



The Executive Committee of the MU Faculty Council on University Policy issues the following statement concerning the suspension of Professor Melissa Click by the University of Missouri Board of Curators:

The faculty of the University of Missouri recognize that the Board of Curators is vested with authority to govern the University by the Constitution of the State of Missouri, by Missouri statutory law, and by the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University. Pursuant to that authority, the Curators delegate substantial day-to-day operational authority to the President, the Chancellor, and to other administrators—including authority over personnel matters. Further, the University administration engages in shared governance with the faculty, as is recognized in the Collected Rules, such as CRR 10.030.B.2.d. and CRR 300.010.C, in keeping with national best practices in higher education and in the American Association of Universities.

In addition, the Board has approved faculty bylaws for the four campuses in the UM System, including those for the Columbia campus, which are codified at CRR 300.010. In the Faculty Bylaws for the University of Missouri-Columbia, the CRRs set forth a process for “the filing and disposition of charges alleging breaches of professional ethics or commission of irresponsible acts made against UMC faculty members and teachers.” Pursuant to that provision, “A charge of unethical or irresponsible action may be brought against a faculty member or teacher by a person or group of persons associated with the University, such as a student, faculty member, teacher, administrator, or board member.” CRR 300.010.L.4.

To the best of our knowledge, neither the alleged victim of Professor Click’s misconduct, nor any other member of the University community, has filed a faculty irresponsibility charge against her.

At least some faculty who considered bringing a charge—having seen the video evidence—decided against doing so because Professor Click issued a heartfelt apology. At least some faculty decided against doing so because of the vitriolic attacks that Professor Click suffered in the aftermath of the worldwide dissemination of the video. These attacks included threats of death and rape sent to her University email account and made by telephone. Further, when it became known that the Provost had admonished Professor Click for her conduct, at least some faculty concluded that no additional University proceedings were necessary, believing that the reprimand and the public opprobrium which Professor Click has suffered constituted more than sufficient punishment.

Knowing that a colleague was suffering vicious harassment may well have discouraged faculty from adding another problem to Professor Click’s fall semester. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it appears that public confidence in the University, its administration,

and its faculty would have been bolstered had a charge been filed against Professor Click during the fall.

The provisions of CRR 300.010, which have been approved by the Board of Curators, are designed to protect the rights of accused faculty while also protecting the University's interest in identifying and responding to faculty irresponsibility. The Chancellor has authority to review hearings conducted under this rule. CRR 300.010.L.9.

Accordingly, if members of the Board believe that a formal investigation of Professor Click's conduct is appropriate, the faculty respectfully suggest that the Board bring a charge against her under CRR 300.010, allowing the University's existing process to go forward under the supervision of the Interim Chancellor, whom the Board appointed in November. Suspending Professor Click and conducting its own investigation to determine whether additional discipline is appropriate, without using the existing procedures that the Board has approved, undermines confidence in the current leadership of the University.

Approved January 28, 2016