



Excellence in Truth and Service

**Office of the Provost and
Chief Academic Officer**

June 18, 2019

Dr. Sonya Sobrian
Chair, Howard University Faculty Senate
525 Bryant Street, NW, Room C-119
Washington, DC 20059

Dear Dr. Sobrian:

I am copied on your memorandum to Chairman Mobley dated June 17, 2019 regarding the Howard University Faculty Handbook (2019) approved by the Board of Trustees on June 7, 2019, and would like to respond to some of the matters raised in that communication. I agree with your observation that the ten year process to develop and approve a revised handbook was a demonstration of the shared governance necessary to continue to move the University forward. This extraordinary process provided extensive and numerous opportunities to University Faculty, and the Faculty Senate in particular, to provide recommendations, craft language, express concerns, revise the document, and shape the handbook in an unprecedented manner.

Following my initial submission of the consensus document (developed by the Working Group consisting largely of faculty members) to the Faculty Senate on February 9, 2018, it was not until March 7, 2019 that I received a communication from you indicating that the Faculty Senate Council had voted to approve a revised document, including numerous changes and insertions of language that were not a part of the consensus document I originally submitted on February 9, 2018, and in several cases had not even been a part of the discussion of the Working Group.

On several occasions during this process, I shared my concerns regarding language that was suggested for inclusion by the Working Group (and Faculty Senate). However, in good faith, I agreed to advance the language as proposed by the Working Group, with the shared understanding that as the governing body of the University, the Board of Trustees would be the final arbiter of any and all language communicated in the approved Handbook, which could ultimately differ from that proposed by the Working Group or by me.

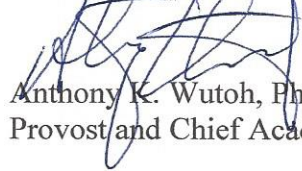
Your letter identifies several changes to the Board-approved document as compared to the 1993 Handbook. As I have previously noted, many of the changes in the Board-approved document further protect and expand the rights of faculty members as compared to the 1993 Handbook. This includes expanding protections for leave and tenure clock extensions and further expanding and defining shared governance with additional processes for faculty participation in that process, as well as formalizing the role of the faculty in the planning processes at each School/College.

Additionally, I had shared previously that the Board of Trustees cannot approve any language that restricts, removes, or limits its fiduciary obligations and responsibilities to the University. In short, no language could be approved by the Board that would abridge or restrict its role and responsibilities as the governing body of the University.

While I understand that members of the Faculty Senate may be disappointed that some of their approved language was not included in the final version approved by the Board, I think it is extremely important for the University that the faculty as a whole recognizes the important changes approved by the Board, and seeks to participate positively and constructively in the continued growth of the institution through the already-existent and new processes of shared governance.

Your letter also indicates that there are potential errors within the document. Please share any sections and pages where you believe there may be errors, and we certainly will be responsive to reviewing them and addressing as appropriate. Regarding your request for a meeting with the Board of Trustees and me, I will be on scheduled international travel between July 10-July 20, 2019. I would be happy to make myself available outside of that conflicting period for a meeting as you have proposed. Thank you.

Excellence in Truth and Service,



Anthony K. Wutoh, Ph.D., R.Ph.
Provost and Chief Academic Officer