



Carleton University
Academic Staff Association

October 29, 2025

L. Pauline Rankin
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Carleton University

Dear Provost Rankin,

Thank you for the invitation to have a member of CUASA on the new **Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Community Healing, Rebuilding and Belonging (CHRB)**, and for the copy of the Terms of Reference of this new body. Thank you also for the offer of a conversation in advance of CUASA appointing a representative to the Task Force. We would also appreciate more information about how the Task Force's stated goals will be implemented and whose voices will be included in shaping its work.

To ensure we have the relevant information and context required for CUASA to equitably participate in this process to our fullest abilities please do take the time to write to us in response to our questions and concerns at your earliest convenience so that we might be prepared for our meeting.

In your email you write that we have "heard concerns from the university community about the frictions and fractures within the Carleton community as a result of geopolitical tensions in various parts of the world". **We have questions about the concerns that the Task Force is being asked to address.**

- Will the task force have access to the documentation of these concerns?
- Will the task force have the opportunity to hear directly from the individuals/groups whose concerns are the impetus for this task force?
- How will the task force ensure that they hear from underrepresented individuals/groups who might not have had access to administration or have had worries about speaking openly about their concerns?

You write of "systemic issues that undermine our collective commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, academic freedom, and the excellence that it spawns" on this matter **we have concerns about the composition of the task force and the timeline.**

- **The proposed makeup of the Task Force sees members of the University management outnumber members representing the Carleton community.** As such, this composition risks becoming a top-down initiative potentially reproducing systemic issues of power and representation. Further, the failure to include representation from CUPE 4600, who represent Contract Instructors and Graduate Students at Carleton, is a significant oversight. **An equitable and fulsome dialogue must include representation from the whole of the community.**

- **Workload and scheduling.** To assign a single CUASA member to this task force limits accessibility, diversity of representation and risks overburdening the very people this work is stated to help “heal”. CUASA has at least two representatives on other joint University committees. **We suggest a larger committee with groups being encouraged to send alternates.**
- **Transparency. We suggest the task force include space for observers.** Allowing stakeholder groups to bring to the meeting at least one and preferably two non-speaking non-voting observers, would give the task force and its members the opportunity for consultation with more affected members. This would reflect the reality that **no single representative could be asked to fully understand or represent the many diverse concerns of the membership of their group.**
- **The timeline to “feasible and actionable recommendations”.** Five months for completion of this work will limit fulsome engagement which needs to be both meaningful and unhurried. As such, we recommend that the task force review the University of Waterloo’s [“How-To Guide” on consultations and community engagement with marginalized groups](#), and **suggest that the timeline for meaningful consultation be extended to a year.**
- **Appointment of Associate Deans.** How has the task force considered the appointment and representation of not only a diversity in academic fields but also in the identity matters that affect the issues being discussed, including belonging to equity deserving groups on campus such as racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+ and disabled communities?
- **Terms of reference.** The definition of “safety”, “civility” and “institutional non-partisanship” are not fixed concepts. We would like reassurance that the work of the task force will include an open discussion of the uses and definitions of terms and agreement within the task force itself.

While CUASA remains concerned with how Carleton initiatives are prioritizing equity we appreciate the references to the foundational documents of the University, which include academic freedom and collegial governance, as well as the Human Rights Code of the province and the country. We also appreciate the commitment to a process of generating consensus, enabling healing and reconciliation, and building community.

Thank you for the offer of a conversation to continue to clarify the role and nature of this new body which we hope will also address the concerns we have raised here. CUASA will share this letter on its website to keep members informed of actions of the Association, as many members have already inquired about the creation of the task force.

Sincerely,

Dominique Marshall

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President

Carleton University Academic Staff Association