

Emails between Bill Crenshaw and the student referred to in Scott Cook's letter. I use a pseudonym for the student: Maximus A.

I publish the first two emails with full headers (except for changing the student's name); after that, to save space, I usually just publish sender, date, and subject line.

From: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>
Date: March 12, 2010 10:28:13 AM EST
Subject: meeting
To: maximus@erskine.edu
Cc: Gid Alston <alston@erskine.edu>

Hi Max —

Dr. Alston informs me that you're still upset. I'm sorry to hear that, and I'd like to talk to you about it, especially since I thought your telling me that I was forgiven after I apologized meant what it said. Let's get together so we can iron things out like two Christians who have had a misunderstanding. As I said on Wednesday, you should drop in some time as Brandon did and we can have a long talk — although you can't break my chair as Brandon did: I'm running out of them.

Anyway, send me an email today and we can set up a time to meet. although I can't meet today. How about Monday or Tuesday of next week? Monday at 2:30 would be good for me, or anytime Tuesday.

Looking forward to your reply,

Dr. Crenshaw

From: maximus@erskine.edu
Date: March 13, 2010 6:16:26 PM EST
Subject: Re: meeting

To: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>, Gid Alston <alston@erskine.edu>

Thanks for the email. I'm glad we can begin to clarify some matters. Also, I included Dr. Alston in this discussion since he is the Academic Dean. Given the incident Wednesday and statements made by Dr. Alston, I would prefer to begin this discussion through email.

Concerning Forgiveness:

My understanding of the matter is that you said you were sorry for hurting my feelings. "And if I offended you or hurt your feelings, I'm sorry," he told the student. "But I don't think I intimidated you in any way" (For support see Greenville news). I extended forgiveness to you for hurting my feelings. However, it is not clear that you asked for forgiveness for the things you said. You did not, to my knowledge, admit that the things you said were untrue. That is, you were sorry about the effect it had but as to the veracity of your claims or the motives of your heart, I don't believe you have said anything to indicate that you were wrong. Consequently, it is unclear to me whether or not you think you need (or want) my forgiveness on that front.

Furthermore, my complaint to Dr. Alston was that I experienced what has been called a "culture of intimidation." This you have clearly denied. "But I don't think I intimidated you in any way" (again see Greenville news for support). I can't extend forgiveness on that issue if you are unwilling to admit that you indeed did intimidate me.

Concerning Responsibility: You seem to be operating with the assumption that just because you are sorry (at least for hurting my feelings) you are not to be held accountable for your actions. In other words, was it wrong that I addressed Dr. Alston about your remarks?

Dr. Alston mentioned under the previous Academic Dean and under himself as the current Academic Dean, that there have been numerous complaints brought against you for your treatment of students. Dr. Alston noted that he thought some of these complaints were questionable. Moreover, he believes that you have made more progress in your interaction with students. That is, at least, until this incident. But Dr. Alston agreed that the incident Wednesday was unquestionable. You were in the wrong.

However, the only appropriate discipline was to write you up. He also mentioned that he talked with you multiple times and that you have already been written up before. But any further disciplinary actions, he said, would be un-Christian.

I believe this is irresponsible. Even if being sorry means you are not accountable for that particular action, I think both Dr. Alston and yourself have the responsibility to take measures that such verbally abusive behavior will not happen again. Dr. Alston said that he could not give me any assurance that such hostile treatment will not occur again to me or to other students. You have a record, whether warranted or unwarranted, for being hostile to some students. In light of this, I think it is irresponsible to the institution, students, and parents that no further disciplinary action will be taken.

