

# HOWARD UNIVERSITY

## OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Stacey J. Mobley, Esq.  
Chairman, Howard University Board of Trustees  
Washington, DC 20059

Dear Chairman Mobley:

The Faculty Senate leadership takes its role as a partner in the shared governance of Howard University seriously, with the understanding that such a partnership is built upon mutual respect and accountability. Receipt of your April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 letter to the Faculty Senate regarding the results of its “No Confidence” vote is both alarming and troubling, and lacks serious attention to the issues expressed. The vote of “No Confidence” is not based upon frivolous charges that are generated within echo chambers, and reflect the largest faculty participation in a vote in the last decade. Rather, in our role as scholars the claims of the Faculty Senate are supported by documented evidence that compel us to act responsibly and transparently. However “deeply troubling” the vote of “No Confidence” may be to you and your colleagues, the evidence supporting our Resolution is neither unfounded nor untrue; to assert anything otherwise on your part is to intentionally mislead others.

The continued lack of commitment to shared governance, on the part of the current Administration and Board of Trustee precipitated the initial vote of “No Confidence” by the Council in March, 2017 that was subsequently reaffirmed in April, 2018 by both the Council and by vote of members of the entire Faculty Senate. Your failure to respect the vote of the Faculty, and to acknowledge the deeply problematic issues that underlie it, illuminates the reasons why we are unable to move forward to engage in a process of responsible shared governance.

The Board of Trustees’ positive assessment of the current administration’s performance is suspect, because it consistently fails to consult the Faculty Senate (a key stakeholder) for its evaluation and perspective when drawing such glowing conclusions. Let us be clear, Chairman Mobley, that although the Board of Trustees may be *informed* about the problems stated in The Resolution, it is faculty, staff and students who experience the chronic challenges posed by defaults in administrative leadership, fiduciary irresponsibility, and decaying infrastructure on a daily basis. These and other problems jeopardize the quality of education and scholarship at our University.



Chairman Mobley, your letter to the Faculty Senate cites numerous accomplishments of the President and his administration that simply do not ring true. Please let us remind you of the following:

- Your claim that “...when Dr. Frederick became President, there was no capital campaign planned or on the horizon” is incorrect. Official documents from the Budget Advisory Committee meetings (June-July 2013), which then Provost Frederick attended, clearly articulate the intention of President Ribeau’s administration to initiate a 2017 sesquicentennial campaign (1). Subsequently, President Frederick, during a State of the University Address to the alumni (October, 2015), stated that he planned to launch a \$1 billion capital campaign for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University; this was followed up in a 2016 Background Statement that was sent to various members of the University community (1). To date, none of these campaign promises have been realized.
- The Faculty Senate must provide an appropriate context for your claim regarding “...four consecutive years of faculty salary pool increases.” With respect to salaries, Howard University faculty salaries continue to live in the zone of dire straits. Despite small, selective (mostly 3 percent) salary adjustments, the problem of salary compression still places Howard University Faculty at as much as an \$80,000 negative differential compared to faculty peers at universities in the DC Metro area. In 2011, the Faculty Senate produced a formal report of the problems of salary compression at Howard University (1); an updated assessment of these compression problems appears in its January 2018 issue of *The Senate Communicator*. Moreover, recent salary increases that you applaud are mostly negated by substantial increases in parking fees, health insurance premiums, and the cost of living. Despite the fact that members of the Faculty Senate worked diligently on a sub-committee of the Budget Advisory Committee, which included then Provost Frederick, to develop and finalize a proposal that would systematically alleviate the salary compression problem (1), this plan, completed in May 2012, has been ignored by the current administration.
- Your response ignores many global concerns that are articulated in The Resolution that formed the basis of the ‘No Confidence’ vote. Many of them have been expressed to you, and members of the Executive Committee, by the Faculty Senate Council, and its Steering Committee in a series of face-to-face meetings (March 2017, October 2018, and March 2018). For too long, the faculty, staff and students of Howard have taught, learned, worked and lived in hazardous facilities and conditions that can directly be linked to the indifference

of the Administration and Board, which underscores the need for change and transition in leadership.

Truthfulness, integrity, and honesty are critical elements for the success of our campus community, but these terms should not be articulated as a form of empty rhetoric. Actualizing the mission of Howard University is more urgent now than ever before, and requires the full implementation of shared governance for its success. Anything less, Chairman Mobley, is counterproductive to our mutual goal of moving the University forward. As it now stands, the current climate of governance and accountability does not exemplify the Howard University ideals of Truth and Service.

Sincerely,

Faculty Senate Council  
Howard University

cc: HU Communications  
Faculty Senate Council  
Florence W. Prioleau, Esq. Secretary, HU Board of Trustees

<sup>1</sup> Documents that support these statements can be found in the Office of the Faculty Senate, and are available for review.