



UWSA CALLS FOR ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION INQUIRY AND RESPONDS TO RACISM IN UWINDSOR DELTA CHI FRATERNITY

Dear Lancer Community,

This message is being sent in consultation with the Faculty Societies and members of the UWSA Board of Directors following the tokenistic and reactive attitude that the University has exhibited, especially the Office of the President, which represents the surprisingly silent Office of Student Experience. This, however, is something that we have too often come to expect and with which the student body is fed up. The University need not succumb to the ever-growing complex of institutional incompetence and betrayal during times of hard reality and brutal honesty.

The UWSA is appalled by the recently uncovered explicit examples of racism and hatred from members of the University of Windsor's Delta Chi Fraternity chapter. Such behavior is in direct violation of the UWSA's values and we cannot support a group suggesting physical violence, xenophobia, racism, and homophobia on fellow students. As the safety and security of our students is risked, we refuse to allow such rhetoric to be insincerely painted as "Banter Talk" and strongly condemn such heinous dialogue and commentary.

It is crystal clear that the student body has lost trust in the internal processes of the University and its ability to respond to incidents of vehement racism and physical violence. For this reason, the UWSA has issued a letter to the Ontario Human Rights Commission calling for an inquiry into the systemic failure and incompetence on part of the University when it

Room 209
CAW Student Centre
401 Sunset Ave • Windsor, ON
N9B 3P4 • (519) 971-3600 • uwsa@uwindsor.ca

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comes to its response and handling of racism and discrimination (see attached). Since the University cannot be trusted to carry out an adequate inquiry into matters of discrimination that BIPOC students face within the institution, and since any such inquiry would raise serious concerns of validity, we are imploring the OHRC to undertake this matter effectively.

While the University is correct in stating that the UWSA has no direct affiliation with the fraternity, we will not use this as an opportunity to avoid responsibility and will not hesitate to intervene when there exist serious threats to the safety of students. We are immediately severing all relations with this chapter and are actively discouraging our members from associating with a platform that fosters such bigotry and one that threatens a safe and welcoming student experience. Similarly, the UWSA is actively investigating any affiliations these members had while volunteering with us, are verifying this using our registered volunteer lists, and are ensuring that action will be taken swiftly, accordingly, and promptly.

We are also calling for a thorough investigation to explore the affairs and misconduct within UWindsor Delta Chi in order to shed light on how this dialogue was accepted within this circle in the first place. The perpetration carried out by its current and former members alike suggests that there exist serious systemic concerns of the culture within the chapter itself. These concerns, however, are not limited to this group. The potential vulnerabilities of similar groups to descend into environments of bigotry must also be strongly considered, and any complaints of misconduct within other fraternities and/or sororities on campus must also be strictly examined and acted upon.



We will be working to establish training opportunities in anti-oppression and anti-racism for our students. With many UWindsor students taking on leadership roles in student groups and extracurricular activities, we expect our student leaders and advocates, in Windsor or otherwise, to participate in various anti-oppression orientations and trainings. We also expect that the University's staff and faculty members will also expose themselves to increased awareness of the ramifications that the expression of these prejudicial and threatening views has on our community at large.

We look forward to working with our trusted equity-focused partners across the province, including our allies over at the Canadian Federation of Students, to facilitate productive educational opportunities for all students while voicing and resolving the concerns of the student body. A culture of understanding, openness, and inclusion must therefore be immediately struck within our student community and an acknowledgement must be had that education is, in fact, a key to combatting the longstanding issues of racism and oppression. We can only hope that the University cooperates.

Thank you,

Herman Dayal

President

University of Windsor Students' Alliance

puwsa@uwindsor.ca

519.253.3000 ext. 4500

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For more information, please contact:

Paramjot Singh Gogia

Vice President Student Advocacy
University of Windsor Students' Alliance
vpsauwsa@uwindsor.ca
519.253.3000 ext. 4501

Aaron Carder

Communications Manager
University of Windsor Students' Alliance
commuwsa@uwindsor.ca
519.253.3000 ext. 4505

The University of Windsor Students' Alliance (UWSA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit, student-run organization. We are your undergraduate student government, your campus services, your clubs and societies, your student life, your community campaigns, your students' association. Every UWindsor full-time undergraduate student is a member of the UWSA and you are encouraged to take advantage of the services, events and programming we offer.

