

# Academic Matters

OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR D'UAPUO

## *Whose University is it Anyway?*

**Alison Hearn and  
Vanessa Brown**

Lessons from the eye  
of the storm: Chakmagate  
and Western University

**Larry Savage**

Defending collegial governance  
at Brock University

**Root Gorelick**

Obscuring transparency  
and silencing dissent:  
Carleton University's  
Board of Governors



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Academic Matters is published two times a year by OCUFA, and is received by 17,000 professors, academic librarians and others interested in higher education issues across Canada. The journal explores issues of relevance to higher education in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and globally. It is intended to be a forum for thoughtful and thought-provoking, original and engaging discussion of current trends in postsecondary education and consideration of academe's future direction.

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**Editor-in-Chief:**

Graeme Stewart

**Associate Editor:**

Erica Rayment

**Assistant Editor:**

Brynne Sinclair-Waters

**Art Direction:**

Eva Kiss, Neglia Design Inc., www.NegliaDesign.com

**Editorial Board:**

Melonie Fullick, Glen Jones, Vinita Srivastava

**National Advertising Sales:**

DOVETAIL COMMUNICATIONS  
30 East Beaver Creek Road, Ste. 202  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1J2

**Sales Manager:**

Beth Kukkonen, bkukkonen@dvetail.com  
Phone (905) 886-6640 ext. 306

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**For subscription information, please contact:**

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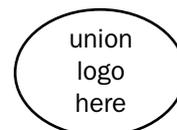
**Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:**

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
17 Isabella Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 1M7

Phone (416) 979-2117 Fax (416) 593-5607  
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Cover illustration: Marie-Claude Carignan

# LESSONS FROM THE EYE OF THE STORM: Chakmagate and Western University

Alison Hearn and Vanessa Brown



The controversy around presidential pay at Western proved to be a flashpoint for taking back control.

*La controverse entourant le salaire du président de Western s'est avérée un point chaud pour la reprise du contrôle.*

There was a powerful moment at the height of last year's pay scandal at Western University, when president Amit Chakma spoke at Senate for the first time since revelations that he had been paid twice his normal salary in 2014. As Dr. Chakma stood before hundreds of faculty, librarians, staff, and students, many in the audience also rose from their seats and then abruptly turned their backs to the president.

Just as the university itself is many different things to different people, individuals in the audience that day stood in peaceful protest for various reasons. Some were protesting the greed of the president and the arrogance and ignorance displayed by the chair of the Board of Governors, while others were angry about the slow starva-

tion of SSHRC-side disciplines in terms of both resource allocation and research funding. Graduate students lamented the fact that they had to run a food bank on campus for their impoverished colleagues, while many STEM-side faculty and administrative staff were angry about significant cuts to their lab and office personnel. Undergraduate students were concerned about increasing tuition and class sizes, and contract faculty were angry that many of them earned far less than one percent of president Chakma's salary. Some colleagues felt disheartened by a series of failed initiatives rolled out with minimal consultation by the senior administration, while others felt the current budget model was designed to pick winners and losers from among the faculties.

As the president apologized for his actions, members of the university community held signs with such messages as “Restore Collegial Governance: Reform Senate!” and “Administrators don’t Attract Research Funding: Researchers DO,” which security guards promptly confiscated.

The protests at Western’s Senate meetings last April confirmed that a significant number of students, staff, and professors no longer trusted, or felt respected by, their leaders. The double payment was simply a symptom of much larger issues at the university.

“The salary controversy has been the match that has gone into the bucket of gasoline,” said associate dean of Social Science, Andrew Nelson, quoted in the London Free Press.

The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association (UWOFA) knew full well that the “bucket of gasoline” was ripe for a conflagration. The tensions precipitated by the imposition of a top-down, corporatized management model; the constant cry of austerity; the use of hybridized activity-based budgeting; and the slow erosion of meaningful collegial governance had been simmering for quite some time.

Those working in Canadian universities today have been told that we’re living in crisis and austerity conditions for the better part of the last decade. While Western was not explicitly subject to the program prioritization exercises experienced by so many of our colleagues at other Ontario universities, the budget model and management decisions were doing the same kind of unilateral prioritizing by stealth; several faculties were withering on the vine, class sizes were increasing, tenured positions diminishing, and contingent faculty and support staff were losing their jobs. Western’s leaders, however, were immune to the warning signs; they were disconnected and generally disdainful of calls for more communication and collegiality. When pressed about the implications of the budget model for those who were losing their jobs, the provost simply declared that the budget was an important exercise in restraint and could not be tampered with. When our president gave his annual report on his priorities in Senate, diversifying revenue streams and building up the endowment were No. 1. There was no mention of investing in the academic mission of the university anywhere on his list.

The truth is that these administrative responses are not unique to Western; they could have come from any campus across the country. They are clear illustrations of the ways in which our public universities have been thoroughly infected by the logic of austerity and practices of perpetual cost cutting, informed by the principles of New Public Management (NPM).

Developed in the US and UK in the 1980s, and now firmly entrenched across the public sectors of countries worldwide, NPM advocates the idea that where service provision in the public sector cannot be privatized, it should be modernized and made to run efficiently on the model of the



*Students and faculty turn their backs to the president during a special Senate meeting in April 2015.*

private sector.

NPM explicitly rejects the view that public service might be qualitatively different from the provision of other kinds of goods and services, and assumes that public services—universities, schools, health care systems—are all essentially the same and operate the same way. Under NPM, citizens become customers while politicians or public servants become (ostensibly non-ideologically driven) technocrats, whose job is simply to measure and control operations so as to make them as efficient as possible. A focus on achievable short-term goals; the imposition of league tables; audits and accountability mechanisms; the disaggregation of jobs into component parts; and the perpetual search for new revenue streams and efficiencies also characterize NPM (Lorenz 2012, 601-602).

In our universities, NPM has helped create the scenarios with which we are all now familiar: rising tuition and ancillary fees for students; increasing class sizes and the imposition of more and more technologized labour-saving teaching devices in the classrooms; an emphasis on monetizable research outcomes; the standardization of courses and teaching modules; the reduction of tenure and growing reliance on underpaid and underemployed contingent faculty; the pursuit of alternative revenue streams of any and all kinds; the imposition of disciplinary budget models; and mechanisms of audit and control in the form of narrow research and learning outcome metrics.

In the NPM universe, the job of the university manager is to be a “change agent” by creating perpetual austerity conditions, even when the university coffers say otherwise. The logic is quite ingenious, really; if managers are continually crying poor, reorganizing, reprioritizing, issuing edicts and directives, reassessing, measuring, and auditing, then faculty members and students are forced to live in a state of constant

The disconnect between Western's senior leaders and the rest of the university community was too obvious to ignore, and hundreds of people both inside and outside the university gates erupted in anger.

instability and fear, and have little time to protect or fight for collegial self governance or academic freedom. The goal of NPM is to stress the "limits of worker performance" by making workers responsible for their own fate and the fate of the organization (Bousquet 2008, 104), forcing them to do more with less. This creates an environment in which, in Marc Bousquet's words, "every year is a year of fiscal crisis, and...every year sees 'new' pressures on wages, workloads, class sizes, benefits, and autonomy" (2008, 107).

Under NPM, there can be no question as to whether the costs saved are actually worth it, or whether the decisions taken are in the best interest of the institution because the terms "worth" or "best interest" are so narrowly defined; they are simply whatever saves money. Under these conditions efficiency, expediency, and productivity emerge as the public university's core values, displacing academic values of collegiality, inquiry, debate, and academic freedom. Another contradiction of NPM is that university managers tend to hold themselves outside of assessment altogether. For all their talk of audit and control, no one ever audits the auditors or managers, or asks whether *they* are rationally and responsibly administering public funds. Nor do people ask whether universities are actually in need of perpetual measurement and austerity in the first place. Whereas faculty members who dare to question administrators are often labeled obstreperous cranks, managers are positioned as unassailable and infallible. And, while university managers are busy cutting jobs and arguing against pay raises, this same logic certainly has not prevented them from awarding themselves hefty salaries (Lorenz 2012, 614).

In the end, the distrust and desire for control on display in the imposition of these forms of NPM only end up undermining the implicit trust and sense of responsibility, reciprocity, and collegiality that the university needs to be successful. Paradoxically, the hypercompetitive habitus fueled by NPM tends to undercut the very innovation and out-of-the-box thinking governments are demanding from universities these days.

Witnessing these managerial strategies over the past decades prompted members of UWOFA to fight back. After years of being told that funds were tight, we decided to challenge the agents of perpetual austerity by taking control of the information flow and completing our own analysis of the university coffers. In the spring of 2014, we published *Every Budget is a Choice* (available at uwofa.ca), which analyzed the previous four years of Western's finances. The document showed that the university was repeatedly creating operating surpluses, approximately \$40 million a year to a total of \$202 million, and then transferring these surpluses to unrestricted or restricted sub-funds, or spending the surplus money on buildings or other capital projects. We showed that the Board of Governors and senior managers were repeatedly putting the accumulation of assets ahead of investing in the university's core mission, and argued that any shortfall in the operating budget, and by extension a faculty's budget, was an artificial problem that could easily be rectified by a change of policy at the Board level. In the end, the budget analysis revealed that our supposedly ideologically neutral fiscal managers actually had quite an obvious agenda and a very clear vision about what kind of university they wanted Western to be.

UWOFA's budget analysis was well received across campus. The senior administration never disputed our numbers. Instead, they continued to defend their budgeting as in the best interests of the university. And then, at the end of March 2015 the Sunshine List came out, revealing that the president had taken two salaries in one year due to a clause in his contract that allowed him to take pay in lieu of administrative leave. After years of austerity budgets and the hardships they had visited on faculty, staff, and students, the harsh truth of the Board and senior managers' real priorities were laid bare for all to see. The disconnect between Western's senior leaders and the rest of the university community was too obvious to ignore, and hundreds of people both inside and outside the university gates erupted in anger.

Inexplicably, the administration was caught off guard by the reaction of the university community. They claimed that Dr. Chakma wanted to forgo his administrative leave because the university was facing "many challenges and uncertainties" and he needed to be there to manage them. In the wake of the double-dip revelations, Board of Governors Chair, Chirag Shah, gave an interview where he likened the president's pay deal to sabbaticals taken by faculty members—a gaffe which further illustrated the lack of understanding of the university's day-to-day operations at the Board level. In fact, and most crucially, faculty are not afforded extra pay for foregoing an earned sabbatical leave. In spite of the Board chair's statement, the senior administration dug in, remaining silent for the first week of the crisis.

In the meantime, opposition was gathering speed on the ground. At a UWOFA general meeting held three days after the news broke, a motion came from the floor to hold a non-confidence vote in the president and the Board chair;



Members of the university community stand together outside a Senate meeting to protest the presidential pay scandal at Western university.

the result was 94 per cent supporting the non-confidence motion, with the highest voter turnout UWOFA has ever seen. A Change.org petition started by a faculty collective called Noah Confidenze, expressing non-confidence in Dr. Chakma and Chirag Shah, gathered 5800 signatures in just three days. Local NDP MPP Peggy Sattler introduced a Private Members Bill in the legislature to prevent these forms of executive payouts in the future. London Free Press reporter Jonathan Sher exposed the fact that Dr. Chakma had taken pay in lieu of leave from the University of Waterloo when he left to come to Western, earning a double salary that year as well, as had a series of other outgoing university presidents, including our current Governor General and former President of Waterloo, David Johnston.

By the end of the first week, the Board of Governors issued a press release saying that Dr. Chakma would give the money back, likely in an effort to stop the controversy in its tracks. It didn't. In addition to a scheduled Senate meeting on April 10, a group of 22 senators requested a special meeting on April 17 to consider two separate motions of non-confidence in the president and the Board chair. The administration called in Navigator, a crisis-management firm, and well-heeled alumni took ads out in the local press urging the university community to stop their protests and deal with their problems behind closed doors.