The following narrative, while not perfect, is a helpful illustration of what I've been saying: If Jimmy crashed into Steven, Jimmy is still obligated to compensate Steven for repairing the vehicle, even if Jimmy was sorry. Moreover, if Jimmy has a past history for irresponsible driving (he has four speeding tickets, hit two mail boxes, one dog, and has in the past three years caused three traffic accidents), the state has the obligation to administer discipline. They might suspend his driving privileges temporarily or permanently. They might require Jimmy to have an eye examination or to attend driving school for a time. Whatever they choose, it is doubtful that the judge would simply ask Jimmy to not drive poorly again. Moreover, if Jimmy is repentant and does not wish to drive poorly or cause damage again, he will likely welcome whatever discipline the court finds fitting.

In sum, I agree that perhaps there was some misunderstanding, but I am disappointed that you think that was all that happened on Wednesday. In other words, I believe it is disingenuous to write Wednesday off as simply a misunderstanding.

1) You said you were sorry for hurting my feelings. I said I forgave you for that. It was rash to do so, but I wanted to respond in a way that honors Christ. I am still upset, but my statement was meant to indicate that I want to forgive and am willing to do so. If you are truly sorry, then I want to extend forgiveness (though it may take time to work through).

2)Do you admit that the statements you made were untrue (I'm a liar for Jesus, that I am to enjoy hell, and that my graduation was not soon enough)? Your second statement implies that Christ's work is of no consequence for me and that I will forever be separated from the Lord of truth and beauty. This statement in particular is painful.

3)Do you admit that you were wrong for saying what you said (and not just for the effect of upsetting me)?

4)Do you admit that, whether successful or not, you attempted to intimidate me and that, whether directly or indirectly, through your remarks you have contributed to the culture of intimidation?

5)Would you be willing to submit to effective disciplinary action in order to ensure that similar actions will not occur again?

I understand these are not easy questions to answer. True repentance and reconciliation rarely are easy. I look forward to your response so that one sinner in need of grace can be reconciled to another sinner who is also in need of grace. I truly mean that and believe that.

From: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>

Date: March 13, 2010 8:21:15 PM EST

Subject: Re: meeting

Hi Max —

Sorry I misspelled your name in my previous email.

Thanks for writing back — I didn't expect to get such a long and thoughtful reply, and I want to answer it fully and not give it short shrift. But that will take some time and I'd rather you not think I was ignoring your email, so here I'd like to cut right to the chase and answer your five questions. Then I can respond at length and send you a more full and complete answer.

Anyway — to the five questions:

On Mar 13, 2010, at 6:16 PM maximus@erskine.edu wrote:

1) You said you were sorry for hurting my feelings. I said I forgave you for that. It was rash to do so, but I wanted to respond in a way that honors Christ. I am still upset, but my statement was meant to indicate that I want to forgive and am willing to do so. If you are truly sorry, then I want to extend forgiveness (though it may take time to work through).

First, facts. I said in public that I was sorry I hurt your feelings, immediately after you stood to address the room to tell them that I had intimidated you.

Later — when the meeting was breaking up, we talked and we discussed the question you had asked Mr. Wingate, and I apologized, saying something close to this — that I was out of line and shouldn't have said it, that I was sorry I had said it, that it was inappropriate. It was at that point that you said “You are forgiven.”

What I said was actually more than that, but I'm pretty sure that the phrases above were ones that I used. I can refresh my memory by checking the tape — you remember that I said I recorded my classes so that students couldn't misrepresent what I said? I record all of my conversations now. If you would like to hear the tape, we'll sit down with Dr. Alston and listen to it together.

So first, you're mistaken in what you claim I apologized for, and I have evidence to prove it. I don't accuse you of lying; I think you were just mistaken.

However, when comes to your forgiveness, I'm afraid we're in different territory

I didn't know that forgiveness could be, as you say, “rash.” I'm dead sure that rash forgiveness — forgiveness that you don't really mean — in no way “honors Christ.” In fact, it demeans Christ and his call for seventy times seven. Because what you're telling me is that your forgiveness was not sincere, that you were holding back your true feelings, that you hid in your heart something that your lips did not reveal. I'd call that lying, wouldn't you? I'd call it first class deception. That is what is known as an “equivocal oath” — you say one thing, a thing that sounds good, but you mean another. The very definition of a lie.

