



Office of General Counsel

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Review of Actions Taken by Texas A&M University
Relating to Dr. Joy Alonzo
August 3, 2023

The Office of General Counsel conducted an internal review of the facts and circumstances related to Texas A&M University's investigation into comments made by Dr. Joy Alonzo during a presentation to first year medical students at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston on March 7, 2023. The internal review involved the review of available documents and interviews of Chancellor John Sharp, Jenny Jones, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, and TAMU officials Kevin McGinnis, Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer, and Dr. Joy Alonzo, Clinical Assistant Professor.

Based on this review, OGC reports the following:

- On March 7, 2023, at 10:00 am Dr. Joy Alonzo made a presentation on Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Administration at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. During the presentation, Dr Alonzo made comments about a state official.
- A member of the audience at the presentation contacted Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham. Buckingham then contacted Lt. Governor Dan Patrick.
- Buckingham then called Jenny Jones, Vice Chancellor of Governmental Relations, and reported that Dr. Alonzo had made highly inappropriate and unprofessional remarks regarding the Lt. Governor during the UTMB presentation. When Buckingham called Jones, she referred to a censure of Alonzo's remarks that had already been issued by UTMB. Buckingham noted that she had previously called the Lt. Governor.
- Lt. Governor Patrick called Chancellor Sharp. They had a brief call. The Lt. Governor described the report he received from Buckingham and Chancellor Sharp said he would look into it.
- UTMB issued a "formal censure" of Dr. Alonzo, stating that her comments did not represent the opinion or position of UTMB and that "we wish to express our disapproval of the comment."
- Vice Chancellor Jones called Chancellor Sharp to report on the information provided by Commissioner Buckingham.
- Chancellor Sharp asked a System staff member to find out what happened.
- At approximately 4:00 pm, McGinnis received a call from Dr. Jon Mogford, Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President of Texas A&M Health, with a message that President Banks wanted him to take charge of looking into the matter of Dr. Alonzo's comments concerning the Lt. Governor.
- Chancellor Sharp sent a text message to the Lt. Governor notifying him that an investigation was underway.

- During the evening of March 7, 2023, McGinnis had a call with Dr. Mansoor Khan, Dean of the School of Pharmacy, Dr. George Udeani, Department Head of Pharmacy Practice, and Dr. Alonzo. During that call, McGinnis informed Dr. Alonzo that she would likely be placed on administrative leave with pay pending an investigation. Dr. Alonzo acknowledged that she had made a comment during her presentation about a meeting regarding the opioid crisis that occurred in 2015 or 2016. The Lt. Governor and members of his staff were present at that meeting. She stated that she did not make any comments that could be considered offensive or a personal attack on the Lt. Governor.
- On March 8, 2023, McGinnis made an effort to obtain information from UTMB regarding Dr. Alonzo's presentation and determine what prompted UTMB to issue the formal censure. UTMB indicated that the presentation was not recorded and declined to provide any other information regarding Dr. Alonzo's comments.
- On March 9, 2023, McGinnis interviewed a TAMU graduate student who was in attendance at the presentation. She did not recall any comments by Dr. Alonzo relating to the Lt. Governor and could not provide any information relevant to the investigation.
- On or about March 9, 2023, McGinnis obtained and reviewed the power point slides used by Dr. Alonzo in her presentation.
- On March 10, 2023, a memo from McGinnis was issued regarding Dr. Alonzo being placed on administrative leave. The memo informed her of her right to appeal being placed on leave and was approved by Dr. Udeani.
- McGinnis did not substantiate the allegation that Dr. Alonzo made unprofessional or inappropriate comments about the Lt. Governor. McGinnis states that at no time was he contacted by the Office of the Chancellor or the Office of the President to exert influence on the timing or the outcome of the investigation.
- Given the principles of academic freedom that apply to faculty in the course and scope of their employment, McGinnis conferred with TAMU administration and determined that it was appropriate to conclude this matter without further action.
- On March 21, 2023, Dr. Udeani sent an email to Dr. Alonzo letting her know that her administrative leave had been lifted.
- On March 22, 2023, Dr. Udeani issued a memo to Dr. Alonzo entitled "Expected awareness when speaking publicly on behalf of the institution" that addressed this situation and provided guidance on future public presentations.