

Tuesday May 7, 2019

Dear Professor Maun, Dean Hartwell, and Dean Ingrid Guerra-Lopez,

We are writing to you with grave concerns about Professor Watten and his treatment of graduate students and colleagues extending over the past 20 years to the present. These concerns have once again come to the surface in recent weeks, especially in relation to his complaints filed against two individual students who are in the English program now.

Courageous graduate students and faculty have recently made their concerns public, documenting Watten's behavior (<https://bwrecords2019.home.blog>). These statements attest to the ongoing and longstanding pattern of inappropriate behavior that he has manifested toward many graduate students and other members of the Wayne State community. Therefore, we believe that Professor Watten should not be teaching, advising or mentoring any graduate students. It would be unethical to allow Professor Watten to continue to work with graduate students in any professional capacity, as it would continue to expose them to the kinds of harassment documented in the online accounts.

Given Professor Watten's history of harassment, physical intimidation, bullying and verbal and emotional abuse of graduate students, we the undersigned members of the English Department faculty request that Professor Watten's status as graduate faculty immediately be revoked.

Moreover, given Professor Watten's history of confrontation, aggression, angry outbursts, and threats of retaliation, and given the number of graduate students and faculty who actively avoid contact with him because of this history (several of whom have expressed concerns about their safety), we request that he be reassigned to a new office, one not located in the Maccabees building. Permitting Professor Watten to occupy his current office in the English department will perpetuate the anxiety and fear documented in the public accounts cited above and will continue to contribute to the sense we have now of an unsafe work environment.

Our department cannot ethically or effectively teach and mentor our graduate students so long as Professor Watten is in active contact with graduate students. Professor Watten's behavior has had extensive damaging effects on the personal and professional lives of graduate students in our department. That must stop now.

We urge you to act immediately and decisively.