



Pedagogical Reck...

The AAUP has written to Antioch's President. Twice.

Guess what it's about?

2 min read · Jun 5, 2026



Liz Flyntz



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By Liz Flyntz

Antioch College, Class of 2002 | Past President, Antioch College Alumni Association (2022–2024) | Former Member, Board of Trustees | AAUP Member

In February 2026, Antioch College terminated the appointment of tenured professor michael casselli without convening the Faculty Promotion and Review Committee or the Board of Trustees, the bodies its own Faculty Personnel Handbook designates for termination for cause. The Board rescinded the termination in March and ordered an FPRC review. The review did not materialize. The American Association of University Professors has since written twice to President Jane Fernandes urging the hearing the handbook requires. Both letters are confirmed public and appear below.

May 14, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Jane K. Fernandes
President
Antioch College
418 South Hall
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

Dear President Fernandes:

Mr. Michael Casselli, an associate professor of sculpture and installation with thirteen years of service to your institution, has asked for the advice and assistance of the American Association of University Professors regarding your administration's efforts to dismiss him from his tenured appointment.

As we understand it, you sent Professor Casselli a letter on February 9, 2026, informing him that, following your review of a grievance filed against him by a colleague, you had determined that he had "engage[d] in misconduct that constitute[d] workplace violence under College policy." You wrote that your determination was based upon "undisputed facts, including [his] use of threatening, intimidating, and derogatory language in a public setting where students were present," and you told Professor Casselli that you would initiate dismissal proceedings against him unless he agreed by February 13 to either resign or accept an unpaid, indefinite suspension from his duties with conditions on his reinstatement. "Failure to respond" or "refusal to commit in writing" to one of the options, you wrote, would "result in the College initiating termination proceedings" against him.

By letter of February 13, Professor Casselli disputed your characterization of events, emphasizing that the incident did not involve "violence or threats of any sort," that it had not taken place in public or in front of students, and that he had not "acknowledged responsibility" for the incident or for "a similar pattern of conduct." He declined the options you presented, and he requested a hearing before the college's Faculty Promotion and Review Committee [FPRC] at which he could grieve your actions.

On February 19, after meeting with Professor Casselli to ask why he had not chosen one of the options you presented to him in your February 9 letter, you gave him a letter stating that because he had not chosen one of those options and had allegedly refused to "commit to complying with Antioch policies," you were dismissing him for cause as of that same date. Although your February 9 letter had acknowledged that dismissal for cause under the faculty handbook required proceedings involving the FPRC and the board of trustees, your letter effected the termination immediately and apparently without those bodies' involvement.

Letter 1. For screen reader access, please use the link to the PDF below.

May 14, 2026

By mid-May, casselli's institutional access, faculty-page listing, and the FPRC review the Board had ordered in March remained outstanding. The AAUP wrote.

Download: [AAUP letter, May 14, 2026 \(PDF\)](#).

June 2, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Jane K. Fernandes
President
Antioch College
418 South Hall
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

Dear President Fernandes:

On May 14, we wrote to you concerning dismissal proceedings you had undertaken against Professor Michael Casselli; a copy of our letter is enclosed for your reference. In that letter, we conveyed our concern that Professor Casselli was facing termination of his appointment for cause without the affordance of an adjudicative hearing before an elected faculty committee. While we have not yet received a formal letter in response, we appreciate your offer by email message of May 24 to discuss these issues in a virtual meeting. We are especially interested in your assertion that our initial letter's account of events "does not reflect the actual process, or parties involved" in Professor Casselli's case. We hope that the conversation you suggested can be arranged for a mutually convenient time.

However, Professor Casselli has now informed us that he received notice from you, by letter of May 20, that in lieu of dismissal he has been suspended from his appointment indefinitely and without pay, and that this sanction will be in place "until satisfactory evidence is provided that [he is] able and willing to return to work in full compliance with all College policies."

We are heartened to hear that the administration did not immediately dismiss Professor Casselli without the hearing called for by Association standards. However, the action it has taken remains a matter of serious concern.

First, the AAUP has long regarded punitive suspension as a major sanction, second in severity only to dismissal (see Regulation 7a of the enclosed *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*). Consequently, its imposition should be preceded by a dismissal-style hearing of the same kind we urged Professor Casselli be afforded in our May 14 letter: one held before an elected faculty committee, in which "the administration will bear the burden of demonstrating adequate cause . . . , preferably by a standard of clear and convincing evidence, and the faculty member will be permitted to appear before the committee, provide evidence, call witnesses, and be confronted with the witnesses against them." While we would welcome correction, it remains our understanding that Professor Casselli has not been afforded such a hearing.

Second, an indefinite suspension with conditions for return is tantamount to a dismissal, especially when the administration is the sole arbiter of whether the conditions have been met.

PDF link below.

June 2, 2026

Six days after the AAUP's first letter, on May 20, the administration changed casselli's status from paid leave to indefinite suspension without pay, conditioned on terms the college alone would judge met. No hearing was held. None was scheduled. The AAUP wrote again.

Download: [AAUP letter, June 2, 2026 \(PDF\)](#).

The hearing has not happened.

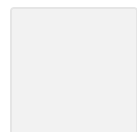
Aaup

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Written by Liz Flyntz

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