A Fatally Tainted Report: The CAUT *Ad Hoc* Committee Report on the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba (2015)

External reviews are of crucial importance to academic and professional programs. During the 2014-15 academic year there were six scheduled reviews underway in the Faculty of Architecture: three professional program accreditation reviews, two graduate program reviews, and an undergraduate program review. Professionally conducted, they follow standard processes of verification. All of these reviews are evidence-based.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) also produced an *ad hoc* report. This report is not based on evidence. Rather, it relies on anonymous sources, unsubstantiated allegations, and unattributed stories. Many of the claims are made without reference to name, date, place, individual, or document; they are free floating allegations without attribution as to occurrence, individual, or documentary source. In making these allegations, the authors of the CAUT *ad hoc* report do not consider and are in conflict with readily available public documents. Further, they also disregard information provided to them in response to their draft, offered specifically to assure that the report would not be compromised by blatant errors of fact. What follows below are examples of the multiple falsehoods that taint this report; falsehoods that are obvious, serial, and, by all appearances, intended to harm a specific individual.

The *Ad Hoc* Report Ignores or Suppresses Documents

Purportedly an investigation into a strained working environment of the Faculty of Architecture attributed to the Dean, the *ad hoc* report disregards previous reports on the Faculty completed before the arrival of the Dean. These include, but are not limited to, the Faculty of Architecture's 200-page *Employee Systems Report* (ESR, 2006)—written by a committee of eight members of the Faculty. The Executive Summary of the ESR clearly states: the Faculty exhibits systemic equity imbalance and an unhealthy working environment, consisting of a *"culture of cliques, double-standards, maltreatment and manipulation of students by professors"*.

Similar concerns were documented by faculty members and brought to the attention of the Dean when he arrived in 2010; including harassment of staff and students, obstruction of tenure-track faculty and requests for assistance from the Dean and university officers. Some of these concerns are also documented in the Faculty of Architecture's *Undergraduate Program Review* (2014), a review requested by the Dean as well as by students and faculty members in order to address issues raised in the ESR. The findings are again clear: inequitable teaching loads and a "*caste system*" between departments and programs seen as "*damaging to student health and sense of well-being*" and "*detrimental to student self-esteem*". The Faculty's working environment resulted from organizational structures implemented over many years, structures that were inherited by the Dean upon his arrival.

The *ad hoc* report does praise one of the Faculty of Architecture's graduate programs, but omits the fact that this very program received a limited 3-year (rather than a full 6-year) accreditation, due to inadequate program performance. Criteria deemed by the accreditation board as "not met" include sustainable design, building economics, comprehensive design, and project delivery. The professional community in Winnipeg had similar concerns and shared these with the incoming Dean, noting that only one full-time faculty member teaching in this program held professional licensure in Manitoba.

In short, in order to make its case the CAUT *ad hoc* report ignores extensive documentation of significant and longstanding problems at the time of the investigation.

Disregarded Facts

The ten-month (03.2014—02.2015) *ad hoc* investigation covering the period 2010-15 intersected more than 700 students, staff, and faculty in the Faculty of Architecture. Yet, the CAUT *ad hoc* report presents only two documents in support of its conclusions: an email from a former employee and a letter from a current employee. These two documents give opinions, not facts. The other documents quoted in the *ad hoc* report, including the 10-page Memorandum added as the Appendix, as well as statements by the Vice-Provost of Academic Programs and the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, contradict the allegations made by the *ad hoc* committee.

The CAUT *ad hoc* report conceals evidence of many kinds. This includes, but is not limited to, eight other documents on the Faculty of Architecture: the *Employee Systems Report*, two *Architecture Program Reports* (APR) formally accepted by a professional accreditation body (CACB), an *Architecture Graduate Self-Evaluation Report* (SER), a *Council for Interior Design Accreditation* (CIDA) *Program Analysis Report*, a *Self-Evaluation Report for Accreditation Council of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects* (CSLA), an external University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Program Review*, and a Manitoba Architects Association (MAA) *Annual General Meeting Report* (AGM).

All of these reports were authored, co-authored, or approved by faculty and/or staff members of the University of Manitoba and/or other Canadian universities. Many of these faculty and staff are also members of their respective unions. Additionally, the *ad hoc* report ignores official University of Manitoba publications, university policy and terms of reference, as well as minutes of alumni, professional and student meetings.

A Platform for Personal Opinions

The CAUT *ad hoc* report amplifies the voice of one former employee who directed invective against students, faculty, and alumni. It quotes this individual's characterization of a "culture of fear" in the Department of Architecture, but is completely silent on this individual's record of disparaging remarks made against departments and programs other than his own as well as of his dismissiveness of faculty and students in other programs (position paper, meeting minutes). Prior to the period covered by the *ad hoc* report, this individual's disparagement culminated in wanting the Department of Architecture to leave the Faculty and abandon the University campus (meeting minutes). Moreover, this individual is on public record (*Architecture Program Report, 2008*) declaring that *"Winnipeg … has very little that can be described as architecture or culture …"*.

While amplifying the voice of this former employee, the CAUT *ad hoc* report stifles the voices of current faculty members; specifically those who take issue with the *ad hoc* report's narrative. The *ad hoc* report also makes false allegations against a senior faculty member, who is on public record responding to allegations made against him by writing: *'… statements written by the Members of the CAUT ad hoc Committee... are false and extremely misleading.'*

One union (UMFA) member personally met with the *ad hoc* committee. Finding that his views were entirely scrubbed from the final report, he wrote directly to the *ad hoc* committee stating: *"… it would surely be iniquitous on your part to suppress a contrary view … As it stands, your report discredits the CAUT and the academics that it purports to represent by being nothing more than a blatantly one-sided diatribe – a diatribe that does nothing to help those of us seeking honestly to serve the students and supporters of this University"*.

