



TRENT UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION
(TUFA)

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January 17, 2012

Diane Lloyd, Chairperson
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
Education Centre
1994 Fisher Drive
PO Box 7190
Peterborough, ON K9J 7A1

Dear Ms. Lloyd:

The Executive Committee of the Trent University Faculty Association (TUFA) has been following the prospective closure of the Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational School (PCVS) with mounting concern. We note a widespread perception that the process followed in determining which (if any) Peterborough schools ought to be closed was flawed and, relatedly, that the rationale provided for the selection of PCVS has proven neither consistent nor compelling. We understand that the Ministry of Education has now appointed an independent facilitator to review the Accommodation Review Committee process that resulted in the decision to close PCVS this coming September.

Setting aside our personal opinions regarding the wisdom of shutting down what appears to be a highly valued and vibrant downtown institution, we write to convey two specific concerns.

Given the appointment of a facilitator, we think it incumbent on the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board -- at the very least -- to push back the closing date of the school by one year to allow time for this review to unfold. Should the review lead the Board to revisit its conclusions, the proposed delay will have ensured the possibility of undoing the decision with minimal additional cost. If the review confirms the validity of the Board's decision-making, then the delay will have served a valuable purpose in lessening public frustration over what some see as a precipitous rush to close PCVS.

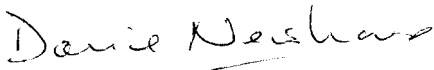
Our second concern relates to the silencing of dissent among PCVS teaching faculty. While we understand the rationale for restricting employees from subverting their employer's right to manage the affairs of the institution, we would distinguish between

requiring employees to fulfill their duties as assigned and suppressing the right of those same employees to voice their opinions in matters of importance to the general public. In this regard, the academic freedom enjoyed by the faculty in institutions like our own is useful to consider.

The Canadian Association of University Teacher's "Policy Statement on Academic Freedom" asserts that any faculty member should have the "freedom to express one's opinion about the institution, its administration, and the system in which one works." The policy also affirms that "Academic staff must not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as individuals including the right to contribute to social change through free expression of opinion on matters of public interest."

There are a number of reasons for safeguarding such freedoms in educational institutions. Primary among these is the value of modeling for our students the kind of civic engagement that we hope they themselves will manifest as citizens. Given that the impending closure of PCVS has now involved our community in a deep and considered exploration of that institution's role in the City of Peterborough, we would urge the elimination of any institutional impediments keeping PCVS teachers from engaging fully with this issue as members of the larger community.

For the Executive Committee,



David Newhouse,
President

TUFA Executive Committee

David Newhouse (Business Administration and Indigenous Studies), President
Sara Humphreys (English Literature), Vice President
Ray Dart (Business Administration), Secretary-Treasurer
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Susan Wurtele (Geography), Past President

cc: Denise Severin, Principal, PCVS
W.R. Hick, Director, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB