

## Jennifer Bard Settles with the University of Cincinnati College of Law



**Summary:** Former dean Jennifer Bard of the University of Cincinnati College of Law settled with the school after suing the school for being placed on administrative leave.

Jennifer Bard sued the University of Cincinnati College of Law after being placed on administrative leave by Interim Provost Peter Landgren. The law school dean experienced problems with members of the law faculty when she proposed budget cuts, resulting in Landgren placing her on administrative leave. She claims she was improperly reprimanded. The settlement will require her to resign as dean in exchange for two years of academic pay at her dean salary of \$300,000.

Bard's attorney Marjorie Berman said, "This settlement demonstrates that Landgren had no basis whatsoever to place Bard on administrative leave and his doing so was wholly unjustified and completely inappropriate. Dean Bard did what the university asked of her in a professional manner with the support of students, alumni, donors, and many faculty and staff."

University spokesman Greg Vehr noted that the school is moving "forward constructively" and that her version of events is not how they saw things. He explained, "Comments being made by Ms. Bard's counsel should not be taken at face value, and we dispute their accuracy and truthfulness." Bard claimed that being incorrectly placed on administrative leave hurt her academic reputation since she was not accused of any actual wrongdoing.

She was hired as the school's first female law dean in 2015 for a five-year term. She was at Texas Tech University School of Law. She alleges that one of the mandates given to her by university administrators was to address a "multimillion" operating budget shortfall. Some members of law faculty did not agree with her way of cutting costs. They rebelled against her efforts to cut back on faculty travel and merge the law library with the main campus library.

She presented her cost saving methods in November to the faculty. By December 14, Landgren asked her to resign. Bard refused, entering into an agreement to use mediation to improve relations with faculty. Her lawsuit claims that the mediation turned into an investigation to gather evidence to support firing her.

The Cincinnati Business Courier broke the news of the issue at the school on March 19. On March 22, Landgren placed her on administrative leave. In her complaint, she wrote, "Although I enjoyed the support of the students and many highly talented faculty and staff, the university now seems committed to seeing a small, entitled minority of faculty hijack reform efforts that should be dedicated solely to the welfare of its students."

Bard will be able to spend her two years of academic leave on writing and research, as well as any other administrative opportunities with the school that she wants to. She said, "This is an exciting time to be engaged in health law and I look forward to the opportunities that this academic leave provides for me to contribute to the national conversation. I wish much success to all our students, alumni, faculty and staff and to Verna Williams as she takes over the reins of the College of Law."

Do you think the settlement was fair? Tell us in the comments below.

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