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Glendale prof faces possible termination over e-mail

PHOENIX - A professor at Glendale Community College who sent an e-mail to district employees that contained a link to Pat Buchanan's Web site and a transcript of a George Washington Thanksgiving proclamation is now facing possible termination.

Math Professor Walter Kehowski was placed on paid leave from his job. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, a national free-speech group, has taken up his cause and is asking the Maricopa County Community College District to exonerate him.

Greg Lukianoff, president of the Philadelphia-based group, said Kehowski is being targeted because of the e-mail, sent Nov. 22, with the 1789 proclamation and the link to the site of Buchanan, a conservative commentator and former presidential candidate. Lukianoff said five employees filed complaints because the Buchanan site criticized immigration policies.

"This case would be almost funny if it wasn't having such serious implications for the professor's life and livelihood," Lukianoff said.

Kehowski declined comment Monday. In the past, Kehowski has angered some employees and students with his e-mails, leading to debate over academic freedom and how far professors can go in expressing opinions.

In 2003, Kehowski e-mailed employees several Internet links that contained statements about Hispanics.

The titles on the Web sites included, "Mexicans Think U.S. Belongs to Them!" and "Mexican Double Standard."

GCC administrators said his postings were abrasive and divisive, but said they could do little to prevent professors from expressing their views outside class.

Maricopa County Community College Chancellor Rufus Glasper notified Kehowski March 9 that he intended to recommend to the governing board that Kehowski be dismissed. He said Kehowski's Nov. 22 e-mail violated the district's electronic communications policy, which bans using district e-mail for private or personal matters.

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