

When a University Goes Woke



Frances Widdowson, Fired MRU Associate Professor
Annual Meeting of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship
Room 100, London Hall, Western University
May 20, 2023

Lecture Overview

- What is a “woke” university?
- The #FrancesWiddowsonCase
 - Two shocking incidents
- Timeline of significant events
- Agents of MRU destruction
- What is to be done?

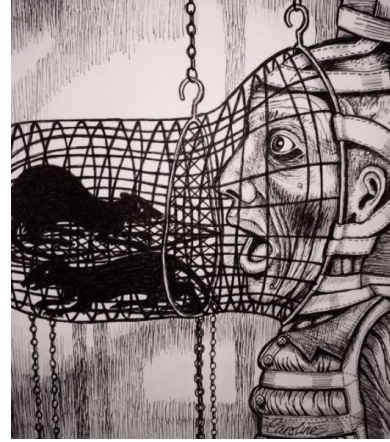


What is a “Woke” University?

- Postmodernism and identity politics (#PCTotalitarianism)
 - Replacing The Enlightenment’s objective search for truth with subjectivity
 - Affirming the subjective beliefs of “the Other”
- Intersects with university corporatization
 - Diversity managerialism
- A reaction against class politics



The #FrancesWiddowsonCase (www.WokeAcademy.info)



1. One Tweet satirizing “misgendering fatigue” and the LGBT initialism violated three policies and two laws
2. Fighting back against an indigenous scholar-activist’s attempts to get me fired constituted “harassment” and a breach of the Code of Conduct
3. Filing 18 complaints, where six colleagues were found to be harassers (including Renae Watchman), which resulted in one finding of filing a “frivolous and vexatious” complaint
4. Renae Watchman filed a retaliatory complaint that resulted in a finding of harassment and “contributing to a toxic workplace environment”

Two Shocking Incidents

<https://soundcloud.com/user-970178378>



Final MRU disciplinary meeting before Frances Widdowson firing

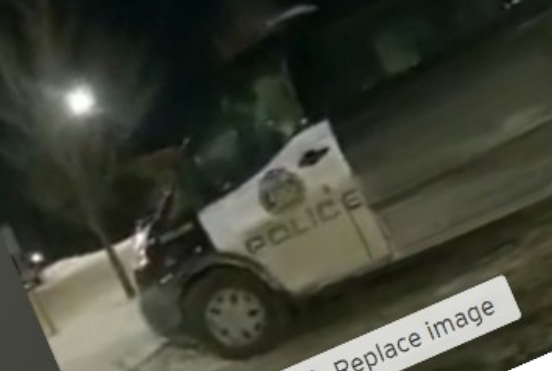
Frances Widdowson



Frances Widdowson Firing - Terrorization at MRU

Frances Widdowson

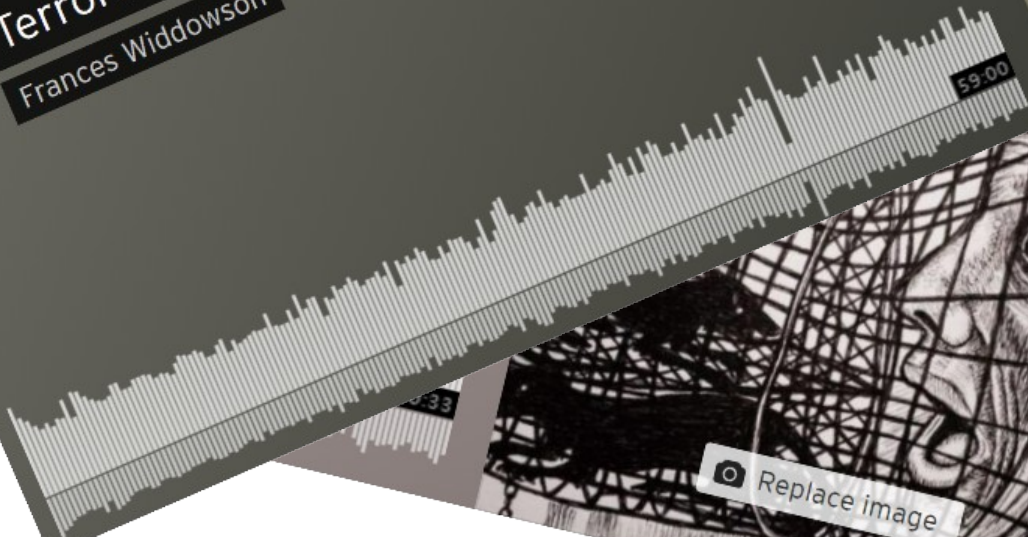
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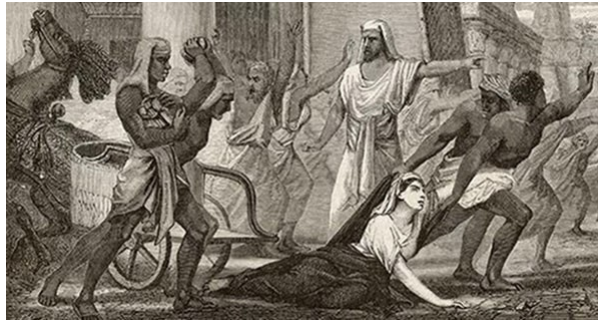


