



Department of Humanities  
(413) 748-3607 FAX: (413) 748-3612

November 19, 2018

Dear Dean Herzog,

I received with surprise and considerable unhappiness your letter of November 13, informing me that I have been placed again on "Official Warning Status."

It is, of course, your prerogative to deploy this threat, but it is ill-advised. You are essentially punishing me for asking legitimate questions about the conditions of my employment and for refusing to participate in activities that do not accord with Springfield College policies. In addition, you are expecting me to do these questionable things with administrators who have made abundantly clear their animus against me.

A rhetorical question, in that I know you would never answer it: Would you put yourself in that situation?

I'll answer for you: Of course not.

But that's what you expect me to do. There is name for this. It is called abuse of power.

Perhaps you will get away with it, but I assure you that I will do everything I can to make sure that your abuse of power is seen for what it is by the widest possible audience.

I expect that, having traveled this far down the road of the kind of unrestrained exercise of authority evident in your letter, you would find it very difficult to halt or to reverse course. But that is exactly what you should do. I am highly capable teacher and an active contributor to many aspects of the Springfield College community. If provided with an ordinary level of professional respect and appropriate intellectual toleration, I would remain an asset to the department and to the college. The witch hunt launched against me because some of my colleagues dislike the subject of some of my research is entirely unjustified. And it is detrimental to the college. Everything else in your letter is pretext: amounting to claims that I have failed to cooperate with efforts to undermine my own academic freedom.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis Gouws  
Professor of English

cc. Dr. Mary-Beth Cooper, President of Springfield College  
Dr. Martha Potvin, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs