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Dear Louisiana Baptists and Friends:

A few days ago, I read through 1 John and was impressed by John's insistence that there is no disconnect between orthodox faith and orthodox practice. In fact, the strength of his insistence is humbling. He is clear that faith is always and inseparably followed by Christ-honoring behavior. In his gentlest terms John says, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk as He walked." (1 John 2:6) It is my desire that the Louisiana College community walk as He walked. But in our zeal to wage war against the ills that we see, we must be sure that we have not, as Jesus said, "neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith." (Mathew 23:23) I write this letter to illuminate what has followed my Letter of Concern for Louisiana College. My hope is not just to be informative but hopefully to encourage the Louisiana College and Louisiana Baptist communities to Christ-honoring action.

The mission that LC proclaims is of great importance. I want nothing more than for central Louisiana to be served by a conservative Christian college that serves the Kingdom with great honor. It should also be noted that my initial letter was neither hyperbolic nor exhaustive. I sought to mention only items that would get the point across and for which I had firm evidence. There are many other issues that could have been brought up including a faith healer teaching on campus and a professor who taught aura alignment (eastern mysticism) in the classroom. The letter was a scratch on the surface of the situation at LC. It was a call for Louisiana Baptists to lay aside their apathy and for some at LC to change their ways.

Following is a narrative of what has happened since my letter.

In the days after I sent out my Letter of Concern, I had two meetings with the Louisiana College administration. After the first meeting, it was clear that I was being dismissed and banned from campus. However, I was told in the second meeting that I was only banned, not technically dismissed. When I was finally allowed to clear my personal belongings from my office, I discovered that the locks had been changed and a 24-hour guard had been

posted at the door. Two classes that normally met in my office had to find alternate meeting space; at least one of them held class on the floor in the foyer, without access to the presentation technology the class required. The fervor of the administration to penalize me undermined the college's goal of academic excellence.

Prior to my second meeting, the administration confiscated a painting which one of my students had painted the previous school year. When the student artist and her parent met with the administration, the president refused to return the painting and held it for two more days. Meanwhile, the figure painting had been photographed and an image of it leaked, which is a copyright infringement, in an effort to discredit me. When the student's property was finally returned a week after its confiscation, it was banned from campus for the first time, despite that the administration had known about its existence for a year.

The Louisiana College Faculty Handbook contains clear procedures for how both non-renewal of contracts and dismissals are to proceed. In short, the dismissal procedures include (section 2.7.4) a letter from the VPAA informing the faculty member of a proposed dismissal. This letter must include a reasonably clear articulation of the reasons for the proposed dismissal. The faculty member then has the opportunity to request a hearing before the Faculty Affairs Advisory Committee to defend himself against the charges. After the hearing the committee makes recommendations to the president who then decides if dismissal is appropriate. The faculty member has additional remedies with the Board of Trustees, but those are post termination.

In my case, when I next heard from the administration, Dr. Aguiard refused to send the requisite paperwork to me or my lawyer, insisting that I come to his office rather than follow my lawyer's advice to have the paper work sent to me. The next morning an LC security guard delivered a letter which notified me that if I did not meet with the President my "salary and benefits would be terminated today." This was a clear violation of the Faculty Handbook (section 2.7.4) which provides no mechanism for immediate dismissal and assures due process. Twice the administration (once Dr. Aguiard and once Acting President Tim Johnson) produced documents requiring that I admit to being found in breach of contract, dishonest, and insubordinate. Further, the documents prevented me from saying anything about LC while not restricting what the administration could say about me. I obviously was unable to sign such one-sided documents, especially with their claims of my dishonesty, insubordination and breach of contract. When my lawyer sent a mutual release and settlement agreement to the College which provided greater protections for both parties and released both parties from further legal action and fault, the administration refused even to discuss such an arrangement.

Dr. Tim Searcy then sent me a letter on April 5<sup>th</sup> stating that my employment had been severed as of that day. However, the letter violated the Faculty Handbook on several fronts: the VPAA only has the authority to propose dismissal, there is no allowance within the

Faculty Handbook for immediate dismissal, and the Faculty Handbook requires the reasons for dismissal be stated with "reasonable particularity." None of these were done. My lawyer pointed out these errors to the administration, and on April 20<sup>th</sup> I received a letter from Dr. Searcy notifying me of my proposed dismissal, reinstating my insurances, and providing reasonable particularity of my alleged offenses.

In compliance with the Faculty Handbook, we requested an administrative hearing with the Faculty Affairs Advisory Committee which was scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup>. The Faculty Handbook guarantees me the right to present witnesses in my defense. Despite my appeals, the administration continued to deny me access to campus and refused to lift the e-mail protocols which blocked my e-mail address from campus. These actions severely limited my ability to contact witnesses and to prepare my defense.

