

# 'Intimidation tactics' won't deter free speech rally near WLU: organizers

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<http://torontosun.com/news/provincial/intimidation-tactics-wont-deter-free-speech-rally-near-wilfrid-laurier-campus>

Organizers of a free speech rally near the campus of Wilfrid Laurier University say “intimidation tactics” from “militant” leftists won’t derail support for Lindsay Shepherd, the WLU teaching assistant wrongly sanctioned for showing students a debate surrounding the merits of genderless pronouns.

Free speech advocates from WLU and nearby University of Waterloo are bracing for a possible counter-demonstration after members of Waterloo’s Revolutionary Student Movement (RSM) referred to Friday’s rally as hateful and discriminatory.

The RSM, a group that self-describes as combative, originally sounded the alarm for its members to descend on the free speech event before ultimately deleting a Facebook post after organizers of the free speech rally tipped off police.

“Of course it scares us,” free speech organizer and third-year Waterloo student Cosmin Dzsurdzsa told the Toronto Sun. “Of course it’s something to be afraid of.

“But these intimidation tactics can’t work. We can’t let these people get away with these things. This is why we reached out to police.”

Shepherd, 22, secretly recorded an informal disciplinary meeting with supervising professors in which she was lectured for 45 minutes for her innocuous decision to show a YouTube clip of contentious professor Jordan Peterson debating gender topics on TVOntario.

The university has since apologized to Shepherd, who is scheduled to speak at Friday’s rally in front of hundreds of supporters and, potentially, counter-protesters bent on pushing leftist ideology.

“We’ll respect them being there as long as they respect us being there,” Shepherd said, adding she believes RSM might avoid the event due to an expected police presence.



**Dr. Deborah MacLatchy delivers an address on Tuesday October 31, 2017 during the Laurier Brantford fall convocation at the Sanderson Centre in Brantford, Ontario. MacLatchy apologized to Lindsay Shepherd earlier this week. (Brian Thompson/Brantford Expositor)**

“We’re comfortable that justice is on our side,” Dzsurdzsa added. “We’re trying to do the right thing. If some people decide to act out we hope nobody gets hurt and justice swiftly prevails.”

The RSM, a group of self-proclaimed communists, had referred to Friday’s free speech event as a “guise” to allow a platform for violence against the non-binary and trans community.

“This is an attempt to avert what we’re here about,” Dzsurdzsa finished.

“We’re here to give voices to everyone. We’re here to defend everyone’s right to voice an opinion and to express who they are.

“We’re defending a position that we feel was unfairly represented in the classroom and in the meeting Lindsay had.”