



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016

Professor Jordan Peterson  
Department of Psychology  
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Peterson,

We are writing in follow up to Professor Ferber's letter to you of October 3, 2016 (copy attached for reference), regarding the ongoing concerns related to your videos, and complaints that have been made to the University by members of the University community, including transgendered persons and the organizations that represent and support them on campus, about some of the content of those videos.

Firstly, let us be clear that the University is committed to the protection of freedom of speech as a core value for our community and for any university in a democratic society. The University is likewise committed to protecting the academic freedom of our faculty members, including their right to criticize the University and society at large with freedom from institutional censorship, as articulated in Article 5 of the [Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto Faculty Association](#). The University's commitment to protecting these core values includes your right to express and debate views that may be discomfiting or even offensive to others. However, as Professor Ferber has already pointed out to you, these rights are not without limitation and must be exercised in accordance with your responsibilities as a faculty member, including upholding applicable laws.

You have continued to state publicly that if a student or colleague or staff member requests that you refer to them using gender neutral pronouns, you will refuse to do so and that you do not recognize the rights of others to tell you which personal pronoun to use when addressing them.

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The law of Ontario, specifically the Ontario Human Rights Code, protects against discrimination based on gender expression and gender identity. Depending on the context, if personal pronouns are being used, the refusal by a teacher or colleague to use the personal pronoun that is an expression of the person's gender identity can constitute discrimination. In many situations it is not necessary to use personal pronouns at all, but where it is, the personal pronoun that is chosen as the person's gender identity-related and gender expression-related identifier should be used.

Your statements that you will refuse to refer to transgendered persons using gender neutral pronouns if they ask you to do so are contrary to the rights of those persons to equal treatment without discrimination based on their "gender identity" and "gender expression".

You should also be aware that many members of the University community are concerned and distressed about the declarations of your discriminatory intentions. The University has received communications from individuals, student groups and employee groups that find your comments to be unacceptable, emotionally disturbing and painful. Some members of the University community report that the statements and the invective that has followed in the ensuing commentary and debates on social media have caused them to fear for their safety on the University campus.

Some students have reported being the target of specific and violent threats, including threats of assault, injury and death against them individually and as members of the trans community.

We trust that these impacts on students and others were not your intention in making these remarks. However, in view of these impacts, as well as the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, we urge you to stop repeating these statements.

As Professor Ferber informed you, your responsibilities as a faculty member at the University of Toronto include an obligation to uphold the law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, and to do so as you exercise your academic freedom, or freedom of expression. Your responsibilities as a faculty member also include dealing with other members of the University community in ways that provide equal treatment without discrimination. Article 5 of the Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto Faculty Association not only recognizes that faculty members have the right to academic freedom, but also notes the responsibilities of faculty members to establish “fair and ethical dealings with students”, as well as with colleagues. The impact of your behaviour runs the risk of undermining your ability to conduct essential components of your job as a faculty member and we urge you to consider your obligations as a faculty member to act in a manner that is consistent with the law and with University policy.

You have referred to allegations of criminal behaviour by some in attendance at the rally of October 11, 2016. The University deplores acts of violence and the disruption of civil debate. The allegations of criminal behaviour are being investigated by the Toronto Police Service. The University continues to emphasize to its community members the obligation to engage in civil, non-violent interactions at all times, including when difficult topics are discussed on campus.

Yours sincerely,



David Cameron  
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science



Sioban Nelson  
Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life

cc. Professor Susanne Ferber, Chair, Department of Psychology