

**Memo on John Tobia**  
**Log of Events regarding complaint made by student [REDACTED]**

1. On 24 Jan 2006, student [REDACTED] dropped off a complaint on John Tobia.
2. A meeting was scheduled with the student and myself for 30 Jan 06.
3. I met with Professor John Tobia in my office to discuss the complaint made by the student. I asked him if the allegations were true and he admitted to making them. He said that he uses statements such as those listed in the student's complaint to motivate students and that it helps them to remember the lecture material. He also stated that some of the students recorded his lecture in which the comments were made and he could provide me with copies of the tapes. I advised him to refrain from making such comments that could be viewed as racist or sexist. I also told him he should be able to find alternate ways of getting his point across to the students without offending them. Professor Tobia promised to have a written response to me by 25 Jan 2006.
4. On the morning of 25 Jan 06, Professor Tobia informed me that he asked his lawyer to look over his response and will have it to me later in the day.
5. On 25 Jan 06, Professor Ron Colburn informed me that a student had approached him with a complaint against Professor Tobia. He informed the student that [REDACTED] should go directly to the dean of his department. He also told me that on different occasions, three female faculty members from the Osceola campus complained to him about the conduct of Professor Tobia in the classroom especially his comments to female students. He gave me the name of Professor Ellen Pastorino as one of the faculty. I contacted Professor Pastorino and inquired about the comments to Professor Colburn. She stated that it was based on her observation of Tobia in the office area and comments she had heard from students. She said that she had informed Dean Mulholland of her concerns. She said would provide me with written documentation of her charges. I contacted Mr. Mulholland and he said he did not remember such a complaint.
6. 25 Jan 06, I had a meeting with Dr. Zapico to inform her of the student's complaint. She then contacted Dr. Walter to inform her of the complaint. Dr. Zapico asked me to contact Dr. Stone for guidance. She also asked for me to contact Dean Kevin Mulholland to see if any past allegations were made against Professor Tobia. I contacted Dean Mulholland and he stated he had never received complaints similar to the ones made in the student's complaint against Professor Tobia. He gave me printed copies of documentation he had regarding minor issues in dual enrollment classes that were taught by Professor Tobia.
7. On 27 Jan 2006, professor Tobia presented me with written documentation defending the allegations made by student [REDACTED]. He said that the student's complaint was probably due to that fact that the student might not be


doing well in his course. He once again stated that he has used such techniques in the past and was once named Professor of the Month. He also stated that no such complain has ever been formally made and that he believed that his methods were successful in getting the material across to the students.

8. On January 30 2006, I received a phone call from Dr. Stone advising me to meet with the student who made the complaint against Professor Tobia and to conduct a full investigation. He then asked for me and Dr. Zapico to meet with him after the investigation was completed.
9. On 31 Jan 2006, I met with student [REDACTED] who made the complaint against Professor Tobia. [REDACTED] stated that his comments singled out women and that during his last class on 26 Jan 2006, he made another comment which he tried to link to the lecture. The comment was based on the "Rule of Thumb", which dealt with women being subservient to men. According to the student, [REDACTED] believed that it is a good idea for men to rule women and that the "Rule of Thumb", should still be in place. [REDACTED] also stated that his comments are often made in a joking manner and are not often related to the class topics. [REDACTED] said that [REDACTED] has no problems with the class lecture but the problems are with the comments made which are degrading to women. [REDACTED] said his favorite comment which is always said in a joking manner is "If I ruled the country, men would still be beating their women and dragging them home by their blonde hair". The student said [REDACTED] always felt "beaten up" after each class and don't like feeling that way.  
The meeting ended with the student wanting to remain in the class due to [REDACTED] work schedule. I advised [REDACTED] to come to visit me anytime if the classroom comments were to continue or if [REDACTED] continued to feel uncomfortable in the class.
10. On 31 January 2006, I met with students in Professor Tobia's classroom. I informed them that I was there in my capacity as dean to solicit their input as to their satisfaction with him as an instructor. I distributed my business card to each student and ask them to visit me if they had any concerns with the way the class was being conducted. I spent approximately 5 to 10 minutes in the classroom and questioned the students on how the class was being conducted. The students who responded which was about 60%, all agreed that the class was conducted in an enthusiastic and in an informative matter. They all said that Professor Tobia made the class interesting by any simplifying difficult concepts and using real-life examples. No one would give me specific examples that he used in class.
12. On 31 Jan <sup>06</sup>05, I received two pieces of correspondence outlining concerns with Professor John Tobia. They were from Professor Ellen Pastorino and Counselor Soledad Townsend. Both letters were centered on comments made by students regarding Professor John Tobia's classroom behavior.
13. I concluded my investigation into the student's complaint against Professor John Tobia after a brief phone conversation with him on 3 Feb 06. My conclusion was

