

May 19, 2023

Dr. James Clark
Provost Florida State University
Subject: Termination letter Dr. Stewart

Dear Dr. Clark

With respect to the intent to terminate Dr. Stewart, I would like to list the facts provided to me:

1. All inquiries (FSU and GSU) related to possible misconduct by Dr. Stewart resulted in the same conclusion: no evidence of misconduct and "no full investigation is warranted".
2. The issue of Dr. Stewart asking for an "eraser" software is clarified by Dr. Patricia Warren-Hightower in an email sent to Dean Blomberg. At that time, Dr. Blomberg knew that Dr. Warren-Hightower, not Dr. Stewart, asked for the eraser software.
3. No evidence of harm to the university, the college or students was provided in the documents I reviewed. It is my opinion that there is a perception of harm, which is not proven by actual data.
4. The university lost all the data provide by Dr. Stewart in 2019. The university lost 3 data sets with 1,372 observations.
5. Dr. Stewart is being accused of inappropriate storage/conservation of research data, while the university lost critical data provided by Dr. Stewart during an active investigation.
6. Testimony by a witness that Dean Blomberg and President Thrasher asked Dr. Stewart to retract the papers under investigation.
7. Annual evaluation for Dr. Stewart were exceed expectations for 2019 and 2020 and meet expectation for 2021. No concerns were raised in the annual evaluations.
8. Evidence of words of appreciation from students were provided.
9. Evidence of active involvement in service to the profession was provided.
10. Several letters from Professors of Criminology from several Universities in support of Dr. Stewart.
11. Interview of Dr. Stewart with Rebecca Peterson April 11, 2022. A review of this interview was provided by Dean Blomberg on October 6, 2022, 6 months after the interview. No request for clarifications was made and no follow ups. It seems odd that it took 6 months to review the interview and it is also unclear why Dr. Blomberg wrote a commentary of the interview and who requested the document.
12. The termination letter is inaccurate as it states that Dr. Stewart voluntarily withdraws 5 papers from publication. The letter submitted by Dr. Warren-Hightower to the Provost specifically states that President Thrasher and Dean Blomberg asked Dr. Stewart to do this.
13. The conclusion of the inquiry committees and the termination letter do not align. Each inquire committee conclude that there was no evidence of misconduct, and that no full investigation was warranted. The termination letter states that the committees were unable to reach a conclusion.
14. Dr. Stewart was investigated by misconduct, which he was cleared by the inquire committees. His contract has been terminated because of "negligence and incompetence", which are new charges. The decision seems to be based on the review of the interview with Dr. Peterson by Dr. Blomberg, the same person that gave Dr. Stewart exceed and meet expectations in annual evaluations.
15. A new investigation of "negligence and incompetence" is warranted if Dr. Stewart contract is terminated by these reasons.

Therefore, based on preponderance of evidence disciplinary actions are NOT warranted and the decision of the Provost of “termination for incompetence and negligence in the performance of your duties” is NOT appropriate.

Thank you for your consideration.

DocuSigned by:
Gloria Salazar Aranda
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