

**Investigative Report**  
**Regarding Allegations related to Theatre Department**  
**Conducted By Central Connecticut State University**

*Report Prepared By:*

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January 10, 2019

## I. Introduction

In or about April, 2018, the University and/or the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) received one or more reports about sexual misconduct and/or other inappropriate behaviors exhibited by faculty members in the Theatre Department towards students and/or staff members at CCSU. This report addresses the concerns raised with the alleged misconduct of Professor Joshua Perlstein. Some of the allegations of reported sexual misconduct were also the subject of an article written by 1-210B 11 in the student-run newspaper, The Recorder. The complaints known at that time may be summarized as follows:

- One or more students and/or former students claim that they were asked to act out the word "sex" or similar terms.
- One or more students and/or former students claim that they were asked to rehearse and act out scenes with sexual acts.
- One or more students and/or former students claim that they were asked in audition questionnaires if they would be willing to engage in full or partial nudity.
- One or more students and/or former students claim that they were asked to remove their clothing to act out scenes and that they needed to demonstrate that they were connected to their sexuality.
- One or more students and/or former students claim that Professor Perlstein made unwelcome propositions and advances of a sexual nature.

ODE personnel received these complaints and, in some cases, may have received information regarding the allegations.

On or about April 10, 2018, Professor Perlstein was placed on administrative leave pending the conclusion of the investigation. 1-210B 17

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In April of 2018, CCSU retained Attorneys Lisa Banatoski Mehta and Christopher B. Engler of Shipman & Goodwin LLP to investigate the allegations. They

also provided notice of the allegations to Professor Perlstein on or about May 4, 2018. Attorneys Mehta and Engler reviewed information received and materials compiled by ODB regarding this matter. They also conducted numerous interviews with dozens of potential witnesses and relevant individuals and reviewed a wide range of documentation. As part of their investigation, Attorneys Mehta and Engler also attempted to contact other potential complainants and/or witnesses that had been identified but, in some cases, the individuals did not respond to such requests for interviews. In addition, as part of their investigation, Attorneys Mehta and Engler interviewed Professor Perlstein. Professor Perlstein was represented at his investigatory interview by his union representative, Paul Filson, Director of Member Services for CSU -- AAUP.

The investigation sought to determine whether the reports of alleged misconduct and/or inappropriate behavior could be substantiated. The results of this investigation follow.

## **II. Theatre Department Background**

The University has a full-service Theatre Department. The mission of the Theatre Department is as follows:

The two-fold mission of the Theatre Department is to provide a foundation for the artistic and intellectual growth of our students and to offer a cultural opportunity to the community through public performance. Theatre is a multi-art form, consisting of performance, design, technology, art, music, dance, and literature. Therefore, the education of Theatre students requires a comprehensive program of practical application of techniques and theory, plus personal awareness, in order to prepare students for productive participation in an increasingly diverse and multi-cultural world. The performance offered to the public should provide a varied season of productions to build an appreciation of the theatrical event as well as an increased sense of the value of the arts in our society.

To fulfill this mission, the Department provides instruction in both the performance aspects and technical elements of theatre. There is little overlap between the two different programs in that most, if not all, professors focus on either the technical side of the program or the performance area, but not both. The Department also offers opportunities for students to participate in both faculty and student-run productions. While the curriculum and classes offered in the Theatre Department include some written assignments and work product, students participate in a substantial amount of performance exercises.

It should be noted that nearly all individuals interviewed, including but not limited to both current and former students in the Department, commented that there

exists and has existed for quite some time tension and conflict between various staff and faculty members within the Theatre Department. Such conflict has also generated some complaints made by some members of the Department against other members of the Department and has contributed to an environment in which "factions" have developed and relations have been quite strained.

### **III. Factual Allegations and Findings**

By way of background, it is noteworthy that this investigation is unique in that the allegations effectively span several decades. Indeed, as a result of the newspaper article in *The Recorder*, new allegations previously not reported and investigated surfaced which required inquiry and investigation. Such allegations related both to activities inside and outside of the classroom and performance spaces at the University. Some allegations related to certain exercises that students were asked to perform. Others related to alleged inappropriate comments or personal contacts. Still others relate to more significant sexual misconduct some of which came to light during the pendency of the investigation. The investigators reviewed thousands of pages of documents, written accounts, notes or statements, personnel records, text and email messages and interviewed dozens of witnesses, including current and former students, faculty members and university administrators regarding the specific allegations and the climate of the Theatre Department.

