



STATEMENT ON MATH PROFESSORS XENOPHOBIC COMMENTS

“PEOPLE DON’T GET SHOT FOR JUST PROTESTING, BUT FOR A LOT DEEPER REASONS”

Recently, a post has circulated on social media with screenshots of an interaction between a student and a professor in the math department at York University. The student was seeking academic accommodations for an upcoming exam amidst severe political violence and a disconnect of internet and media access in Myanmar. The student was met with what was frankly, disgusting comments by the professor - the response lacked basic human decency, morals, and empathy. Rather than providing the student with an accommodation, the professor instead chose to insinuate that the student was lying about connectivity, and that they had a skewed understanding of their current reality.

York University has recently responded by stating that they are “committed to upholding and promoting the values of respect, equity, diversity, and inclusion” and that the actions of the professor “does not reflect those values.” Despite this response, we believe that the actions of this professor are consistent with York University’s history of discriminatory, racist, and xenophobic practices and actions. After all, it’s only recently that CBC’s Fifth Estate outlined York’s complicity and active perpetuation of Anti-Black Racism. This is not only an issue of lack of reasonable academic accommodations amidst online learning in a pandemic, but is truly indicative of the consistent discrimination that Indigenous, Black, Racialized, and International students can and do experience on our campuses.

It’s not enough for York University to release a statement that does not explicitly condemn the rhetoric and behaviour of the professor in question. It’s not enough for York University to continue to reference their commitment to “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” when the actions of their administration and faculty do not reflect such a thing. It’s not enough when Racialized and international students continue to experience such discrimination and harassment on such a consistent basis at this institution.

We affirm our support for the student who has experienced such harm at the hands of someone who was meant to be their educator. We demand accountability from the University and will be in touch with the Office of the Provost to ensure a more meaningful response and accountability plan. We will update our members with any developments.

For more information, contact YFS President Kien Azinwi at president@yfs.ca.