

In order to contextualize the current discussion about academic freedom at King's University College, the Women's Caucus of King's University College Faculty Association has constructed a general outline of the relevant events.

In March 2011, the Social Justice and Peace Studies program (SJPS) at King's University College (KUC) had an external review conducted according to the Institutional Quality Assurance Process set out by the Council of Ontario Universities. Within the program, there were dissonant interpretations of the review's assessment of the program and its subsequent recommendations, as well as a failure to produce a timely program response. Given the high state of intradepartment tension within SJPS and the absence of two faculty members (one of whom was on parental leave and one of whom was on sabbatical), the Academic Dean formed a broader committee, which included SJPS faculty members, the SJPS Coordinator, the Department Chair, the Associate Dean, and an extradepartmental faculty member in order to craft a program response to the external review. Part-time instructors participated in this committee at their will.

Mr. Luckhardt, a former sessional instructor who had taught at King's, wrote two letters (sent to the Academic Dean, the KUC Principal, and the Provost at Western University) following the resignation of the then-program Coordinator in response to changes in the SJPS program following the external review. Mr. Luckhardt's letters ostensibly expressed his concern about the future of the program given the process of interpreting and implementing the external review. As these letters took up programmatic concerns, they were forwarded to SJPS faculty. Notably, these letters contained hostile language and characterizations of two female SJPS faculty members in their professional capacities. In response, one of the faculty members lodged a formal complaint of Harassment and of Workplace Violence with the Principal.

In accordance with KUC policy that is consistent with Ontario's Bill 168, the Administration hired an independent external investigator to review the complainant's allegations of harassment and workplace violence. The external investigator found that the language within the letters clearly constituted harassment.

In response to the finding of the external investigator, the Principal, Dr. David Sylvester, informed Mr. Luckhardt that he was banned from campus until such time as Mr. Luckhardt acknowledged that he was bound by KUC harassment policy, that he had violated them and that he would, in future, be bound by them. It is in response to the discipline imposed upon Mr. Luckhardt that CAUT has made allegations – in a October 3, 2013 report drafted by Dr. Albert Katz and Dr. Jonathan Hexall, as well as in an interview by Dr. James Turk with CTV News on December 3, 2013 – that the Administration of King's University College has violated principles of academic freedom.

The KUCFA Women's Caucus contests CAUT's allegations that principles of academic freedom have been violated by KUC Administration as the attached letter to the Executive Director of CAUT, Dr. James Turk, outlines.