

DH

THE DAILY HELMSMAN

Wednesday, December 1st 2021

VOL. 88 NO. 06

IN THE NEWS:

From Royal Cuisine to Commoner's Food: the Story of Korean Bulgogi, DWJ Korean BBQ's Best-Selling Dish — Page 6



UofM Student Alleges Sexual Misconduct Office Protects Tenured Faculty Over Students

By Lucas Finton

When any form of sexual harassment or assault is alleged to have taken place on campus, the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) investigates. Their sole purpose during that process, according to the website's mission statement, is to provide a fair and unbiased process to resolve allegations such as these.

One University of Memphis student is alleging OIE cannot be impartial in these situations. He wonders if a branch of a university can be unbiased in these situations and what happens when those meant to protect victims, instead protect the perpetrator of sexual harassment.

Josh Swiatek, a graduate student in the anthropology department, is dealing with the fallout from what he believes is a biased decision spawned from an incomplete investigation into allegations of sexual harassment by a tenured professor toward him.

Swiatek provided several documents from the case for the Daily Helmsman to review and OIE declined to comment about the investigation and case. He first reported the alleged harassment to his now former

academic advisor in November 2020, who – in turn – filed the original complaint with OIE.

"I had talked to my advisor and said that I was being made uncomfortable by stalkerish messages and things like that from a professor," he said. "The professor was taking pictures of apartments and asking me if that's where I live. [The professor was] out telling me they fantasize about seeing me at the dog park while they're jogging. It was unprofessional, especially considering it was a professor in a class I was in. It was bothering me, so I confided in my advisor."

The alleged harassment began in the midst of the pandemic, just over a year after Swiatek made the 900 mile move from his home in Buffalo, New York. He had earned undergraduate degrees in history and anthropology from Canisius College five years prior, where he fell in love with the latter subject in similar fashion to other students: pure chance.

"I think anthropology kind of found me, really. I took an intro socio-anthropology course and I didn't even know what it was at the time," Swiatek said. "I



This pyramid depicts the investigative process that OIE follows. Josh Swiatek asserts that OIE skipped over portions of this process while investigating his case.

just fell in love with it."

He credits the professors at the small liberal arts college, whom he forged strong relationships with during his time there, for encouraging his pursuit of a graduate degree in the subject. He would go on to be accepted to five schools – SUNY Albany,

Binghamton and Buffalo along with the UofM and University of Louisville.

"I think it was time to leave Buffalo and venture out into the world," Swiatek said. "Memphis was also the only one that came with a funded offer, so that was the biggest reason for coming.

But I also lived in Nashville for a few years as a kid, so I do have some local Tennessee ties."

Swiatek thrived in the interactive environment during his first semester at UofM in fall 2019. By fall 2020, he was elected as the Graduate Student Association's (GSA) representative