You're also making forgiveness contingent — which you are free to do —

but which I don't believe Christ required, or even mentioned. In fact, I'm pretty sure that he did the opposite. He never said wait until the person who offended you is sorry, "[truly sorry](#)," before you "[want to extend forgiveness](#)" to him. You're free to feel that way, of course; I mean, I have no problem is that is how you feel, but as a Christian I do resent your ascribing to Christ concepts of forgiveness that I'm pretty sure are antithetical to his teachings. You might want to do a New Testament search on "forgive, forgiveness" and check out what I say.

Also antithetical to Christ's teaching is the idea that "[it may take time to work through](#)." Again, such a concept is a dire misreading of scripture. I can understand lingering resentment, anger, frustration — that's just human; nothing wrong with that. But once you forgive someone, as Christ describes forgiveness, all those burdens are lifted from your heart. That is the real message of Christian forgiveness. And by the way, I do forgive you for trying to get me fired.

Oops — I ran on more than I meant to. That's all I have time for today. But rest assured, I'll be answering each of your points in great detail, and I'm going to request a face to face with you, me, and Dr. Alston. I hope you don't mind, in your words, that "I address Dr. Alston about your remarks."

Looking forward to answering your email completely and to talking with you at length again — with Dr. Alston, of course.

Dr. Crenshaw

From: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>
Date: March 14, 2010 2:20:24 PM EDT
Subject: **Continuing 2**

Hi Max —

On Mar 13, 2010, at 6:16 PM, maximus@erskine wrote:
[Thanks for the email. I'm glad we can begin to clarify some matters.](#)

As we continue to clarify these matters — for which I too am glad — I thought I would go back and start at the top.

I'll comment on your email bit by bit so that it really will be a conversation, a virtual conversation in virtual time.

Also,

I included Dr. Alston in this discussion since he is the Academic Dean.

Fine with me. Helpful, even. By all means, let's include Dr. Alston.

Given the incident Wednesday and statements made by Dr. Alston, I would prefer to begin this discussion through email.

That's up to you, of course, and I certainly have no objection. If you'd be more comfortable in a face-to-face with Dr. Alston present, that's fine also.

Concerning Forgiveness:

My understanding of the matter is that you said you were sorry for hurting my feelings. "And if I offended you or hurt your feelings, I'm sorry," he told the student. "But I don't think I intimidated you in any way" (For support see Greenville news).

Yes, that is what I said after you stood to make your political point about the so-called culture of intimidation. But, as I said in my previous email, that was not the apology for which you said "You are forgiven." Do you dispute the accuracy of that? Because, again, as I said in my previous email, I have a recording of the whole afternoon session on which our subsequent conversation is preserved. So before we can even enter in to the section of your email entitled "Concerning Forgiveness," we have to make sure that we agree on the facts of what happened.

Now that you have been reminded of the sequence of events, may I assume that we share an understanding of the facts, and wouldn't you agree that your earlier assertions about the

sequence of events were mistaken?

I extended forgiveness to you for hurting my feelings

Sorry, but this statement is inaccurate. I made an entirely different apology to you, to which you answered “You are forgiven.” If you would like to hear the tape, we can arrange for you to do so. But you must see that your argument here rests on a false premise and is therefore invalid.

However, it is not clear that you asked for forgiveness for the things you said.

This is incorrect. Would you like to review the tape?

You did not, to my knowledge, admit that the things you said were untrue.

This is incorrect. Would you like to review the tape?

That is, you were sorry about the effect it had but as to the veracity of your claims or the motives of your heart, I don't believe you have said anything to indicate that you were wrong.

This is incorrect. Would you like to review the tape?

Consequently, it is unclear to me whether or not you think you need (or want) my forgiveness on that front.

This may be correct. You may in fact be unclear as to this issue. But the tape will show that the lack of clarity on your part is not due to a lack of clarity in my statement. My statement was clear and direct.

