



M. Brian Blake, PhD
Provost
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Distinguished University Professor

November 2, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Adam Steinbaugh
Sr. Program Officer and Investigative Reporter
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)
510 Walnut Street
Suite 1250
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. Steinbaugh,

Thank you for your October 20, 2017 letter regarding Professor Ciccariello-Maher.

Like your previous letter to me, you seem to imply in your letter that the University is not abiding adequately by our policies including principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression. And similar to your previous letter, as it appears you are obtaining your information solely from Professor Ciccariello-Maher and his article in the Washington Post, you do not have accurate or complete information.

Drexel University has not suspended Professor Ciccariello-Maher. It has removed him from campus, with full pay and benefits, to mitigate a threat to the safety and security of both himself and others in the Drexel University community. Both Professor Ciccariello-Maher and others in the University community have received threats of violence that seriously concern our Police Department, which consults with other police and intelligence agencies. Placing Professor Ciccariello-Maher on this administrative leave was a non-disciplinary action.

Professor Ciccariello-Maher asked to be able to continue to teach his courses remotely during this administrative leave, and Drexel University, after consulting with its Police Department, agreed to this request. After the University provided support and infrastructure, Professor Ciccariello-Maher resumed teaching his courses remotely several weeks ago. Through the remainder of this term, we are assessing safety concerns and infrastructure so that we may understand the most effective approach for protecting students, faculty and professional staff when the University and its representatives receive many threats of violence across the campus.

With respect to your request for specific information concerning threats and related methods and operations regarding information and intelligence that has been gathered by law enforcement in this ongoing matter, we are unable to provide such information to you. Professor Ciccariello-Maher is well aware of numerous threats that he has received. He has detailed them in his report to the Drexel Police and in his Washington Post article. There are also numerous threats, the details of which we will not share with you, that have been made against others in the Drexel University community.

Consistent with my June 5, 2017 letter to you, you can be assured that any potential action that the University might take with respect to Professor Ciccariello-Maher will accord with all relevant policies, guidelines and standards. I will repeat here what I wrote to you in that letter:

There are many important and potentially competing interests and concerns at issue here. These include preserving the rights and values that we all hold dear, including academic freedom and the associated obligations and responsibilities, which affect our entire University community. At the same time, all universities have an important interest in preserving and protecting the safety, freedom and rights of all members of its community, including students, faculty and professional staff.

The actions that have been taken in this matter are entirely consistent with the above.

I appreciate your letter and your interest in this matter.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Brian Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.