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**From:** Dianne Harris <dsh1@uw.edu>

**Date:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 1:09 PM

**To:** Tricia Serio <tserio@uw.edu>

**Cc:** Fredrick M Nafukho <fnafukho@uw.edu>, Shelley Kostrinsky <skos@uw.edu>, Schubert, Jennifer (ATG) <jennifer.schubert@atg.wa.gov>, Peter J Denis <denisjp@uw.edu>, Daniel Pollack <pollack@uw.edu>, Larry Yaffe <yaffe@phys.washington.edu>

**Subject:** Professor Bulgac--Next Steps

Dear Tricia,

Following from our zoom meeting this morning, I write to confirm our agreement about the next steps we will take with Professor Bulgac (Department of Physics).

**Background briefing:** As I noted during our conversation this morning, Peter Denis and I met with Professor Bulgac via zoom some weeks ago as part of a 25-71 process intended to permit him the opportunity to present his view of what transpired during his office hours with two students in his course during Autumn quarter (one of whom filed the report with Safe Campus). Note that I asked Professor Bulgac to move his courses online for the remainder of the Autumn quarter and to refrain from coming to campus until this matter was resolved and he abided by that request.

In our 25-71 meeting, Bulgac presented a narrative that was consistent with what he had conveyed to Peter Denis in an earlier meeting: That he had relayed a scene from a movie in which members of the Japanese military harm themselves as a way of motivating improved performance (you already know the details of that narrative so I am not recounting them again here). He stated that he conveyed this in an effort to motivate the students, that he never intended to frighten or harm them, and that he at no point said he would harm them in the manner described in the film. He insisted that the knife he used to illustrate the point was one he brings to work to make sandwiches for his lunch.

Throughout the meeting, Professor Bulgac listened carefully, responded thoughtfully and respectfully, and was appropriately contrite. He very clearly wanted us to understand that he at no point intended any harm to the students. I asked him very plainly whether he had at any point intended to enact any violence or harm on the students and his response was a resounding "No." I also asked him if he understood that the film scene he relayed to the students was deeply inappropriate. Although he at first demurred and said he felt that determinations of appropriate behavior were fluid, he wrote an email message to me immediately after our zoom meeting concluded, indicating that he clearly understood his words and actions that day to have been inappropriate. At no point in our conversation did any concerns arise for me regarding Professor Bulgac's demeanor and I do not believe he poses a threat to anyone on or off campus.

The student who filed the complaint with Safe Campus subsequently wrote to Peter Denis to request a meeting. In that meeting which took place days before our meeting with Professor Bulgac, the student indicated that he was not fearful of harm from Professor Bulgac, and though the student did not recant his initial complaint, he indicated an interest in simply moving on from this matter and a sense of security in the Physics department and a continued passion for his chosen major.

The chair of Physics, Lawrence Yaffee, has worked for many years with Professor Bulgac. Chair Yaffee has written to me and has had several discussions with Divisional Dean Dan Pollack about this matter. He feels strongly that Professor Bulgac poses no threat or harm to anyone on or off the UW campus. He agrees that Professor Bulgac made a terrible error in judgement, but strongly urges that Professor Bulgac be allowed to return to campus, to the classroom and to working with his graduate students.

**Next Steps:** I recommended to you--and you expressed agreement---with the following course of action:

1. We will require that Professor Bulgac undergo coaching so that he can gain a clear understanding of appropriate conduct with students and so that we can better ensure that such an incident as the students reported does not recur in the future;
2. Professor Bulgac will be required to send a written letter of apology to the two students involved in this case (one who filed a complaint, one who did not do so);
3. Once he agrees to the above conditions, Professor Bulgac will be permitted to return to campus to teach his courses, to mentor his graduate students, and to resume his normal responsibilities and roles as a tenured member of the UW faculty in the department of Physics.

Peter Denis is contacting the POD office today to begin making arrangements for the coaching. He will also draft a letter for me to send to Professor Bulgac as soon as possible, informing him of these requirements, asking him to sign an agreement indicating that he will fulfill those requirements by specified dates, and indicating that he may return to campus once we have the signed agreement. We do want him to be able to resume in-person teaching during the first week of January (he will be teaching two, small classes: Physics 495 B and 495 C).

Thank you for this morning's helpful meeting and please don't hesitate to reach out if any aspects of this message misalign with your understanding of our agreement.

With best wishes,  
Dianne

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