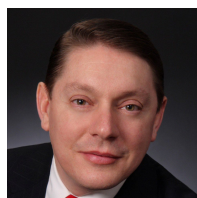


OPINION

Penn State's integrity crisis



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Penn State University just exonerated Professor Michael Mann for wrongdoing related to Climategate. While that good news for Mann is no surprise, it came at a dear cost to Penn State – its integrity.

Soon after Climategate broke last November, Penn State convened an internal committee to investigate Mann, the primary author of the **now-infamous and discredited "hockey stick" global warming graph**.

Hopes for a bona fide investigation were dashed when the preliminary results were released in February. To the joy of climate alarmists, Penn State announced via press release that Mann was cleared of three of the four allegations against him (regarding falsification/suppression of data, deletion of e-mails/data and misuse of confidential information). But if one looks past the release and reads the committee's report, it becomes obvious the fix was in.

The preliminary review included the Climategate e-mails themselves, an interview with Mann, and documents submitted by Mann. While one committee member did informally endeavor to get external views on Mann, they only came from Texas A&M's Gerald North and Stanford University's Donald Kennedy.

North had earlier dismissed Climategate in a *Washington Post* interview only a few days after the scandal broke. He also assisted with a futile 2006 effort to rehabilitate Mann's debunked hockey stick. As editor of *Science* magazine, Kennedy was an outspoken advocate of climate alarmism.

The committee went to great lengths to defuse the money line from the Climategate e-mails – i.e., “Mike’s Nature trick... to hide the decline.” While explaining how “trick” could merely refer to a “clever device,” the committee failed to even mention “hide the decline,” a phrase referring to Mann’s still-unexplained deletion of temperature data contradicting the climate alarmism hypothesis.

Based on Mann’s denial, the preliminary report concluded that there was no evidence to indicate that Mann intended to delete e-mails – even though that conclusion is contradicted by the plain language and circumstances of the relevant e-mail exchange. No inquiry beyond Mann’s denial was made.

Finally, the preliminary report dismissed the accusation that Mann conspired to silence skeptics by stating, “one finds enormous confusion has been caused by interpretations of the e-mails and their content” – but shouldn’t the committee have attempted to eliminate that confusion?

It’s unclear why the committee didn’t immediately exonerate Mann of the fourth allegation — seriously deviating from accepted practices within the academic community — except that by leaving it open, the committee apparently hoped to rebuild “public trust in science in general and climate science specifically.”

Four months later, the committee’s investigation charade has concluded. Most shocking, however, is that Penn State remains openly unabashed by the investigation’s shoddiness.

As before, a media release clearing Mann of “any wrongdoing” is making alarmists giddy. But once again, the investigation’s disturbing reality is revealed in the report.

The committee again excluded from consideration any document or point of view that might incriminate Mann’s conduct.

Other than the Climategate e-mails, the committee only examined:

(1) undescribed “documents collected by the [committee];” (2) “documents provided by Dr. Mann...”; (3) the committee’s preliminary report; (4) a May British House of Commons whitewash of Climategate; (5) a recent letter published in Science magazine deploring climate skepticism from 255 climate alarmists; (6) a document about the National Science Foundation peer review process; (7) the Department of Energy Guide to Financial Assistance; (8) information on the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration's peer review process; (9) information regarding the percentage of NSF proposals funded; and (10) Mann's curriculum vitae.

The committee apparently made no effort to obtain, much less consider, the volumes of available news reports, analyses (including from Congress) and commentary about Mann, the hockey stick and/or Climategate.

More than see no evil, the committee maintained its policy of hear no evil. Of the five additional interviews conducted, four were of Mann's fellow alarmists. The lone climate skeptic interviewed was MIT professor Richard Lindzen. But the report makes clear that the committee conducted Lindzen's interview in the finest traditions of a kangaroo court.

Here's how the report describes the interview:

... When told that the first three allegations against Dr. Mann were dismissed at the inquiry stage... Dr. Lindzen's response was: 'It's thoroughly amazing. I mean these issues that he explicitly stated in the e-mails. I'm wondering what's going on?' The Investigatory Committee members did not respond to Dr. Lindzen's statement. Instead, Dr. Lindzen's attention was directed to the fourth allegation, and it was explained to him that this is the allegation which the Investigatory Committee is charged to address...

Amazed that the committee would treat a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Meteorology at MIT and an IPCC lead author with such disrespect and disregard, I contacted Dr. Lindzen. He told me, "They also basically ignored what I said. I suppose they interviewed me in order to say that they had interviewed someone who was skeptical of warming alarm."

The committee asked Mann about e-mails that mention Dr. Stephen McIntyre, one of the scientists credited with debunking Mann's hockey stick. While Mann told the committee that there was "no merit whatsoever to Mr. [sic] McIntyre's claims here...", the committee didn't interview McIntyre.

The committee also pointed to several awards given to Mann for his research including *Scientific American's* naming Mann as one of the "50 leading visionaries in science and technology" and its selection of a web site co-founded by Mann as one of the top 25 "science and technology" web sites in 2005. The committee then wrote, "had Dr. Mann's conduct of his research been outside the respected practices, it would have been impossible for him to receive so many awards and recognitions..."

The Committee also credited Mann with the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Al Gore. "This would have been impossible had his activities in reporting his work been outside accepted practices in his field," the committee observed. MIT's Lindzen was also a co-Nobelist, but apparently the award didn't help *his* credibility.

Global warming and Mann have been worth millions of grant dollars and lots of publicity for Penn State. But one would think the institution's integrity is worth more.

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