
Report of the Ad Hoc Investigatory Committee

Into the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba

February 2015



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeures d'université
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Report of the Ad Hoc Investigatory Committee into the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba

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1| Introduction

This is the final report of the Ad Hoc Investigatory Committee on the University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture. The CAUT struck this Committee in March of 2014, with the following terms of reference:

- Determine whether there has been interference with the duties and responsibilities of the heads of the Department of Architecture;
- Determine whether there has been interference with the research activities of faculty;
- Determine whether there have been restrictions of academic freedom;
- Determine whether there has been interference with the functioning of committees;
- Consider other issues that may arise in the course of its investigation; and
- Make any appropriate recommendations.

Members of the Committee are:

- Charles Reeve, Associate Professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies, OCAD University (Chair);
- Pauline M. Pearson, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Winnipeg; and
- Grant Wanzel, Professor Emeritus and former Dean, School of Architecture, Dalhousie University.

Our report has three main sections: Method; Findings; and Recommendations.

2| Method

After having been constituted, the Committee reviewed documentary materials. It then attempted to set up meetings with faculty, staff, students and administrators who may have knowledge of events in the Faculty of Architecture.

In April 2014, the Committee spent several days speaking with individuals who agreed to be interviewed—mostly in person in Winnipeg, but also by telephone and Skype—to gather information about these matters. Four things are noteworthy regarding these interviews. (1) Although participation was voluntary (the Committee has no authority to compel participation), more than twenty people came forward, the majority of whom were current faculty. (2) The participants came from many ranks, as well as students, administrators and former staff from all four departments within the Faculty of Architecture. (The Faculty comprises the departments of Architecture, City Planning, Interior Design and Landscape Architecture; it also houses the Environmental Design program.) (3) Despite the diversity of participation, the testimony was remarkably consistent. (4) We were told by a number of the faculty that they welcomed the CAUT inquiry because their attempts to resolve the matter internally had not worked: that they had brought their concerns to senior university officials, including Vice-President and Provost Joanne Keselman, to no avail.

We also spoke with Linda Guse, Executive Director of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA), and Sharon Alward, UMFA President at the time. Prof. Alward reiterated that efforts to resolve issues in the Faculty of Architecture had been made but were largely unsuccessful except for the settlement of one grievance. In correspondence to the Committee she wrote:

[I]ndividual faculty members and, in at least one instance, a group of faculty members have met with a member or members of the senior administration to share their concerns and have provided relevant documentation. UMFA has also met with the senior administration by phone and by email, and has provided documentation, particularly email documentation, regarding actions taken by the administration in the Faculty of Architecture.

In addition, the Committee was provided with documentation by other individuals in the form of correspondence and email exchanges, and notes and chronologies regarding various incidents.

Despite multiple invitations, Dean Ralph Stern, Vice-President (Academic) and Provost Joanne Keselman and President David Barnard declined to meet with the Committee.

To ensure fairness to persons potentially affected in a material adverse way by preliminary findings in the Committee's report, each was sent a letter with a summary of those preliminary findings and with an invitation to respond to any preliminary findings they felt were incorrect. We have reviewed the responses and modified our findings as appropriate.

3| Findings

Although some of the findings of the Committee are relevant to multiple issues in the mandate, for simplicity's sake we will attempt to group findings according to the part of the mandate to which each is most relevant.

Interference with the Duties and Responsibilities of the Heads of the Department of Architecture

We found numerous examples of interference by Dean Ralph Stern with the heads of the Department of Architecture in their efforts to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. One of the clearest signs of trouble was the rapid turnover of personnel. Stern has been Dean of the Faculty of Architecture since the fall of 2010. In that time, there have been three Heads of the Department of Architecture, a rate of churn that clearly indicates trouble at the top. Not only that, but the two previous Heads, Nat Chard and Frank Fantauzzi, have both left the University of Manitoba, Fantauzzi after taking a grievance-related leave. Chard, having learned of our investigation, wrote an extensive email, in which he said about Dean Stern:

I recently visited the University of Manitoba where I worked between August 2005 and December 2012 (and department head between 2005 and 2010). I was told that you are making inquiries into the behaviour of the Dean. I was also told that the University was denying knowledge of his behaviour.

I would like to register the following:

My sole reason for leaving the University of Manitoba was the behaviour of the Dean, who established a culture of fear within the faculty and appeared only to try to find problems with the department, despite its peer reviewed success. It was clear that it was not possible to work to one's capacity in either teaching or research under the Dean's regime and therefore a completely unsatisfying place to work. It had been our intention to stay in

Winnipeg — we had bought a plot of land on which to build a house and our two children have settled in Winnipeg with their partners, so you can imagine how desperate the prospects were for us to decide to leave. The Dean's behaviour towards Frank Fantauzzi, who succeeded me as department head, is apparent through their e-mail correspondence. Frank asked for my help in answering these e-mails until he was forbidden to seek advice in his work by the Dean. I have never seen anything close to the hostility that Frank was subjected to in his work by the Dean.

The hopelessness of the Department of Architecture's position became fully apparent to me when the then director of the Partners Programme copied an e-mail from the Dean to me where the Dean made it clear that if the Partners Programme honoured his commitment to the department the director of the programme would lose his job. I believe I was sent the e-mail because the director was an honourable person and wanted me to understand why he could not honour that agreement.

