

Date: Mon, 08 Aug 2011 14:27:14 -0400
From: Edward Calabrese <edwardc@schoolph.umass.edu>
To: dickjackson@ucla.edu
CC: lindarosenstock@ph.ucla.edu, chancellor@conet.ucla.edu
Subject: Enstrom Case

August 8, 2011

Dear Dr. Jackson:

I am writing this letter to support the perspective that Professor James Enstrom should have his contract renewed with the UCLA School of Public Health. I have followed the controversy and debate concerning your SPH and Professor Enstrom from 3,000 miles away but have done it with considerable professional and academic interest. First, I had never met Professor Enstrom nor have I been involved with the CARB and other research issues that his research addresses. I was however very concerned when I was told that UCLA had decided not to renew a research professor after over 30 years employment, an employment in which he has brought in his own funding over all of these years. This is an achievement that is extraordinary and should be seen as a major achievement. This is something that many tenured faculty could not have achieved. Such consistent achievement is something that the University needs to highlight, not dismiss. Enstrom should be used by the school as a role model and mentor for young faculty. The future is likely to see an even higher proportion of research professors and they will need mentors to help them survive and thrive. Tenured faculty can't understand the psychological stresses and challenges that are faced by research professors. Thus, the decision to remove Enstrom hurts not only Enstrom but the younger faculty.

I understand that the decision not to renew Enstrom is entangled with his research on fine particulate matter and second hand tobacco smoke. His research challenges the status quo. This can get people upset when they are more interested in an outcome than a process of discovery. None of us knows the truth about anything. We are all searchers in a process we call science, that is guided by hypothesis generation and testing of such hypotheses. When people disagree, give them the chance to prove each other wrong via testing not by firing one of them!! Even better, encourage the two or more groups to work together.....The firing of someone over scientific differences sets such a bad example to students and faculty. It is one way to assure that people will never relate honestly to you. I am sure that you don't want this. It is also a way to ensure that people will only develop hypotheses that the people in power want. Again, this is not what a University is about. If this is what UCLA is becoming then this is indeed a very major downturn.

Last year I had my Intro to Environmental Health Sciences class (all new MS students in our SPH) explore the Enstrom controversy, with one group representing the Enstrom perspective and a second group representing the UCLA perspective. They had six weeks to study the papers and issues and then they developed and presented their cases. I can tell you that the students defending the UCLA perspective were shocked with how your University has treated Enstrom. The class will once again take up the Enstrom issue this fall. I think it is a good introduction to

some important scientific questions but also how life is in the research and academic community. Let me suggest that you try a similar activity in your department's Introduction to Environmental Health Sciences. You would be surprised with the interest and objectivity that the students' would bring to the evaluation. The students' would also come to appreciate the openness and willingness of the faculty to take on challenging issues. You might also impress the students by your willingness to have your own decisions about Professor Enstrom openly debated. All these things can be turned into something positive.

As for myself, I have been no stranger to controversy. I have been interested in studying the concept of hormesis for many years. This has resulted in me becoming involved with issues almost as tempestuous as Enstrom has had to go through. The big differences are that I am tenured and that my department chairs and deans have always been fully supportive. This has been the case even though we have at times had major disputes on other issues. This is in such contrast to how your institution has responded. Despite my praising of UMass there are still problems even here. For example, a few years ago one of the statisticians on the hormesis team (from the Math/Stat Department) said publicly to our entire group that he had to quit our research group because he was told it might affect his tenure decision. He said that there was an ideological group that indicated that they were opposed to my research as they believed it might result in the weakening of some health standards. He did quit the team; he did get tenure. Thus, UMass can be just as intolerant of people who think differently as is occurring at UCLA. These are very ugly situations.....yours and what I just described at UMass...

I strongly recommend that the School come to its senses and do the honorable, fair and correct thing.....that is, reappoint Enstrom....Do not let yourself and your school be degraded by money, politics and ideology. Stand up for academic principles....in the end, this is all that counts.

Sincerely,

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