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## **No suspension for dental student**

### **Dean overturns punishment, but offending blogger still will go on probation, do community service**

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The dean of Marquette University's School of Dentistry has overturned the suspension of a student who posted negative comments about classmates and professors on a blog, saying the discipline was "not appropriate" for the circumstance, according to Scott Taylor, the student's lawyer.

Instead, Theodore Schrubbe, a second-year dental student, will be placed on probation and required to perform 100 hours of community service. He must also make a public apology to his class, Taylor said.

"Ted is very relieved," he said. "This punishment differs dramatically from the first."

Last month, in a decision that drew sharp criticism on and off campus, Schrubbe, 22, was suspended for the rest of the academic year and ordered to repeat his fall semester after a committee of dental students, professors and administrators determined that a half-dozen postings on his blog were in violation of Marquette's codes of conduct. One posting described a professor as "a (expletive) of a teacher." Another described 20 classmates as having the "intellectual/maturity of a 3-year-old."

Schrubbe did not use names on his blog, which included comments on subjects ranging from drinking to video games, and the Web site was intended for his friends' viewing only. Critics said the suspension was too harsh.

William Lobb, the dental school's dean to whom Schrubbe appealed, agreed. Schrubbe received a letter from Lobb on Thursday, informing him that his suspension was being repealed, Taylor said. The dean said he had made his decision with the help of an advisory committee.

"The advisory committee recommended, and I concur, that suspension in this specific circumstance is not appropriate," Taylor quotes Lobb's letter as saying. "Consequently, I have decided to overturn the decision to suspend you from the School of Dentistry."

Taylor said Schrubbe's mother did not want to release the letter because she works in the dental school and fears

retribution from the administration. The Schrubbes did not return a call for comment.

Lobb referred a call to Brigid O'Brien Miller, the university's spokeswoman, who said a federal law prevents her from commenting on a student disciplinary action. She said the university was obliged to investigate Schrubbe's blog after a student alerted the administration to it. The committee that recommended suspension "carefully hears and deliberates over significant amounts of information," she said.

Lobb's decision was welcome news to Ryan Alexander, a Marquette undergraduate who runs a liberal blog called 1832.blogspot.com. He had helped organize a petition with nearly 300 signatures demanding that Schrubbe's suspension be repealed.

"We thought the decision would have set a very dangerous precedent for all students, not just bloggers," said Alexander, who often criticizes the Marquette administration on his blog. "If allowed to stand, we worried that the university would start punishing students for all kinds of comments made online - whether it's a blog, message board, Facebook.com or instant messaging. We were wondering - where will it end?"

John McAdams, a Marquette professor who runs a conservative blog called Marquette Warrior, said he was pleased that Schrubbe could continue his education uninterrupted. But McAdams, who had crusaded for the dental student, said the revised punishment was still excessive.

"The *most* that the Dental School should have done is for some administrator to take the student aside and say, 'Off the record, don't you think those posts were a bit ill-advised? Don't you think that maybe you should take them offline?' " McAdams said on his blog. "The least the school could have done was to entirely blow off something that was, in reality, pretty trivial."

When Denis Lynch, associate dean of the dental school, informed Schrubbe of his original disciplinary action, he threatened him with expulsion if he continued to post material on "any blog sites that contain crude, demeaning and unprofessional remarks." The letter from Lobb made no such threat.

Still, Taylor said, "I think his blogging days, at least for the near term, are history."

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