And so we arrive at the Senate meetings where Dr. Chakma made his apology and faculty, students, and staff staged their powerful protests. After hours of heated debate, the motions of non-confidence in Dr. Chakma and the chair of the Board of Governors were eventually defeated. The messages of discontent and broken trust, however, were delivered loud and clear, and it appears as though the Board and the president have heard our collective call to action.

The Board of Governors commissioned a judicial review by retired Justice Stephen Goudge, which was published in the summer of 2015, and, from it, the Board struck a taskforce to review its own governance practices. Dr. Chakma undertook a "100-day listening tour" of the university community, while Noah Confidenze started its own "Alternative Listening Tour" on Tumblr ([www.noahconfidenze.tumblr.com](http://www.noahconfidenze.tumblr.com)). For 100 days, members of the community and outside guests contributed their thoughts about the managerial university, with formats ranging from essays, to open letters, to satirical stories and poems. Senate established three separate committees in the wake of the crisis—one to look at governance, one to examine SSHRC-side research funding, and the other to look at the university budget. Chair of the Board Chirag Shah stepped down from the Board, declining to stand for reappointment. Senate has been revived from its moribund state, with multiple elections for Senate seats this year where previously there were none. And, UWOFA, which played a central role in the crisis, has had many new members become actively involved in the Association.

The lessons of the crisis of Chakmagate show that the contradictions of NPM are open secrets amongst our colleagues, staff, and students, and are more vulnerable to challenge than we might think. People from across campus communities experience the myriad problems of NPM every day, and many are just waiting to be engaged in resistance to these trends. For faculty associations, this can start by taking control of the discourse and the flow of financial and administrative data. Audit the auditors. Produce your own budget analysis. Address your colleagues as colleagues—committed to their professional vocations and their studies and not to being mid-level employees. Work on examining and engaging your Board of Governors. Encourage your senators to participate actively and critically in Senate. Call on your leaders to serve your interests, to communicate, and to explain their decisions.

We at UWOFA firmly believe there is a role for faculty associations to play in pushing back against management strategies that strip us of our autonomy and academic freedom and in strengthening collegial governance at our respective universities. In the words of Kim Solga, associate professor of English and Writing Studies at Western, we urge our colleagues across the university sector to "hold tight to this fight." ■

*Alison Hearn is the past president of UWOFA. Vanessa Brown is UWOFA's Communications Officer.*

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# Faculty awakened to the university governance crisis in BC

Mark Mac Lean and Michael Conlon

The resignation of Arvind Gupta reveals worrying trends and damaging ideas about Canadian university governance.

*La démission d'Arvind Gupta révèle des tendances inquiétantes et des idées fausses quant à la gouvernance universitaire canadienne.*



The sudden resignation of a president is a disruptive event for any university, but when the reasons are shrouded in mystery and intrigue, the university has a severe governance crisis on its hands. On the afternoon of Friday August 7, 2015, during the dog days of summer, UBC announced that President Arvind Gupta had resigned, ostensibly to return to his life as a computer science professor. The announcement began an awakening of UBC's faculty to the fact that transparency and accountability had long ceased to be central principles in the governance of the university.

Indeed, collegial governance had been eroding at UBC for many years, as it has at other universities across Canada. As more information came to light, many realized that President Gupta had been ousted, in part, because he intended to strengthen collegial governance at UBC. It is also now clear that President Gupta's avowed policy to move significant resources from secondary activities to support the university's core research and teaching missions seemed to threaten some members of the Board, including the chair, and some members of the administration. However, by the time a grassroots group of faculty members started the peti-

tion that ultimately led to the vote of no-confidence in the Board of Governors in March of this year, the issues under scrutiny were much larger than President Gupta's resignation: a profound anger has grown as faculty have lost faith that UBC's Board of Governors understood the nature of our academic mission and how to act in the best interests of that mission.

UBC's publicly visible crisis is simply a bellwether of the widespread struggle to protect our institutions from external—and indeed, internal—interests that seek to reshape our academic mission to focus on the narrow development of human capital and the creation of marketable innovation and research. The erosion of collegial governance through administrative actions and policies designed to minimize faculty power is deliberate, as evidenced by Peter MacKinnon's *University Leadership and Public Policy in the Twenty-first Century*—a cynical, but influential, book read widely by Canadian university administrators and government policy makers. As faculty have effectively withdrawn from their formal governance roles on university boards and senates, the collapse of collegial governance has accelerated.

To a great extent, faculty have been acquiescing to these changes with little resistance or comment. Recent events at a number of universities, however, give some hope that faculty are awakening to the situation and to their power to change the course of their declining influence over academic governance of their universities.

It is likely that the seriousness of the governance crisis at UBC would have remained hidden after President Gupta's resignation had it not been for an academic blog post written on the day of Gupta's resignation by Professor Jennifer Berdahl. Berdahl, an expert in gender and diversity in the workplace and the Montalbano Professor of Leadership Studies in the Sauder School of Business, asked whether Gupta had lost a "masculinity contest" with the Board of Governors. While normally Professor Berdahl's blog would be read by the relatively small academic community to which she belongs, this post was picked up by a widely-read Vancouver paper, *The Georgia Straight*. Shortly after, then-Board Chair Mr. John Montalbano made the ill-advised decision to call Professor Berdahl to express his concerns about her post.

What followed this phone call was a bizarre series of events that culminated with an investigation by the Honorable Lynn Smith, Q.C., and, ultimately, the resignation of Mr. Montalbano as Chair of the Board of Governors. Ms. Smith concluded that UBC had failed in its active obligation to protect Professor Berdahl's academic freedom. Ms. Smith's investigation also concluded that the combined actions of those involved had the effect of interfering with Professor Berdahl's academic freedom even though no individual, on their own, had interfered with her rights as a faculty member. While the UBC Board and administration have publicly acknowledged UBC's failure to protect Professor Berdahl's academic freedom, they have not yet acknowledged the interference component of Ms. Smith's findings. This is in spite of a clarifying conversation between the parties and Ms. Smith herself. As this issue is the subject of an ongoing grievance, we will not comment further here.

### *How did the Smith investigation help reveal the depth of the governance crisis at UBC?*

Through all of this, the University of British Columbia Faculty Association's (UBCFA) goal was to determine if there was due process leading up to the Board accepting President Gupta's resignation. Before the Smith investigation, the Board had taken the position that the resignation was a "personnel matter" and it refused to provide any details of the events leading up to the Board's August 7, 2015 decision to accept President Gupta's resignation. During Smith's investigation, however, a set of emails surfaced that discussed "Special

Committees" that were part of the process that led to the resignation. While not much to go on, these emails became the basis for a set of freedom of information (FOI) requests submitted by the UBCFA. These seemingly mundane requests about Board committees ultimately turned out to be critical in piecing together key actions taken by Board members and the Board around President Gupta's resignation.

UBC's responses to these requests did not include any information about the "Special Committees" that were mentioned in the emails the UBCFA had in its possession, and UBC insisted no such committees existed. However, documents UBC released inadvertently in January 2016 demonstrated that such committees had indeed been struck as part of the "resignation" process. This justified the UBCFA's concern that in the matter of President Gupta's resignation, the Board of Governors had acted via secret, *in camera* processes that did not meet the standards of best practices for public bodies in British Columbia. Worse, it became apparent that such a lack of public accountability was the normal mode of operation for the UBC Board of Governors. The UBCFA became concerned that the actions of the Board could expose the University to charges of contravention of the *University Act* and provincial privacy and access to information laws.

Moreover, President Gupta's performance seems to have been evaluated personally by Mr. John Montalbano, together with a few other Board members. The formal committees of the Board that would usually participate in a review of the president appear to have been bypassed, and it is not clear whether the Board as a whole was ever apprised of the entire process initiated by Mr. Montalbano—most of which seems to have occurred via undocumented and unreported meetings.

It is also known from the email record that Mr. Montalbano arranged a meeting with President Gupta and Mr. Greg Peet, another member of the Board of Governors, for a "confidential discussion, not captured on email." This was the last meeting recorded in President Gupta's schedule before his resignation on August 7. The exact nature and content of this meeting is not in the records released, even in redacted form. It seems certain that this meeting precipitated President Gupta's resignation, and yet there appears to be no record of it and it is not at all clear how it was

reported to the Board. That any meeting with such a strong outcome could happen without any record—indeed, this appears to have been Mr. Montalbano and Mr. Peet’s intention—raises concern about how much UBC business is not accessible to the public through FOI requests. It is important to note that none of these clandestine actions of the Board would likely ever have come to light had UBC not mistakenly included a number of PDF’s containing compromising information in their response to the FOI request.

More generally, Board procedures appear not to be documented. Instead, they seem to be maintained as some form of “oral knowledge” managed by either the Board Secretary or the University Counsel, depending on the matter. Board practices or governance procedures, judging from the limited documents available, appear to be run at the whim of the Chair and Board Secretary, with little or no oversight. This is certainly inconsistent with a notion of open and transparent university governance, and seems to leave important governance processes open to abuse.

Faculty members (and the public) expect the UBC Board of Governors to operate in the best interests of the university, *and to be seen to be doing so*. The requirement for transparency and accountability is a formal one, spelled out explicitly in the Letter of Mandate from the BC Provincial Government. The failure to meet this requirement was certainly an important factor for faculty who lost confidence in the Board of Governors.

### *What really precipitated President Gupta’s resignation?*

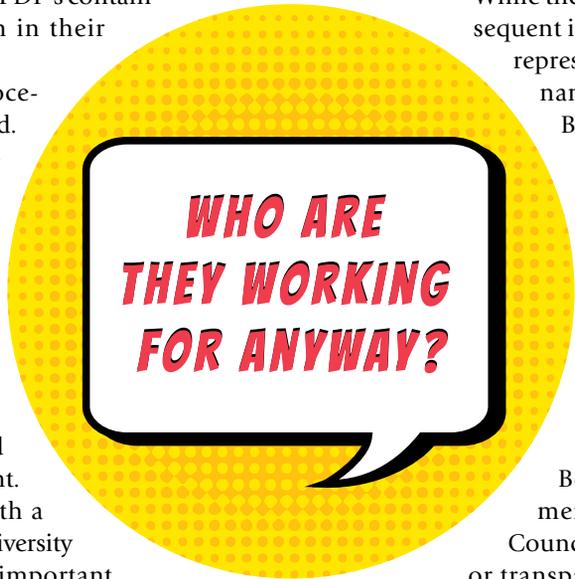
While the answer is not entirely known, it is clear from the available email exchange between Mr. Montalbano and Dr. Gupta, that a key point of strategic disagreement was Dr. Gupta’s plan to refocus the university administration on the

university’s core functions of research and teaching, and the disappointment of some unidentified “key stakeholders,” notably the deans and senior executives, with this plan. Faculty became deeply concerned by the evidence that a culture exists in UBC whereby the Chair of the Board is personally involved with managing university personnel and their concerns, and whereby backchannels exist between the Board and the administration that bypass formal governance structures. Individual contacts between Board members and academic administrators other than the president should be limited to those directly sanctioned by the president. Beyond displaying a lack of respect for the presidency, such backchannel activities demonstrate just how far collegial principles are from the minds of those involved in top-level university governance.

While the Gupta affair at UBC and the subsequent imbroglio over academic freedom represent a perfect storm of failed governance, the problem of governance at British Columbia’s research universities is structural. Though it is common in other provinces for the provincial government to appoint individuals to Boards of Governors, BC’s system is uniquely politicized. BC is the only province in which legislation assures that direct government appointees will always have a working majority on Boards of Governors. All appointments follow a secretive Order in Council process with no public scrutiny or transparency and all appointments are signed off by the Premier.

This politicized process has had predictable results. In 2015, nine of the 11 provincially appointed UBC Board members were BC Liberal Party donors. These nine individuals have contributed a combined \$137,395 to the party since 2005, and a tenth appointee donated money through a personal corporation. The provincial appointees were also prominent in corporations that in turn donated to the BC Liberal party, bringing contributions connected to these Board members to a total of \$387,274.