Further *ad hominems*

In its investigation into the Faculty of Architecture, the CAUT *ad hoc* report suppresses a multitude of documents and voices. Instead, it resorts to a series of falsehoods, contrivances, and inventions in its goal of singling out the Dean as responsible for workplace issues in the Faculty. Rapid personnel turnover, for example, is alleged to be among the "clearest signs of trouble". This first finding alleges that the Dean interfered with the responsibilities and duties of a Department of Architecture Head, precipitating the premature end of this Headship.

The *ad hoc* report's self-described "clearest sign" is patently false. This Head departed under the previous Dean. This Head's impending departure was announced in a public document in 2008 *(Architecture Program Report, October 2008)* — one full year before the Dean who is charged in the *ad hoc* report applied for the Deanship (2009) and two years before he arrived in Manitoba (2010).

In asserting this falsehood, *ad hoc* report ignores not only the information given directly to CAUT and the *ad hoc* committee by the Dean, it also ignores the architecture accreditation document, the public search for a new Department Head, the announcement of the new Department Head to the professional community *(MAA AGM Report 2010)* and the public announcements to students, faculty, and alumni (Faculty of Architecture's *Network 2010*).

In short, the CAUT *ad hoc* report asserts a central conclusion manifestly at odds with a multi-year series of publicly available documents, records, and announcements.

Further Examples of Falsehoods and Inventions in the *Ad Hoc* Report

The CAUT *ad hoc* report condemns the Dean for following standard University policies and procedures. It alleges that the Dean followed University accreditation procedures in order to limit the duties of an Acting Department Head. It also alleges that the Dean followed University safety and liability protocols in order to limit the research of an individual working in the Faculty of Architecture's C.A.S.T. facility. Finally, it alleges that the Dean conspired with a University Human Rights and Equity Advisor to follow the University's *Respectful Work & Learning Environment* (RWLE) policy in order to limit academic freedom.

All of these allegations are absurd: the Dean had to follow University policy because a Dean is required to follow University policy. The CAUT *ad hoc* committee may not agree with institutional policy, but it is misguided to malign individual(s) charged with implementing these policies.

The CAUT *ad hoc* report holds the Dean responsible for actions in which he played no part. It alleges, for example, that the Dean interfered with research funding provided by a student fund, completely disregarding the fact that meeting minutes posted on the Faculty website record that it was the students themselves who made all decisions regarding their Student Technology Fee Fund.

The *ad hoc* report falsely alleges that the Dean interfered with research by disinviting a guest lecturer (page 10). Records show that the lecturer demanded an expensive business class flight from Europe in contravention of University travel policy, and declined the offer by the Office of the Dean of an economy class ticket, an honorarium and additional support for accommodations and expenses.

The *ad hoc* report makes allegations based on omission. For example, it alleges that the Dean overrode a teaching assignment given to a student that was made by an Acting Department Head by assigning the course to a valued faculty member instead. The report omits the fact that the Dean offered to hire the student as a Teaching Assistant to support that faculty member and that the entire matter was resolved to everyone's satisfaction over the course of a single weekend.

The CAUT *ad hoc* report makes allegations on the basis of inventions. For example, it alleges that the Dean 'incessantly' interfered with industry partners, guest lecture programs, and the Department of Architecture's centenary. Yet, not a single instance of interference is cited in the *ad hoc* report. All industry partners wishing to work with the Department did so. All scheduled guest lectures and centenary events took place, including the public speech held by the Acting Department Head at the official celebrations attended by a multitude of alumni, faculty, and students.

Similarly, the CAUT *ad hoc* report alleges that the Dean 'regularly' overturned decisions made on research funding by the Department Head when he was 'chair'. However, it fails to provide a single example of decisions purportedly overridden or even of what committee the Head chaired (page 10). Unaware of a single incident or of any relevant committee, the Dean requested further information from the *ad hoc* committee. The request was ignored, and no examples are in the final *ad hoc* report.

Conclusion

Taken collectively, the CAUT *ad hoc* report is everything that an external report should not be. It violates key principles guiding evidence-based, non-partisan reviews of programs and institutions. The *ad hoc* report's claims and conclusions are contradicted by the facts. Even if one takes only public documentation into account, the number of individuals on record contradicting the allegations of the *ad hoc* report far exceed the anonymous entities that the *ad hoc* report claims to be speaking for. Particularly misguided is the attempt by the CAUT *ad hoc* report to excuse the actions of a few faculty members—manipulation and maltreatment of students, harassment of staff, and bullying of junior faculty by senior faculty—as actions protected by academic freedom. In so doing, the CAUT *ad hoc* report only adds to the unfortunate "culture of cliques and double-standards, manipulation and maltreatment of students" that is formally documented by Faculty of Architecture members.

The President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manitoba, in detailed and public responses (available online), condemns the CAUT *ad hoc* report as inaccurate, unbalanced, a shoddy piece of work, suffering from egregious conflation and as potentially deleterious to students. He declares it as particularly harmful insofar as it targets a specific individual and is on record concluding that the CAUT *ad hoc* report cannot be taken seriously.

It is unclear whether the CAUT *ad hoc* report's suppression of factual evidence, as well as the presentation of falsehoods and misleading statements, are the result of incompetence or malice. What is clear is that it this CAUT *ad hoc* report earns the epithet given to it by a University of Manitoba Faculty Association member as "*nothing more than a blatantly one-sided diatribe"* that thoroughly *"discredit(s) the CAUT and the academics it purports to represent"*.

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