



PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

# American Association of University Professors

Promoting Quality Higher Education – An Investment in Oregon's Future

VIA EMAIL AND  
PDF ATTACHMENT

DATE: December 10, 2018

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Rahmat Shoureshi via US Mail pursuant to CBA Article 39

RE: LETTER OF CONCERN: Suspension of admissions to the Applied Physics PhD Program

Dear President Shoureshi and Provost Jeffords,

On or about November 19, 2018, a confused potential Physics PhD candidate student contacted the Physics Department asking why s/he could not apply to the Applied Physics PhD program. The department chair John Freeouf contacted the Graduate School, and they could not answer the question. After a number of inquiries, the department was that admissions to the Applied Physics PhD program were “paused.” On

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Suspension of Admissions to the Applied Physics PhD Program

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or about November 26th, John Freeouf received [the memo from Graduate School Dean Rossitza Wooster providing notice](#) to the department that she and other administrators had suspended admissions to the Applied Physics PhD program. This was the first notice provided to the faculty, and the suspension came as a complete surprise. There had been no conversation with the department chair or any Physics faculty that such a decision was being considered, nor had any problems or complaints been shared with the faculty that could justify that immediate unilateral decision.

This unilateral move contradicts PSU-AAUP and the University's agreement in Article 12, section 2, that "it is mutually desirable that the collegial system of shared governance be maintained and strengthened so that faculty will have a mechanism and procedures, independent of collective bargaining, for appropriate participation in the governance of the University." Such action would also appear to contradict elements of the Faculty Senate Constitution which makes clear that faculty have substantial autonomy to make curricular and programmatic decisions.

Further, we find that the convening of listening sessions with graduate students, while the Physics faculty themselves continue to be left largely in the dark about why management is taking these steps, to be a further violation of basic principles of shared governance.

The leadership of PSU-AAUP consider this a serious erosion of shared governance in a decision that has largely belonged to the faculty.

We submit this letter of concern as an attempt to open a dialogue with administration about this decision, and potentially other decisions that they may seek to make unilaterally that could damage the previously successful relationship with the faculty around pedagogical matters, and foul the relationship between administration and PSU-AAUP — a collaborative relationship we've been at pains to rebuild since the faculty voted to go on strike in 2014.

We request a meeting with you both together, the leadership of the PSU Faculty Senate, and the leadership of PSU-AAUP to discuss how to proceed going forward in this matter. We request this meeting be made a priority and, if possible, that we convene the meeting before winter break.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.