

3 UTS Board Members: Why We Are Resigning - The Difference between a Good-faith and a Bad-faith Effort

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When presented with an assignment only partially accomplished, a College Dean once remarked "Don't worry, I can tell the difference between a good-faith and a bad-faith effort." She forgave the student and granted more time to finish his work. How did she know? She had wisdom, discernment and experience. Oh yes, and heart.

Three of us on the UTS Board (Chairs of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, Committee on Trustees, and Advancement Committee, respectively) are resigning today because of incredible bad-faith actions on the part of our HSA-UWC USA leaders regarding commitments made just a few months ago to keep the undergraduate program in Barrytown. In fairness, this commitment, made when forcing the removal of Richard Panzer as UTS President on January 7, was not an absolute commitment on their parts, but they said they'd try. In the adverse climate between the UTS and HSA-UWC administrations which has continued for almost two years now, a number of UTS Board Trustees have "hung in there" in an effort to positively influence the direction UTS heads in these uncertain times. In short, we chose to stay in the game.

Yet, when it becomes clear that those with whom one is collaborating are not being truthful, one has to evaluate whether it is ethically possible to remain engaged: a statement which is 95% true (and 5% false) is still a lie. Our dilemma has not just been one of personal integrity (as important as this is), but also whether the larger community would view our continued participation on the UTS Board (when we can no longer affect decisions that are being made about UTS) as complicit towards outcomes which are largely objectionable. So, we have decided, with deep regrets, that it is time to resign, despite our collective 25+ years of experience as UTS Trustees.

We debated whether to go quietly, as several of our colleagues have done recently, or to be more public. Through prayerful consideration, we are called to speak out. Why? Even with all of the admitted inadequacies demonstrated by the UTS administration over the past several years, those deficiencies are nothing when compared to the willful, cynical way in which the undergraduate program has been undermined by the parent church. The project had been approved by church leadership, funding commitments of approximately \$15 Million (over a 7 year period) were made, not just to the UTS Board, but also to the New York State Department of Education (NYSDoE). The latter was a required pledge, to demonstrate financial stability in order to secure the NYSDoE approval for the undergraduate program. However, within weeks of Eric Holt's death in 2013 (by then Eric was both HSA-UWC USA treasurer and chair of the UTS Board Finance Committee), his replacement began threatening to make, and then HSA-UWC made reductions to that commitment. To their credit, the UTS Administration sought to cooperate and made significant financial cuts. Some of these cuts put UTS staff and administration at increased risk of making mistakes because fewer hands had to do more work. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that some (not all) of the problems UTS later experienced resulted from already overworked staff being given even more work. Thus, the induced financial crisis begat an administrative one.

You may also have heard about an accreditation "crisis" at UTS. The accrediting agency, MSCHE, has put UTS on probation. However, the central and largest factor in that probation is financial instability. Again, this instability was induced by HSA-UWC. Anyone who questions this has only to review the timing. MSCHE made their decision AFTER the first budget cuts were made and PRIOR to discoveries of Federal financial aid problems. Simply put, there is a high likelihood that UTS WOULD NOT have been put on probation if the financial crisis had not been induced.

In the following weeks and months please prepare yourselves to read a series of well-crafted reports, perhaps sent from UTS, but in any event ghost-written by an HSA-UWC USA PR team, which will persistently seek to place the blame for everything bad at UTS on the previous administration. We predict a series of notices of "tough decisions" framed with what appear to be heartfelt regrets.

You EACH will have to personally discern whether you are being told the truth or not. This takedown of the undergraduate program (and we can only hope this does not extend to the liquidation of the Barrytown campus as well) has been carefully scripted.

One observer has described this HSA-UWC process as "the boiled-frog method", in which frogs are placed in cool water, with the heat gradually increased to boiling, at which point the frogs expire. Alas, frogs are cold-blooded and cannot notice the danger. As warm-blooded creatures, we can. It requires action not to suffer the frogs' fate. We encourage each of you who understand the import of this moment, to write to our leadership and, at the very least, let them know you are watching and that

you CARE whether they keep their promises or not. As whistleblowers (thus removing ourselves from the game on the inside), we've done what we can to let you know what's gone on. You prayerfully need to take the next steps.

Sincerely,

Chad Hoover, Amy Cuhel-Schuckers, Katie Zahedi

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Mr. Chad Hoover ('80), AIA, is the Principal of the architecture firm, Charles Hoover Architect, in Ithaca, New York. On the UTS Board he chaired both the Buildings and Grounds Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Assessment, served on the Ad Hoc Committee on Mission Review, the Executive Committee and was the Secretary of the Board

Mrs. Amy Cuhel-Schuckers ('83,'12) is the Director of Faculty Grants at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. On the UTS Board she chaired the Trustees Committee and served on the Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on Mission Review, the Ad Hoc Committee for Strategic Assessment as well as the Executive Committee

Dr. Katie Zahedi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration at SUNY New Paltz in New Paltz, New York. On the UTS Board she chaired the Advancement Committee, and served on the Buildings and Grounds Committee