



June 26, 2012

Via Email and Hand Delivery.

Dr. Gregory Ahearn
Professor
Biology
University of North Florida

WRITTEN REPRIMAND

Dear Dr. Ahearn:

Pursuant to Article 30 of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the University of North Florida Board of Trustees and the United Faculty of Florida (UFF), I am issuing you this Written Reprimand based on your unprofessional conduct toward a female student employee which resulted in the student filing a complaint with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EOD) alleging that you sexually harassed her.

Due to the nature of the allegations against you, the University placed you on leave pending investigation on May 7, 2012 so that EOD could complete a full investigation of the allegations against you. As you're aware, you were previously provided a written counseling memorandum on December 1, 2008 regarding your poor judgment in sharing a hotel room with a female student when attending a conference in Africa. (See attached Exhibit A.) In that memorandum, you were advised of the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in faculty and student interactions for the protection of the student, you as a faculty member as well as the University. Consequently, the EOD office not only interviewed the student filing the complaint but prior students with whom you interacted as well as other University representatives.

Upon completion of EOD's investigation, EOD determined that you violated the University's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation, Sexual Harassment Regulation, the sexual harassment provisions of the collective bargaining agreement as well as the faculty handbook in your interactions with the complaining student. A copy of EOD's final investigative report has been attached to this reprimand as Exhibit B.

From a review of the report as well as your meetings and discussions with the EOD investigator and President John Delaney, the University continues to have concerns that you do not understand the appropriate boundaries that must be maintained in faculty / student relations as well as relations between a supervisor and employee, especially regarding young females. However, given your status as a distinguished professor with nearly eleven years of service and no prior discipline history, the University has determined that it will not terminate your employment for the above referenced conduct but instead is issuing this reprimand and requiring the following:

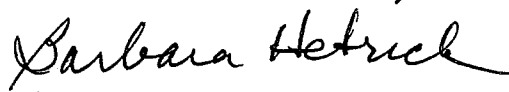
1. That you attend sexual harassment training at a time and date to be determined by the University. Included in this training will be special emphasis on appropriate faculty / student relationships as well as supervisor / employee relationships.
2. That you not travel with students to conferences or other commitments;
3. That you are being placed on probation for five (5) years effective the date of this reprimand. Significantly, if you are found to have committed any type of sexual misconduct in violation of University regulations or policies, the collective bargaining agreement or any other University criteria, you will be subject to the immediate termination of your employment.

Based on my understanding of your meeting with President Delaney, you have indicated that you have learned a great deal from this current situation. While you have made this statement and reportedly seem sincere, I need to emphasize my concerns as well as the concerns of the University's administration in general that you keep your relations with students formal so that it's clear that both you and students understand the boundaries in your relationships. This includes face-to-face contact as well as email and other communications. While I appreciate your desire to work with students and subordinates in your laboratory, in reviewing your communications with these individuals they are often too casual, intimate and have been determined as crossing the appropriate border between faculty / student and supervisor / employee relations. As a result, it's important that you remember your role in all interactions with students and employees so that your conduct is not called into question. Hopefully, the sexual harassment training will help you gain a better understanding of the serious nature of these issues and result in your behavior not being questioned.

Please be advised that pursuant to prior agreement, you have waived any right to contest this disciplinary action through the provisions of Article 31, Grievance Procedures of the BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Dr. Gregory Ahearn
June 26, 2012
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Hetrick".

Dr. Barbara Hetrick
Dean, Arts and Sciences

cc: Dr. Courtney Hackney,
Chair, Biology

Dr. Mark Workman,
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs

Attachments