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Alan Rock
President
University of Ottawa

November 2, 2011

Dear Mr. Rock,

As we are sure you are now aware, during the University of Ottawa Senate meeting of October 3, 2011, the camera which is meant to film the entire proceedings was shut off after a student senator asked a question that the chair appeared not to wish to answer. We are writing to express the Student Federation's concern regarding this egregious breach of policy and lack of transparency at the University's highest governing body for academic affairs.

The *Policy on Video Recording, Broadcasting, and Picture Taking during the Senate Meetings* was adopted in 2009 out of a need expressed by students and community members for the proceedings of the Senate to be fully transparent and on the public record. This policy clearly states: "meetings of the Senate are fully recorded by equipment installed and operated by University personnel. The complete recording can be accessed on the University Website." This is extremely important given that the University of Ottawa is a public institution whose mandate is to serve the community. The adoption of this policy was also in line with the Vision 2010 statement on transparency within our university's governance.

It is extremely concerning that the chair demanded the camera be shut off, and that the rest of the meeting went unfiled. As expressed in the past, relying on the official minutes taken during the meetings is not sufficient to ensure transparency, especially in light of the many instances where the exactitude and completeness of the minutes was put in question. When the *Policy on Video Recording, Broadcasting, and Picture Taking during the Senate Meetings* was adopted, students expressed a concern as to whether or not the community could trust that the University would provide a full and unedited video of the meetings. Clearly, that concern was well founded. It appears that members of the public will once again have to film or capture the proceedings themselves should they want an accurate recording of the meetings.

We believe it is imperative for you to affirm that the camera will not be shut off again. The university community requires an assurance on your part that duly approved University of Ottawa policies and procedures will not be breached by the administration. After having spent months discussing the contents of the University's first ever *Policy on the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment*, we cannot help but wonder, in light of this recent example, whether the University will unilaterally decide not to follow this new policy of fundamental importance for all members of our community.

The *Policy on Video Recording, Broadcasting, and Picture Taking during the Senate Meetings* must be respected to preserve the integrity of the university administration and the legitimacy of the decisions made at the Senate. We look forward to a written response that will illustrate how you intend to proceed in the enforcement of this Policy.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kessler
V.P. University Affairs, SFUO

Amalia Savva
President, SFUO

cc: Members of Senate