

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

November 6, 2020

Marcus Alfred
Associate Professor
Chair, Howard University Faculty Senate
325 Bryant Street, NW, Room C-119
Washington, DC 20059
202-806-6258
maralfred@howard.edu

Dear Dr. Alfred,

We write this letter to express serious concerns on the part of the Board of Trustees and the Administration of the University about your presentation to the Academic Excellence Committee at its meeting on November 5, 2020. Those concerns relate primarily to your statements and misrepresentations in slides 12 through 15 of your Power Point presentation that suggest that Howard University should discriminate in favor of African Americans in its hiring practices. Specifically:

Howard University is committed to maintaining a University community that is free from unlawful discrimination in every aspect, including our employment practices. Howard's status as an HBCU does not render it exempt from this commitment, nor from applicable antidiscrimination laws at both the federal and local levels. Accordingly, Howard does not discriminate (whether against or in favor) on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, or any other protected characteristic, with respect to its hiring, advancement, or separation of faculty and staff. Our employment decisions are based solely and fervently on merit.

Our mission states the following:

“Howard University, a culturally **diverse**, comprehensive, research intensive and historically Black private university, provides an educational experience of exceptional quality at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels to students of high academic standing and potential, with particular emphasis upon educational opportunities for Black students. **Moreover, the University is dedicated to attracting and sustaining a cadre of faculty who are, through their teaching, research and service, committed to the development of distinguished, historically aware, and compassionate graduates and to the discovery of solutions to human problems in the United States and throughout the world.**”

As noted in our mission, the diversity of our University community is just as integral to Howard's ability to provide an exceptional educational experience as to any other institution of higher education. We are therefore honored that we attract talented faculty, staff and students from Africa and the African diaspora at large (not solely African Americans), as well as a variety of other races, nationalities and ethnicities with a commitment to our mission and core values.

Dr. Alfred, to suggest that Howard does or should make hiring decisions based on the faculty member's status as an African American is wholly against our mission and, moreover, suggests that the University should engage in unlawful discrimination. It is therefore egregiously inappropriate that you presented such an analysis to the Academic Excellence Committee. Furthermore, as Howard is certainly proud of its legacy of employing a large number of black faculty in the higher education space, your superficial examination of one of 13 schools/colleges over a four-year period is flawed on its face. You also provided no basis to suggest that any of the faculty who departed from the College of Engineering and Architecture were involuntarily separated for a discriminatory reason, or that the faculty hired were selected for any reason other than their respective merit and accomplishments. In fact, the University's meritorious hiring selections in CEA have been bolstered by the College's 66-point increase in U.S. News and World Report's 2019 rankings of Best Graduate Schools.

On a different matter, with respect to some of the other concerns in your presentation that you purportedly raise on behalf of others, if faculty have issues or concerns about any terms or conditions of employment, the University has several established protocols for promptly addressing those concerns. Therefore, we expect faculty to utilize those processes to promptly notify the University. We are unable to effectively address anonymous and anecdotal concerns as you have presented them.

Dr. Alfred, as indicated by the signatories to this letter, the University's Board of Trustees and its Administration summarily reject your suggestion that the University should take such a myopic (and facially discriminatory) approach to our recruitment of talented faculty, or any notion that this represents the view of even a small minority of the faculty.

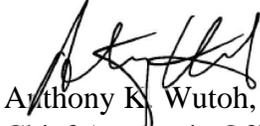
To close, we reiterate and advise you that you are not authorized to publish confidential University personnel data, particularly when it includes personally identifiable information (i.e., names, professional rank, date of hire/separation from employment) as well as your inappropriate assumptions of how these individuals self-identify in terms of race, ethnicity and nationality.

You should consider a follow-up meeting with the Provost to address any questions about this response.

Sincerely,

Laurence C. Morse

Laurence C. Morse, Chair
Howard University Board of Trustees


Anthony K. Wutoh, Provost
Chief Academic Officer