

Daniel R. Page

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Douglas Farenick, PhD
Dean,
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December 22, 2021

I am formally requesting the withdrawal of the *Letter of Expectation* you had sent to me on October 28, 2021, and the administration of the University dropping this concern completely.

I have concerns about the letter and its contents, and the surrounding events of how it came about. The letter and what was presented to me by you during our meeting contain unfounded claims where no valid evidence was presented to me, especially about my teaching (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-G1fULpGq2tAQIeALCZ9zg>), which was the nature of the concern in your letter. Furthermore, it furthers claims that simply are not true, inconsistent, nor things I stated. The hope as well of this letter is to correct the record, in hopes of clarifying what happened should any individual stumble across your letter and take its presumptions.

- I was criticising the university, as an academic, who routinely engages publicly on matters in Computer Science and other topics as an academic, including on the topics of university excellence/standards and academic issues, whose views need not have to support, endorse, nor align with the ideologies and activism you are compelling me to support in your *Letter of Expectation* (paragraph 5). To be very clear: One can be an inclusive, excellent, caring educator, and provide helpful learning environments in a manner incidental to your suggestions, without committing oneself to the (underlying ideological and political) initiatives you are outlining in the letter, which I will continue to do as a highly experienced Computer Science educator.
- Criticising one's university, especially with respect to not upholding what I believe to be core university principles, is only beneficial for a university and encourages discourse about these issues. There is a history in Canada especially, such as with the Harry Crowe affair, for the protection of academic freedom in the context of criticism of one's university. I believe, that in intervening in this process of civil discourse, you, or whomever ordered you to do, may have violated:
 - Article 2.1.2: Defend the academic freedom of a faculty member against frivolous anonymous or untrue complaints. The University is required to defend my right to express my criticisms (even as it relates to an opinion at odds with University policy and practises) in order to uphold its contractual obligations under the Collective Agreement.
 - Article 2.1.3. Failed to recognize the respect of the right for me, like any other faculty member, to express my opinion in criticism (which is also protected under Section 2(b) of the Charter) by issuing the *Letter of Expectation* and effectively requiring me to attend the online 'Respectful Workplace' workshop, should I meet the expectations laid out in your letter.

In failing to uphold my rights under the Collective Agreement the University has breached in its duty. The policy announcement is in part of a public discussion and debate, that academics may hold different positions on and sometimes rightfully so. The University has a positive obligation to protect my and other faculty's right to express both an academic and extra-mural opinion under Articles 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. The *Letter of Expectation* issued by you is not only a violation in at least

the principles of Articles protecting academic freedom and expression rights, it neglects to respect the protective clauses and exemptions laid out in the Code of Conduct and the Respectful University policies.

- Your letter states:

“I encourage you to keep this in mind when engaging with social media. Deleting the post that prompted this complaint, which you suggested in an email that you would be willing to do, would be a positive concrete action to remedy the concern.”

I reviewed my previous communications and those during the meeting, I never stated this. In fact, I actually stated:

“If the University has concerns over how it will be viewed with my comments remaining there, or if it would ease the mind of any students, the University has my permission (though never is this needed, University of Regina has the ability to delete comments on their posts on LinkedIn) to remove my comments (which can be done through the LinkedIn account that made the post).”

- Nothing I wrote was hateful, nor was it harassing. I was supporting the principle of impartiality in academic decision making by the university in my criticisms. My opinion is one that is shared amongst many individuals who are opposed to the use of experiences of past discrimination in corporate branding exercises or to further in a partial manner a certain political ideology, that usurps the individual dignity of people as individuals; this is in contrast to traditional inclusion practices, that I have professional experience with employing, that include everybody in an impartial and neutral manner.

Incidental to this letter. The **Society of Academic Freedom and Scholarship** (SAFS) had written a letter and sent you it on December 3, 2021, if you have not yet done so, I advise you read their letter:

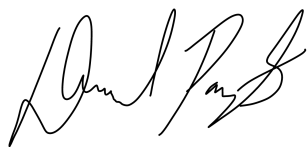
<https://safs.ca/university-of-regina-computer-science-lecturer-receives-letter-of-expectation-for-criticizing-his-university/>

I echo many of the sentiments in their letter. I hope, in the spirit of academic freedom and what I would hope is the ethos of The University of Regina, you will respond to their letter by understanding the concerns with how I was treated and your issued letter. The University of Regina, if it is to be respected in wider society, should be proud to defend academic freedom, and under this, the frank and just criticism of ideas; groups such as SAFS are contacting you to ensure you are meeting a principled duty as Dean of Science to defend the academic freedom of all faculty in the Faculty of Science.

I believe it is important that universities defend academic freedom and their faculty. If incidents of this nature can happen to someone such as myself, whom values excellence, standards, and inclusivity in my classes, no one is safe from overzealous and unfounded concerns or claims about one's teaching being entertained by administrators, that as a result only cause undeserved anxiety and stress from administrators (not those making the claims). I will be giving SAFS permission to post this letter alongside other records, as I value transparency and honesty on all matters involving my academic activities, for both the general public and my students.

I strive for high-quality education and accessibility in my classes. I expect the University of Regina to respect my ability as an educator and assure students if they have difficulties confronting ideas, to discuss them with me directly.

Have a beautiful day!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel R. Page', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel R. Page
PhD, Computer Science
Theoretical Computer Scientist, Science Educator

Attachments: SAFS response to Letter of Expectation, Letter of Expectation.

Cc. Jeff Keshen, PhD, President and Vice-Chancellor
david Gregory, PhD, VP Academic and Provost
David Gerhard, PhD, Department Head, Computer Science
Britt Hall, PhD, President, University of Regina Faculty Association
Heather Ritenburg, PhD, Executive Director, URFA
Landon Schaffer, Member Services Officer, URFA
Colin Tether, Member Services Officer, URFA
Mark Mercer, PhD, President, Society of Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS)