

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is being transmitted to the stakeholders (members, donors, volunteers and so forth) in CFI Canada based on the address information currently available to the board. If someone is overlooked, we apologize. Any such omission is unintentional. Please feel free to pass this on to anyone you feel may have been left of the distribution list. We also apologize to any of you who may receive this letter more than once.

As you know, CFI Canada has been undergoing some turmoil over the last couple of months, with questions about the direction of the organization, including decisions of the board of directors. Some of these questions have focused on the dismissal (with notice) of Justin Trottier and the hiring of Derek Pert as National Executive Director. In reaction to this situation, the Associate Members of CFI Canada had, in accordance with the by-laws of the organization, called a meeting for December 11. The board of directors is also scheduled to meet on December 11, and it was expected that pending issues of concern to the membership would be discussed.

Events have happened this past week which threaten to cause even more disruption within the organization. We believe you are entitled to know of these events. Our account below is factual, and there is no attempt, nor will there be any attempt, to assign blame or fault.

On November 21, Derek Pert wrote to the board requesting that he be terminated with severance. Derek indicated that he thought he lacked sufficient support from the board to carry out his duties. The board held an emergency meeting on the evening of Wednesday, November 23. At that meeting the board passed a motion confirming that Derek had full authority to carry out the responsibilities associated with the position of National Executive Director.

Following adoption of this motion, discussion among the board members ensued. Some board members expressed the opinion that the proposed Associate Members meeting served no purpose and that there should be no further discussion of Justin Trottier's dismissal either at the Associate Members meeting or at the board meeting. Other board members disagreed.

There followed a motion to terminate Derek Pert with severance of \$50,000. The motion was made by Michael Gardiner. The motion was properly seconded and a vote was taken. The motion failed 6-3, with Michael Gardiner, Ian McCuaig, and board chair Carol Parlow voting for the motion.

Late on the night of November 23, Derek Pert submitted a letter of resignation. On November 24, in quick succession, directors Michael Gardiner and Ian McCuaig and board chair Carol Parlow submitted their letters of resignation.

We thank Messrs. Pert, Gardiner and McCuaig and Dr. Parlow for their prior service to the organization, and wish them the best in any future endeavors.

We, the remaining board members of the organization, take our responsibilities seriously. By no means are all of us in agreement about the best course of action to take regarding the issues confronting the organization. We all agree, however, that it is not in the best interests of the organization for any of us to abandon our positions simply because we may not get our way on every issue. We intend to work together to preserve this organization, which is so important for the future of Canada, and the cause of critical thinking, science, and secular values—and to which so many of you have devoted your time, energy and money.

Our main concern in the short term will be to make sure the day-to day-operations of CFI Canada are maintained. We have appointed Michael Payton as interim National Executive Director while we begin the search for a permanent replacement. If any of you have any specific questions or concerns you can address them to board member Kevin Smith through the CFI Canada website <http://www.centerforinquiry.net/about/contact>

We also intend to replace some or all of the board positions now left vacant.

We who are on the board (including, we believe, those who recently resigned) signed on to CFI Canada to make a difference in this world. We cannot allow our goals to be obstructed by personal interests and emotional reactions; this is not what is expected of an organization which prides itself on its critical thinking skills. What will not help now is finger-pointing, rumor, and blame assignment. What will help is patience and support. We all know why we support this organization; we all have the same goals and ideals. What we must do now is put personal and emotional differences aside and do what is best for the cause of secularism, critical thinking and humanist values. Our mission is more important than any one person or one group.

To that end, as indicated, a meeting has already been called by the Associate Members for Dec 11. This body is comprised of board members and key stakeholders in CFI Canada. We anticipate that many of the critical issues now facing CFI Canada will be dealt with on that day and that CFI Canada will be back up and running very soon. Given the current situation we cannot give you a timeline except to say that we will work to bring CFI Canada back to its full potential as soon as is humanly possible and that your commitment and continued support will not be in vain.

We ask that you all continue to support us and we promise to be a more open and transparent board as we work through this difficult situation.

Respectfully,

CFI Board of Directors

Pat O'Brien
Ronald Lindsay
Lorne Trottier
Richard Thain
Kevin Smith

(Tom Flynn is away for the four-day Thanksgiving weekend in the United States and was not available to review this letter.)

