



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Department of Geological Sciences

240 Wallace Building
125 Dysart Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9371
Fax (204) 474-7623

Allan Rock, Office of the President
University of Ottawa
Tabaret Hall (Room 212)
550 Cumberland Street
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5

May 14/2009

Dear President Rock:

It was with dismay that I learned recently of the dismissal of Professor Denis Rancourt, a prominent member of the Ottawa-Carleton Geoscience Institute and the Ottawa-Carleton Institute for Physics, from the Department of Physics, at the University of Ottawa.

Professor Rancourt is an outstanding scientist who has worked extensively in the same general area as myself, and I have no hesitation in ranking him as (1) the world leader in the use of Mössbauer spectroscopy in Mineralogy, and (2) a scientist with considerable insight into the behaviour of natural inorganic solids. There are few scientists of his calibre in the area of Mineralogy worldwide, and the community can ill afford to lose his ability and expertise. In particular, the loss of him and his work will hurt the Canadian mineralogical community; we cannot afford to lose one of our top scientists.

As I understand things, the principal contentious issue involved is the unconventional grading system used by Professor Rancourt in his courses. I have talked with Professor Rancourt and he is willing to (1) use a conventional grading system for his examinations, (2) publish a course content for each course, and (3) release his examination questions subsequent to each examination.

I hope that these changes address your issues concerning Professor Rancourt, and that you are willing to discuss any further differences of opinion with him. As I have emphasized above, Professor Rancourt is a top rank scientist and the national and international scientific communities can ill afford to lose his talents. I feel strongly that people of goodwill should be able to resolve their differences to the benefit of all. In this spirit, I hope that you are able to reconsider this dismissal, resolve your differences in philosophy with Professor Rancourt, and reinstate him as a faculty member in your University.

Sincerely

Frank C. Hawthorne

Officer of the Order of Canada
Canada Research Chair in Mineralogy and Crystallography
Distinguished Professor
Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada
Foreign Member, Russian Academy of Sciences
Killam Prize Winner in Natural Sciences 2008

cc: Dr. Denis Rancourt
[REDACTED]
Ottawa, ON
[REDACTED]