

*Mount Saint Vincent University May 15, 2018*

At a meeting at Mount Saint Vincent University earlier today, held at the request of History professor Dr. Martha Walls, there was a thoughtful discussion about the concerns raised on social media and recent media coverage regarding *History 3320 – Selected Topics in North American History: Residential Schools*. The meeting included faculty (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous), History department leadership, the Mount's Senior Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs, and senior administration.

Dr. Walls has the support of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty and administration at the Mount, to teach the course regarding residential schools, a course she developed.

Dr. Walls – who joined the Mount as a full-time faculty member in 2013 – is a well-respected scholar of First Nations history. Consistent with her usual practice, and as was originally planned, Dr. Walls' curriculum will prioritize first voices, Indigenous narratives, firsthand accounts and primary sources. This is an approach that is consistent with academic inquiry that often reaches beyond one's own community or identity.

Indigenous faculty and staff at the Mount believe that true allies committed to honest reconciliation – like Dr. Walls – must be engaged in sharing knowledge of First Nations/Canadian history in order to reach all those in education who should be reached with this important information.

Truth and Reconciliation is a partnership. The work of reconciliation requires us to have complex and sometimes challenging discussions. Critique, discussion, and reflection are at the heart of academic inquiry and are foundational to research and teaching. In keeping with our commitment to academic freedom, today's meeting represents our responsibility as an academic institution to take up difficult questions.

The Mount recognizes the consequences of colonization and, in response, is committed to continued work with partners inside and outside our University – including our Internal and External Aboriginal Advisory Committees. We will continue to strongly support Indigenous students and communities, including increasing the number of Indigenous faculty in the University.