



**Office for Equity and Accessibility**

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November 6, 2023

Trevor Jeyaraj Jeyaraj Samraj  
*Via email at bbryce@vt.edu*

Dear Trevor,

On October 13, 2023, the Office for Equity and Accessibility (OEA) received your complaint. Your complaint alleges that Dr. Francois Debrix, Dr. Mauro Caraccioli, and Dr. Peter Schmitthenner discriminated against you based on your color, national origin, and/or race. You and I met on October 20 to discuss your complaint. You submitted supplemental materials alleging discrimination based on caste and adding Dr. Brian Britt and Dr. Christin Labuski as respondents.

Specifically, you allege that you have been denied the opportunity to teach independent undergraduate courses while other ASPECT students with comparable qualifications, some of whom enrolled in the program after you, have received this opportunity. You shared that you were assigned an independent undergraduate course to teach for Fall 2023, but that the course was cancelled due to low enrollment. You also shared that you are working with a history professor to independently teach a course in Spring 2024.

You also allege that your name was left off of a list for the Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 GA assignments for the Department of History, which has contributed to your feeling of discrimination and a hostile environment. Regarding the Spring 2023 list, you shared that it did not appear that any other ASPECT students' names were included on the list and that, after you pointed out the error, the faculty member responded that you had accidentally been left off of the list and that the department did have an assignment with you with a history professor. Regarding the Fall 2023 list, you shared that it did not appear that any other ASPECT students' names were included on the list and that you were not provided with any reason why your name was not included.

You shared that you believe you may be experiencing retaliation because you have shared your perspective that minority voices have been oppressed by the majority elite caste in India. You stated that the only feedback you have received related to the GTA positions you have held was that you were too critical of some students' assignments. You stated that there has been a general lack of feedback as to why you have not been given independent teaching opportunities, but that Dr. Debrix did give you feedback on how to raise your GPA in order to be in good standing for future semesters.

You also allege that opportunities to serve in leadership roles with the 2022 and 2023 ASPECT conference were not advertised to all students and that the SPECTRA journal editorial roles

have not been advertised.

OEA has completed a preliminary inquiry into your complaint. From the information available, OEA cannot infer that the conduct of the employees listed above violated Virginia Tech's Policy 1025. Based on the information that you shared with OEA, OEA cannot infer that you have been treated differently because of your color, national origin, and/or race. Based on the information shared through our preliminary inquiry, the ASPECT program may coordinate with core departments to offer independent undergraduate course teaching opportunities depending on students' backgrounds and prior experiences with teaching and departmental availability. You have been given the opportunity to teach an independent undergraduate course for two semesters. Additionally, the ASPECT program Director sent out a survey in spring 2023 to assess student interest in conference leadership opportunities, and the SPECTRA journal is a student-run publication.

Please note that OEA's determination does not foreclose other ways to seek redress of your concerns, nor does it reflect agreement with, or approval of, the alleged conduct. As stated in Policy 1025, offensive behavior that does not violate this policy should be addressed by the appropriate supervisor or administrator. You are welcome to reach out to the Director of the ASPECT program to discuss your experience in the program and future teaching and leadership opportunities. Please see Section 4.2 of Policy 1025 for more information about alternative avenues for seeking resolution, and be aware of applicable filing deadlines.

If you have questions or concerns about this letter, please contact me at [olearyk@vt.edu](mailto:olearyk@vt.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen E. O'Leary". The script is cursive and fluid.

Kathleen O'Leary  
Civil Rights Investigator  
Office for Equity and Accessibility