

December 7, 2011

Joseph Corlett
[REDACTED]

Ms. Mary Beth Snyder
Vice President Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
Oakland University
144 Oakland Center
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4499

Dear Ms. Snyder:

I've had a chance to digest the letter you presented to me at our meeting this morning with Dean of Students Glenn McIntosh. I struggle with my tone sometimes, so please bear with me. Particularly troubling is your one-sided, guilty-until-proven-innocent attitude: "When taken as a whole, the complaints about your behavior toward women are troubling and must be addressed." Even the most cursory review of your allegations renders them moot:

"An incident with student journalists and the editor at the student newspaper, The Post, involving your insistence they print your article on the subject of the Michigan Open Carry debate; and"

I have an email confirmation of the school newspaper's agreement to publish my article on gun rights on campus. I wrote the story as an assignment in Journalism class and would be given extra credit if published. The newspaper agreed, but when Gabriel Giffords was shot the paper reneged. There was no hostility whatsoever, just normal give-and-take. They published a subsequent letter-to-the-editor from me on the subject as well as one from another student.

Earlier, I complained in person to the Editor, Kay [REDACTED], that an article in which she said her boyfriend had a "pancake butt" was sexist and that the newspaper would never have printed a male assessment of female breast size. I recommended she apologize to readers and stand by that recommendation. A conversation with a male staff writer who came to her defense was a bit heated, but civil. This happened last fall semester.

"A late night phone call to a female student in your English 380 class who never gave you her phone number; and"

Although it is not a crime to call any *publicly available* telephone number at any hour, if memory serves I did not call much after 10:00 p.m. I called and emailed several classmates that evening. I was in a panic mistakenly thinking I didn't have an assignment completed that was due the following morning. Megan [REDACTED] emailed me the next day expressing her family's displeasure at the timing of my polite

message, explained the assignment, and asked that all communication between us be email. I apologized for the call, thanked her for the help, and told her I would not contact her again. I have not.

“Unsolicited stories of a sexual nature sent to a female faculty member whom you also invited to meet with you privately off campus; and”

I did ask Dr. Dana Driscoll to meet me off campus, *along with her husband*, who is also an OU instructor. I was going ask her to be my advisor in my upcoming hearing. Since Ms. Mitzelfeld's egregious FERPA leak has "poisoned the well", my choice for advisor has been denied by default. Dr. Driscoll and I were Facebook friends and she eagerly assisted me with writing problems as little as 15 days ago. Any “stories of a sexual nature” sent to her were sent for academic criticism only. If she had any objections to this story, why remain my Facebook friend? Why encourage me to take her Peer Tutoring class? Why help me with writing for other classes? Why not file a complaint about the story within the required deadline? Because until she got wind of Ms. Mitzelfeld's accusations, she had no objections. That's why.

“Numerous written musings of a sexual nature about your female English 380 instructor recorded in your class journal.”

On the first day of class, Ms. Mitzelfeld explained the Day book assignment using the terms “diary/journal” and wanted unedited work turned in. The Day book explanation in her syllabus urges students to “try out ideas and record impressions and observations” and “freewriting and brainstorming for essay assignments”. I specifically asked Ms. Mitzelfeld if there were any topical restrictions, as I've had other professors rule out student sex life accounts (Ms. Rebecca Rivard) and grandmothers (Ms. Linda McClosky). She told the class there were none. Several weeks in, I had class assistant and Writing Center employee Catherine Leider review my Anecdote essay entitled *The Boobs I Was Not Supposed To See* after class along with Ms. Mitzelfeld. Concerned with its nature, *I again asked if there were any topical restrictions and again I was told there were none with Ms. Leider as a witness.* Ms. Leider and Ms. Mitzelfeld agreed the title should be changed to *My Boobs DVD*. I took their advice and scored a 4.0 on the assignment.

I subsequently wrote an essay entitled *Revenge Karaoke*, a somewhat dark and amusing tale of the interactions between myself and a young woman in a bar. Ms. Mitzelfeld scored this at 3.9, apparently because I described switching from drinking beer to gin and tonics too awkwardly.

Ms. Mitzelfeld has had, at minimum, six opportunities to tell me my sexually oriented writing was inappropriate. She took none of them and abandoned her responsibility to set the class tone. Ms. Mitzelfeld is contractually obligated in her labor agreement with the University to advise and counsel students. Had the University had Ms. Mitzelfeld stick to her agreement, we would not be where we are today.

Does the University see any irony in assigning me *Me and Miss Mandible*, by Donald

Barthelme, in Fiction 303, the story of a boy/man having sexual relations with his teacher while bringing nonacademic conduct charges against me for trying to emulate an assigned writer? Isn't this why I'm in school? I never suggested a sexual relationship with Ms. Mitzelfeld, yet the University makes student/teacher sexual relations required reading? This is the tremendous educational cost of political correctness and students deserve better.

I'm sure that after hearing the other side of the story, you're probably feeling a bit sheepish. If not, you should be. You now know it was the Oakland Post Editor publishing sexism, not me. You now know that Megan's phone number is public, that I apologized and thanked her and never contacted her again. You now know that I asked Dr. Driscoll to bring her husband to my suggested off-campus meeting. You now know that Ms. Mitzelfeld disregarded at least six chances to set the tone of her class as is her professional responsibility. In short, Ms. Snyder, you and the University have nothing.

We have a mutual interest in settling this matter as quickly and as quietly as possible. Let's take a look at what each of us has to offer. You've got a longshot harassment case against me and I've got a FERPA slam-dunk (or several) against you. I've got a case number with the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education which may save my recent inheritance from my \$250.00-per-hour attorney, and you have all the resources of the state.

I would entertain the idea of successfully completing University-sponsored advanced sexual harassment training in return for dropping the sexual harassment and intimidation charges against me. I will admit no wrongdoing and the University will have a metaphorical bone to throw to my accuser(s). I will consider dropping my complaints against the University in return for having Acting English Chair Susan Hawkins demonstrate familiarity with the OU Student Handbook and student fairness obligations.

The University and I will enter into an agreement whereby I will agree not to pursue FERPA violations as long as the University provides new specific FERPA training to covered employees, etc. We could probably work out some sort of confidentiality agreement also with the University covering my attorney fees.

The University agrees there will be no retaliation against me whatsoever and Dean of Students Glenn McIntosh will send an email acknowledging his recent apology, on behalf of Oakland University, for my humiliating English 380 classroom removal by the OUPD to my classmates, Ms. Megan [REDACTED] included. I will enroll in Winter, 2012, classes.

What's not to like? Everybody walks away a winner except the lawyers. Life presents fleeting opportunities sometimes and we've got to take them. If you think we can put something together, please let me know as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Joseph Corlett