

JAN 17 2014

Mr. Colin Craig
1881 Portage Ave, PO Box 42123
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3X7

Dear Mr. Craig:

Re: Your Request for Access to Information Under Part 2 of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*: Our File No. 2013-E 033

On December 19, 2013, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning received your request for access to the following records:

"Please provide all documentation since January 1, 2013 provided to, or produced by the Minister or Deputy Minister's office related to Red River College's President's expenses."

I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to these records has been granted in part.

Access to certain records which you requested is refused, as these records contain information that falls within the following exceptions to disclosure in *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

17(1) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant if the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's privacy.

17(3) In determining under subsection (1) whether a disclosure of personal information not described in subsection (2) would unreasonably invade a third party's privacy, the head of a public body shall consider all relevant circumstances including, but not limited to, whether

(i) the disclosure would be inconsistent with the purpose for which the personal information was obtained.

20(1) The head of a department or government agency shall refuse to disclose information to an applicant if disclosure could reasonably be expected to reveal information provided, explicitly or implicitly, in confidence by any of the following or their agencies:

(c) a local public body

21(1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose information to an applicant if disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm relations between the Government of Manitoba or a government agency and any of the following or their agencies:

(c) a local public body

23(1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose information to an applicant if disclosure could reasonably be expected to reveal

(a) advice, opinions, proposals, recommendations, analyses or policy options developed by or for the public body or a minister;

As required by subsection 7(2) of the Act, we have severed information that is exempt from disclosure and have provided you with as much information as possible.

Subsection 59(1) of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* provides that you may make a complaint about this decision to the Manitoba Ombudsman. You have 60 days from the receipt of this notice to make a complaint on the prescribed form to:

Manitoba Ombudsman
750-500 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3C 3X1
(phone) 204-982-9130
1-800-665-0531

If you have any questions with respect to our response, please contact Jodi MacDonald, Access and Privacy Coordinator at 204-945-5310.

Sincerely,



Claude Fortier
Access and Privacy Officer

Attachments

MacDonald, Jodi (EDU-Shared)

From: Stecher, Carolina [Carolina.Stecher@leg.gov.mb.ca]
Sent: November-26-13 9:18 AM
To: Clark, Andrew (LEG); Anthony, Jennifer (LEG)
Cc: Johnson, Tim (LEG); Freed-Lobchuk, Leezann (LEG)
Subject: FW: News Release: How Much Did Red River College Pay For A Pre-Wedding Reception?
Importance: High

This is going to be a problem.....

From: CTF-Colin Craig [mailto:ccraig@taxpayer.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2013 9:09 AM
To: Premier
Subject: News Release: How Much Did Red River College Pay For A Pre-Wedding Reception?



November 26, 2013

How Much Did Red River College Pay For A Pre-Wedding Reception?

- *Wedding-related expense at Red River College not appropriate, Minister Allum needs to disclose amount, shake up board*

WINNIPEG, MB: The Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) is calling on provincial post-secondary Minister James Allum today to investigate a pre-wedding expense that was expensed by officials at Red River College.

Earlier this year, the CTF received a tip that a wedding expense was claimed by college officials. Unable to obtain details through an FOI, the CTF questioned the College directly. The College confirmed the expense was incurred in order to help "forge strategic relationships" with another government funded post secondary institution.

"If Premier Greg Selinger expensed bills for Sam Katz's pre-wedding reception and said it was to help build relationships with the city the public would be outraged," said CTF Prairie Director Colin Craig. "This is no different. The elite at two government funded institutions should be able to meet in a boardroom like anyone else."

The College told the CTF:

"Early in the President's tenure, the Board requested that she forge strategic relationships with post-secondary institutions in an effort to enhance cooperation and collaboration."

Advisory Note for the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning

Department: Education and Advanced Learning
Division: Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE)
Date: November 28, 2013
Subject: Red River College – President's Expenses (revised)

Speaking Points

- Expense claims submitted by the President of Red River College (RRC) are reviewed and approved by the College's Board of Governors, in accordance with their policy manual.
- RRC's president has correctly decided to personally repay inappropriately claimed expenses.

Issues / Prime Consideration(s)

- On March 13, 2013, local media outlets, including CJOB and the Winnipeg Free Press, published a story related to questionable expense claims made by the President of Red River College, Stephanie Forsyth. These were brought to light through a Freedom of Information request made by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

23(1)(a)

- On November 26, 2013 the Canadian Taxpayers Federation published a press release that showed that expenses for a pre-wedding reception were charged to the college by President Forsyth. The event occurred spring of 2011.

Update/Response: The College has responded to CTF indicating that the expenses were limited to tables, plates and other non-consumable supplies. The college is claiming that these were authorized at the time, as the event was an opportunity to build relationships with another post-secondary institution (PSI).

21(1)(c)

23(1)(a)

Critical Overview

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21(1)(c)

21(c)

- On an annual basis COPSE approves all college operating budgets. COPSE does not approve all individual transaction at the institution. Individual expense claims are approved at the board level.
 - As a requirement of the COPSE Act, the colleges can not incur a deficit without approval from COPSE.

Current Status / Future Status

- The initial issue in March received significant media attention, carried by all local media outlets.
- In response, Ms. Forsyth agreed to repay some of the expenses, including the cost of the golf shoes, duffle bag, and a year's drivers licence fee (claimed in error). She did clarify that her contract includes a provision for reimbursement of 50 per cent of vehicle expenses and 100 per cent of vehicle insurance costs.
- The Board of Governors has announced that as of April 1, 2013, the President's expense claims would be posted on the College website, in an effort to increase transparency. The board reported that this was implemented.

23(a)

Background

1. March 13, 2013: The Canadian Taxpayers Federation releases the details of expense claims made by the President of Red River College, received under a Freedom of Information request. The media coverage of this issue centred on a number of questionable claims, namely the cost of new golf shoes, personal vehicle expenses, a duffle bag at the Vancouver Airport costing \$134, groceries for a dinner with a Minister and over \$370 on ballet tickets. Between September 2010 and January 2013, the President's expenses totalled \$78,842.21.
2. March 14, 2013: The Province of Manitoba releases the statement that "We fully expect that any expenses deemed inappropriate will be reimbursed."
3. March 15, 2013: Ms. Forsyth publicly responds, agreeing to repay certain expenses and RRC commits to posting all expense claims online.
4. April 1, 2013: RRC begins publicly disclosing the President's expenses on their website.
5. November 26, 2013: The Canadian Taxpayers Federation publishes a press release indicating that President Forsyth had expensed items associated with hosting a pre-wedding reception to the College.