

Christian Professor Suspended Without Pay Over Gay Rights Debate

A professor at Marquette University in Milwaukee has been suspended after he publicly chastised a teaching assistant on his blog for discouraging a discussion in her classroom regarding gay rights, the school said on Wednesday.

Political science professor John McAdams was suspended with pay from his faculty and teaching duties at the Catholic university and barred from being on campus during the school's investigation, according to university spokesman Brian Dorrington.

The controversy began on Nov. 9 when McAdams criticized philosophy class instructor Cheryl Abbate on his blog.

According to McAdams, the instructor challenged a student's opposition to gay rights and told the student "homophobic comments" would not be allowed in the class. She also suggested the student drop the class if he did not like it, according to McAdams.

McAdams wrote Abbate was using a liberal tactic to dismiss any opinion that does not fit into their views.

"Opinions with which (liberals) disagree are not merely wrong, and are not to be argued against on their merits, but are deemed 'offensive' and need to be shut up," he wrote.

Loyola University professor John Protevi wrote an open letter to Marquette in support of Abbate. In it, he called McAdam's actions a "one-sided public attack" that is a threat to academic freedom.

Neither Abbate nor McAdams were immediately available for comment.

Gay rights continues to be a hotly debated topic in the United States where more than 30 courts have ruled in favor of gay marriage over the last couple of years.

McAdams also took the Catholic institution to task on Tuesday, writing that the school was attempting to censor him and that the investigation is a form of harassment.

“Marquette ... has again shown itself to be timid, overly bureaucratic and lacking any commitment to either its Catholic mission or free expression,” he wrote.

Dorrington did not address the controversy directly, but referred to a letter president Michael Lovell sent to the university community in November addressing personal attacks and harassment on campus.

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