Obviously there is much more in your email to talk about, but since much of you claim depends on your faulty statement of events, it is difficult to continue. If you will stipulate that your

assertions were incorrect about when the apology was made, what the apology said, and when you said “You are forgiven,” it will be easier to address the rest of your email. If you will not so stipulate, I’d suggest that we see Dr. Alston and play the tape ASAP so that you may be convinced of your mistake. Otherwise, or in the meantime, I can continue my reply, but it will be unnecessarily cluttered with reminders that your initial assertion is untrue.

Looking forward to working this out.

Dr. Crenshaw

From: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>

Date: March 14, 2010 5:58:20 PM EDT

Subject: **continuing 3**

Max — haven’t heard a response yet on parts one and two of our dialogue. I’ll go ahead and start part 3

Furthermore, my complaint to Dr. Alston was that I experienced what has been called a "culture of intimidation." This you have clearly denied. “But I don’t think I intimidated you in any way” (again see Greenville news for support).

First, it’s clear that you don’t know what “intimidate” means. If you did, you would see that the quotation in the Greenville News is exactly correct. “Intimidation” is the noun form of the word “intimidate.” Here’s the definition:

-verb (used with object),-dat-ed, -dat-ing.

1.
to make timid; fill with fear.
- 2.

to overawe or cow, as through the force of personality or by superior display of wealth, talent, etc.

3.

to force into or deter from some action by inducing fear: *to intimidate a voter into staying away from the polls.*

As you can see, even if intimidation had been my goal — which is wasn't — you were hardly intimidated. You weren't made timid; you weren't filled with fear; you weren't overawed or cowed, weren't forced into or deferred from some action because fear was induced; indeed, you were bold, outspoken, assertive, defiant, aggressive.

In fine, you were the antithesis of being intimidated.

I, on the other hand, have been a victim of intimidation, so much so that I record all of my public conversations in order to protect me from people, mostly students, who willfully distort or flat-out lie about what I say in an attempt to have me fired from Erskine College. Indeed, as you know, when we were talking my recorder was on — luckily for me. Otherwise we might not be able to sort out what I'm sure were simply mistakes in your assertions. I have no reason to think they were willful distortions.

But once again your attack on me is an example of hamartia, an archery term which means “off target.” It says nothing about motivation; it simply means in general terms “an error,” even though when A. C. Bradley in his Shakespearean criticism modernized Aristotle's original term, he called it “tragic flaw.”

So given this new understanding of “intimidation,” I don't think there's a complaint here any more. Do you?

I can't extend forgiveness on that issue if you are unwilling to admit that you indeed did intimidate me.

Two points:

1. I discussed this rather odd notion of contingent forgiveness in part 1. But you're free to abide by it, non-Biblical though it is.

2. I did not intimidate you, by definition. So your contingency for this failure to "extend forgiveness" no longer applies.

Concerning Responsibility: You seem to be operating with the assumption that just because you are sorry (at least for hurting my feelings) you are not to be held accountable for your actions. In other words, was it wrong that I addressed Dr. Alston about your remarks?

To address your second sentence first:

You are certainly free to see Dr. Alston, and I don't think it was wrong that you did so. In fact, I have given you no indication in written or spoken word, that I have any objections whatsoever for your doing so. I would appreciate your telling me where you got that idea.

Your first sentence:

Nothing I have done could support such an assumption as that. What evidence can you point to in support of that assumption?)And in asking that question, I am once again forced to point out that your basic premise is also wrong, that being that I only said I was sorry for hurting your feelings.)

It is difficult to take seriously your comments here on responsibility when those commenth in themselves are so irresponsible, that is, unfounded on any evidence and based on

a faulty premise.

Sorry this is all coming out in dribs and drabs. I'll get to part 4 as soon as I can.

