



The University College Literary and Athletic Society

University of Toronto

November 12th 2009

To members of the UC and U of T communities:

On October 29th, 2009, SMCSU, VUSAC, and the UC Lit co-hosted a Halloween Club Night event at which a group of attending students wore costumes which were offensive to many members of the U of T community. Subsequent to the club night, this group's costume was selected by one of the event organizers as being among the best costumes of the evening. Although the UC Lit had no involvement in, nor awareness of, a costume contest being held in conjunction with the club night, we were nonetheless dismayed by--and disagreed with--the positive recognition given to this costume.

When asked to comment in the immediate aftermath of this incident, we sought initially to clarify that our council had no role in the costume contest and that, had we been involved, our values of inclusion and non-discrimination would have guided our input in the selection of winning costumes. A more comprehensive response from us, as one of the event's co-sponsors, could have shown greater leadership by encouraging further dialogue on the persistent problems that modern society faces around issues of race, and the systemic discrimination and inequality that are a daily reality for so many of our community's members.

The deeply felt sentiments expressed at the November 10th town hall event hosted by the Black Students' Association made clear that more work is needed to make U of T a more equitable and welcoming environment. The UC Lit has a mandate to promote an atmosphere of collegiality, community, and opportunity in all that we do, and this mandate will serve as a starting point for continuing our long tradition of bringing about positive change at U of T. We will immediately begin work to identify ways of creating a more inclusive community at both UC and U of T, and we welcome opportunities to partner with other campus organizations who share this commitment to equity. It is our strong belief that our continued leadership presence on the U of T campus will serve as an example for students and administration alike.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at uc.lit@utoronto.ca

Sincerely,
The University College Literary and Athletic Society