At the University of Victoria, Board Member Ida Chong, a former Liberal Cabinet Minister of Advanced Education, was appointed to the Board almost immediately after she lost her seat in the 2013 provincial election. At the University of Northern British Columbia, the Board



***WHO ARE  
THEY WORKING  
FOR ANYWAY?***

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of Governors, by a narrow 7-6 vote, recently appointed former Conservative cabinet minister James Moore as Chancellor. Elsewhere in Canada, universities generally appoint well-respected and non-controversial individuals to the largely ceremonial position of Chancellor. By contrast, Moore is an extremely controversial figure within the university sector given that he was the federal Minister-in-charge when grant agency budgets were cut, and the voices of federal scientists were muzzled.

All of this begs the question: in whose interest are these governors working? Patronage appointees are of course capable of working in the broader interest of a university, but the current appointment system should give student, faculty, and community members pause to consider who is really running their institutions.

In addition to the transparency and accountability challenges of Boards of Governors, BC's universities are also seeing an increasing constriction of collegial governance—in both spirit and letter. The common pattern in these controversies is that governments and senior administrators are slowly backing away from the academic model of collegial governance, in which faculty have meaningful input into the academic management of universities.

This burgeoning shift in the model of collegial governance finds explicit voice in Peter MacKinnon's *University Leadership and Public Policy in the Twenty-First Century*. MacKinnon has, in effect, written a manifesto designed to encourage and support efforts to blunt the role of faculty unions in protecting and, in some circumstances, expanding the scope of collegial governance. MacKinnon's ideas have had considerable sway as a clarion call to reign in faculty unions and he has made numerous presentations to senior university administrators across the country on his particular views on governance and faculty unions.

MacKinnon's treatise for university administrators boils down to a few simple (and simplistic) principles:

- i) Faculty unions have become too powerful (read: successful) and have been able to enshrine collegial governance provisions in collective agreements. In MacKinnon's view collective agreements are no place for collegial governance and these provisions should be removed in bargaining when possible and never be bargained into new agreements. MacKinnon goes further to argue that anyone active within their faculty union should be excluded from all aspects of collegial governance, and tenure and promotion committees.

- ii) Working conditions for faculty are so advantageous and generous that faculty have no need for the protections offered by unions. He further argues that labour legislation and human rights codes have become so robust that any concerns faculty have could be addressed through these legislative protections.

- iii) Intimately linked to this argument against unionization, MacKinnon also argues that two of the defining features of academic work—academic freedom and tenure—should be revisited. MacKinnon argues, in a familiar trope, that academic freedom has become too robust and the only way to save it is to allow university presidents to reign it in. He also suggests that university presidents should have more control over hiring, tenure, and promotion, of both faculty and deans. MacKinnon further argues: "The question is fairly asked and renewed, whether tenure serves an important public policy piece in Canada in the twenty-first century" (150).

MacKinnon's views are worth reviewing in this context, not because they are new or particularly compelling, but because they are a coherent registry of oft murmured but rarely articulated ideas about faculty unions in Canada. Employers complaining about robust workplace rights is as old as collective bargaining itself, so we should not be surprised when a university administrator expresses these types of views. MacKinnon's real objection seems to be that effective faculty unions restrict the freedom of administrators and governing boards to roll back collegiality and impose their own vision on universities. His unspoken and authoritarian assumption is that administrators and governors—simply by dint of the positions they hold—are the only legitimate guardians of academic excellence and good governance.

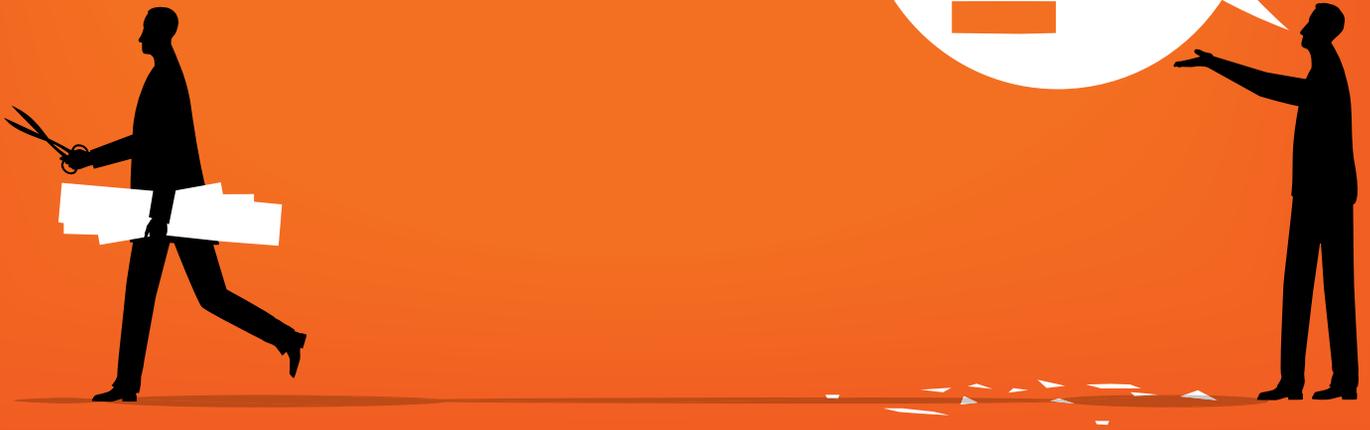
But as the Gupta case and the ongoing challenges in university governance in BC clearly demonstrate, if the power of administrators and governors is allowed to go unchecked, the principles of accountability and transparency—and indeed the integrity of the university—are at risk. The adversarial approach espoused by MacKinnon toward collegial governance and faculty unions therefore exacerbate rather than solve the problems he purports to address. ■■

*Mark Mac Lean is President of the University of British Columbia Faculty Association. Michael Conlon is the Executive Director of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations—British Columbia.*

# Obscuring transparency and silencing dissent:

## CARLETON UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Root Gorelick



An account of attacks on openness and deliberation by someone at the centre of the governance controversy.

*Un compte rendu des attaques contre l'ouverture et la réflexion, rédigé par une personne qui se trouve au centre du débat sur la gouvernance.*

Transparency and accountability have become murkier by the month on Carleton University's Board of Governors. The Board's open sessions are now "open" in only the most Orwellian sense. Academic freedom in university governance has been gutted. Governance is no longer collegial. Tyranny of the majority has been memorialized in the Board's rules. In the three years since I became a duly elected faculty member on Carleton's Board of Governors, the Board has pushed through two new versions of a code of conduct; introduced new bylaws that centralized power and made governance far more opaque; and intimidated internal board members (faculty, staff, and student members).

Upon becoming a board member, it was apparent to me that the Board did many important and relevant things for

the university community. However, the members of that community seldom had any clue about the Board's actions. Therefore, I started a blog about open sessions of the Board (<https://carletonbogblog.wordpress.com/>) with simple ground rules: I only blogged about open sessions; I never blogged about closed sessions nor confidential documents; and I always mentioned that blog posts were my personal perspective and were not a surrogate for official minutes.

At first, my blogging was tolerated by the university administration and chair of the Board. Over time, attacks related to my blog website increased: from threats to remove me from the Board, to threats from human resources regarding my employment, to the shuttering of my teaching and research website in retaliation for my writing. During my tenure as a board member, many open session items have

been moved to closed sessions to restrict public access to deliberations. Blanket gag orders were imposed on all governors. The Board's Executive opted to no longer follow their own bylaws and procedures. People seconding motions from the floor were harassed. Guards were posted throughout the building where board meetings occurred, only allowing in people who had been pre-approved by the Board chair.

In the following, I describe the attacks on transparency, accountability, and collegiality by the Carleton Board of Governors, followed by ideas for fixing these transgressions.

### STUDENT PROTEST OVER TUITION

On March 30, 2015, the Board embarked on its annual approval of tuition increases. Seven students were in the audience for this agenda item. When the subject of tuition increases was broached by the Board chair, the seven (later eight) students began a peaceful protest. The open session was successfully disrupted without a vote on tuition.

The Board had previously held an annual "open forum" where anybody could sign-up to give a 10-minute presentation on whatever matter they deemed important. The university president, with approval by the Board chair, opted to cancel such events. The university president can invite people to present matters to the Board, but the university community no longer gets a chance to address the governors on its own volition. Peaceful protest is thus the only means for community members to intervene in Board deliberations without the approval of senior administration.

Despite the peaceful student protest, the Board of Governors still needed to decide on tuition for the upcoming academic year. This was sufficiently important to not simply be delegated to the Board's Executive Committee, a body that contains no internal board members (no faculty, staff, nor students). Board bylaws allowed for a special session to be called so long as six governors concurred. Six governors did call a special session to discuss tuition increases, suggesting that students be invited to make a formal presentation, in addition to the one-sided presentation by the university's Vice-President Finance. Although the six governors followed board procedures perfectly, the special session was never convened. The Board's Executive said that only the university secretary is allowed to send out the agenda for board meetings and would not do so for this special session on tuition fees.

In response to the call for a special session, the Governance Committee chair denounced the student protestors, writing that the peaceful protest:

*...has no place in a lawful democratic society—it is the tactics of Brownshirts and Maoists. It has no place in a university—it is the antithesis of free speech.*

Calling the protestors Nazis was widely condemned, but the Governance Committee chair refused to apologize.

The Board's Executive doubled-down after the March 30, 2015 student protest by closing open sessions, a decision that was never approved by the full Board. Open sessions in April and June of 2015 were convened without any visitors allowed, other than those invited by the university president. I unsuccessfully tried to bring a reporter from the campus newspaper to the June 2015 open session. Having a reporter present would have been useful because of the dramatic procedural defects at that meeting.

Since April 2015, visitors to open sessions have had to request written permission to attend at least a day in advance. The Board chair decides who is admitted. Those allowed in to the open session have their name and photo placed on a list and have to pass through three security checkpoints. Interested community members were therefore treated as potential criminals, rather than participants in an important democratic process.

The Board live-streams some (but not all) open sessions to a remote room on campus. This allows audience members to hear the proceeding, but only to see and hear things from a fixed perspective (one fixed camera and only comments from those whose microphones are on). Campus security has been stationed outside the live-stream room on some occasions, adding to the overall atmosphere of exclusion.

The Board also curtails transparency by mandating that all committee meetings be in camera and the minutes of the Executive Committee are always confidential, even though a Freedom of Information request showed that virtually none of the material therein is really confidential at all.

### BOARD VIOLATES ITS OWN BYLAWS IN CHANGING ITS BYLAWS

At the June 25, 2015 open session, the Board tried pushing through bylaw changes to exclude union officers from serving as governors. The rationale given was that union officers had an inherent conflict of interest ratifying their own collective agreements and adjudicating grievances brought by members of their bargaining units. These rationales are specious as only the Board's Executive Committee, which does not include any internal or unionized members, ratifies collective agreements and union members do not adjudicate grievances. It has been this way for decades.

Nevertheless, the exclusionary bylaw change was introduced, seconded, and limited debate and discussion occurred. Then the Board chair announced that there would not be a vote on the bylaw changes at the open session, but voting would be deferred to an email poll over the following four days. Many external governors were absent at this meeting, while all internal governors were present. Bylaw changes require a two-thirds supermajority, so the motion may have failed if voted upon at the open session.

Board bylaws require that for special resolutions, which include bylaw changes, voting only be done by board members physically in attendance and those participating

via teleconference. The bylaws did not allow for electronic voting on bylaw changes. The motion calling for an email vote thus constituted a bylaw change, requiring a two-thirds supermajority and five-day notice requirement, but was tabled anyway. The motion for an email vote passed, but with less than the two-thirds supermajority required for a vote of this type. I raised these points of order at the open session on June 25<sup>th</sup>, but was dismissed. I raised the points of order again via email on June 26<sup>th</sup>, but was again dismissed, and the email vote began an hour later. This was so egregious that I extensively blogged about the out-of-order vote over the next two days. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, after the email voting had been ongoing for three days and was supposed to continue for one more day, the bylaw vote was unilaterally cancelled by the Board Chair. Curiously, the email voting also included a vote on whether to require that board members sign the code of conduct (more on this later - the code was essentially a gag order on sitting and past governors). That vote was also cancelled, meaning that, at least through summer of 2015, the Board still maintained that signing the code of conduct was voluntary.

