



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

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By email: don.lovisa@durhamcollege.ca

May 22, 2018

Don Lovisa
President
Durham College
2000 Simcoe Street North
Gordon Willey building, Room A140
Oshawa, Ontario
L1H 7K4

Dear President Lovisa:

On behalf of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), representing more than 70,000 academic and professional staff at over 120 universities and colleges, I am writing to urge you to rescind your policy on Community Elections and Political Activity. The policy places unjustified restrictions on the political activity of staff and as such represents a serious violation of academic freedom and basic democratic rights.

As has been brought to your attention by the Chair of the College Faculty Divisional Executive of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), you are incorrect in asserting that the limitations you have placed on the political activities of college teachers and staff are required by the 2006 Public Service of Ontario Act. The restrictions in this Act do not apply as colleges are not "public bodies" as defined in the Act, colleges are not designated as crown agencies, and employees of Ontario colleges are not public servants.

CAUT is deeply concerned that your policy violates academic freedom. Academic freedom includes the right to teach, research, express one's opinion about the institution, and to exercise one's civil liberties. Academic freedom means academic staff must not be hindered or impeded in exercising their rights as citizens, including the right to free expression of opinion on matters of public interest.

Academic freedom means academic staff have the right to engage in political activity, and to express support for or opposition to a political party both inside and outside of campus. Universities and colleges are places where debates on matters of public concern must be encouraged, not stifled.

I have referred this matter to our Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee for further consideration and action. In the meantime, I urge you to immediately withdraw your restrictions on political activities.

Sincerely,



David Robinson
Executive Director

/mmp

cc: RM Kennedy, Chair, College Faculty Divisional Executive, Ontario Public Service
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Peter McInnis, Chair, CAUT Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee
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