

Indigenization and the #FrancesWiddowsonCase



Frances Widdowson (Former Professor, Mount Royal University)
Presentation for “Combatting Cancel Culture”
National Association of Scholars, September 30, 2022

Presentation Overview

- MRU's Indigenous Strategic Plan
- Why was Frances Widdowson “cancelled”?
- Asking questions about “Indigenous science”
- “Residential School Denialism”
- Satirical warfare
- The problem of university politicization

INDIGENIZING
THE UNIVERSITY



Diverse Perspectives

Edited By
Frances Widdowson



- Goal 1: Indigenizing Mount Royal University

Cultivate **respectful and welcoming environments** that prevail over the legacy of colonization

- Goal 2: Culturally respectful Indigenous research

Foster respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge-production and increase capacity for Indigenous scholarship

- Goal 3: Bridge-building with Indigenous education stakeholders

Build strong relationships by forging mutually supportive and productive **partnerships with all stakeholders** in Indigenous education

- Goal 4: Support for Indigenous learners

Work with our communities to enhance the academic, personal and cultural experience of Indigenous learners

- Goal 5: Respectful and inclusive curricula and pedagogies

Promote **culturally responsible and respectful curricula** that integrates **Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing**

Why was Frances Widdowson “cancelled” (wokeacademy.info)?

- You have been found to have violated the Personal Harassment Policy and the Code of Conduct – Employees;
- Bringing forward a complaint that was deemed frivolous, vexatious or malicious, or not made in good faith; and
- Significantly contributing to a harassing and toxic workplace environment and negatively impacting the mission and reputation of the University.

****BUT****

... She is not entitled to mock and demean people in her workplace and university generally for having the viewpoints that they do, particularly in the context of the active battle that was ongoing at that time when she knew very well that these exchanges were being seen by colleagues.



Asking questions about “Indigenous science”



█ also alleged during our interview that at an Indigenous Knowledge Public Lecture Series at the University of Calgary featuring Dr. Gregory Cajete on September 25, 2019 (the “Public Lecture”), after Dr. Cajete gave a 75-minute lecture explaining what Indigenous science was, FW asked Dr. Cajete what **Indigenous science was** and stated that **Indigenous science was not science** (the “Public Lecture Remarks”). █ stated that she believed that the Public Lecture Remarks were **“racist and discriminatory.”**

4. Your conduct at a meeting in the spring of 2021 was so disruptive that it was a significant contributing factor to the development of new procedures for Arts Faculty Council meetings as well as the disabling of the chat function during these meetings;



Sean Carleton
@SeanCarleton

Historian/Indigenous Studies @umanitoba.

“Residential School Denialism”

MRU Student
September 8, 2020

In her interview [redacted] she said, "What people don't realize is that these Indigenous children were able to get an education that they wouldn't have received", she said the term "genocide" to describe residential schools is incorrect. **How can a professor at MRU not recognize that residential schools were harmful to indigenous people and deny that genocide occurred? By her stating this, she is going against MRU's mission of decolonization and indigenization.**

MRU Racial Advocacy
@RacialAdvMRU
Hopefully, this means genocide denial of residential school will have no place at @mountroyal

GFC Motion
September 11, 2020

...the genocide done to Indigenous Peoples by residential schools. The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings...
...the genocide done to Indigenous Peoples by residential schools. The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings...
...the genocide done to Indigenous Peoples by residential schools. The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings...

MRU Faculty Member
June 14, 2021

I support academic freedom, of course, but universities must absolutely fire racists who deny the real harm of residential schools for indigenous peoples, arguing that residential schools somehow carried benefits. Kowtowing to them undermines everything a university does for decolonization.
9:35 PM - Jun 14, 2021 from Calgary, Alberta - Twitter for iPhone

1. Students have raised numerous complaints and concerns regarding your conduct, this includes a media release from SAMRU condemning your social media comments in July of 2021;
2. Mount Royal University has received an abundance of complaints from external parties with respect to your inappropriate conduct on social media;

Satirical Warfare



francXs mcgrath (NOT frances widdowson)
@FrancesWiddows1

👏👏👏 @MRUAntiRacism! Canada is obvs even MORE of a genocidal state than Nazi Germany (the fascists only systematically killed millions; they did not assimilate with literacy). Profs questioning this should be fired, as they are harassers & holocaust deniers! Viva Indigenization!

...



francXs mcgrath (NOT frances widdowson)
@FrancesWiddows1

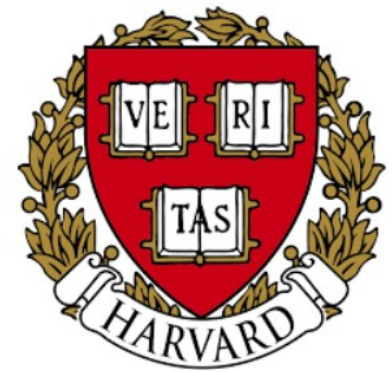
...

👏👏👏 @MRUAntiRacism! Only by promoting knowledge that is NOT evidence-based can we be truly anti-racist #MRU -[thestar.com/news/canada/20...](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/20...)! After all, as some of our selfless&brave faculty association representatives tell us, demanding evidence is evidence of WHITE SUPREMACY! 🤝💕🙏

SAMRU Representation Executive Council condemns comments mocking the unmarked graves of Indigenous children

Calgary, AB July 13, 2021 — Last week, SAMRU's Representation Executive Council unanimously voted to condemn MRU Professor Frances Widdowson's public social media comments deriding the unmarked graves of Indigenous children of the residential school system.

The Problem of University Politicization



- A university's "telos" of truth (Haidt)

NYU professor quits academic group requiring DEI statement, cites his 'duty to truth'

MAGGIE KELLY - ASSISTANT EDITOR
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

- Disputation versus celebration (Mercer)

As universities 'Indigenize,' some see a threat to open inquiry

Posted on June 7, 2018 in [Education Debates](#)

YOU
BELONG
HERE