



Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship

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15 November 2018

Alan Shaver, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor
Thompson Rivers University
Clock Tower Building, Room CT 312
805 TRU Way
Kamloops, BC V2C 0C8

Dear Dr Shaver:

I am writing as president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS), an organization of university faculty members and others dedicated to the defense of academic freedom and the merit principle in higher education. (For further information, please see our website at www.safs.ca.)

I read with alarm an article in the *Globe and Mail* (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-derek-pyne-and-the-future-of-academic-freedom/>) that stated that Thompson Rivers economics professor Derek Pyne had been banned in May from the TRU campus and that TRU has not yet been forthcoming about what Dr Pyne did to merit this action.

The article suggests that Dr Pyne's troubles with TRU stem from his work on the subject of the use by professors of fraudulent academic journals. These are journals that falsely claim to peer-review submissions but in fact publish them simply for a fee. Dr Pyne has revealed that a large number of professors publish in these journals just for the sake of increasing their number of publications, thereby to promote their reputations and to enhance their chance of gaining tenure or promotion. This sometimes happens, Dr Pyne alleges, with the connivance of some university administrators and other professors.

One gathers from the article that Dr. Pyne has identified a significant number of Thompson Rivers faculty members who have published in such journals, and whose reputations thus rest, with the potential collusion of administrators, on a dubious foundation. If this is true, it constitutes a serious breach of academic standards.

Dr Pyne's right to make known the results of his research and his criticisms of Thompson Rivers University is protected by the academic freedom guaranteed all TRU professors by

Article 9.6 of the TRU Collective Agreement. Banning Dr Pyne from campus for being outspoken, then, would be a violation of his academic freedom. Thompson Rivers owes it to the academic community to explain why it has taken action against Dr Pyne and why this action is not an attack on academic standards and values.

TRU should at least co-operate fully with the investigation by the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

We respectfully ask you to respond to our letter. With your permission, we will post your response along with this letter on our website.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Mercer', written in a cursive style.

Mark Mercer, PhD
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