MEMORANDUM DECISION

TO:

Professor Susan Barrett, Complainant
Trey Barnett, Student, Respondent
Dr. Teresa Reed, Associate Dean for
The Henry Kendall College of Arts and Sciences
Dean Yolanda Taylor, Associate Vice President for
Enrollment and Student Services
Ginna Langston, Registrar

FROM: Winona M. Tanaka, Senior Vice Provost

DATE: October 24, 2014

RE: DECISION IN BARRETT V. BARNETT HARASSMENT CASE

I. BACKGROUND

This case involves the following parties:

- 1. Professor Susan Barrett, Professor and Chair of the Theatre Department, Complainant; and
- 2. Mr. Trey Barnett, a student (senior) majoring in Theatre, Respondent.

As Complainant, Professor Barrett seeks redress not only for herself but also for the following additional victims of the alleged harassment:

- <u>Professor Kimberly Powers</u>, Assistant Professor in the Theatre Department;
- Indicated, a student (senior) majoring in Theatre and minoring in Musical Theatre; and
- Professor Machele Dill, Assistant Professor in the Theatre Department

On the morning of September 28, 2014,¹ the following posting was published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page:

I apologize in advance for calling and Susan and Kim out on university of Tulsa Confessions ... not apologizing to them but to you trey as I know they will take it out on you. Susan really needs to take better control of her students and teach them time management and control her employees. I appreciate it when we have to cancel plans

¹ This posting was brought to the attention of Professor Powers, Professor Barrett and Professor Dill during the early morning hours of September 28, 2014. Thus, although Mr. Barnett's Response suggests that the posting was actually published on the evening of September 27, 2014, this decision refers to the posting as made on September 28, 2104.

because students don't show up on time. When they Don't show up on time it makes everyone else run behind. In the real world this wont fly. TU really needs to fire Kim. She is unqualified and plays favorites ... and needs to learn how to assign teams a little bit better. needs to lose weight and quit living in a fantasy world believing its okay to be morbidly obese ... Both her ankles broke for a reason ... She's fat ... gastric bypass will save her life ... and she needs to quit giving alcohol to underage minors. That is all. I love you.²

Professor Barrett, Professor Powers, and Professor Dill ("Victims") learned of this posting after receiving phone calls and emails from students, alumni, faculty and others who had seen and read it on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page.

The Formal Complaint process was initiated on the afternoon of Monday, September 29, 2014, when Professor Barrett, Professor Powers, and Professor Dill met (separately) with Senior Vice Provost (SVP) Winona Tanaka to present their complaints against Mr. Barnett. The Victims requested that their case be handled under the Formal Complaint procedures of the Harassment Policy.

On the morning of Tuesday, September 30, 2014, SVP Tanaka met with Mr. Barnett for about one hour, beginning shortly after 8:20 AM. SVP Tanaka addressed the following matters during that meeting:

- a. Notified Mr. Barnett that the Formal Complaint process had begun under the Harassment Policy;
- b. Summarized the allegations made against Mr. Barnett by Professor Barrett, Professor Powers, and Professor Dill;
- c. Provided Mr. Barnett with a copy of the Harassment Policy and reviewed specific provisions relevant to this case and to his rights and responsibilities under the Policy;
- d. Notified Mr. Barnett that the situation may also be actionable under the Student Conduct Code and the Academic Misconduct Policy of the College of Arts and Sciences, and explained that the Student Conduct Code is administered by Dean Yolanda Taylor, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, and the Academic Misconduct Policy is administered by Dr. Teresa Reed, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences;
- e. Responded to questions raised by Mr. Barnett regarding the Harassment Policy and procedures; and
- f. Received Mr. Barnett's initial, verbal responses to the allegations, including Mr. Barnett's acknowledgment that the September 28 posting was published

² Text from all Facebook postings, Professor Barrett's October 3, 2014 Formal Complaint and Mr. Barnett's October 13, 2014 Response are quoted verbatim. No notations are made for grammatical or other errors.

on his Facebook page and Mr. Barnett's statement denying any responsibility for that posting.

After Mr. Barnett confirmed that the September 28 posting was published on his Facebook page and that earlier postings of a similar nature had been published on his Facebook page in March and April, 2014, SVP Tanaka presented Mr. Barnett with a confidential letter dated September 30, 2014. That letter provides specific instructions for Mr. Barnett during the pendency of the case, including notification that he is expected to comply with the prohibition against retaliation and the requirement of confidentiality under the Harassment Policy.

On Friday, October 3, 2014, Professor Barrett delivered to the Provost's Office her written, signed Formal Complaint, stating that she was acting on behalf of herself and Professor Powers, and Professor Dill. Professor Barrett's Formal Complaint states that she was taking action under Section J of the Harassment Policy, which imposes on supervisors "a legal obligation to act whenever they learn – directly or indirectly – about the occurrence of Prohibited Harassment."

The Provost's Office delivered a copy of the written Complaint to Mr. Barnett by email at 11:15 AM on October 3, 2014, within minutes after receiving that document from Professor Barrett.

On Monday, October 13, 2014, Mr. Barnett delivered to the Provost's Office his written, signed Response to Professor Barrett's Formal Complaint. On Tuesday, October 14, Mr. Barnett met with SVP Tanaka, Dean Taylor and Associate Dean Reed. SVP Tanaka explained that, pursuant to the Formal Complaint procedures, she was conducting the investigation in this harassment case and would make a decision as soon as possible, hopefully within a week. She invited Mr. Barnett to provide any additional information regarding his Response, either in person during that meeting or in writing within 48 hours. SVP Tanaka explained that she had asked Dean Taylor and Associate Dean Reed to attend the meeting in order to answer any questions Mr. Barnett might have regarding policies and procedures under the Student Conduct Code and the Academic Misconduct Policy of College of Arts and Sciences, respectively. Mr. Barnett asked questions about specific aspects of the Harassment policy, particularly procedures followed under the Formal Complaint process.

II. ISSUES AND FINDINGS

A. <u>ISSUE A</u> Is Mr. Barnett responsible, directly or indirectly, for the postings and attacks made against Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett on and after September 28, 2014?

A-1. The September 28, 2014 Posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook Page.