My blogs at the end of June 2015 regarding the email vote on bylaw changes got me in trouble, eliciting the threats to remove me from the Board, the unspecified disciplinary threats from human resources, and the termination of my research and teaching website on Carleton's server that I mentioned earlier.

Fearing for my job, I punctually issued a written apology to the person who was identified to me as being offended, as well as a public apology that is still posted on my blog. I did not divulge anything confidential nor breach fiduciary duty. I was also accused of defamation, so I retracted the alleged offensive portions of my blog posts. Since my goal was never to offend anybody personally, I immediately and sincerely apologized directly to the individual. What was offensive? I accused members and advisors of the board of using tactics of "Brownshirts and Maoists," without attributing that three-word phrase to the Governance Committee chair.

Ultimately, Carleton wanted me to destroy my personal blog.

The day after I complied with the order to redact statements and to post the public apology, Carleton University locked-down my teaching and research website hosted on a university server, without informing me. Later I learned that this was done by order of the university's chief information officer, with approval of the university president. More than one month later, the university agreed to restore my teaching and research website, but never did so, supposedly due to some unnamed technical problems.

It is one thing to crucify my academic freedom with respect to my actions in service of the university. But it is much more egregious to trample my research and teaching resources in retaliation for this same university service.

I am still being silenced on my new teaching and

research website, now on WordPress, by being explicitly prohibited from including any links to the Carleton server. I can only infer that this is because I refused to destroy my personal blog. I believe there are limits to what I can be forced to do by the university administration, and those limits are set by the principle of academic freedom.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The most insidious provision in the new code of conduct passed on January 21, 2016 effectively imposes tyranny of the majority and silences dissent by requiring members to:

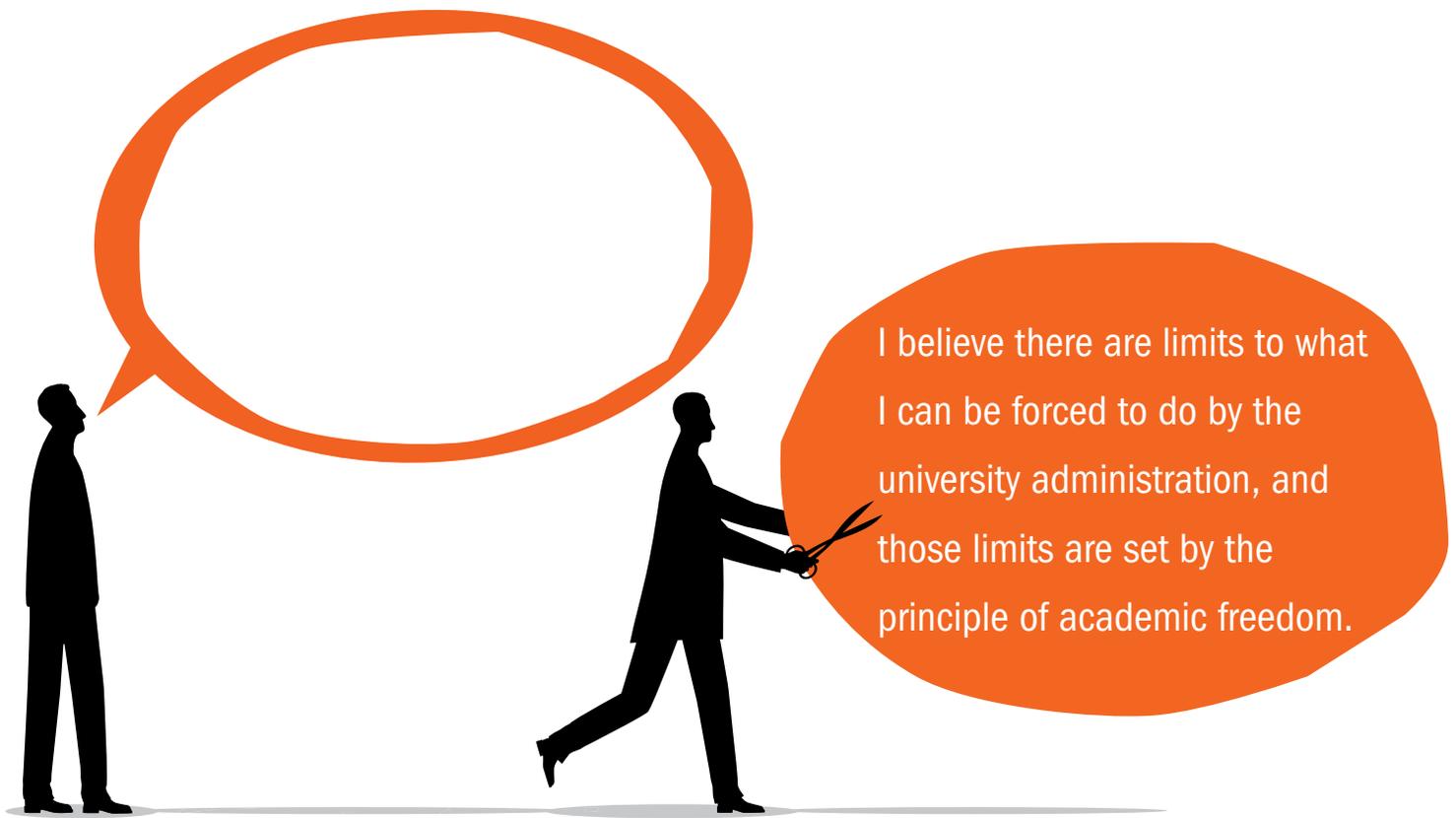
*Support all actions taken by the Board of Governors even when in a minority position on such actions. Respect the principle of Board collegiality, meaning an issue may be debated vigorously, but once a decision is made it is the decision of the entire Board, and is to be supported.*

This provision may be typical of corporate governance in the private sector, but has no place in academic governance, where academic freedom should be a guiding value. To be clear, the Carleton University Board of Governors operated effectively for decades without curtailing the academic freedom of its members.

Compelled support for a majority position is the antithesis of collegiality. Collegial means that all governors should have equal power and freedom, even those who disagree with the majority position. In order to respect the principle of collegiality, one must enshrine space for dissent. There is nothing collegial about the hierarchical, authoritarian, corporate style of governance now at Carleton. Only external governors are allowed on the Board's Executive Committee or allowed to chair any committees. This gives them extraordinary power to shape the Board agenda and its ultimate decisions. By banning dissent and minority positions, the code of conduct further empowers external governors on the Executive Committee.

The new code of conduct also requires all members to maintain confidentiality in perpetuity. In effect, no one can ever know who disagreed with the Board's decisions or why they disagreed.

The code also requires that, "Governors must...refrain from taking any action that is damaging to the reputation of the University." Given the numerous critiques of the new code of conduct by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), Carleton unions and associations, and several journalists, the Board has damaged Carleton's reputation by passing this new code of conduct. They are now in violation of the very code they introduced, by dint of their attack on transparency that is repellent to observers both outside and inside the university.



## NEW BYLAWS

On March 21, 2016, the Board passed embarrassing new bylaws that codify the code of conduct and officially refer to the university president as the “Chief Executive Officer.” Two weeks after the bylaws passed, the Board Chair rationalized the bylaw changes in the name of, “the integration of essential components of the previously separate Bylaws and Board Procedures document into one document”, followed by, “the creation of...new Rules of Procedures for the Board and its committees”. If the purpose of the new bylaws were really to integrate bylaws and procedures, then why were the Rules of Procedure not provided to the full board until the day of the vote? This implies the Board once again violated its own bylaws in passing bylaw changes because the five-day notice requirement was not met for the Rules of Procedure.

The Board also violated reasonable standards of process while considering amendments to the new bylaw. I proposed 33 amendments, one of the first of which was to reduce the number of external at-large governors from 18 to eight. To the best of my recollection, the following dialogue ensued:

Board Chair: *Is there a seconder?*

Secunder: *[raises their hand]*

Board Chair: *Are you serious? Do you understand what you seconded?*

Secunder: *Yes.*

Board Chair: *Let me make sure you understand what you just seconded. Do you understand the amendment?*

Secunder: *Yes.*

Board Chair: *Then could you please repeat the amendment?*

Secunder: *The proposal is to reduce the number of at-large community governors from 18 to 8.*

I could understand the Board Chair’s incredulity had the seconder been an at-large external governor, who may have been jeopardizing their own position, but the seconder was a student governor. The above exchange was interrupted by an external at-large governor on the phone, who said that the amendment “violated democratic principles.” After being lambasted by the Board Chair and board member on the phone, the seconder reluctantly withdrew their second of the motion. There was thus no further discussion and no vote. No parliamentary procedures allow for such harassment of seconders.

The new bylaws now allow for email votes on bylaw changes. This removes incentive for debating motions, as it severs the link between discussion and decision, putting the latter at a remove from the former. I proposed an amendment stipulating that only board members who heard the discussion and debates could participate in subsequent electronic votes, but that amendment was defeated. Thus, the Board will never have to listen to dissent, or respond to reasonable concerns of governors with opposing views.

The new bylaws severely restrict eligibility of internal board members in two new ways. First, they require candidates running for election to the board to first sign the code of conduct. Second, the bylaws now include a provision that the university secretary will run elections and have full non-appealable power to decide on candidate qualifications. Recently the university secretary wrote that a candidate for the Board could not campaign on any issues, such as tuition freezes and increased funding for mental health, because these would constitute ignoring discussion and debate in favour of a pre-formed decision. Note that this is exactly the sort of pre-judging required of any board member voting electronically without hearing discussion and debate. The university secretary threatened to disqualify candidates



unless they redacted all platform issues from their campaign materials. Censoring of candidates before they are even elected is deeply worrying.

### REVIVING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND COLLEGIAL GOVERNANCE

A first step to reviving transparency, accountability, and collegial governance at Carleton is to rescind the new code of conduct and bylaws. The bylaws could be declared null and void because the Board's Executive failed to provide five-day notice of an integral part of the new bylaws before voting on them, namely only providing the new 'Rules of Procedure' on the day of the bylaw vote. The new code of conduct is self-contradictory insofar as passing it severely damaged the university's reputation. The new bylaws and code of conduct could also be declared null and void because they were approved by an improperly constituted Board. The old bylaws specified that approval of new board members was strictly under the purview of the full Board. Yet all new board members for 2015/2016 were only approved by the Board's Executive Committee. This also implies that any changes to the "Statement of Duties" (the predecessor of the code of conduct) or requirements to sign it passed during the 2015/2016 Board term should be declared invalid. Carleton's Board thus has a simple procedural remedy for clearing the decks of all the damaging changes approved

during their 2015/2016 term, a solution that requires no more than a ruling from the Chair.

The procedural and administrative blunders of the past year point to the biggest threat to collegiality on Carleton's Board: it's deeply unbalanced composition. The Board is currently composed of the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor (or CEO), 20 external members (18 at-large community members plus two alumni) and 10 internal members (two faculty, two senate representatives, two non-academic staff, two undergraduates, and two graduate students). The two-to-one overrepresentation of external-to-internal members induces power imbalances, most evident in the fact that the Board chairs, the Board vice-chairs, and all committee chairs and vice-chairs are external governors. The Board's Executive Committee has never had any representation from internal governors, thereby excluding the voices of the campus community. Tyranny of the external governor majority would be eliminated if there were equal numbers of external and internal governors, which would still leave the administration with a slight voting advantage because the chancellor and vice-chancellor can vote.

Nothing in the Carleton University Act precludes equal numbers of external and internal board members, but only specifies 30 governors plus the chancellor and vice-chancellor. I therefore propose that there be 15 external governors (12 at-large community members plus three alumni) plus 15 internal governors. Each constituency could be given full authority to choose their own representatives to the Board, without censoring of candidates by the Board Secretary or Executive.