I was one of a group of tenured professors who met with the Union for a number of months before finally meeting Joanne Kesselman on a date I am sure my former colleagues have provided. During the lead up to this meeting the Union was in contact with the administration behind the scenes (of course you can check this with the Union, but I believe this conversation started in the spring of 2011). Additionally, I had an exit interview held in the "Big House" (the building that holds the University's upper administration) in November or December of 2012 when I was clear that the Dean was my reason for leaving and that he was bullying members of staff in the department. Any attempt to deny knowledge of the Dean's behaviour by the University is disingenuous.

Chard's mention of peer-reviewed success is crucial to this narrative. The Canadian Architecture Certification Board (CACB) accredits all Canadian architecture programs and reviews all accredited programs regularly.

How regularly, though, depends on the program's quality: the CACB has four accreditation cycles, ranging from six years for a top-ranked program to two years for a program on the cusp of having their accreditation revoked. Between these extremes, the CACB has a three-year cycle for programs with serious deficiencies, and a six-year term with a *Focused Evaluation* after three years for programs that are basically sound but have specific shortcomings.

Currently, Canada has eleven accredited architecture programs. Of these, eight, including the program at the University of Manitoba, are on unqualified six-year accreditation cycles. Interestingly, the three that are subject to *Focused Evaluations* are the University of British Columbia, the University of Toronto and McGill University—which is to say that even top programs can fall short.

We underline this point for two reasons. First, when the CACB last reviewed the University of Manitoba program, it flagged two areas of concern for a follow-up *Focused Evaluation*. However, the program successfully dealt with those issues, and the CACB website notes that the Manitoba program *is no longer subject to a Focused Evaluation*.

Yet, rather than congratulate his faculty on a job well done and help them prepare for their next accreditation visit (scheduled for 2015), Stern wrote a 10-page memo to the Dean of Graduate Studies extremely critical of the acting head of the Department of Architecture, Terri Fuglem, his colleagues and the graduate program. A full copy of the memo is attached as Appendix A. Stern frames his comments as follows:

With regard to full disclosure, I relate that I am both Dean and a member of the Department of Architecture. I came to the University from abroad: I had no dealings with or knowledge

of this department prior to the start of my recruitment. Unlike the majority of the members of the Department, I am neither an alumnus of Carleton nor of McGill. I am, however, the first architect to be Dean of the Faculty of Architecture in close to twenty years... Arriving in 2010, I fully expected to find a functioning department that I could be of assistance to with regard to "moving from good to great", as the University agenda indicated. I expected to find a department interested in engaging a larger, international context (from which I was recruited), a department eager to engage the urgent issues of climate change, social justice, advances in technology and developments in professional practice. I also expected to find a department engaged in an ongoing discussion of history and theory, and their relevance to contemporary issues. In short, I expected to find a department "typical" in the best sense of the word: eager, ambitious, engaged and wishing to accomplish the best for its students. I enquired of Departmental members who they considered their Peer Institutions to be, and was told that they were "unique". To date, including the Graduate Program Review, no Peer Institutions have been forthcoming, thereby leaving an open question as to how we are serving our students in relation to our peers and competitors..."

Subsequently, there was interference with Acting Head Terri Fuglem's duties externally, again regarding accreditation. On June 27, 2014, Vice-provost David Collins sent a brief letter to CACB President Branko Kolarevic, in which he writes:

I would ask that communications about the accreditation process be directed to the Office of the President and copied to the Dean of Architecture. As Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Prof. Ralph Stern is responsible for the University's professional and academic architecture, design, and planning programs, and his office will coordinate preparation of the Architecture Program Report, ensuring that it reflects the pedagogical aims of the Faculty and its professional programs as required by the CACB Procedures documentation.

However, the 2012 edition of *CACB Procedures for Accreditation for Professional Degree Programs in Architecture* emphasizes that the *Program Head* (at Manitoba that has been the Head of the Department of Architecture) leads the accreditation on the university side. For example, the Program Head writes the program review and liaises with the CACB on logistics (*CACB Procedures* p. 5); the Program Head vets the Visiting Team Report for factual errors (*CACB Procedures* p. 10); the Program Head meets with the Visiting Team to discuss questions as they arise (*CACB Procedures* p. 14); and so on.

That the Head of the Department of Architecture should be the *Program Head* for CACB accreditations was confirmed in a July 14, 2014 letter from CACB President Kolarevic to Vice-Provost Collins, which states that:

the Program Head plays a key role in preparing the Architecture Program Report and for the subsequent team visit ... Prof. Fuglem as Program Head (or Prof. Stern as Dean) can communicate directly with the CACB as necessary.

In our view, Vice-Provost Collins' suggesting otherwise undermines Fuglem's coordination of the process although in correspondence to the Committee, the Vice-Provost said:

Given the complexity of our particular institution, and the Faculty of Architecture, the accreditation process cannot be managed entirely by the Department of Architecture, and requires a coordinated approach by the Dean of the Faculty ... In our institution, the "program head" role is largely filled by the Dean, in consultation with the Department Head, the Provost's office, and any other necessary offices.

Fuglem's role as Head of the Department and Program Head for the review was also denied her as the Dean, through a series of emails in late July and early August of 2014, directed that much of the program head's role was

to be played by another faculty member, Herb Enns, who substantially authored the report and hand-delivered it to the CACB in Ottawa. Meanwhile, Fuglem was given little opportunity to review the final version of the document and did not see any changes made subsequent to her review, even though she is listed as one of the report's co-authors.

Along with this kind of major interference with the program head's duties, there also is routine interference in smaller matters. For example, in August 2014, Fuglem hired a graduate student to teach an introductory-level design course which Dean Stern alleges is not common practice at the University of Manitoba. On the morning of Saturday, August 23, with the course due to start on Monday, August 25, Stern contacted Fuglem to inform her that he was overriding her decision, and that she was to instruct a specific junior faculty member to teach the course instead of the sessional instructor she'd hired.

