



Women & Gender Studies Institute  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

President Rhonda Lenton  
York University  
4700 Keele Street  
Toronto, ON  
M3J 1P3  
February 20, 2025.

Dear President Lenton,

On behalf of my colleagues (faculty, staff and students) at the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto, I write to convey our deep dismay at the announcement that York University has taken the decision to suspend new admissions of 1<sup>st</sup> Year Majors to undergraduate programs in The School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (GSWS), as well as many other programs primarily in the Humanities, and with which several of our colleagues have important connections.

GSWS is one of Canada's earliest and largest programs, with a mandate to "Examine the artistic, cultural, economic, geographic, historical, literary, political, psychological and social aspects of gender and sexuality in a transnational context." In these deeply fraught times, it is programs like these that resolutely stand for the knowledge that the current and impending climate seeks to attack and eliminate. Your administration has justified these actions through a narrow language of sustainability and financial viability, a language that we respectfully submit fundamentally misrecognizes the *value* of these Humanities programs, programs that require material and symbolic support for the vital intellectual work they carry out to underpin York University's Mission and Core Values:

The mission of York University is the pursuit, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge. We promise excellence in research and teaching in pure, applied, and professional fields. We test the boundaries and structures of knowledge. We cultivate the critical intellect.

York University's motto is **Tentanda Via: The way must be tried.** We urge you to reconsider this decision and find another way, alongside and not in spite of your colleagues who learned peremptorily and on the eve of Reading Week of these decisions.

Sincerely,

*D. Alissa Trotz*  
D. Alissa Trotz

Professor, Caribbean Studies at New College  
Director, Women and Gender Studies Institute  
Alumni, Bethune College, York University (1986-1989)

cc.

Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, JJ McMurtry  
Frances Latchford, Chair, GSWS  
Amar Wahab, Undergraduate Program Director, GSWS