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Phi Delta Theta Student Faces Suspension from Franklin College for sending Snapchats

This week, Franklin College will hold a second disciplinary hearing on misconduct allegations against junior Patrick Clark for Snapchats sent to other members of Clark's recently suspended fraternity, Phi Delta Theta (PDT). The school's original decision to indefinitely suspend Clark was issued by VP of Student Affairs Dean Ellis Hall on March 14, 2016. That decision was overturned on appeal last week by Franklin College's President Thomas J. Minar. Clark's case has been remanded back to the Student Affairs Office to be re-adjudicated in accordance with the school's established judicial procedures.

According to Clark's attorney, Maritza Webb, "Clark's suspension was swiftly imposed by Dean Hall through an egregious violation of Clark's rights as a student at Franklin College. No criminal allegations have been made against Clark; rather, [Franklin College] is simply persecuting Clark for private communications that expressed an opinion the school found objectionable. . . The college now continues its crusade against Clark as it restarts the judicial process but still shows no intention of providing Clark with a fair and impartial hearing." Thus far, the school has refused to identify the students that reported Clark for the Snapchats. For the upcoming hearing, the college will not ensure the availability of the reporting officer as required by their judicial procedure and has asserted it can rely on its findings made in the original decision.

At this time, Clark is the only student from PDT who has been formally disciplined by the college as a result of the allegations that prompted the chapter's suspension. "Clark is an honors student with no prior criminal or disciplinary history. The school's actions suggest that the swift discipline taken against Clark may be no more than a token response to [PDT's] suspension, leaving unaddressed serious incidents, including illegal behavior of which the school has direct knowledge," Clark's attorney further stated.

Franklin College's chapter of Phi Delta Theta's operations were suspended by the fraternity in early March, pending an investigation into allegations of various illegal acts and instances of student misconduct. On April 6, the chapter's charter was officially suspended by the PDT's for "risk management violations and failing chapter operations."

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