

STANFORD
UNIVERSITY



MARC TESSIER-LAVIGNE
President

March 11, 2023

Dear Judge Duncan,

We write to apologize for the disruption of your recent speech at Stanford Law School. As has already been communicated to our community, what happened was inconsistent with our policies on free speech, and we are very sorry about the experience you had while visiting our campus.

We are very clear with our students that, given our commitment to free expression, if there are speakers they disagree with, they are welcome to exercise their right to protest but not to disrupt the proceedings. Our disruption policy states that students are not allowed to “prevent the effective carrying out” of a “public event” whether by heckling or other forms of interruption.

In addition, staff members who should have enforced university policies failed to do so, and instead intervened in inappropriate ways that are not aligned with the university’s commitment to free speech.

We are taking steps to ensure that something like this does not happen again. Freedom of speech is a bedrock principle for the law school, the university, and a democratic society, and we can and must do better to ensure that it continues even in polarized times.

With our sincerest apologies again,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Tessier-Lavigne".

Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D.
President and Bing Presidential Professor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Martinez".

Jenny Martinez
Richard E. Lang Professor of Law
& Dean of Stanford Law School