The administrative hearing on May 4<sup>th</sup> was highly unusual. Administrative hearings are typically fact finding events and can be informal. It is the responsibility of the committee to find the truth and make recommendations accordingly. There must be a clear separation of legal counsel between the committee and the administration; charges should be clearly levied, with the faculty member having the opportunity to respond to those charges. However in this hearing, the legal counsel for the administration also functioned as the counsel for the Committee, representing a clear conflict of interest and ethical violation. The procedures which the college's lawyer instituted were extremely unusual including having me present my defense prior to the administration presenting their case and seeking to exclude hearsay, which is always permissible in administrative hearings due to the lack of subpoena power. Further, when my first witness was on the stand, I discovered that the Committee was totally unaware of the charges against me. How could they reasonably seek truth about the charges without any knowledge of the charges? When I spoke to my legal counsel after the first day of hearings, they were appalled by the lack of normal procedures. College employees are guaranteed due process, fairness, both through college policy and constitutionally. In the course of this hearing, my due process rights were so egregiously violated that a judge granted me a Temporary Restraining Order against the college to stop the proceedings.

When the restraining order was signed, the hearings were stopped. However, Dr. Aguillard had the audacity to ask me to rescind the restraining order and then asserted that even filing for such a restraining order was against college policy. Though Dr. Aguillard insisted on this being part of the official record of the hearing, I cannot provide the exact quote because, in violation of the Faculty Handbook, I have never been presented with the transcripts. In essence, Dr. Aguillard was arguing that the civil rights of school employees are superseded by college policy.

Through the work of my lawyer the College was unable to breach my contract, as it had several times tried to do while failing to follow the Faculty Handbook procedures. The

restraining order issued by the court stopped the continued violation of my due process rights. While I had initially wished to keep these issues out of the courts and media, they were forced into those areas through the aggressive actions of the college. I was able to protect my rights, but it came at a still undetermined price in legal fees.

Prior to the hearing being stopped, one student and one faculty member testified on my behalf. The student who testified broke down in tears at one point, out of fear, and asked the committee if she would be allowed to return to LC next year, to which Dr. Aguiard vigorously objected. The faculty member confessed under oath that she feared her honest testimony would cause her to lose her job, despite her stellar annual review. Prior to the hearings, she had received a letter promising her a contract for the 2011-2012 academic year, however, she was not offered one when contracts were issued ten days after her testimony. The head of her department was not even notified of her non-renewal. She was eventually told by Acting President Tim Johnson that she would not receive a contract. This behavior is exactly what faculty and students fear and clearly illustrates why such fear is justified. Further, this sort of blatant dishonesty and abuse of power discourages faculty and students from even testifying on behalf of members of the college community and has no place in a Christian institution.

At 6'5" and almost 250 pounds, I do not think much about abuse. But when my wife began sharing some of our ordeal with friends, comments were repeatedly made comparing our situation to spousal abuse. One friend sent my wife a section of a blog post on abuse:

An abusive system is a closed system, whether it is found in a family, a work place or a church. The abuser has absolute power and uses his power to dominate, exploit, control, manipulate and oppress those under him. The enabler tries frantically to keep the peace by doing whatever it takes to soothe both the rage and shame of the abuser. Enablers also work to control how others perceive the abuser and how they behave when he or she is around. There is no room for truth in an abusive system.

I have thought a great deal about the enablers over the past few months. Certainly there are those who frantically fight to keep the peace at the cost of truth as mentioned in the quote above. But, there are also those who enable through their apathy. Either way, those who witness abuse and do nothing to stop it are morally culpable.

According to the prophet Jeremiah, those who say, "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace should be ashamed. I hope that those who receive this letter will choose to seek out the truth about what is happening at Louisiana College. In order for the college to fulfill its mission, the administration of the college must lead with honesty and integrity. They must be held accountable for their leadership and be able to withstand the scrutiny of honest critics. I have seen the current administration make choices that harm the faculty, staff, and

students of Louisiana College. These letters of concern are my way of asking those with power to intervene and stop the abuse.

When I first moved to Louisiana, I was rightly resistant to believe claims that LC administrators behaved differently than what I had witnessed. How could those who seemed so loving to me truly behave so poorly toward others? The same comment has, understandably, been made to me over the last two months. However, Christ is clear that we must behave well not just toward those who treat us well but toward everyone. The character of a person or an institution can best be judged by how critics are treated. Christ pointed out even the tax collectors, who behaved abhorrently toward many people, loved those who loved them. (Matthew 5:43-47) My positive experiences early on did not make the experiences of others untrue. My wife and I have a friend who was abused by her husband. When she finally left him, her family refused to believe that he was abusive. How could he be? He was such a good Christian. In reality he was like the tax collector- loving to some and abusive to others.

I pray that the situation at Louisiana College will improve. But, it will not happen on its own. It will not happen unless the apathy of our convention subsides and we demand better. It will not happen unless those of us who say we abide in Him remember the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. The role and mission of Louisiana College is crucial. We need academically strong institutions based on a love for Christ and the authority of Scripture. However, without a foundation of integrity and a commitment to truth all Louisiana College does is in vain. As the Apostle John wrote, "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth."

In Christ,

Rondall Reynoso