At the outset, it is important to note that in the course of the investigation and the interviews conducted nearly all of the current and/or former students used the word "creepy" to describe Professor Perlstein. When asked to elaborate, many recounted that they did not trust Professor Perlstein, they did not want to be alone with him in his office or in a rehearsal space, and they felt as though he did not respect their personal space. More recent students admitted that they had heard "stories" about Professor Perlstein and his conduct or relationships with female students; many also admitted that they had been warned by prior students to be careful of and cautious around Professor Perlstein because of the above-referenced issues and his flirtatious behavior. At least one student admitted that she felt like she was being "groomed" by Professor Perlstein due to the special attention that he was giving to her and that other students commented on the fact that he was singling her out.

The witnesses that were interviewed consistently reported that Professor Perlstein routinely conducted warm-up exercises, improvisations and visualizations in classes in which he sometimes requested that students imagine themselves naked or act out words representing various sexual activities such as "sex" and "orgasm." In some cases, one or more female students reported that, during these "exercises," at times they would "catch" Professor Perlstein looking at them in such a way that made them feel uncomfortable.

Similarly, several students recounted incidents in which Professor Perlstein made inappropriate comments to them regarding their bodily appearance and/or

sexuality. Current and former female students consistently reported that Professor Perlstein would make comments about an individual's weight, body type, body parts and sexuality. He told one student that she was not "sexual enough" to play a certain role in a play. He also told the same student "you walk in a room and your tits are like bam." In some instances, these comments were made in front of the class and/or at the very least in the presence of one or more other students. In at least a few instances, female students reported that Perlstein questioned why the female students didn't act in the nude or suggested that they needed to remove their clothing if they wished to be convincing as a serious actress. Those students who were the subject of such comments and/or critique reported that such comments made them feel uncomfortable and, in one or more instances, witnesses admitted that they withdrew from active participation, the class or the University to avoid such conduct, often to their financial detriment. In some cases, such students admitted that they did not report such concerns because they were fearful of what impact it would have on their grades, ability to be cast in theatre productions, and/or prospects after graduation.

There has also been criticism by other current and former members of the Theatre Department, many of whom were interviewed, regarding the choices of plays that Professor Perlstein proposed to present, perform and/or direct. In some cases, it has been alleged that he has deliberately chosen plays to produce or direct that include sexual themes or nudity. Likewise, at least one professor testified that Professor Perlstein used an audition questionnaire and/or inquired verbally as to whether auditioning students would be willing to act in the nude. Notably, such professor had also filed an anonymous complaint contemporaneously regarding such verbal inquiries during auditions. In addition, other witnesses confirmed that Professor Perlstein sometimes verbally or in writing inquired of auditioning students as to whether they would be willing to act fully or partially nude.

By his own admission, Professor Perlstein wanted to rehearse and perform the play, *Oleanna*, with a female student partner, which both professors and students frowned upon in their interviews with the investigators in this matter. *Oleanna* is a play by David Mamet in which there are only two actors, a male and a female lead. The play depicts the power struggle between a professor who is about to make tenure and a female student who accuses the professor of sexual harassment. Ultimately, the professor verbally and physically threatens the female student in the play. It was reported that Professor Perlstein did read and rehearse the play, *Oleanna* with one or more female students and that he attempted to do so with several other female students over the course of time.

Professor Perlstein did, in fact, read and perform *Oleanna* with a now former student during the time that she was still an actively enrolled student at the University; that production actually toured area universities and other locations. During the preparation of and period of that performance, the former student reported that Professor Perlstein had engaged in a sexual relationship with her. In fact, he had been

previously disciplined for his involvement with the student.<sup>1</sup> At the time of the interviews conducted by the undersigned investigators, the former student stated that, upon further reflection, she did not believe that such earlier relationship was fully consensual on her part. Indeed, she described a sexual relationship in which Professor Perlstein aggressively pursued her physically and emotionally even when she attempted to end the relationship on several occasions.

Notably, the former student believed that, since Professor Perlstein was the only Theatre Professor teaching in the Honors Program at the time, he was the only person who could oversee her senior honors thesis, an understanding which he confirmed for her. Because Professor Perlstein was the sponsor/advisor for her honors thesis/senior project, she believed she needed his assistance to successfully execute her project and graduate from the University. Therefore, she claims that she felt as though she had no choice but to capitulate to his demands. While still a student, she agreed to accompany him to see a show in New York City as friends. She claims that, unbeknownst to her, that he arranged for the two to stay overnight in a one bedroom apartment that he had arranged through AirBnB. There, she alleges that there was sexual contact which was not consensual.

