

College Makes Bold Stand on Difference Between Christianity and Islam

A professor at an evangelical university near Chicago who got in trouble after saying Muslims and Christians worship the same God will leave the school, according to a joint statement released by Wheaton College on Saturday night.

Larycia Hawkins, a tenured political science professor, had been scheduled for a disciplinary hearing in five days to determine whether she would be allowed to remain at Wheaton.

A joint statement said Hawkins and the college had “found a mutual place of resolution and reconciliation” and that the two sides “will part ways” after reaching a confidential agreement.

The controversy began on Dec. 10, when Hawkins wrote on Facebook that she would don the hijab head scarf during the period of advent before Christmas as a sign of solidarity with Muslims.

“We worship the same God,” she said in her post.

The post drew criticism amid a broader debate regarding the role and treatment of Muslims in the United States following the November mass shooting in San Bernardino, California, which U.S. authorities have said was inspired by the militant group Islamic State.

The college placed Hawkins on administrative leave as a result. Last month, the school’s provost recommended Hawkins be fired.

The school previously said Hawkins was disciplined not because she chose to wear a hijab but because her “theological

statements seem inconsistent with Wheaton's doctrinal convictions".

Both sides struck a conciliatory tone in the statement, which also said neither Hawkins nor school officials would offer any further comment until a scheduled news conference on Wednesday morning.

"I appreciate and have great respect for the Christian liberal arts and the ways that Wheaton College exudes that in its mission, programs, and in the caliber of its employees and students," Hawkins said in the statement.

The college president, Phillip Ryken, said the school "sincerely appreciates Dr. Hawkins' contributions to this institution over the last nine years."

Many members of the faculty had expressed support for Hawkins. Bill Struthers, a Wheaton psychology professor, posted a photo on Facebook on Saturday night of himself holding a handwritten sign reading, "I support Larycia."

Wheaton, founded in 1860 and located in the Illinois town of the same name, has approximately 2,400 undergraduate students and 480 graduate students. {eo}

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