**The Implementation of a Thesis Only PhD Programme in American Academia**

Kevin Sleem, UNC Chapel Hill

UNC School for Civic Life and Leadership

The attainment of a PhD is oftentimes the pinnacle of educational achievement for an individual, and entitles them to work in Academia. They can teach classes and publish papers in academic peer reviewed journals, or work as a dean or president of a college or university. Currently, there are two systems for awarding the PhD degree: 1) American Academia, Classes, Tests, and Dissertation. 2) British Academia, Thesis Only. A fair question to ask, is why can’t PhD students in American Academia obtain their PhDs by Thesis Only? What would have to happen to change the system in America to Thesis Only? Are classes better for some degrees, and not needed for others? For example, math and engineering classes should be required, but economics and english classes should not be required. Is PhD by publication adequate? And what counts as a publication? Does SSRN count as a publication? And if you already have a master’s degree in the subject area, should you still be required to take additional classes in the PhD programme? This is an important point, because the reason why British PhD programmes are Thesis Only, is because you have to already have a master’s degree. I already had an MBA from UNF, and then enrolled in a PhD program at FAU, and the timing was off. I was focused on research, having already written a dissertation proposal on monetary policy for British schools, and having to take additional classes at FAU was not helpful to my research. There are diminishing returns to classes.

**Graduate Student Union**

Central to the graduate student or PhD student debate, is the existence and involvement of the graduate student union at degree awarding colleges and universities. Harvard recently told their graduate students to get on food stamps. This is a novel approach, although incorrect. The financial cutoff for food stamps is $1,500 dollars per month, and Harvard pays their graduate students $40,000 per year. So, Harvard is incorrect that graduate students qualify for food stamps.[[1]](#footnote-0) What graduate students do qualify for is unemployment insurance if they get fired, and this is something that the graduate student union should communicate to their employees. I say employees, because unemployment insurance assumes that the person asking for financial assistance is an employee of the institution.

The argument against unemployment insurance is that the graduate student is only a student receiving a stipend, so they are not an employee. This is a ridiculous and frivolous claim. Clearly, the graduate student is an employee of the school performing critical research and teaching responsibilities, and deserving of employee status. Schools should classify their graduate students as employees, not students. PhD students are graduate students, and work for a living. They are not undergraduate students on their parents’ dime, they are societal employees contributing to the economy, and should be recognized and paid as such. Plus, in a capitalist society, such as America, it is important to offer 6 months of unemployment counseling so our citizens do not become homeless. Permanent housing is guaranteed in communism. That is a capitalist pig, not offering unemployment insurance.

**United Nations PhD Programme Rules**

The United Nations should issue PhD program rules, to bridge the divide between British and American systems. It’s been a long time now since my money was cut off for taking allotted sick days and my civil right of pursuing an education was taken away. If FAU had just paid me the full year salary for moving expenses, none of this would ever have happened, even though that slick first USDE report was an interesting way to turn. You know what Madura did, he erased a 0 off my 1000 bimonthly check and I only got 100 dollars. Now that is extortion, I think so. That must be fun, erasing 0s from bank accounts. When someone moves for a job, you have to pay them the full contract, at least one year’s salary for moving expenses. Something the graduate student unions at FAU and UNLV should communicate to their employees that they can apply for unemployment insurance if they are fired. It should also not be the PhD advisor who has control over the paychecks. That is a segregation of duties problem. There should be a formal hearing before you fire a graduate student from his work, or file to disenroll from the programme.

At UCLA, the process that’s followed for a grievance, discipline, or early termination. An Academic Senate committee or campus investigative agency conducts a preliminary investigation before a matter is referred to the Academic Senate for a formal hearing. After that hearing, a Senate committee makes recommendations to the chancellor, who has the authority to make a final decision. If the chancellor’s decision differs from the committee’s recommendations, the chancellor meets with the committee’s chair to explain the reasoning, and the chair reports that disagreement to the Academic Senate without divulging confidential information. The chancellor’s decision is communicated in writing to the person in question. I was subjected to a whimsical and spontaneous email firing. The academic chain of command was not followed at FAU for me. FAU should apologize.

**2010 USDE OCR FAU Report**

The USDE Report from 2010 clearly states that I asked for references the first time, so why did I have to file a second complaint for references in 2022?

1. What did I plagiarize? The 4 papers from the dissertation are published to SSRN, and I hope to publish them as a book eventually. The reason why they were not accepted to journals is because my technical writing is not good enough, like citing multiple references in one thought. The experiment is original and solid, and charts and graphs take up 100 pages in the book.
2. The official dismissal was 2 weeks before finals in the email from Madura, not February 2009. Or, as FAU says, the pay was cut off 2 weeks before finals, and the official dismissal was in February, after Kevin did not take finals, and failed Statistics. Marek was the only person who encouraged me to take finals.
3. What work did I not do and which classes did I not show up for? I missed 2 classes in Statistics in a row in November, a class I was failing, both to work on my thesis proposal and out of protest because Madura was discriminating against me and not taking me to lunch with Marek and Kien. I was preparing to go to Statistics when Madura sent the dismissal email 2 hours before class, so I didn’t go to class that day either, nice timing Jack. I showed the doctor’s note from the student clinic for heartburn to Dr. Gleason. Taking allotted sick days should not lead to termination.
4. I did all my research work for Dr. Viale, and handed in my thesis proposal to Dr. Gleason.
5. Clearly, the extortion charges were retaliation from FAU. The aggravated stalking was warranted for the email death threat. FAU owes me the remainder of the 4 year PhD contract, since they didn’t want to settle in 2009 for 1 year.