On September 27, 2014, Theatre faculty and students working on production of <u>The Glass Menagerie</u> were called to work at the set in Kendall Hall. The show was scheduled to open on Thursday, October 9. Mr. Barnett, as Lighting Designer, was among the students called to the set that day. Late night and weekend "work calls" for Theatre Department productions are not uncommon, particularly during the last two weeks before a show is scheduled to open. At the September 27 work call, progress was delayed when a few students failed to arrive on time. Everyone is expected to be on time, but delays due to tardiness or last-minute problems are not unusual. Mr. Barnett is known to be very punctual. Because of the delays, Mr. Barnett was late for dinner with Mr. Mangum that evening. By the end of the day, members of the cast and crew had worked together and finished the tasks at hand.

Some time later that evening or night, the following posting was published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page:

I apologize in advance for calling and Susan and Kim out on university of Tulsa Confessions ... not apologizing to them but to you trey as I know they will take it out on you. Susan really needs to take better control of her students and teach them time management and control her employees. I appreciate it when we have to cancel plans because students don't show up on time. When they Don't show up on time it makes everyone else run behind. In the real world this wont fly. TU really needs to fire Kim. She is unqualified and plays favorites ... and needs to learn how to assign teams a little bit better. needs to lose weight and quite living in a fantasy world believing its okay to be morbidly obese ... Both her ankles broke for a reason ... She's fat ... gastric bypass will save her life ... and she needs to quit giving alcohol to underage minors. That is all. I love you.

The readers of Mr. Barnett's Facebook page include students, faculty, alumni and others in the University of Tulsa Theatre Department and Tulsa theatre community. These readers quickly recognized the names of individuals targeted in this posting. Thus, during the early morning hours of September 28, faculty, students and alumni contacted Professor Barrett, Professor Powers and about the posting. Apparently the same or a similar posting had appeared initially on the social network site known as "TU Confessions," which has a much broader audience. The accusations against Professor Barrett, Professor Powers and quickly became the subject of discussion and gossip among Theatre students, faculty and alumni.

In his October 13 Response, Mr. Barnett claims that he had no involvement and bears no responsibility whatsoever for the fact that (a) this posting was published on his Facebook page; (b) this posting remained on his Facebook page for hours after Professor Barrett asked him to "stop this latest attack;" and (c) this posting reached students, faculty, staff and others in the Tulsa theatre community. Instead, Mr. Barnett argues that the only person responsible for this posting should be Mr. Christopher Mangum, his fiancé.

Mr. Barnett contends that the University of Tulsa should accept, at face value, the denials made by him and the statements made by Mr. Mangum that Mr. Mangum acted alone and is solely responsible for the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. Mr. Mangum is not a student at the University of Tulsa and was not in attendance during the September 27 call-in for *The Glass Menagerie*. Mr. Mangum claims that he wrote about incidents based on his own, personal knowledge, obtained from sources other than Mr. Barnett. Mr. Mangum also claims that he was not influenced in any way, directly or indirectly, by Mr. Barnett. Mr. Mangum's claims are not credible.

In his Response, Mr. Barnett acknowledges that the September 28, 2014 posting was "crude and insulting" and "not appropriate in any public forum." The Victims would regard this as a gross understatement. The plain language of this posting shows that it was a defamatory and demeaning effort to hold Professor Barrett, Professor Powers and up to disrespect and ridicule in their professional and personal lives:

- a. The posting accuses Professor Barrett of failing to fulfill her responsibilities as Theatre Department Chair and faculty advisor to *The Glass Menagerie*;
- b. The posting accuses Professor Powers as being "unqualified" and states that she should be "fired;"
- c. The posting accuses of living "in a fantasy world" and being "morbidly obese;" and
- d. The posting accuses of "giving alcohol to underage minors," a crime under the laws of the state of Oklahoma.

At the time of the September 28, 2014 posting, Mr. Barnett knew that the readers of his Facebook page include students, faculty, alumni and other members of the Tulsa theatre community. Mr. Barnett knew that the theatre community is small and that readers would quickly recognize the individuals identified in the posting as "Susan" (Professor Barrett), "Kim" (Professor Powers) and

After summarizing the complaints against him during their meeting on September 30, 2014, SVP Tanaka expressed her opinion that the only reason for posting such attacks on his Facebook page was to demean and humiliate the intended targets. SVP Tanaka distinctly recalls Mr. Barnett's reaction – while she spoke, Mr. Barnett smiled and nodded his head repeatedly, agreeing that those were indeed the reasons for posting the attacks against Theatre faculty and students on his Facebook page. Mr. Barnett knew that this posting

would be read not only by the targeted individuals, but also by other faculty, students, alumni and members of the Tulsa theatre community.

That purpose was achieved. As expected, Professor Powers and were extremely distraught to see their character, professional qualifications and personal lives attacked on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. Also, as expected, other Theatre students and faculty were dragged into the situation. In her Formal Complaint, Professor Barrett describes the impact of the September 28 posting as follows:

Morale and relationships in our Department have been harmed. These postings have damaged reputations; undermined and disrupted the faculty's ability to offer academic programs and co-curricular activities. These attacks have disrupted other students as well as participate without fear, in class, on productions, and in co-curricular activities in our Theatre Department and for the College.

During the investigation, it was necessary to examine the context in which the September 28 posting was made. Specifically, it was necessary and appropriate to examine earlier postings on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page that had included defamatory, demeaning attacks against Professor Powers, and Professor Dill.

A-2. The March 15, 2014 Postings on Mr. Barnett's Facebook Page.

In March, 2014, Mr. Barnett and a group of eight other Theatre students traveled to Ireland under the leadership of Professor Machele Dill. The trip provided an opportunity for University of Tulsa theatre students to participate in a production in Dublin. was in the group. Mr. Barnett was accompanied by Mr. Mangum.

