

4 October 2016

TO: The University Centre Management Board

SUBJECT: Letter from Special Status / Student Service Groups and supporters regarding Solidarity on the Issue of UC Space Revisions.

Dear Members of the University Centre (UC) Management Board,

We write to you today as a coalition of recognized student organizations and supporters within the University of Guelph community—including those groups recognized by the University, and the Special Status Groups as recognized by the Central Students' Association. We are a diverse coalition of organizations, all committed to social justice in various forms, and all committed to serving the university community to our best abilities in our missions.

It is our collective belief that this University Centre space, built and funded by students and with student dollars, should serve the good which students intended—for their organizations, services, and projects to flourish and best meet the needs of that membership. To that end, we collectively express solidarity with each other and will not act to undermine the collective desires of our fellow organizations.

- We will not collaborate in the reduction of space for some of us or the removal of others from the University Centre space entirely.
- We will support each other in our work and in our collective desire to see *all* Special Status and Student Service Groups located decent, accessible, and viable spaces within the University Centre.
- We will present our needs as a collective to the University Centre Board and struggle until these needs are met—not simply for one of us, but for all of us.

Students have built our organizations in this very spirit—to not simply serve themselves, but to support our community; to enhance and further the University's public and community-based mission. We believe, as the institutional mission states, that the University exists “to serve society and to enhance ... quality of life”. Through our work, we do just that for students and all those in the University and broader community that this institution claims to aim to collaborate with.

Collectively, we are also acutely aware of the history of the University Centre (UC). From the development of the plans for the Student Union Building (SUB) in 1966 to the failings of Queen's Park to assist with construction (1969) to the University's takeover of the project to the generation-of-undergraduates spanning lawsuit that gained student voice on this very Board. This is students' building, plain and simple. And, it is in the interest of all students to protect and

expand space given to voices that often otherwise suppressed and to those which are inherently critical of our institution, each other, and wider society.

These are the roles that Special Status and Student Service Groups fulfill on our campus—from service providers to hard fought spaces to critical voices from within and out. This is who we are within the University of Guelph and the broader community. These proposed revisions are an opportunity to rethink the University Centre space and to restore the complex to a vision closer to its initial one—as the centre of student space, student voices, and student action. We are an essential part of what this vision should and must be.

In solidarity,

The UC Space Coalition

- **The Guelph Black Students Association**
- **Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment And Diversity**
- **Guelph Queer Equality**
- **Ontario Public Interest Research Group — Guelph**
- **The Peak Magazine**
- **Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 1334**
- **Guelph Action Coalition**
- **Student Help and Advocacy Centre**



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