The now former student reported that he continued to pursue her and pressure her to continue a personal and sexual relationship with him while she was at the University. He threatened to pull his support from her projects and to cancel performances that he had helped schedule with his professional contacts outside of the University if she did not remain in the relationship. He also threatened to not allow her to perform in other scheduled performances if she attempted to break off their relationship or if she shared the details of their relationship with anyone. On several occasions, he acknowledged the impropriety of their relationship under the University's policies in electronic communications with the student. Extensive electronic communications were provided to and reviewed by the investigators. In some cases, such communications were graphic and sexually explicit and indeed acknowledged the impropriety of the relationship.

It should be noted that neither this investigation nor the 1-210B 17 referred to in Footnote 1 above represented the first time that the University has been called upon to investigate alleged sexual harassment and/or misconduct in the Theatre Department including with respect to Professor Perlstein. Indeed, in 2004, a complaint was made by a student in which it was alleged that when Professor Perlstein met her for lunch, he shared personal details of his life, claimed that the student was "his destiny" and made

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1-210B 17 At that time, Professor Perlstein indicated that they were no longer in a relationship and, he agreed that he would no longer have an advisor/advisee relationship with the student, would not teach the student, and that he would not direct any activities in which the student would be participating.

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unwelcome advances toward her including but not limited to kissing her on the cheek, attempting to hold her hand and hugging her and grabbing her buttocks. Following the interaction, he continued to send unwelcome emails until the student's father stepped in, demanded that Professor Perlstein cease and desist such activities, and warned that if he did not he would contact the authorities. An investigation ensued, and, during such investigation, Professor Perlstein admitted that he had exercised poor judgment in his behavior. Ultimately, the investigator, the University's Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs/Director of Affirmative Action, determined that Professor Perlstein had acted inappropriately and in violation of the University's policies:

Based on the above noted findings, Professor Perlstein engaged in conduct on or about April 30, 2004 that constitutes repeated, unwelcome sexual advances and such conduct had the effect of creating a hostile and offensive learning environment. It is, therefore, determined that the totality of Professor Perlstein's actions constituted sexual harassment in violation of the Central Connecticut State University's Sexual Harassment Policy.

During the course of this investigation, it was also reported that Professor Perlstein made an unwelcome advance in which he attempted to kiss a student near the call board to the left of the entrance to the Black Box Theatre at the University in the late 1990's. In that instance, it is alleged that Professor Perlstein approached the individual from behind and tried to kiss her on the lips. She was able to turn her head so that the kiss landed on her cheek but it is alleged that the Professor whispered that the then student should "not attempt to pull away when [he is] trying to kiss her." A few weeks later, the female student confronted Professor Perlstein and, in no uncertain terms, told him that he had made her uncomfortable, that his advance was inappropriate and unwelcome as she was a married student and that he was not to ever attempt to do so again. The student recalled that, during this exchange, Professor Perlstein was most concerned about whether she had reported it to anyone at the University. The student had been scheduled to be the student stage manager for the Professor's upcoming show but withdrew from the commitment as a result of her interactions with Professor Perlstein. She did not want to put herself in the position of being with him in the types of one-on-one meetings that customarily take place between a director and stage manager, and she did not want to be in the secluded theater spaces with him late in the evening for rehearsals. Therefore, a male student assumed the stage manager responsibilities.

During his investigatory interview, Professor Perlstein denied engaging in most of the conduct alleged or claimed that the allegations were a product of one or more "misunderstandings." He also claimed that some of the comments or behaviors were inaccurately attributed to him when another professor in the Theatre Department, Professor Thom Delventhal, was actually the individual responsible for such comments or conduct. Specifically, Professor Perlstein flatly denied making comments about the sexuality of students and alleged that it was Delventhal that told students that "if they wanted to succeed, they needed to get f\*\*\*ed." He also indicated that it is his belief

that current and/or former members of the Department do not like him because of his political or religious beliefs and that Delventhal was upset with him for not supporting the hire of Delventhal's wife for another position in the Department. He also alleged other inappropriate behavior on the part of Delventhal.

