

Some Questions For Alumni Board Members

At what point does a university's elaborate management apparatus clank to a halt and its valuable working parts, cogs, gears, and chains sit idle, sound falling into silence? At what point does a university consider that there may be a problem with the way some things are working?

Is it taboo for alumni to even think there could be a little something wrong, alarming, like those annoying little red dashboard lights *check engine* ?

Could it occur when 500 alumni sign a petition to try to save a valuable memorial building on the property? Only to hear the President and administration say, a petition means nothing? Even a respected, recognized petition like Care2 ?

How about when world-recognized architects have assayed the campus on behalf of the university and found a beautiful building now slated to be torn to rubble to be outstanding inspiring, strong and reflective of the university's persona?

Does the little red light go on?

Is it possible that some of these wonderful Mount Allison buildings may be more useful in maintaining the university's unique persona than its technocratic administrators believe?

And what would cause a concerned alumna to write: *My reasons are purely sentimental as that is the building I looked at across the street from our home, for many years, watching people enter and leave. It is also a building that served many purposes and has many memories for many generations. It is the one building most everyone who ever went to MtA knows. It is really, in one way, the heart of the old campus. It is a Memorial to all, faculty, students and parents. Parents who may never have seen the inside of college life except through the stories their children. It is history being destroyed and forgotten. It is part of the foundation of today's accomplishments of which we are all so proud.*

Or: Mt. Allison's character and charm are of its best qualities, and to continue to tear down the buildings that make the campus so unique and beautiful is a shame. As both a Mt. Allison alumni, and longtime resident of Sackville, I do not support the decision to continue to revamp the campus in such a way that destroys its heritage and beauty, and I do not support the destruction of the old STUD.2004 Alumni.

Or: It is incredibly important to preserve this memorial building and find new uses for it. Mount Allison claims to be steeped in heritage yet we're slowly losing all of our most important buildings. MT A and its alumni should step up and do what they need to preserve it, refurbish it and keep it in use. Alumni '04

Or: Conserving the heritage of our university is so important in remembering the lessons of our past! class of 61, one of 4 sisters and mother of 4 children all graduates of Mount Allison, former member of the Board of Regents

As these numbers rise daily, like the temperature gauge on the dash, does a little red light go on? They come from alumni of all ages, from renowned architects, heritage experts, townspeople, people who've never gone to Mount Allison but love it anyway.

These are questions each member of the alumni board must again ask herself or himself. Because a Mount Allison alumni board member is much more than a team member and proselytizer. Each one of you is a conscience of the place, a protector too, as valuable as tree, pond, building, conversation, teacher, all those elements that became part of you, that you came to love because they made your life so much better.

So we ask again: How much does it take for belief to be shaken when something just doesn't sit right? Like where did the 5 million extra cost to include the Memorial Library come from? Was Jack Diamond dismissed because he liked the building? Or is it just that someone has a hate for it, wants it out of his or her life? The relentless drive to destroy the Memorial Library begs these questions. Well over 550 people who love Mount Allison have felt that twinge of doubt, with the red warning light coming on. Soon there'll be 1000. And these people aren't your enemies, for the most part, they're your fellow Allisonians.

Do you just leave it alone, suck it up, go with the flow of the administration, think every decision must be final, ignore the value of almost the entire alumni with whom the administration disagrees, and willingly condone the "there, there, everything's fine" purring of the PR spin machine? Is the spin more honest than the little red light?

Or do some of those critical thinking values both you and the university developed together begin to emerge again, to nudge?

Can you still challenge an assumption, especially your own?

Is it possible the administration has made a mistake? That the Memorial Library or whatever you want to call it can thematically synergise the new Fine and Performing Arts Centre as nothing else will, restoring and increasing the wonderful conversation that is the Mount Allison experience? The Centre becoming a triumph rather than a source of resentment for years to come? The alumni association has to date restricted the conversation, hasn't it?

Doesn't that put the little red light on as well?

And when your car makes that funny, clanking, grinding noise, and the little red light comes on, do you just go with the flow?

Or do you call and get it fixed?

The Save the Memorial Library Committee