The California Faculty Association, through aggressive representation, is proud to have successfully protected the career and livelihood of a 20-year lecturer at Cal State Fullerton.

An arbitrator issued an opinion and award in the case of Dr. Eric Canin on July 10, a little more than a week after the arbitrator took the case under submission. The hearing took place in early May, and both sides had an opportunity to call witnesses and offer evidence. The university was ordered to reinstate Dr. Canin and convert his termination into a two-month suspension.

CFA successfully challenged the university’s assertion that Dr. Canin had physically assaulted a student at a demonstration in February 2017. Arbitrator Jan Stiglitz concluded that Dr. Canin may have grabbed an offending sign during the Fullerton College Republicans’ protest march and probably 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 any harm to the students in question,” the arbitrator wrote in the decision.

Dr. Canin is one of several college faculty throughout the country who have found themselves unfairly vilified by students aligned with the nationally-organized, ultra-conservative youth factions that appear to be growing bolder following the election of Donald Trump.

Differences of opinion will always be present in an academic setting; learning the ability to have a vibrant discourse involving dissenting views contributes to the very essence of higher education. A political group has no right to censor or target faculty or students who challenge their views, and faculty should not fear losing their careers to unabashed hatred and unfounded assertions. The CSU has an obligation to protect its employees from such attacks.

Working hard on behalf of faculty is at the very core of our mission at CFA, and we will always protect and defend our members, who are the foundation of the California State University system. Our union is strong, and together, we win.