

Dr. Alan Shepard,
President and Vice-Chancellor,
Western University,
London, Ontario.

November 6, 2023

Dr. Shepard,

I am writing to you regarding the recent letter written to you by the student-athletes of the Western Mustangs women's hockey team.

The Canadian Student-Athlete Association was founded on July 20, 2020, in response to a first wave of decisions made relating to the COVID-19 crisis, decisions that dramatically impacted the lives, careers, and futures of student-athletes. Decisions that were made by colleges and universities, governing college and university sports organizations (USports, CCAA, OUA, Canada West, RSEQ, AUS), and the provincial and federal governments, with little or no input from student-athletes. I believed that student-athletes needed a voice at the table of those entities making the decisions. I was wrong.

Student-athletes need an independent voice to disrupt the status quo and challenge the decisions made by those at the table when those decisions are not in the best interests of student-athletes. Decisions such as the ones you have made have led this situation to deteriorate to a point where the women's hockey team student-athletes feel they have no option but to boycott any games and practices that coach Moxley is involved in to protect themselves from further harm. Surely you do not want to expose the student-athletes to potential further harm.

Yet you are allowing the coach to return. You appear to be making a decision to expose the student-athletes to the potential for further harm. I am sure you can see how they may not interpret that as you or the university acting in their best interests.

The Canadian Student-Athlete Association is urging you to demonstrate to the women's hockey team and all student-athletes that you are acting in their best interests. Relieve both coach Moxley and Christine Stapleton, Director of Sports and Recreation, of their duties until a full and thorough independent investigation of the concerns and allegations made by the women's hockey team is completed (by someone with no past or present affiliation with Western University). I include Ms. Stapleton in the investigation as the statements made by the student-athletes in reference to her are potentially more concerning than those made in reference to Ms. Moxley given Ms. Stapleton's position and broader responsibility.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this and am hopeful that you hear these student-athletes.

Regards,
Garrett Holmes,
Founder, the Canadian Student-Athlete Association