With today's technology, all open sessions of the Carleton's board could be digitally recorded and a public web-link provided. Let the public see what the Board does.

All board committee meetings should be open to the public unless there is a well-elucidated reason for moving to closed session. Minutes of all committee meetings, including the Executive Committee, should be open-session documents, posted on a public website immediately following the meeting and not several months later.

These are but a few of the possible solutions available to the Carleton University Board of Governors. The point is that the slide into closed-door, autocratic governance is not only stoppable; it can be reversed. Collegial governance can be restored. The success of Carleton as a university—and its reputation among peers—depends on our ability to create an open, transparent, and accountable Board of Governors. **AM**

*Root Gorelick is a Professor of Biology at Carleton University, and (for now) member of the Board of Governors.*

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

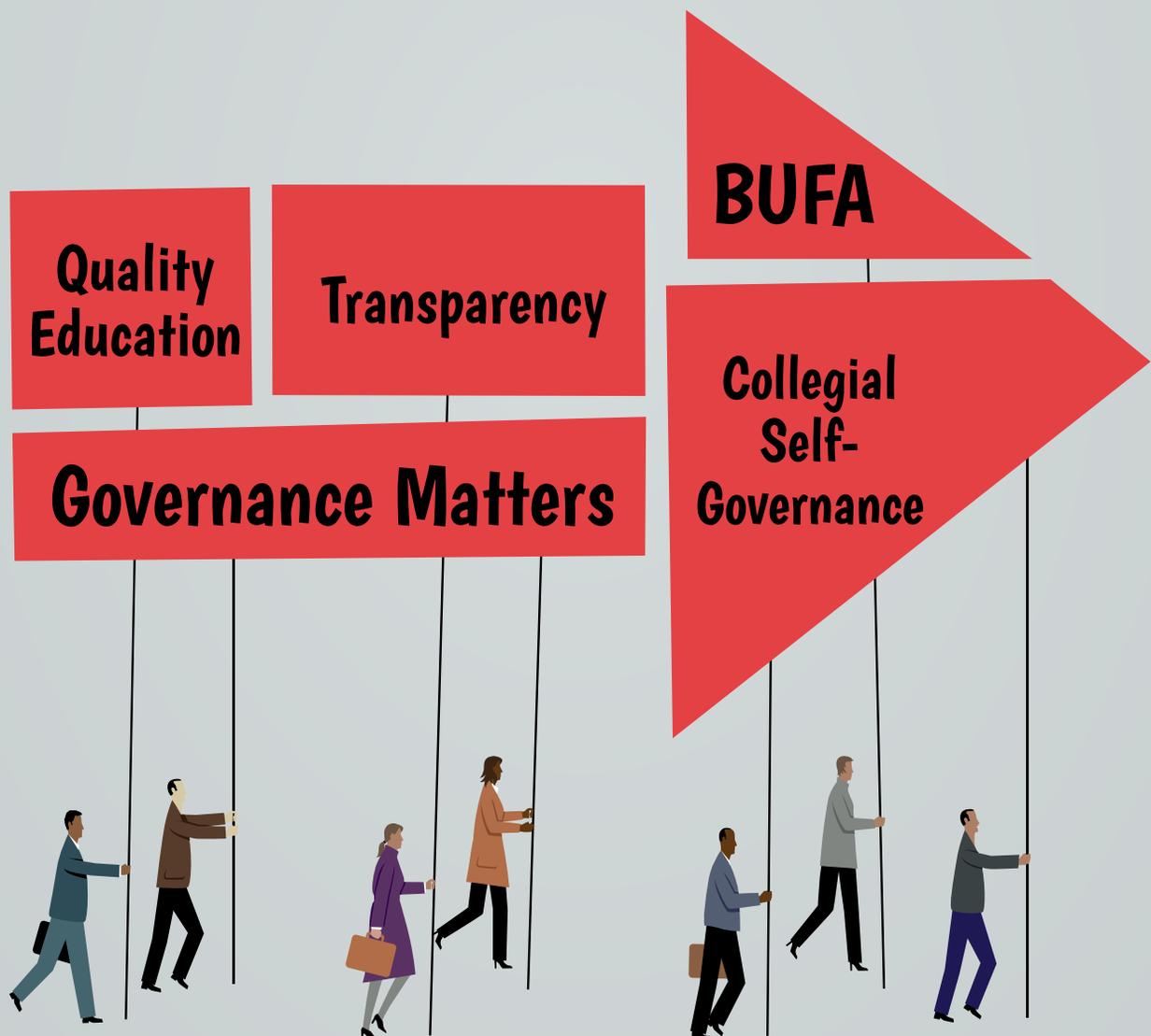
Many thanks to supportive colleagues at Carleton—students, staff, and faculty—and throughout North America, with special thanks to the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

# Defending collegial governance at Brock University

Larry Savage

The successful campaign against admin overreach at Brock University carries lessons for faculty everywhere.

*Le succès de la campagne contre les pouvoirs excessifs de l'administration de l'Université Brock est une leçon pour les professeurs de partout.*



In September 2013, elected Senators at Brock University derailed a unilateral attempt by the institution's president to establish a process for reviewing and prioritizing academic programs outside of the university senate's purview.

The successful mobilization in opposition to the Presidential Taskforce, spearheaded by the Brock University Faculty Association (BUFA), offers a number of important lessons for faculty concerned about the state of collegial governance at their institution, the role faculty associations can play in defending against administrative end runs, and ultimately strengthening the democratic capacity of university senates.

#### BACKGROUND

On June 28, 2013, Brock University's president announced via email the establishment of a Presidential Taskforce on program review. Following in the footsteps of several other North American universities, Brock's president wanted the Taskforce to review and prioritize all of the university's programs (both academic and non-academic) using Robert C. Dickeson's now infamous book, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, as a guide. The hand-picked members of the Taskforce would be responsible for prioritizing the university's programs and identifying units for reduction in funding, phasing out, consolidation, or (in theory) enhancement. The Taskforce would then report its findings directly to the president, who, in turn, would ask Senate to act on the recommendations. The Taskforce held its meetings in secret, with no observer from the faculty association or other campus groups, and no record of minutes made public. The eleven-member committee included just three faculty members, and excluded representatives from the university's two largest faculties and the library.

From the outset, the BUFA leadership expressed deep reservations about both the process by which the Taskforce was formed and the substance and legitimacy of its work. The academic quality

Over the course of the next several months, it would successfully organize a campaign to dismantle the Taskforce and ensure that any review or prioritization of academic programs would be undertaken by Senate.

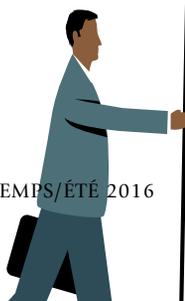
## Quality Education

of the university's programs was a matter for the Senate to judge, reasoned the faculty association. Moreover, the Taskforce was not representative, and lacked both transparency and time to consult properly with affected units. The Taskforce brushed aside these concerns and carried on with its work throughout the summer, stubbornly refusing to reform itself in response to criticism. Sensing growing opposition to the Taskforce from the broader university community, the BUFA Executive met to

consider its next move. Over the course of the next several months, it would successfully organize a campaign to dismantle the Taskforce and ensure that any review or prioritization of academic programs would be undertaken by Senate.

#### CAMPAIGN

As a Brock University senator and a member of the faculty association's executive, I played a central role in the campaign. What follows is my own take on the sequence of events that led to the derailing of the Presidential Taskforce. BUFA developed a two-pronged campaign approach. The first was educative. BUFA members received a series of communications from their union concerning the negative experience of Dickeson-inspired program review exercises at other institutions (namely the Universities of Guelph and Saskatchewan) and the potential negative impact of program review on academic offerings. Members also received updates on the unwillingness of the Taskforce to broaden its membership or conduct its work transparently. The president of BUFA regularly communicated with members through direct emails, newsletter columns, and face-to-face at general membership meetings and pre-Senate BUFA caucus meetings.



# Transparency

The second prong was organizational. A select group of senators received their first update on the President's Taskforce at a late summer meeting of the Senate's Governance Committee. Fortunately, a number of key union activists were elected to the Senate a year prior and four of them had been appointed by Senate to the strategically important Governance Committee which, among other things, plays a general oversight role of senatorial business. Individual union activists serving on the Governance Committee orchestrated the passage of two motions related to the review at the August 2013 meeting:

"The Senate respectfully requests that the President direct the members of the President's Special Task Force to stop their program review and prioritization of academic programs"; and

"The Senate respectfully requests that the President refer any matters concerning the review and/or prioritization of academic programs to Senate for timely consideration, decision and conduct".

The wording of the motions was strategic. While many BUFA members were sympathetic to the view that the program review and prioritization process was rotten no matter who conducted it, a sizeable number of faculty expressed support for a fair and transparent mechanism for reviewing programs. Because a majority of Senators could likely not be convinced to oppose any and all forms of program review, the motions were crafted in a way that could appeal to those who opposed specific aspects of the Presidential Taskforce. We knew that the votes of outright opponents of program review could be taken for granted.

The motions were also worded in a way that clearly asserted the Senate's purview over academic review, while deliberately using technical arguments and collegial language in order to give lower-level administrators a reason to support them. With the motions in hand, BUFA activists on the Governance Committee reached out to the other faculty and student members of the Committee in advance of the August 2013 meeting to make the case for why they should support the pair of motions. This advanced organizing gave BUFA activists a good sense for which arguments senators found most persuasive, thus validating the strategic choices made in crafting the motions.



In the end, the motions were adopted by the Governance Committee with only one member, the Provost, opposed (both the President and one Dean were absent, and an Associate Dean abstained). The motions thus became recommendations to Senate. The adoption of the motions represented a stunning victory and a strong rebuke to the president's Taskforce. BUFA activists knew, however, that they had been fortunate given specific absences at the committee, and that senior administrators would no doubt redouble efforts to defeat the recommended motions on the floor of Senate at its September 2013 meeting.

The faculty association's organizing efforts were ramped up in advance of the September meeting. Three leading members of the association's Executive, who also served as elected faculty representatives to Senate, divided up amongst themselves a list of all senators. They each agreed to contact the senators on their list, raise the issue of the program review, make the case for why it should be removed from the purview of the Presidential Taskforce, and determine how the senator was likely vote on the issue. In an effort to help inoculate senators against predictable arguments from senior administration for why the Taskforce should proceed, the organizers developed a question-and-answer handout, debunking the arguments of the opposing side. This inoculation effort proved extremely useful, especially for senators who initially indicated they were on the fence. Finally, BUFA wrote its membership and asked them

to contact the handful of Senators who they knew personally about supporting the recommendations of the Governance Committee to put an end to the Presidential Taskforce.

At a caucus meeting organized by BUFA prior to the September 2013 meeting of Senate, BUFA senators coordinated who would speak on the issue, what they would say, and in which order. All of the advance work paid off. Going into the meeting, BUFA knew it could count on at least 45 percent of senators to support the motions.

At the meeting itself, BUFA senators took turns dismantling the administration's arguments for why the

# BUFA

Taskforce was needed to review academic programs. The chair of the Board of Trustees and the dean of the Faculty of Humanities argued for the necessity of the Taskforce, but it was clear which way the wind was blowing. In the end, the motions passed with the support of nearly 60 percent of

senators. Student senators either abstained or lined up squarely behind the Taskforce for reasons that still remain unclear. Elected faculty representatives overwhelmingly supported the motion, while most senior administrators and representatives of the Board of Trustees on Senate lined up against it. Interestingly, the deans of the faculties not represented on the Presidential Taskforce broke ranks and supported the motions, along with one other associate dean. These defections demonstrated that the carefully-worded motions had appealed to a broad audience. Shortly after the vote, the president announced that his Taskforce would not continue to review academic programs and Senate asserted control over the process.

## LESSONS LEARNED

With the benefit of hindsight, the faculty association's campaign offers several important lessons for faculty members concerned about the future of university governance.

