

President's Working Group on Free Speech Terms of Reference

Mandate

To provide input and advice on policies and resources relating to the exercise of free speech at York University. In particular, the Working Group will:

1. provide input and advice on the creation of a toolkit on protest and other training or education material for the York University community;
2. provide recommendations and advice on interpretive guidelines with respect to the application of relevant policies and procedures to the exercise of free speech;
3. recommend a process for obtaining ongoing input from community members with respect to use of the Statement of Policy on Free Speech, to inform annual reporting to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO);
4. identify potential gaps or revisions to York University policies as they relate to free speech and make recommendations for addressing them;
5. provide input and advice into the role of the University Ombudsperson as it relates to free speech; and
6. ensure broad and inclusive consultations in carrying out the work noted in items 1-5 above.

Membership

The Working Group will consist of community members from across the University and will include representation from equity-seeking groups. The group will consist of the following:

Chair, appointed by the President for a two-year term

YFS representative

YUGSA representative

GCSU representative

Osgoode student union representative

3 students at large coordinated through the Student Success Centre

2 faculty members appointed on the basis of knowledge and expertise in free speech and/or policy development

2 faculty members following an expression of interest

2 non-academic staff members following an expression of interest

Representative from Office of VP, Students

Representative from Ancillary Services Community Safety

Representative from Community Support and Services

Representative from Centre for Human Rights Equity and Inclusion

University Secretariat (ex officio, non-voting)

Appointments will be made by the President in consultation with the Provost and VP Equity, People and Culture recognizing the importance of ensuring representation from equity-seeking groups.

Meetings

Meetings will be called by the chair and may take place in person or via telephone conferencing. Notice of meetings identifying items to be addressed will be provided to members at least three business days in advance of a meeting. Minutes will be taken and made available to the general public. Meetings will take place three times per year or such greater number as may be required.

Quorum

The Chair plus a simple majority of all other voting working group members formally named to the working group will constitute quorum.

Conduct of Meetings

Committee recommendations will generally be determined by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached on an issue that requires action, it will be put to a vote. A question will be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present. The Chair will vote to break ties.

Minutes

Minutes of meetings will be recorded by a recording secretary and copies will be distributed to all Committee members. The minutes will be made available to the public.

Inclusion Statement

The working group promotes an atmosphere of co-operation, diversity, equity and respect. Members recognize the rich diversity of perspective and experience within the York University community that is informed by many factors including gender identity, gender expression, age, race, socio-economic background, ability, culture, language, sexual orientation, creed and/or political persuasion. Members of the Working Group will endeavor to conduct themselves in a way that is aligned with this inclusion statement. Members are encouraged to participate in group discussions and share information to help group members understand the various perspectives represented at the table.

Duration

The Working Group will complete its work by June 2021 at which time it will be disbanded unless the President determines it should continue.

Amending the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference may be revised by the President on her own initiative or upon the recommendation of the Working Group.