



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

 www.caut.ca
acppu@caut.ca

2705, promenade Queensview Drive
Ottawa (Ontario) K2B 8K2

Tel\Tél. 613-820-2270
Fax\Télé. 613-820-7244

May 6, 2015

Dr. David Wheeler
President
Cape Breton University
P.O. Box 5300
1250 Grand Lake Road
Sydney, NS
B1P 6L2

Dear President Wheeler:

As you are aware, Bill 100, the *Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act*, passed 3rd and final reading in the Nova Scotia Legislature on May 5. This was despite widespread opposition to the Bill from faculty, staff, and students in the province and nation-wide.

At the annual Spring Council meeting of the Canadian Association of University Teachers held last weekend, delegates from academic staff associations across the country unanimously passed a motion condemning the legislation as a violation of constitutionally protected rights, university autonomy, and academic freedom. The motion also authorized CAUT to commence censure proceedings against any university that attempts to trigger the provisions of the legislation by submitting a "revitalization plan" with the government.

Consequently, I am writing to you and all university presidents in Nova Scotia to serve notice that in the event you seek to use the powers in the legislation that take away the right to strike and grant government unprecedented powers to direct and determine research and instructional priorities, CAUT will immediately proceed with censure. Censure is a rarely used sanction that is applied only in cases where a university administration acts in a manner that threatens academic freedom and tenure, undermines collegial governance, disregards negotiated agreements, refuses to bargain in good faith, or takes other actions that are contrary to interests of academic staff or compromise the quality and integrity of post-secondary education. Censure means CAUT will publicize the offending actions of an administration nationally and internationally, and call on the academic community not to accept appointments, speaking engagements, or honorary degrees at the censured institution. Censure does great harm to the reputation of an institution, which is why it is used judiciously and only in serious cases where the rights of academic staff are breached.

I hope that censure will not be necessary. To date, however, I have to note that I have been extremely disappointed by the response from our university leaders in Nova Scotia. I am not surprised when governments, donors, or special interests try to intrude upon academic affairs. I am surprised when the leaders of our universities are so quick to acquiesce and accede to these pressures. I would expect more from those charged with

defending the core academic principles of institutional autonomy, collegial governance, and academic freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Robinson
Executive Director

cc: Scott Stewart, President, Cape Breton University Faculty Association
Marc Lamoureux, President, Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers
Robin Vose, President, CAUT
Peter McInnis, Chair, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, CAUT