

Petition to Dean Ruger re: Wax Video

Dear Dean Ruger,

Penn Law alumni recently learned of disparaging, false and deeply offensive claims made by Penn Law Professor Amy Wax in a video interview (<https://youtu.be/cb9Ey-SsNsg>) published on September 11, 2017 (see minutes 49-51). In the video, Professor Wax states “I don’t think I’ve ever seen a black student graduate in the top quarter of the class” at Penn Law, and “rarely, rarely in the top half” of the class. She goes on to assert that only one or two black students have scored in the top half of her required first year Civil Procedure course.

Setting aside the false and slanderous nature of these statements, Professor Wax’s actions are in clear violation of the terms and spirit of Penn Law’s anonymous grading policy, and compromise the law school’s assurance that grades are maintained by the Registrar under strict scrutiny. In light of this policy, we would like to know upon what data Professor Wax relies, and whether such race-based data is even collected by the Law School. We are particularly sensitive to the cavalierly offensive remarks given that professors do not have access to name or race-based grades.

Among other concerns, these statements: 1) are inaccurate, 2) demean and disparage the achievements of black Penn Law students and alumni, and 3) are in clear violation of Penn Law’s anonymous grading policy. It is incumbent upon you, as Dean of the Law School, to issue a strong, explicit response addressing and rebutting such deleterious and false claims which are antithetical to the values of Penn Law and the University as a whole.

It is critical that your response:

1) Explicitly dispel the lies. We know that black students have graduated in the top quarter and top half of their classes at Penn Law during the years Professor Wax has been on the faculty. Those facts must be clearly stated.

2) State Penn Law’s action steps. If Penn Law is finally taking the appropriate measures to prevent students from having to endure such racial hostility and intimidation, now is the time to articulate those action steps.

At the very least, Professor Wax’s actions necessitate the following responses by Penn Law:

a) Permanently remove Professor Wax from teaching 1Ls, and
b) Permanently remove Professor Wax’s appointments to the Clerkship Committee, and any other committees that involve leading and directing the law school.

3) Earn the public’s attention and respect. Professor Wax’s public statements are false, denigrating, and completely incongruous with Penn Law’s culture and values. In order to separate itself from such harmful, hurtful lies, Penn Law must respond publicly.

We trust that your due diligence will yield a productive outcome.

jared.turner010@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

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Name *

Your answer

Penn Law Class Year

Your answer

Email Address *

Your answer

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Your answer

For our allies that are not Penn Law students or alum, please list your school or organization below:

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