that the statements were made during his class lectures and I believe them to be uncalled for and due to a lack of maturity. My conclusion is based on his own admission of making such statements in his classes over the years. I advised him that such statements are not necessary to motivate students and that he should refrain from making comments that might be considered offensive. During our phone conversation he seemed apologetic and told me that he realized that what he believed was a successful technique could be viewed as offensive to some students. He has promised to be more sensitive to the feelings of students and to modify his classroom behavior.

14. John Tobia, Dr. Silvia Zapico and I met on 7 Feb 2006. The meeting was called by Professor Tobia. He began by attempting to explain the comments listed in the complaint against him by the student. He explained that over his teaching career at Valencia Community College, the majority of students his courses has been women and he has never received a complaint about the content of his course material and his presentation methods. He added that he was not 100% certain of what his statements were in class and he did not intend to offend anyone. He said that his remarks were intended to spur debate and motivate students. He was seemed remorseful and was apologetic for offending the student. He said he would modify his classroom presentation methods and to refrain from making comments or using examples that might be considered insensitive or offensive.

## MEMO

TO: Professor John Tobia  
FROM:   
Dr. Dale Husbands  
Dean, Business, Information Technology & Social Sciences  
DATE: 2/7/2006  
SUBJECT: Letter on Classroom Conduct

This letter is to direct you to cease from making statements in your class that are listed in the attached letter that was submitted by a student in one of your U.S Government courses. These statements or statements of similar nature might be seen as sexist or racist. At Valencia Community College we strive to create a climate where students feel comfortable in a friendly non-threatening learning environment. Your statements do not foster such a climate.

In our conversation on 24 January 2006, you admitted that the statements listed by that student were used to motivate students and to stimulate learning. I believe that other non-threatening techniques could be employed to achieve successful results. My direction to you is based on the Valencia Community College 1001.64; 1001.65 FS. Please see attached policy. If further guidance is needed in this matter, please feel free to schedule a meeting with me to assist you.

1/24/06

Dr. Husbands,

Mr. John Tobia, teacher of US Government, Tuesdays and Thursdays the twelve o'clock class, has made many offensive sexist comments such as:

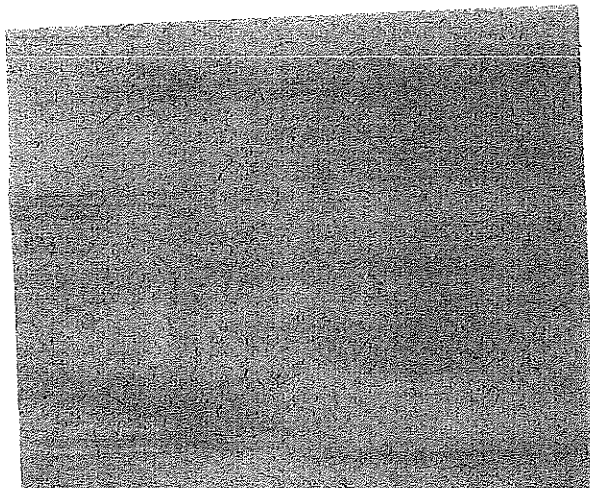
- Women shouldn't be allowed to drive because they are bad drivers.
- Women "bitch and complain."
- "If I ruled the country men would still be beating their women, and dragging them home by their blonde hair."

While talking about who has the right to vote, he mentioned incompetent individuals do not have the right to vote, and said then, "that rules women out." Implying women are incompetent.

- While giving a lecture about "free-riding" He told a story about how men who get to take drunk women home, are free riders off of the men who got them drunk.

These are just few of the many comments he has made to the class during lecture. This sexist attitude has also been noticed by the other women in the class. I have been to class each day, but would rather not have to be subjected to his beliefs, but rather learn about US Gov.

Thank you for your time,



## Dale Husbands

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 17, 2010 5:43 PM  
**To:** Dale Husbands  
**Subject:** [SPAM] Professor Tobia - POS 2041

**Importance:** Low

Hello Dean Husbands,

To follow up on our conversation today regarding the concerns I had about Professor Tobia, I would like to add a few more things.

