

No Merit in Professors Emeriti

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I retired from the University of Saskatchewan as Professor Emerita in January 2019 after 38.5 years of service. Like many of us who are still providing research supervision to students, I continued in this role during the early years of my retirement and saw to completion three doctoral students and one honours student. I also supervised an additional honours thesis during 2019-2020 and have recently agreed to be a member of an MSc research advisory committee for another student. I remain a member of the research advisory committees for another two doctoral students.

In addition to maintaining my role as research supervisor, my transition away from being a full-time faculty member was aided by my choice to continue with other scholarly activities. During the past nearly five years, I published one invited short methodology book in the American Psychological Association's (APA) series on qualitative research, three journal articles (one invited), three book chapters (two invited), and served as an invited editor of a major volume (the APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, 2nd edition) on which I was responsible for 17 chapters on qualitative

research. I also participated in six conference presentations and was a keynote speaker at an international conference. I credited all of these activities to my institutional affiliation with the University of Saskatchewan.

On June 15, 2023, I received a message from the current Head of Psychology informing me that the College of Arts and Science had announced that they are no longer covering the costs of software licensing for Emeritus faculty. This policy includes licensing and services such as NSID, USask email, PAWS, MS Office 365, Zoom, wireless network access, IT Support for USask Managed Devices and Services, and IT Security, among others. To maintain these licenses and services we are required to pay \$1,000 **annually**. A second package that additionally includes access to research computing, equipment integration, Linux support, HPC access, and research support tools requires an annual fee of \$2,000!

After getting over my initial shock regarding this policy, I wrote to the then-Dean and Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Science to express my puzzlement

and disappointment. I outlined my ongoing commitments to the University and to scholarly work under an affiliation with the University and I emphasized that, for me, this sort of decision really undermines a sense of continued belongingness to the University. I sent a copy of this message to President Stoicheff, not with the goal of prompting him to intervene but rather as information.

The responses I received from the College and from the President could not have been more different. The then-Dean said she appreciated how involved I have continued to be with the University and the College, especially sitting on student advisory committees. However, she advised me that she did not expect to see any change in this policy direction. President Stoicheff was puzzled by this move, apologized for the situation, and said he would look into it.

I also sent this correspondence to the University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association (USRA). Rick Bunt, the University's former Chief Information Officer and now Board member of the USRA, reported to me that this new ICT fee structure caught them completely by surprise

and that the USRA intends to pursue the matter as they plan for the renewal of the USRA's Memorandum of Understanding with the University in 2024.

On June 30, 2023, I received another message from the current Head of Psychology in which she forwarded a message from the Arts and Science IT Manager indicating that they had just been told that the planned license packaging changes for Emeritus faculty have been put on hold pending further review.

I have not been informed of further developments.

This sequence of events highlights a few observations and conclusions for me: (1) retired faculty members

can easily be seen as financial liabilities and turned into revenue-generating units; (2) very little is known about the continuing contributions of Professors Emeriti; and (3) we are very fortunate to have a strong Retirees Association that can advocate on our behalf.

In my view, this situation also exposes a blind spot among some (not all) Department Heads and Deans. Before I retired, the then-Head of Psychology did not offer to have a conversation with me about whether or how I might want to continue my association with the Department, College, and University. Instead, I was summarily cut off from the Department's

listserv a few months later. Clearly, retiring faculty members have different wants and needs regarding their desire for continued involvement. Some want to sever ties completely; others want to complete their unfinished commitments; and others might actually be interested in teaching, continuing with their research, giving a special lecture now and then, or mentoring junior faculty members. We should at least be asked.

After all, it is in the interests – financial and otherwise – of Departments, Colleges, and the University to foster continued connections to retired faculty, particularly when desired by some of our members.

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