

NEWSLETTER

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Case for a Resolution to Preserve McMaster's Historic Core

The following Brief was distributed for the March 19, 1998 Board of Governors meeting and is reprinted with the permission of the author.

I believe that a resolution passed by the Board of Governors to preserve McMaster's historic core would be welcomed by both the University community and the civic community. The family of six historic buildings in their park-like setting is a treasure we should preserve in its entirety for generations to come. The excellent work of the citizens who make up The Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee has helped us to see more clearly the historical and architectural significance of this beautiful part of our campus.

Since the entire historic core is less than 5% of the total area of the central campus, an undertaking to protect the core would leave unrestricted 95% of the campus. Although it will require skill and sensitivity to develop a splendid site design outside of the core, surely that challenge can be met when the cost of failure would be so great.

On the need to protect the historic core, the voice of alumni, and of current and emeritus faculty, is strong, clear and persistent. A review of some 240 communications to the Board of Governors as of March 6th shows that the site design C, which called for the destruction of Alumni Memorial Hall, was overwhelmingly, and passionately rejected. The site design A/C, with a wing projecting into the historic core, received even less support than that of site C. Most important for the issue before us, more than half of the respondents explicitly rejected both options and asked the University to put the Centre somewhere outside of the historic core.

The comments of quite a few staff members are among the communications to the Board. Dr. Petric's submission to the Board in support of preserving AMH and the green space surrounding faculty hollow was accompanied by 471 endorsements; 130 were from members of staff. I have the impression that sighs of relief were heard in many offices when the recommendation of the Planning and Building Committee to preserve Alumni Memorial Hall, and to consider a site to the east of Gilmour Hall, was announced on March 4th.

Ironically, we now know more about the feelings of former students than we know about those of current undergraduate and graduate students. There are, however, growing signs that many current students want the family of old buildings and the green spaces around them left as they are.

Of one thing we can be certain, many student leaders felt betrayed by the rejection of what was both the architects' and their own preferred site design. They have not put a very high value on protecting the historic core. The same must be said of the architects.

Although not univocal, I believe the voice of the broader University community is quite clear: we want the historic core left alone.

How then did we come to the brink of a disaster; the permanent desecration of the historic core? My first approximation to an answer is this: We came to it by the cumulative largely unanticipated, consequences of a series of unexamined, but seemingly reasonable, claims about necessary features of an acceptable site. They include the claims that Hamilton Hall is the heart of the campus, and that the Centre should house all student services, enterprises and

social facilities under one roof or in connected buildings.

As well, we came to the brink because for whatever reasons, we failed to develop a mutually respectful partnership between the students' representatives and the rest of the University. Without a partnership of that kind we cannot hope to build a Centre in which all can take pleasure and pride.

The unselfish donations from many classes of students have raised funds without which the project could not go forward. Students need to know that their fine effort is sincerely appreciated. They should feel confident that as the major tenants and users their voice will be listened to, respected and taken seriously.

Theirs cannot, however, be the only voice. The broader University community has a responsibility to future generations who will study and work on this campus. Student leaders need to understand that many faculty, alumni, staff, as well as other students, place great value on the preservation of our historic core. They need to respect, not denigrate, the reasons so many feel that way. They need to accept that a desire to protect the core is not intended to frustrate their wish to get on with building a fine University Centre.

When we have a partnership based on mutual respect, we can keep the treasure of the historic core and also have a splendid University Centre. It is unfortunate that we cannot get from where we are to where we want to be without a delay that no one wants.

The cumulative effect of unexamined claims and our failure, so far, to build a mutually respectful partnership led us, prior to the March 4th meeting of the Planning and Building Committee, to an intolerable choice between only two building site options, both of which would do great violence to the integrity of the historic core. We stepped back from the brink because the President and members of the Board listened to the voice of the University community and endorsed the exploration of a building site outside the core.

We are not, however, safely back from the brink. The site design option A/C, which would disfigure Hamilton Hall and invade, divide and overwhelm the historic core, has not been removed. We have no assurance that site design A/C will not be presented again, perhaps as though it were the only viable option, if for some reason the new site east of Gilmour Hall is judged to be unworkable. It is not inconceivable that the nightmare we have endured will recur.

The University community, I believe would welcome **a public resolution, expressed through the good offices of the Board, to place a very high value on the preservation in its entirety of our historic core.** Such a resolution would acknowledge a plain truth; it is a valued part of our heritage from which we take strength.

We need this resolution to provide a measure of protection from the pressures that led us to the brink because they are still with us. Moreover, we need protection from who-knows-what seemingly reasonable, but unexamined claims that may in the future lead some to justify the desecration of an important part of our heritage. Finally, we need it because somewhere down the road, the voice of the University community may fall on deaf ears. As we have learned, intelligent, well-intentioned people can make a mess of things.

