

The University of British Columbia Destroys and Indigenous Professor's Reports of White Supremacy among Students

Dr. Wolf has since been placed on administrative leave

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The University of British Columbia Destroys an Indigenous Professor's Reports of Possible White Supremacy among Teacher Candidates

On Wednesday, January 13, 2021, Dr. Amie Wolf was instructed by the Associate Dean of the UBC Department of Educational Studies, Dr. Marianne McTavish, to delete the Interim Reports she had written for twelve teacher candidates. In Winter Term 1, 2020, the students were taking a required, credit course that Dr. Wolf has taught since July 2020: Indigenous Education in Canada. Wolf observed that the participants were not ready to teach Indigenous subject matter, citing their unwillingness to critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, and values to facilitate change, as stipulated in the [BC Teacher's Council, Professional Standards for BC Educators](#). Dr. Wolf passed the students despite that fact, on a condition that was laid out in their Interim Reports: that they continue to try to learn how to respectfully teach Indigenous perspectives, histories, and world views in an elementary classroom context.

During the meeting with Dr. McTavish, Dr. Amie Wolf was told that the UBC President's Office destroyed these reports, which were edited, signed, and emailed to the students by the Director of the Teacher Education Office, Mr. John Yamamoto, and the Indigenous Education in Canada course supervisor, Dr. Shannon Leddy. The decision to censor Dr. Wolf's Interim Reports was the McTavish's response to an anonymous letter from a parent of one of the adult teacher candidates, expressing concern that the Interim Reports could negatively impact their adult-child's future employment opportunities. On January 15, 2021, Dr. Wolf communicated to all parties that she would not delete her desktop copies of the assessments.

"I was told by Dr. McTavish to never speak about my meeting with her or about the content of the Interim Reports," Dr. Wolf explains. "However, I think what the top levels of UBC administration have done must not be swept under the rug. They have committed an act of erasure and tampered with documents. The public needs to know about this. The Indians are in the fort now, and we're not going away. The University has to start doing what it says it is committed to doing."

On its [website](#), the UBC Teacher Education Office claims that its faculty are "committed to preparing educators who will be knowledgeable, capable, flexible, and compassionate members of the profession guided by a sense of social and ethical responsibility in relation to the students and wider society." Resonating with those words in the 2020 [UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan](#), UBC President, Dr. Santa Ono writes that UBC "can produce systemic change... by developing and implementing innovative and

path-breaking research, teaching, and engagement with Indigenous communities.”

When Dr. Wolf reads words like these, she knows what they actually mean. “Indigenous people are experts at seeing lip-service. We know when promises like this are put down on paper, they don’t mean anything in terms of how our lives change for the better. It’s the same battle, different piece of paper. We are the ones who are stuck with doing all the work, and we meet the same barriers every time. People say they are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, but they want to keep their privilege at the same time. It doesn’t work.”

Dr. Wolf notes that she is the only person at meetings about censuring her work without pay. “I am remunerated on a contract basis for my teaching work,” she points out, “but I am not paid to attend meetings that quash me, and I am not paid to fight colonial genocide, which this is. The institutions of Canada use their policies, procedures, and positional authority to pave over me and push me to the edge of disappearing. I’m exhausted, I feel alone, and making ends meet is always hard.”

Dr. Wolf fears for her employment. She is a sessional instructor and an Adjunct Professor. The course she teaches is awarded to her on a per-semester basis only. “I know that speaking out will probably cost me again,” she says, pointing out that, in 2016, [the UBC Sauder School of Business stopped contracting her educational services](#) after she stated in the media that a course requirement on First Nations’ rights and the title is needed, campus-wide. “The University wants to sound progressive and to look they are doing something different. However, the shift of resources – the money that it takes to actually restructure – is still not happening.” The result: Indigenous professors who are willing to assimilate are the only ones left in all levels of the B.C. education systems.

Released in 2020, the report, [In Plain Site](#) identifies what Dr. Wolf feels are the needed systems changes to all B.C. institutions. “In every colonial system in Canada, there are insufficient policies to protect Indigenous people from white supremacy. When Indigenous professors who are precariously employed are eliminated for trying to create change, the institution can just spit us out. The anti-Indigenous bias is hard-wired into the structure.”

Dr. Wolf is hoping that, by going to the media with this story, systemic change will be spurred to actualize at UBC. “My goal right now is just to not disappear,” she says. “My message matters, and my student assessments are correct. I’m an Indigenous scholar and leader, and I deserve to be paid fairly for what I do and to be protected and helped as I make the changes the President of UBC says it supports. Policies, procedures, and monetary provisions to implement these must be adopted at the highest levels of all Canadian institutions.”

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