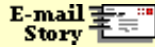


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## Professor requires anti-war action

BY MEGAN SULLIVAN

Staff Reporter

A professor from Citrus College in California was placed on administrative leave Tuesday after assigning her students to write anti-war letters to President George W. Bush.

Louis Zellers, superintendent and president of Citrus College, said Rosalyn Kahn, an adjunct instructor, told students they would receive extra credit if they wrote to Bush protesting a war with Iraq.

He said she told students that expressed alternate views would not be eligible for the extra credit.

"I guess you'd call it terrible judgment," he said. "We addressed the issue swiftly and as far as we're concerned we're putting it behind us."

As a result of the incident, Zellers said he is sending a letter of apology to the president explaining the illegitimate nature of the assignment and requesting the letters be retracted.

He said he is also writing a letter to California State Sen. Jack Scott, D-21st District, because of a similar assignment in which Kahn asked her students to write to him to express a dictated opinion about a budgetary issue.

Zellers said he received numerous e-mails of complaint against Kahn, most of them calling for her dismissal. He said the college will sanction Kahn in an appropriate manner.

"We're still reviewing that aspect of her appointment," he said.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education wrote to Zellers concerning Kahn's conduct after receiving complaints from students in her speech class.

In a FIRE news release, Thor L. Halvorssen, chief executive officer of the organization, said Kahn abused her power as a professor and should not have imposed her political views on her students.

Halvorssen said colleges at which students are not able to express their own views cannot thrive as academic institutions.

"A college in which students are not allowed to disagree reasonably with their professors on fundamental issues is incapable of intellectual innovation, critical dialogue, meaningful discourse or true scholarship," he said.

Samuel T. Lee, associate dean of language arts and foreign languages at Citrus College, said he wrote a letter to Kahn instructing her not to discriminate against students with opposing political views and expressing that political activism or favoritism was not allowed in the classroom.

"Professors ought to be free to teach what they think needs to be taught in their subject."

-- Distinguished Journalist in Residence Ralph Begleiter

"Academic freedom must work both ways," he said. "Instructors and students alike are encouraged to express their views in appropriate ways, and should both feel secure that they do so in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and respect."

James Magee, acting chairman of the political science and international relations department at the university, stated in an e-mail message that, in some instances, a professor may require students to argue a particular point for an academic purpose or to measure how different students perceive the point they are expected to support.

"It is not necessarily an imposition of values to have students defend, in written or oral assignments, arguments with which they disagree," he said.

"[However], if the case is one of outright faculty imposition of viewpoints for no academic reason at all, but is instead a bald imposition of political or social viewpoints because the instructor insists that those were the only permissible viewpoints, then there could be a violation of the First Amendment."

Ralph Begleiter, distinguished journalist in residence at the university, said professors have the responsibility of exposing students to a wide variety of viewpoints.

"Professors ought to be free to teach what they think needs to be taught in their subject," he said.

Although restraints on political expression should not be imposed on professors, Begleiter said, they should not tell students which side of an argument to act upon.

"Individual professors should not require [students] to take certain political views," he said. "Academic freedom is a vital and important principle in campuses around the country and around the world."