

Discussion

Featured

Topics

Members

Media

Files



Karim Ismail

Admin · January 28 · 🌐

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Hello everybody,

I come to you to touch on the issue I raised at the LSA meeting regarding complaints about college-approved exam accommodations. I will start off by saying, as President, I will take full accountability for how sensitive complaints such as these should be handled. **To every Indigenous student at the College: I am very sorry for handling these complaints in a way that perpetuated further discrimination and racism. The suggestion of a survey was pure wrong. I will wear that and I should not have floated the idea.** This was not my place to discuss. It is not your typical "should school be hybrid or not" or "should we have in person events or not" topic, this survey would have turned into a vessel through which Anti-Indigenous sentiment could run rampant. For not recognizing that, I apologize.

My approach on this, I realized, was a mistake. It led to further marginalization of Indigenous students specifically, and singled them out. Given the sensitivity of such an issue, particularly to Indigenous students here at the college, who already face discrimination on many levels, it would have been prudent to consult with our VP of Indigenous Affairs prior and NOT bring it out to the student body at large. I do believe this could have led to it being handled better and would have made the outcome a lot less polarizing and for that, on behalf of the LSA, I do apologize to everyone who was hurt or alienated by mishandling these complaints and raising them publicly in this fashion.

Over the past few days, I have seen and reflected on how painful raising these concerns publicly were first hand, and the way I addressed them fell short of my commitment to making sure everyone feels included and that they belong. Therefore, moving forward, the exec team and myself will commit to future changes in order to make sure things like these never happen again:

- Utilize the newly developed ARTFC to provide education to all LSA executive members.
- Establish a new framework for which the exec team approves a topic before raising it to council.
- Ensure that no policy that has the potential impact of affecting Indigenous students is taken without personally consulting the VP of Indigenous Affairs.
- Push the College to address the underlying issues that could have exposed these concerns in the first place, primarily racism and discrimination in the college. Also, addressing academic underlying concerns such as how faculty structure or grade exams as well.
- Pressure the College to provide immediate supports for Indigenous students and ensuring the support is impactful and lasting.

I have expressed to JC Steele that the LSA will strive to collaborate more on issues that impact Indigenous students. The LSA will not be taking on this issue anymore and will instead let the administration handle the underlying concerns since they are best equipped to do so. This issue must not be off-loaded to student organizations to fix, and the college has folks who should devote their time to this. I have spoken to the Dean about this whole situation, and he has



devote their time to this. I have spoken to the Dean about this whole situation, and he has reassured me that these two underlying concerns mentioned in point #4 will be raised with faculty.

I understand that this semester has already been difficult for Indigenous students. I was alerted in the past couple of days that there were some unacceptable and disparaging comments being made in Kwayeskastasowin towards Indigenous faculty, students, and curriculum. When I found out about this, I realized my comments have added more fuel to the fire which honestly deeply hurt me to think that I would contribute to this. Regardless of my intentions, this was the effect, and for that I am deeply sorry.

Thank you for bearing with me the past couple of days.

See you (hopefully) soon,

Karim & LSA Executive Team

  Wendy Anne, Lily Wiebe and 85 others



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