



FACT SHEET

Adams v. Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina-Wilmington

ABOUT Adams v. Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina-Wilmington

Dr. Mike Adams, an associate criminology professor at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, frequently received accolades from his colleagues after the university hired him as an assistant professor in 1993 and promoted him to associate professor in 1998 when he was an atheist. However, following his conversion to Christianity in 2000, he was subjected to intrusive investigations, baseless accusations, and the denial of promotion to full professor even though his scholarly output surpassed that of almost all of his colleagues. In their lawsuit filed against UNC-Wilmington on Adams' behalf, ADF attorneys contend that the university denied Adams a promotion because his nationally syndicated opinion columns espoused religious and political views that ran contrary to the opinions held by university officials.

CURRENT STATUS OF Adams v. Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina-Wilmington AS OF 1/25/11

In April 2007, ADF attorneys representing Adams sued UNCW in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Southern Division, arguing that he was harassed and denied a promotion because his Christian beliefs did not coincide with the political and philosophical stance of his superiors. The federal court denied the university's motion to dismiss the lawsuit in 2008, but then ruled against Adams in March 2010. ADF attorneys appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit and filed their opening brief in the lawsuit three months later in June. In July 2010, The American Association of University Professors, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, and the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression jointly filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of Adams' appeal, arguing that the federal judge errantly determined that the professor's opinion columns were unprotected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—simply because he made reference to them in a promotion application. ADF Senior Counsel David French is scheduled to present oral arguments on Adams' behalf before the 4th Circuit on January 26.

FOCUS OF HEARING – WHAT IS AT STAKE?

If the appellate court allows the federal court decision to stand, such a ruling could have profound ramifications across the nation on the free speech rights of university professors, who are often required to author articles to further their careers. It would have the effect of nullifying public university faculty members' First Amendment right to speak freely under the U.S. Constitution.

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ABOUT ADF

ADF is a legal alliance of Christian attorneys and like-minded organizations defending the right of people to freely live out their faith. Launched in 1994, ADF employs a unique combination of strategy, training, funding, and litigation to protect and preserve religious liberty, the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family.

ABOUT David French

David French serves as senior counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund at its Regional Service Center in Columbia, Tennessee, where he heads efforts to restore the marketplace of ideas to university campuses, concentrating his litigation on religious freedom issues. French joined ADF in 2006 and is admitted to the bar in Tennessee and Kentucky. He has practiced law since 1994 and graduated with honors from Harvard Law School, where he earned his J.D. Prior to coming to ADF, French served as president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). He has authored several books on religious liberty and has made numerous appearances on televised shows, including *ABC World News Tonight*, *The Fox Report with Shepard Smith*, *Special Report with Brit Hume*, *The O'Reilly Factor with Bill O'Reilly*, and many others.