



## UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LITERARY & ATHLETIC SOCIETY

### STATEMENT ON THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S COURSE OF ACTION FOR TUITION CUTS AND OSAP 9:00 AM ON JANUARY 18th, 2019

Like many of you, we were alarmed to wake up to the scenario many Ontario students were dreading. It was quickly revealed that there was more promised to the 10% tuition cut from the Progressive Conservative Government of Ontario than what was apparent. Under the announced plan, the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will be restructured to reflect the 2016 grant-and-loan system. In addition to this, the six month interest-free grace period previously granted on loans to students post-graduation is set to be eliminated. Rather than facilitate a positive university experience, these decisions threaten the academic future of many students on campus. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Students with parents unable or unwilling to financially support their education.
2. International students whose astronomically high tuition fees are not being touched and may face further deregulation.
3. A population of students who graduate and will immediately be met with worries pertaining to the accumulating interest on their loans.

These policies will further wedge out low and middle-class students from acquiring a post-secondary education and will polarize our student body. **With this in mind We, The University College Literary & Athletic Society, strongly condemn these changes.**

Premier Ford's course of action will foster a precarious situation for the students he purports to be supporting through this tuition 'cut'. The alleged monetary difference is balanced by making previously mandatory non-tuition fees optional.

This is a facetious move as the tuition reduction will not be funded by the university nor the government, but rather by the removal of services which profoundly contribute to what creates the university experience. While health and safety services will continue to be guaranteed funding, the same cannot be said for independent, autonomous student unions and groups, such as the UC Lit.

We are currently at risk of losing what historically the UC Lit is elected to provide. These include eclectic resources and opportunities for our student body such as our peer support, equity and university-related activism, student jobs (especially provided through Diabolos' Coffee bar),

events within the Commuter Student Centre and community spaces including our beloved Junior Common Room. The funds we collect also support University College clubs and ancillaries, such as the UC Gargoyle, UC Review, UC Follies, and Orientation, a diverse collection of events, team-building and professional development experiences (such as our Intramural sports teams, and our commissions). Ultimately, the opportunities we provide for students often cannot be replicated in a classroom.

Countless student unions, course unions, equity-seeking groups and clubs on campus are also at risk of losing much of their guaranteed funding, which ultimately narrows what encompasses an enriching, affordable university experience.

The UC Lit is firmly committed to working our hardest with the help of other student groups in putting up our best fight against these OSAP and student service reductions. Nonetheless, we are not blind to the political realities these decisions contain. Therefore, we urge you to bear and work with us as we begin to explore strategies to help us restructure our organization to, as always, resemble the best interest for UC students. As we navigate a new possible financial circumstance, we promise to do so while working to retain, broaden and improve the level of services, events, community hubs and general experiences that the UC Lit provides to students, whilst simultaneously supporting other student organizations, especially our own clubs and ancillaries, who need to do the same.

We vow to be with you every step of the way. We pledge to work even harder in collaboration with other clubs, student unions and departments on campus, in support of students who want or need support adjusting to the new OSAP reality, to create and share resources (especially financial ones) and sympathetic, understanding environments. We promise to not let up in the fight to prevent these changes from taking place by vigorously lobbying our administration, UofT departments, central administration, and Members of Provincial Parliament.

As a starting point, one aforementioned coalition is bringing a UofT delegation to a protest at Queen's Park Friday afternoon (<https://tinyurl.com/uoftprotest>), which we wholeheartedly encourage students to attend if they are able. We also encourage you to call or email your MPP's to protest this – another coalition, Students for Ontario, has prepared a helpful contact list and message templates for anyone to use (<https://tinyurl.com/mppcontacts>).

If you are ever in need of someone to talk to or a platform to raise your concerns to a higher administrative body, our office is open weekdays 10:00 am - 4:00 pm in the UC Junior Common Room ([uclit.ca/contact](http://uclit.ca/contact)) and our email inboxes are always open.

*Let us work together to demonstrate what a policy "for the students" should actually look like.*

Best,

Your 2018-2019 UC Lit Council