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Timeline of Significant Events

- Indigenization and the CAUT equity workshop (2014)
- Roundtable and the Indigenous Strategic Plan (2016)
- The Rational Space Network's Critical Thinking Series (2018-2019)
- Cancellation of the Navabi talk the Mark Hecht case (2019)
- #BLM: My satirical letter and defense of Wendy Mesley (July 1 and 2, 2020)



July 1, 2020

Dear Colleagues:


Last night, George Orwell came to me in a dream and said "Frances, while I know that you are a fan of mine, you need to understand that I was mistaken in my analysis of totalitarianism. I have now learned that postmodern intersectional theory is the Right Way. You must admit your thoughtcrimes and repent!". After praying to the Creator and reciting a territorial land acknowledgment, adding a condemnation of racism to my syllabi, and posting my pronouns on twitter, I have decided upon the course of action that I believe is needed to make Mount Royal University (MRU) a more socially just place.

While I look forward to a future of having every word and action vetted by the Mount Royal Anti-Racism Coalition (only a fascist could object), I cannot sign the selfless and brave "Open Letter to Mount Royal University" condemning systemic racism like many of you (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd1fPdpDQxrt_IHNutXAYRgFUmnvI89gIoffTG_Vpqv-PSUqg/viewform?fbclid=IwAR1AC25_3INXzRr5Oir6J9HJ0Ur6olFz5D0tw_M2AkN7EVIDdT_obs6w1qIQ). This is because open letters themselves are part of the white supremacist-cis-hetero-patriarchal system (after all, the first open letter, J'Accuse, was written by a white-hetero-cis-man demanding Eurocentric justice, thus reinforcing oppression). Instead, I have decided to take action by embarking upon an intersectional analysis of all MRU faculty members. Since the faculty members who signed the Open Letter are already enthusiastic supporters of this approach, I have decided to start with them (see attached).

As I now know that "merit" is a tool of the oppressor, intent on maintaining systemic racism (not to mention transphobia, homophobia, and misogyny), I will be proposing an "Oppression Point System" that we can use to evaluate all faculty in the future. Those with the most "Oppression Points", will, once they have realized their tyrannical position of privilege in hyper-capitalism, obviously want to create space for those at the bottom of the manure pile of hate that is MRU. If they are serious about their activism, faculty members with the most points will undoubtedly follow the lead of Ben Mulroney, who has admitted his crimes against the marginalized and stepped aside to allow BIPOC "voices and perspectives" to take his place on the red carpets of the world - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CJaWyGV-r8>.


Your faithful and obedient Big Brother lover,

Frances Widdowson

 **Frances Widdowson** @FrancesWiddows1 · Jun 29
Mentioning this book was one of Wendy Mesley's #WordCrimes. Doesn't @CBC realize that @WendyMesleyCBC saying the word in this context is different than using it as an insult? And if it is the word itself, and not the intent, is it o.k. to yell "Hey N-word" at black people?



1 4

 **Ben V. #BlackLivesMatter #IndigenousLivesMatter** @MxSpo... · Jul 2
If the word is so benign, why do you refuse to say it?

1

 **Frances Widdowson**
@FrancesWiddows1

Replying to @MxSpoike @CBC and @WendyMesleyCBC

The word itself does not have some kind of spiritual power. We need to separate a user's intent from recognizing a word that exists. There is no problem with saying "White Niggers of America" or quoting that "the word nigger is an ethnic slur typically directed at black people".

Agents of MRU Destruction

- “Woke” faculty members
 - Large cohort tenured 2011-2015
- The administration
 - Fisher and Mertin vs. Docherty and Shailer
- The Students’ Association
 - Episode 18, www.wokeacademy.info/episodes
- The Mount Royal Faculty Association
 - “How Reified Postmodernism is Killing the Mount Royal Faculty Association” (SAFS Newsletter, April 2021) and Episode 11, www.wokeacademy.info/episodes
 -



NO PASARÁN!

What Is To Be Done?

- Not settling and demanding reinstatement
- Recognizing the danger of official university political statements
- Local SAFS chapters and national and international linkages
- Educating the public
- A principled defense is needed (George Orwell was a socialist, FFS!)

