



Denis Rancourt [REDACTED]

## Open letter to Alan Rock in support of Dr Denis Rancourt

CU WU &lt;cuwu.info@gmail.com&gt;

Sun, Feb 28, 2010 at 11:24 PM

To: president@uottawa.ca

Cc: [REDACTED]

Montreal  
February 28, 2010

Open letter to Alan Rock  
President of the University of Ottawa

We, the undersigned members of College and University Workers United (CUWU), know Dr Denis Rancourt to be a dedicated educator and a fearless defender of justice. We know Denis Rancourt to stand for human rights and for students' rights. We are thankful to count Denis Rancourt among the rare public intellectuals who do not compromise their principles when they become aware of institutional folly; but instead use their positions to expose and correct flawed practices.

We have examined the circumstances of Denis Rancourt's sudden removal from the University of Ottawa. These extraordinary circumstances have included an unannounced laboratory lockout, illegitimate use of trespass legislation to handcuff and arrest the professor, illegal dismissal of his research associate of many years, denial of due process, extensive use of covert surveillance including voice recording talks on other campuses, intimidation of graduate students by threatening loss of scholarships, and many more violations of established labour norms in the academic environment.

We note that the dismissal was executed against a mid-career tenured professor of the highest academic rank, with an active and federally-funded research group, having achieved international recognition for his scientific work in several areas, and practising some of the most innovative advances in teaching in the country.

We note that less than a year before the dismissal, Denis Rancourt won an Arbitration Award setting new precedents for academic freedom in Canada – a published legal study of which was entitled "Teaching Science through Social Activism is Protected by Academic Freedom, Arbitrator Rules."

We have examined the accusations against Denis Rancourt, which he has made entirely public, and the university administration's position which it has made public in two press releases.

We conclude that the charges advanced against Denis Rancourt are a contrived pretext, that they are preposterous as reasons to summarily remove a tenured professor, and that, therefore, the real reasons must

lie elsewhere. We conclude that this was a political firing to remove a dissident academic who was also critical of the university administration and supportive of student efforts to reform the institution towards greater student power.

We protest the firing of Denis Rancourt by the administration at the University of Ottawa as a backward move that harms Canadian academia and the educational project in a free and democratic society. We ask that those most directly involved take an uncompromisingly critical look at the machinations of the university's administration in this important case and not let justice be disregarded to this extent.

Cordially

Martin Duckworth, Concordia University  
Sumi Hasegawa, McGill University  
Adrienne Hurley, McGill University  
Sandra Jeppesen, Concordia University  
Steven Jordan, McGill University  
Denis Kosseim, André-Laurendeau  
Thomas Lamarre, McGill University  
Abby Lippman, McGill University  
Ehab Lotayef, McGill University  
Joy Moore, Dawson College  
Anthony Paré, McGill University  
Eric Shragge, Concordia University

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