I am confident that a public announcement of our resolve would be strongly applauded by the civic community. As Professor Les King, former Vice-President (Academic), noted in his letter to the Board: McMaster faculty, staff and alumni played important roles in the development of the Vision 2020 agenda and in the plans for its implementation. These plans have been incorporated in the Renaissance Project and adopted by the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Council. By resolving to protect our own heritage we testify to the strength of our commitment to continue to work with the civic community towards a more sustainable society.

I thank Catherine Beattie for her very significant help in the formulation of this brief.

Herb Jenkins
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus

Petrified Campus

BOOK REVIEW

[David Bercuson, Robert Bothwell and J. L. Granatstein, *Petrified Campus: The Crisis in Canadian Universities*, Toronto: Random House of Canada 1997, 216 pp.]



by Harvey P. Weingarten, Provost and VP (Academic)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 22, 1998, 2 pm
Convocation Hall (University Hall 213)

Corporatism and the University



Part 1

This is the first in a series of articles prepared by Bill Graham, President of the University of Toronto Faculty Association. It is reprinted with the permission of the author. Ed.

As long as universities have existed, private donors have bestowed money on them, sometimes in very large doses, and lent their names to buildings, professorships and even universities themselves. If that is true, why are we hearing more and more concerns about private donations to and corporatism in the university?

Since the 1980's, with government funding cuts having begun years before, it has become increasingly clear that universities would need continuous injections of private money to keep the academic enterprises afloat. Presidents publicly lobby governments for increased funding while, privately, they may be quite pessimistic about any major changes. They may, at the same time, moderate their criticisms of even repressive governments for fear of losing marginal advantages. This sometimes gives rise to situations which appear contradictory on the surface but that mask underlying congruencies which have become part of the *real politik* of universities.

For example, on November 19, 1997, President Prichard exhorted Premier Mike Harris to increase government support

for the University of Toronto. "There are growing shortages in our ability to serve the legitimate expectations of the employers of Ontario," he said. Yet, just two days earlier, his Chancellor, Hal Jackman, said "when one looks at the government's own financial picture it is difficult not to conclude that governments are overfunding rather than the opposite." (*U of T Bulletin*, November 24, 1997). Contradiction or congruence?

Significant issues are at stake here. Universities in Canada are public institutions; and they are publicly funded, although very inadequately. In the United States many of the large public universities are also inadequately funded, and many private universities receive some degree of state financing. They are not publicly funded universities, but call themselves "publicly assisted" universities.

The congruity underlying the statements of President Prichard and Chancellor Jackman is precisely that: they envisage the University of Toronto moving rapidly from a "publicly funded" to a "publicly assisted" status -- and they are willing, perhaps eager, to accept the consequences of such a change.

But do we know what the change entails? Has the University community addressed the consequences of the rapid privatization of programs and research? We certainly ought to do so. If we are becoming ever more dependent on private financing for our academic mission we ought to know where the balance lies between privatization and our responsibilities as a public institution devoted to creating, preserving and disseminating knowledge in the public interest. As academics we need a broad discussion and debate on the serious issues which corporatism raises for our work, our lives, and our institution.

Since the 1980's the view that the purpose of the university is to contribute to the economic growth of the province and the nation has been gaining strength and acceptance. Whereas students in the 1960's talked about the "relevance" of education to their personal lives and to public affairs, governments in the 1990's talk about the "relevance" of education to the job market, and about the "relevance" of research to economic growth. As more and more academics become dependent on private funding to carry on their work, it becomes increasingly difficult to think critically and dispassionately about other visions of the purpose of the university.

Our analysis of the University's budget practices and strategies, carried out as part of the last round of salary negotiations, brought to light the enormous and rapidly growing wealth of the University of Toronto. U of T is by far the wealthiest university in Canada and is on the verge of being able to compete with some of the major public research intensive universities in the United States. Our rapidly growing wealth could provide a buffer against the vagaries of public post-secondary education policy; it could ameliorate the burden of student debt load; it could attract and retain the very best faculty and librarians world wide by providing competitive salaries and working conditions; it could support basic research, raise morale among employees, and be generous to its retirees. It could, that is, if all faculty members and librarians decide that our wealth should be used in these ways, and that the University of Toronto should be an intellectual voice for the public interest. The failure of academics to determine the future direction of the University will leave that direction to administrators, governments and private interests. It is up to us.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

The University is a *public* educational institution. We create, preserve and disseminate knowledge for the public good. Talking about the University moving from a "publicly funded" status to a "publicly assisted" status is problematic for several reasons: (a) it runs the risk of justifying the present political situation in which governments are failing to do their duty to financially sustain public post-secondary education. It confuses a (negative) fact with a (positive) goal or purpose; (b) It confuses how universities are funded with what they should be doing. If we are funded privately, should our research be privately appropriated?

Traditionally, we have held that our work is a public resource, not a private good. We share the knowledge we produce with our colleagues for critical appraisal and improvement. Research is hard work, as is teaching done well. In many fields research is also very expensive and requires external support -- from government, from granting councils and, more and more, from the private sector.