These instances exemplify a prominent theme in our conversations with faculty from City Planning, Interior Design and Landscape Architecture: a concern about the usurpation of Terri Fuglem's role as head, a concern for her welfare and a desire to show support for her. She enjoys strong respect and affection from her colleagues, as is evidenced by them voting by a large majority this summer to extend her term as head to a third year. They made clear in our interviews that their concern for her flows directly from their awareness of, and experience with, the culture of fear and retribution that Stern has produced.

Interference with the Research Activities of Faculty

While our investigations turned up multiple examples of research interference, we will focus on just a couple in this report to illustrate the scope of Stern's interference.

However, we will discuss closely related issues subsequently.

One instance of such behaviour that almost every interviewee mentioned involves Professor Mark West and his research institute, the Centre for Architectural Structures & Technology (CAST). The institute resides in a purpose-built structure that was designed and constructed at a cost of roughly \$1.5 million. Support for this project came from a wide range of public and private partners, and subsequent research support has come from various government and industry partners, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

West's colleagues describe him as an ideal faculty member: he has big ideas, which he pursues with determination, drawing in funding from a wide range of agencies and partners and encouraging cross-pollination with other departments and faculties (for example, he works closely with the Department of Civil Engineering). This has resulted in an international profile for himself and his institution. He has lectured at such prestigious institutions as the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and CAST has collaborated with a host of internationally recognized architecture firms.

West's colleagues find it both baffling and concerning that Dean Stern has attempted to discredit West's work and undermine his contributions. For example, Stern pressed West to resign as director of CAST in 2011. When West resisted, Stern took the position that West never had held the position anyway; that, as he wrote to West in an email of June 29, 2011:

[T]here was only a tacit understanding between yourself and former Dean Witty that you could call yourself "Director" ...

I believe that we are now in agreement that you should no longer hold a title that appears to have been one in "name only."

Citing his duty when a unit is ignoring policy, and placing the institution at undue risk of liability, Dean Stern said he was obligated to act. He further said that West was offered help but chose to resign.

West came to feel unable to continue in an environment where the Dean described him as director of CAST *in name only* despite the fact that West launched the program and built the building. The Dean met with West's research and industry partners without his knowledge and stalled his projects until his partners are forced to back out. In 2014, prompted by these actions, West took an unpaid leave from the university, and has recently left the University of Manitoba for a position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

His resignation letter, sent to University of Manitoba President David Barnard on January 15, 2015 is quoted in full below as it is directly relevant to the matters we were asked to investigate:

I am writing to inform you of my intention to resign my position at the University of Manitoba, effective July 1, 2015, and to briefly explain my reasons for doing so.

My eighteen years at the University of Manitoba have been the most productive period of my professional life. During the first 14 years here I received extraordinary support from my Department, Faculty, and the University. For this I will be forever grateful.

Unfortunately, my recent experience working under the leadership of Dean Ralph Stern has brought great frustration and unhappiness. I could cite numerous reasons for my dissatisfaction, but chief among these is the fact that Dean Stern has placed certain devastating constrictions on my research that have made it impossible for me to continue my work here.

Beginning in November 2012, Dean Stern placed specific strictures on my work at the CAST laboratory that made it impossible for me to transfer, test, and apply my research in commercial projects. His decision to do this cited "university policy" and was founded on his definition of my work as "production" rather than academic "research". I have repeatedly asked that the Dean change his decision by adopting the definitions of "research" vs. "production" given by the University's Associate Vice-President (Partnerships), as established in conversations between myself, the VP (Partnerships), and my Faculty's Associate Dean (Research). I have also endeavored to lift Dean Stern's prohibitions through conversations with the Dean, through our Faculty's Research Committee, and with the University's Vice President (Research). The Provost was also made aware of this problem. After more than two years of frustration, Dean Stern's classification of my work with private sector research partners as "production" work rather than "research" still stands, along with his prohibitions on the use of the CAST laboratory for this work.

My plans now are to accept a new position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, beginning in the Fall Term 2015, where such constrictions on research do not exist.

It is with deep regret that I leave the excellent laboratory I founded at this University. Although the Department of Architecture at MIT does not have anything even approaching the facilities we have built at the CAST Lab they are, unlike the U of M Faculty of Architecture, enthusiastic about supporting my research and its further development and application in innovative and experimental construction projects.

While I leave the University of Manitoba with regret, I look forward to my work at MIT, and other universities abroad, with great relief. My energies can once again be spent in positive work rather than fighting the strange and negative friction I have encountered here in recent years.

I will always be grateful for the extraordinary support I received from the University of Manitoba in the past. It has changed my life, and served many others as well in the process. Despite my recent frustrations, I will remain forever thankful to this University for the excellent years I spent here, and for the contributions I was able to make with its support.

We emphasize the case of CAST only because it was the most serious and because the vast majority of our interviewees raised it with us. However, almost everyone we met also had a story of their research being interfered with, from minor but dispiriting incidents involving distinguished visiting lecturers being uninvited after faculty had worked hard to stitch together the necessary funding, to the direct interference with industry partners and research initiatives that West experienced.

For example, Frank Fantauzzi, when he was chair, regularly had his decisions overturned regarding research allocations. Shauna Mallory, a long-time faculty member, reported she experienced decanal interference with research funding, when the dean became involved with the Student Technology Fee Investment Committee. After she questioned a proposal to move the Partnership Program office, she suddenly found her funding frozen pending the submission of an accounting of how she had spent the funds to date, even though this requirement was not part of the funding structure.

