



Master of Information Student Council
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MISC Statement on the University Mandated Leave of Absence Policy

On June 27, the University of Toronto Governing Council voted in favour of approving the Mandatory Leave of Absence Policy (MLAP). The policy allows university administration to remove a student from the campus and the resources it has to offer if they are deemed to be of substantial threat to themselves and others, or they are unable to meaningfully complete their academic studies. The new policy improves a previous policy in the sense that placing a student on leave was considered punitive and was recorded on the student's academic record. While this new policy is considered to be a step in a positive direction by many, there are many factors that the policy does not address.

One substantive flaw is that this policy affects those coping with mental health challenges but does not require intervention from a mental health practitioner. At the Governing Council meeting last week, administrators spoke of their commitment to involving professionals and ensuring the Policy would only be used as a last resort. The Master of Information Student Council (MISC) sincerely hopes these words were spoken in good faith. However, the process by which MLAP was drafted and subsequently passed fall short of our values of accountable decision-making, meaningful participation and active transparency. MISC stands alongside the student associations from all three campuses that voiced their opposition to the MLAP at the Governing Council meeting, including the Graduate Student Union, the University of Toronto Students' Union, the U of T Mississauga Students' Union and the Scarborough Campus Students' Union. This year, we will collaborate with the GSU and other student groups to monitor instances of the policy's implementation and act within our power to ensure the MLAP is administered in an accountable manner and that sufficient access to care is provided to students that need it most.

Although we know the decision to pass this policy cannot be changed, we continue to believe in the provisioning of equal access to mental health resources, which the policy endangers. These values do and will continue to inform our actions over the coming year. We want to do everything within our power to help students receive the care and support they need to succeed personally and academically during their degrees. We are here to offer resources and guidance and to help navigate the administrative policies that you may come across in your

studies. If you have questions about how the MLAP might affect you or would like more details, please contact Co-Presidents Emma Findlay-White and Jamie Duncan at misc.ischool@gmail.com. For access to mental health resources or questions about what resources are available to you, please contact the iStudents for Mental Health Co-Chairs, Robyn Forman robyn.forman@mail.utoronto.ca and Marta Cooper Burt martacooper.burt@mail.utoronto.ca.

Yours in service,

MISC Co-Presidents
MISC Mental Health Working Group Co-Chairs