

<https://cha-shc.ca/english/what-we-do/what-we-do.html/advocacy/unb-academic-freedom-and-sociology-professor-ricardo-duchesne>

27 May 2019

On 23 May 2019, a group of University of New Brunswick academics, including more than ten faculty members of the department of History, wrote to explain that University of New Brunswick Sociology Professor Ricardo Duchesne's arguments about multiculturalism and immigration are "racist and without academic merit." The Canadian Historical Association is an organization representing more than 800 teachers, writers, and researchers of history across Canada. We share the signatories' concerns about Duchesne's views and like them, distinguish between the important principle of academic freedom and indefensible and potentially dangerous arguments.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers defines academic freedom as the right "to teach, study, learn, and publish free of orthodoxy or threat of reprisal and discrimination."^[1] Academic freedom does not mean that people should not be held accountable for their arguments or their impact on students, co-workers, and communities. In the case of Dr. Duchesne, the signatories of the 23 May 2019 letter point out that his ideas on immigration and multiculturalism have not been published in peer-reviewed or otherwise rigorous publications. They also point out that Duchesne's views and their dissemination have real implications for those who might encounter them.

Since 1982, the CHA has published thirty-seven brochures on the history of immigration, ethnicity and race in Canada. Here readers will find considered and careful analysis of a wide range of histories, including Redress Movements in Canada, Refugees in Canada, the Quebec ministry of Immigration, Chinese-Canadian History, and much more. All of these books are available online at <https://cha-shc.ca/english/publications/immigration.html>. Those interested in learning about histories of immigration and multiculturalism in Canada might consider examining these works. One will encounter a variety of views in these pages, views which might challenge or conflict with ours, or which might seem out of date. But all of these arguments will be carefully made and documented, and have been accessed by relevant experts and editors. There is a difference between vigorous academic debate, and academic freedom, and views which are without basis. The CHA shares our colleagues concerns that important principles of academic freedom are being used to justify indefensible ideas and their dissemination, and join them in challenging Duchesne's ideas.

[1] <https://www.caut.ca/latest/publications/academic-freedom>. Also see <https://www.caut.ca/about-us/caut-policy/lists/caut-policy-statements/policy-statement-on-academic-freedom>, accessed 26 May 2019.

Adele Perry
President
Canadian Historical Association