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(I) The Ruination of a University: The Sad Tale of the Laurentian University Fiasco

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In a legally unprecedented and controversial action, administrators on behalf of Laurentian University in Sudbury, ON, filed for insolvency protection in Ontario Superior Court on Feb 1, 2021 [1,2]. It marked the first (and still only) time in the annals of Canadian Academia, that a publicly funded, non profit, post-secondary institution availed itself of the provisions of a federal legal mechanism designed to protect profit making corporations: the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA). The action resulted in part, due to successive chronic operating deficits effectively unknown to faculty, staff, students, alumni, benefactors, provincial authorities, or the public at large. On April 12, 2021 under court protection, the university eliminated 69 undergraduate and graduate programs, terminated 111 full-time faculty (of which approximately 87 were tenured), 41 unionized staff members, and 37 non-union positions [3,4,5]. In some extreme cases - entire academic units such as the Physics Department - were completely eliminated. As the last serving Chair at the time of elimination, in this talk I will offer my perspectives on the "whats", "whens", "whys", "whos", "hows", and "what nows" surrounding this episode. In particular, I will devote some attention to how I dealt with the assigned task of the orderly shutting down the Department in 18 days, which at the time had a proud and productive 60 year existence [37].

[1] "Laurentian University, key school for northern Ontario, files for creditor protection" CBC News Sudbury. 2021-02-01.

[2] "Laurentian University files for creditor protection; former Queen's Provost appointed as special advisor". YGK News.

[3] Laurentian University (2021-04-12). "Laurentian University academic Senate votes to approve certain program closures".

[4] Friesen, Joe (2021-04-11). "Laurentian professors in precarious spot as university navigates insolvency". Globe and Mail.

[5] Ulrichsen, Heidi (2021-09-23). "Laurentian's first-day-of-class down almost 13% overall". Sudbury.com.

[6] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/radiation-therapy-laurentian-restructuring-physicists-training-1.6018454>

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