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Citrus College Will Sanction Instructor Accused of Giving Extra Credit for Letters Opposing War

By [LAWRENCE BIEMILLER](#)

Citrus College will sanction a part-time instructor whose students said she offered them extra credit for writing and sending letters to President Bush that opposed going to war with Iraq.

Officials of the community college, which is located near Los Angeles, said that a dean met with students in the course on Thursday and that they "were clear in their understanding that they would only receive credit if they wrote 'protest' letters."

The instructor, Rosalyn Kahn, could not be reached on Sunday for comment. But in a brief comment to the *Los Angeles Times*, she said that the allegations against her were "100 percent lies."

Ms. Kahn was hired this semester to teach Speech 106, a course the college's students are required to take if they hope to transfer into the California State University or University of California system.

The college's president, Louis E. Zellers, said in a letter on Friday that "all students should have freedom of expression and equal opportunity to benefit, regardless of their political beliefs." He added that extra credit given for Ms. Kahn's original assignment would be expunged, and that students would be given an

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alternative assignment in which they could draft letters to President Bush "concerning the possible war with Iraq" and would be encouraged to express whatever their own views are.

Christopher J. Stevens, a first-year student at Citrus who is in Ms. Kahn's class, said in an interview that Ms. Kahn had also offered extra credit to students if they wrote letters to Jack Scott, a state senator. Mr. Stevens said the assignment was to write letters "about how important adjunct faculty members are to our education," and that Ms. Kahn had delivered the letters to Mr. Scott in person.

At another point, Mr. Stevens said, Ms. Kahn had asked students to fill out postcards about the importance of adjunct instructors. He said that the postcards did not carry addresses, but that Ms. Kahn said she would later address them herself. He added that she had also encouraged students to visit the Web site of [MoveOn.org](#), a political-action organization, and that "the first 10 minutes of every class were devoted to her political agenda."

Mr. Stevens said he and another student tried several times to file complaints about the assignments with Citrus administrators, but were rebuffed. Subsequently, Mr. Stevens got in touch with the California College Republicans, and he was advised to contact the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. The Philadelphia-based organization, known as FIRE, is a nonprofit educational foundation devoted to free speech, equality, due process, and academic freedom on college campuses.

Thor L. Halvorssen, FIRE's executive director, wrote to President Zellers about Mr. Stevens's allegations on Tuesday. During the class's scheduled meeting on Thursday, Mr. Stevens said, Ms. Kahn was sent home and the students met instead with the college's associate dean for language arts and foreign languages, Samuel Lee, who asked about the allegations in detail.

In [a letter](#) he sent Friday to Mr. Halvorssen, President Zellers said that based on Mr. Lee's meeting, Citrus

administrators believed Ms. Kahn had abused her authority. He said he would write to both President Bush and Senator Scott asking them to disregard the letters from her students.

He added that Mr. Lee had apologized to Ms. Kahn's students, and would work with any of them who have questions about their grades in the class. Mr. Zellers also said Ms. Kahn would be sanctioned "in an appropriate manner."

Neither Mr. Zellers nor Mr. Lee could be reached Sunday.

Mr. Stevens said that the meeting with Mr. Lee had "re-established our trust," and that Mr. Lee had told students he would let them know by e-mail whether an exam scheduled for Tuesday would be canceled, and also whether the class would be taught for the rest of the semester by another instructor.



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