Dr. Crenshaw

From: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>

Date: March 15, 2010 7:35:26 AM EDT

Subject: continuing 4

Hi Max —

On to part 4:

On Mar 13, 2010, at 6:16 PM, maximus@erskine.edu wrote:

Dr. Alston mentioned under the previous Academic Dean and under himself as the current Academic Dean, that there have been numerous complaints brought against you for your treatment of students. Dr. Alston noted that he thought some of these complaints were questionable. Moreover, he believes that you have made more progress in your interaction with students.

Honesty, Max, honesty. Here is what Dr. Alston has to say about what you claim he said. I would like to assume that your distortions were not intentional: the wording of the two descriptions is significantly different — you have worded yours to create a much different impression than Dr. Alston's wording.

Since you have chosen to continue this issue, I must ask that you be completely truthful with Dr. Crenshaw in all correspondence. It is true that

I told you that Dr. Crenshaw had some history of complaints, because

his methods of challenging students in discussions was sometimes interpreted as overly aggressive even angry. You were also truthful in saying that I told you that most of these complaints were questionable, as they were not supported by other students who were present. You failed to mention, however, that I told you that for every single student complaint that has been registered, I have received at least twenty reports from students who felt that Dr. Crenshaw had made a positive impact on their lives (on second thought, that number is more like 30 to 1.). Your failure to inform Dr. Crenshaw of this statement was not honorable.

Dr. Alston, based on your email to me, seems to have some doubts about your truthfulness and honor; I have some doubt about your ability to record facts actually — we can't debate your assertions until we agree on the facts. In other words, your assertions are too often not completely factual; your representations of events are more self-serving than accurate.

That is, at least, until this incident. But Dr. Alston agreed that the incident Wednesday was unquestionable. You were in the wrong. However, the only appropriate discipline was to write you up. He also mentioned that he talked with you multiple times and that you have already been written up before.

Since none of this has been communicated to me by Dr. Alston, I will withhold my judgement as to its veracity until such time as your assertions are confirmed by Dr. Alston. Frankly, I doubt your assertions; I'm not sure what "to write you up means;" there are procedures for acting on complaints from anyone — student, faculty, staff — about anything, but taking the word of a complainant without full

investigation before any disciplinary action is taken in not procedure. Your assertions would not be acted on until the completion of a thorough investigation, which would include, for example, considering evidence, such as the recordings I have, your email, and my responses.

But any further disciplinary actions, he said, would be un-Christian. I believe this is irresponsible.

Did he say those exact words? Or was that the exact substance of what he said? I have a feeling you have misinterpreted something hear; We will probably need to ask Dr. Alston about this assertion particularly

Even if being sorry means you are not accountable for that particular action, I think both Dr. Alston and yourself have the responsibility to take measures that such verbally abusive behavior will not happen again. Dr. Alston said that he could not give me any assurance that such hostile treatment will not occur again to me or to other students. You have a record, whether warranted or unwarranted, for being hostile to some students. In light of this, I think it is irresponsible to the institution, students, and parents that no further disciplinary action will be taken.

You are, of course, entitled to your opinion; however, if you want to convince others of the soundness of your opinion, you will need fact and analysis of fact. So far your assertions have been short on both. You might also want to factor in to your demands the following considerations: without exception, every complaint relayed to me by the administration has come from Bible and Religion majors, philosophy majors, or both, or a parent of such a major. Coincidence? I think not. A concerted effort by a group of people to get me fired? There is evidence to suggest this is more likely. Indeed, your response, after consulting your compadres, was in fact to try to have me fired, was it not? It all seems part of a pattern of manufactured

outrage. Now it may not be, of course. But . . .

End of part 4. Part 5 soon.

Dr. Crenshaw

From: maximus@erskine.edu
Date: March 15, 2010 11:55:52 AM EDT
Subject: **Re: continuing 4**

Thank you for the time you have taken to respond to my email.

As of now, I am no longer sure you want reconciliation. Most of what you have said appears to be an attempt to win a debate rather than amend wrong. Moreover, it is more than apparent that through your responses you have tried to paint the picture as if you are the victim (Facts - I did not choose to sit next to you, I did not ask that question to get a rise out of you, and I certainly did not ask you to say those hurtful comments to me).

