

Panel of UWindsor law students say N-word incident is disappointing, needs attention

Regardless of the context, students say it was inappropriate

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<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/university-of-windsor-law-students-n-word-incident-1.5786530>



Charles Campbell says he accepts the professor's apology but still thinks this is a moment where more action is needed. (Tom Addison/CBC)

University of Windsor law student Charles Campbell remembers the first time he heard the N-word.

A kid on the school playground had referred to him, using the derogatory term.

To hear it being said now, in an academic setting, left him feeling "disappointed," he said.

Campbell is one of a number of UWindsor students who say they want to see action from the institution after professor Ashley Glassburn-Falzetti said the N-word at least twice during a class last week.

CBC's *Windsor Morning* spoke with a panel of Black students from the university Monday about how this incident has impacted them, the use of the N-word in an academic setting and how the post-secondary institution should move forward with this incident.

Glassburn-Falzetti said the word while warning students about offensive language they would encounter in a book she was assigning. She later apologized to students and publicly posted her apology in a Twitter thread on Wednesday.

- **Some students and faculty outraged after UWindsor prof uses N-word during class**

"To the students who were directly harmed by this, I apologize for bringing this pain into this course for you. One student raised their concern with me about this. I apologized and immediately changed the content warning for the book posted on blackboard. I promise not to do this again," reads part of Glassburn-Falzetti's apology.

'Power imbalance' puts Black students in difficult position

Since the professor did not direct her use of the term at a student and was using it in an academic setting, a question posed to the panel that joined CBC's Tony Doucette Monday, is whether the context in which the word was used should be considered.

But, alumna Kayla Smith, who graduated from UWindsor's law program this spring, said how and why the word was said doesn't matter.



UWindsor law alumna Kayla Smith says the context in which the word was said doesn't matter, it's still inappropriate. (Tom Addison/CBC)

"In spite of it not being hateful [or] directly toward any one particular student, professors do not have the right to use the term and ... if the word is ever going to be used, this is a debate amongst people in the Black community not people who are not Black," Smith said.

- **Teachers and community leaders demand action from school boards over textbook's use of N-word**

Jhanel Dundas, the president of UWindsor's Black Law Students Association, said that when it is used in settings like academia, where Blacks are typically underrepresented, it puts students in an position they shouldn't have to be in.

"It puts a lot of pressure on Black students to be advocating for themselves when that's not necessarily what they should have to do up against their professor when there's a power imbalance right," she said.

"I hope that there can be some change in that because that has been the experience for the Black students who have had to [hear] those words and not be able to really speak out because of the power imbalance in the classroom."

For Campbell, he said it's up to his community to decide whether the use of the term is appropriate or uncalled for.

"The oppressive group has to decide and dictate when and how this word is used, especially in an academic context ... when individuals who not Black are given the platform to use terms that would be offensive and derogatory to Black people then there also has to be a conversation ... where Black people are given the chance to say 'you know what in this context' or 'in general it shouldn't be used as a whole,'" he said.



Jhanel Dundas, the president of University of Windsor's Black Law Students' Association, says when the N-word is used in academic settings by a professor, it puts pressure on students who are disadvantaged by the power imbalance. (Submitted by Jhanel Dundas)

Apology accepted but more action needed

Campbell said he has seen Glassburn-Falzetti's apology and accepts it.

"I do believe that the things she said in her statement was good enough, for me personally, but I just believe that at this point now it's about action and moving forward," he said.

"The issue here is more so that there is an ongoing discussion that needs to happen amongst people in the Black community and other community groups need to understand and hear from the Black community on the implications of the term."

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VIDEO

EMSB's Marlene Jennings delivers powerful message against textbook with N-word

He said a good way to deal with discourse around this situation is to bring in Black scholars or speakers who can speak on the topic.

In an emailed statement to CBC News Thursday, the university said that, "the word was used in a classroom setting and the University considers this to be a serious issue, and one that is being addressed. We hope a resolution will be reached shortly. The University must provide a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone, and all forms of anti-Black racism must be dealt with."

As of Monday, the university has not provided an update on the situation.

*For more stories about the experiences of Black Canadians — from anti-Black racism to success stories within the Black community — check out *Being Black in Canada*, a CBC project Black Canadians can be proud of. [You can read more stories here.](#)*