



FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY

Department of Biology

RECEIVED

APR 01 2011

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

March 31, 2011

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Francis Marion University

Dear [REDACTED],

The Academic Freedom and Tenure Grievance Committee has met to discuss the complaints detailed in your letter of March 8, 2011 and in accompanying documentation, all submitted by you to our committee. Your letter requests our adjudication in a number of issues, and suggests our possible involvement through a number of scenarios. After considering your case at length, we have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Your letter begins and ends with what appears to be your chief request, i.e. that we effect "reinstatement of my tenure track position in the department of [REDACTED]." Nowhere in our FMU faculty handbook or the policy recommendations of the American Association of University Professors does such an action fall within the right or duty of our committee or one like it, regardless of any conclusion we reach here. Accordingly, it seems appropriate to generally remind you that any recommendation we make is purely advisory and non-binding.
2. Your letter charges that your academic freedom was unjustly violated. However, the committee finds no evidence whatsoever that your academic freedom, as it strictly relates to scholarship and teaching, was violated in any way. Your record of publication is itself evidence directly contradicting your charge, and we additionally note the letter of support by Dr. [REDACTED], recommending you for a summer research stipend. As you yourself say in your own summary timeline: "November 10, 2010 Dr. [REDACTED] writes an excellent recommendation for Dr. [REDACTED]'s Summer Research Stipend Proposal." This suggests that the department and its chair supported your scholarship by all available mechanisms, even days before reaching the decision to not renew your contract.
3. You request our committee to effect a third-year review, because you apparently feel the department was bound by those procedures rather than those for faculty in their second probationary year. Here we remind you that our committee has neither right nor duty to dictate in detail the process of departmental evaluation of faculty. In any case, your current status is that of a non-tenured, tenure-stream faculty member in her second year of a probationary contract. Therefore, we find that the department appears to have followed proper protocol of evaluation, insofar as it has treated your evaluation as that of second-year probationary faculty.
4. Your letter alleges, in so many words, that Dr. [REDACTED], Chair of [REDACTED], deliberately preconfigured a committee that would reach a negative decision regarding your contract renewal. We find no evidence whatsoever to support this accusation. It is clear from the records submitted by you that Dr. [REDACTED] sought the advice of all tenured political scientists in

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your department, and did so via a meeting convened for that purpose. We remind you that the decision to renew contracts for first- and second-year probationary faculty is the purview of the department chair and, that by including all tenured faculty in your discipline, the Chair and the department have followed the general practice outlined in our faculty handbook and used by departments across campus. That Dr. [REDACTED] disagrees with the decision and elements of the decision-making process (as per his email of November 23, provided by you) proves only that he was afforded ample opportunity to register his dissent in your favor, both in and out of that meeting.

5. You raise several complaints regarding breach of policy recommended by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Out of the collection you present in your document referred to as 'Attachment 8,' we take note of two specific instances: Point #2, regarding standards of notice of non-reappointment; and Point #6, regarding notice of impending decisions of contract renewal and the opportunity to submit materials which the candidate feels would influence the decision. The committee feels that a comparison of these passages with the documentation you have submitted suggests that the department is in conflict with recommended AAUP policy. Our committee does not feel that AAUP provisions should be contradicted by our procedures, unless our handbook explicitly describes and delineates such a departure. Our committee therefore recommends that these two instances, but not any others raised in your letter, are of sufficient concern to merit deliberation by the Mediation Committee.

I will provide copies of this letter to Prof. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] (Provost). It is our understanding that [REDACTED] will advise you on the proper protocol for approaching the Mediation Committee.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Chair, Academic Freedom and Tenure Grievance Committee