



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 22, 2018

Canadian Graduate Student Mistreated for Playing Jordan Peterson Video Sues University

A Canadian graduate student who was subjected to a verbal assault and subsequent mistreatment by university administrators for daring to present both sides of the gender-neutral pronoun debate to a class she taught is now suing the university for \$3.6 million.



Lindsay Shepherd, a former master's student and teaching assistant at Ontario's Wilfrid Laurier University, [filed suit](#) against the university and the three administrators who castigated her, charging them with "predatory" behavior that caused her to undergo "nervous shock" and "rendered her unemployable in academia," forcing her to stop teaching as a master's student and forgo dreams of a Ph.D.

Shepherd's crime, in the university's opinion, was [showing a video](#) of a televised debate between University of Toronto professors Jordan Peterson and Nicholas Matte to a communications class she was teaching last autumn. Shepherd presented the video, in which Peterson argued against using newfangled gender-neutral pronouns and Matte argued in favor of it, without taking sides in the debate.

For this offense she was summoned to a meeting at the university's Gendered Violence Prevention and Support office, where the three individuals named in her lawsuit — acting manager Adna Joel, program coordinator Herbert Pimlott, and communications studies assistant professor Nathan Rambukkana — told her in no uncertain terms that airing Peterson's politically incorrect views without clearly branding them evil had created a "toxic climate" in her class. Joel told Shepherd that the video had caused "harm and violence" to "trans folk."

Shepherd, who at the time disagreed with Peterson, argued in favor of the free exchange of ideas. Rambukkana, who oversaw her class but had, according to her lawsuit, heretofore "barely acknowledged her existence," countered that showing Peterson's remarks without condemning them was "like neutrally playing a speech by Hitler," and he suggested that doing so was illegal under Canadian law.

The three also told her — falsely, her suit alleges — that the meeting had been spurred by one or more student complaints about the video.

Shepherd, who claims she was "reduced to tears" during this "inquisition," had the foresight to record it secretly. When she released it on social media, the resulting firestorm forced the university to apologize and promise never to let such a thing happen again.

In her complaint, however, Shepherd maintains that the university continued to make life miserable for her. Her department chairman sat in on her first class after her recording began making waves, offering her students "emotional support" and "undermining Shepherd's role in her classroom"; he also insulted her publicly in an e-mail conversation with *MacLean's* magazine. Another professor demanded in class that she put away her laptop, explaining to all the students that she didn't want to be recorded. Shepherd was later assigned to teach under Professor Judith Nicholson, who had already "publicly



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taken a negative position against Shepherd” and who then “harassed and abused Shepherd” on three occasions. Through all this, Shepherd took no legal action against the school.

Then Ethan Jackson, a transgender activist who “was banned from the University of Waterloo campus in 2013” for “dressing up as a giant vulva and yelling” at a Member of Parliament who was speaking on abortion, filed a harassment complaint against Shepherd after Shepherd had finished her course work at the university and would no longer encounter Jackson. Rather than dismiss this “inherently self-contradictory, ludicrous and narcissistic” complaint, Shepherd alleges, “the university not only proceeded to summon Shepherd for an investigation but threatened her with repercussions if she disclosed Jackson’s complaint to anyone.”

That proved to be the last straw, and so Shepherd is now suing for damages, charging that in its treatment of her the university violated the law that created it, its own policies, and its contractual obligations to her. Her complaint also alleges that Rambukkana “slandered” Peterson by suggesting he was a Nazi when, in fact, “Peterson has spent decades educating his students about the evils of the holocaust.”

Peterson, for his part, is also suing the university for \$1.5 million, alleging he “was falsely labeled as incompetent, sexist, misogynist, dangerous and racist” in the meeting that Shepherd recorded, reports the [Edmonton Journal](#). Both Peterson and Shepherd have the same attorney, Howard Levitt.

“We’ll see if two lawsuits make the point,” said Peterson.



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