

VERITAS

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Editorial

The reason why the academic freedom of Prof. Smith is being violated can be arrived at by way of reference to certain facts surrounding the issue and corresponding legal points.

First, President Danieley in his Sept. 26 letter to the faculty stated that the faculty had no choice but to hold classes on Oct. 15. In a telephone interview with the Burlington Daily Times, the Times quoted him as saying that appropriate reasons for a professor cancelling classes are death in the professors's family, sickness, or to attend a professional meeting. Neither of these statements have basis in any regulations regarding the cancellation of classes. Section (15) of the Faculty Handbook specifies "illness or other reasons" concerning faculty absences.

Second, since many faculty members in the past have taken advantage of this leeway in the Faculty Handbook, and have cancelled classes for many and varied reasons, the temporary suspension and proposed dismissal of Michael Smith may be considered a case of "selective enforcement." This means that Smith's job is in jeopardy because he cancelled his classes on the specific date Oct. 15, in accordance with the Vietnam

Smith Suspended

Chronological report of events regarding the suspension of Assistant Professor C. Michael Smith. September 26: President of Elon College, J. Earl Danieley releases a letter to the President of the Student Govt., Asso., William Y. Comminaki, and to the faculty in response to Comminaki's decision to join the National Vietnam Moratorium. Comments in this letter pertaining to faculty participation in the Moratorium were that the college is "resolved to tolerate no interruption of classes" and "although several faculty members might like to cooperate with you, as faculty members we have no choice but to fulfill our obligations to our students and to hold our classes as scheduled."

Monday, October 13: Professor Smith apprises President Danieley of his plans not to meet his classes on Wednesday, October 15, in accordance with the National Moratorium.

Wednesday, October 15: Smith does not meet his two classes but has arranged for them to meet with two of his colleagues. Smith gives keynote Moratorium speech on campus and joins peace march in Burlington.

Friday, October 17: Smith is notified in A.M., by Presidential Assistant Al Hassell to meet with Danieley immediately. At this meeting (about noon), Danieley directed Smith not to meet with his classes (suspended him), until the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Elon College met, tentatively Wednesday, October 22, to decide on Smith's dismissal for breach of contract. Smith would obey this direction if provided with a written statement from Danieley directing him not to meet his classes against his wishes. Smith was not at that time given the statement. Friday P.M., Danieley was contacted by the Greensboro Daily News and the Burlington Daily Times who both, in Saturday's issues reported him to have declined comment on the grounds that this is a "personal matter" or a "conjectural matter" between Smith and the Board of Trustees. Danieley told the Burlington Daily Times, however, that "appropriate reasons for a professor cancelling classes would be death in the family, sickness, or to attend a professional meeting."

Saturday, October 18: Local AAUP officials make inquires with regional and national officers of AAUP, to determine what procedural standards in the suspension and possible dismissal of Professor Smith have been violated. An 'Ad hoc' committee of students begins to form to mobilize the support of the student body for Smith. The Committee meets Sunday night at 7:00 P.M.

Saturday evening, news stories of the matter are released to the New York Times, and the national wire services Associated Press, and the United Press International.

Moratorium. Smith alone had denied this false authority of the President and is now being made an example for the stability of

the Administration and thus, the continuance of such arbitrary rule. It must remain clear however that Prof. Smith's motive

in not meeting his classes on Oct. 15 was not intentionally a direct challenge or protest against the College Administra-

tion, but an outgrowth of his own deepest convictions concerning the war in Vietnam.

Third, President Danieley himself brought the matter to the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee of which will decide on the dismissal of Smith on Wednesday. But until that decision is reached Danieley has instructed Smith not to hold classes, in effect, has temporarily suspended him. Michael Smith is being punished in advance of the settlement of his guilt or innocence by the Executive Committee.

In these ways, we suggest, the academic freedom of one of our numbers is being violated. The whole academic community, while some may not agree with the personal politics of Prof. Smith, must stand in defense of one of its constituents when such grave injustices are committed against him. If we stand idly by now, this infection may well

spread further, to at any time jeopardize the academic freedom of any one of you. The authority at Elon may truly become unquestioned because of fear, an authority limited by no adherence to what is both legal and just. Sorrowful it is that justice here is the underdog, but our one recourse as a student body in indeed our unquestioned support of Prof. Michael Smith.

Side Order

In the case of Prof. Michael Smith's dismissal, some additional points deserve mention here and consideration by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

Through precedent and through the stipulations of the faculty handbook, we know that faculty absences, if foreseen, must be reported to the Administration

in advance of the fact. We know also, and most of us have experienced that classes are often conducted by student group discussion leaders without the presence of the teacher.

In reference to these points, VERITAS learned the following information in an interview with Prof. Smith.

That he informed the Admin-

istration on Monday, Oct. 13, of his planned absence Oct. 15.

That on his way to his 1:20 class on Monday, Oct. 13, he encountered Robert G. Blake, Chairman of the English department, who told him that he had just come from Smith's 1:20 classroom where he had informed the students that class would meet on Wednesday whether

Smith was present or not. He had one so without Smith's knowledge of it.

That Smith then attended his class and arranged to have two students lead a discussion of the work then under consideration. That after this class he informed Blake of what he had done and Blake said that this was not sufficient, that he must ar-

range substitute faculty members to hold the classes.

That Blake again attended Smith's 1:20 class and presented the same information as he had to the 1:20 class, and that Smith agreed to arrange for substitutes.

Smith's classes did meet on Wednesday, Oct. 15, under Professores Bland and Ramsey.

President Comminaki addresses Moratorium participants.