These activities seemed to run exactly counter to what deans normally do: when faculty members find ways to secure outside funding and develop external partnerships that can support innovation while providing pathways for students to transition from school to career, they enhance the school's reputation and the quality of education that the school provides, and their dean should applaud and encourage them.

Restrictions of Academic Freedom

While issues of academic freedom clearly are in play in much of the material covered in this report's other terms of reference, we address it specifically here to take up a theme that relates directly to the fundamental principles of academic freedom but is not covered elsewhere in this report: the principle that academic freedom protects the right of faculty members to criticize their institution and administration.

Of the numerous complaints we heard concerning Stern's attempts to restrict academic freedom in this regard, many alleged Stern used Jackie Gruber, the University of Manitoba's Human Rights and Conflict Management Officer, in what they regarded to be a campaign to use the University's *Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy* as a weapon to roll back his faculty members' right to freedom from institutional censorship. We heard numerous stories of faculty members being instructed to attend meetings with Ms. Gruber to be advised of their responsibilities under this policy, or being summoned to attend meetings with Stern and arriving to find Gruber also in attendance.

Faculty felt these meetings were intended to quell dissent by positioning all criticism and all critics as *disrespectful* and therefore as potentially subject to discipline under the policy. In correspondence to the Committee, Ms. Gruber said that such a perception misunderstands her role:

I have no part whatsoever in investigating complaints, and no disciplinary role or authority. My job is to educate, help resolve conflict, and if a formal complaint is filed, ensure that an investigator is appointed and does a thorough and fair review.

Stern's action encompasses three important violations of principle. First, academic freedom protects freedom in carrying out research and in publishing the results

thereof, freedom in carrying out teaching, and freedom from institutional censorship. Second, this is an instance of senior administration using the respectful work and learning environment policy to silence academic staff. Finally, this behaviour makes recourse to *RWLEP* provisions effectively unavailable to members of the Faculty of Architecture, by removing their trust in the process.

Moreover, these violations of principle also violate the collective agreement, since Article 19.A.1 of the University of Manitoba's Collective Agreement with its faculty underscores the faculty's right to be free from institutional censorship.

Interference with the Functioning of Committees

The protection from institutional censorship guaranteed by Article 19.A.1 of the Collective Agreement is complemented by the very next article, Article 19.A.2.1, which enumerates faculty members' rights, duties and responsibilities. Of particular interest is the first paragraph, which guarantees free expression and participation in specific, key aspects of committee work:

Faculty members shall have the right to express opinions and to participate by means of their representatives in procedures as provided for in the appropriate Article concerning such matters as: the appointment and promotion of faculty members; the granting of tenure to faculty members; the selection and review of heads of departments and academic administrators (but not their deputies or associate officers); and the granting of merit awards. (45)

Free, uncoerced participation in such activities as appointment and promotion of faculty members and selection and review of department heads is a must for any institution claiming to promote academic freedom and to be governed collegially. Conversely, to the extent

that any of these aspects of collegial governance are undermined, so too is that institution's claim on academic freedom diminished. Academics have a right to expect that much of the work they do in committees is a key aspect of collegial governance. That is, such committees are mandated to make decisions that represent the collective will of the colleagues on the committee—rather than to execute the will of a chair, dean or other administrator. And yet, it appears that executing his will is precisely how Stern expects committees to act.

A number of faculty members reported that Stern finds it difficult to resist intervening in faculty members' activities, no matter how large or small, usually with the effect of making the activity either much more difficult or impossible. We were told that industry partnerships, guest lecturer programs, the Department of Architecture's centenary—all were subjected to Stern's incessant interventions. In communication to our committee, Dean Stern said he was endeavouring *to assist faculty members in navigating these requirements so that we can achieve successful programs*. He continued, *The fact that some faculty members do not think these rules should apply to them does not make it interference, because they are simply wrong.*

Other Issues that May Arise in the Course of its Investigation

The main additional concern that regularly was reported in our interviews and that the evidence we saw supports, is that Ralph Stern is not appropriate to be a dean. He simply has the wrong personality, and is unable to turn his hand to encouraging his faculty members and finding ways to help them realize their projects. He certainly could not be regarded as the chief academic of his Faculty in any meaningful way (particularly since the Ph.D. he was working on when he was hired has failed to materialize). Dean Stern indicated to the committee that he did *make commitments regarding my continued academic pursuits, but those were made in the context of my relationship with my supervisor, the Vice-President (Academic) and Provost. I am currently working with Dr. Keselman to fulfil her expectations in this regard.*

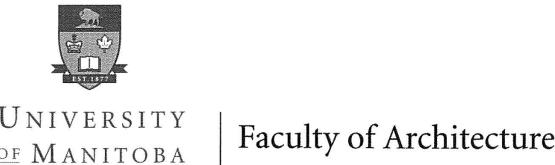
Far from thinking of him as a mentor or facilitator, his faculty members (along with the student leaders we met) think of him as an obstacle.

4| Recommendations

Given the contents of our interviews and the documents that we have reviewed, we make the following recommendations:

1. That Ralph Stern be terminated immediately from his position as Dean and have all administrative and supervisory authority revoked.
2. That the University begin a search for a new dean, consistent with its policy and in consultation with members of the Faculty of Architecture.

