

Senate committee votes to withdraw emeritus title from retired professor

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Brock University's Senate Governance Committee voted unanimously on Wednesday, Aug. 15 to withdraw the honorary designation of professor emeritus from retired political science professor Garth Stevenson.

In a brief meeting, the committee voted 9-0 to withdraw the title, which had been given to Stevenson when he retired in 2012.

The move came after a series of vulgar, inflammatory statements, aimed at the Indigenous community and others, were posted last week on Stevenson's social media pages. Stevenson has confirmed in news media interviews that the comments were his.

The Brock University Faculty Handbook characterizes the title of professor emeritus as one that "indicates the mutual desire of the University and the retired full Professor/Librarian IV to maintain an ongoing relationship which honours both the retiree and the University."

Senate Chair and Social Sciences Professor Scott Henderson, who tabled the motion to withdraw the designation, said Brock is an academic community that encourages a diversity of opinion, but also expects thoughtful, reasoned debate on nuanced issues.

"The issue here is not one related to free speech, as we are in no position to censor Mr. Stevenson's comments," said Henderson. "The concern that has been raised here is with the horrendous tone of many of the comments made online, including those that wish harm others directly, and those which

openly malign the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the very First Nations on whose land we meet today.”