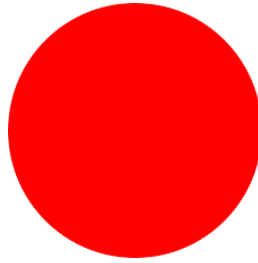


GROUP 1



Co-Worker

John is the chairperson of the criminal justice department at a small private college. He has been employed by the college for 17 years. While well respected for his scholarship, he is known as a difficult professor and a grumpy colleague. As a result of shifts in enrollment and the decline in the number of criminal justice majors, the Dean has recently informed John that two members of his department will have their status reduced to part-time. In addition, another member of the department, Charles, will be leaving the CJ department and assuming the chairmanship of a new Political Media department. Media's impact on the criminal justice process has long been a focus of John's research, and he had been very vocal about his desire to have the media courses included in the CJ department. As a result of Charles' leaving, John will have to teach a freshman class previously taught by Charles. John has always made clear that he believes his talents are wasted on freshmen.

Two days after his conversation with the Dean, John becomes very upset during a faculty meeting. He complains loudly about the administration's decision to "decimate" his department, the change in his workload and about Charles' promotion. He is unpleasant through even the mundane parts of the meeting. When he discovers that the coffee urn is empty when he tries to refill his cup, he flings the urn toward Charles, splashing him and several of his colleagues with grounds. He then proclaims that Charles is an "empty fraud" and storms from the room.

HR receives a number of complaints about the incident and plans to give John a written warning. Before that happens, however, John calls the HR Director and tells her that he is being treated for depression and has been experiencing great difficulty with regulating his medication. He tells her that he is working with his doctor but that these "fits" are part of that medical problem. When the HR Director expresses her concern but maintains that such conduct cannot be tolerated, John becomes furious. He screams that he has "given his life" to the school and that if Charles thinks that he is going to ruin his department that he "will pay."



When the Dean learns about these events, he decides that John's contract will not be renewed. He requests that HR send a letter informing John that this semester will be his last.

Case Study Questions

1. What immediate steps should be taken to address any safety concerns?
2. What communications, if any, should there be about John's threats?
3. Is John a workplace safety threat?
4. What, if any, information should be provided to Charles?
5. Did HR respond appropriately to John's disclosure re his health issues?
6. Should there be an internal investigation? Who should conduct it?
7. What types of protocols and plans should the college have had in place to deal with this type of situation?
8. What type of training would have better equipped various players to respond better?

