



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT
Academic Affairs

UNIVERSITY of
NORTH FLORIDA

December 1, 2008

TO: Dr. Greg Ahearn
Professor
Department of Biology

FROM: Mark E. Workman *MEW*
Provost and Vice President

SUBJECT: COUNSELING MEMORANDUM

Thank you for meeting with me last week and providing me your perspective regarding the trip taken with your graduate student, [REDACTED], as well as your assurance that nothing inappropriate occurred between you and [REDACTED]. I must, however, reinforce my comments at our meeting that your decision to share a hotel room with your graduate student was improper and unacceptable regardless of the reasons for such action. Because [REDACTED] serves as your graduate student it would be very difficult for the University to defend an allegation of conflict of interest or favoritism should one be leveled against you. Additionally, it would be extremely difficult to defend you against allegations of misconduct such as sexual harassment if [REDACTED] opted to file such a complaint against you. There are boundaries between faculty and student interactions that must be observed for the protection of the student, the faculty member and the institution. As such, your decision to share a room with [REDACTED] constituted a serious lapse in judgment. You, as a seasoned faculty member, should understand that one should avoid any actual or perceived conflicts of interest as well as unacceptable interactions with students. I trust that you understand the seriousness of this situation and will avoid any such impropriety in the future.

Additionally, at our meeting you indicated that Mr. Brian Coughlin served as substitute instructor for your classes while you were on the trip. While we value Mr. Coughlin's contributions to the Department and College, a non-tenure earning faculty member should not be tapped to substitute in a course assigned to a tenured faculty member. In the future, please make sure that you consult with your Department Chair regarding which faculty members are appropriate to substitute when you need to miss class(es) because of travel for professional development opportunities.

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Finally, I understand that you used your University purchasing card for expenses that are specifically exempt from p-card use, such as alcohol. Use of the University's p-card for personal expenditures is not acceptable. Please familiarize yourself with the p-card guidelines so that, in the future, you charge only those expenses that are referenced in the guidelines.

cc: Dr. Courtney Hackney
Dr. Barbara Hetrick