



December 12, 2018

The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton  
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities  
Mowat Block  
3rd Floor, 900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Ms. Linda Franklin  
President and CEO, Colleges Ontario  
1600 - 20 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2N8

**Re: Free speech policy must include consultation with college faculty**

Dear Minister and Ms. Franklin:

We were alarmed to discover that you have developed a free speech policy for the colleges without any consultation with faculty members. We now know that you quietly put together a policy taskforce with 12 college administrators, one student, but no faculty. We are calling on Colleges Ontario to halt the process, include faculty in the taskforce membership, and immediately engage in a broad consultation with students, faculty and staff.

Faculty are on the front lines, and upholding and defending the principles of academic freedom and free speech at Ontario college campuses. Omitting key stakeholders from the process demonstrates the colleges' lack of respect for free speech.

It's ironic that Colleges Ontario is trying to push through a policy on free speech without any public scrutiny or debate. This action undermines the academic credibility of the colleges and highlights the need for collegial governance. Ontario colleges require a robust framework of collegial governance that puts faculty and students at the heart of academic decision making.

The Ford government's intent is to silence critics, rather than ensuring Ontario's colleges are world class institutions for innovation, debate, and inquiry. Ford's stated "minimum standards" for a free speech policy specifies the goal of shutting down on-campus protests.

We cannot stand by and allow students and faculty to become targets of Ford's crack-down on Ontario colleges. Full transparency and the participation of all key stakeholders is required immediately.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience regarding your intent to take action on this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RM Kennedy".

RM Kennedy, Chair, OPSEU College Faculty Divisional Executive

c: Don Lovisa, Chair, President's Council, Colleges Ontario