



## ***FACT SHEET Sheldon v. Dhillon***

### ***ABOUT Sheldon v. Dhillon***

In June 2007, San Jose City College biology professor June Sheldon truthfully and accurately answered a student's question about how heredity affects homosexual behavior while she was teaching a human heredity course. In her response, the experienced adjunct professor noted that the issue is being debated in the scientific community and cited the class textbook, as well as a well-known German scientist. Sheldon explained that the scientist's research presented only one set of theories from the "nature vs. nurture" debate addressed in the classroom text and that a later chapter addressed how homosexual behavior may be influenced by both genes and the environment. Allegedly, another student in the class complained to college officials about being offended by Sheldon's answer, and the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District fired the instructor for presenting the information.

### ***CURRENT STATUS OF Sheldon v. Dhillon AS OF 1/8/09***

On July 16, Alliance Defense Fund Center for Academic Freedom attorneys filed a lawsuit on behalf of Sheldon against the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District. The suit alleges that the district violated Sheldon's constitutional rights by firing her for doing her job, which in this case was to present both sides of a heredity debate when a student asked about the origins of homosexual behavior. ADF Litigation Staff Counsel David J. Hacker will present oral arguments to counter the district's motion to dismiss at a hearing set for Jan. 9 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, San Jose Division.

### ***FOCUS OF HEARING – WHAT IS AT STAKE?***

This hearing will determine whether Sheldon's suit can go forward. Ultimately, the case could determine whether a public college will be allowed to terminate instructors as a means to keep them from teaching both sides of controversial issues—when one side is not in line with the school's political agenda. This could expedite the transformation of America's colleges and universities from marketplaces of ideas into institutions of social and political indoctrination.

### ***CONTACT***

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### ***ABOUT ADF***

The ADF Center for Academic Freedom defends religious freedom at America's public universities. 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 J. Hacker***

David J. Hacker is litigation staff counsel at the Alliance Defense Fund. Prior to joining ADF in September 2005, he practiced law in Chicago, Ill., and served as an ADF Blackstone intern at the Pacific Justice Institute. He earned his J.D. from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. Hacker is a 2002 Blackstone Fellow and is admitted to the bar in Illinois and California.