



January 6, 2016

Dr. Philip Graham Ryken, President  
Wheaton College  
Blanchard Hall  
501 College Avenue  
Wheaton, IL 60187

Dear President Ryken:

It is with great concern that we write regarding the status of a political scientist and member of your faculty, Larycia Hawkins. We understand from news media reports and from statements by Wheaton College that Professor Hawkins has been placed on administrative leave following posts on Facebook and that Wheaton's provost has made a Notice of Recommendation to Initiate Termination-for-Cause Proceedings. We strongly encourage you to reinstate Professor Hawkins immediately and resolve this matter so that she is not terminated from her position.

The American Political Science Association is a scholarly association that represents more than 13,000 U.S. and internationally-based professors and students of political science. Our membership includes those working at public and private institutions, at two year and four year institutions and at institutions granting Bachelor's degrees and doctorates in political science. Our members research a wide variety of topics related to politics and human life, including politics and religion. In addition to being on your faculty, Professor Hawkins is a longtime member of the American Political Science Association and has been a member of our sections focusing on race, ethnicity and politics; religion and politics; and gender and politics. She has presented her research at numerous APSA conferences and published in scholarly books, edited books, and journals.

Without any further or contradictory information, her suspension appears to be connected to public statements about the status of religion in public life – statements that cannot be separated from her scholarly focus on religion and politics. While we cannot presume to know all the facts of her contractual relations with Wheaton College, we find the overlap between her scholarly focus, her public statements, and Wheaton's resulting action particularly troubling. We urge you to continue working to resolve the situation so as to leave no doubt as to the College's commitment to academic freedom, to freedom of expression, and to its stated support for "a robust exchange of ideas among faculty and students on the critical issues of the day."

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hochschild  
President

David A. Lake  
President-Elect

Rodney Hero  
Immediate Past President

Steven Rathgeb Smith  
Executive Director