5| Appendix A



March 11, 2014

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To: Dr. J. Doering, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
 From: R. Stern, Dean, Faculty of Architecture
 Subject: Department of Architecture Graduate Program Review

The FGS Letter of May 7th, 2013 addressed to Terri Fuglem, Acting Head of the Department of Architecture regarding the Graduate Program Review indicates that the “unit’s Line Dean” is to comment on two questions as follows:

- i) The strategic directions and priorities of the Faculty, and
- ii) How your graduate programs fit into that context.

The Faculty is currently preparing for a retreat at the end of March, facilitated by an external facilitator, to address the Faculty Strategic Plan. This will include revisiting the Faculty Vision and Mission statements. Therefore, at this juncture it is technically not possible to respond with accuracy to these questions. Similarly, I have read in the Graduate Program Report that the Department of Architecture is currently reviewing its mission statement of September 2008 (page 6), but have since been apprised that the Department has not yet seen a draft of any revised document. As both the Faculty and the Department are in flux with regard to establishing strategic directions and priorities I would like to take this opportunity to address concerns that I feel, as Dean, should be incorporated into the deliberations of the Graduate Program Reviewers. As the architecture program is also subject to an external professional accreditation review, I believe it appropriate to raise these issues “internally” first, within the framework of this Graduate Program Review, and with an eye towards addressing and resolving what I see are outstanding issues prior to the program undergoing its periodic professional accreditation review this coming year.

One important opening note: the Acting Department Head did not consult the Department, the Associate Dean Academic, or the Dean on strategic directions (or other topics) with regard to the Program Review. The Office of the Dean has also not received the information produced by the Acting Department Head in a timely fashion

(internal deadlines were serially disregarded) and requests by the Dean for clarification on important, if not essential, issues apparent from the Review document after it was submitted to FGS have been equally disregarded. This is truly unfortunate, as the information provided on the program remains incomplete. It is possible that some of the issues I have raised in the series of “observations” that follow may have been clarified and resolved prior to my submitting this document. Given this, I have done the best I can with the information at hand, I hope that the Reviewers will be granted the opportunity to complete this picture of the current Graduate Program of the Department of Architecture. It is equally important to note, as indicated in the Review, that this is a “new” program implemented in 2008/09.

With regard to full disclosure, I relate that I am both Dean and a member of the Department of Architecture. I came to the University from abroad: I had no dealings with, or knowledge of, this department prior to the start of my recruitment. Unlike the majority of the members of the Department, I am neither an alumnus of Carleton nor of McGill. I am, however, the first architect to be Dean of the Faculty of Architecture in close to twenty years. I came to the Department and Faculty with extensive field experience, equally extensive experience as a practicing professional with broad experience in two countries, as an academic who has taught in three different countries (now four), on two continents, at both private and public institutions. I am professionally licensed in two countries, have been licensed in a third, and am currently a member of the American Institute of Architects, the Royal Architects Institute of Canada, and the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA). I am also an active member of the MAA Council. My field of research is in the area of History and Theory, with a requisite track record of publications and lecturing and/or teaching at institutions that include Columbia, Yale, Harvard, MIT, Cambridge, the London School of Economics, etc. I believe that I am fully qualified to note the observations below and to raise the concomitant concerns.

I can equally relate that I feel conflicted about this report; I have tried to function in the capacity of Dean in providing much of the information below, but, as a member of the Department, also clearly wish to present a strongly dissenting voice with regard to the efficacy of what is consistently referred to as “our” program. I do not agree with many of the aspects of “our” program and others in the Department have come to me privately over the past years to express similar dissenting opinions. I have been advised that, in the past, faculty members who haven’t “fit in” have been driven out and, frankly, I can see what appears to be this dynamic at work today. There is, in my opinion, an urgent need to depersonalize the program, to change “our” program from what seems to be a territorial and possessive clan-like affair into a graduate program serving the students (it is, after all, “their” program) as aspiring professionals.

Many of these issues might have been addressed in a Departmental venue prior to the Graduate Program Review, had such a venue been made available. I can

relate that dissenting opinions about the program have been brought forward to me on repeated occasions by colleagues in the Faculty, by colleagues in the Department, by Administrative Staff, by the Professional Community, by Alumni, and by students. The students themselves are admirable, but I do not—whether in my capacity as educator, administrator, or professional—believe that they are served as well as they might be.

Nor do I believe that departmental members are well-served by the graduate program: a program that has little on the way of course offerings between a 1.5 credit-hour elective and an 18-credit hour studio sequence. The lack of a more regularized university schedule stifles some, if not many, instructors in their teaching and research as much as it guarantees—indeed reifies—a departmental silo preventing students from taking other courses in the Faculty and University. As the “line Dean”, I recognize the ongoing demands this makes on resource allocation as well as the overall ineffectiveness of the program in delivering the possibilities for transparency and mobility that students—and increasingly the profession—expect. As a department member I have been informed, on the one hand, that teaching a 3-credit history/theory course constitutes a “monologue” (email correspondence) but that an 18-credit course is necessary to “better aid, guide, and challenge the student” and that the student is “able to develop a greater understanding of the deeper complexities of architectural problems” (page 10). To myself, these two positions (“monologue” and “greater understanding”) stand in stark contradiction to one another.

In her Forward to the Graduate Program Review (January 31, 2014), the Acting Department Head states that the Department “will resolve to improve its recordkeeping and maintain a higher level of consciousness about the multiple contexts in which it operates.” If this is not merely rhetoric, then I am truly pleased to read this for much (if not most) of what I have heard since my arrival is that the Department is “autonomous”. This position of self-proclaimed autonomy has led to a recurring burden for the Office of the Dean, Administrative Staff, and the Faculty as a whole.

