

Monday, November 2, 2020

Dave Robinson,  
Executive Director, CAUT  
2705 Queensview Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K2B 8K2

Dear Mr. Robinson,

The recent incident at University of Ottawa concerning Dr. Verushka Lieutenant-Duval's intentional use of discriminatory and racially-charged language in her ART 3317 Art and Gender course, combined with CAUT's solidarity of such language under the guise of academic freedom, is deeply concerning. OCADFA supports the statement of the caucus of the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) Professors and Librarians at the University of Ottawa.

It is the position of the Ontario College of Art and Design Faculty Association (OCADFA) that:

- i. The social, political, economic, and environmental systems, in which academia is situated, champion imbalances that largely target and disadvantage Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities to directly impede the fundamental human rights of inherent dignity and of equal and inalienable rights for all. Recognizing that social illiteracy and insensitivity only compound such inequity and exclusion, the pursuit of equal rights is our collective responsibility. Language developed to discriminate and persecute—spanning enslavement, exclusion, racial ridicule, racist terrorism, and segregation—is in stark conflict with dignity and intolerable.
- ii. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights guarantee inclusion of specific human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, and are the philosophical basis for academic freedom. However, these provisions are limited and not absolute; they restrict statements that express an intention to discriminate, imply discrimination, or intend to incite others to discriminate. Academic freedom must not be misappropriated as a mechanism to impose harm or violate other universally protected human rights.

OCADFA requests the following remedies of CAUT:

- i. Retract their support and protection of the use of discriminatory language, including racial slurs, within an academic context; and
- ii. Publish and disseminate (to the membership and public) an apology that unequivocally denounces the application of academic freedom as protection for discrimination; and

Ontario College of Art &  
Design Faculty Association  
#248 - 100 McCaul Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5T 1W1

iii. Provide anti-racism and BIPOC-inclusivity training to CAUT staff and members to restore and uphold the fundamental human rights of inherent dignity and of equal and inalienable rights for all within the academy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Min Sook Lee", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Min Sook Lee,

President, OCADFA