

Case #1: Classroom Climate & Microaggressions

Professor Williams is tenured and has been at the university for 25 years. Over the past few years, comments on course evaluations have been progressively problematic, especially as regards classroom climate. Two students met with you in the past week complaining about Professor Williams' behavior. The first student, who identifies as non-binary (they/them), shared that Prof. Williams consistently misgenders them, even though they and other classmates continue to correct him. The second student, who identifies as a queer Latine man, shared that Prof. Williams routinely uses heterosexist examples in class and has, on more than one occasion, singled him out to talk about the "immigrant experience" even though he was born in the United States.

Case #2: Adapting to Change

Your department has recently undergone an external program review and hired several new junior faculty members. It is clear that the department's curriculum must be updated to reflect both new directions in the scholarship and the interests and needs of today's students. As you engage your colleagues in the work of revising the curriculum, you encounter strong resistance from a senior colleague, Professor Asher. He asserts that the revisions will diminish the rigor of the program, and he is anxious about how the changes will affect his enrollments and teaching load.

Case #3: Inequity & Racism

Professor Carter holds a tenure-track position and is coming up for third year review. Her dossier is stronger than many other faculty at her rank, but she is unsure whether her colleagues in the department will support her. She is African-American and the only person of color in your department, and one of only eight faculty of color at your institution. She shares with you a number of concerns that she says she shared with the previous CAO and Dean who did nothing about them. Some of these include: 1) colleagues both in her department and across campus repeatedly call her by the wrong name, confusing her with another Black woman professor in another department; 2) Professor Carter's student advising and mentoring load is almost three times of that of her colleagues, who often recommend students go to her for assistance because they are "too busy"; and 3) departmental colleagues have dismissed Professor Carter's scholarship because of its activist orientation and strong public and digital media components and she is concerned about how the tenure and promotion committee will respond.

Case #4: Budget/Program/Staffing Cuts

Smalltown College has experienced a steady decline in enrollment since the pandemic and is experiencing a budget deficit for the next fiscal year. The Cabinet aims to propose a balanced budget within two years by indicating areas for reduction across the institution including academic programs. The CAO pulled together a taskforce of faculty and academic staff to review recent program review data along with current enrollment trends, and to recommend to the Cabinet programs for potential reductions, sunseting, and/or elimination. Chairperson Richardson leads one of the programs that has been identified for elimination, with a teach-out plan to be completed within two years. Reasons cited for elimination included a declining number of new students for the past five years, and a low student-to-faculty ratio. Dr. Richardson argues that her program has a long history at the college with successful graduates and that over half of the department's faculty are tenured. Even though enrollment has dropped significantly, she maintains that the college's academic reputation would suffer if the program is eliminated. She insists that her program should continue and that cuts should be found elsewhere at the college.

Case #5: Social Media

In a prestigious college known for its diversity and inclusive culture, a seemingly innocent social media post by a student sparked outrage across campus. Sarah, excited about her study abroad trip to an Asian city, posted a photo on Instagram with a caption that read: "Living my best life surrounded by all the exotic charm of the Orient!" Many students, especially those of Asian descent, found the term "exotic" offensive and outdated, perceiving it as a stereotype that diminishes the complexity and modernity of Asian cultures. The term "Orient" also struck a nerve, seen as colonial and reductive. The Dean of Students, Dr. Rodriguez, was informed about the controversy by concerned students who felt marginalized by Sarah's post. Understanding the gravity of the situation and the need for a swift response, Dr. Rodriguez decides to approach the issue with Sarah.