



## KU Professor Quits Over Concealed Carry in his Classroom

An associate professor of history and American studies at the University of Kansas (KU) loudly announced his departure from the faculty after 10 years by having [his resignation letter](#) published on May 5 by the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. Wrote associate professor Jacob Dorman:



In light of the state of Kansas' apparent determination to allow the concealed carry of firearms in the classrooms of the University of Kansas, I am writing to tender my resignation effective two weeks from today as an associate professor of history and American studies at the university. I have accepted a job in a state that bans concealed carry in classrooms.

This was no "apparent determination" by state legislators. For years the issue of constitutional carry has been debated in Topeka and under a compromise bill the issue of concealed carry by students on campus was resolved by allowing them to carry concealed effective July 1.

But according to Dorman, this new freedom somehow weakens the education those 28,400 students are currently getting at KU's five campuses (Lawrence, Kansas City, Overland Park, Wichita, and Salina):

Kansas will never secure the future that it deserves if it weakens its institutions of higher learning by driving off faculty members or applicants who feel as I do that there is no place for firearms in classrooms. Kansas can have great universities, or it can have concealed carry in classrooms, but it cannot have both.

At the moment those 28,400 students are being served by 2,600 faculty with no evidence of a mass exodus by members of that faculty over the issue.

Dorman laid out his reasoning for leaving:

In practical terms, concealed carry has proven to be a failure.... But beyond the fact that concealed carry does not deter gun violence, the citizens and elected representatives of Kansas must recognize that this is a small state, and in order to run a premier university, which is necessary for the health and wealth of the state, it must recruit professors from out of state.

At present there are 37 public institutions in Kansas that are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents, including Kansas State University (KSU), Washburn University, Wichita State University, and 33 others. Somehow these institutions have been able to find enough applicants to fill their faculty positions. But Dorman continues:

Recruiting the best trained professors necessarily means recruiting from coastal areas and progressive college towns where most people do not believe that randomly arming untrained



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 11, 2017

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students is a proper exercise of the Second Amendment's protection of a well-regulated militia. Dorman's elitist view must rankle those teaching at "inland" colleges such as Hillsdale College, Liberty University, and other highly regarded schools that are not only far away from the left coast but also away from the likes of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and other "progressive" campuses.

It must also rankle those "random" students who have gone through various training classes on their own in order to learn how to carry responsibly.

But Dorman claims that those "random untrained" students are likely to start a gun battle in one of his classes when things get testy:

We discuss sensitive and highly charged topics in my classroom, concerning anti-religious bias, racism, sexism, classism and many other indexes of oppression and discrimination. Students need to be able to express themselves respectfully and freely, and they cannot do so about heated topics if they know that fellow students are armed and that an argument could easily be lethal.

Guns in the classroom will have a chilling effect on free speech and hinder the university's mission to facilitate dialogue across lines of division. That stifling of dialogue will hurt all students, including the ones with guns in their pockets.

It's all the NRA's fault, according to Dorman:

Let us not let the NRA destroy the future of the state of Kansas with a specious argument about the Second Amendment. Guns do not belong in classrooms any more than they belong in courtrooms, but a university simply cannot afford metal detectors at every entrance.

It's simply not possible to have high-quality education with students carrying on campus, claims Dorman:

Kansas faces a very clear choice: does it want excellent universities with world class faculty, or does it want to create an exodus of faculty like myself who have options to teach in states that ban weapons in classrooms? Does Kansas want to reinvent itself as a center of innovation and prosperity, and attract the minds that will create the jobs that the state needs to be prosperous for the 21st century, or does it want third-rate universities that will not find the cures, patent the drugs, train the engineers, start the companies, or innovate the laws and social programs that will bring the state lasting prosperity and health?

It's important to note that Dorman is a very bright guy. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Stanford University in 1996 with a BA degree, and obtained his Ph.D. in U.S. history from UCLA in 2004. Over the years he has been awarded research fellowships from Yale, Columbia, Duke, Wisconsin, and Harvard. So he's no fool.

But something is wrong here. Something is missing here. As an associate professor for 10 years, surely Dorman should have been promoted to full professor by now. According to KU, "promotion to full professor is based on substantial additional achievement since the award ... to associate professor ... although there may be some variation, continuing productivity should prepare most faculty members for promotion to full professor within six years of their promotion to the rank of associate professor."

KU adds: "For promotion to the rank of professor, the record [of the applicant] must demonstrate continued effectiveness and growth as a teacher, as reflected in such factors as mastery of the subject matter, strong classroom teaching skills, an ongoing commitment to student learning, and active involvement in providing advice and support for students outside the classroom."



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What's missing in Dorman's letter is any mention that, on May 1, KU held its faculty meeting to consider promotions. His letter of resignation was published by the *Topeka Capital-Journal* on May 5, just four days later. Is it possible that, in a pique of anger, Dorman decided to vent his frustration at not being promoted to full professorship once again?

He claims that he is leaving for a position at a more enlightened school where freedom to carry on campus is still prohibited. Given his credentials, one would assume that he would return to the comfortable cocoon of a university on the east or west coast. But, no. Instead the associate professor from KU is joining the faculty of the University of Nevada - Reno. According to the "Best Colleges" listing by USNews, KU is ranked 118th in the country, with an "overall score" of 44/100. The University of Nevada - Reno? USNews ranks it 197th in the country, with an "overall score" of just 28/100.

One familiar with the Kansas culture and specifically the debate over constitutional carry is former Kansas Republican Senator Forrest Knox. who, after reading Dorman's letter of resignation, Knox called it "ridiculous":

Mr. Dorman's ridiculous letter of resignation poses many false, unsubstantiated statements and proposed choices. For a professor, let alone of history and American studies, his reasoning skills and understanding of the Constitution are obviously lacking.

He states that, "concealed carry has proven to be a failure" and that "concealed carry does not deter gun violence," yet gives no basis for this statement. On the contrary, concealed carry, which now exists in all 50 states, coincides with the rate of serious crime at an all-time low. A look at what happened in cities like Chicago when guns were banned (in the 1980's) shows tremendous increases of crime. Statistics prove that when citizens are allowed a means of defense, crime drops. When only criminals have the guns, crime rises.

Mr. Dorman calls the argument that the 2nd Amendment simply means what it says, "a specious argument" and claims it is only a protection of a well-regulated militia, completely ignoring the words "shall not be infringed."...

Presently 24 states allow for campus carry with nine states mandating universities to allow it, and with more states joining these ranks each year.

Does Mr. Dorman really think that all these states have "third-rate universities" and can't recruit "world class faculty?" He is welcome to go back home to his "coastal areas and progressive college towns" where apparently, the professors bury their heads in the sand and believe that there are no guns on campus because of the signs prominently posted — Gun Free Zones — where, coincidentally, the mass shootings occur.

I'm sticking with the rational, fact-based, Constitutional view that, in the lack of real campus provided security, we can trust law-abiding citizens, even if they attend KU, to defend themselves and their peers in the event of life threatening criminal violence.

I offer Mr. Dorman a hearty Kansas "So long!"

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