

Friday, November 27, 2020

CUASA's Written Submission to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario re. Bill 213

Made by Raj Singh, External Relations Officer

The Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA) remains concerned with efforts to expand the privatization of postsecondary education in Ontario and to give private institutions degree-granting privileges that will undermine the quality and accessibility of postsecondary education in the province. In particular, we continue to oppose the Ford government's ongoing attempt to pass legislation that would allow Charles McVety's private Canada Christian College to call itself a university and award degrees. We are not alone in our opposition. The National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, pro-LGBTQ2S+ groups, the South Asian Dalit and Adivasi Network, among others have opposed this part of Bill 213. Even the Ontario Legislature condemned this attempt by passing the NDP's motion against it. It seems the only people in favour of it are the minority of PC MPPs that bothered to vote on the NDP's motion, the majority abstaining entirely.

We have already expressed alarm at the process in earlier communications -- its discreetness, the political closeness between Mr. McVety and Premier Ford, the failure to secure proper approvals, among others. It is also concerning that Mr. McVety holds views that are inconsistent with equity principles that CUASA adheres to and that are arguably inconsistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code. Furthermore, one of the goals and achievements of universities is to nurture students' capacities to think freely, fairly, critically, without bias or prejudice, and to use evidence to come to reasoned conclusions. It seems to us that neither Canada Christian College nor Mr. McVety is committed to these goals and is therefore unlikely to achieve them.

In light of the very strong and broad opposition, the questionable process by which this matter has been put forward, and the risk it poses to the integrity of the university system and its role in nurturing free thinking and protecting human rights, we urge the Ontario government to withdraw this segment of Bill 213.