While in Ireland, Mr. Barnett became upset about a request from Professor Dill that he and other students contribute \$100 Euros (each) towards the rental costs for the Theatre. Mr. Barnett was also frustrated because he felt that, as set designer, his time and contributions were not being properly planned and managed by Professor Dill. Mr. Barnett emailed Professor Barrett, his faculty mentor and Theatre Department Chair, by email to express his complaints and to seek resolution. While these matters were under review, postings were published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page under the name "Christopher Blackstone." In his Response, Mr. Barnett acknowledges that "Christopher Blackstone" is psuedonym. Mr. Barnett claims that all postings under that pseudonym were written and posted solely by Mr. Mangum:

(March 15, 2014 Christopher Blackstone) Trey Barnett ... first I am sorry to you for not being able to stay quiet ... But I think when there is an allegation of corruption and an affair TU needs to investigate it. (Everyone knows about the affair and I'm glad TU has launched and investigation and HR is involved) Secondly ... I Don't care what says about me. I've always been nice to her. She is simply miserable ... And deflects in an attempt to hide her own

insecurities. When all the fat comments I've heard others make towards her I was always the one to tell them to sfu. Her loss. Not mine. I hope TU fires your corrupt professor.

(March 15, 2014 Christopher Blackstone) I just sent an email to the Tulsa US Attorneys office asking them to open a formal investigation for possible criminal wrong doing. Racketeering comes to mind. That is the statute they used to put the last guy in prison for 9 months. When I saw how many people were being steered to one person in Ireland by one professor from TU it set off too many alarms.

The plain language in these postings demonstrate an intent to demean, humiliate, bully and intimidate Professor Dill and Intim

- a. The postings accuse Professor Dill, a married woman, of engaging in an "affair" while in Ireland;
- b. The postings accuse of being "simply miserable" and subject to "fat comments;" and
- c. The postings accuse Professor Dill of being a "corrupt professor" responsible for "possible criminal wrongdoing" and "racketeering."

Mr. Barnett attempts to minimize the impact of the March 15 postings by stating that Professor Dill was not named in those postings. However, as Mr. Barnett knows, the Theatre community in Tulsa is small and its constituents are a relatively close-knit group. Mr. Barnett knew that his Facebook page was being read by Theatre faculty, students, alumni and other constituents who knew he was in Ireland and participating in a program led by Professor Dill. Thus, by context, Professor Dill's identity was readily ascertainable by readers of Mr. Barnett's Facebook page.

A-3. The April 12 Postings on Mr. Barnett's Facebook Page.

On Saturday, April 12, 2014, scurrilous attacks against University of Tulsa faculty were again published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. This time the target was Professor Powers.

Earlier that day, Professor Powers had supervised a group of Theatre students participating in a community service project near the University of Tulsa campus. Professor Powers' areas of expertise include scenic design and set design. This was a class project. Under arrangements with the Kendall Whittier neighborhood association, the group painted a large mural on the north side of the building that houses Ziegler's, a local business that provides art supplies and services to the Theatre Department and other departments at the University of Tulsa. The mural is designed to be seen from Interstate 244, welcoming visitors to Tulsa and to the Kendall Whittier neighborhood. Local merchants agreed to reimburse the Department for the cost of paint and other supplies. Students worked on the scaffolding under the supervision of Professor Powers and a technical director from the University of Tulsa's Lorton Performance Center, which provided the materials and offered specific •

expertise (through its technical director) for building the scaffolding. Upon completion, community representatives thanked the Theatre group and presented Professor Powers with a check to reimburse the Department for paint and supplies. Following University procedures, Professor Powers submitted that check to College administrators the following Monday.

Later that day, postings were published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page, accusing Professor Powers of being professionally and personally unqualified. As with the postings from Ireland, these postings were made under the psuedonym, "Christopher Blackstone."

(April 12, 2014 Christopher Blackstone) Trey Barnett I'd feel better about you painting and hanging off the side of buildings if I knew that TU carried Workmens Comp for all these projects they do ... who pays the bills if you get hurt on these freebie projects? I don't think your teachers are qualified in the safety department and I don't think they have taken any safety measures at all from the pictures I've seen .. They are quite careless and extremely disorganized. Its extremely scary that you are trusting them with anything.

(April 12, 2014 Houston Hall) You realize that you can send personal messages to people. Lol.

(April 12, 2014 Christopher Blackstone) Yeah but I Didnt Want that to be a personal message. They are idiots.

The last posting on April 12, 2014 makes it clear that Mr. Barnett's Facebook page was used intentionally as a public platform for reaching members of the Tulsa theatre community. "Christopher Blackstone" wanted the message to be read by students, faculty, alumni and others, and wanted readers to know that the writer(s) consider Professor Powers and other "teachers" to be "idiots." This publication was intended for an audience that knows Professor powers, the intended target, and could readily ascertain her identity through context.

A-4. The Warnings Given to Mr. Barnett By Professor Barrett

Evidence received during the investigation showed that, after the March 15, 2014 postings that attacked and demeaned Professor Dill and on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page, Professor Barrett contacted Mr. Barnett and warned him to take the postings down and cease the "derogatory public attacks." After the April 12, 2014 postings that attacked and demeaned Professor Powers, Professor Barrett contacted Mr. Barnett and again warned him to take the postings down and cease the attacks. In her Formal Complaint, Professor Barrett describes her warnings to Mr. Barnett as follows:

I spoke with Trey by phone as soon as I was aware of the attacks from Ireland urging him to take the postings down and in person again when he returned to Tulsa from Ireland. In both instances, I warned him that these kinds of derogatory public attacks must cease. I spoke with Trey, following the Kendal Whittier posting urging him to take down it down and again warned him to cease all forms of this activity.

In his Response and during the investigation, Mr. Barnett did not deny that he received warnings from Professor Barrett after the March 15 and April 12 postings on his Facebook page. Instead, he points to his repeated claims that he should not be held responsible for anything, and that Mr. Mangum alone bears responsibility for all postings:

I was clear with Professor Barrett from the beginning that I was not directly or indirectly involved with any postings, which she understood.

In his Response, Mr. Barnett attempts to suggest that he did not receive Professor Barrett's warnings, but those denials lack credibility. Mr. Barnett uses guarded language to offer denials that are limited and meaningless:

I did not have a working phone while in Ireland.

I never had a meeting with Professor Barrett about what happened in Ireland.