What follows is a list of Observations made in conjunction with the submission of the Graduate Program Report as I received it on January 31st, 2014.

Observation 01: Accountability regarding Strategic Planning & Peer Institutions:

Arriving in 2010, I fully expected to find a functioning department that I could be of assistance to with regard to “moving from good to great”, as the University agenda indicated. I expected to find a department interested in engaging a larger, international context (from which I was recruited), a department eager to engage the urgent issues of climate change, social justice, advances in technology and developments in professional practice. I also expected to find a department engaged in an ongoing discussion of history and theory, and their relevance to contemporary issues. In short, I expected to find a department “typical” in the best sense of the word: eager, ambitious, engaged and wishing to accomplish the best for its students. I enquired of

Departmental members who they considered their Peer Institutions to be, and was told that they were “unique”. To date, including the Graduate Program Review, no Peer Institutions have been forthcoming, thereby leaving an open question as to how we are serving our students in relation to our peers and competitors.

The Graduate Program Review states that the Department has a “unique curriculum in Canada that is influenced by the British unit system and tailored to the North American university system”. (page 8) My first questions, then, are as follow:

- 1) What evaluative metrics are used to assess the merits of implementation?
- 2) Why the British Unit System? What is the British Unit System? Why do students “self-direct their education”? Were other “systems” considered?
- 3) What current relationships (MOUs, student, faculty, research exchanges) do we have with British universities to facilitate a peer review of the DoA’s “new” program.

These would be logical first steps to pursuing a self-assessment on terms that would potentially validate the “uniqueness” of the DoA program in Canada. Unfortunately, the Graduate Program Review is utterly silent on this front. Further, to the best of my knowledge, the DoA currently has no exchanges with any British institution.

To summarize some impressions: I see little evidence in the Graduate Program Review of a clear departmental strategic plan with regard to the implementation of the British “unit system” to create a Program “unique” to Canada, and how this was “tailored” to the North American university and accreditation systems. This could be a very interesting discussion, but there is no evidence that this discussion is being engaged. Also not evident is how this connects to other Continental “systems” with which other units in the Faculty are working in areas germane to Architecture: sustainable and energy efficient building design, student exchanges, etc.

I have been a Research Associate at Cambridge University as well as a Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics. At these two British institutions I experienced programs and opportunities quite different than the one here, leaving me to wonder again what exactly is meant by the Program Review’s assertion about the “British Unit System”. Finally, I question whether “uniqueness” should be pursued as a goal in and of itself.

Observation 02: Accountability regarding Professional Accreditation:

If Peer Institutions and the attendant cooperation and commensurability with other programs do not factor large in the Graduate Program Review, then what other points of external validation exist? The Acting Department Head has noted in the Graduate Program Review that the “new’ curriculum, implemented in 2008/9, received praise and a strong endorsement in the 2009 CACB Visiting Team Report” adding that the program was granted a full six year term of accreditation.” (page 13) I feel compelled to make a point here: a member of the Visiting Team was concurrently applying for a

position within the Department at the time of the Team Visit. This anomaly contravenes, to the best of my knowledge, the arms-length distance requirements mandated by the CACB and may raise questions about that particular accreditation report as a whole.

The potential qualification mentioned above aside, although the program was “granted the full six year term of accreditation” it was done so with required focused evaluations after two years in order to address the two “recurring issues”, the criteria determined to be “not met” by the Visiting Team: Condition 5 (Human Resources) and Condition 12 (Student Performance Criterion 12.22 - Building Systems Integration). How the Department addressed these “not met” conditions is not mentioned in the Graduate Program Review (“Building Systems Integration” appears in conjunction only with a 1.5 credit hour Advanced Technology Topics elective). The request for a baseline position (page 38) forwarded to the Office of the Dean in the fall of 2013 made no mention of need in the area of Building Systems Integration.

Observation 03: Accountability regarding Grading or Who Assigns Grades?:

Page 34 of the GPR indicates a “typical program of study” for the Department. Studio courses, as the GPR relates, comprise 9 credit hours per semester (generally over two semesters) for a total of 18 credit hours and the GPR Document relates the “Portfolio Grading” structure for studio courses on page 11 as follows: “Individual Instructors suggest the term grades, and these are reviewed by the (portfolio) committee in relation to the quality of work both within the particular studio as well as at that level across studios. ... Portfolio grading is also a method to ensure performance standards across a variety of studio themes and teaching methodologies ...”

Unfortunately nowhere in the Graduate Program Review does one find a delineation of what these “performance standards” might be. If students are to take “greater responsibility for their education and research directives” and “self-direct their education” (page 8), then how do these correlate with the “performance standards”?

Studio Grading Concern:

Of greatest concern is the portfolio grading by the portfolio committee. When I received the GPR from the Acting Department Head on January 31st, I enquired as to who has been on the portfolio grading committee (the instructor of record only “suggests” grades) for the past five years (request attached). The deadline for submitting this information to me was February 24th; to date I have not received a single name but have been told verbally that getting this information is “difficult”. Therefore, one can only conclude that there are no records of who has actually been grading the students for the majority of their coursework. I have asked the Acting Department Head for clarification on these issues, but to date have received no response.

