

September 2, 2016

Dr. David Turpin  
President  
University of Alberta  
2-24 South Academic Building (SAB)  
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G7

Dear Dr. Turpin,

I am writing to you in my capacity as president of the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA). Please note that I am also the Deputy Superintendent of Elk Island Catholic Schools and a University of Alberta alumnus (B. Ed. '86, M. Ed '06).

My purpose in writing is to convey CCSSA membership's concerns regarding Dr. Kristopher Wells recent 'grading' of four school board's policies on Inclusive Communities for students (including LGBTQ). Our perception is that Dr. Kristopher Wells, spokesperson for Public Interest Alberta, is attacking Catholic education values and in particular the two Catholic Boards identified in the 'grading' press release. This commentary along with numerous social media posts and quotes within local media has our membership asking how an educational institution has an individual profess inaccurate and intolerant judgments on another educational institution. Clearly the statement below identifies Dr. Wells by his association with the University:

*The University of Alberta's Dr. Kristopher Wells, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Policy Studies, and the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services says "The policy from Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board includes a call to chastity as a solution. It's embarrassing and inappropriate in 2016. Many other elements of this policy are deeply concerning and may contravene government legislation." (630 CHED - August 30, 2016)*

If chastity is embarrassing, is promiscuity then the alternative? Is Dr. Wells promoting those school-aged children in 2016 being encouraged to be sexually active? Is Dr. Wells lecturing his UofA education students to promote their grade school students being sexually active? Is Dr. Wells representing the University of Alberta when he chastises Catholic school boards and Catholic educators? As absurd and extreme our presumptions, we feel Dr. Wells has been allowed to be absurd and extreme without fear of consequence. We feel that as educational professionals, there is a place for academic debate but not within social media and general news media. The use of vulnerable children for political agendas needs to stop.

Regardless of his personal belief, to publically state that a belief held sacred to many people of faith is irrelevant in 2016 is irresponsible and resembles discrimination of religion but then accuses religion of discriminating against the LGBTQ population.

### ***Vision Statement***

"The Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta is a community of disciples providing a valuable and valued voice that influences the development and direction of Catholic Education in Alberta"

As reported in the media, there was a public response from one of our colleagues that we feel was fair and factual. Unfortunately we do not expect a response from Dr. Wells:

*"Grande Prairie Catholic Schools received a thumbs up from Alberta Education for its inclusive schools policies and procedures", said Superintendent Karl Germann. "The district deserved a better grade on the report card", he said. He encouraged Wells to "redo and resubmit his homework. (Edmonton Journal, August 30, 2016)*

*Public Interest Alberta (Dr. Wells) missed many policy documents in its analysis of the Greater St. Albert Catholic School District, Superintendent David Keohane said. "Keohane was so baffled by the report card's conclusions, he called Alberta Education again Tuesday for reassurance their policies were acceptable to the ministry. He said they are." (Edmonton Journal, August 30, 2016)*

The fundamentals of academic freedom are understood and promoted at the highest levels within Catholic education and within the post-secondary system that we support. What I am hoping to convey on behalf of our association is our disappointment with the lack of professionalism demonstrated by a fellow educator and the public discrimination of our fundamental belief that "every child is a profound gift from God and welcome and cared for in our inclusive system."

Is Dr. Wells representing the University of Alberta when he publicly undermines another publicly funded educational institution? Dr. Well's twitter account states that he is "Faculty Director, ISMSS & Assistant Professor, University of Alberta yet the twitter feed is used to undermine the quality work that is being done in Catholic schools to protect vulnerable students and undermines the role of Catholic Education in the province of Alberta. Are these views sanctioned by the University of Alberta? What are the avenues of appeal a public institution such as a Catholic School Board have, when it is perceived, that one public institution such as the University of Alberta is being used by a professor to undermine another?

If you have any questions or require clarification of our concerns or questions, please feel send me an email or call me directly.

Thank you for your time, we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
Shawn Haggarty  
CCSSA President  
c/o 21 Walters Place  
Leduc, AB T9E 8S7  
C: 780 242-4299  
E: [shawnh@eics.ab.ca](mailto:shawnh@eics.ab.ca)

Cc: Dr. Randy Wimmer, Dean of Education

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### *Vision Statement*

"The Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta is a community of disciples providing a valuable and valued voice that influences the development and direction of Catholic Education in Alberta"

September 8, 2016

Dr. David Turpin  
President  
University of Alberta  
2-24 South Academic Building (SAB)  
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G7

Dear Dr. Turpin,

I am writing to you in my capacity Superintendent of Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools.

