PLU dismisses Judy Baker

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PLU counselor and instructor Judy Baker will not have her contract renewed this year, a decision made by the Morning Muse last Sunday.

"I really don't have a clear idea as to why I'm being fired," Ms. Baker said. "When I asked Dr. Adachi (Seiji Adachi, Director of Counseling and Testing Services) about it, he said it was either difficult to describe. I asked him, too, if I had anything to do with my skill as a counselor or a teacher and he said it didn't." Ms. Baker contends that, in the process of evaluation used by her superior (Dr. Adachi and Dr. Philip Beal, Vice-President for Student Life), her effectiveness as counselor was not studied directly during actual counseling situations.

"I don't think that the evaluation was correct," Dr. Adachi remarked. "It is true that we have not conducted a comprehensive evaluation with students, and we admit that we have some work to do." He also noted that the counseling process is very complex and involves many factors.

The initial student demonstration of Ms. Baker's dismissal came from "The Reader's Monitor," where she was verbally abused, but there was no written complaint. Ms. Baker made a formal complaint to the Dean of Student Life about the incident, and she was offered a meeting with Dr. Adachi, but she refused.

"I hope we can keep it simple," Ms. Baker said. "I would like to discuss the situation with Dr. Adachi without involving outside parties." Ms. Baker expressed her desire to continue counseling students and said that she was willing to work with the university to improve the counseling process.

When asked about the consequences of being dismissed and the effect on her personal life, she said, "I am still working on that issue, but I am trying to stay positive and move forward." Ms. Baker has been a counselor at PLU for the past 10 years and has served as a role model for many students.

"I'm disappointed to say the least," Ms. Baker said. "I have been at PLU for 10 years and I feel that the university has missed an opportunity to work with me and improve the counseling process. I will continue to work with students in other capacities."