Despite such protestations, Mr. Barnett does not deny that he received warnings from Professor Barrett while he was in Ireland, that he was warned again after he returned from Ireland, and that he received further warnings after the April 12 postings against Professor Powers. During the investigation, Professor Barrett stated that she clearly recalled communicating with Mr. Barnett while he was in Ireland, but acknowledged that her communications with him might have been through email, not telephone. Professor Barrett stated that, after learning of the March 15, 2014 postings on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page, she used emails, text messages and telephone calls to contact various individuals, trying to get Mr. Barnett to remove the derogatory postings and cease the attacks against Professor Dill. By whatever medium, Professor Barrett firmly recalled contacting Mr. Barnett while he was in Ireland and asking him to cease the attacks against Professor Dill on his Facebook page.

Mr. Barnett acknowledges that he was aware of the March 15 postings on his Facebook page and he received the warnings from Professor Barrett. However he states that the March 15 postings were not removed from his Facebook page until after Mr. Mangum was satisfied:

Chris had taken down all the posts while we were still in Ireland because the school was starting an investigation about the trip.

After the March and April postings, Professor Barrett decided to give Mr. Barnett the benefit of the doubt. She accepted his claims that Mr. Mangum, and Mr. Mangum alone, was responsible for the March 15, 2014 and April 12, 2014 postings on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. Professor Barrett assumed and hoped that the matter was resolved with her warnings and admonishments to Mr. Barnett.

On the morning of September 28, after seeing the latest postings against Professor Powers and Professor Barrett spoke with Mr. Barnett initially by telephone and later in

person. She urged him to "stop this latest attack" against Professor Powers and Subsequently the Victims were dismayed to see that, although the initial posting on "TU Confessions" were removed, the same attacks were published and allowed to remain on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page long after Mr. Barnett received the latest warnings from Professor Barrett.

A-5. Mr. Barnett's Failure to Act and Failure to Heed The Warnings Given to Him by Professor Barrett

The recent spate of attacks against Professor Powers and show that Mr. Barnett failed to avail himself of the opportunity given to him by Professor Barrett last spring. Instead of accepting the warnings and taking appropriate action, Mr. Barnett did nothing. He had successfully used what Professor Barrett now characterizes as the "Chris did it" defense to avoid consequences after the March 15 and April 12 postings. Apparently Mr. Barnett expected to rely on the same defense to avoid responsibility for the September 28 posting. In her Formal Complaint, Professor Barrett reflects on the situation as follows:

Looking back, I guess he [Mr. Barnett] never really took my warnings seriously. Trey seems to think that, as along as he can claim, "Chris did it," he can hide behind Chris and avoid responsibility for these attacks on our faculty and students.

After being warned repeatedly by Professor Barrett to stop the attacks against University of Tulsa faculty and students, Mr. Barnett was on notice and became responsible for paying heed to Professor Barrett's warnings. Mr. Barnett became responsible for taking reasonable steps to prevent further attacks against University of Tulsa faculty and students on his Facebook page.

Yet, in Mr. Barnett's Response and during this investigation, no evidence emerged to show that Mr. Barnett made any effort to heed Professor Barrett's warnings and fulfill his responsibilities after being warned last March and April. In fact, Mr. Barnett's Response is strikingly void of any indication that he did anything last spring or last summer to prevent further derogatory, inappropriate attacks against Theatre faculty and students on his Facebook page. For five months, Mr. Barnett did nothing. He acted only in early October, after commencement of this harassment case.

If, as Mr. Barnett claimed last spring, all defamatory, demeaning attacks against University of Tulsa faculty and students last March and April had been made solely by Mr. Mangum, Mr. Barnett could have taken action to block further postings by Mr. Mangum. Mr. Barnett could have password-protected his Facebook page. Mr. Barnett could have spoken with Mr. Mangum, his fiancé, and asked him to cease these attacks against University of Tulsa faculty and students. Mr. Barnett reveals in his Response that – had he made even an *effort* after the March and April postings – he could have influenced Mr. Mangum's subsequent conduct and choices:

I have explained to Chris (Mr. Mangum) how these statements are harmful to others and how they are harmful to me. After discussions about the comments, Chris has taken all previous comments down. Chris has assured me that he will not make any more posts, or other comments, about TU or people related to TU.

Unfortunately, Mr. Barnett did not take steps and did not make the necessary efforts until after he learned that the Victims were seeking redress against him under the Harassment Policy. He had been warned repeatedly, but he did nothing for five months. Mr. Barnett acted only after realizing that the demeaning, defamatory attacks on his Facebook page were harmful not only to "others," but also "harmful to me."

The record shows that Mr. Barnett has not claimed at any time that he lacked *control* to block, stop or take down from his Facebook page the attacks against the Victims. In fact, Mr. Barnett denied control only once in his Response and during the investigation, when referring to the posting on the KTUL website:

I had informed [Professor Barrett] that neither Chris nor I had any involvement with the post. I had no control over taking the KTUL post down as I did not post it and Chris has denied posting it. (Emphasis added)

In this context, it is reasonable and unavoidable to infer that Mr. Barnett has known all along that he has the ability to control postings on his Facebook page, particularly postings made by Mr. Mangum – if indeed Mr. Mangum alone wrote the defamatory, bullying attacks against the Victims. The attacks were posted and allowed to remain on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page last March, April and September not by happenstance, but by choice.

Moreover, although Mr. Barnett repeatedly claims he "was not involved" and "was not the one who posted the comments," he has never suggested that he lacked interest or that he had no reason to have the attacks posted on his Facebook page. Credible evidence obtained during the investigation showed that, prior to each attack against the Victims, Mr. Barnett had expressed dissatisfaction with relationships and matters were addressed in each attack. In addition to the circumstances described previously in Sections A-1, A-2 and A-3 of this Memorandum Decision, credible evidence was received to show the following:

• Prior to the trip to Ireland, Mr. Barnett became "disgruntled" after he learned that his application to the Musical Theatre program had been denied. All applications to the Musical Theatre program are reviewed by a faculty committee, not by Professor Dill single-handedly. However, Professor Dill directs the Musical Theatre program. She observed a change in Mr. Barnett's behavior towards her after he was denied admission to the Musical Theatre program.

