

WLUFAs STATEMENT ON RECENT EVENTS AT WLU

Sent on behalf of Michele Kramer, WLUFAs President:

Dear Colleagues,

There is no question that the meeting between our members and Ms. Shepherd, as well as the media frenzy that has followed it, have inspired strong feelings from many of you. And many of you, coming sometimes from diametrically-opposing points of view, have asked for WLUFAs to intercede or to make public statements along various, diametrically-opposed, lines of support.

As your Association President, it has been my role — and the role of our Executive — to attempt to approach what has frequently been a fairly out-of-control situation with reason and with measured response. It has also been our role to keep in mind that WLUFAs duty is first to our members by way of our collective agreements, and next to ensuring that we are speaking for/ with the majority voice of our membership, to the best of our ability.

For these reasons, WLUFAs has been very careful about where it has chosen to exercise its influence during the course of the past three weeks. Our priorities have been/ continue to be:

1. The physical, emotional and professional protection of our members — in the main, Drs. Rambukkana and Pimlott, but also certain members who have approached us with concerns regarding their emotional well-being and physical safety on campus;
2. In connection with the above, the provision of WLUFAs consultation, guidance and representation at all meetings between our members and University Administration and/or Robert Centa (the lawyer hired to gather facts around the incident);
3. Ensuring that WLUFAs maintains lines of communication with the Administration as it moves forward toward the finding of solutions/ repairing of campus relations and university reputation. This includes, but is not limited to, WLUFAs role in helping to draft the composition for the Task Force. It is essential that WLUFAs be a primary stakeholder in any actions that arise from the Task Force, or the Report that will be issued by the fact-finder, Rob Centa. To ensure WLUFAs effectiveness, it has been necessary to refrain from certain public statements, while continuing to press the Administration out of the public eye.

4. Working with Dawn McDermott and others, the facilitation of workshops and training that can help our members to deal with what many have come to see as increasingly difficult classroom atmospheres over the past number of weeks.

To be clear, WLUFAs condemns the violent speech and actions that have, unfortunately, become a daily occurrence on our campuses. In particular, the harm that has been leveled at our Trans Community and its supporters is unacceptable. WLUFAs stands in solidarity with our LGBTQ2 community as they continue to battle their way through walls of ignorance and oppression — walls that seem to have been disproportionately fortified in the last few weeks.

WLUFAs strongly supports a Laurier that fosters diversity and protects the rights of the diverse groups that make our community what it is.

We take any threat to this diversity seriously, and continue to work with, and put pressure on, the Administration. To fulfill our primary role as a union — the protection of members' rights under the collective agreements — the Executive has not been able to advocate publicly for all the positions our members would like.

I realize that this has disappointed many of you. I have listened carefully to your concerns over these weeks. My first responsibility, however, is to ensure that WLUFAs performs its mandate as a union.

Sincerely,

Michele Kramer

WLUFAs President