1. The stubbornness of senior administration can work in our favour. The reality is that Brock's senior administration could have clipped the wings of the faculty association's campaign if it had simply heeded early calls from the university community to reform the Taskforce's mandate and composition. Instead, it forged ahead, alienating key stakeholder groups in the process, helping to build support for BUFA's campaign and validating the need for the faculty association to become more invested in university governance. In fact, the three faculty association activists who spearheaded the campaign were the top vote-getters in the next round of Senate elections.
2. Faculty associations that narrowly restrict themselves to "policing the collective agreement" are reinforcing a false division between "workplace" issues and "academic" issues. BUFA made a strategic decision to actively engage on the question of university governance on the basis that the academic repercussions of a program review and prioritization process would have

a significant impact on the working conditions of faculty members. In short, academic issues are almost always workplace issues, even if they don't always appear to be at first glance.

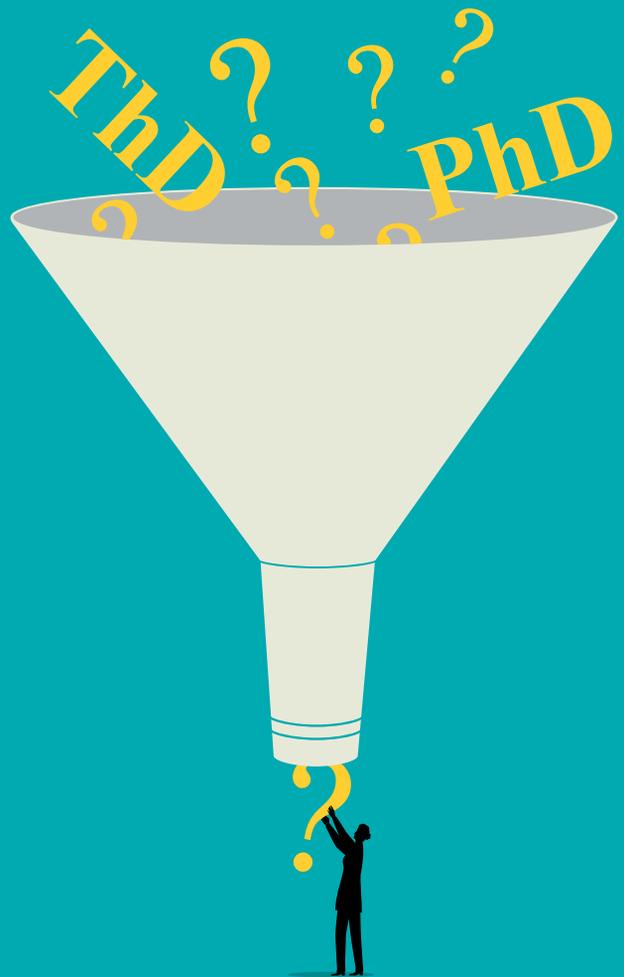
3. It's never too early to lay the groundwork for a successful campaign. Education, organization, and mobilization were key ingredients to BUFA's campaign. Luckily, the association did not need to start from scratch. A long-established practice of pre-Senate caucus meetings for BUFA Senators helped better coordinate floor strategy at Senate meetings. BUFA's existing e-newsletter was a reliable vehicle for communicating with its membership. The association's concerted effort in previous years to encourage BUFA activists to run for Senate, and take on key leadership roles within Senate, also helped immensely in navigating the terrain of university governance.
4. Vision must accompany strategy. Looking back on BUFA's campaign reveals some important limitations in the union's approach. The whole campaign centred on questions of process and legitimacy. This led to a debate about *who* should conduct a program review, and *how* the review should be conducted. The discussion never really tackled the important question of *why*. In effect, while BUFA managed to derail the Taskforce, it simply helped legitimize the review process as long as it was conducted by the Senate. Even so, the Senate's Ad hoc Committee on Program Review and Prioritization did a much better job at addressing the university community's desire for a process that was both transparent and fair. Its representatives were elected, each faculty was represented, its meetings were open, and the committee consulted widely before reporting. When the Ad hoc Committee finally reported in 2015, the university community seemed content with the results and Senate adopted the Ad hoc Committee's report virtually unanimously.
5. Faculty associations can play an important role in defending collegial self-governance. Shared-decision making is a defining characteristic of universities. If we dismiss Senates and related bodies as giant administrative rubber-stamps, we are in fact ceding governance of our institutions to university administrations and giving away an important and unique source of power for university professors and professional librarians. The fact is that we cannot rely solely on our collective agreements to beat back the consolidation of neoliberalism in Canadian universities.

University governance matters. Strategic interventions over questions of collegial self-governance are critically important to defending the standards of our profession, asserting control over our working lives, and defending the quality of education in postsecondary institutions. ■■

Larry Savage is Director of the Brock University Centre for Labour Studies.

# Questioning the quality of the quality assurance process in Ontario's Universities

**Donald Wiebe**



The case of the Toronto School of Theology raises serious questions about the misuse of quality assurance processes in the province.

*Le cas de l'école de théologie de Toronto soulève d'importantes questions concernant des erreurs graves dans les processus d'assurance de la qualité en Ontario.*

In the Fall of 2011, the Toronto School of Theology (TST) within the University of Toronto (UofT) underwent a rigorous quality assurance review of its academic programs by its theological accrediting agency in North America, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). In all, twenty-one scholars from university-related or free-standing accredited theological institutions with an intimate knowledge of North American theological education—in teams of three, one for each of the six member-institutions of the Toronto School of Theology, and one for the TST consortium itself—strongly affirmed the quality of the programs, including the Doctor of Theology (ThD) research degree program.

In January of 2012, the Toronto School of Theology was put through a second quality assurance review process by the University of Toronto—referred to as the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP). The UTQAP is governed by the Quality Assurance Framework of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the Quality Council) of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). Three scholars, one each from the University of Chicago,

University of Cambridge, and McGill University, were invited to undertake this cyclical degree program review, which included a two-day site visit (January 10 and 11, 2012).

The UTQAP external assessors were aware of the results of the earlier ATS assessment of TST's theological programs, but, nevertheless, declared the research ThD degree program to be "below standard" and advised that it be closed. However, they also admitted (in their April 10, 2012 report) both that their "visit was not focused on the quality of specific programs but rather on the institution that is TST, and its relationship to the University of Toronto," and that they had "lacked both the data and, during [their] visit, the time to do a full academic assessment ...[of TST's programs]" (p7). Despite this major discrepancy in the results of the two quality assurance reviews of TST's academic programs, the University not only unhesitatingly accepted the results of the UTQAP review process, but immediately informed TST to suspend admissions to its doctoral programs, including the ThD degree program.

The Toronto School of Theology, and individual faculty within it, brought to the University's attention that the UTQAP external assessors had admitted that they had not properly carried out a full review of TST's programs. Those concerns were not only ignored but evidence justifying those

review was used inappropriately—by both UofT and the leadership of the TST—to resolve a long-standing tension regarding the use of the PhD designation for the TST Doctor of Theology degree.

The Toronto School of Theology has over many years (since the early 1980s) requested the university to consider approving a change in nomenclature of its research doctoral degree program from ThD to PhD. As the Director of TST puts it, the PhD nomenclature is the recognized international standard for doctoral research degrees and is, therefore, a better credential in the academic job market. Frustrated by the lack of progress in this effort, TST permitted its ThD students to graduate with a PhD degree in theology by way of an existing PhD degree program it was administering for one of its member colleges. This in itself was an irritation to the university.

Moreover, the manner in which TST transferred ThD students to what the university seems to have perceived as a "rogue" PhD program further exacerbated the tension between the two institutions. Because the ThD is jointly granted by TST and the UofT, it is a government-funded program, whereas the PhD degree program is not, making the tuition costs for the PhD considerably higher than they were for the ThD program. In order to keep student debt to

To this day, the university has not informed the Academic Board as to whether or not the ThD degree

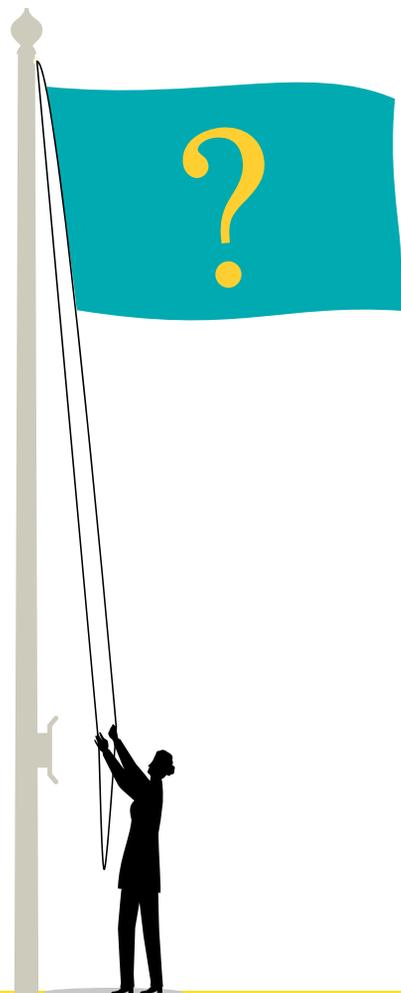
concerns was removed from the report. The university, that is, suggested that the external assessors delete the compromising comments about the limitations of the review. This was an extraordinary intervention by the university.

A different version of the report, with the problematic elements removed (dated April 26, 2012) was presented to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs and to the Academic Board as the basis for its actions against TST. Under pressure from the university, TST reluctantly agreed to suspend admission to its ThD program for the 2013-2014 academic year. Within weeks, however, the university withdrew its demand for such a suspension of admissions, even though it still claimed that the ThD was not up to standard. To this day, the university has not informed the Academic Board as to whether or not the ThD degree is up to standard, despite its obligations under the cyclical program review protocol to do so.

It is difficult to fully understand why the senior administration of a world-class university behaved in this manner, especially when the welfare of TST's students was at stake. Some sense can be made of this as a political maneuver when one recognizes that the UTQAP cyclical degree program

a minimum for ThD students who wished to graduate with the PhD degree, TST permitted students to transfer into the PhD program in the final year of their ThD degree program, thus reducing the individual student's costs significantly. Although this was a long-standing practice of which a succession of deans of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) had full knowledge, current senior university administrators were not pleased with the practice. The claim was made that the university would be greatly embarrassed should knowledge of this practice reach the office of the Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities. As the dean of SGS at that time explained the matter to me, not only did the university want this practice stopped, it believed that TST needed to be "taught a lesson" about proper academic practice.

As already noted, TST had not only passed a rigorous external review of its degree programs but had also committed itself to further improvements of its ThD degree program recommended by the ATS assessors. One of these recommendations was that TST bring to an end the practice of transferring ThD students to the rogue PhD degree program. This gave increased urgency to TST's campaign for a conjoint



It was, of course, inappropriate for the university to have agreed to use the cyclical degree program review process for any other objective than the assessment of academic programs as set out by the COU's Quality Council. The admission that TST and the UofT diverted the attention of the UTQAP external assessors from program assessment to resolution of the PhD problem accounts for the fact that they had neither the time nor the data to do a proper review of TST's degree programs. Removing that admission from the external assessors' report amounts to deliberately hiding the fact that the UTQAP assessors were not in a position to provide academic justification for their claims from the University's Committee on Academic Policy and Programs and from the university's Academic Board. The agreement between TST and the UofT, therefore, led to an unjustified negative judgment about the ThD which, to this day, has not been corrected.

The university not only undermined the credibility of TST's ThD degree program, it has also refused to consider TST's original request for a change of nomenclature of its ThD degree program to a PhD in theological studies—presumably on the grounds that the ThD was not up to standard as a research doctoral degree program. But the university was willing to approve a “brand new” PhD degree program in theological studies and it created a joint TST/UofT committee

is up to standard, despite its obligations under the cyclical program review protocol to do so.

