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December 16, 2008

Michele Kerr  


Dear Michele,

We met on December 10, 2008 to talk with you about concerns regarding your professional conduct and progress in STEP. This was the second occasion when the three of us met to discuss worries about your professional conduct. In early September we met to discuss your obligations regarding confidentiality, and how these were relevant to your activity as a blogger. Rachel's letter of September 8, 2008 could have left you in no doubt whatsoever about your ongoing legal and ethical responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and blogging.

The meeting on December 10, 2008 was prompted by other concerns, and as we explained to you in our discussion it was the first step under the STEP Guidelines for Reviewing Concerns Regarding Suitability for the Practice of Teaching. During the meeting itself you did not appear open to criticism or advice. As we were trying to bring forward concerns that have been raised about your behavior, you were hostile, argumentative and insulting. While we recognize that it was difficult for you to hear these criticisms, and we want you to express yourself and present your side of events, you must learn that you can only be successful in a teaching career through the development of an ability to temper yourself and respond to criticism with reflection. We would remind you that collegial professional relations among teachers and between faculty and teacher candidates are only successfully maintained when disagreements can be discussed with civility.

The following are areas in which progress or maintenance of improvement on your part is necessary if you are to succeed in STEP:

- Work as a team with STEP faculty, staff, peers, university supervisor as well as cooperating teachers and colleagues at your placement site.
- Develop and maintain an openness to learning and self criticism.
- Assess your development as a teacher by seeking out and accepting corrective and critical feedback from instructors, colleagues, cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
- Analyze and reflect on your teaching and your curriculum to understand what contributes to student learning.
- Expand your knowledge of instructional methods and technologies and demonstrate their implementation in the classroom.
- Use observations of veteran teachers to improve your teaching and extend your learning.
- Avoid unnecessary personal and professional conflicts related to STEP.
- Submit assignments by the deadline (we acknowledge you have made progress and need to maintain your improvement with regard to this area of concern).
- Attend class on time (we acknowledge you have made progress and need to maintain your improvement with regard to this area of concern).

We acknowledge that in response to a letter sent to you on November 24, 2008 you have recently remedied your consistent tardiness and have been present in classes at their start. Additionally, we appreciate that your assignments will be turned in on-time going forward. We also recognize the substantial merits you may bring to a teaching career, including your commitment to students who are especially vulnerable to failure in mathematics, your solid classroom presence, your ability to work one on one with struggling students, your insightful and incisive questions, and strong writing skills.

While we continue to hope that you are able to respond to these areas of concerns appropriately and succeed in STEP a subsequent event requires further comment.

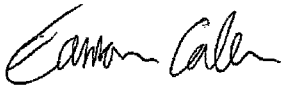
Very soon after our meeting on December 10, 2008 you sent an e-mail message to your fellow STEP students giving your account of the meeting and also instructing them on how they should in future respond to your demeanor in the classroom. You express fulsome respect for your peers, but then you display contempt for anyone who might find fault with your conduct and yet feel afraid to confront you directly. Those who might complain to their instructors rather than to you are whiners, and those who say nothing are comparably weak and unfit for the "real world" of public education, or so you suggest.

One of the things that we discussed in our meeting was a concern brought forward that you can domineering in class discussion, resulting in other students feeling as though they cannot express themselves in class with you. Your email of December 10, 2008, similarly could have the effect of silencing those who are wary of confronting you directly. Students who have a concern about you should be able to express themselves through any appropriate channel, including speaking to an administrator if they are not comfortable speaking to you directly. It is interesting to note Michele, that you who hold

the ability to express yourself so dear, have not considered that your actions could have a chilling effect on other students' ability to express themselves freely.

We continue to hope that you will be instructed by our comments and by this letter and complete STEP successfully. However, additional acts of intimidation towards other students, or a failure to improve or maintain improvement in the areas noted above may require us to proceed on to "informal hearing" stage of the STEP Guidelines for Reviewing Concerns Regarding Suitability for the Practice of Teaching.

Sincerely,



Prof. Eamonn Callan  
Associate Dean, SUSE



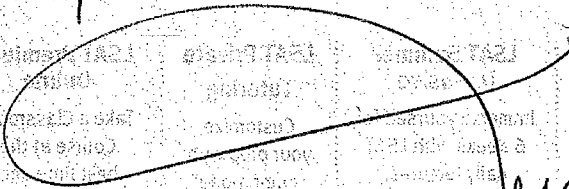
Prof. Rachel Lotan  
Director, STEP Secondary

Adam Kissel  
FIRE

215-717-3440

Adam,

Here's the letter I emailed  
you about.



Michelle

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