Dr. Alston has maintained that it is who wishes to continue this series of events. This, however, I do not wish to do. And, I imagine you do not wish to so either.

In light of it being unclear as to what exactly was apologized for AND that I think it is very clear that whatever it was that you apologized for, it was not for attempting to intimidate me, I will give you another chance, for good, to settle the matter. If you want reconciliation then agreeing to the following will put an end to the matter:

Do you agree that your comments were verbally abusive, uncharitable, reckless, and unprofessional? Do admit that you attempted to bully me? Will you take measures to ensure that you will not behave this way to me or to another student again?

This is not unreasonable.

From: Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>
Date: March 15, 2010 1:26:19 PM EDT
Subject: **Re: continuing 4**

Hi Max -- thanks for writing back.

On Mar 15, 2010, at 11:55 AM, maximus@erskine wrote:
[Thank you for the time you have taken to respond to my email.](#)

[As of now, I am no longer sure you want reconciliation. Most of what you have said appears to be an attempt to win a debate rather than amend wrong.](#)

Actually, this is incorrect. We are not having a debate. We are having a discussion which you initiated. As part of that discussion — as a necessary part before that discussion can begin — I am trying to make sure that we are in agreement as to the facts so that we can have a clear and correct basis for discussion. Correcting misperceptions or seeking clarification is not debating but is establishing the ground on which discussion can occur.

[Moreover, it is more than apparent that through your responses you have tried to paint the picture as if you are the victim](#)

Here you go again — you make another assertion —saying “it is more than apparent” does not lend it credibility — which you expect me to accept simply because you say it. I disagree — I am not painting myself as a victim. I may be challenging your assertions, asking for clarification or evidence; I may deny some of your claims. But if you really want reconciliation, why do you keep making these little digging assertions? Are you trying to bully me into reconciliation? I really don’t get it.

[\(Facts - I did not choose to sit next to you, I did not ask that question to get a rise out of you, and I certainly did not ask you to say those hurtful comments](#)

to me).

Fact: You tried to have me fired. Compare your facts to mine.

Dr. Alston has maintained that it is who wishes to continue this series of events.

Do you perhaps mean “Dr. Alston has maintained that it is HE who . . .?”

This, however, I do not wish to do. And, I imagine you do not wish to so either.

On the contrary, I am eager to finish answering your letter and to meet with you and Dr. Alston. You started this process. It’s not working out as you had hoped, apparently — but you can’t bail out just because you’re not comfortable, just because it’s not going the way you envisioned. You wrote a long, assertion and error-filled email that I’m trying to understand and rectify; you must take responsibility your words, both in your email, and which you spoke to Dr. Alston.

In other words, you must surely, to avoid outrageous hypocrisy, hold yourself to the same standard of responsibility to which you hold me. It’s only just to do so, isn’t it.

In light of it being unclear as to what exactly was apologized for AND that I think it is very clear that whatever it was that you apologized for, it was not for attempting to intimidate me, I will give you another chance, for good, to settle the matter. If you want reconciliation then agreeing to the following will put an end to the matter:

You will give me another chance? Max, your assertion that is unclear what was being apologized for is demonstrably absurd. *I have a recording of what was said.* How can I make that point more clear.

Again, you don't understand the process —you don't demand conditions for reconciliation; you seek to learn the truth and work from there.

Really, Max, you're embarrassing yourself.

Do you agree that your comments were verbally abusive, uncharitable, reckless, and unprofessional? Do admit that you attempted to bully me? Will you take measures to ensure that you will not behave this way to me or to another student again?

This is not unreasonable.

These are all questions to be answered as we continue our conversation. Look for the next part soon. We might be able to meet with Dr. Alston before spring break. I certainly hope so.

