

## MEMORANDUM DCD #3, 2023-24

To: Chairs & Directors, University of Toronto Scarborough  
Cc: Chairs' Assistants  
From: Professor Jessica Fields, Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success  
Professor Suzanne Sicchia, Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning, & Undergraduate Programs  
Date: 18 August 2023  
Re: **Classroom Safety and Gender Education**  
Note: For broad distribution

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Dear Colleagues,

In the weeks since the 28 June violence in a University of Waterloo gender studies course, the University of Toronto and University of Toronto Scarborough have been among the many Canadian universities reconsidering campus safety to ensure a safe and non-threatening environment for the exploration of ideas. Below we outline U of T Scarborough's initial efforts toward such an environment. Please share this information with faculty and staff in your departments.

The Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean (OVPD) has worked with multiple partners at the University, including the UTSC Registrar, Campus Safety, and Health & Safety Offices, and the University of Toronto Community Safety Office, and the Office of Safety & High Risk. An exchange with faculty from the Women & Gender Studies Program in the Department of Historical & Cultural Studies has given our work shape and purpose, and we are grateful for their contributions and care.

### Classroom Safety

Like other universities, we are removing classroom information from public websites. This information has been removed on all three U of T campuses. Classroom information will be available only to those who are enrolled in a course and have access to the secure Quercus site.

U of T Scarborough Health & Safety and Campus Safety have conducted an audit and inventory of classroom access points; they will conduct broader safety audits this Fall. Health & Safety has provided this inventory to U of T Community Safety, and the Registrar is exploring how to use this information proactively when assigning classrooms. In the meantime, if faculty have concerns about the classrooms their courses are currently assigned for Fall, please let [Professor Suzanne Sicchia, Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning, & Undergraduate Programs](#), know so she can explore with the Registrar's Office alternate spaces.

Clear signage and instructions regarding classroom safety will be posted in all U of T Scarborough classrooms. Posters will include information about building and room location and emergency contact details.

## U of T Safety App

We encourage all faculty, students, and staff to download to their phones the [U of T Safety app](#). The app includes an “Emergency - Contact Campus Safety now” function that sends information directly to U of T Scarborough Campus Safety dispatch. Training regarding use of the app will continue to roll out this Fall.

## Patrols

U of T Scarborough Campus Safety reviews requests for patrols on a case-by-case basis and increases building patrols as needed. Building patrols increased this summer, for example, and they plan a similar process and model for Fall. Our aim is to resist normalizing a visible increase in patrols while also ensuring safety - ensuring that patrols are present but not creating a campus marked by surveillance. Please contact Campus Safety with questions regarding patrols.

## Additional Training and Resources

The Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean is working with the U of T Office of Safety/High Risk to offer a scenario-based session on de-escalation to campus leadership. This de-escalation training will be promoted more widely across the university and available to other groups. In addition, clear signage and instructions, like that posted in classrooms, will be posted throughout campus. For additional information, we refer you to this recent article in The Bulletin Brief - [Services, tools and resources support safety across the University's three campuses.](#)

The U of T Community Safety Office will meet this Fall with the academic leaders, including chairs, to co-create preparedness plans, training, and audits. These efforts will reflect the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, a multi-disciplinary approach to crime prevention. The Campus Safety Office will also review the Emergency Handbook to ensure it includes relevant scenarios that will support departments - chairs, faculty, students, and staff.

## Gender Education

We consider the threats to campus safety a collective concern; conversations about gender must not live only in gender studies classrooms or rest with Women & Gender Studies (WST) colleagues. We look forward to considering with all department chairs and faculty how we can all contribute to gender education in our course offerings, student advising, and other department activities. This year, the OVPD plans to host campus-wide conversations about sexism and gender, including (but not only) the Equity Matters Seminar series, workshops for U of T Scarborough Chairs that will begin this year, and the ongoing work of the Campus Curriculum Review Working Circle. Plans for a campus teach-in are underway. If any faculty are interested in participating in the teach-in, please ask them to contact [Professor Suzanne Sicchia, Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning, & Undergraduate Programs.](#)

Our aim in all these efforts is to develop a meaningful response to our shared concerns about the safety of gender and sexuality scholars, students, and staff at U of T Scarborough, not to compound the workload of gender and sexuality scholars, and to enlist us all in the ongoing work of ensuring the environment necessary to the exploration of ideas. We look forward to working with you toward this end.

Sincerely,



**Jessica Fields**

Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success  
Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean



**Suzanne Sicchia**

Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs  
Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean