From the California Faculty Association

CFA SPECIAL HEADLINES
July 20, 2017 · Special news digest from CFA

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Cal State Fullerton lecturer reinstated, CFA urges administration to protect academic freedom

A Cal State Fullerton lecturer will be returning to campus this fall after CFA successfully fought his termination following accusations that he had assaulted students at a counter protest.

An arbitrator issued a decision on July 10 that Dr. Eric Canin, who has taught Anthropology at Fullerton for nearly 20 years, be immediately reinstated.

In February, students affiliated with the ultra-conservative College Republican group had accused Canin of attacking them and interfering with their free speech during a counter protest in which they were carrying signs bearing hate-speech imagery.

Canin maintained he had lost his balance and inadvertently came into contact with the students and their signs during a contentious exchange. The university placed Canin on paid leave in February.

After hearing witness testimony and Canin’s account, Arbitrator Jan Stiglitz concluded that Canin may have grabbed an offending sign and could have used an open hand to push a student away in response to being pushed by someone else. “But he did not engage in anything resembling a fight and did not have any conscious intent to cause harm to the students in question,” the arbitrator wrote.

Not only did CFA help a member keep his job, but it’s important to note that CFA received a good decision in support of “just cause,” said Kathy Sheffield, CFA’s Director of Representation.
“Arbitrator Jan Stiglitz provides very useful language about the justification required when there is collective bargaining, correcting University Counsel in its mistaken notion that ‘cause’ in our CBA does not mean ‘just cause,’” Sheffield said. “In short, when faculty face discipline, the University is required, among other things, to conduct a fair investigation and mete out appropriate and proportional punishment for misconduct.”

Canin said he is looking forward to getting back to teaching, but on Tuesday at the CSU Trustees meeting, he urged Chancellor White and Trustees to do a better job protecting faculty, staff, and students. The announcement of the reinstatement and his message to Trustees made national headlines this week.

“My colleagues and I are trying to focus on teaching, research, and our students. Yet many of us are finding ourselves under attack and subject to hateful discourse,” Canin said.

“Now, more than ever, we are teaching in a time of fear. This must change. As leaders of our university system, you need to better protect faculty, students, and staff from attacks on academic freedom. Just as CFA defended me and will continue to protect my fellow educators, you need to protect your employees from these unfair assaults on our freedom to teach, and on our students’ right to learn.”

CFA issued a statement about Canin’s reinstatement, and also has launched a letter petition demanding that CSU Trustees, campus presidents, and university administrators nationwide do a better job protecting faculty from attacks on academic freedom.

“We live in a troubling new world where the truth is called fake, dissent is being criminalized, and the right is targeting colleges, universities, and university professors,” CFA President Jennifer Eagan told Trustees on Tuesday. “Wake up and realize that there are forces mobilizing not just against the faculty, but against truth, learning, and the university.

“Make no mistake, CFA will stridently defend our faculty who are under attack by forces who have contempt for the university and for free inquiry,” she said. “Our successful defense of Dr. Canin speaks to CFA’s commitment to protecting all members of the campus community from the new wave of attacks on academic freedom and free speech… We hope we can count on the Board to make the same commitment.”

- Click here to read and sign the letter.
- Click here for news coverage regarding Canin’s reinstatement.
- To watch faculty speak at the CSU Trustees meeting (beginning at minute 25:34), click here.
CFA signals plan to fight for improved faculty salaries, workload issues, quality of life on the job

Bargaining over the full successor faculty contract will be underway in coming months, with salary, workload, faculty hiring and appointments and quality of life on the job among key focal points of our negotiations.

On Tuesday, CFA leaders were at the Trustees meeting to 'sunshine' the areas of the contract we plan to negotiate, and show that the union is unwavering in our commitment to improve and defend our contract.

During the last academic year, we consulted with members, compiled and analyzed responses from a comprehensive bargaining survey, and met with members on all 23 campuses, said Kevin Wehr, Chair of CFA’s Bargaining Team.

“CFA members across the state were clear that we need salary increases that keep faculty ahead of inflation and address low overall pay, salary inequities, and the ability to move upwards in range," he said.

The union also will seek to clarify and improve the appointment process for lecturer and tenure-line faculty, address problems related to tenure density, racism, gender-based discrimination, and other areas of social justice, as well as articulate faculty rights to academic freedom.

Negotiations are scheduled to begin in August.

Click here to read more about bargaining and our plans.

Links of the Week

First Look: Suspended California instructor to keep his job
Politico
The California Faculty Association will announce today that Eric Canin, an anthropology lecturer at California State University, Fullerton, who got into an altercation with a group of College Republicans during a campus demonstration in February, will keep his job, Morning Education has learned.

Professor reinstated after GOP student assault accusation
Associated Press
LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — A California professor facing termination over a run-in with pro-Donald Trump student demonstrators has been reinstated after arbitration, though the school maintains he acted improperly.

Correcting the record
Inside Higher Education
California State University, Fullerton, has reinstated a part-time faculty member it terminated this year after he was accused of hitting a student at a political rally.

Lecturer Eric Canin to return to CSUF following investigation into misconduct
Daily Titan
Anthropology lecturer Eric Canin will return to teach at Cal State Fullerton this fall after Arbitrator Jan Stiglitz concluded that his actions during an altercation that occurred Feb. 8 warranted a two-month suspension.

Cal State instructor accused of assaulting GOP students reinstated
Press Telegram
An anthropology instructor who lost his job after being accused of assaulting a conservative student during a campus protest at Cal State Fullerton will be allowed to return to work.

Suspended CSUF teacher says Breitbart lied about protest clash
MyNewsLA
A Cal State Fullerton part-time anthropology lecturer, who was suspended for two months following a conflict with a President Donald Trump supporter on campus, appeared before the California State University Board of Trustees Tuesday to warn about the dangers of snap judgments resulting from political disputes.

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