

Discipline appeal *continued from page 1*

academic year. I owe this guy a response," Doucette said at the Board hearing. "It took me a long time to get to and I have many other things to do."

He stated that that he did not have time to go over all aspects of the appeal and it "took a while to collect" the information, but also claimed that he relied upon Allbee's judgment and the summary report of private investigator James Sweeney, whom EICCD had hired to investigate Compton's conduct as Calumet adviser. Doucette admitted that he had not read beyond the summary of Sweeney's report and interview of Compton, nor had he listened to or read student or employee interviews beyond Compton's.

Doucette said, "I relied on what I thought to be the most independent, objective result, which was Mr. Sweeney's report."

Allbee also stated that he had only read Sweeney's summary of his report and that he had not read the specifics of the interviews performed by Sweeney.

Doucette sent his decision to Compton in an e-mail, which stated, "In response to your appeal that I overrule the Level Two disciplinary notice your [sic] received from President Allbee, I have reviewed the materials related to the incidences that led to the disciplinary action and find no basis for overruling his decision." Doucette provided no supporting information to accompany his e-mail decision ruling in opposition to Compton's appeal request.

The Board made its decision at the end of the hearing, choosing not to deliberate between the current and following month's meetings. EICCD Board Member Denise Hollenbeck first motioned to "support the administration" on Compton's Level II Discipline Notice. EICCD Board member, Bill Phelan, seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Each Board member, by roll call, voted in favor of Hollenbeck's motion.

Origins of Discipline

The beginning incidents that led to the Compton's discipline are traceable back to an October 29, 2013, Calumet article titled "Confusion over student award," by former MCC student Spencer Ludman. The article focused on the Student Senate Student of the Month award, raising issues of conflict of interest and nepotism when Student Senate advisor John Dabeet's niece, Loureen

Sayej, won the award for the second time in 12 months. Sayej was Student Senate President at the time and also lived in the same home as Dabeet. The award was based on a show of hands vote conducted by Dabeet. Sayej had left the room for the vote.

Although Calumet staff had determined the story to be newsworthy and a Calumet reporter had researched and written the story, a charge of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) retaliation was filed against Compton as a result of the article's publication.

EICCD then attempted to interview student journalists without legal representation or informing them of their legal rights. They were also uninformed that Sweeney, a private investigator, had been hired to conduct the inter-

views. that they refused to participate in the duly constituted and legally required EEO investigation because of [Compton's] instruction not to cooperate and the students presumed a threat of lowered grades."

- "[Compton] acknowledged the controversial Calumet article was divisive among the Calumet staff and caused divisions and tension in class. [Compton] clearly took one side of the position, and this created a hostile environment that undermined learning in [Compton's] class."

According to Compton and his attorney Eric Mail, Compton ad-

...according to Allbee and Doucette at the Board hearing, neither had done more than listen to Sweeney's interview of Compton and read Sweeney's summary report.

views.

Sweeney operates James Sweeney and Associates, Inc. The company website claims the organization is "A Risk Management Company" that "specializes in providing investigative solutions to businesses in response to criminal activity in the workplace and employee misconduct." The website also claims that "once suspects are identified, interviews are conducted with the intent to obtain admissions of guilt."

There is no evidence that Sweeney obtained any admissions of guilt, nor any evidence of EEO retaliation in Compton's case. Yet Allbee wrote up Compton for information he states Sweeney found during his investigation.

Allbee's July 3, 2014 letter of Level Two Discipline stated that Compton had "admitted to" the following actions:

- "A student complained [Compton] threatened to lower her grade for talking to another faculty member about an article in the Calumet."
- "Other students also reported to investigators

mitted to none of these behaviors, neither in the interview with Sweeney nor at any other time.

The costs of Eric Mail's services for Compton were paid for by the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA).

During the Board hearing, the only evidence for the discipline provided by EICCD from Sweeney's report were three statements that do not appear to support the discipline notice. The statements consisted of one, that Compton was aware that Ludman's story could be controversial; two, that Compton, as Calumet adviser, was part of the classroom discussion about the newsworthiness of the story; and three, that no intent of Compton's to retaliate could be determined.

Compton's Appeal Letter

Compton's appeal included this statement. "I was never informed of the charges within this Disciplinary Notice until it was handed to me on July 3, 2014. I was never provided the opportunity to speak in my defense as to the charges presented in the Notice. My one, and only, opportunity to

speak on anything related to these charges was during my interview concerning the EEO investigation with Private Investigator James Sweeney."

Compton's appeal included lengthy explanations against each accusation, denying all of the disciplinary notices charges.

The appeal addresses the first point, that "A student complained [Compton] threatened to lower her grade for talking to another faculty member about an article in the Calumet," by stating "The student in question was given a lower grade than she wished for at midterm because she had not performed well enough to earn the grade she desired. The Calumet is very much collaborative and depends upon collegiality and trust...Students work together in almost every aspect of newspaper production. [The student] intentionally disrupted another student's reporting. That student had put in significant time researching, determining and arranging interview subjects, and preparing interview questions. [The complaining student] approached a faculty member who was one of these potential interview subjects. She frightened this faculty member by misrepresenting the nature of the article and therefore made her colleague's article unnecessarily difficult to report and write."

Regarding Compton's "instruction not to cooperate" in the EEO investigation, Compton stated that he instructed no one whether to cooperate or not, but that he informed the students that they had a right to request why they were chosen for interview, and that they had a right to legal representation during the interview.

In response to discipline point about the "controversial Calumet article," Compton stated, "As The Calumet adviser, I did support the publication of Spencer Ludman's article because it was newsworthy, he provided ample opportunity for all involved in the story to present their viewpoints, and the article was objectively written. This support of a student is central to the job of the Calumet adviser. To disallow the publication of Mr. Ludman's article because certain parties would be unhappy with its publication would have been unwarranted censorship and would have run contrary to the First Amendment, i.e., Freedom of the Press, i.e., a subject that is covered as a central part of journalism in a journalism class."