•	and Mr. Barnett had been close	friends at one time but, during the
	past year, their relationship became strained	d. The rift worsened while they
	were in Ireland, after encourage	d Mr. Barnett to remain on the set
	with other theatre students despite Mr. Mangum's desire to go elsewhere.	
	After learning what had said, M	Ir. Mangum reacted angrily and
	called her a "bitch."	

• During the Properties Management class taught by Professor Powers this fall, Professor Powers observed noticeable tensions between Mr. Barnett and the three other students in the class. Professor Powers took steps to make sure that those tensions did not affect any class activities, but noticed that Mr. Barnett sought validation from her "on every bit of his work" in the class.

Prior to the commencement of the Formal Complaint against him, Mr. Barnett knew that the postings on his Facebook page had been harmful to the reputations and well-being of the Victims. Apparently Mr. Barnett did not realize, until after commencement of this investigation, that those same postings could also be "harmful to me." Apparently the harm suffered by Professor Dill, Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett had not been enough to motivate Mr. Barnett to act. Mr. Barnett finally acted and took corrective action in early October – but only after realizing that, with the commencement of the harassment case against him, the cyber attacks on his Facebook page had become potentially "harmful to me."

In this context, Mr. Barnett's repeated, self-serving denials of any responsibility and involvement ring hollow and lack credibility.

FINDING ON ISSUE A Mr. Barnett bears responsibility for the September 28, 2014 posting on his Facebook page. He received adequate, repeated warnings to cease the attacks. Mr. Barnett's self-serving denials of involvement and responsibility lack credibility. He is responsible for his actions and inactions that led to the September 28, 2014 attacks on his Facebook page against Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett.

B. <u>ISSUE B</u> Did the Provost's Office err in suspending Mr. Barnett from two theatre classes and one theatre practicum, and removing him from his position as Lighting Director of <u>The Glass Menagerie</u>, before receipt of the written Complaint and during the pendency of this case?

A Formal Complaint under the University of Tulsa's Harassment Policy is initiated when one or more parties present allegations of prohibited harassment to an appropriate University official and express their intent to proceed under the procedures for Formal Complaints. The process begins as soon as the complaint is received, even though a written Complaint is required and may not be presented by the parties until later. To date, all Formal Complaint cases handled by the Provost's Office have been initiated with complaints

presented orally (in person) or in writing (letter or email). Written complaints are not received until later. In situations where the status quo appears stable and there does not appear to be a reasonable basis for fearing continued harassment, the Provost's Office does not notify the accused until after a written complaint is received. However, in cases where there is reasonable basis for concern about ongoing harassment and vulnerability of the Victim(s), the accused is notified as soon as possible, typically before the written complaint is received.

From the outset, this case presented a reasonable basis for concern regarding ongoing harassment and vulnerability of the Victims. The language and tone of the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page was hostile, aggressive, bullying and defamatory. Moreover, this was not the first time that Mr. Barnett's Facebook page had been used to launch defamatory, demeaning attacks against faculty and students in the Theatre program. Similar derogatory and demeaning attacks had been published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page last March and April. The September 28, 2014 attack against Professor Powers was posted on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page five months after he had received clear warnings and admonitions from Professor Barrett to cease the attacks. These circumstances were enough to raise serious doubts about Mr. Barnett's willingness to conform his conduct to the standards of the University of Tulsa community, as described in the opening paragraphs of the Harassment Policy:

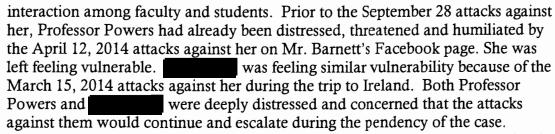
The University of Tulsa is committed to fostering a civil campus community.

Indeed, the University expects of all such participants that they will treat each other respectfully and refrain from any inappropriate conduct, especially conduct that rises to the level of being prohibited under this policy. Such conduct is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. The purpose of this policy is to protect participants from conduct which is unsolicited, unwelcome and inappropriate, in any form and by any means.

At the time this case was initiated, defamatory, demeaning attacks had been posted on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page on three separate occasions: March 15, 2014; April 12, 2014 and September 28, 2014. Mr. Barnett has never denied that these postings were made on his Facebook page.

During individual meetings with the Provost's Office on September 29, 2014, Professor Powers, Professor Barrett and Professor Dill expressed great distress, intimidation and dread at the mere thought of working alongside Mr. Barnett in Theatre classes and on the set of *The Glass Menagerie*. Therefore, the following enrollment and cocurricular issues had to be addressed by the Provost's Office at the outset and during the pendency of this case:

1. Mr. Barnett is enrolled in Theatre 3142 (Properties Management), taught by Professor Powers. Only four students are enrolled, including and Mr. Barnett. It is an upper level class with a pedagogy that requires continuous



- 2. Mr. Barnett is enrolled in Theatre 4973 (Collaborative Processes), an upper level course co-taught by Professor Barrett and Professor Dill. There are 13 students in the class, including the class requires continuous faculty and student interaction, including class exercises where students are required to work in small groups. The March 15, 2014 attacks against Professor Dill had affected her personally and professionally. She felt unwanted pressure and vulnerability from the threat of ongoing harassment. Professor Barrett and Professor Dill were both deeply concerned about the impact of having Mr. Barnett in their Theatre 4973 class, especially with
- 3. On September 28, <u>The Glass Menagerie</u> was less than two weeks away from opening. The entire cast and crew were already anxious, and their anxieties were heightened by the September 28 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. was the Stage Manager, Mr. Barnett was the Lighting Designer, and Professor Powers was a faculty advisor. None of the Victims believed that it would be feasible to work with Mr. Barnett in such close proximity and under the pressure felt by all participants.
- 4. Mr. Barnett is enrolled in Theatre 1220 (Practicum), supervised by Professor Barrett. The practicum is based heavily on Mr. Barnett's performance as Lighting Designer for <u>The Glass Menagerie</u>. Professor Barrett reported that, if Mr. Barnett were suspended or removed from the position of Lighting Designer, the crew would have to hire or assign another person to handle those responsibilities for the remaining period. A temporary replacement was not possible at that point in the production schedule.
- 5. Professor Powers, Professor Barrett and Professor Dill all expressed great concern about their security in Kendall Hall. They were all concerned about retaliation and continued harassment after the filing of the Formal Complaint. The building itself is odd because of its circular design. The shape does not allow a clear line of sight from one direction to another, and there are odd "niches" and doorways throughout. It is not uncommon for Theatre students, faculty and staff to study and work in the building late at night sometimes until midnight or later in order to use the stage, carpenter's shop and other areas needed for specific purposes. At times only a handful of individuals remain in the building at night. The Victims feared reprisals and continuing harassment, and did not feel secure in Kendall Hall after the complaint was filed against Mr. Barnett.