Professor Perlstein also objected to the characterizations made by others about his choice of plays, saying that "sex is not interesting on stage." He denied asking students whether they would be willing to act in the nude verbally or in writing on audition questionnaires. He also suggested that there were other productions in the Department that did include some nudity including a student-run production of HAIR that was voted on and approved by the Department.

With respect to the allegations relating to unwelcome advances, Professor Perlstein also denied any misconduct. Specifically, he maintained that the alleged incident with the student near the call board at the entrance of the Black Box Theater was a "misunderstanding," stating that he was merely trying to congratulate her after she allegedly told him that she was "getting married." He denied anything more or any other interactions, but suspected that former Professor Thomas Callery had contacted her and asked her to come forward with a claim because Callery was upset with Professor Perlstein for not supporting him with respect to an unrelated matter internal to the Theatre Department.

Professor Perlstein disputed the account of the student that gave rise to the 2004 report in which he was found to have engaged in inappropriate behavior/sexual harassment. He indicated that their discussion was "emotional" but not "sexual." He also denied any claim that he touched her buttocks but admitted that he had hugged her and kissed her on the cheek. He also admitted to having reached out to her via email because he wanted to "clear up" some things. According to him, he claims that the investigator told him that "if we call it sexual harassment, it will go away;" otherwise, Perlstein claimed that he was told that there was a high likelihood that the matter would be pursued with the authorities by the student's "crazy father." Therefore, Perlstein accepted the findings of the report because he thought it would end the inquiry.

In his interview, Professor Perlstein admitted that he had engaged in a consensual relationship with a student that he was teaching and advising, however, he claimed that the sexual relationship was limited to a 1 or 2 week time period while he was advising her. Professor Perlstein admits that he did receive the August 13, 2013 discipline for violating University Policy. Despite the fact that the discipline clearly placed certain agreed-upon limitations on the Professor's interactions with the student, he admitted in the course of our investigation that he continued to work with the student because he didn't think it was a problem since, according to him, they were no longer in a relationship. When questioned about the follow-up discipline he received dated May 6, 2014, he stated that he received a reduced suspension for allowing the student to run one of his rehearsals after she had volunteered to do so. He stated that they were not engaged in a relationship again until after she had graduated from the University.

At all times, Professor Perlstein maintained that his relationship with the student, whether before or after she graduated, was consensual and not coercive. Nevertheless, he readily admitted that he was attempting to conceal the relationship from the University because he knew that it put his job in jeopardy.

#### IV. Analysis

Professor Perlstein and the other witnesses made substantially different statements about complaints that gave rise to the investigation in this matter. In many cases, the incidents that gave rise to this investigation occurred in a one-on-one setting, therefore, there are limited if any witnesses. However, objective evidence in the form of documents, email or text messages tend to provide support for those who raised concerns regarding Professor Perlstein's conduct.

In cases where objective evidence either did not exist or could not be located due to the fact that some records related to the Theatre Department, particularly production related documents which in some cases are maintained by the student stage managers and are not filed in a centralized physical or electronic location, the consistent accounts of those witnesses who were interviewed provided at least some corroboration for the allegations. The consistent testimony of the many witnesses interviewed about the troubling comments and behaviors for many years cannot be overlooked.

On the other hand, Professor Perlstein was not fully forthcoming and/or provided some information that was clearly untruthful during his investigatory interview. For example, with respect to the incident that occurred near the call board at the entrance of the Black Box Theatre, Professor Perlstein indicated that he was congratulating the female student on her marriage but such is not credible given the fact that the student was already married when she enrolled in the University a few years earlier.

Perhaps most troubling is the fact that he represented that the sexual relationship that he had with the student lasted only for a two week period when substantial electronic communications<sup>2</sup> between the Professor and the student demonstrate that their inappropriate sexual relationship lasted for an extended period of time. Indeed, their tumultuous relationship which first began in 2013 continued until the summer of 2014, when the student graduated, albeit with some breaks along the way. Evidence of their ongoing relationship can be found in the Professor's text messages to the student in early 2014 when he is booking performances on behalf of the student. In the chain of texts, Perlstein indicates, "in the fall I believe that I am up to 80 blowjobs." There can be no question that the Professor and the student were engaged in a physical relationship as a text on from Perlstein on February 20, 2014 states, "Sorry about attacking your butt..it was aggressive and wrong.. have a swell day. Love yo!"

