



UKRAINIAN CANADIAN STUDENTS' UNION
СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО СТУДЕНТСТВА КАНАДИ
UNION DES ÉTUDIANTS UKRAINIENS CANADIENS

The Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union (SUSK) appreciates and is pleased with the University of Alberta's (UofA) reaffirmation of its commitment to raising awareness of the Holodomor Famine-Genocide of 1932-1933. Moreover, SUSK is encouraged by the U of A's commitment of its role to enable students and scholars to engage in "well-inform, evidence-based" inquiry, debate, and discussion.

Furthermore, we commend the Dean of Arts and the Dean of Education of the U of A for their statement condemning irresponsible and dangerous comments calling the Holodomor "fictitious" and "a myth concocted by the Nazis to discredit the Soviet Union." We are pleased that the Deans categorically state that these comments are not true.

SUSK welcomes the announcement of new initiatives meant to educate about and spread awareness of the Holodomor that the U of A is taking, namely:

- Launching a Rapid Research Response project (hosted by the Kule Institute for Advanced Studies) which will result in a website designed to educate students and the public about the Holodomor;
- Hosting the Holodomor Bus at the earliest opportunity and facilitating opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty of Education and at the U of A to engage with the exhibit;
- Displaying materials in the Faculty of Education and at the U of A to educate about the Holodomor; and
- Holding an annual Holodomor Lecture.

Further, SUSK calls on the U of A to continue in engaging in meaningful discussions with key community stakeholders, including students, to ensure that the safety and dignity of all students, faculty and staff are respected.

As a student organization based on the principles of democratic values, SUSK is a strong proponent of freedoms of speech and freedoms of expression, as entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the "Charter") and considers them to be sacrosanct in a free and democratic society like Canada. However, as is also enshrined in the Charter, SUSK recognizes that there are reasonable limits on such freedoms as prescribed by law. It is particularly concerning where such freedoms are attempted to be used as a shield for ignorant and irresponsible comments that could be considered tantamount to hate speech, libel and defamation. Consequently, we believe Mr. MacDonald's comments have crossed that reasonable limit and are concerned with the claim of freedom of speech and expression for those who try to pervert the truth, as has been well established by numerous academics and experts who utilize evidence based research rather than ill-informed opinion to formulate academic inquiry and discussion. This evidence-based academic research is what has led to the Government of Canada and Alberta, among many others, to recognize the Holodomor for what it is, a Soviet orchestrated genocide of Ukrainians.

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who has condemned this denial of the Holodomor, while extending a special thanks to Akanksha Bhatnagar, President of the University of Alberta's Students' Union and Megan Brownlee, President of the University of Alberta Ukrainian Students' Union for their continued support. SUSK will continue its efforts in educating and spreading awareness of the Holodomor utilizing conclusions stemming from academic, peer reviewed, and factual based evidence.