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November 27, 2020

VIA MAIL AND EMAIL

Ena Chadha
Interim Chief Commissioner
Ontario Human Rights Commission
180 Dundas Street West, 9th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2G5

Re: Request for Commission Inquiry into Racism and Failure to Respond by University of Windsor

Dear Interim Chief Commissioner:

It is with grave concern that we write to you, on behalf of the University of Windsor Students' Alliance (UWSA), the full-time undergraduate students' union representing over 10,000 University of Windsor students. On behalf of our membership, as well as the entire University of Windsor community, we are writing to request an inquiry by the Commission into the University of Windsor.

As you will ascertain by reading the remainder of this letter, several BIPOC members of our campus community have experienced incidents of racism, bigotry and hatred. We quote an email written by one group of BIPOC students to the University's administration: "When we as BIPOC students were approached with this information we were moments away from going to you because we had no clue where else to go. But then during the past month and a half we saw just how little you care about addressing racism and discrimination." The email went on to voice that these BIPOC members of our community are afraid for their lives on campus.

Other messages denouncing the University and calling on further action have been issued by groups of faculty, staff, and researchers on campus. We are aware of at least one human rights complaint filed internally, and for the reasons that follow, the student body does not have confidence in the University's ability to handle such complaints in an objective, fair, and impartial manner.

Quite frankly, it is unacceptable for students to feel unsafe being themselves on a publicly funded campus in Ontario. This statement has always been true, but it is especially true in 2020. Any internal inquiry or report commissioned by the University would lack legitimacy in the eyes of the student body, especially BIPOC students, who have warned of documented instances of previous investigators altering statements or otherwise failing to act impartially in the course of investigations. Furthermore, the University's own *Procedures for Addressing Student Non-Academic Misconduct* were found by an adjudicator to be unfair: "It does not provide due process to the students and it is not fair and equitable." In the same adjudicator's decision, the University was called to task for, amongst other things, disregarding procedures which led to highly prejudicial effects on a Black student.

In summary, the University cannot be trusted to undertake an adequate inquiry into matters of racism, bigotry, and hatred within its institution when it cannot even follow its own procedures. When it does, these procedures do not provide for fairness or equity. Even if this institution were somehow able to manage this, any results of such an inquiry would not be recognized as legitimate by the student body, given the recent history of its systemic failures to address such issues. We implore you, as Interim Chief Commissioner, to invoke the various provisions of the *Human Rights Code* to initiate an inquiry into the University of Windsor, including into specific instances of racism, bigotry, and hatred, as well as into the University's handling of such matters. The institution's mechanisms for handling these instances must also be subject to inquiry. Such an inquiry would very clearly be in the public interest.

We kindly request that you follow up on this matter at your earliest opportunity. Our request for an inquiry is not one that is made lightly. It is an expression of the fear and other unfortunate lived experiences of BIPOC students, faculty, and staff on our campus. These concerns require immediate inquiry by the Commission as matters of public policy and safety.

Respectfully,



Herman Dayal

President

puwsa@uwindsor.ca



Paramjot Singh Gogia

VP Student Advocacy

vpsauwsa@uwindsor.ca



Petar Bratic

VP Finance & Operations

vpfuwsa@uwindsor.ca



Jasleen Dayal

VP Student Life

vpsluwsa@uwindsor.ca

- c. Hon. Doug Downey, MPP
Hon. Ross Romano, MPP
Lisa Gretzky, MPP
Percy Hatfield, MPP
Taras Natyshak, MPP
Laura Mae Lindo, MPP
Gurratan Singh, MPP
Chris Glover, MPP
Dr. Robert Gordon

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Minister of Colleges and Universities
MPP for Windsor West
MPP for Windsor-Tecumseh
MPP for Essex
Opposition Critic, Anti-Racism
Opposition Critic, Attorney General
Opposition Critic, Colleges and Universities
President & Vice-Chancellor, University of Windsor