<sup>2</sup> This report includes a sampling of the extensive text messages between Professor Perlstein and the student; many of those messages contain typographical and other grammatical errors and they appear here in their original form.

In March of 2014, the student told Perlstein, "I just wanted to people to see me for my work, not my relationship. Its so big and difficult at times that it seems to overshadow things and I wanted to be recognized for me, not as your girlfriend." Perlstein replied,

"I am sorry that being with me makes you think it would make a negative impression. I have tried to give you space to have your own life and treat you as my peer. I know that in your mind being someones girlfriend means some kind of diminished status. That is the antiquated philosophy of a bygone era. I know that your previous bf treated you tnat way. But I have never done that. So your attitude demeans my feelings of equality and partnership. i feel insulted..."

Later in the month, the two exchange the following messages:

Perlstein: "I love you so much and have absolute faith in you... guess I miss you just a tad as well... was planning on kicking your ass in rehearsal but I am not sure there is enough of it left..."

Student: "I am a ruler :( but I don't want to be fat!"

Perlstein: "I love your f[\*@k]in' ass... you are not a ruler... well yes you are and I am your subject..you look so good these days."<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Perlstein writes to the student, "...slumberland... maybe I will dream of being a cannibal dining on [student's name] thigh and rumproast." Later, he also states that "Enchanted up in the air now...don't know the details...maybe i shold (sic) just hire you to be my sex slave." The student replies, "No."

In an alarming stream of texts, Perlstein demands, "Answeet the phone or I amcoming to your house. Answer your phone or I will come to your housr. Answeer the phone or I will come to your housr. Now please we need to come to rezolution." In a series of later consecutive texts, Perlstein blames the student for things that are not going right in his life:

"Last week I said it was beginning to feel like I could not trust anyone...you dont mean me you said...what a fool."

"Hey."

"Please answer me... i am drowning in sorrow...have some compassion...I cannot tell anyone... so alone."

"How could you join the treachery after you saw what Thom did to me."

<sup>3</sup> The profanity in this message has been redacted and replaced with symbols.

"I am so sad...help me please...i cant take it...sorry sorry i said i would leave you alone...its sooooo hard."

"Ow."

"Could we undo anything...why did you do this on the eve of our great triumph...i don't get you."

"I know you wont answer but as the day goes on I am slipping...no directing being put on leave without pay...now this...I don't know if I can take it."

"Out on the town? You may want to spend a little extra time in church tomorrow. I cant get your duplicity out of my head. I thought more of you. I misinterpreted what you were saying but I just cant reconcile all of the positive things you said...as recently as yesterday...Good night. I miss you so. What is my crime...why does yhe world continue to punish me."

The texts are hardly indicative of what one would expect of an appropriate student-teacher relationship. What's more, other texts further from March and April of 2014 confirm that Perlstein knew that his conduct was inappropriate and violates the professional standards and expectations of the University. For example, Perlstein engages in the following exchange with the then student:

Perlstein: "Hey while you are being honest when do you plan to let M in on your secret. Or are you too ashamed..live another lie."

Student: "Who's M? Whoever you think is, I told him. Everything."

Perlstein: "You stupid girl...what if he goes to the administration. You not only betrayed me you armed the enemy. Why dont you just call and tell [male student] while you are at it...didn't you learn anything in all this."

Perlstein: "If you told him everything including my name I am going into work tomorrow and quitting..."

Under the circumstances, Perlstein cannot possibly claim that his behavior was acceptable and keeping with his position in the public trust.

Later in April, 2014, Perlstein continues to correspond and these messages also demonstrate the longstanding nature of the sexual relationship between he and the student:

"I don't have to hurt myself. Someone I love has taken care of that. I am feeling better a bit which is good news for you. Still am confused as to how you did this to me again...at least I don't have to digest the line about you "developing feelings" for someone anymore...my one piece of advice...accept as natural that people develop feelings all the time... I wanted to kill someone yesterday...you are not obligated to act on them I would rather not hear how "chill" [male student] is. Did he think we were done or does he realize he is culpable... enjoy his company for now. Maybe he will turn out to be the man of your dreams and the right age. Well you have soared yourself the unpleasantness of watching me get old. I know how much you hate bodily fluids. Anyway back to condoms and sperm free sex for you...and back to my right hand...at least mine doesn't get tired...talk to you around 8."