The concerns and fears of the Victims were reasonably based on actual circumstances in this case. When there is a fear of continued harassment or retaliation, Section C(1)(c) of the Harassment Policy requires administrators and supervisors to act:

Administrators and supervisors have the legal responsibility to protect a complainant or victim from continued Prohibited Harassment or retaliation ...

For these reasons, the Provost's Office imposed interim restrictions on Mr. Barnett during the pendency of this case:

- 1. Suspension of Mr. Barnett's enrollment in Theatre 3142 (Properties Management);
- 2. Suspension of Mr. Barnett's enrollment in Theatre 4973 (Collaborative Processes);
- 3. Suspension of Mr. Barnett's enrollment in Theatre 1220 (Practicum);
- 4. Removal of Mr. Barnett from the position of Lighting Designer for <u>The Glass Menagerie</u>;
- 5. Limited access of Mr. Barnett to Kendall Hall, allowing him to be in the building for voice lessons but at no other times without prior written approval from Professor Barrett;
- 6. No further communications or contacts with Professor Powers and Ms. who were the primary targets of the September 28 posting.

FINDING ON ISSUE B The Provost's Office was justified in concluding that interim protective measures were required to protect Professor Powers, Ms.

and Professor Barrett from continued harassment and threats to their persons and reputations during the pendency of this case. The restrictions placed on Mr. Barnett in SVP Tanaka's September 30, 2014 letter were necessary, appropriate and authorized under Section C(1)(c) of the Harassment Policy.

C. <u>ISSUE C</u> Did the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page violate the Victims' rights under Section A(3) of the Harassment Policy?

Section A(3) of the Harassment Policy prohibits inappropriate conduct that is harmful to an individual's "person or reputation on or off campus:"

Section A(3). Reputation - Prohibited Harassment related to an individual's reputation may include any form of inappropriate conduct which is defamatory, demeaning, intimidating, threatening, or otherwise places an individual in fear of harm to his or her person or reputation on or off campus.

The September 28 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page included several demeaning, defamatory attacks against the persons and reputations of the Victims:

- 1. Accusing Professor Barrett of failing to fulfill her responsibilities as Theatre Department Chair and a faculty supervisor for *The Glass Menagerie*;
- 2. Accusing Professor Powers of being "unqualified" and stating that she should be "fired;"
- 3. Accusing of living "in a fantasy world" and being "morbidly obese;" and
- 4. Accusing of "giving alcohol to underage minors," a criminal act in the State of Oklahoma.

These accusations are defamatory, demeaning, intimidating and threatening to the persons and reputations of Professor Barrett, Professor Powers and . In his Response, Mr. Barnett acknowledges that these accusations are "crude and insulting ... and were not appropriate in any public forum."

Evidence was received during the investigation that clearly demonstrated the significant harm suffered by the Victims. All Victims described how their morale and sense of well-being in their personal and professional lives have been disrupted and damaged. The accusations were read by Theatre students, faculty and alumni. Some readers have contacted one or more of the Victims to express their concern and inquire about the accusations. In effect, each of the Victims has been smeared by the defamatory, demeaning and bullying accusations published against them on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page.

Relationships between the Victims and others, on and off campus, have been adversely affected. The Victims related how students, faculty and other members of the Tulsa theatre community have appeared uncertain about how to interact with them. Many members of the Theatre community seem to sense a cloud of uncertainty created by the aggressive, defamatory and demeaning attacks that were published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page.

Personal life, personal sense of well-being and ability to interact freely with classmates have been disrupted. Professor Powers, Professor Dill and Professor Barrett report that faculty-student relationships in their classes and co-curricular activities have been adversely affected. Clearly the attacks published on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page have undermined the reputations and persons of the Victims, and have harmed many aspects of relationships and programs in the Theatre Department.

FINDING ON ISSUE C Section A(3) of the Harassment Policy was violated by the defamatory, demeaning, intimidating and threatening posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page that attacked the reputations and persons of Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett on September 28, 2014. Significant harm has been suffered by the Victims personally and professionally, on and off campus.

D. <u>ISSUE D</u> Did the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page violate the Victims' rights under Section B(1)(c) of the Harassment Policy?

Section B(1)(c) of the Harassment Policy prohibits inappropriate conduct that unreasonably interferes with the academic or working environment:

Prohibited Harassment includes any conduct or behavior of an inappropriate nature where:

c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working, educational or campus living environment.

As discussed earlier under **ISSUES B and C**, evidence received during the investigation clearly showed that the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page has significantly disrupted and damaged the Victims' personal well-being, their professional standing, their ability to interact freely in classrooms and during co-curricular activities, their morale, and their relationships with other faculty and students in the Theatre Department.

Mr. Barnett knew, at the time of the posting, that the September 28 attacks against Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett would be read by and become the subject of discussion among faculty, students, alumni and others involved in the University of Tulsa Theatre community. By attacking and demeaning the professional qualifications and abilities of Professor Powers and Professor Barrett, and by attacking and demeaning Ms. personally and in her life as a student at the University of Tulsa, the September 28 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page unreasonably interfered with the Victims' personal and professional lives and their ability to participate freely and without fear in academic and co-curricular activities. The evidence clearly showed that the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page has had the effect of "creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working, educational or campus living environment" for the Victims, individually and as a group.

FINDING ON ISSUE D Section (B)(1)(c) of the Harassment Policy was violated by the September 28, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. This posting has had the effect of unreasonably and significantly interfering with the personal and professional lives of the Victims, and their ability to participate freely and fully in academic, co-curricular and other activities at the University of Tulsa. In addition, the posting has affected other faculty and students in their relationships with the Victims and in their academic and working environments. Such a broad impact was inevitable because, as Mr. Barnett knew, his Facebook page would be read by many students, faculty, alumni and others, on and off campus.

