

In the Matter of a Complaint of Professional Misconduct Against Mr. Douglas Cameron, PhD, PAg Pursuant To S.24 Of The Agrologists Act, 1994 C. A-16:1.

Professional Conduct Committee of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists

And

Douglas Cameron, PhD, PAg. Of Swift Current Saskatchewan a Member of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists

DECISION OF DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE ON PENALTY

(Results from Penalty Hearing Feb 29, 2016, Saskatoon, Sk.)

Discipline Committee

Mr. Vernon Racz PAg (chair)

Mr. Glenn Clarke (public representative)

Ms. Brenda Stefanson PAg

Mr. Keith Head PAg

Ms. Shannon Ruzesky PAg

Counsel for Professional Conduct Committee

Mr. Chris Boychuck

Counsel for Mr. Douglas Cameron

Mr. Larry Kowalchuck and Mr. Micah Kowalchuck

Assessor to the Discipline Committee

Mr. Jay Watson

Note: Mr. Cameron due to an unfortunate set of medical circumstances joined the hearing via telephone conferencing allowing complete audio of the penalty hearing.

A. BACKGROUND

1. This matter came before the Discipline Committee on the recommendation of the Professional Conduct Committee of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists. The Professional Conduct Committee was acting upon a complaint made by Mr. Jim Schille PAg dated January 13, 2014.

The complaint, against Mr. Douglas Cameron as presented by the Professional Conduct Committee is set out in the Formal Complaint and Notice of Hearing dated June 27, 2014 as follows:

“That between the dates of March 26, 2013 and November 2, 2013, you authored, published and distributed by e-mail under the title “Grassroots” material that is in breach of the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards of the Institute and that such conduct constitutes professional misconduct within the meaning of the s. 28(1) of *The Agrologists Act, 1994*. ”

2. A hearing before the Discipline Committee was held on December 8, 2014 to hear Mr. Cameron’s bias application against Mr. John Spencer PAg, Chair of the Committee, and Mr. Vern Racz PAg, Committee member. Subsequently, Mr. Spencer removed himself from the Committee and the Discipline Committee denied the application with respect to Mr. Racz.
3. The complaint was heard by the Discipline Committee on March 20, 2015. On July 22, 2015 the Discipline Committee determined that Mr. Cameron was guilty of professional misconduct.

B. SUBMISSIONS OF COUNSEL RE: PENALTY

1. In the submissions relative to the sentencing, counsel for the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) sought that Mr. Cameron be suspended from the Institute for a period of 90 days, that he pay a fine of \$2000.00 within 90 days, and that costs of \$15000.00 payable within 90 days be assessed against Mr. Cameron.
2. Counsel for Mr. Cameron took the position that a 90 day suspension was unreasonable and that a suspension of 20 days would be more appropriate, and further, that, because Mr. Cameron could not practice between the discipline hearing and the sentencing hearing due to medical problems, the 20 day suspension should be considered as having been served during that time.

3. Counsel for Mr. Cameron argued that a fine of \$2000.00 was also unreasonable, and that no costs for the hearings should be assigned to Mr. Cameron because it was not his fault that there is lack of a mediation process in the Agrologists Act.
4. Mr. Cameron provided a verbal statement outlining his position.

C. PENALTY:

The findings and decision of the Discipline Committee with regard to penalty is as follows:

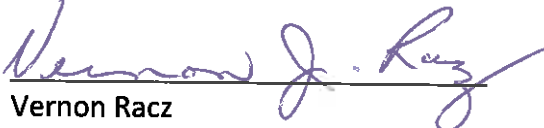
- 1) The nature and seriousness of the proven allegations; The DC finds that while the infractions of professional misconduct occurred mainly within the membership of SIA making it not as obvious to public perception, the incidences of professional misconduct within the SIA were equally or more serious because of the following findings:
 - a) Through his newsletter "Grassroots" Mr. Cameron has on numerous occasions used unsubstantiated questioning of the integrity and honesty of other members in SIA and in particular those serving SIA in volunteer positions.
 - b) "Grassroots" was distributed to some 700 to 800 SIA members and should not be regarded as a private newsletter but public within the SIA, reflecting on how agrologists view other agrologists and their effectiveness to serve the public.
 - c) Mr. Cameron had previously plead guilty to a similar professional misconduct charge in December 2010. The similar continued behavior suggests the penalty for the previous misconduct was not adequate to initiate a behavioral change.
 - d) Mr. Cameron is a senior member of the SIA and has served in top positions, contributing to the overall good of the SIA, however the route chosen by Mr. Cameron on repeated occasions has been adversarial and not conciliatory even when faced with opportunities to resolve issues. Mr. Cameron with his background and experience should have acted differently with greater sensitivity, understanding and respect for others.
- 2) In its decision the DC indicated in its Obiter that mediation should be an option to help resolve issues at the beginning of a complaint before it escalates. Although mediation is not specified as an option in the Agrologists Act, there is no reason it cannot be used if needed. It should be noted that initially there was opportunity offered to Mr. Cameron to discuss the issue with the complainant; however there is no evidence that he contacted the complainant or made any effort to resolve the issue. This response is in contrast to Mr. Cameron's claim in "Grassroots" as being a strong proponent of mediation.

The Discipline Committee therefore orders as follows:

- 1) Mr. Douglas Cameron, PAg is hereby reprimanded for his misconduct;
- 2) Mr. Cameron PAg is hereby fined \$2000.00 to be paid within six months of the date of this order;
- 3) Mr. Cameron, PAg is hereby suspended from the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists for a period of 30 days from the date of this order;
- 4) Mr. Cameron, PAg successfully complete the professional and ethics course conducted by the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologist within 90 days of the date of this order. If Mr. Cameron fails to complete this course within the 90 days, it is ordered that he be suspended for a further 60 days;
- 5) Mr. Cameron PAg pay costs to the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists an amount fixed at \$15,000.00. The said costs to be paid within six months of the date of the end of his suspension;
- 6) In the event that the costs or the fine is not paid within six months of the date of the end of his suspension, it is ordered that Mr. Cameron, PAg be suspended as a member of the institute until the fine and costs are paid in full.

Dated at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, this 25 day of March, 2016.


DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE OF THE
AGROLOGISTS ASSOCIATION
OF SASKATCHEWAN

Per: 
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Keith Head

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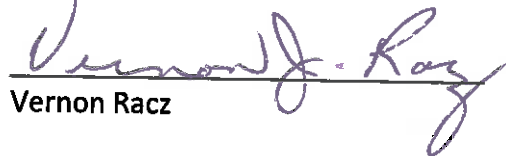
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