**2023 USDE OCR FAU Report**

1. “In light of the representative’s statement that the University does not request or require that faculty provide letters of recommendation, the response to the School’s request does not indicate any different treatment of the Complainant.”
2. Yes, this is technically the party line, that professors are not required to provide references. However, how often does that happen? And, it could be argued that references are mandatory, and if you disagree with the student, you can simply write that in the reference. A reference is an indication of a relationship, for better or worse. You might even say that it is petty to not provide references or write a negative reference.
3. That’s not why I said I was dismissed. Not my grade point average. I was dismissed because Geoff Gitlen is a rogue CIA agent, and tried to steal my money.
4. My UNC GAA email account was allegedly deleted at 5PM on Friday, and at 5:44 PM I received the USDE letter which lies about my claims and rules for references.

**Racism in Higher Education**

McKinsey reports that 84 percent of presidents in higher education who responded to a 2021 survey said issues of race and ethnicity have become more important for their institutions.[[2]](#footnote-1) Freshman dorms should be segregated. Trump is wrong that racial housing arrangements at colleges are woke and DEI. Living together is different from working together. Racism on TV should be left to the congress; all that happens when TV commentators talk about racism is incite riots. Everyone has an opinion on racism, and all opinions are different. Racism is politics, whereas sex crimes and drugs are human nature, and that behavior can be fixed. In my opinion, I do not want to live with a person of a different race. We see this issue arise in prison, housing different types in the same jail cell, and is one of the top priorities in prison, housing assignments.

**Data Collection and Experiment, Thesis Only in American Academia**

A survey about current themes in higher education including Thesis Only is presented. The survey participants were 25 domestic and international universities, and the surveys were emailed to their graduate school email address or media department. Greetings, my name is Kevin Sleem. I am working on a paper and some of this survey is pertinent to that paper, and some are general questions based on my life experiences which could help with the USDE OCR investigation. Please respond to some or all, and you may respond directly to the USDE if you prefer. It is common for the USDE to ask for peer feedback before they issue a civil rights report.

Madura has 100 publications, I’ve applied to 100 schools, and Noah had 40 sons that rode on 40 donkeys.

If you don't want to respond back to me, you can respond to the USDE for their report, I think so. Maybe it will help their report to have feedback from peers.

**Le messe de l’athée, Honoré de Balzac**

Avant d’être interne à l’Hôtel-Dieu, Horace Bianchon était un étudiant en médecine, logé dans une misérable pension du quartier latin, connue sous le nom de la Maison Vauquer. Ce pauvre jeune homme y sentait les atteintes de cette ardente misère, espèce de creuset d’où les grands talents doivent sortir purs et incorruptibles comme des diamants qui peuvent être soumis à tous les chocs sans se briser.

**Survey, American Academia Thesis Only**

1. Civil rights has a long history in the United States. What constitutes a protected group, and should PhD student be a protected group?
2. Do you think that American Academia schools should offer Thesis Only PhD programmes?
3. Do you think that British Academia should change and offer classes and tests too?
4. Is it good to have two different PhD systems?
5. What would be the effect on the graduate students of offering Thesis Only in American Academia?
6. Is there a difference between math classes and economic or social science classes? Should math classes be required more than economics classes?
7. Should every school offering graduate level classes have a graduate student union?
8. What role should the graduate student union play in registering the graduate students for classes and paying the graduate students?
9. Should graduate students be classified as employees so they can collect unemployment insurance?
10. Should the PhD advisor have access to the bank account? Should the PhD advisor be able to cut off paychecks for graduate students, or should there be segregation of duties with the graduate student union having to sign off on cutting off graduate student pay?
11. Should there be formal meetings to dismiss a graduate student from the program, or to cut off his pay, which are two separate issues, or is an email dismissal acceptable.
12. Is an email firing ever appropriate in the workplace, or do employees deserve the civil right to an in person meeting?
13. Should you wait a full year to evaluate a graduate student's performance with annual reviews, or is firing mid semester appropriate?
14. Is going on strike and missing classes to protest appropriate, or should a class never be missed by a student or professor for any reason, since we don’t police students.[[3]](#footnote-2)
15. Is a professor smoking marijuana acceptable? Do we expect undergraduate students to smoke marijuana in the dorms, because what else would a freshman do in his house?
16. How long should welfare last?
17. How does Title IX affect the participation of trans athletes in college in America?
18. What are your thoughts about interracial living arrangements in college dorms? There have been reported racial issues at UNC and Duke, so do you think the freshman dorms should be segregated? What about prison segregation? Like climate change is real, we know that interracial living with different people can cause problems, but do the differences add up to a significant level, or should they be overlooked in the name of integration?

1. Sophie Mann, Daily Mail, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12406973/Harvard-University-food-stamps-endowment.html>. Retrieved August 15, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Scott Jaschik and Doug Lederman, 2021 Survey of College and University Presidents, Inside Higher Ed, 2021, <https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net/IHE_2021-Presidents-Survey.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/01/07/columbia-university-strike-ends/>. Retrieved August 15, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)