He tells a lot of stories, which is his primary method of teaching.

Throughout his stories, he mentions many different "friends" of his. He mentions a great lawyer that he is close friends with. He mentioned having dinner with the owner of AMSCOT. He speaks about being at a friend's home in Celebration that owns several gas stations. He speaks about various jobs that he has held in government and the multitude of licenses that he possesses. I have learned that he is a Florida House of Representative. All of this scared me into coming to you to express myself. From his stories and his position, I think he is a very influential, highly connected and powerful individual. Not someone that you would want to go up against. Plus, he mentioned that he is tenured and doesn't care about what we think.

But everyone has their breaking point, and I have come to mine. Each class that I come to, I have to mentally brace myself for the abuse. Many times I have wanted to come to you but was afraid because of his standing. The abuse in class got so bad, that I would not participate in class to avoid being embarrassed and ridiculed for any answer that I gave that he was not looking for. I think most students feel that way too because they do not respond either. It is frustrating to sit in a class where, at times, no one participates. Professor Tobia would just continually drill the class for an answer and finally tell us what is on his mind and then berate us for not guessing it. It is demoralizing, deflating and counterproductive. Instead of encouraging participation, he inhibits it. I check the time in every class at about 25 minutes into it to see how much more time I would have to suffer through his class. Most students, including myself would just bow their heads and focus on a happier place and try to block out the humility as if we personally were not the target.

We were told that we do not need a book. We are directed to a web site [www.pos2041.com](http://www.pos2041.com) where there is material for us to print out and bring to class. I was astonished that there was no text book needed for the class. I assumed that the Professor was so fantastic that he did not need to have us use a book! Perhaps if we had a book to read it, then we would be able to respond to his questions in the manner in which he expects.

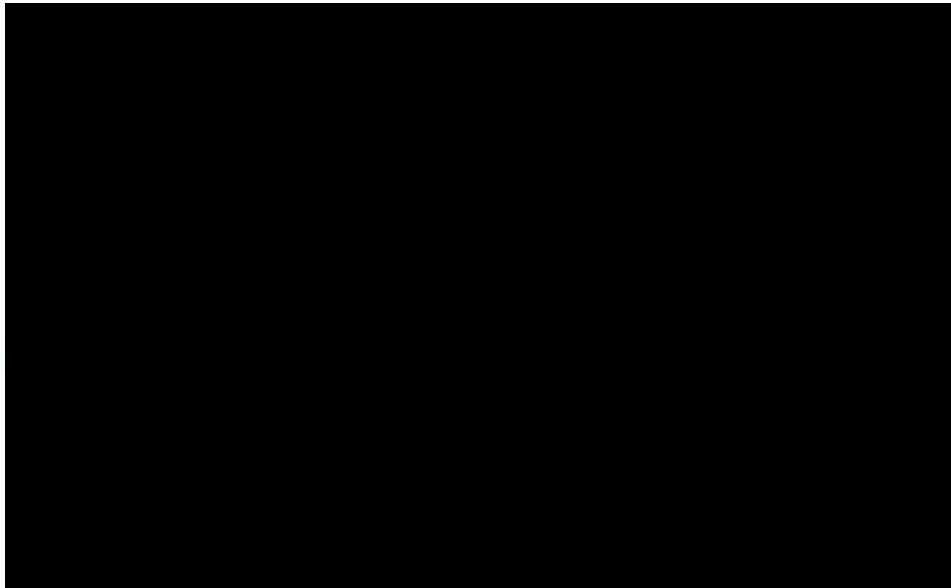
I am not coming to you for me. I have tough skin and let it roll off me. I am coming to you to protect future students that will be taking this class as well as those who may feel the way that I do. They deserve a quality education, respect and a professor who is dedicated to ensuring that the students receive the best that he can offer them. I don't feel that Professor Tobia is interested in providing that.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns. Should you require additional information, or would like clarification on anything that I have shared with you, please contact me.