From: maximus @erskine.edu
Date: March 15, 2010 2:02:16 PM EDT
Subject: RE: meeting
To: Gid Alston <alston@erskine.edu>
Cc: maximus@erskine.edu, Crenshaw Bill <billcren@mac.com>

[Note: I am including a copy of Max's email to Dr. Alston because Max cc'd it to me as part of our dialogue. BC]

Dr. Alston, a few points of clarification.

1) I have not chosen to continue this issue. The issue has not yet been resolved. Moreover, Dr. Crenshaw sent me an email. And, I responded to him.

2) I have been seeking to be accurate and fair. Do you expect me to tell Dr. Crenshaw everything that was said during an 1.5 hour conversation? I related to him what was pertinent to the discussion at hand. I even mentioned positive statements to demonstrate that I was attempting to be fair. I guess since I didn't tell Dr. Crenshaw that you said twice that he had "anger management problems" and "anger management issues" that I

was

being unfair. Also, you said that he can be brutal (not physically but verbally). I purposefully refrained from mentioning these things in the email. I was trying to be charitable and respectful. But, you have called me dishonorable.

3) You have also called me dishonorable for not wanting to meet with Dr. Crenshaw face to face. This is not dishonorable. It is prudent. Wednesday I was the victim of mistreatment (not him). Moreover, you have said he has anger management issues. You also mentioned that there have been passed episodes. Also, you said that though it was not justifiable one could understand where Crenshaw was coming from when he made his statements in the "heat of the moment." Surely, these conversations with Dr. Crenshaw have the potential to get emotional. When you can give me no assurance that he will not behave this way again towards me or other students I think it is unfair to call me dishonorable for not wanting to talk to him face to face. Also, I never said I wouldn't speak face to face with him. I simply wished to begin through email to see how the conversation would go.

4) I did not shut the door to Crenshaw. Rather, I gave him a thoughtful response. It is unfair of you to say that I have rejected and refused Dr. Crenshaw.

In light of our correspondence, I have no confidence that you have my interest and well-being in mind as Academic Dean. If you should request a meeting with Dr. Crenshaw and myself, I will bring another party. As of now, I would be uncomfortable with a private meeting with only the two of you.

[End of correspondence. Beginning of Spring Break. Three weeks after my last email to Max, he complained about me and the dean to the president. Below is the cover letter I sent to the President in which I responded to a Maximus's complaint to the President (I do not quote that letter here since it was not addressed to nor cc'd to me by Max). I also attached for the President the correspondence above.

To: Dr. Randy Ruble
From: Dr. Bill Crenshaw

Re: Student Grievance

Date: 4/18/10

Dr. Ruble:

On March 10 of this year, Maximus A chose to enter the rough-and-tumble world of political debate in the on-campus meeting with the representatives from Synod and the Commission. He sat next to me; I did not know him; I did not know he was a student; the room, in fact, was filled with many people I did not know.

Maximus A has filed a grievance based on an exchange in that meeting.

When Maximus A first approached Dr. Alston with his grievance, apparently on direction of the Office of Student Services, he had two demands: 1) that I be fired; and 2) that I apologize. I did apologize, as I document in the narrative below and the email attachments. As for being fired, I think that's a demand which warrants reconsideration.

The best way for me to approach the issue is, it think, to use Maximus A's cover letter to you as the basis for my response. I will for the most part confine myself to confirming or correcting factual claims by Maximus A although I will on the rare occasion be obliged to offer interpretation as well.

Paragraph 1

Maximus A asserts that he has a grievance. No factual claims in paragraph.

Paragraph 2

Sentence 1: Quoting. *“On Wednesday March 10, Dr. Crenshaw directly called me ‘a liar for Jesus’ and told me to ‘enjoy Hell (sic).’ He further remarked that the day of my graduation was not soon enough.”*

These statements are accurate insofar as they go. However, they are incomplete and lack context. Here is the complete record and the context.

