

TO: DEAN WILLIAM FALLS, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, UNIV. OF VERMONT
FROM: JOHN SUMMA, FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBER (LECTURER), DEPT OF ECONOMICS, UVM
SUBJECT: (IN STRICT CONFIDENCE) A REQUEST TO ADD A NOTE TO MY EMPLOYMENT FILE
DATE: 10/3/2016

In strict confidence, I would like to add the following note to my employment file regarding an interaction between a Dept. of Economics tenured faculty member (who will remain unnamed) and myself in Old Mill at 10:05 AM Thursday, September 29, 2016. Because I am up for reappointment and promotion (Dept. vote in early October), I would like to make sure the following facts are recorded in the record (in my employment file at the Dean's level). The description of events should speak to my concerns regarding fairness and academic freedom.

My account: The description below (in italics and taken from an email sent to a student witness) captures the basic nature of the interaction that took place, which was corroborated by this student witness (see attached emails from student), who stated, "Your account seems accurate." See attached full text of student comments (name redacted) in a series of emails with me about the matter.

"I was walking with a student to proctor a makeup in the library [for him]...and one of my colleagues approached me and asked if I had a copy of the textbook used in my international trade class (not one of the peer reviewers in that class, by the way). After I said, 'sure' I can go grab it, the faculty member said 'well when you are not busy' and I said 'no problem', which led to a discussion that was inappropriate and disrespectful. This person said in front of my international trade class student 'my students in REDACTED say you said the Heckscher-Ohlin trade model is bull shit' and that 'you told them that'. I was stunned and said, 'well, I did a critique of it with a peer review faculty member present, so maybe you should consult with them [sic; there were two peer reviewers] about what I really said'. 'Do you really think that is how I talk in class'? The conversation eventually led the faculty member to say: 'I believe in that model and think it is great' and I said, 'well there is a lot of criticism of it and that is hardly news to anybody'. He then said 'it was making his job impossible trying to teach the model'."

As I had more time to reflect on the above interaction, it occurred to me that this faculty member could have presented his model data and arguments in favor of this model to his class and allowed his students to make up their own minds. After all, isn't that the nature of academic work? After giving it time to sink in, the interchange just didn't sit well with me, especially given the stress related to my impending reappointment vote by the department.

Therefore, I want to register the fact of this interchange as described above (witnessed by a student, thankfully, and probably others standing nearby) *before* my department's vote. Given that this faculty member clearly does not like that I criticized a model the faculty member thinks is 'great', a model to which this faculty member is quite obviously attached (perhaps even professionally), I felt compelled to inform you of my concerns.

I would be happy to meet to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

John F. Summa

John Summa, Ph.D
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