



AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 33

MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION

AFFILIATED WITH
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY & MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES – AFL-CIO
PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO
PHILADELPHIA COUNCIL AFL-CIO

HERMAN J. MATTHEWS, JR.
PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT PHILA & PAAFL-CIO

“Philadelphia Works Because We Do”

3001 WALNUT STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104

BETTE MACDONALD
SECRETARY-TREASURER

(215) 895-3300
FAX (215) 222-8981

BOBBY C. DAVIS
VICE-PRESIDENT

April 16, 2014

Temple University
Dr. Neil D. Theobald, President
1801 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Re: Ethics Complaint Against Professors Hakim and Blackstone

Dear Dr. Theobald:

As the President of AFSCME Council 33, President of Philadelphia Corrections Local 159, and Executive Director of AFSCME Council 13 we are contacting you in reference to an ethics complaint filed against Temple Professors Simon Hakim and Erwin Blackstone. The complaint, filed by Alex Friedmann, associate director of the Human Rights Defense Center, was submitted to Interim Senior Vice Provost Michele Masucci in June 2013, alleging violations of Board of Trustees policies 4.16.02 and 02.54.01 III(L)(5).

Specifically, the complaint alleges that Professors Hakim and Blackstone committed ethics violations in connection with their research paper regarding privately-operated prisons, “Cost Analysis of Public and Contractor Operated Prisons.” According to the complaint, the research study as initially released did not disclose that it had been funded by private prison companies, though a separate press release did mention the study’s funding source. After Mr. Friedmann challenged the failure to disclose the industry funding in the research paper itself, a revised version of the study was posted that included a brief notation, on page 4, under a chart, indicating that the private corrections industry had provided funding for the study.

Additionally, the ethics complaint alleges that Professors Hakim and Blackstone submitted editorials to newspapers in at least five states regarding their research findings, and in all but one of those editorials failed to disclose that they had received funding from private prison companies – that is, the very industry that was the subject of their study. Further, in their editorials, Professors Hakim and Blackstone claimed that private prisons “generally met industry standards” established by the “independent American Correctional Association,” despite the ACA receiving payments and donations from private prison companies, and referred to prison privatization as a “proven solution” – a subjective opinion rather than an objective research finding.

We have several concerns regarding the actions by Professors Hakim and Blackstone that are the subject of the ethics complaint filed by Mr. Friedmann – a complaint that has remained pending for over eight months. These concerns are related to the fact that our members, which include public corrections officers, are aware of significant problems related to for-profit prisons such as high staff turnover rates, understaffing and higher levels of violence. These issues, which directly impact public safety, were largely ignored in the research paper produced by Professors Hakim and Blackstone.

Initially, we question the propriety of Temple faculty members conducting research that is funded in whole or in part by the very industry they are studying. This presents a potential conflict of interest, particularly when the funding source is not adequately disclosed.

We are also concerned that professors who conduct industry-funded research may have personal interests, financial or otherwise, in the companies that provide such funding. For example, do Professors Hakim or Blackstone own stock in private prison firms CCA or GEO Group? If so, that would create a conflict of interest material to the ethics complaint filed against them – but if Temple relies entirely on self-disclosure of such conflicts, then we submit that is an inadequate means of ensuring ethical academic research.

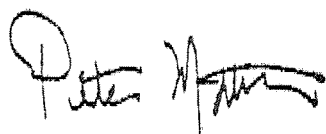
For example, former University of Florida professor Charles Thomas, who directed a Private Corrections Project at that university, owned stock in private prison companies and received payments from those companies. He was fined \$20,000 by the Florida Commission on Ethics in 1999 and resigned after his financial interests in private prison firms were exposed. Therefore, it is not hypothetical that academics who conduct research into private prisons may have stock ownership or other financial interests in private prison companies.

Further, we have concerns about the ethics complaint process at Temple, which appears to be non-transparent. For example, according to news reports, when members of the media contacted Ms. Masucci's office, no information regarding the ethics complaint or its status was provided. When there is a final decision regarding the complaint, we have concerns whether details about the investigation and its outcome will be made publicly available.

In closing, please note our concerns regarding the ethics complaint pending against Professors Hakim and Blackstone, and please provide the following information: 1) Does Temple have a process for determining whether faculty members own stock or have other financial interests in the companies that are funding their research? If so, please provide details regarding that process. 2) To what extent are details related to ethics complaints and associated investigations into such complaints made public, both during and after the complaint process?

Thank you for your time and attention; a timely reply would be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Pete Mathews
President
AFSCME Council 33
3001 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

cc: Michele Masucci



Lorenzo North
President
AFSCME Local 159
AFSCME Corrections United
3001 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104



David Fillman
Executive Director
AFSCME Council 13
4031 Executive Park Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17111