

# Canadian T.A. Reveals that Objective Truth is Not the Goal of Higher Education

Look at the majority of students in higher education today and one will come away with the idea that they are unable to handle debate or uncomfortable ideas. But Lindsay Shepherd is [challenging that stereotype](#).

Shepherd is a master's student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada. As the teaching assistant in a class on critical thinking, she recently played a video of controversial professor [Jordan Peterson](#) discussing the issue of gender pronouns. Although Shepherd disagrees with Peterson's position, she sought to objectively bring all points of view to the class discussion which she was leading in order to help students think critically about one of today's leading issues. In return for her objective overtures, she was called before a tribunal of college officials. Shepherd's secret recording of the meeting reveals the mindset of university staff:

*University Staff: "[I]t is discriminatory to be targeting someone due to their gender identity or gender expression, so bringing something like that up in class not critically – and I understand that you're trying to –"*

*Shepherd: "It was critical. I introduced it critically."*

*University Staff: "How so?"*

*Shepherd: "Like I said, it was in the spirit of debate."*

*University Staff: "Okay. In the spirit of the debate is slightly different than being like, 'Okay, this is a problematic idea that we want to unpack.'"*

*Shepherd: "But that's taking sides!"*

*University Staff: "Yes."*

The university staff goes on to say that by raising this issue, Shepherd has created a toxic climate that makes transgender students uncomfortable and does them a disservice:

*University Staff: "It's not just telling them. In legitimizing this as a valid perspective, as this is another perspective –"*

*Shepherd: "In a university all perspectives are valid!"*

*University Staff: "That's not necessarily true."*

The staff goes on to compare Peterson to Hitler, suggesting that anyone who even brings up Peterson's views for debate is fostering the type of violence which the infamous Nazi is known for the world over.

Shepherd is quite upset over these accusations, and understandably so, for while she may not realize it, she has unfortunately stumbled into the war between education and propaganda. University of Chicago professor Richard Weaver delineated the difference between the two in a [1955 essay](#):

*"It is of primary importance to distinguish propaganda from education. These two are confused in the minds of many people because both are concerned with communication. Education imparts information and also seeks to inculcate attitudes. Propaganda frequently contains information, and it is always interested in affecting attitudes. A good part of modern propaganda, furthermore, tries to parade as education. The critical difference appears only when one considers the object of each. The true educator is endeavoring to shape his audience for the audience's own good according to the fullest enlightenment available. In doing so he erects and strives to follow a standard of objective truth. The propagandist, on*

*the contrary, is trying to shape his audience according to the propagandist's interest, whether that be economic, political, social, or personal."*

Shepherd, it would appear, is seeking to further the enlightenment of her students with an objective look at all sides of the debate. The university, however, appears intent on shaping student thought only along acceptable political lines, a concerning thought given that their say in the matter likely holds more clout.

If this is so, then perhaps we need to reconsider the notion that the current generation is the most educated in history. Is it possible that they are instead the most propagandized in history, and as such, are unable to think for themselves or really make any serious contributions to the debate of ideas which has continued for generations?