

# Professor's blog posts spark backlash, prompt internal review at Mount Allison University

University condemns 'inappropriate' comments, students' union says it has received multiple complaints



[Marie Sutherland](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 23, 2021 4:24 PM AT | Last Updated: February 23  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/professor-systemic-racism-review-mount-allison-1.5924465>



Mount Allison University said in a statement that it has received complaints about a faculty member's blog and that 'serious concerns have been expressed' about posts related to systemic racism, sexual violence, gender and colonization. (Submitted by Mount Allison )

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comments

Mount Allison University has launched an internal review after receiving complaints about an associate psychology professor's personal blog.

In a statement, the university said it has received complaints about a faculty member's blog and that "serious concerns have been expressed" about posts related to systemic racism, sexual violence, gender, and colonization.

"We neither support nor agree with the inappropriate comments that have been posted to this blog," the university said in its statement, which was posted Monday night on Facebook and emailed to faculty, staff and students.

"We recognize that comments such as these are hurtful to many people in our community and more widely."

The university said it has initiated its "internal review processes," and will be looking into the situation to determine next steps.

It noted concerns have been raised by the Mount Allison Students' Union, the Black Students adviser and diversity educator, the Indigenous Affairs co-ordinator and the Indigenous Student Support Group, and said it would ensure that these issues "are addressed without delay."

The statement did not identify the professor or the blog.



Jonathan Ferguson, president of the Mount Allison Students' Union, said the union has received complaints about Azar's blog. (Tori Weldon/CBC News file photo)

## **Multiple complaints about blog, students' union says**

However, Mount Allison Students' Union president Jonathan Ferguson told CBC News that the blog in question was that of Prof. Rima Azar, a health psychology professor at the university.

"Many students reached out to us yesterday morning about the blog," and complaints have continued to come in since then, he said.

- **More than 80% of people who answered survey believe racism exists in N.B.**

"They were concerned about what this professor was saying throughout her blog ... denying systemic racism in New Brunswick or in Canada, talking about BIPOC students in unkind ways, labelling Black Lives Matter a radical group — stuff that doesn't run in line with the values of our institution at all."

Several Twitter posts have also cited concerns about Azar's blog, bambisafkar.ca, Ferguson said.

Ferguson said the students' union flagged the concerns to administration and will now stand back and "give them time to go through the process" of an internal review.



Mount Allison health psychology professor Rima Azar declined to comment on her personal blog posts or on the university's decision to launch an internal review of complaints about it. (Mount Allison University)

Reached by email on Tuesday morning, Azar said she was ill and was awaiting medical test results.

She declined to comment on the personal blog or on any measures the university is taking in response to complaints about it.

According to the Mount Allison website, Azar is also an adjunct professor at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick and at the Université de Moncton school of psychology.

Asked what next steps and possible repercussions of the internal review would be, Mount Allison communications officer Aloma Jardine referred CBC News to the statement issued Monday evening.

"We will not be making further comment at this time," Jardine said.

Ferguson noted the students' union has no specific hoped-for outcome, other than to ensure its students feel represented and heard.

"A lot of people will rightfully bring up where freedom of speech falls into this, but I just want to say on behalf of the students of Mount Allison that freedom of speech doesn't mean amnesty from consequences," he said.

"She is free to say what she feels and students are free to express how upset they are with those comments."

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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