

Dispelling some Falsehoods

Matt Crawford, March 1, 2025

I've seen a lot of false statements flying around regarding the recent hearing that put American Mensa into such a pickle. Some of these statements are the inevitable product of the veil of secrecy, some are propaganda enabled by the secrecy, but others are not connected to the confidential contents of the hearing and I can dispel some of them here.

The Ten Resigned?

The first, and most mind-bending is that the ten targeted AMC members constructively resigned their offices. This sophistry seems to have originated on Mensa Connect with John Neemidge, who has put a lot of digital ink into propping up the AML authoritarian régime. The argument runs thus: for a committee to remove directors from the board would violate New York law (which is true¹), therefore the Hearings Committee did not remove them, they all simultaneously resigned. Even in these times of troubles, Mensans are still Mensans and very few indeed have swallowed this fantasy.

Nobody resigned from the AMC in January. The summary report of the National Hearings Committee (NHC) said,

As a consequence of those acts inimical, the National Hearings Committee imposed the following sanctions:

- (a) removing each of the Respondents from every national, regional, and local Mensa office they currently hold, ...

Removing. The Hearings Committee said they were removing us. Neemidge, and those few who repeat his fabrication, want to retroactively absolve the hearings committee of law-breaking by saying they did not do what they very precisely said they did. They prop this fantasy up with this line from Article III the Bylaws.

(6) Elective officers and appointive officers of American Mensa, Ltd., and elective officers and appointive officers of the American Mensa Committee, and candidates for such offices, and the National Ombudsman must remain members in good standing of American Mensa, Ltd., as defined in Article IX, section (1)(b) of these Bylaws. Failure to maintain this status shall constitute resignation from office or withdrawal from candidacy.

¹ Chapter 35 §712 (a) (6) “no committee of any kind shall have authority as to the following matters: [...] (6) The election or removal of officers and directors.”

Let's dive further into the bylaws then and show that this selective quotation they make is not applicable. What is good standing? No need to search, we are pointed to the right source: Article IX, §(1)(b).

(b) A "member in good standing" shall be a person who has accepted an offer of membership, has paid all dues owed, and is not currently subject to any sanction **imposed by the American Mensa Committee**, any other national Mensa, or by Mensa's International Board of Directors.

That's pretty plain stuff. The AMC imposed no sanction in this matter. They washed their hands of it and lay all responsibility with the Hearings Committee, who indeed take full ownership of the action. In her January 14 message, the chair disclaims² AMC involvement:

The following is a decision from the National Hearings Committee, which is not a subset of the AMC (American Mensa Committee).

You're probably already realizing that this "they all resigned" argument can only be *made* by a completely prejudiced mind, because it requires that one group (the Hearings Committee) is innocent even though they declared their own guilt while another group (the Ten) are guilty even though they proclaimed their own innocence. Whether you believe in the guilt or innocence of the Ten, or for that matter the NHC, you cannot make this particular argument with any pretense of rationality.

Fair and Independent Process?

Many say American Mensa's Hearings Process is fair and independent. It "says so on the tin," as our cousins across the water put it, but it isn't true. First of all, it is conducted in deepest secrecy by three past chairs of the AMC. Except in cases of revocation of Mensa membership, there is no possibility of review. And in every case, there is no provision for appeal.

American Mensa exists under charter from Mensa International, just as our local groups exist under charter from AML. Just as local group bylaws are subject to AML's Minimum Standard Bylaws, AML's are subject to MIL's Minimum Standard Constitutional Requirements. One of those requirements is in MIL Bylaws §13.3. (NM stands for National Mensa.)

² <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/amc/jan-14-2025-message-from-the-chair/>

13.3 NM REQUIREMENT TO HAVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Every national Mensa must ensure that a fair and reasonable independent internal discipline procedure is in place. **This procedure must include an independent appeals procedure.** This appeals procedure must be exhausted before any appeals to Mensa International are made.

Unlike the AML-local group relationship, MIL's bylaws do not say that they supersede a National Mensa's bylaws in case of a conflict.

How or why does MIL permit this bylaws deficiency to continue? The full story is complicated. The responsibility for reviewing compliance was defined when there were fewer National Mensas than now, but more persons were not added to the reviewing job. But it must be noted that the current chair of MIL's International Standards Committee is LaRae Bakerink, a member of the Hearings Committee, which benefits from the deficiency.

Our discipline process violates MIL Bylaws. Furthermore, the Hearings Committee, in practice, does not even follow our own bylaws, flawed though they are. IX (5)(b), for one example, says

(b) Within 30 days following a complaint to its chairperson, the Hearings Committee shall notify all parties concerned and the AMC that a complaint has been made and the specifics of that complaint.

Although the evidence that they violate this on a regular basis is not available to the general membership, any recent AMC member (except a current or recent chair) can tell you the Hearings Committee does not do this. And their failure is prejudicial to the accused—uninvolved members of the AMC knew little or nothing about what was happening to the majority. There were other Hearings in process³ during my short time on the AMC and I can tell you, the Hearings Committee never notified me of the specifics of those complaints.

As for the independence of the process, almost anyone who has been an AMC chair has had many years of working with other members of the AMC. Even if the chair is not tainted by a lust for power or status, they will have deep collegial acquaintanceships with some who remain on the AMC and not with those who are new to it since their own departure. And this case was a matter of long-time AMC veterans against eight who were completely new, and two who had joined the board recently. In addition to this clear lack of independence, current⁴ AMC Chair Lori Norris made herself a "Participant" in the Hearings Committee, over and

³ You can see proof that other cases existed during that time by looking at the Hearings Committee's quarterly reports.

⁴ As of this writing.

above her role as liaison to it. This was shown in the committee detail page, up until someone drew attention to it⁵ on a mailing list devoted to Mensa Politics. After this, it was quietly revised.

Even when no AMC members are party to a hearing, there is still a structural bias in favor of the complainant. They can talk to any and all other persons they wish to and say anything about their issue before filing a complaint. After they file it, it becomes a confidential hearing matter and cannot be spoken of. And that is the state of it when the respondent first learns of it—they cannot discuss it with others. In fact, the current Hearings Committee doesn't even say the respondent can tell their own witnesses about the complaint before the hearing begins.

⁵ <https://crowdad.neocities.org/Tomis/Executive%20Capture%20revised.pdf>