

Sexual Misconduct Investigation of Three Dartmouth Professors

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Three Dartmouth College professors are under investigation for alleged sexual misconduct. The three professors have been identified as Todd F. Heatherton, 56; William M. Kelly, 45; and Paul J. Whalen, 54. The three are all tenured professors and work in the Centers for Social and Psychological Brain Sciences at Dartmouth College.

Dr. Heatherton is the Director of the Center for Social Brain Sciences. He is a professor of Human Relations and his research focuses on social behavior, self-regulation, self-esteem, and self-referential processing. Dr. Kelly is a professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences and conducts a research program on various behavioral techniques. Dr. Kelly's area of expertise is memory and self-regulation. Dr. Whalen is a professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences and runs the *Whalen Lab*. Dr. Whalen's areas of expertise include affective neuroscience, facial expressions, and the amygdala.

In late October, the professors stopped reporting to work with no explanation for their absence. Students began hanging posters around the campus demanding the college administration explain what was going on. Since then, it has been reported that the professors are on paid leave while a joint criminal investigation is being conducted by the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office, the Grafton County Attorney's Office, the New Hampshire State Police, the Grafton County Sheriff's Office, and the Hanover Police Department. Although details of the allegations have not been released, Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald of New Hampshire confirmed the existence of an active investigation into allegations of "serious misconduct" by the three professors. In addition, it has been reported that the professors' access to the campus has since been restricted.

Dartmouth spokeswoman Diana Lawrence said that the college was conducting its own investigation into the allegations of "serious misconduct." "We are engaged in a thorough and impartial process that protects the rights of all parties and promotes the safety of our campus community," Lawrence said in a statement.

The president of Dartmouth, Philip K. Hanlon, said that the college was cooperating with the criminal investigation of the three professors. "It is important to remember that investigation are ongoing, with no official findings yet produced. However, we take these allegations very seriously and are pursuing our own independent investigations in coordination with law enforcement officials," he wrote. President Hanlon continued, "I want to say in the most empathetic way possible that sexual misconduct and harassment are unacceptable and have no place at Dartmouth. Such acts harm us as individuals and as members of the community."

This latest situation at Dartmouth comes amidst a time when an exceptional number of colleges and universities have been accused by both complainants and respondents of mishandling complaints of sexual misconduct. In the wake of the current increase in lawsuits brought by both complainants and accused individuals, institutions are advised to review their sexual misconduct policies and update them if necessary to ensure compliance. We encourage institutions to provide regular training to students, educators and all members of the school community on how to properly recognize, prevent and respond to allegations of sexual misconduct.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding education-related issues, please contact Hayley B. Dryer at HDryer@cullenanddykman.com or at 516-357-3745.

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