



Mount Royal Faculty Association Condemns Gendered Violence at the University of Waterloo

The Mount Royal Faculty Association condemns the targeted attack perpetrated at the University of Waterloo on Wednesday June 28, 2023. We stand in solidarity with the faculty and students who were victims of this abhorrent crime.

We further recognize that hate crimes such as this one has roots in gender-based violence, misogyny, trans-phobia, and homophobia. We know that the incident at the University of Waterloo is not an isolated event and that the rise of gender-based hate across the country and in Alberta—such as protests against drag queen story-times, steep rise in hate crimes reported to police by 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and election of a trans-phobic politician to the Alberta Legislature—helps create the conditions that enable the kind of violence perpetrated at the University of Waterloo. Government funding also plays a role in this tragedy given that postsecondary operating funding which supports courses and programs like gender studies has been severely and repeatedly cut over recent years, to be redirected (in reduced and very limited form) to the small number of programs that the provincial government believes align with its narrow economic policy objectives. All of these acts are in addition to the ongoing, disproportionate levels of individual and systemic violence perpetrated against women and girls.

Mount Royal University issued a [statement](#) on Friday June 30, 2023, which the Association fully supports. In a statement to the University Leadership Group, Provost London added, “Mount Royal University’s Security Services, Risk Management and Communications areas are continually reviewing and enhancing our policies and processes regarding safety, as well as our security systems, including Code Blue Stations.”

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The MRFA also urges the co-Chairs of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) to call a special meeting of the JOHSC to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the risks that have become evident to those students and faculty who are involved in teaching and learning about gender at MRU. A clear plan for dealing with these risks must be created.

As a starting point, the MRFA endorses the six [calls to action](#) from Possibility Seeds, the first of which is the establishment of a team to respond to critical incidents such as the one at Waterloo. This action needs to be taken immediately.

The MRFA is now a signatory to the Women's and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes (WGSRF) [open letter](#) of solidarity. The Association echoes its call to administration to collaborate with faculty who teach gender studies, and those who teach sex, gender, and sexuality courses in other disciplines, to create meaningful and actionable supports to secure the safety and wellbeing of 2SLGBTQIA+ faculty, staff and students. The Association has been in contact with faculty in MRU's Women and Gender Studies program and will work with them to ensure they have a safe and healthy workplace free of violence to which they are entitled under our Collective Agreement.

We also support CAUT's [statement](#) condemning this attack as well as that from [CAFA](#) which calls for the provincial government to take seriously the growing threat to 2SLGBTQIA+ scholars in Alberta post secondary institutions. The MRFA stands with all those who study and teach gender at MRU and at other Alberta universities, colleges and technical institutes.

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