

Professor's future at stake over space alien sex book

By ANNE THOMPSON

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A year ago, Harvard psychiatrist John Mack cruised the talk show circuit promoting his best-selling book about people who say they had sex with aliens.

Now, a committee of colleagues is investigating whether Mack's alien abduction research meets the school's standards for scholarship.

The Harvard Medical Committee expects to complete its report within two months. Based on the peer review, the dean, Dr. Daniel Tosteson, will make a decision that could range from trying to oust Mack to applauding his perseverance in doing work his colleagues

might call quackery.

Attorney Roderick MacLeish, representing Mack during the review, said Harvard's action violated the principle of the tenure system.

"History has not been kind to those who have unorthodox ideas," MacLeish said Thursday. "That's the whole point of having a free and open academic community. That's the whole purpose of tenure."

Before he started talking about space aliens, Mack was a well-respected professor at Harvard Medical School. He founded the psychiatry department at Cambridge Hospital, one of Harvard's teaching facilities. He won a 1977 Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Lawrence of Arabia.

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