

# CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN THE CANADIAN ACADEMY

History, Tendency, Remedy

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# History

- ❑ The allure of **purity**, the limits to **unworldliness**, and the paradox of the **freedom to be disciplined**
- ❑ Plato's Academy (and its groves), then Scholium, Religious Foundation (Bologna, Oxford, Paris, Salamanca, etc.), Research Institution (von Humboldt), Ivory Tower (Sainte-Beuve), Treasonous Place (Benda, Goebbels, Stalin), Public Utility (Clark Kerr), Business (James Keller), Bastion of Democracy (ask any authoritarian)
- ❑ Interests (and duties) always in play and in conflict: external and internal, individual and collective, material and not, in private as well as public universities contending with nepotism, doctrine (and its enforcers), bribery and corruption, and self-censorship

# Tendency

- ▣ **Scrupulous self-recusal** is the dominant tendency in **peer review** and **collegial governance**: no great problem there
- ▣ The growing problems lie with the **managed university**: donors as owners, and brand management before academic integrity
- ▣ To **hype** or to **hide**? **That** is the question?
- ▣ And why are some academic (and student and community) **leaders** demonized as **ringleaders** while others are welcomed as **cheerleaders**?



Manitoba Commonwealth, 7 June 1947

# Remedy

- ▣ Regulate to educate, not to suffocate
- ▣ Confidentiality is not designed to hide conflict of interest or over-protect commercial interests
- ▣ Avoid the Chatham House Rule as a pretext for excessive redaction (see the **Monsanto Affair 2015**)
- ▣ Not cracks in concealment where the light gets in, but **maximum transparency** and **collegial oversight** in the institutional, academic, and public interest
- ▣ Avoid the unproductive optics of damage control (**Giesy/3M**) and the chill expressing risk aversion

# Recommendation

- ▣ A review of CoI policies and practices at the U of S initiated by Senate but including tri-cameral representation, and an external authority; (I recommend Arthur Shafer of the U of Manitoba)
- ▣ In this way, Senate shows a double allegiance to institutional reputation and academic integrity, while aptly reversing the flow of influence from University Council and the Board of Governors; Senators hence show initiative, and demonstrate once more that you care too

# Further Reading

- ▣ CAUT Policy on Academic Staff and Conflict of Interest ([www.caut.ca](http://www.caut.ca))
- ▣ CAUT. *Open For Business? On What Terms?* (Ottawa: CAUT, 2013; and at link above)
- ▣ CAUT Ad Hoc Investigation Reports on ... the Balsillie School and The Enbridge Centre for Corporate Sustainability, University of Calgary
- ▣ U of S Responses to FOIP requests from the Academic Integrity Group [I can provide you with electronic copies of these]

# And the Heart of the Matter

- ▣ Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* (c.335 BC)
- ▣ Heinrich Heine, “The German Censors” (1827)
- ▣ Henrik Ibsen. *An Enemy of the People* (1882)
- ▣ Bertolt Brecht. *The Life of Galileo* (shifting versions from 1938 to 1955)
- ▣ Jon Thompson, Patricia Baird, and Jocelyn Downie. *The Olivieri Report*. (2001)