

## CU-Boulder philosophy professor on leave, barred from campus

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The University of Colorado this week placed associate philosophy professor Dan Kaufman on leave for unspecified reasons and barred him from the Boulder campus indefinitely, according to an email sent to faculty members in the department.

Students said that when they arrived at Kaufman's class Tuesday morning, they were met by police and told by a teaching assistant that class was canceled and that they should leave the building.

"He said, 'Everyone's fine, but no one should be here right now,' and we all just left," student Mandy Silverstone said.

In the email from department chairman Andrew Cowell, faculty members were instructed to call police if they see Kaufman on campus.

Kaufman's leave -- with pay -- comes a little more than a month after the university released an independent report describing sexual harassment, bullying, unprofessional behavior and other types of misconduct within the department.

There was no indication that Kaufman's suspension was connected to the alleged sexual harassment referred to in the report.

University officials acknowledged conducting a "personnel action" this week, but could not identify the employee or confirm whether it was related to the philosophy department report.

Kaufman would not discuss his status with the university.

"It would be highly irresponsible for anyone to say anything about anything related to this situation at this point in time," Kaufman wrote in an email to the Camera on Thursday.

CU spokesman Ryan Huff said he could not address personnel actions relating to specific employees.

"What I can tell you is that there was a personnel action on our campus (Tuesday), and part of a routine procedure, when we have personnel actions, we have our police department in the area in case they're needed," Huff said. "(Tuesday) a personnel action was taken without incident."

Despite the police presence Tuesday, Huff said the administration does not feel there is any threat to the campus community.

### Police presence

Students in Kaufman's "Introduction to Philosophy" class said they saw several police officers inside the Hale Science building Tuesday before their 9:30 a.m. class.

"I came in up the stairs and I saw a couple of cops, just chilling out, not doing anything and I was like,

'OK,' but everyone was just walking to class, so I just said, 'Let's go to class, then,'" Silverstone said.

After that, Kaufman walked into the classroom and appeared to be setting up something on the computer at the front of the lecture hall, Silverstone said.

Later, a teaching assistant walked in and told the students class was canceled "because the cops don't want anyone in the building right now," Silverstone said.

Silverstone said she'd never experienced that type of situation before on campus. She said Kaufman was a "funny" and "really intelligent" teacher who explained topics well.

### **Students notified**

In an email from Cowell, the philosophy department chairman, on Tuesday, Kaufman's students were told the professor is "on leave as of today, until further notice."

"I realize this could be a major disruption to your semester," Cowell wrote. "The Department of Philosophy is working very hard at the moment to find immediate replacements for Professor Kaufman, in order to minimize the disruption. We will announce those replacements as soon as they are available."

Cowell also wrote that he could not "comment on the reasons for the leave, as this is a private personnel issue."

He took over as philosophy chairman Feb. 1, replacing former chair Graeme Forbes, based on recommendations made in the report by the American Philosophical Association Committee on the Status of Women Site Visit Program.

The report also led administrators to suspend graduate admissions into the department until at least fall of 2015.

Cowell spoke to Kaufman's "Introduction to Philosophy" class on Thursday and introduced Shane Gronholz, a philosophy graduate student, who is taking over the class "for as long as necessary," Cowell said.

"It could be for the rest of the semester, but if Professor Kaufman comes back soon then he would step back in and take things over," Cowell said to the class.

Faculty members were informed of the situation in an email from Cowell and were instructed to call the police if they saw Kaufman on campus.

Anyone who violates an exclusion order, or returns to campus, can be charged with trespassing or unlawful conduct, CU police officials said.

### **'He's a super cool teacher'**

Kaufman, who lives in Denver, according to his curriculum vitae, focuses on 17th century philosophy, especially the metaphysics of Descartes, Locke and Leibniz.

According to his faculty page on the philosophy department's website, Kaufman is also interested in

contemporary metaphysics, medieval philosophy and philosophical theology.

This semester, Kaufman had been teaching an introductory philosophy course for undergraduates and a seminar on the history of philosophy for graduate students, according to the CU schedule for spring courses.

Many undergraduate students said they were disappointed that Kaufman would not be leading their classes for the foreseeable future.

Majed Abdulfattah said he appreciated Kaufman's use of examples and imagery in lecture.

Another student, Brian Castillo, said it was unfortunate that Kaufman was being replaced by another instructor.

"He's a super cool teacher, and it's kind of (expletive) that he's gone," Castillo said. "This was one of my favorite classes."

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