

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

November 4th, 2019

FORMAL COMPLAINT

Regarding the Administration's Selection of "Faculty Representatives" To Meet with Dr. Shirley Jackson, Middle States Visitation Chair

"The Howard University Faculty Handbook and the Constitution of the Faculty Senate are the Board of Trustees-approved documents that coordinately frame a relationship that is based upon a mutual respect between the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees that is the framework of a partnership and collaboration in University governance." Section A2.6, p. 14, Howard University Faculty Handbook, as revised June 7, 2019

Unfortunately, as demonstrated by the process through which the administration organized a meeting between "Faculty Representatives" and Dr. Shirley Jackson, President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the Middle States Visitation Chair, the administration has clearly violated its essential responsibilities to partner and collaborate with the Faculty Senate in the most fundamental ways.

The schedule of events for the preliminary campus visit by Dr. Jackson called for a meeting in the Board Room between "Faculty Representatives" and Dr. Jackson from 2:25-3:10 p.m. on Thursday, October 24, 2019.

Invitations to the meeting were sent out by Dr. Rubin Patterson, Chair of the Middle States 2020 Self Study and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Of the faculty members invited to the meeting, Dr. Patterson made the decision not to intentionally select even *a single member of the Faculty Senate*, barring its chairperson. What Dr. Patterson chose to do, instead, was to ask the deans of the schools and colleges to hand-pick faculty members to attend the meeting.

Dr. Marcus Alfred, "in his capacity as Faculty Senate Chair," was the sole member of the approximately 40-member Faculty Senate Council invited to this important meeting. It must be pointed out that Faculty Senate representatives are elected "to deliberate and determine, independently, the University-wide faculty's positions on issues of faculty concern..." and "to participate in the governance of the University, by the exchange of information and views." (See the Faculty Senate Constitution, Article 1, Sections A and C.)



Although an “Adjusted Time: Middle States Preliminary Visit (Accreditation)-Faculty representation” email was sent out to participants selected by the deans shortly before the scheduled time of the meeting, Dr. Alfred was not informed of the significant and sudden change in timing.

Nor was Dr. Jackson informed that the faculty members with whom she was meeting, some of whom were department chairs and assistant deans, were hand-picked by administrators and, therefore, could not be expected to accurately represent the interests of rank and file faculty, as members of the Faculty Senate are charged with doing.

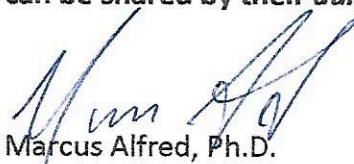
A few other Faculty Senate representatives managed to attend the meeting along with Dr. Alfred, despite the fact that they had not been invited by Dr. Patterson. During the meeting, Dr. Jackson solicited concerns regarding the newly modified *Faculty Handbook*. Accordingly, these concerns are herewith attached.

What is even more disconcerting is that the administration, after putting together a group that it knew did not include independent faculty voices, would then proceed to defend the selection process, rather than acknowledging its complete lack of transparency and good faith:

... I submit that faculty recommended by their Deans are not unrepresentative of our faculty in general. Again, the meeting, as standard Middle States protocol, is to be for President Jackson to meet with colleagues who are representative of the faculty, not a body that is ostensibly representing the faculty. (From an email from Dr. Rubin Patterson on October 21, 2019 to Marcus Alfred, President of the Faculty Senate.)

The Faculty Senate is fully invested in working together with the administration in this most critical of processes - maintenance of accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. However, we will neither be silent nor have our voices pushed aside in the process. The administration’s actions are antithetical to the mutual respect and collaboration that is essential for a partnership with the Faculty Senate in the governance of the University, as described in the revised *Howard University Faculty Handbook*. Only after legitimate dialogue and an inclusive process can we move forward.

Since members of the Faculty Senate were not invited to the meeting with Dr. Jackson, **the Faculty Senate is hereby requesting a meeting with her and the other members of the Middle States visitation team as soon as possible so that the views of the faculty can be shared by their *duly elected* representatives.**



Marcus Alfred, Ph.D.
Chair, Howard University Faculty Senate