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SOS - Society of Space - School of Architecture and Planning Student Body - University of Auckland

Archive for August, 2007

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Friday, August 31st, 2007

”

Auckland staff face reign of terror

Weeks after the controversial sacking of Auckland professor Paul Buchanan, a top professor has resigned as head of the University of Auckland School of Architecture and Planning. Professor Peggy Deamer says that a deep “misalignment” of views between her and Faculty management is behind her premature departure. Deamer was Assistant Dean at Yale University’s School of Architecture before taking up her position this February. She resigned on Friday 17 August and was ordered by Professor Sharman Pretty, Dean of the University’s National Institute of Creative Arts, to clear out her office immediately, despite offering six months’ notice to minimise disruption to her students. Deamer’s sudden departure is reported to have shocked staff and students. 372 students have signed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor asking for problems between the Faculty and School to be resolved. Most Architecture staff spoken to by press did not want to be named, describing a “climate of fear” at the School and saying their jobs would be in jeopardy if they spoke out.

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Source: <http://www.critic.co.nz/about/news/246>

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[Article by The Association of University Staff of NZ](#)

Thursday, August 30th, 2007

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Another key resignation from Auckland

A top professor has resigned as head of the University of Auckland School of Architecture and Planning, telling students a deep “misalignment” of views between her and Faculty management is behind her premature departure, according to a story in today’s New Zealand Herald .

Professor Peggy Deamer, who was Assistant Dean at New York ’s renowned Yale University’s School of Architecture, took up her position in February this year, appointed with much fanfare by Professor Sharman Pretty, Dean of Auckland University’s National Institute of Creative Arts.

The Herald says that Professor Deamer, who resigned on 17 August, was ordered by Professor Pretty to clear out her office over the weekend. Professor Deamer told students she had offered six months' notice to minimise disruption, but that was rejected.

Professor Deamer's sudden departure is reported to have shocked staff and students, who have been given no official explanation. Students gathered in the School's courtyard in protest and 372 have signed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor asking for problems between the Faculty and School to be resolved.

A group represented by the University's Students' Association is due to meet Professor Pretty next week. Most Architecture staff spoken to by the Herald did not want to be named, describing a climate of fear at the School and saying their jobs would be in jeopardy if they spoke out.

The Herald understands Professor Deamer was constantly thwarted by Professor Pretty in her efforts to make changes at the School.

Acrimonious relations between the School and the Faculty have been a longstanding problem and were highlighted in a 2006 accreditation report. Staff talk of a lack of autonomy in decision-making, token democratic processes in Faculty meetings and centralised "micromanagement" control by the Faculty.

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Source: <http://www.aus.ac.nz/Publications/tertiaryupdate/2007/No%2031.asp#3>

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[Vice Chancellor's Office has Recieved our Letter](#)

Wednesday, August 29th, 2007

“Thank you for your letter dated 24 August 2007, addressed to Professor Stuart McCutcheon, which was hand-delivered to the Vice-Chancellor's Office on 29 August 2007 and handed to me personally.

As advised to the students, the Vice-Chancellor was away in Wellington and the letter will be brought to his attention on his return.

Yours sincerely
Gill Wilson
Executive Manager - Vice-Chancellor's Office
The University of Auckland”

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[News from 2005 resurfaces](#)

Wednesday, August 29th, 2007

Financial restrictions impact Auckland University's curriculum.

August 2005. Published in NZHerald.

[Link to Article.](#)

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[NZHerald Article](#)

Wednesday, August 29th, 2007

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METRO

UNIVERSITY

Students protest as professor resigns

Shock as US academic leaves architecture school after just months in job

by Chris Barton

A top Ivy League professor has resigned as head of the Auckland School of Architecture, telling students a deep "misalignment" of views between her and faculty management is behind her premature departure.

Professor Peggy Deamer, who was assistant dean at New York's prestigious Yale University's School of Architecture, took up her position in February. She was appointed with much fanfare by Professor Sharman Pretty, dean of Auckland University's National Institute of Creative Arts, in December.

"We could not have hoped for a more outstanding appointment as a result of our international search for this new chair in architecture," Professor Pretty said at the time.

Professor Deamer, who resigned on Friday, August 17, was ordered by Professor Pretty to clear out her office over the weekend.

She met informally with students last Tuesday to say goodbye. She told students she had offered six months' notice to minimise disruption, but that was rejected.

A university spokesperson confirmed Professor Deamer had resigned, saying: "The University of Auckland will not be commenting further on this matter."

Professor Deamer's sudden departure has shocked staff and students, who have been given no official




Peggy Deamer **Sharman Pretty**

The *Herald* understands Professor Deamer was constantly thwarted by Professor Pretty in her efforts to make changes at the school.

Acrimonious relations between the school and the faculty have been a longstanding problem and were highlighted in a 2006 accreditation report.

Staff talk of a lack of autonomy in decision making, token democratic processes in faculty meetings and centralised "micromanagement" control by the faculty — especially by institute marketing department directives.

"It's crucial for the school to have people like Peggy, she was doing such a great job," said part-time design tutor Charissa Snijders.

"It seems amazing that when the staff and the students are behind her and she's so passionate about the school that she resigns — you've got to question what's going on."

Ms Snijders said she hoped there would be some sort investigation and was concerned that staff were afraid to speak out. "I think there are some serious issues which are undermining this environment, making it difficult for creativity to flourish."

Professor Pretty's management style has been called into question before. In January another Pretty appointment, Eric Hollis, head of the university's music school, resigned. The music school has also had two reinstatements for unjustified dismissal. In 2005 Professor Pretty had staff complaints against her for bullying and was criticised for how she went about making staff redundant at the Elam School of Fine Arts.

Professor Deamer is being replaced by Department of Planning professor Jenny Dixon.

Students gathered in the school's courtyard in protest and 372 have signed a letter to the vice chancellor asking for problems between the faculty and school to be resolved.

"Her resignation affects a lot of year five students who are about to graduate and are left in a tricky situation doing their final projects," said a student who didn't want to be named for fear of repercussions.

As well as administrative duties, Professor Deamer had been active in studio work assessment.

"Students have an issue with the university not being very supportive of staff and it's not doing much for students either," said the student.

A group represented by the university's students' association is due to meet Professor Pretty next week.

Most architecture staff the *Herald* spoke to also did not want to be named, describing a climate of fear at the school and saying their jobs would be in jeopardy if they spoke out.

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