E. <u>ISSUE E</u> Did Mr. Barnett violate Section C(1)(a) and Section E of the Harassment Policy?

Section C(1)(a) of the Harassment Policy prohibits any reprisals or retaliatory conduct against victims:

a. Against the Victim. It is a violation of the Policy on Harassment to retaliate against a complainant for filing a charge of Prohibited Harassment. A complaint of retaliation will be pursued using the steps followed for a complaint of Prohibited Harassment.

Section E of the Harassment Policy requires that every effort be made to assure confidentiality and to protect against breach of confidentiality:

Throughout the complaint and investigation process, every effort will be made to assure and provide confidentiality to the fullest extent reasonably possible to protect against retaliation. Subject to applicable law, communication will be limited to a minimum "need to know" basis, coupled with a directive not to discuss the matter outside the process. However, the investigation of such complaints will generally require disclosure to the accused party and other witnesses in order to gather pertinent facts.

During their meeting on September 30, 2014, Mr. Barnett was notified and admonished by SVP Tanaka to comply with the mandates of Sections C(1)(a) and E. He received instructions orally and in writing. SVP Tanaka's September 30, 2014 letter to Mr. Barnett, delivered to him at that meeting, includes the following instructions:

- 7. You are to respect the requirement of confidentiality and the prohibition against reprisals or retaliation, as specifically stated in the Harassment Policy. Any allegations regarding breach of confidentiality or retaliatory conduct will be investigated as potential additional violations under the Harassment Policy.
- 9. Effective immediately, you should be mindful to avoid any conduct that may violate one or more provisions of the Harassment Policy. Please be aware that the investigation of the Provost's Office will not be limited to conduct that occurred prior to today, but will be continuing in nature.
- 10. If you have any questions regarding the nature and scope of these instructions, please present your questions to me by email. I will respond as quickly as possible.

Despite these instructions, Mr. Barnett shared the confidential September 30, 2014 letter and the confidential October 3, 2014 (written) Formal Complaint with Mr. Mangum.

The record shows that Mr. Mangum received a copy of SVP Tanaka's September 30, 2014 letter almost immediately after it had been given to Mr. Barnett. The letter had been delivered in person to Mr. Barnett before he left the Provost's Office, close to 9:30 AM on

September 30. At 6:14 PM that afternoon, Mr. Mangum emailed SVP Tanaka to say that he had prepared an affidavit and would be sending it to the Provost's Office, responding to the contents of the (confidential) September 30, 2014 letter. Mr. Mangum's Affidavit, dated and signed on October 1, 2014, includes his claim that he was solely responsible for postings on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page. That affidavit also includes additional disparaging accusations – beyond those in the September 28 Facebook posting – against Professor Powers and

Similar sharing of the Formal Complaint became evident within hours after Professor Barrett's Formal Complaint was delivered by email to Mr. Barnett at 11:15 AM on October 3, 2014. At 4:33 PM that afternoon, Mr. Mangum emailed SVP Tanaka with an attached "additional affidavit in regards to the official compliant (sic) submitted by Susan Barrett." That affidavit includes additional, defamatory accusations – beyond those in the September 28, 2014 facebook posting - against Professor Barrett, who wrote and signed the Formal Complaint.

Under Section E of the Harassment Policy, Mr. Mangum is not an appropriate person with whom these confidential documents could be shared by Mr. Barnett. Further, if Mr. Barnett believed his own statements in his Response, he knew that Mr. Mangum could not be trusted to act reasonably, responsibly or civilly:

[Chris] is very defensive and protective of me. Chris takes medication for Rapid Bi-Polar Depression, which makes him speak his mind.

Mr. Barnett knew or had reason to know that Mr. Mangum could not be trusted to respect the requirements of the Harassment Policy and the expectations of the Victims that their harassment case would be handled discreetly and without inappropriate publicity. The Victims were entitled to be protected against further publication of the defamatory, demeaning accusations that had appeared previously on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page.

After Mr. Barnett received Professor Barrett's Formal Complaint, attacks against Professor Barrett escalated with the following October 5, 2014 posting on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page:

Just sent an email to the ACLU on Trey's behalf asking for their help against The University of Tulsa for censorship and free speech violations. We're gearing up to go to war with TU. Susan Barrett will regret lying when we get to go face to face with her in court. Susan, you shouldn't have lied or forged documents!

This October 5 posting includes precisely the type of retaliatory, defamatory language and inappropriate threats that had given rise to the Formal Complaint in the first place. The timing of this publication makes it reasonable to infer that it was published in response to the fact that Professor Barrett had signed the Formal Complaint and the University of Tulsa was

pursuing these matters under the Harassment Policy. The threat against Professor Barrett to cause her to "regret lying" is an unsubtle reference to the written Formal Complaint she had signed just two days earlier, on October 3, 2014. The threats against both Professor Barrett and the University of Tulsa are acts of retaliation against the Professor Barrett (Complainant) and the University for pursuing redress for the Victims under the Harassment Policy:

- a. The October 5 posting threatens to "go to war with TU" with accusations of "censorship and free speech violations;"
- b. The October 5 posting accuses Professor Barrett of having "lied" and "forged documents;" and
- c. The October 5 posting threatens to "go face to face with [Professor Barrett] in court" to make her "regret lying."

The October 5 posting was retaliatory and bullying. Mr. Barnett gave Professor Barrett's Formal Complaint to Mr. Mangum. Mr. Barnett participated in and allowed publication of the retaliatory, defamatory, threatening attacks against Professor Barrett on his Facebook page on October 5, after being admonished verbally and in writing by SVP Tanaka against such action. The October 5 posting was made despite the fact that, on September 30, Mr. Barnett was notified verbally and in writing that he must refrain from engaging in retaliatory conduct and "be mindful to avoid any conduct that may violate one or more provisions of the Harassment Policy."