Again and again, he continues to press the student and question her decisions as she tries to end the relationship. On or about April 20, 2014, he writes:

"I do not mean this spitefully but I think you are really going to regret this. Yes things would have been transitionally difficult. And yes it probably was better not to cohabit. But to throw it all away...the laughter, the stimulation, the mutual curiosuty, the creative partnership...and mostly the sympathetic hearts...these things are not the province of new love...and they are not as exciting... but they nurture beauty unmatched... and you just spit on that...I always believed that you would develop into a wonderful human being...and you are well on your way. But I could not stop you from acting on a juvenile impulse. I know you will characterize it differently because you need to justify what you have done. And I hope that I am wrong. I have devoted the better part of a year and a half to you. I always pushed you to be the best. And now someone else will enjoy the fruits of that. Damn shame. I deserve better you are right."

"Forget about losing you...do you know how crippling it is to lose a creative project that you have spent a year directing and producing. You should take immense pride in what you have accomplished as an actor. But you never would have performed this beyond September without me. And you never would have found the textures. And now that you have it you throw me aside. Wasn't this the argument that we always had... you said I was only doing the play so I could sleep with you... and I said you only slept with me so I would do the play...the events of the past year and last few days seem to err in my favor...so take this child of ours and share its beauty with the world. Otherwise what was the point."

When Perlstein is not successful in getting the response that he wishes from the student, he pleads with her to call and then threatens to cancel her performances:

"Please call me. I do not want to text anymore. And please be nice to me I had the power to make this for you... it is a lot easier to undo. I am cancelling all dates... call your man...report me... or call me and apologize for the tremendous risk you put me through..i will wait 5 minutes so we can calm down and I can give you the Hartbeat details."

On April 23, 2014, he again threatens to cancel her performances, "I have a solution...I am going to call the people in Michigan and tell them YOU are not able to come but I will do something." When she protests, he taunts her and tells her "Sorry, just got it a little late...already sent to them... They understood that college students can be unreliable and sometimes do y unexplainable rash things without truly gauging the consequences...gotta go create...thanks for the opportunity." Ultimately, Perlstein acquiesces to the student and does not cancel the performances but tells her "Don't worry about me anymore. I am going to check in to a psych hospital. I am not doing anyone good out here. Forgive me for anything I said or did. I loved you too well and never saw this coming. I will tell the people in Michigan. Have a good show and good luck with everything. Please don't report me and if you already did let me know."

Those extensive communications further undermine the Professor Perlstein's account of the nature of the relationship and call into question whether there was any coercion<sup>4</sup> at work. Notably, his threats to harm the student's academic and professional careers in furtherance of his desire to maintain their relationship constitutes a substantial abuse of power.

Under the circumstances, Professor Perlstein knew or should have known that his involvement was, at best, inappropriate and demonstrated extremely poor judgment, but also violated University policies and sexual harassment and Title IX principles. The extensive communications demonstrate that he engaged in a long-term, sexual relationship significantly beyond what any reasonable person would view as appropriate between a professor and a student. Furthermore, the sampling of communications referenced above demonstrate that Perlstein was aware that his actions were wrong. After all, the discipline that he had received by letter from the University's Chief Human Resources Officer, Lou Pisano, dated August 13, 2013, provided specifically that "During our meeting on July 23, 2013, also attended by Dean Pease and your union representative Caryl Schiff-Greatorex, you assured us that you are no longer engaged in this relationship. During the meeting you also agreed that you would no longer have an advisor/advisee relationship with the student, that she is not registered for any classes that you are teaching, and that you will not be directing any activities that she will be participating in." However, it is clear that both before and after that

<sup>4</sup> Perlstein and the student also exchange messages in which the Professor describes an article he read stating that "some colleges call sex between professors and students rape because of the power differential...I hope your concern about 'expectations' do not veer down that road." At one point, he also questions whether "Does the possession of power constitute a crime?" and asks the student "What about that doesn't make you feel good... that we have may be 'coercive' or that others may perceive it that way." The student does recognize that at one point she did think that it was coercive.