UofT/TST PhD degree program in theological studies. Consequently, TST requested to use the government mandated UTQAP cyclical degree program review process as an occasion to consider that proposal, and the University accepted the offer. Here is how the director of TST described this decision in a letter to the teaching staff in the member colleges of TST:

*“Unlike most quality assurance reviews under the UTQAP, which focus their attention on program objectives, admissions, curriculum, assessment of learning, resources, and quality indicators, the report which we received for TST was overwhelmingly concerned with TST's relation to the University. This was an unusual approach, but it came about in large part because we ourselves had invited it. With the University's agreement, we were using UTQAP to test the possibility of a conjoint PhD and MA, and this purpose really did require the reviewers to deal with larger issues, not just the character of our existing programming” (October 3, 2012; emphasis added).*

to create the new program. That committee, however, did not in reality create a new program, despite claims to the contrary. A comparative analysis of the current ThD degree program and the new PhD degree program proposed by the university shows that the latter is merely a slightly modified version of the former with no substantially different program requirements and no substantially different program outcomes. The PhD degree program makes use of all the current ThD program courses and teaching staff.

All of this was brought to the university's attention—and to the attention of the Quality Council of COU and the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities—with the request that the University recognize both that the ThD was unjustifiably claimed to be below standard, and that it agree to a change of nomenclature of the ThD degree to the PhD. The university ignored the evidence showing that their proposed PhD degree program was not a new program, and it proceeded to have the proposal considered by external assessors under the New Degree Program Approval Protocol of its UTQAP framework. Because the PhD is not actually a new program, this action was again a misuse of the UTQAP process that further harmed TST's ThD students. Because the university claimed the

PhD was a brand-new degree, current ThD students were not given the opportunity to graduate with the PhD. They will now be at a significant disadvantage in the academic job market against new, incoming students who will be graduating from the same program, but who now have the PhD degree.

One might have expected the TST administrators (and the chief executive officers of its member colleges) to have balked at this process and to have protected its own ThD students by insisting that they be allowed to graduate with the

actions. Without public scrutiny of university administrative practice, such flawed processes are, unfortunately, likely to continue. It might be reasonable to expect the possibility of such examination from the Quality Council of the Council of Ontario Universities, to whom Ontario universities are responsible for proper execution of their quality assurance reviews and adherence to approved program review protocols. I was surprised, however, to learn from the director of the Quality Council that it “does not intervene in the cyclical

Without public scrutiny of university administrative practice, such flawed processes are, unfortunately, likely to continue.

new designation of PhD (particularly because it is essentially the ThD students’ current program, slightly modified).

In fact, they did the opposite. They filed an official petition with the ATS for a change of nomenclature for the existing ThD degree program to PhD, highlighting the false distinction between the existing ThD and the supposedly “new” PhD program. But correspondence between the ATS and TST shows that TST took the same line as the university was imposing on them, namely, that the proposed new PhD was meaningfully distinct from the ThD.

The ATS, however, did not accept the argument that the proposed new PhD proposal was a new degree program, and it informed TST that:

“While the province and the University of Toronto consider a change in nomenclature such as this to comprise a new degree program, the Commission staff understand this change to be a nomenclature change with only minor adjustments and the addition of two required courses” (Letter from Dr. Tisa Lewis, Senior Director, Accreditation and Institutional Evaluation; January 6, 2015).

The letter from Lewis also indicated that ATS expects TST to allow ThD degree students to be able to choose either designation upon graduation. However, the university refuses to allow TST to proceed in this manner. In contrast, when the university changed the nomenclature of its law degree program from the LL.B. to the JD, it permitted all current students, and former graduates, to choose use of the JD nomenclature. The fact that TST is not objecting to the university’s stance on this issue is likely not based on agreement with the university’s position, but rather on fear that objecting to the university’s position may jeopardize the now agreed upon Uoft/TST conjoint PhD degree program in theological studies.

Despite the evidence given here of the university’s mishandling of the TST program reviews, it has been impossible to get an independent investigation of the university’s

program reviews that are undertaken by universities” (Letter, August 16, 2012) no matter the evidence of failures to comply with the cyclical program review protocol.

In reality, once an Ontario university’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) has been approved, it can be administered as the university sees fit (at least until it undergoes an audit process by the COU once every eight years; Toronto’s next audit is slated for 2016-17). From my perspective, this is at odds with the COU’s stated goals of being “publicly accountable” in its task of ensuring “rigorous quality assurance” of the academic programs of Ontario’s public universities. The hands-off stance of the director of the Quality Council was further confirmed in letters to me from the President and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities (March 25, 2013), the Chair of its Executive Committee (April 18, 2013), and the Chair of its Appraisal and Audit Committee (July 2, 2013). This position may well be due to the nature of the COU as an organization that comprises senior administrators from universities across the province. Regardless of the reasons for their unwillingness to investigate or intervene, it is clear that modifications need to be made to the quality assurance processes for Ontario university programs. As the University of Toronto Faculty Association put the matter to the provost of the University, it is important to see that measures are taken “to ensure that the authority of the Provost’s Office is exercised in a sufficiently collegial and accountable fashion.”

The acknowledged unwillingness of the Council of Ontario Universities to investigate possible misconduct by universities in carrying out quality assurance reviews, and the fact that there are at present few, if any, credible measures in place to ensure accountability in the exercise of the authority of the Provost’s Office in overseeing quality assurance reviews, raises serious questions about the efficacy of the COU’s entire quality assurance framework. ■■

*Donald Wiebe is a Professor in the Faculty of Divinity, Trinity College in the University of Toronto.*

# COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS: A partnership for a more inclusive university

Stuart Kamenetsky and Christina Dimakos

An innovative program at the University of Toronto Mississauga allows individuals with intellectual disabilities to experience university life.

*Un programme novateur à l'Université de Toronto-Mississauga permet aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle de connaître l'expérience de la vie universitaire.*



This is the story of a unique partnership between the University of Toronto, and Community Living Mississauga, a local charitable organization that provides support to individuals living with intellectual disabilities. These two organizations have joined forces to promote inclusion for young adults who have intellectual disabilities within a university setting. The story unfolds primarily from the perspective of the university and, as such, can inform other postsecondary institutions about the benefits of fostering the inclusion of young adults with intellectual disabilities.

### *What is it?*

Community on Campus (COC) is one of several day programs offered by Community Living Mississauga (CLM). This unique program provides an opportunity for young adults with intellectual disabilities to participate in a range of activities at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), one of the university's three campuses. In addition to auditing classes and volunteering in several areas of campus life (e.g. Student Centre, Women's Centre, campus radio, campus day care, library, gym), participants enjoy activities such as fitness classes, swimming, weight lifting, or going to the pub to shoot a game of pool. Individuals are welcome anywhere they go; they are provided with the same access and respect and held to the same social standards as any other UTM student. One COC staff member from CLM coordinates the schedules and activities, and one-to-one support is provided by UTM student volunteers. Participants in the day program can spend up to 16 hours per week on campus for a period of three years.

### *What is it for?*

Individuals who have intellectual disabilities are among the most excluded social groups in North America (Partington, 2005). Although the public education system provides such individuals with a free and appropriate education until the age of 21, there are few options for meaningful daily activities in adulthood. Work opportunities are limited for those who do not graduate from high school, resulting in high unemployment among people with intellectual disabilities (Burkhauser & Stapleton, 2004; Dyda, 2008; Levy & Hernandez, 2009). Such individuals also tend not to be married nor live with a significant long-term partner (Ashman, Hulme, & Suttie, 1990). Instead, many live with and receive support from parents who quit jobs or retire early in order to care for their adult children (Lippold &

Burns, 2009; Shooshtari, Naghipur, & Zhang, 2012). Recently, the Ontario government introduced its Passport program, enabling adults with developmental disabilities to participate in their communities by providing funding that can be used towards community supports and services. Some additional support is also available through the Ontario Disability Support Program. For the most part, however, this is where the responsibility of the state ends; additional services and supports for individuals with disabilities must be purchased privately or accessed through community agencies that receive funding through government grants and charitable support.

Participants with intellectual disabilities who are interested in joining the COC program must apply through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), a government-funded umbrella organization that helps adults with developmental disabilities connect to services and supports in their communities. Eligible participants must be between the ages of 21 and 30; able to attend the program for a minimum of eight hours per week; have access to their own transportation to and from campus; and show an interest in taking part in the activities made available on campus. A small monthly user fee (\$26.50/day) is charged to those who attend the program. The fee is typically paid through government funding such that the program entails no additional cost to participants. CLM pays the salary for the full-time staff member who is present on campus. This includes all soft costs such as benefits, parking, a cell phone, and training, as well as activity costs for participants (e.g. a graduation ceremony). The university provides in-kind contributions of office space, internet, and phone access. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs is officially responsible for the university's involvement in this partnership.

### *How did it start?*

In the 1990s, the Department of Psychology at UTM was approached by CLM with a request to host a joint program. This proposal was a natural extension of UTM's existing senior practicum seminar that places students in supervised social service agencies and other community settings and provides hands-on experience with theoretical and practical aspects of disability. CLM hosts student practica and also employs graduates of this and related programs. CLM staff are therefore very familiar with UTM, its programs and culture, as well as with faculty members who share common interests.

Like other universities, the University of Toronto is not a social service agency. Nevertheless, UTM is committed to human rights and academic freedom, and to ensuring diversity and equity through the implementation of anti-discrimination policies. With respect to disability, the

Registered UTM students can volunteer with COC, allowing them to develop crucial employment, social, and interpersonal skills.

university is committed to meeting the 2006 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards for a fully accessible Ontario by 2025 and has “AccessAbility” offices designed to meet the university’s moral and legal obligations to provide a fair and level playing field for all faculty, staff, and students with disabilities.

But does this commitment also extend to individuals who have intellectual disabilities? A university is a community of public intellectuals in pursuit of higher knowledge and a broadening of critical thinking. Membership to this community depends on stringent academic admission requirements; given the diminished cognitive functioning among many people with intellectual disabilities, most do not meet these requirements and are not considered for admission to universities. Despite legislation in Canada and the U.S. mandating that organizations provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities (Barnett, Nicol, & Walker, 2012), admitting a student with an intellectual disability who has not demonstrated academic suitability does not fall under this requirement. Individuals with intellectual disabilities are therefore excluded from university admission at the outset. The goal of the COC program is to allow such individuals the opportunity to partake in some aspects of university life they otherwise would not have the opportunity to experience.

### *How does the university benefit?*

Registered UTM students can volunteer with COC, allowing them to develop crucial employment, social, and interpersonal skills. By assisting others with intellectual disabilities for at least one hour per week during the semester, students internalize important values that will enable them to build a fairer and more inclusive society. Volunteers are drawn from a range of disciplines including psychology and the concurrent teacher education program, as well as management and science programs. Through an increased awareness of disability issues and meaningful interaction with participants in the COC program, these students may come to be future advocates and community organizers for more inclusive workplaces and other social settings.