Granting councils are also underfunded, which leads to priority areas for strategic grants, the priorities being set not by the broad base of researchers themselves but by specified individuals, administrators, and government directions. The bias of money becomes a steering effect in research. A lot of good research is not funded because it doesn't fit the

"what's-IN" paradigm. University research is curiosity driven, not done to create wealth. The human intellect drives the desire for knowledge, as Aristotle said more than 2000 years ago. The life of the mind is not for sale. Or, it shouldn't be.

In fact, however, faculty members at the U of T are being told that we should all have grants. Performance indicators are being used to measure a person's grants which, in turn, are being used to measure the researcher's "value" to the University. PTR and promotion decisions follow. If carried to an extreme, each of us would have a "value-quotient" based on the size of our grants.

Almost every other university in Canada has a system of Faculty Allowances, a dedicated sum of money (tax free) to support scholarship, research materials, conferences, books and journals, etc. Our administration has consistently refused to negotiate a Faculty Allowance for us on the grounds that we should all be able to get grants. If we don't have grants there is something wrong with us.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT AND COLLEGIALITY

Universities which are financed like private corporations also tend to be managed like private corporations *and to generate corporate cultures*. In the 1980's the President of Waterloo University startled some traditional academics by declaring that his university was "open for business". We are no longer shocked by such statements, but have grown accustomed to them. The "entrepreneurial" spirit is alive and well. Corporate University operates like a business. Presidents behave like CEO's; the language of the corporate boardroom creeps in: "strategic planning," "bottom line," "benchmarking," "restructuring," "downsizing," "rightsizing," "fiscal accountability," "value for money". Collegial governing bodies are reduced to advisory boards which, instead of creating policy, listen to reports from CEO's and specially appointed committees and task forces. They participate by supporting the management-created technical *and fiscal* plans.

In December 1997, the President of Carleton University said to the press that "Carleton is a private corporation, and it has the right to define the way it will conduct its own business." He confused university autonomy with privacy and claimed that the University was accountable to itself alone, meaning its administration and its Board of Governors. Using the vehicle of a managerial task force he succeeded in getting the Carleton Senate to close a number of undergraduate and graduate programs. The innocent victims of this corporate approach to university management are the Carleton University students, and the tenured faculty members who are in imminent danger of being laid off.

In the corporately managed university, students are reduced to "clients" in a "user-pay" regime. Faculty and librarians are "service providers". Teaching and learning are part of a production process; education is measured for success by an economic scale. Corporations which used to mobilize wealth to exploit natural resources now mobilize wealth to exploit "intellectual resources" in the so-called "information age".

In following essays, we will be exploring Corporatism and the University relating to such topics as (a) the threats it poses to academic freedom, (b) the steering effect of corporate donations and private funding on university research and faculty careers, (c) the commercialization of academic life, (d) technology and corporatism, and (e) strategic planning and budgeting in the corporate university.

If expanding private sector funding is an unescapable fact of the contemporary university we must all carefully and critically reflect on the meaning and consequences it has for the kinds of work we do, and for the sake of the future and integrity of the public university in which we teach and do research, and which we -- faculty and librarians -- should collegially govern.

*Bill Graham
President, UTFA*

(Next: Private Donor Agreements and Academic Freedom)

Information Service

Thanks to the University of Waterloo Faculty Association, selected summaries of articles supplied by Mark Rosenfeld, OCUFA Community and Government Relations Officer, are now available on the web. You will find a link on the MUFA web site to the FAUW file. Below is a sample listing of articles. For the full summaries via the MUFA web site (www.mcmaster.ca/mufa), go to LINKS then click on OTHER INTERESTING SITES, click again on OCUFA INFORMATION SERVICE.

- 1."University Enrolment Figures", from the *Daily* (1 December 1997, Stats Canada)
- 2.Excerpts from *Hansard* regarding Postsecondary Education in Ontario (20 November; 8, 16, 17 December)
- 3."Is Harris Right about Universities?" Two articles from the *Toronto Star* (8 December 1997)
- 4."The New University", an article on the reshaping of colleges by market forces. The original appeared in *Business Week* (22 December 1997)

THE FACULTY CLUB ... MOVING FORWARD

In celebration of the recent decision to preserve Alumni Memorial Hall, the Faculty Club is about to offer all non-members a special opportunity to sample the club's services. This promotion signals the beginning of a new future for the Faculty Club and it is hoped that all will take advantage. More details about this offer will be presented soon by e-mail and by traditional printed methods. Please stay tuned!

Parking Lot Assistance Now (The PLAN)



Needed a battery boost? Run out of gas? Needed a mechanic in a hurry? What you needed was the **PLAN (Parking Lot Assistance Now)**. Help is on the way! Just contact any Parking Control Officer at any entry kiosk or on patrol. The officer will arrange for assistance. Call Security after 8 p.m. (Ext. 24281).

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