



# Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship

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11 April 2017

Dr. Max Blouw  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
75 University Avenue West  
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3C5  
mknechtelbell@wlu.ca

Dear President Blouw,

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](http://www.safs.ca).)

An article by Christine Schuknecht, a Laurier student, appeared in the 10 April edition of the *National Post*. Entitled "At Wilfrid Laurier University, do as the campus thought police dictate, or else," it reports that students disrupted and vandalized a peaceful pro-life demonstration last October and harassed the pro-life students. (The article can be found here: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/christine-schuknecht-at-wilfrid-laurier-university-do-as-the-campus-thought-police-dictate-or-else>.) It also says that members of Laurier's Diversity and Equity Office (DEO) saw fit to identify the pro-choice position with "social justice values" and to encourage the disruption. The DEO "placed a sign on the walkway leading to our display. It read: 'Warning: Anti-Choice display ahead.'"

Our Society is concerned that in the aftermath of the disruption, administrators and members of the students' union have sought to restrict expression on campus. According to Ms Schuknecht, the "Students' Union changed the rules on acceptable practices by campus clubs. Displays like our flags are now prohibited." As well, she says, the Students' Union and the DEO are together working "to ensure this does not happen again," the "this" referring not to the disruption but to the peaceful demonstration.

In light of Ms Schuknecht's comments, we would like to ask whether Laurier has officially and publicly denounced the actions of the students who disrupted the demonstration and those of the members of the DEO who failed in their duty to be supportive of all Laurier students? Has it assured members of the Laurier community that Laurier values freedom of expression? Has it engaged in discussion with the Students' Union to try to halt whatever plans the Union has to oversee and restrict the peaceful expression of opinion and emotion on campus?

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.

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