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July 26

## Prior Restraint on Speech?

The president of the State University of New York at Fredonia [offered to promote a faculty member to full professor](#) if he would agree, among other things, to subject any writing or public statements about the institution to prior review for approval.

The professor and a free-speech group backing him say that the offer demonstrates the university's willingness to censor faculty views, especially if they are conservative. But Fredonia officials say that — while the proposal was a mistake — the professor brought it on himself.

The dispute centers on the promotion bid of Stephen Kershner, an associate professor of philosophy, who was nominated for full professor by his department in January. Kershner writes a regular column for a local paper in which he has, among other things, [questioned the priority the university places on attracting more minority students and faculty members](#), and argued that there is a shortage of conservatives in higher education. Some of his columns have angered university officials to the point that they have sent campuswide e-mails disputing them.

Kershner's excellent reputation for teaching was not disputed by anyone when his promotion bid came up, and his publication record was declared to be adequate for promotion. But Dennis L. Hefner, Fredonia's president, wrote to Kershner in April that his service contributions were insufficient. And he specifically cited Kershner's "deliberate and repeated public misrepresentation" of Fredonia's policies, in ways that have "impugned" the university's reputation.

According to Kershner, he then on to a 789( )a7th h6.53597(o)-0.9570i3(e)3.15789( )-0.47989(r)2.36903(-)-0.478208(

