



Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship

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18 January 2017

Michael J. Mahon, PhD
President, University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, AB T1K 3M4

Dear Dr Mahon,

I am writing as president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS), a national organization of university faculty members and others dedicated to the defense of academic freedom and reasoned and respectful debate. (For further information, please see our website at www.safs.ca.)

The Canadian Press reports that the University of Lethbridge has filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission against Professor Anthony Hall for comments Dr Hall made on blogs and in videos (<http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/university-of-lethbridge-complaining-to-human-rights-commission-over-prof>).

It is disturbing that the University, Dr Hall's employer, would complain to the AHRC. The University has its own disciplinary procedures, up to and including dismissal, that it can invoke, and in which Dr Hall would be represented by his union. Lodging a complaint seems to be an end run around the University's own procedures.

Further, it is disturbing that the University would launch a complaint based on the content of a professor's speech. Doing so is contrary to respect for both freedom of expression and academic freedom. Universities should protect speech by its academic staff rather than try to curtail it.

In light of these considerations, SAFS would like to ask you how a human rights complaint against Dr Hall is consistent either with confidence in the University's own procedures for dealing with alleged misconduct or with protection of academic freedom and freedom of expression.

SAFS looks forward to hearing from you. We will post this letter on our website. With your permission, we will be pleased to post your reply together with it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Mercer', written in a cursive style.

Mark Mercer, PhD
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