

From: [Lucas Granger](#)
To: [councilmeeting](#)
Subject: Letter to Toronto City Council re: Motion MM10.7
Date: October 1, 2019 5:20:29 PM
Attachments: [Student Union Open Letter to Toronto City Council.pdf](#)

Good Evening,

My name is Lucas Granger, and I am the Vice-President, External Affairs of the University of Toronto Students' Union.

I am writing to you today on behalf of the various student unions that represent students within the City of Toronto. Collectively, we represent over 300,000 students that live, work, and study within the city.

We would like for this letter (see attached) to be included with item MM10.7 by Councillors Layton and Wong-Tam on the agenda, as we collectively agree that issues surrounding post-secondary student transportation need to be re-discussed due to the Student Choice Initiative, which makes the current U-Pass system impossible for student unions to run.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours in service,

Lucas Granger

Vice-President External Affairs



www.utsu.ca | (416) 978-4911 | [12 Hart House Circle, Toronto, ON M5S 3J9](#)

Tuesday, September 24, 2019
Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St W, Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

Dear members of Toronto City Council,

We, the undersigned, are writing to you today on behalf of the 300,000+ students that we collectively represent. These students live, work, and commute within this city, and are an integral part of the communities in which they are a part of.

We write to you today due to the extenuating circumstances that have been placed on us both as representatives of the various student unions, but also as students ourselves. Recent actions by the Government of Ontario have drastically changed how students approach their post-secondary education, both at the college and university levels. The implementation of the Student Choice Initiative changes how student unions can collect funds and impacts how we are able to provide crucial and valuable services to our students, in many cases limiting us severely. These services include the operation of student health and dental plans, the operation and funding of equity service centres, mechanisms for student aid programs, funding for student clubs and initiatives, and more.

In addition to the Student Choice Initiative, the Government of Ontario has also changed how students receive assistance from OSAP. With the elimination of the interest-free grace period post-graduation, and a general reduction in grants given to students, these changes have resulted in massive cuts towards our students abilities to fund their education, their living expenses, and their necessities.

For many students, commuting is not a choice, but instead is a financial necessity. The ability to save money through commuting is a benefit to students who are not able to afford the skyrocketing rent around their campuses. Despite commuting, these students are not necessarily always able to afford these commutes. Students can spend upwards of \$1500 per year on the Student Metropass alone. With university tuition around \$7000 and college tuition around \$3000 per year for domestic students, respectively, this can account for a significant proportion of a student's money in hidden costs every year. For international students studying in Ontario, this amount is around \$38,000 per year.

Due to the Student Choice Initiative, we are no longer able to collectively decide to adopt a U-Pass under the current TTC Framework, and as such, we are asking that the TTC consider new alternatives to the U-Pass system in order to help further support full-time and part-time students in this city.

Respectfully,

The University of Toronto Students' Union Executive Committee, Ryerson University Students' Union Executive Committee, York University Graduate Students' Association Executive, The York Federation of Students Executive, University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union Executive, The Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson Executive, Student Association of George Brown College Executive, Scarborough Campus Students' Union Executive, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students at the University of Toronto Executive, Glendon College Student Union Executive, the IGNITE Executive, Centennial College Student Association Incorporated Executive, University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union Executive, Seneca Student Federation Executive.

