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THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Today's News

Monday, September 10, 2001

Albright College Drops Attempt to Oust Faculty Member Who Criticized Its President

By [JULIANNE BASINGER](#)

Albright College officials who had sought to fire a tenured faculty member who has been an outspoken critic of the college's president dropped all of their charges on Friday. The president, Col. Henry A. Zimon, had included what appear to be misleading statements about his academic and publishing credentials on his résumé before he was hired two years ago.

Just a few hours before a faculty committee on Friday was scheduled to hear the accusations against Achal Mehra, a communications professor, and decide whether he should be fired, the college's academic dean, Thomas C. Brogan, informed the chairwoman of the committee, Ann Myers, that the complaint had been withdrawn and the hearing had been canceled.

Ms. Myers, an English professor, says she was given no explanation. "It was withdrawn at the 11th hour," Ms. Myers said Friday. "I don't know what happened."

Mr. Brogan, in a statement issued by the Reading, Pa., college Friday, confirmed that the proceedings to fire Mr. Mehra had been dropped. "Given the totality of the concerns and considerations at stake, including its educational mission, Albright College felt it was in the best interests of the college not to pursue this matter any further," Mr. Brogan said. He added that the college "plans to have additional comment to explain its decision within a few weeks."

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College officials have said they want to begin a capital campaign soon to seek donations for Albright.

The president, along with four administrators and a faculty member who had served on the search committee that hired Colonel Zimon, started the termination proceedings against Mr. Mehra in January in a complaint to the faculty committee on rank and tenure. They accused Mr. Mehra of "professional unfitness" and "moral turpitude" in his criticism of the hiring of Colonel Zimon, a retired Army officer. The president, through a college spokeswoman, Barbara J. Marshall, declined to comment Friday on the dismissal of the complaint.

Mr. Mehra has said that he was exercising his right to free speech and his professional responsibility to uphold academic integrity. The proceedings to fire Mr. Mehra drew attention last spring from the American Association of University Professors and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. The foundation planned to send letters of complaint about the situation to Albright's alumni, parents, trustees, and donors.

After the charges against him were dropped Friday, Mr. Mehra said he was disappointed to be deprived of a forum for examining the accusations against the president.

"The college was forced to drop the charges because it recognized that the hearings and any resulting court action would expose the truth and the full extent of Colonel Zimon's duplicity and academic dishonesty," Mr. Mehra said.

Questions about the president's academic and publishing credentials arose in the fall of 1999, when an article in *The Chronicle* presented evidence supporting some faculty members' suspicions about the accuracy of some credentials on the résumé that Colonel Zimon provided to the college before he was hired. The credentials included two books he listed as forthcoming

for publication. Neither manuscript has a publisher.

Colonel Zimon has said that he provided further explanations of the credentials on the résumé to the presidential search committee before he was hired.

Background articles from *The Chronicle*:

- [Panel Postpones Move to Fire Critic of Albright College's President](#) (6/1/01)
- [Calling All Cheaters?](#) (9/15/2000)
- [Albright Trustee Quits Over Controversy Surrounding the President's Resume](#) (3/24/2000)
- [Albright Professors Are Angry Over Panel's Support for Embattled President](#) (12/17/1999)
- [Questions Raised About Academic Credentials of Albright College's President](#) (10/22/1999)

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