

# Under siege on social media? Choose words carefully when responding

If an aggrieved employee launches a social media campaign against your organization, it can be hard to figure out how to respond. However, you can defend yourself.

If it's worded carefully, your response won't add fuel to the legal fire that comes in the wake of an employee's lawsuit.

**Recent case:** Kristin, an assistant professor at Macalester College, was fired when a former student complained that Kristin solicited her for sex. One incident occurred while the student was taking a class from Kristin, while another came a few days after the student graduated. The college has a strict rule against sexual harassment and faculty having sex with students.

Kristin sued, alleging discrimination. Then, she and people who backed her launched a social media campaign to attract support and donations.

When the student paper found out, it sought to interview both Kristin and the administration. Kristin called her firing a clear violation of due process and discrimination under false pretenses. The college responded with a statement saying Kristin had been terminated following a student complaint and that she responded to her termination with attempts to intimidate and retaliate against the student.

Kristin then added a defamation claim. The court tossed out that claim, reasoning that the college's response to Kristin's comments to the student paper were reasonable. (*Naca v. Macalester College*, DC MN, 2017)

**Final note:** Don't start a social media flame war, but don't be intimidated into silence if the employee does. Your response should be measured and factual.