Professor Perlstein did advise, assist and direct activities in which the student was involved in direct violation of the terms of the discipline and the expectations of his employment. Furthermore, following the issuance of this discipline, Professor Perlstein was engaged in a sexual relationship with the student and continued to have a significant role in the projects and productions of the student.<sup>5</sup> By Professor Perlstein's own admission, he concealed the relationship from the University, and the follow-up discipline issued on May 6, 2014 only addressed an occasion in which the student covered for Professor Perlstein and ran one of his rehearsals. Frankly, his voluntary acceptance of an unpaid suspension for that singular incident demonstrates that he knew or should have known that his intentional and substantial involvement in and support of the student's activities was inappropriate, would not be condoned by the University, and warrants more significant discipline up to and including the termination of his employment. Under the circumstances, the credible testimony of other witnesses and the objective documentary evidence undermine Professor Perlstein's credibility with respect to all of the concerns investigated.

The evidence further indicates that Professor Perlstein has engaged in a pattern of behavior, including inappropriate comments of a sexual nature and/or a failure to abide by personal space which has had a negative impact on many of the students interviewed. Such behavior was credibly described by various individuals who were interviewed though they may not have been witness to the same incident or event. In some cases, the students interviewed took dramatic steps to avoid further contact with Professor Perlstein, the Department and/or the University. As a result, Professor Perlstein's conduct did not conform to the reasonable expectations and policies of the University and its mission to foster a safe and welcoming learning environment.

#### **V. Conclusions**

Given the length of time that has passed since some of the events giving rise to the complaints in this matter, the investigators cannot definitively state that every comment was made or incident occurred as reported at a specific time. However, the available written or other evidence and the consistent statements made during witness interviews lend greater support to allegations regarding a troubling pattern of behavior on the part of Professor Perlstein. Furthermore, in some instances, as specifically outlined above, the evidence and credible testimony of one or more witnesses confirms the factual accounts of the complainant(s) over those of Professor Perlstein.

Furthermore, the investigators found that Professor Perlstein was untruthful during his investigatory interview. By his own admission, he attempted to conceal his problematic conduct since it would "put his job in jeopardy." Not only that, the investigators further find that Professor Perlstein knowingly misrepresented himself in his dealings with the University and violated the terms and conditions of his prior

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<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the investigators did not have reason to doubt the credible testimony of the student regarding the sexual contact that occurred on a trip to New York City which she described as nonconsensual.

discipline and that his conduct violated the spirit of the University's policies and values to provide a safe and welcoming learning and working environment.

Based on the consistent and credible testimony of the many witnesses in this matter regarding the alleged misconduct, this investigation finds that Professor Perlstein failed to uphold the standards reasonably expected of faculty members of the University in his dealings with female students for many years. Furthermore, based on the comprehensive interviews conducted with dozens of witnesses and an extensive review of available documentation, the evidence demonstrates that it is more likely than not that Professor Perlstein was involved in sexual misconduct with one or more students while serving as a faculty member at the University.

It is beyond the purview of the investigators to recommend disciplinary actions or follow-up at this time. The investigators, therefore, hereby present this investigation report to CCSU's President for review and appropriate action.

# Redaction Log

Total Number of Redactions in Document: 9

## Redaction Reasons by Page

| Page | Reason    | Description   | Occurrences |
|------|-----------|---|-------------|
| 2    | 1-210B 11 | Names or addresses of students enrolled in any public school or college without the consent of each student whose name or address is to be disclosed who is eighteen years of age or older and a parent or guardian of each such student who is younger than eighteen years of age provided this subdivision shall not be construed as prohibiting the disclosure of the names or addresses of students enrolled in any public school in a regional school district to the board of selectmen or town board of finance as the case may be of the town wherein the student resides for the purpose of verifying tuition payments made to such school | 1           |
| 2    | 1-210B 17 | Educational records which are not subject to disclosure under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 20 USC 1232g  | 2           |
| 6    | 1-210B 17 | Educational records which are not subject to disclosure under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 20 USC 1232g  | 6           |

## Redaction Log

### Redaction Reasons by Exemption

| Reason    | Description   | Pages (Count) |
|-----------|---|---------------|
| 1-210B 11 | Names or addresses of students enrolled in any public school or college without the consent of each student whose name or address is to be disclosed who is eighteen years of age or older and a parent or guardian of each such student who is younger than eighteen years of age provided this subdivision shall not be construed as prohibiting the disclosure of the names or addresses of students enrolled in any public school in a regional school district to the board of selectmen or town board of finance as the case may be of the town wherein the student resides for the purpose of verifying tuition payments made to such school | 2(1)          |
| 1-210B 17 | Educational records which are not subject to disclosure under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 20 USC 1232g  | 2(2)<br>6(6)  |