



Question

TO: Senate
FROM: Genevieve Gore and Terry Hébert
SUBJECT: Question Regarding Academic Freedom
MEETING DATE: April 20th, 2017

PREAMBLE: McGill University is a vibrant community of diverse opinions. To imply that the “university” itself can take a position on statements made by members of its community, other than positions that have been officially adopted through community mechanisms such as Senate, runs counter to the notion of intellectual diversity and academic freedom.

Many have raised concerns about a chilling effect in this regard implicit in the tweet from McGill’s official Twitter account (from @mcgillu: “The views expressed by @JAndrewPotter in the @MacleansMag article do not represent those of #McGill”) sent by the “university” in response to Prof. Potter’s article.

The selective disavowal of contentious positions taken by members of the academic community represents a real danger to academic freedom.

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- QUESTIONS:**
1. What was the intended purpose of the tweet?
 2. How and when can the “university” have such an opinion?
 3. What steps can be taken such that future communications by the university will not be perceived as a selective disavowal of contentious opinions?
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