13 Aug 79

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

N.S.W. 2308, AUSTRALIA

Telephone 68-0401

FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL,
PROFESSOR D. W. GEORGE, A.O., F.T.S.

13th August, 1979.

Dr M.E. Spautz,
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Dear Dr Spautz,

Your letter of 8 August, 1979, a copy of which I note you have forwarded to all members of Council, escalates a matter which has been of the greatest concern to me and others in the University for most of this year. I refer, of course, to your personal attacks on the standing of Professor A.J. Williams and the disruptive impact this has had particularly for staff and students in the Management Section of the Department of Commerce.

At the meeting which you and I had in my office on 11 July, 1979 (as a follow-up to the discussions which I held with all members of staff of the Management Section on 3 July, 1979), I endeavoured to make clear to you the seriousness of your actions and offered again to consider a shift for you to another academic department, as a possible way of ameliorating the situation. This you rejected.

The "new" charge which you bring in your letter of 10 July, 1979 of plagiarism in respect of Professor Williams' Ph.D. thesis is not, in my view, supported by the extract which you provided with your letter. Further, and repeating the comment in my letter of 6 March, 1979, I find it remarkable that you do not see it as improper and offensive for one university to challenge the academic judgment of another - in this case the University of Western Australia, which awarded the degree concerned to Professor Williams.

I also repeat my advice to you (23 May, 1979) that "the proper way for disputes over matters of academic judgment to be resolved (is) by appeal to the peer group through the professional literature". I am distressed that a member of the academic staff of the University should have been advised, as you were on 25 July, 1979 by the Managing Editor of Rydge Publications Pty. Ltd., that "in our judgment the material submitted by you is defamatory and therefore unusable".

I'd like to see a signed complaint!

I don't accept bribes or corruption!

So - I'm sending more proof, more book reviews + passing!

No wonder someone has said "The Law is an ass"!

Pointing out a fraud is defamatory?! Hogwash!

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On the matter of your letter of 29 May, 1979 (a), I note from the Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Board, Faculty of Economics and Commerce on 11th July, 1979 that you raised there your allegations about the three new subjects for the M.B.A. degree and the way in which they were introduced. As the matter was discussed by the Board and your complaint was dismissed by the appropriate academic body carrying responsibility for the degree I find no grounds for further investigation of this issue.

Similarly, all other matters which you have raised with me, going right back to your suggestion in October, 1978 that the sea-horse be pointed in the "proper" direction, have proved, on investigation by me, to lack persuasive grounds for your stated concern.

In my letter of 6 March, 1979 I advised you that I was unable to find substance in your allegations against Professor Williams such as to warrant their reference to Council. Despite your continued complaints since that time, nothing has changed the opinion I have expressed. On the other hand, I would anticipate that your most recent letter of 8 August, 1979, with copies to all members of Council, will raise grave concern at Council level at your own conduct.

Yours faithfully,

D.W. George,
VICE-CHANCELLOR.

c.c. Members of Council