

Engineering professor accused of discrimination, suspended

Three Asian female students filed gender and race discrimination complaints.

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Following accusations of gender and racial discrimination, engineering associate professor Greg Engel was indefinitely removed from the classroom earlier this week.

Three students, all female and Asian, filed a complaint against Engel, resulting from a situation earlier this semester dealing with plagiarism. Despite a prior warning resulting from an earlier plagiarized assignment, Engel said the students plagiarized a second time. Engel said he was prompted to give them zero credit because of this.

Via e-mail Nov. 13, Noah Manring, Electrical and Computer Engineering Department chairman, informed Engel of a faculty vote that day to suspend him.

"Basically, chair Manring had held a secret meeting with a select group of ECE faculty, which is against the ECE bylaws, by the way," Engel said. "They met to discuss the situation, and the outcome was apparently to suspend my teaching."

This was after a meeting the previous Wednesday between Manring and Engel, in which Engel said he thought they had settled the situation.

"We met on a Wednesday, and as far as I was concerned, I felt that everything was fine," Engel said. "That wasn't true. I thought we had come to a conclusion."

This situation unearths another situation in which Engel had been previously entangled with the department.

Last year, while pursuing his work creating advanced electromagnetic launchers, or rail guns, Engel helped secure a \$2 million federal earmark to fund the project. After receiving the earmark, however, engineering Dean Jim Thompson and Manring swapped Annie Sobel, assistant to the provost for strategic operations, with Engel as project leader in April. Sobel is primarily an administrator in Thompson's office, Engel said.

MU officials claimed Sobel filled the position because Engel was failing to complete required duties, but Engel said this isn't true.

After voicing his concern with MU's handling of the situation through the media, Engel said he feels he has been victimized on some level. He said Manring publicly vowed to revoke Engel's tenure and have him terminated.

This vow was expressed, Engel said, through a faculty irresponsibility charge Manring filed against Engel three months ago.

According to bylaws Engel cited, irresponsibility charges must be dealt with within two weeks. He sent an e-mail to Thompson requesting the charge is enacted upon earlier this week, but he has yet to receive a response.

"It needs to be decided," Engel said. "They've sat on it for three months. I've requested they process it or drop it, and I still haven't heard anything back."

Engel said he believes, but cannot be certain, that this animosity might have exacerbated the current situation.

"I can't speak to whether they're related or not, but there appears to be a continued pattern of intimidation and harassment," Engel said.

Still able to conduct research, Engel continues to receive his full salary, \$98,000 per year. Both of his classes, however, have been reassigned.

"The particular faculty member has not come by my office to talk to me at all," Engel said. "I have four assignments to hand back in those classes. He hasn't come back to pick up those assignments, talk to me about where I was in the text or talk about what I was planning to do in the future."

Both Manring and Lex Akers, associate dean of the College of Engineering, were unable to speak on the situation, citing personnel issues.

Although he has not yet pursued legal action, Engel did not rule out the possibility.

"I can't speak about that right now, but I can certainly say it's on the table," Engel said.

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