



November 4th 2020

The Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS) is deeply saddened by the death of [Keshav Mayya on November 2nd](#). We offer our condolences to family, friends, classmates and all those affected by the loss of a member of our student community.

This year has been difficult. Under this “new normal” of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed our communities struggle to adjust as we are kept apart for our safety, but often at the expense of our mental well-being. Students are increasingly reporting feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety and burnout resulting from the disruptions to their academics, jobs and relationships. We have yet to fully understand the implications that lockdowns, social distancing and other public health measures will have in the future, but we can say that right now, our current students are not okay.

None of us could have prepared for a global pandemic, but the University of Toronto has had more than enough time to prepare and take student mental health seriously. The very fact that this is only one of many public incidents in the last few years is heartbreaking.

We remain frustrated that the University of Toronto continues to address the symptoms but not the root causes of mental health. Countless students have called attention to the hyper-competitive nature of many U of T programs and their effects on student mental health, particularly in the STEM fields, and offered concrete structural changes that need to be made to their programs. We are fed up with the introduction of more apps and resource lists and phone numbers while the University continues to promote a coercive leave policy as an effective strategy to deal with students in crisis. We are not interested in championing an institution that is receiving record numbers in financial donations but we are still finding students who are poor, food-insecure, without proper living space or additional financial resources to survive while still trying to finish their degrees.

We want to encourage students to reach out and check in with each other. As a student community, we will continue to share resources and experiences and grieve together. We welcome any student to contact APUS and we will do our best to listen, support and provide additional resources if you need them.

And in no uncertain terms, we want to emphasize that each and every student who comes to the University of Toronto is valuable and deserves a campus that cares.

In solidarity,

APUS

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RESOURCES:

Please note that while APUS remains critical of Mental Health Resources available to students on campus, our priority is to make sure students are aware of services that they already have access to as a U of T student.

Please also note that if you are an APUS member, the APUS Health & Dental Plan covers up to \$125 per visit for up to 20 visits under our Psychology & Counselling benefit. Coverage under this benefit includes access to Psychologists, Social Workers, Master of Social Work, and Psychotherapists.

The following campus and community helplines are also available:

- Good 2 Talk Student Helpline 1-866-925-5454
- Gerstein Crisis Centre 416-929-5200
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto 416-408-HELP (4357)
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto Mental Health Crisis Line 416-360-0486
- My SSP for U of T Students 1-844-451-9700.
- Health and Wellness Centre 416-978-8030