Technology Grading Concern:

A similarly obscure structure of grading occurs in the required Technology Courses where a similar “portfolio” is graded “collectively by the consultants” (page 12). As with the Studio Portfolio grading, I asked the Acting Department Head to provide me with a list of the consultants involved in grading over the past five years, and the response has been the same as with the instructors involved with portfolio grading: silence. In both cases it is not only unclear who has served on the respective committees, but also how individuals are selected for these committees, and how the grades have fluctuated between those “suggested” by the instructor of record and those finally given by the grading committees. I have heard, but cannot verify, that sessionals have served on these committees and have “graded” the work of students working under associate and full professors. I have asked the Acting Department Head for clarification on these issue, but to date have received no response.

M1 Studio Grading Concern:

The general concern regarding “group grading” by an unidentified group is elucidated above, but the M1 Studios (18 credit hours) are of yet another order. Page 34 of the GPR indicates the typical program of study. Hidden within the 9 credits assigned to the second term of the studio sequence is a technology course (incorporated into the studio instructor credits, but for which the Department requires an external Technology Consultant at additional cost). Given the grading structures outlined above, the total number of individuals involved in grading the second semester of the M1 studio numbers approximately 12 (studio portfolio grading committee + technology portfolio grading committee + instructor). I have asked the Acting Department Head for clarification on these issue, but to date have received no response.

In all of my years of experience I have yet to encounter a situation in which more a dozen (unknown) individuals are required to determine a student grade for a first year graduate course. Truly, the Department of Architecture appears to have created processes that are indeed unique, but that do not seem to be in alignment with standard—or best—practices at the University of Manitoba and elsewhere. If nothing else, this is not a productive allocation of resources.

Observation 04: Thesis Studio Concern (Integration into Vertical Studios):

I completely understand the rationale for attaching Thesis projects to the vertical studio structure; clearly it has contributed to the time-to-completion improvements that the Department has realized since the implementation of the new curriculum. However, it is unclear how well these thesis projects are integrated into the studio structure as a whole and I understand that Thesis students often do not participate in studio field trips etc., if they are not central to Thesis concerns. In this regard, I have

heard of Thesis students “hanging out” when the rest of the studio is abroad and it is unclear who is responsible for these students in the absence of their studio instructor.

On another note, I also understand that Thesis students are integrated into third-year undergraduate studios (ED3), which is a procedure that I do not understand. I have asked the Acting Department Head for clarification on these issues, but to date have received no response.

Observation 05: Five Pedagogical “Streams”:

On page 9 of the Graduate Program Review it is stated that the Program is divided into 5 pedagogical streams as follows: 1) design studio, 2) technology, 3) history and theory, 4) professional practice, and 5) design thesis. This distribution implies a diversity of opportunities for students in shaping their course interests to align with their educational and professional goals, I do not see how at least two of these (history and theory; professional practice) are reflected in the “Typical Program of Study” (page 34). Here it appears that the total number of hours available to a student under “professional practice” amounts to 6, and the total number of hours allocated to history and theory amounts to 4.5. In particular with regard to the latter, I question whether 4.5 credit hours distributed over a two-year period of study qualifies as a “stream” and speculate as to whether the paucity of support in this area leads to an absence of students eager to continue in a PhD program (the typical trajectory of history/theory students) here or elsewhere.

With regard to professional practice, I note the complete lack of advancing a revised “Summer Internship Program” (SIP) granting the students the opportunity to work for professional offices. Popular with the students, when I arrived this Program had some profound organizational failures due to lack of proper program oversight; attempts to address these issues have not moved forward since the summer of 2011 with the successor proposal (SWEE) shelved as per the DoA Council Minutes of August 28, 2013 (not yet ratified) due to the “too heavy” administrative workload placed on a tenure-track member of the Department. Apparently no one else in the Department has volunteered to move this program forward at this juncture and so it continues to languish.

Lastly, with regard to the “Technology Stream”, the Program Review document mentions a request for an “external search for a technology-specialized position” (page 38). However, almost half the current full-time staff is capable of teaching technology courses. Surprisingly, almost none teach core courses. It would seem beneficial to the development of such a stream if needs and strategies were clearly articulated. I have requested of the Acting Department Head that such information be provided but, as with other requests, no further information has been forthcoming.

Observation 06: Accountability regarding Resource Allocation:

Page 01 of the GPR the Acting Department Head writes that the Department is “extremely resourceful operating on a lean budget.” When I arrived in 2010 I was asked (literally within a few minutes of my arrival) for additional support and funding for the Department because, as the argument subsequently unfolded, “overworked and underfunded” in comparison with other Departments in the Faculty. Similar assertions had been forwarded to the MAA, the professional organization, and I was also confronted with questions from that quarter based on the assertions of the DoA.

Therefore, in late 2010, the Office of the Dean ran numbers comparing the DoA with other departments in the Faculty. After discounting for fixed costs, the DoA was clearly the most expensive on a per student basis, coming in at almost twice the cost of the Interior Design Department. There were multiple reasons for this, such as hiring sessional instructors to teach an 18-credit hour studio with only 4 students (rather than redistributing the students), or paying sessionals on a 12-month basis although they did not teach in the summer, having a dedicated Administrative Assistant (in comparison to the other three Departments sharing one), etc. Just prior to my arrival, the DoA had even managed to send a sessional on sabbatical (recorded in DoA Minutes) along with her husband, a full-time member of Faculty.

We have reigned in many of these examples and the Department has, in fact, become much leaner and resources are distributed much more equitably across the Faculty. The Department has not reacted well to such constraints and continues to place unreasonably large demands on the resources of administrative staff and the Office of the Dean due to the anomalies of this unique program. Moreover, internal Program commitments involving up to twelve individuals to grade a course appears to demand the time of Program academic staff to such an extent that all other requirements are secondary, potentially resulting in missed opportunities in areas including research, cooperation with other programs within the Faculty and institutions beyond the Faculty. It has also appears to have hindered opportunities for further program development within the Department (i.e., the SWEE program mentioned above, or a post-professional program in Fabric-Formed Concrete, etc.).

