

Board of Trustees

MEMORANDUM

TO: Howard University Faculty Senate

FROM: Mrs. Benaree P. Wiley
Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees
Chair of the Governance Committee

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Faculty Trustee Election Statement

DATE: April 5, 2019

Dear Howard University Faculty:

As you are aware, the election for Undergraduate Faculty Trustee is scheduled for April 10, 2019. The Governance Committee has reviewed the sample ballot provided by the Chair of the Faculty Senate Council and concluded that if the proposed election is held as planned, it would be invalid for lack of adherence to University Bylaws, as more fully explained below.

The University Bylaws stipulate that “voting by faculty shall be made from a field of not less than three or more than five eligible candidates for each position.” On March 15, Dr. Sonya Sobrian requested the Board’s decision as to whether it would allow only two names on the ballot. On March 18, the Office of the Secretary notified Dr. Sobrian that the Governance Committee declined to waive the requirement in the Bylaws that there be three candidates on the ballot.

The current ballot for this election continues to indicate a field of only two candidates. The rationale for the three-candidate requirement is that the Bylaws further provide that “the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the [election] process...[having] at least 30 percent of all votes cast...shall be referred to the Governance Committee for its consideration and recommendation to the Board.” Having fewer than three candidates appear on the ballot removes your right to choose the two candidates you would like to have presented to the Governance Committee for consideration, thus rendering the election almost meaningless. A write-in candidate is permitted under the Bylaws, but will not cure the minimum candidate deficiency cited in the current ballot.



On March 6, the Faculty Senate Council notified the Office of the Secretary that it had just voted not to accept the nomination of associate or assistant deans to serve as Undergraduate Faculty Trustees. The Faculty Senate Council has been advised on several occasions over the past two and one half years by the General Counsel/Secretary that according to University Bylaws, associate and assistant deans are eligible to serve as Undergraduate Faculty Trustees. The Faculty Senate Council has excluded a candidate from the ballot based on its determination that the candidate, an associate dean, is ineligible. The University Bylaws represent the final authority on this matter.

Accordingly, the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees has determined that these deficiencies in the current ballot would invalidate any election for Undergraduate Faculty Trustee. The Governance Committee also notes incorrect information about the position in the ballot's informational sidebar. As such, the Governance Committee will not accept any nominees from this election unless a revised ballot which complies with the University Bylaws and contains correct information is sent to faculty for consideration.

cc: Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA, President
Stacey J. Mobley, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Florence W. Prioleau, Esq., General Counsel and Secretary
Rosalyn E. Jones, Esq., Deputy Secretary and Senior Counsel- Special Projects