

## Statement Regarding Incident at Elections Debate

\*CW: Discussions about misgendering to follow\*

Last Wednesday at the UTSU elections debate, a member of our team misgendered one of our colleagues. While it cannot undo the harm of this act, when we speak or act in ways that are offensive or cause harm to others, it is important for us to take responsibility and to apologize. As a team, we would like to offer our sincerest apologies to our colleague, everyone in attendance at the debate (online and in-person), and to others that have been impacted by this act since then.

It is also important to address one of the responses to this apology that occurred at the debate, which should have been addressed at that time as well. Audience members applauded our candidate for his apology. The applause was unnecessary and inappropriate. Misgendering can be traumatic in itself, the applause only furthers the harm.

We want to highlight and honour our colleague Shawn Williams for her courage in raising the matter of this at the debate. It takes a lot of courage to raise issues like this, especially when one is a member of a marginalized community themselves and directly impacted.

Our team has no desire to sweep this matter under the rug, something which we feel is incredibly harmful. Since the debate, our team has engaged in open and honest conversations internally about the impacts of misgendering, internalization of gender norms and the gender binary, and the realities of violence faced by trans\* members of our communities. Our team takes these issues very seriously and by way of community accountability want to share that we are engaged in a collective discussion to challenge our assumptions and collectively unlearn.

1UofT does not support transphobia, trans\* misogyny or trans\* misogynoir. We recognize that transphobia and other forms of oppression continue to exist in intersecting ways on campus and in the community. We recognize that trans\* women, and in particular black trans\* women and two-spirited people, experience disproportionate levels of violence in our community. We are committed to challenging transphobia, trans\* misogyny and trans\* misogynoir; and to challenging heteropatriarchal assumptions and attitudes that continue to persist in all aspects of our lives.

It is clear to us that these conversations are not given enough attention across campus and within our broader community. We would like to work more closely with members of the trans\* community on campus to raise awareness and act in solidarity with the community fighting for trans\* students' rights.

We would also like to encourage everyone on campus to support the work of organizations like LGBTQOUT who do phenomenal work to support queer and trans\* students. As some of you may be aware, LGBTQOUT is seeking a UTSU levy and is hosting a referendum this election season. 1UofT fully supports the LGBTQOUT levy and we encourage all UTSU members to vote yes to ensure there are dedicated resources for queer and trans\* students on campus.

Sincerely,  
Madina and the 1UofT team