



OHIO UNIVERSITY

Diversity and Inclusion

January 25, 2019

Cutler Hall 3rd Floor
1 Ohio University
Athens OH 45701-2979

T: 740.593.2431
F: 740.593.9591

www.ohio.edu/diversity

Dear delfin,

Pursuant to University Policy 41.011, I am writing in response to your January 21, 2019 electronic mail grieving the notice of contract non-renewal you received on January 10, 2019. As provided by the policy, I offer the following response.

Your e-mail identifies two reasons for your grievance. I will address both in the order that they were presented. Neither reasons are grounds to reverse the decision not to renew your contract.

Your first identified basis of appeal arises from your belief that you were treated unprofessionally when you were advised of your nonrenewal. According to your narrative of events, you claim that I laughed at you when we met. I remember events far differently as do the others that were present.

I most certainly did not laugh at you. To the contrary, I did, and still do, have compassion for you and desired to mitigate the impact of my necessary, but difficult decision, to not renew your contract. This compassion, I think, is illustrated in the fact that I have attempted to provide as much notice as possible to allow you a greater opportunity to move forward while still earning income. Additionally, the University has continued your employment as an instructor for this term. Clearly, the suggestion that I took glee in delivering notice of non-renewal is simply untrue.

Regardless of the mischaracterization of the events at our January 10 meeting, your perception that the notice was not delivered with sufficient gravitas is not grounds for reversing the underlying decision. Accordingly, I respectfully deny your first grievance.

The next identified basis for grievance is equally unavailing. Generally, you have criticized and undermined my leadership and the leadership of the University and mischaracterized our collective commitment to diversity and inclusion, more specifically our LGBTQ+ community. As with your first grievance, the narrative of your second basis is marred by inaccuracy. In truth, the narrative of your second identified grievance illustrates, in part, why non-renewal was the correct decision.

I am qualified for my position and I, together with the President and his leadership team, see diversity and inclusion as the top priority of the University. We recognize that, as a University, we can do better. As you acknowledge, more funding and more staffing have been earmarked to ensure that the mission of this office is realized. As a leader of the University's efforts, one of my responsibilities is assembling a team that can translate priorities into realities. I want to work with directors of varied and diverse backgrounds and beliefs to help the University in advancing this mission. In order for our office to succeed, we must work as a team. To be sure, diversity of

opinion is welcomed. Different views and beliefs further important narratives. Little can be accomplished if respectful dissent is not only allowed, but encouraged. Nevertheless, disagreement must be productive. However, there is a marked distinction between meaningful discourse and unhealthy conflict.

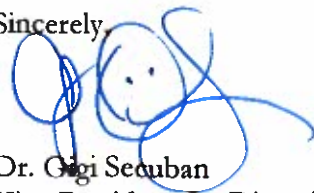
Since arriving at the University I have spent time evaluating the current state of the Division of Diversity and Inclusion. I also engaged in a listening tour that included all the regional campuses. The purpose of both of these exercises was to evaluate areas of strength as well as areas where the University could improve. Certainly, the Center has many strengths to build upon. In my vision, the Center will be even more robust and inclusive as we move forward.

The revised LGBT Center will focus on expanding programming that is inclusive of all members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies where, in the past, the Center traditionally was primarily student-focused. Based on feedback I have received from students, faculty and staff, specifically through the diversity and inclusion audit that was conducted in 2017 as well as through my own listening tour, I truly want the Center to evolve so that all students, faculty and staff feel safe, welcome and valued within the Center. Additionally, I am committed to prioritizing the needs of the LGBT Center, including investing in a larger physical space within Baker Center, that will accommodate expanded programming and collaboration space for students, faculty and staff. The institution's commitment to the LGBT Center, as well as to all members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies, remains strong, and it is my hope that the Center will continue to evolve under new leadership to become nationally recognized through innovative and inclusive programming.

While a decision to non-renew is not a termination for "cause," the decision was not made lightly. I truly believe that you have many great abilities that will, I hope, lead to successful endeavors in your future. However, in order to accomplish the tasks entrusted to me, I must work with persons who demonstrate a willingness to take direction, work as a team and invest in a shared vision. I also need to ensure that directors make appropriate use of the budgets they have been provided as we have a responsibility to the tax payers of the state of Ohio as a publically-funded institution. My observations since undertaking my role with the University have led me to conclude that new leadership is necessary at the Center to ensure its success moving forward.

Based on the fact that Ohio University Policy 41.012 was not violated in any manner, and you were notified of non-renewal prior to April 1, 2019 as set forth in the policy, your grievance is denied in its entirety.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gigi Secuban
Vice-President for Diversity and Inclusion