

May 5, 2016

Dr. Robert T. Dillon, Jr.
Biology Department
College of Charleston

Dear Dr. Dillon,

On May 2, 2016, the College of Charleston Grievance Committee met individually with you and Provost McGee to gather information and discuss potential ways to resolve the reported grievance. The following is a brief recap of these meetings, highlighting information pertinent for next steps.

During our meeting with you, we asked the following questions:

1. Could you please share with us any in-person interactions relative to this situation that were not included in the electronic files you gave to us?
2. What is your position/feeling about some sort of compromise, such as the below, for the lifting of the fall sanctions? [Keeping the Wilson quotation and adding either directly following or as a footnote or endnote an explanation similar to what you provided in your letter to Dr. Ferguson and the Review Panel so that the FAM requirement that objectives are stated clearly is unambiguously met¹]
3. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?
4. Would you like us to mediate a conversation between you and Provost McGee?

In response to these questions, you indicated that there were no in-person interactions; you indicated that you may be willing to compromise; you detailed more specifically your grievances; and you indicated that you were not opposed to having a conversation with Provost McGee.

During our meeting with Provost McGee, we asked the following questions:

1. Are there any circumstances under which you would consider reversing or reducing the sanctions?
2. How did you arrive at the sanctions?

In turn, Provost McGee explained that he would be amenable to revisiting the whole matter related to your grievance if you would be willing to satisfy the following conditions, which all must be in writing:

1. "The College has an interest in [faculty] following college policies and Dr. Dillon must agree to do so;
2. Agreement that Dr. Dillon will create complete and course-specific learning outcomes and publish these in all future course syllabi, as this is in compliance with FAM requirements. These must be satisfactory to his supervisor; and
3. Dr. Dillon must agree that he was in violation of those policies in the current [Spring 2016] semester."

Provost McGee also provided some information clarifying how the sanctions were determined.

The Committee's hope is that a compromise can be met to ameliorate the grievance that you indicated in your initial letter: "Provost Brian McGee imposed upon me an eight-count sanction, including suspension without pay for the fall semester 2016." Toward this end, our recommendation is that you consider the conditions set by Provost McGee necessary to revisit the matter that resulted in the "eight-count sanction." If you decide to accept Provost McGee's conditions, please let us know if you would like us to assist you further toward this resolution.

The Committee understands that you may respectfully decline our recommendation to consider and accept Provost McGee's conditions. If this is your preference, please let us know, and, as written in the FAM, I will refer the unresolved grievance to the President ("the appropriate authority").

We truly hope that this matter can be resolved in the near future.

Sincerely,
Beth Lloyd (chair)
Cliffton Peacock
Doug Walker
Marvin Gonzalez
Sarah Robertson

cc: College of Charleston President Glenn McConnell
College of Charleston Provost Brian McGee
Dr. Mike Auerbach, Dean of the School of Math and Science
Dr. Jaap Hillenius, Chair of the Biology Department

¹ Potential additional explanation added to the Explicit Learning Outcome:
Explicit Learning Outcome – "It is the business of a University to impart to the rank and file of the men whom it trains the right thought of the world, the thought which it has tested and established, the principles which have stood through the seasons and become at length part of the immemorial wisdom of the race. The object of education is not merely to draw out the powers of the individual mind: it is rather its right object to draw all minds to a proper adjustment to the physical and social world in which they are to have their life and their development: to enlighten, strengthen and make fit. The business of the world is not individual success, but its own betterment, strengthening, and growth in spiritual insight-- 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom' is its right prayer and aspiration." Woodrow Wilson, 1896.

In the science departments* of such universities, Wilson's "right thought" is understood to mean "the scientific method." Science is the construction of testable hypotheses about the natural world. And (especially in a laboratory) the focus must be on the verb, "to construct."

Note that the verb "to construct" is transitive; something must be constructed. So in Genetics 305L, we [students] construct testable hypotheses about the mechanisms of heredity.

Over the course of 14 weeks, students in Genetics 305L are expected to submit 10 lab reports and take two practical quizzes evaluating their ability to construct testable hypotheses about heredity.

*Note that the qualities of “right thought” differ among academic departments. So in science, right thought is rigorous, critical, systematic and precise. In poetry, right thought is creative, sensitive, intuitive and metaphorical. This theme is developed more fully in my teaching philosophy, which I recommend.