The success of this program and the resulting trust that has developed between the organizations has led to other productive partnerships between UTM and CLM. These include guest speaker presentations provided by CLM for psychology classes, the opportunity for UTM students to engage in applied research at CLM, and joint meetings

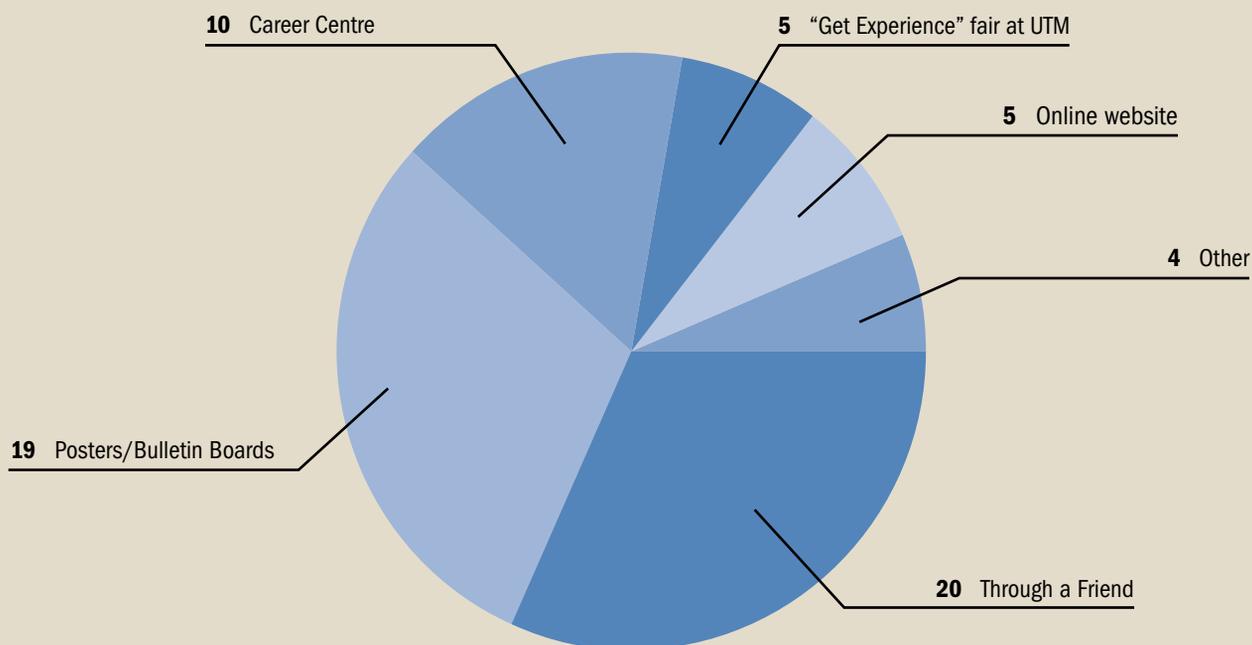
involving university faculty, staff, students, and professionals from the community. Such partnerships directly contribute to advancing the university’s aim of research, teaching, and advocacy in ways that would not be possible without community partnerships. Indeed, student volunteers often turn to CLM in search of further volunteer or employment opportunities. This underscores the role played by the university in fostering a life-long sense of community involvement among future generations. For the agency, accessing educated and enthusiastic young adults with experience interacting with individuals with intellectual disabilities can be a tremendous asset.

### *What does success depend upon?*

In order for such a program such as COC to be successful, the goals of both partner organizations must be met and the program must operate smoothly. Each department or unit must decide whether or not to take part in collaborative programs without pressure from the administration. Large universities are often able to provide office space but may otherwise remain uninvolved in the daily operations of the program. Ideally, the university will have strong student clubs and leadership as well as a firm commitment to student life and extra-curricular development opportunities for its students. A culture of on- and off-campus volunteerism and commitment to a vision of diversity and inclusion at all levels is a must. This is particularly important for new, incoming student volunteers and students who assume advocacy positions such as club presidents and group leaders.

The Association for Community Living must take full responsibility for the program. This includes hiring and training a coordinator who is present and always accessible at the university when participants are on site. The coordinator must be able to effectively train volunteers, build bridges with university staff in diverse units, and provide the support necessary for those units to take in program participants. The volunteers must feel valued by the coordinator as he or she provides effective supervision, problem solving support, and mentorship. Also important is ensuring that a good fit exists between the participant, the program, and the opportunities available on campus. For example, if a participant is interested in auditing classes but becomes disruptive to the rest of the class, the participant should be placed in a different activity on campus.

Figure 1 – How volunteers found Community on Campus



The program must remain cost effective. Because the program involves a team of volunteers, CLM is able to provide service to a greater number of individuals than it typically can in other support programs with the same budget. The volunteer experience must therefore be a convenient fit for student volunteers. With an on-campus program, students are already on site for classes and do not need to devote extra time for travel. The university is therefore a great source of volunteers who are able to commit a few hours every week to the program. It is thus important that organizations are flexible in the timing of their own programs and make efforts to coordinate participant programs with university class schedules.

Although not always amenable to change, universities situated on small- to mid-size campuses can be more conducive to establishing the close-knit culture necessary to fulfill a vision of inclusion. More compact campuses translate into easier accessibility to and from program sites, making the weekly commitment more achievable. Also more likely in this setting is the probability of participants bumping into a

familiar face from the gym or the library as they pass through the hallways, contributing to an even greater sense of inclusion and welcoming.

Crucial to the success of any collaborative program is the role played by volunteers. Without student volunteers stepping forward, both at agencies and on campus, programs such as the COC simply would not exist. Collaborative and participatory alliances between agencies and academia, such as inviting local organizations to university tabling events and fairs, is vital to recruitment efforts on the part of agencies and a tremendous stepping stone for securing the volunteers needed to make these programs possible (see Figure 1).

Most importantly, however, the experience must be a meaningful and fulfilling one for all those involved. For example, COC volunteers often speak of the personal growth and transformation they experience from their interactions in the program and the friendships they develop with program participants. In turn, participants with intellectual disabilities speak about the great gains they make in their confidence and social skills, and the long-lasting connections they make with university students.

#### *How can the program be improved?*

Although a tremendous success to date, there are always areas for improvement within any collaboration. First, providing graduating participants with an official university certificate of completion would serve to acknowledge their

From the perspective of both university students and COC participants, these experiences allow them to learn about one another while learning together.

involvement in the program and their achievement as active members of the university community. If participants have volunteered or contributed unpaid labor to the university, this contribution should also be acknowledged. Second, although not always plausible, providing the possibility of employment at the university for graduates of the COC program would be ideal. This would serve to maintain their connection with the university and better prepare them for possible future employment opportunities. Third, including preliminary training for the program would allow volunteers to be more effective in their positions.

### Conclusion

Traditional forms of post-secondary education have typically been opaque to people with intellectual disabilities and the challenge of broader accessibility has yet to be overcome. Encouragingly, the University of Toronto continues to invest in increasing inclusion, challenging cultural conventions, and directly fostering social change. The collaboration between CLM and the UTM is novel in that it provides a space for individuals with intellectual disabilities to partake in an experience that would have otherwise been beyond their reach. From the perspective of both university students and COC participants, these experiences allow them to learn about one another while learning together. This spirit of inclusion in education holds great promise and is given a significant place in the University of Toronto. In our view, the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities into the university community enriches the campus in many new and important ways.

In her book about the rise of world hyperpowers, Yale law school professor Amy Chua (2007) argues that the creative power of a culture is closely associated with its tolerance for its subcultures and its assimilation of multiple perspectives. The partnership described in this chapter underscores Chua's vision and highlights the complex interdependence between academia and the wider community. Indeed, in his installation address, University of Toronto President Meric Gertler, stressed that:

*We need to identify our most successful examples of community outreach and partnership, and scale them up to generate more opportunities for our students and faculty, and more benefit to our local partners... [the University of Toronto will] seek new opportunities to open up our campuses to the city around us, using our physical spaces to convene public discussions of the most pressing and compelling urban issues of the day.*

President Gertler calls attention to the responsibility of academic institutions to design and implement programs that take learning outside the ivory tower and into the real world. By engaging students and community partners in mutually beneficial ways, universities expand their teaching and research missions to new and relevant domains. It is now widely accepted that the role of the public intellectual is to move beyond the educational institution and find ways to become more involved with larger social, political, and moral issues (Tierney, 2013). Programs like COC are in line with the social responsibilities of organizations to make contributions to society through decisions and activities that impact on the social welfare of its citizens (International Organization for Standardization, 2011). The challenge for any institution is not simply to illuminate the lived experiences of others but to do so in ways that diminish racial, ethnic, religious, gender, class, ability, and other boundaries.

Can the benefits of other university-agency partnerships flourish? Whether and how such collaborations can make their way into other academic institutions remains to be determined. At the macro level, it is important that educational institutions continue to strive to enhance equity for people with intellectual disabilities and explore novel strategies that promote friendships and other social relationships for people with disabilities in a variety of contexts, including the university setting. This chapter offers a point of entry for others to follow by detailing how the COC program enriches the university as a whole through the special ways in which it inspires new and inventive ranges of inclusion. **AM**

*Stuart Kamenetsky is the Undergraduate Director of Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Christina Dimakos is currently pursuing a master's degree in community psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University.*

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\* For references, please go to the web version of this article at [www.academicmatters.ca](http://www.academicmatters.ca)



**THE PAST FEW YEARS** have seen university governance jump from relative obscurity and into the headlines. How universities are run is suddenly big news. The issue of Academic Matters you have in your hands right now contains first-hand accounts of some of the campus stories that have found their way into the national media. From UBC to Carleton to Western, these are controversies that have provoked anger and discussion on campuses, in local communities, and even in the halls of political power.

At first pass, the appeal of these stories to journalists and the public is easy to understand. Big payouts to public sector managers (like university presidents), overreach by well-heeled members of the Board of Governors, sudden resignations of powerful leaders...these all tap into well-established narratives in the current zeitgeist, suspicious as it is about power and how it is exercised within public institutions.

But for the people paying the most attention to these controversies—students, faculty members, and administrators—governance fights are about more than the appropriate use of taxpayer money or personality clashes between senior leaders. University governance is fundamental, because fights over who runs universities are ultimately conflicts over what the modern university is, what it should look like, and how it should behave.

I've written before about the "inside-the-box" problem in higher education policy and administration, or the tendency for the discussion around universities to be dominated

by a few voices with very similar views. Criticism has a hard time getting into the box, because those within it rigorously police its boundaries and exclude opposing views. The shared assumptions of the insiders become a kind of self-reinforcing doctrine. The assumptions become gospel; for those on the inside, they are no longer assumptions at all, but basic truths that are beyond question.

And so it is with university governance. Many senior university administrators—and the various consultants and policy entrepreneurs that support them—seem to have internalized the view that the only response to the growing size and complexity of modern universities is to govern them like private corporations. Efficiency and centralized authority come to replace debate and collegiality as core values. This tendency finds expression in the ideas of New Public Management (NPM), a doctrine that Alison Hearn and Vanessa Brown (writing in this issue) suggest is at the heart of the presidential pay scandal at Western University.

In the box where NPM and similar forms of top-down governance are dogma, the managerial technocrats in charge of universities are the only ones—simply by virtue of the positions they hold—who can make good decisions about the future of a university. Democracy in campus deliberations, where students and faculty have a fair say in decision making, is often viewed as inefficient. Power in the hands of campus stakeholders is seen as a threat. This is why administrators like Peter MacKinnon, author of *University Leadership and Public Policy in the*

*Twenty-First Century*, are so quick to bemoan the existence of faculty unions and any similar check on administrative power (for more on this, check out Mark Mac Lean and Michael Conlon's piece in this issue). Students and faculty expect their institutions to be open and collegial, while many administrators see these expectations as distractions or obstacles.

But as you'll have seen in these pages, this inside-the-box attitude can backfire dramatically, erupting into scandal, acrimony, and reputational damage. It doesn't have to be that way. While the preceding articles vividly describe serious failures in university governance, they also chart a course towards more democratic and accountable institutions. We can recognize that universities are different from private corporations in both form and objective, and deserve to be governed as such. We can fight for transparency and openness from Boards of Governors and senior administrators. We can use the tools at hand—from financial analysis to collective agreements to campus partnerships—to rebuild collegiality and democracy on our campuses. It's not an easy thing to do, but it is vital.

We want to hear from you. I write this in every column I pen for this magazine, so perhaps you think it is a tired cliché or an empty platitude. But when we say we want to hear from you, we really, really mean it. The editorial team and I read everything that our readers send, and your letters and website comments often make it into these pages. So send me an email at [editor@academicmatters.ca](mailto:editor@academicmatters.ca). Connect with us on Twitter @academicmatters. We're on Facebook. Our website—[www.academicmatters.ca](http://www.academicmatters.ca)—has plenty of ways to get in touch and share your thoughts. So please, let us hear what you have to say.

As always, thanks for reading. **AM**

*Graeme Stewart is the Editor-in-Chief of Academic Matters, Director of Communications for OCUIFA, and a PhD student at the University of Toronto.*

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