

To the Governance Review Panel  
The "Panel"  
% Rebecca Wickens  
University Secretary  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
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Esteemed Members of the Governance Review Panel;

We as members of the Laurier student community, and executive members of the Laurier Sociology Students' Association, would like to take this opportunity to present our opinions and suggestions to you in hopes of improving the functionality, effectiveness, and practices of the governing bodies at this institution.

With the Panel's particular interest in questions involving appropriate memberships, mandates, and powers, accessibility of the community, appropriate by-laws, and necessary tools, we would like to focus on membership and power, student accessibility, and specific policies. Should any of our three suggestions fall outside of the realm of this current focus, please do not hesitate to contact us with the appropriate contact, or to forward our concerns to that party.

1. The Contract Academic Staff (CAS) at Laurier teach approximately half of the students enrolled in classes. They are extremely valued within the student community, and are often favoured among students. The contract faculty at Laurier have taught over a quarter million students at this university, and are respected researchers, experts in their fields, inspiring instructors, published authors, professional association members, community activists and leaders, and exceptional student mentors.

Laurier students recognize that a university functions for more than just student education. However, exceptional education should remain a primary focus. In order to achieve this, contract faculty require a stronger presence within the university governance. The contract faculty are valued equally in comparison to faculty professors to students, and should be valued thusly by the university as well. This means that a stronger presence within the university governance is only the first step. The gap in pay, benefits, and job security need to be drastically improved. The dedication, hard work, and qualifications of CAS need to be recognized by the governing bodies at Laurier. There are world-class educators at this university, all of whom should be treated fairly.

2. The accessibility of policies and changes mandated by the Laurier governance to students is lacking. With the new students website up and running, it would be a great opportunity to have a place where students can easily find detailed information of the decisions, policies, and movements taking place. This would allow students to become more aware and involved within the institution.
  
3. The student body is widely concerned with the new proposed sexual violence policy. Three major issues have been voiced from students, where facilitator/moderators are concerned, the lack of a blanket statement, and cross examination. The facilitator who is outlined within the draft is not detailed as having any particular training in response to sexual violence, social work, or relevant training. In order for an effective resolution to these issues, an adequately trained team is required. The lack of a blanket-policy or equal procedures is of extreme concern as well. The stature of the Survivor or the accused should not affect how the case is handled. Whether it is a student-student, student-faculty, or faculty-faculty, all sexual misconduct cases should be handled with the same professionalism, procedures, and severity. Finally, the language used within the draft in regards to the cross examination during an appeal needs to be more inclusive and professional, rather than accusatory and abrasive. An effective sexual misconduct policy will encourage Survivors to come forward without fear of repercussions or further harm. With this policy coming to effect this January, it is imperative that it is executed properly the first time, in hopes to avoid unfair treatment of these cases. Wilfrid Laurier University has an opportunity to lead the country in proper sexual misconduct policies, but it could also fall short in comparison to other universities if not dealt with correctly.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Panel for the chance to voice our concerns and suggestions. We hope that this will allow for positive change at Laurier, and allow this great institution to further inspire lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Simo  
President  
Laurier Sociology Students' Association

Bobbi Martellacci  
Vice President of Public and Partner Relations  
Laurier Sociology Students' Association

Shaelyn Burnet  
Vice President  
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