

# Wilfrid Laurier University's president apologizes to Lindsay Shepherd for dressing- down over Jordan Peterson clip

Shepherd secretly recorded the meeting, where she was told she had created a 'toxic climate' in the class and it was suggested she had broken the law



[BRIAN PLATT](#)

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<http://nationalpost.com/news/politics/wilfrid-laurier-universitys-president-apologizes-to-lindsay-shepherd-for-dressing-down-over-jordan-peterson-clip>

The head of Wilfrid Laurier University has officially apologized to teaching assistant Lindsay Shepherd for a meeting where faculty members dressed her down for showing students a video clip of a debate involving controversial professor Jordan Peterson.

“Through the media, we have now had the opportunity to hear the full recording of the meeting that took place at Wilfrid Laurier University,” says the letter from President and Vice-Chancellor Deborah MacLatchy.

“After listening to this recording, an apology is in order. The conversation I heard does not reflect the values and practices to which Laurier aspires. I am sorry it occurred in the way that it did and I regret the impact it had on Lindsay Shepherd.”

Shepherd’s supervising professor Nathan Rambukkana also published a letter of apology, saying that “everything that has happened since the meeting has given me occasion to rethink not only my approach to discussing the concerns that day, but many of the things I said in our meeting as well.”

The meeting was called after Shepherd aired part of a 2016 debate on gender-neutral pronouns that had aired on Ontario’s public broadcaster, TVO. The debate included Peterson, who’s become famous for his opposition to being required to use such pronouns, describing them as an expression of a radical left-wing ideology.

Shepherd secretly recorded the meeting, which was organized by Rambukkana and also involved associate professor Herbert Pimlott and Adria Joel, the university’s manager of gendered violence prevention and support. She was told she had created a “toxic climate” in the class, and it was suggested that she had broken Canadian law.

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Both Rambukkana and Pimlott compared airing the clips to exposing the students to Nazi propaganda.

In the letter, Rambukkana acknowledges he mishandled the meeting, and said his main concern was “finding out why a lesson on writing skills had become a political discussion, and making sure harm didn’t befall students.”

He said he failed to provide her the support she deserved in such a meeting with faculty members. “I should have seen how meeting with a panel of three people would be an intimidating situation and not invite a productive discussion,” he said.

Rambukkana also apologized for his choice of words during the meeting.

“Perhaps instead of the route I took I should have added further discussion in lecture, or supplementary readings,” he wrote. “But instead I tried to make a point about the need to contextualize difficult material, and drew on the example of playing a speech by Hitler to do it. This was, obviously, a poorly chosen example.

“I meant to use it to drive home a point about context by saying here was material that would definitely need to be contextualized rather than presented neutrally, and instead I implied that Dr. Peterson is like Hitler, which is untrue and was never my intention.”

He closes the letter by saying he looks forward to “moving past this and continue working with you as my TA and perhaps in the future.”

MacLatchy’s letter says the university is reviewing what took place, both through an independent evaluation and through a university task force.

She also expressed concern about the effect this controversy has had on the university community.

“I remain troubled by the way faculty, staff and students involved in this situation have been targeted with extreme vitriol. Supports are in place at the university to support them through this situation.”

The National Post has not yet reached Shepherd for comment, but she did react to the decision on Twitter, saying the university was still being “ambiguous” about free speech.



**Lindsay Shepherd** @NewWorldHominin

Moral of the story: A university must be repeatedly publicly shamed, internationally, in order to apologize (oh, but keep the task force & investigation). Even then, ambiguous about free speech. Also, make sure to secretly record all meetings or they won't take you seriously.

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