

Trustee Meeting Summary – 10/10/19

The meeting with Dr. Howard started around 9:55 and ended around 10:40. The general tone of the meeting was cordial. The only people in attendance were Dr. Howard, Secretary Prioleau, and myself.

1. Secretary Prioleau joined the meeting around 10:10.
2. General discussion about backgrounds. We agreed that since this was not a business meeting but a 'meet and greet', we wouldn't focus on senate issues and positions.
 - 2a. I was asked, "Why did I come to HU for grad school?" I responded – my advisor and funding. James Lindesay, my advisor, is one of the best theoretical physicist in the country, and he has a strong connection with the African American physics community. He has a dedication to HU and serving African Americans. He was the primary reason for the huge spike in the numbers of African American students that graduated with STEM BS degrees from Stanford in the 80's. He was instrumental in the success of Berkeley's support program with underrepresented groups (associated with Dr. Uri Treisman).
3. I mentioned that in general, the faculty have no idea what board members think. We don't really know what the board wants. Dr. Howard said, what the president says to the faculty, is what the board wants.
4. I was also asked, "Why do I love teaching at HU?" I mentioned that in general faculty at HU do two things (1) we try to make sure our students are competent in their subject area, and (2) we try to make sure our students that graduate can work/practice in their subject area while being true to their own skin. I mentioned that in general, we can create a climate in our classrooms in which students of color can not only feel comfortable but thrive. From my experience, this can't really be duplicated with online classrooms.
 - 4a. I mentioned that when I first started teaching, we had some young students that were fresh out of high school and were trying to fit in by acting out in class. This behavior could disrupt the class and make an already tough subject that much harder – resulting in talented black students we desperately need to succeed and enter our communities, failing and dropping out. I mentioned some faculty, if they don't care about the mission or our communities, might accept this outcome and that these students just aren't ready for college. However, as faculty that care about our communities and the historic mission of HU, we worked to solve the problem. Being a good researcher and/or good teacher aren't enough to be a tenured professor at HU. HU tenured faculty have to care and identify with the communities served by HU and it's historic mission. We must exercise our academic freedom for the common good.

5. I mentioned there are faculty with a tremendous amount of experience and competence. Expertise HU could use to realize its potential. That in my role as FS chair, i hope to facilitate helping the administration and board of trustees hear the voices of the faculty.

6. Near the end of the meeting, I asked that we try to establish regular meetings. I mentioned we are open to telecons.