

# U of T students demand apology from professor over 'transphobic' comments

Psychology prof Jordan Peterson refuses to honour non-binary students' request for gender neutral pronouns.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/10/12/u-of-t-students-demand-apology-from-professor-over-transphobic-comments.html>



Jordan Peterson, a University of Toronto professor who refuses to use gender neutral pronouns, participates in a heated discussion with some students at the university's downtown campus. (EDUARDO LIMA / METRO NEWS)

By **MAY WARREN**Metro

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Students are demanding the University of Toronto take action in the face of “transphobic” comments made by [psychology professor Jordan Peterson](#).

In video lectures posted on YouTube, Peterson criticizes Bill C-16, which would amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code to include protection for gender identity or expression.

He also refuses to honour non-binary students’ request for gender neutral pronouns, saying “I don’t know what the options are if you’re not a man or a woman.”

Denio Lourenco, LGBTQ co-ordinator with the University of Toronto Mississauga Students’ Union, called Peterson’s comments “disturbing” and accused the prof of trying to “hide behind the shield of academic freedom.”

The students’ union, along with a number of other campus groups, has penned an open letter to the administration condemning Peterson’s remarks and demanding an apology.

“Although this is very much about him, it’s also about demanding accountability from the university,” Lourenco said.

The letter, also signed by representatives from LGBTOUT, and the Black Liberation Collective, calls for a full retraction of Peterson’s comments and the removal of his lectures from YouTube.

It also demands the university defend students against future “prejudiced” comments from tenured professors.

Lourenco said U of T’s own policies support an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

“They actually made a commitment, we just need them to follow through with it at this point,” he said.

University of Toronto spokesperson Elizabeth Church said the university has received the letter and is “considering it.”

Peterson told Metro he has no plans to either apologize or retract his statements.

“The whole letter is just basic ideological boilerplate, it’s exactly what you’d expect,” he said after speaking at a campus rally Tuesday.

The rally, organized by Peterson’s supporters, became tense at times, as other students challenged his views, and each other.

At one point a fire alarm went off, causing students to spill out onto the steps of Sidney Smith Hall on the downtown campus, where the event was taking place.