



**Laurentian University**  
**Université Laurentienne**

Office of the President  
Cabinet de la rectrice  
Tel/Tél. : 705-673-6567  
Fax/Télé. : 705-673-6519

December 5, 2006

Mr. James Turk  
Executive Director  
Canadian Association of University Teachers  
2675 Queensview Drive  
Ottawa, ON K2B 8K2

Dear Mr. Turk:

This is in response to CAUT's open letter to me regarding the request from a production company called "Creative Differences" to film a segment on our campus. It is extremely unfortunate that your letter contained false and misleading information in relation to Laurentian University's response and that you did not take the time to contact me or my administration directly to discuss the situation before reacting.

The University was not asked to allow an "interview" on campus and it did not refuse to allow anyone to be interviewed, or "ban" the production company from campus. What the University refused to do was sign a rather lengthy and one-sided waiver and consent form (see attached). Before the University and the production company had an opportunity to discuss the matter, Dr. Persinger, with the support of the local union officials and subsequently your organization, decided to involve the media and the internal University community, to both the University's and the production company's surprise.

The Laurentian Faculty Association's characterization of the production company's request as a mere request for an "interview" is also inaccurate. The email communications between Dr. Harley d'Entremont, VP, Academic (Francophone Affairs) and Director, Academic Staff Relations, and Mr. Richard O'Regan, representing the Discovery Channel, clearly indicate that the plan was to film a procedure involving a human subject.

In any event, as Dr. d'Entremont and our Public Affairs Office have made clear, Laurentian University does not prevent the media from coming onto campus to interview any of its professors. On the contrary, we regularly encourage media to report on our activities. The production company is thus perfectly free to come on campus to interview Dr. Persinger.

.../2

Laurentian University - Université Laurentienne

Mr. James Turk  
December 5, 2006  
Page 2

---

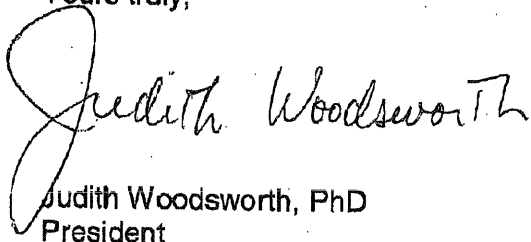
I am pleased to say that Dr. d'Entremont has been working in a collegial fashion with Mr. O'Regan to find a solution. The filming of any research, procedures or experimentation is possible as long as a valid research protocol is in effect. At the time of the request, the University was not aware of a current, effective research protocol that applied to the procedure that the production company was proposing to film on campus.

Laurentian University, along with all the other universities in Canada, has signed the Tri-Council Memorandum of Agreement and is thus bound by a number of policies regarding research, including the requirement for an ethics review for all research and procedures involving humans. The CAUT website ([www.caut.ca/en/issues/ethics/default.asp](http://www.caut.ca/en/issues/ethics/default.asp)) states: "CAUT recognizes the need for clear guidelines governing the treatment of human research subjects and the treatment of animals in research. Human research guidelines must provide effective protections for human subjects while recognizing the experiences and approaches of all disciplines."

Members of my senior administration and I are academics. We are firmly committed to academic freedom, which is also enshrined in our Collective Agreement. Please be assured that Laurentian University is not attempting to restrict academic freedom, but rather is ensuring respect for policies concerning the ethical conduct of all research procedures involving humans, policies to which all universities adhere.

Given these clarifications and information, I trust that you will now publicly retract your earlier open letter to me.

Yours truly,



Judith Woodsworth, PhD  
President

JW:sa