My purpose in writing is to convey our concerns regarding Dr. Kristopher Wells recent 'grading' of four school board's policies on Inclusive Communities for students (including LGBTQ). Our perception is that Dr. Kristopher Wells, spokesperson for Public Interest Alberta, is attacking Catholic education values and in particular the two Catholic Boards identified in the 'grading' press release. This commentary along with numerous social media posts and quotes within local media has our membership asking how an educational institution has an individual profess inaccurate and intolerant judgments on another educational institution. Clearly the statement below identifies Dr. Wells by his association with the University:

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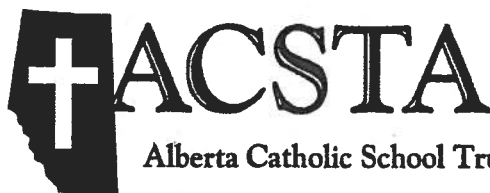
If you have any questions or require clarification of our concerns or questions, please feel send me an email or call me directly.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to your response.

Warmest Regards,

Karl Germann  
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Dr. Randy Wimmer, Interim Dean of Education, University of Alberta  
Board of Trustees, Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools



Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association

*Celebrate, preserve, promote and enhance Catholic education*

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September 16, 2016

Douglas R Stollery  
Chancellor of the Senate – University of Alberta  
Office of the Chancellor and Senate  
322 Arts Building  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E6

University of Alberta

SEP 19 2016

Senate Office

Dear Mr. Stollery,

On behalf of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA), I am writing to share with you concerns that the ACSTA and the member school boards we represent have in regards to statements made by Dr. Kristopher Wells. For the past few years Dr. Wells has publicly expressed what we perceive to be very negative and harmful views towards Catholic education in Alberta, culminating with the most recent and very public 'grading' of four school board's policies on inclusive communities for students (including our LGBTQ students).

In this most recent example, Dr. Wells, who appeared as the spokesperson for Public Interest Alberta, was introduced as a professor at your university, suggesting that the failing grade on inclusive schools policies and procedures represents the views of the University of Alberta. Dr. Wells has also been quoted as saying in the media:

*"The policy from Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board includes a call to chastity as a solution. It's embarrassing and inappropriate in 2016. Many other elements of this policy are deeply concerning and may contravene government legislation."  
(630 CHED - August 30, 2016)*

We perceive this to be a direct attack on our Catholic faith and beliefs and speaks of religious discrimination. After all, a call to chastity is not something that is embarrassing or something to be cast off as ancient or out of date. To publicly state that a belief which is held as sacred to many (including a lot of non Catholics) is somehow irrelevant today is completely absurd, as is the misinformation that the Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board's policy contravenes government legislation. This statement borders on being libellous.

The ACSTA and our member boards take very seriously the education of our students in all areas. As we govern schools of faith, it is, in fact, our constitutional responsibility to ensure that our students are taught in a learning environment where our Catholic faith is permeated and plays a vital role (See Supreme Court of Canada: Loyola High School v. Quebec (Attorney General) 2015).

**Douglas R Stollery**  
September 16, 2016  
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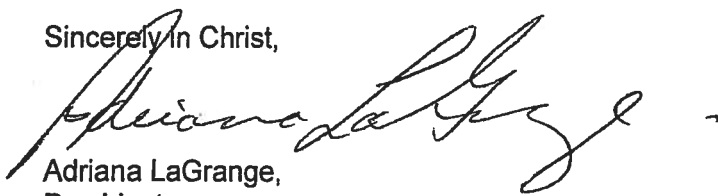
While Dr. Wells is entitled to his opinion, we feel that there is a strong conflict of interest at play due to the fact that Dr. Wells is Faculty Director, ISMSS & Assistant Professor, at the University of Alberta. He appears to be using his position (which is publicly funded) to undermine another publicly funded institution, namely Catholic Schools in Alberta. We strongly believe it is not Dr. Wells place as a faculty member of a publicly funded institution to tell others what their religious beliefs should be. We are disappointed in Dr. Wells failure to speak prudently as a public academic and his intolerance of the freedom of conscious in others which he has demonstrated, especially in this instance.

Our greatest concern is for whom does Dr.Wells speak when criticizing Catholicism and Catholic education in Alberta as his affiliation with the University of Alberta and the Department of Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education are presented as his qualifications and credentials. We would ask for clarification if the University of Alberta supports his negative views of Catholicism and Catholic education in Alberta. In this particular case, the report card, does Dr. Wells speak for the University in this context or is he speaking from his own personal opinion?

The ACSTA and all of our member boards take the education and the emotional, physical, and spiritual health of our students very seriously, especially when it comes to ensuring that each and every individual in our care is protected and served in a safe and caring manner. We also look to the University of Alberta to assist Catholic school divisions across Alberta in the formation of Catholic educators, as we have for the past century. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the University of Alberta to ensure we are forming teachers with open minds and critical thinking skills, who have the best interest of all students in mind..

We would appreciate a response at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions or require clarification on any issue from the ACSTA, please contact us directly.

Sincerely In Christ,



Adriana LaGrange,  
President