Because I have an afternoon class, I enter the meeting with the commissioners well after it has started. I am directed to a seat next to someone I don't know. Mr. Wingate is being closely questioned by

members of the audience. The questions are pointed anybody often repeated; the answers are for the audience apparently inadequate. This goes on for almost thirty minutes. Then the person next to me raises his hand. The person Maximus A; I do not know him.

Maximus A is called upon and says the following, transcribed from a recording of the event (time 25:40 on E-tape):

I hear a lot of this talk about indoctrination. Is that really the expectations of the ARP, that there would be, that this school would be used as an institution of indoctrination? Is that your intention? I hear that, and I'm not sure if that really is the case.

No one would ever ask such a question seriously. The question is designed to take heat off of Mr. Wingate, and he is visibly relieved. ("Of course not," he says.) The person next to me is shilling for the commission, so I give him a hard time, speaking to him in a low voice. I say the following things, according to written notes -- this exchange was not picked up on the recording:

C: (*sotto voce* throughout): Nice job. A softball question, eh?

C: People do have serious questions, you know.

C: Liars for Jesus, eh? (A reference to the book *Liars for Jesus*, which chronicles the lies propagated nationwide by the religious right in efforts to advance their agendas)

C: Enjoy hell. (Because this is where such liars should surely end up.)

C: How long before you graduate? (Realizing that he might be a student.)

Maximus A: Next year.

C: Not soon enough.

So the context here is a Jeff Gannon question from Maximus A, a question designed to appear legitimate but in reality a lie -- a way to break the flow of the questions in the audience. Jeff Gannon was hounded out of the White House Press Corps once his role as a shill for the White House was revealed.

I called out what I believed to be our Jeff Gannon on his deception in no uncertain terms, not knowing he was a student.

He is not my student. He has never been in a class with me. He never will be in a class with me. This was not a faculty/student relationship.

Sentence 2 - end of paragraph: Maximus A tries to argue that he was intimidated by rejecting the standard definition of “intimidation,” saying he does not want to argue over semantics, apparently unaware that “semantics” is “meaning.” Obviously, he does want to argue over meanings -- he wants us to accept his meanings.

Paragraph 3

Maximus A asserts that “Dr. Crenshaw has made comments to me which indicate to me that he does not care to take me or my grievance seriously.” In refutation of this assertion I simply attach to this document a complete record of my correspondence with Maximus A. (His submission of correspondence was substantially complete.) A fair consideration of Maximus A’s claim requires careful reading of the correspondence -- it represents many hours of effort to carry on a dialogue with Maximus A, a dialogue that had to be written because Maximus A refused to meet with me face to face even with Dr. Alston present. As you’ll see in the record, I did my best not only to answer him honestly, but also to counsel him.

Paragraph 4

A continuation of the claims in the points of view paragraph. I’m not sure what he wants, but I am sure that his claims are refuted by the record.

One more point needs to be made. Maximus A claims at various times that I either did not apologize, or that I apologized only for hurting his feelings. As I told Maximus A repeatedly in our correspondence, and as the tape reveals, I did apologize to him in exactly the way he requested. In an explanation and apology lasting nearly a minute, I told him that I was “out of line,” that my response “was inappropriate,” and “I apologize,” to which he said “You are forgiven.” I will be happy to apologize again if that will address his grievance, but I would feel better if he would at least acknowledge that I had in fact done so on the day of the incident.

In closing, I have to say that I find it interesting the Maximus A feels that he can enter the world of rough-and-tumble political discourse but that he can also seek special protection. Maximus A is an adult. He was not acting as a student in the meeting, but as a player. Now he is displaying a sense of entitlement that we see all too often on campus. I think we need to ask to what extent are we ourselves encouraging and enabling this sense of entitlement and infantilizing our students. Maximus A will graduate in a little over a year.

Not satisfied with the President's resolution, Max then mailed grievance letters to the board and Synod and maybe various others. Then to SACS. I heard a rumor that Antonine Scalia had turned down a hearing at SCOTUS. BC]