




Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Faculty of the Department of Earth & Environment
FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 
DATE: November 17, 2017
SUBJECT: Results of Investigation into Allegations against Professor David Marchant

I am writing with regard to Boston University's investigation into the complaints of harassment, including sexual harassment, brought against Professor David Marchant, a tenured member of the Department of Earth & Environment, by Dr. Jane Willenbring, a former graduate student who participated in research trips to Antarctica with Professor Marchant in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. As you may know, reports about this matter have been published in *Science* Magazine and in major newspapers. Further, it is currently the subject of a congressional investigation by the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology.

The University's 13 month investigation into Dr. Willenbring's allegations resulted in a comprehensive report by the BU Office of Equal Opportunity, which based its findings on interviews or statements from over 30 witnesses and review of over 1,000 pages of records provided by Dr. Willenbring, Professor Marchant, and other witnesses. The investigators concluded that Professor Marchant engaged in sexual harassment in violation of Boston University's Sexual Harassment Policy and Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy. Specifically, the investigators found, by a preponderance of the evidence, that Professor Marchant directed derogatory sex-based slurs and sexual comments at Dr. Willenbring during the 1999-2000 field expedition to Antarctica. The investigators did not find credible evidence to support Dr. Willenbring's remaining claims regarding Professor Marchant's behavior, which included allegations of direct physical attacks, and other types of psychological and physical abuse. The investigators found, based on all of the available evidence, that the sexual harassment was sufficiently severe and pervasive so as to create a hostile learning and living environment for Dr. Willenbring at the camp in Antarctica. Professor Marchant has the right to appeal the findings of the investigation.

Ann Cudd, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences accepted the report and, with my approval, informed Professor Marchant that if an appeal of the findings is unsuccessful, the violations were of a sufficiently serious nature so as to warrant initiation of proceedings to terminate his faculty appointment. This is a complex process governed by our [Faculty Handbook](#) with multiple levels of review.

During the process described above, Professor Marchant remains a member of the faculty, but will be on paid administrative leave from his duties in Earth & Environment and will not be on campus.

We take all complaints of sexual harassment very seriously and will always be vigilant in conducting a thorough, fair, and effective investigation. We are committed to creating an environment for all members of the University community that is free from sexual harassment.