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Office of the President

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Dear Members of the York Community,

I have previously released formal statements to the York community about issues pertaining to [civil discourse](#), [respect for diversity](#) and the [political independence of universities](#). In light of recent international events including the terrorist attacks in Paris and some of the dialogue that has since taken place on our campus, I find it necessary to remind everyone about the important and relevant messages in those statements.

York University is committed to social justice, inclusivity and diversity. With over 60,000 students, faculty and staff from a large range of backgrounds, our community provides invaluable research and learning opportunities that produce global citizens prepared to work anywhere in the world. Central to our approach is fostering an environment that embraces respectful dialogue, and rejects hatred and intolerance, upholding the rights of our members to work and study free from discrimination and harassment.

To be clear, we support and defend the exercise of free speech and participation in thoughtful testing of ideas when conducted in a peaceful, non-threatening manner. Universities exist for the free exchange of ideas. At the same time, political activism is no excuse for hatred of any kind, and there can be no tolerance for racism, including those of an anti-Semitic or Islamophobic nature. Any such comments or actions will be followed up and dealt with as appropriate 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.

It is up to each and every one of us to play our part in upholding the values of our community by ensuring our words and deeds contribute to a climate where ideas can flourish and all members feel welcome. Let us as a community commit to thoughtful and respectful dialogue of the issues of our time.

Mamdouh Shoukri
President & Vice-Chancellor