## Professor Tobias

1. No show for 1<sup>st</sup> class
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Class – Late (Every Class Late), except day of collecting paper.
3. If student was one minute late to class – their paper would not be accepted
4. Signaling out students by which school they attended, race, religion, age, citizenship and using that information to demonstrate instruction.
5. His use of examples and stories in the way he tells them is derogatory. He expresses criticism or low opinion of where you live, what school you attend. For example... Valencia.
  - a. Comments: UCF Sorority doesn't want you – *never said*
  - b. You think I'm a shitty professor, I don't care, you get what you pay for, I'm tenured. *true*
6. Taking 2-3 phone calls per class \*
7. Ridiculing students if they don't answer the question in the manner in which he wants. Digging for answers and when he doesn't get them, he berates the class. Ie. This is stuff you should have learned in 6<sup>th</sup> grade Civics Class (favorite phrase) "That's the dumbest question I've ever heard". Going off on a tangent and monologue about what we should know. Ex... following a syllabus. \*
8. Degrading women in a comical manner. Rude and offensive, cruel and tasteless remarks. Ie... commenting on how tight some women wear their clothing. Commenting on weight, using the term fat in his stories. There are some overweight people in the class and it might make them feel uncomfortable.
9. Making off color jokes. Ie. "Gun licenses... "You get to shoot a black guy!" \*
10. Use of profanity is excessive. Terms he has used is whore, bitch, slut, etc.
11. Disrespecting students
12. Class participation is inhibited because of his methods of questioning.
13. Syllabus is a good tool. I find it better to look up things before I come to class.

No



# MEMO

TO: Dr. Kathleen Plinske  
Provost, Osceola Campus

FROM: Dr. Dale Husbands  
Dean, Business, Information Technology & Social Sciences

DATE: 29 November 2010

SUBJECT: Meeting with John Tobia on 23 November 2010

On 23 November 2010, I held a meeting with John Tobia regarding the attached written complaints from two students in his POS 2041 CRN 11297 course. The complaints were read to Mr. Tobia and he was asked to respond to each individual charge. Listed below are the individual charges and his responses:

1. No show for first class.  
Response: He said he does not recall missing the class.
2. Late for every class.  
Response: Denied. He said that maybe once he was a minute or so late.
3. Does not accept work from student if student is late.  
Response: Acknowledge that it is his class policy not to accept late assignments.
4. Signaling out students by race, religion, age, citizenship.  
Response: He said examples were used in his lectures to demonstrate the likely hood of one becoming president based on their social status.
5. Use of derogatory examples in his class stories.  
Response: Denied making comments listed in the complaints. He said that he used the example of tenure in relation to unionized workers.
6. Taking phone calls during class.  
Response: Admitted taking one or two phone calls and will cease this practice.
7. Ridiculing students if they don't answer questions in the manner he expects.  
Response: Denied doing this practice but encourages students to use their critical thinking skills in responding to questions.
8. Degrading women in a comical manner. Commenting on tight clothing, weight and using the term "fat" in his stories.  
Response: He admitted using examples of tight clothing in reference to the class discussion on concealing weapons when wearing tight clothing. He also admitted using the term fat in discussing the recently proposed tax on junk food which is referred to as the "Fat Tax". Professor also stated that he draws attention government's focus on calorie listing on food menus.



9. Making off color jokes during class.

Response: Mr. Tobia said the example was used during the class discussion on segregation. He also said he used an example such as an area like Celebration receiving immediate attention after natural disaster versus a poor black neighborhood.

10. Use of excessive profanity.

Response: Denied the use of profanity.

11. Disrespecting students.

Response: Denied.

The students also mentioned that assignments are never graded and returned to them. Mr. Tobia said that it is his class policy not to return assignments but rather review completed exams as a group. He said students are encouraged to see him in his office for individual grades. He stated that his classes are conducted in a manner to incorporate current information into the class lecture. Such issues discussed are credit card debt, credit rating, race, and discriminatory practices. I questioned him about the vagueness of his syllabus and he stated he will modify them in the future to be clearer and more detailed. I also questioned him on the existence of a grade book and attendance roster. He informed me that they are kept in his office since previous ones were lost when he took them to class.

I ended the meeting by advising him to be more cautious on what was said or how it was said in conducting his class. I reminded him of past complaints that were similar in nature and advised him that this seemed to be a trend that should need to cease. He informed me that in future classes he will stick to the material and will record future class meeting for his protection. He submitted to me all class lecture notes which he uses to supplement the listed textbook.

I believe that Professor Tobia in an attempt to reach his students used examples that were inappropriate and offended some students. I encouraged him to be more careful in what is said and how he conducts himself in front of the class. The students were not identified to the instructor.