Despite warnings and admonitions given to him just days before, Mr. Barnett again failed to act reasonably and appropriately. He failed to comply with the requirements of the Harassment Policy and the standards of conduct required of all members of the University of Tulsa community. After being warned to cease and desist, Mr. Barnett's Facebook page became, yet again, a public forum for defamatory, threatening attacks – this time against Professor Barrett, the only individual who signed the Formal Complaint. Mr. Barnett's Facebook page was used, yet again, to make sure that these accusations and threats would be read by students, faculty, alumni and other members of the Tulsa theatre community.

FINDING ON ISSUE E Section C(1)(a) and Section E of the Harassment Policy were violated when Mr. Barnett shared the confidential September 30, 2014 letter and October 3, 2014 Formal Complaint with Mr. Mangum. Following Mr. Barnett's receipt of the Formal Complaint, the attacks on Mr. Barnett's Facebook page escalated, focusing solely on Professor Barrett, who had signed the Formal Complaint. Mr. Barnett's actions violated the mandate against retaliation in Section C(1)(a) and the requirement of confidentiality in Section E of the Harassment Policy.

III. CONCLUSION

Evidence received during the investigation clearly supported Professor Barrett's assessment that Mr. Barnett never took her warnings seriously after the March 15, 2014 and April 12, 2014 attacks against Theatre faculty and students on his Facebook page. Mr. Barnett failed to fulfill his responsibilities. Instead, he squandered the opportunity given to him last spring when Professor Barrett gave him the benefit of the doubt and considered the matter resolved with her warnings and admonitions. When given the chance, Mr. Barnett failed to act reasonably and appropriately. He demonstrated no concern for the harm already suffered by Professor Dill, Professor Powers and after the March and April postings on his Facebook page. The record shows that Mr. Barnett took action only after learning that the Victims had contacted the Provost's Office to file formal complaints against him under the Harassment Policy. In describing his decision to finally act after September 28, Mr. Barnett reveals in his Response that he became motivated only after realizing that, in addition to harming others, the scurrilous postings on his Facebook page "are harmful to me."

Mr. Barnett violated several provisions in the Harassment Policy: <u>Section A-3</u> (damaging the Victims' reputations and persons on and off campus); <u>Section B(1)(c)</u> (unreasonably interfering with the Victims' academic and work performance and creating an intimidating, hostile and offensive working and educational environment); <u>Section C(1)(a)</u> (retaliation against the Complainant in a harassment case); and <u>Section E</u> (breach of confidentiality).

Mr. Barnett has never acknowledged any responsibility for cyber attacks against the Victims on his Facebook page. Mr. Barnett has failed to provide any credible explanation regarding his claim that all postings on his Facebook page were made solely by Mr. Mangum, without any involvement on his part. After being notified by Professor Barrett on the morning of September 28 that the Victims planned to filed complaints against him with the Provost's Office, Mr. Barnett sent emails to Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett. His messages offered no apologies for any of his actions or inactions. Instead, Mr. Barnett used those communications as yet another opportunity to distance himself from the postings on his Facebook page – asserting, once again, what Professor Barrett now refers to as Mr. Barnett's "Chris did it" defense.

In his Response, Mr. Barnett lists a variety of contributions he has made to the Theatre program as a student, as a volunteer and as a participant in co-curricular activities. However, like his half-hearted email excuses to the Victims on September 28, Mr. Barnett's list of contributions is not enough to offset his failure to accept and perform his responsibilities as a member of the Theatre Department community.

The Issues investigated and the Findings reached in this case clearly and consistently show that Mr. Barnett is responsible and must be held accountable for the derogatory, demeaning attacks posted on his Facebook page on September 28, 2014 and on October 5, 2014. The impact of the September 28, 2014 and October 5, 2014 postings has been significant. Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett have suffered significant harm not only

because of the September 28 and October 5 attacks, but also because those attacks arrived on the heels of earlier defamatory attacks that had threatened and undermined their personal and professional lives and well-being. The effect has been *cumulative* and has been felt not only the targeted Victims. These attacks have undermined the morale and unreasonably interfered with the academic and working environment of many faculty, students, alumni and other members of the Tulsa theatre community. Professor Powers, and Professor Barrett and the Theatre Department are entitled to immediate relief and protection against Mr. Barnett's defamatory, demeaning, bullying attacks.

IV. SANCTIONS

Based on the Findings and Conclusions in this case, the following sanctions are imposed against Mr. Barnett, *effective immediately*:

- 1. Mr. Barnett is suspended from the University of Tulsa until January 1, 2016 or until graduates, whichever is later.
- 2. During his suspension, Mr. Barnett will be barred from the University of Tulsa campus and will not be allowed to enter the campus without prior, written permission from the Dean or Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Failure to abide by this directive will subject Mr. Barnett to immediate removal, possible arrest for trespassing, and further consequences for violation of sanctions imposed in this case.
- 3. Following the expiration of his suspension, Mr. Barnett may return to the University of Tulsa campus and may enroll in classes, but he will not be allowed to enroll in any classes offered by the Theatre Department or Theatre faculty. In making arrangements for his return, Mr. Barnett will be subject to all policies and procedures applicable to returning students in his situation.
- 4. An entry will be made on Mr. Barnett's transcript reflecting the results of this decision: SUSPENDED / DISCIPLINARY PROBATION MISCONDUCT.
- 5. If Mr. Barnett graduates from the University of Tulsa, he will not be granted a degree with a major or minor in Theatre.
- 6. Mr. Barnett may petition the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, if he wishes to request waiver of the 45-hour rule in order to take courses at another institution during his period of probation. However, no Theatre courses will be transferrable to the University of Tulsa. The decision of the Associate Dean will be subject to review and appeal only by the Dean of the College, with a final appeal to the Provost's Office.

- 7. Mr. Barnett will be on Disciplinary Probation during his period of suspension and until graduation.
- 8. Any further violation of the Harassment Policy, and any violation of the terms of this Decision, academic misconduct policies and/or student conduct policies will be grounds for immediate, permanent dismissal from the University of Tulsa, in addition to other, appropriate consequences.

If Mr. Barnett wishes to appeal this decision, he must file a written appeal within seven (7) days with Dr. Roger Blais, Provost of the University of Tulsa. The decision of the Provost will be final. No further appeals are available.