



September 13, 2018

Mark Mercer, PhD
President, Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS)
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president@safs.ca

Dear Dr. Mercer,

I am responding to your letter of September 10, 2018 regarding the dismissal of Dr. Rick Mehta from Acadia University.

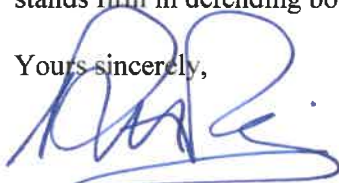
I understand your concern about this matter as the dismissal of a tenured professor is a very serious decision and not one that is done lightly nor without just cause and due process. As this is a personnel matter, I cannot provide you with more specific details of the case due to the pending legal proceedings and privacy issues. However, what I can say is that the dismissal of Dr. Mehta followed the completion of a three-month external investigation by Dr. Wayne MacKay, an eminent and respected legal scholar, which was in response to numerous complaints from members of faculty, staff and students regarding unprofessional and inappropriate conduct by Dr. Mehta. In addition, an internal inquiry was conducted related to a variety of issues including professional conduct. Dr. Mehta was provided access to hundreds of pages of material from both the internal and external reports, as well as a lengthy list of specific reasons supporting the University's decision to dismiss him.

This action was not taken in response to Dr. Mehta's legitimate exercise of his rights to free speech or academic freedom. He was not dismissed for his views but rather for his conduct towards other members of faculty, staff, and students.

I assure you that academic freedom, free speech, and open debate are actively encouraged and vigorously defended at Acadia, and our students get exposed to very high levels of intellectual discourse and critical thinking from a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints. At the same time, Acadia requires its campus to be a place that is respectful and free from harassment and intimidation. As you correctly state in your letter, professors are not free to harass their students or colleagues or treat them unfairly. The rationale behind both the investigation of Dr. Mehta and the decision to dismiss him is based entirely upon complaints about his conduct and behaviour, and the substantiation of those complaints as a result of a thorough and rigorous investigation process.

As with all rights and privileges, academic freedom comes with responsibilities to ensure that it is not abused by using it as a cover to justify inappropriate and unprofessional conduct. Acadia University stands firm in defending both the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Peter J. Ricketts
President and Vice-Chancellor