



CESAR

Continuing Education Students'
Association of Ryerson

Local 105 of the Canadian Federation of Students

Tuesday, January 28th, 2020

Dear Members of Senate,

It is with deep concern that I address you on behalf of the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson (CESAR), which represents 16,000 continuing education and part-time education students, as well as any full-time undergraduate students (who have dual membership with the Ryerson Students' Union) enrolled in Chang School Courses.

On Friday, January 24th, Ryerson University announced their termination of the Operating Agreement with the Ryerson Students' Union that has existed since 1986. They did this without provisions to cancel the agreement, nor through proper planning of an interim solution. This action is a direct attack on student union autonomy and sets a dangerous precedent for student advocacy.

CESAR does not intend to defend the actions of the Ryerson Students' Union executive who mismanaged the RSU in 2018-19, nor do we need to defend the conflicts of the current RSU team. However, we do question if the University has exhausted all its options before tearing up a decades old contract.

As a sister students' union that provides similar services and operates under the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, CESAR was never updated on any issues or delays in the RSU-University negotiations, nor were we invited to help mediate or advise on the issues. CESAR was also not informed of the decision to terminate the agreement until after a public statement from the University was made. This is not good planning and is not in the best interest of students.

Last Friday CESAR representatives heard from the RSU that their academic advocate was turned away from representing a student at a facilitated discussion meeting. On Monday, January 27, 2020 we had received multiple communications from the Senate Office, students, and the Ombudsperson that full-time students were being advised to contact the CESAR student advocate - without formal consultation with CESAR. This is the busiest time of the year for academic appeals. One advocate is not enough for a campus this size and it is in the best interest of students to have advocates from their students' union to objectively challenge the university and stand up for students. It is hypocritical of the University to critique the Ryerson Students' Union of mismanagement when there has been such a breach of fair process in very real terms to students seeking fair appeals. Multiple Senate policies reference advocates from the RSU and CESAR. We are concerned that these policies and students' rights are being violated.



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It is not just the appeals process that is at risk. The University has made promises that they cannot make in regards to Health & Dental Plans, Equity Service Centres and the Student Centre. The University has refused to set up a simple meeting with CESAR by the time of this letter. CESAR is extremely concerned with the lack of respect for due process and consultation that we have been given to represent students.

We ask that the Ryerson Senate take this issue to heart, both for academic reasons relating to appeals, but also to the principle of why a students' union should be autonomous from the University. We encourage Senate members to pressure Jen McMillen, Vice-Provost Students, to return to the table to negotiate a new Operating Agreement with the RSU so that the vital services such as the Student Advocate can continue to run. We also encourage the university to include CESAR in these negotiations to find solutions and accountability frameworks that respect students' union autonomy. There are numerous other options to address the concerns with the RSU - both through student democracy and as a corporation under the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

We encourage any Senate member to reach out to CESAR to get more information on this matter.

Thank you.

Nicole Brayannis
CESAR President
president@mycesar.ca

Please note: A previous version of this letter stated that "CESAR does intend to defend the actions of the Ryerson Students' Union executive who mismanaged the RSU in 2018-19, nor do we need to defend the conflicts of the current RSU team." We have since corrected this error to say that "CESAR does not intend to defend the actions of the Ryerson Students' Union executive who mismanaged the RSU in 2018-19, nor do we need to defend the conflicts of the current RSU team."