On a final, substantive note: the current program is structured in such a manner that each winter session each Vertical Studio (ED4, M1, M2 and already allocated 9 credits) is allocated an additional 3 credits for a “Technology Consultant”. There is an additional 5K upcharge per studio (times ca. 8-10 studios per semester) and, with one Consultant required for each studio group, the total cost for the consultants ranges from 40K to 50K. All consultants issue an absolutely identical syllabus, clearly begging the question as to whether the technology consultancy wouldn’t be better with an instructor teaching a technology class (at a substantial cost saving).

Observation 07: Accountability regarding Governance:

An unclear governance structure in the Faculty regarding the Undergraduate Environmental Design Program and the role of Graduate Programs in accessing and administrating various “options” in the ED Program has plagued the Faculty for years. The statement in the Graduate Program Review that the “graduate degree … is in many respects continuous with the undergraduate degree” (page 4) highlights these issues with regard to the Architecture Program. It is essential to note at this juncture that undergraduate students receive a degree in Environmental Design, not a degree in architecture. This lack of clarity regarding governance and purview has been the source of much friction within the Faculty and has been an ongoing burden with regard to resource allocation.

Closing Observations:

In the Graduate Program Review the Acting Department Head relates that I, as Dean, am “offering an interdisciplinary vertical design studio to all departments in the faculty” (page 10). There is much that is not mentioned in this statement, perhaps there will be an occasion to relate this to the Reviewers; certainly I find (as do the students) the opportunity to work across Option and Departmental silos to be invigorating. Suffice it here to state that I am, in fact, co-teaching with an alumnus of the “old” architecture program (not mentioned in the report). I find my colleague to be just fantastic; a tremendous asset to the Faculty who is currently spearheading the integration of digital fabrication technology into pedagogy. The “old” program seems to have had a great deal of flexibility, validity, and durability. My colleague no longer teaches in the Architecture Program, but in the second-year Environmental Design Program.

The Acting Head also relates in the Program Review that “not surprisingly, the Department of Architecture has made significant ties to its closest institution, the University of Winnipeg. Most prominent of these is Herb Enns …” (pages 21-22). I rely heavily on Professor Enns for his valued expertise on all matters concerning the John A. Russell building (worthy of heritage status), the chairing of various Committees, and, among several other initiatives, supervising at my request this year’s very successful entry into the Warming Huts Competition at the Forks (also not mentioned in the report). Herb is also fantastic: he is an alumnus (also of the “old” program), a twenty-year member of the Department of Architecture, and a former Department Head. He has recently been a central member of two professional accreditation visits (Calgary and Ryerson). When I suggested that he assist the Acting Department Head with the preparation of the forthcoming accreditation documents, I was informed that Herb “has taught only one full year in our department … so he is the member who is least familiar with our program” (email correspondence).

In this revisionist history, the architecture “department” apparently begins only with the inception of “our” program in 2008/09. It was therefore all the more surprising

for me to read the Acting Department Head describing the architecture program as “enjoying a strong reputation” and “boast(ing) award-winning and internationally recognized alumni such as Harry Seidler ...” (page 1).

As the Acting Department Head opens her report with Seidler, I will now close with him. Here we share a point of agreement: for Seidler was indeed an internationally recognized alumnus. He did, however, complete his degree in the mid-1940s, well before all of the current faculty members were born. Therefore I’m not certain that it is germane to conjoin Seidler with “our” program. Certainly the program was not a graduate program at that time, but a most highly-regarded undergraduate program.

The personal history of Harry Seidler is quite remarkable. He was an Austrian Jew who fled Vienna after German annexation. Seeking asylum in the UK, he was arrested and interred after the outbreak of the Second World War. In the early 1940s, he was brought as an internee to Canada where, under a particular program made available to those under the age of 21, he was allowed to apply for “probation” from the camp and admission into a University. With some drafting skills, he applied to the architecture programs at McGill, Toronto, and Manitoba. Only Manitoba accepted him. Continuing to report to his probationary officer, Seidler graduated from the Manitoba undergraduate program and then went on to complete his graduate studies at Harvard and a grand career based in Australia.

Seidler was, however, thankful throughout his adult life for the magnanimous opportunity and life-transforming experience offered him by the University of Manitoba alone. It is a tradition to be truly and profoundly proud of; it is this tradition that attracted me to Manitoba.

I often wonder if Seidler would be afforded a similar opportunity today. I would like very much to think so, but cannot believe so with certainty. Would he “fit” into “our” program? Or, if he returned to Manitoba, would he be deemed someone “least familiar with our program”? Seidler passed away a couple of years ago, but the other alumni praised in turn by the Acting Department Head might speak to their perceptions of the current graduate program (all “old” program alumni, they have spoken to me).

In closing I can state with certainty that I agree wholeheartedly with many of the tenets listed in the Mission Statement. If they are taken at face value, then I believe that the Program not only has a great past (or great precursors), but can have a great future. I can rest assured that there will be a place for the Harry Seidlers of future generations. I trust that the Reviewers sense the importance of their role in assuring that Manitoba can maintain this position of greatness.

RES/pa

Cc: Dr. Brenda Hann, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Dr. Marcella Eaton, Associate Dean, Faculty of Architecture