



Office of the President

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Dear Members of the York Community:

Recent political upheavals around the world continue to reinforce the need for i) openness, ii) tolerance, iii) the right to freedom of expression, and iv) respecting and delivering on the responsibilities that come with that right. These events also serve as a living reminder of the power of a highly educated and informed citizenry.

The issues surrounding freedom of expression are also pertinent to York University and to Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events, which take place simultaneously on campuses across Canada, including, of course, our campus. It is a time when emotions can run high and when political rhetoric and posturing often leads us away from our true task of meaningful academic discourse.

As we approach IAW, I am compelled to remind you of our founding principles and of what York stands for.

York was born out of a vision to redefine the possible. Our faculty, students, staff and community leaders live this vision every day. It follows that to be true to our principles we have an obligation to be part of academic dialogue that contributes to new ideas.

Already, York's community pushes the boundaries of understanding and encourages a deeper appreciation for complex issues such as those in the Middle East. However, as we have seen in countries around the world, not everyone is able to engage in constructive debate.

While I encourage all in our community to speak freely and to participate in the meaningful, thoughtful and respectful testing of ideas, I must also remind you that at York we will not tolerate any actions or forms of speech that are, in any way, racist or that advocate violence or hatred. Any such comments or actions will be prosecuted to the full extent of the University's powers. As always, our priority remains the safety and security of all our community members and guests.

As a university we are committed to our faculty, staff, students and visitors; to redefining the possible; and to your right of expression. Similarly, through your actions and words, I ask for your wholehearted regard to, and respect for, this continuing commitment.

Mamdouh Shoukri
President and Vice-Chancellor

