

QUFA INFOSHEET

Queen's *ConfidenceLine*

QUFA has numerous concerns about the new Queen's *ConfidenceLine* recently announced by the Queen's University Secretary

By Leslie Jermyn
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On 22 October, 2013, the Queen's University Secretary, Lon Knox, announced a new, anonymous, third-party reporting service to report matters of professional or financial misconduct. The service, Queen's *ConfidenceLine*, is meant to complement the Safe Disclosure Policy created in 2011. Reports made by telephone or internet will be passed anonymously to the Queen's Safe Disclosure Officer, Harry Smith.

QUFA has a number of concerns about this service and its potential impact on QUFA Members:

1. **Good Governance:** Proper internal governance processes have not been honoured. In 2011, the Report of the Principal's Ad Hoc Committee on Safe Disclosure was adopted by Senate. QUFA had a representative on that committee. In those committee meetings, a "tip line" was discussed and ultimately rejected because of concerns about

how it would affect morale at Queen's and because there was no evidence that it would produce any benefits. Consequently, creating a service like *ConfidenceLine* was omitted as a recommendation in the Report that formed the basis for the Safe Disclosure Policy adopted in 2011. This history was raised at Senate by Allan Manson in October.

2. **Member Rights:** QUFA has not been consulted about the implementation of this service, and it is not clear what happens if a QUFA Member becomes the object of investigation as a result of an anonymous tip. Members should not be subject to this kind of investigation without proper notice and due process, including the right to respond.
3. **Responsibility:** *ConfidenceLine* goes far beyond permitting anonymous reports of misconduct (which is essential in some circumstances for safe disclosure) to *encouraging* anonymity—even when it may not be necessary or responsible.
4. **Scope:** It is not clear how the scope of the service is being managed, and there is a risk that people will use it to report on matters beyond the University's purview.

QUFA has asked the Provost to suspend the service until we can ensure that Members' rights are protected.

If you become aware of any use of information obtained through the

Queen's *ConfidenceLine* in connection with investigating or disciplining a QUFA Member, please contact our Member Services Staff immediately. All communications with QUFA are confidential.

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