

## [The Columbia Daily Tribune](#)

# MU engineering professor suspended

By [Janese Silvey](#)

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A University of Missouri professor who has battled administrators for months over a federally funded research project has been kicked out of the classroom.



Greg Engel

Greg Engel, an associate engineering professor, had his teaching duties suspended this week after three female Asian students complained he discriminated against them based on race and gender.

Engel is the researcher who helped secure a \$2 million federal earmark to proceed with his work creating more advanced electromagnetic launchers, or rail guns. After the earmark was awarded, engineering Dean Jim Thompson and Chair Noah Manring replaced Engel as project lead with Annie Sobel, an adjunct engineering professor who also works in the provost's office.

MU has countered that Engel was replaced on the project because he was not fulfilling required duties, an accusation Engel denies.

Engel went public with his complaints against administrators, and he has been the target of retaliation since, said his attorney, George Smith.

Smith pointed to a faculty irresponsibility charge Manring filed against Engel in May. The crux of the charge is that Engel refuses to show respect for MU. In the charge, Smith said, Manring demanded that Engel promise to behave respectfully and submit to administrative requests. If not, Smith said, Manring demanded that Engel's tenure be removed and he be fired.

"Manring has let it be publicly known he is out to get" Engel, Smith said. "To me that is beyond outrageous. In the university setting, there is always backbiting, turf battles and disagreements. But even people who hate each other never come out in writing and say they want his tenure removed."

Thompson has not taken action on the faculty irresponsibility charge filed May 10, even though rules call for

action to be taken within two weeks. This week, Engel asked Thompson to move forward or dismiss the charge.

Engel's teaching suspension was the result of an informal complaint three students filed. MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said administrators cannot talk about the situation because it's a personnel matter.

Engel said the students had plagiarized after a previous warning. He said a handful of students in his lab had plagiarized earlier, and he warned them not to do so again. When the three students did so a second time, he gave them zeros, he said. The complaint accused Engel of discrimination based on race and gender.

"These three students happen to be female and happen to be Chinese," Smith said. "So I don't know if" they plagiarized again "because they don't understand English well."

Smith said Engel met with Manring last week and came up with what appeared to be an acceptable remedy. But then Manring called a meeting Saturday, where faculty voted to suspend Engel.

Engel has not filed a formal grievance regarding his launcher project, but he filed research misconduct charges this week claiming administrators are plagiarizing his research when they continue with the launcher project without him. Smith said he could not disclose who the charges were filed against. But because it dealt with the research project, it's likely they targeted Sobel, Manring and Thompson.

Typically, research misconduct charges go to Rob Duncan, vice chancellor of research. But Duncan is Sobel's husband, so there's a potential conflict of interest. Smith said Engel has asked that the charges be reviewed by the provost at UM-Kansas City or UM-St. Louis.

Engel's two classes have been reassigned. He is allowed to continue research and still receives his entire salary of \$98,000.

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