

Faculty Welfare Committee Meeting

Jackson, James <jt_jackson@Howard.edu>

Thu 2/24/2022 12:17 PM

To: Porter, Carol <cporter@Howard.edu>; Grant, Bradford <bcgrant@Howard.edu>; Agarwal, Kamal <kagarwal@Howard.edu>; Perkins, Mary <mperkins@Howard.edu>; Eiland, Derrick <deiland@Howard.edu>; Hall Brown, Tyish <thallbrown@Howard.edu>; Kumar, Krishna <kkumar@Howard.edu>; Jackson, James <jt_jackson@Howard.edu>

Cc: Alfred, Marcus <marAlfred@Howard.edu>; Royal, Guericke <groyal@Howard.edu>

Colleagues,

Good morning. You have been identified as a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee. As Acting Chair, I was asked by Professor Alfred to contact someone in administration to have them speak with the committee about the issues below:

1. The recent pay increase and the criteria used for merit pay
2. Faculty mental health and well-being
3. The university's climate and its impact on faculty productivity.

The following email was sent to Dr. Dubroy on February 15th:

Tue 2/15/2022 5:30 PM

Dr. DuBroy:

Good afternoon! I am Dr. James Jackson, a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the Acting Chair for the Faculty Welfare Committee for the Faculty Senate. I have been asked by Senate to contact you for the purpose of having someone from Human Resources meet with the Faculty Senate to address the following:

1. The recent pay increase and the criteria used for merit pay
2. Faculty mental health and well-being
3. The university's climate and its impact on faculty productivity.

It was my hope that we could speak to Mr. Larry Callahan, but I'm not sure if he is still part of the Howard University's administrative team. Nonetheless, if you could have someone speak to the Faculty Senate Committee on March 02, 2022, at 4:00 PM via Zoom, members of the committee would be grateful. Once I receive confirmation of you or your representative's attendance, I will schedule the meeting via Zoom and send you the link. I thank you in advance!

Respectfully,

JJ

Dr. Dubroy responded by asking for clarification on items 2 and 3 on February 17th. See below:

Dubroy, Tashni-Ann

Thu 2/17/2022 11:31 AM

Good morning Dr. Jackson,

Thank you so much for the outreach on such an important topic. Please pardon my delayed response. Dr. Alfred, thanks for the tickler.

I am copying Provost Wutoh on this email for his awareness. We are both here to be helpful to you. So that we can be of assistance, please expound on the topics you listed:

The first topic is easily understood.

Regarding the topic, "Faculty Mental Health and Well-being", are you asking me to have someone speak to our faculty senate concerning tips on how to maintain their health and well-being especially

amidst the pandemic, how to work towards balancing work and life, sharing resources that can be helpful, and describe what the University community is doing/can do to promote employee health and well-being?

I am seeking clarity on the third topic. I do not want to misinterpret the meaning of the University's climate and what the climate encompasses in this instant, or the impact the climate has on productivity, so I will need your assistance in providing clarity. In terms of the University's climate, can you please describe the University's climate and let me know the impact it is having on faculty productivity. How is faculty productivity being qualitatively and quantitatively measured? Are all faculty more productive or less productive due to the University's climate? Are there specific faculty or clusters of faculty who are more productive or less productive at this time? For faculty who are more productive, what are you attributing their productivity to? For faculty who are less productive, what are you attributing their lack of productivity to? What is the basis for the correlation between the current university climate and faculty productivity? Is the pandemic impacting the University's climate? I am thinking that wellness also ties into faculty productivity, so topics two and three can be related, but I do not want to make assumptions. (The correlation between the current climate and faculty productivity is unclear, but matters when addressing your query).

Do you have any examples of programs the Faculty Welfare Committee is executing to promote health and wellness in the faculty community? HR can help to promote them or partner with you to amplify the wellness programming we already have in place.

Kindest regards,

Dr. Dubroy

My response to her was:

Dr. Dubroy,

Thank you for your response regarding a meeting with members of the Faculty Senate Council to discuss the issues in the February 17th email. You pose a number of interesting questions that I do not have answers for. The issues highlighted in my email of 02/17/22 represents themes that I have heard in meetings of the Faculty Senate or my interactions with peers from across the university community. However, because faculty well-being is a central component of the Faculty Welfare Committee, I will be happy to canvas the Council and other faculty members to see if we might be able to garner some specific questions regarding the two issues. Moreover, if that inquiry determines that these issues are still problematic for the faculty, as Acting Chair of the committee, I am willing to work with other committee members and the university's administration to identify activities and solutions that might be useful to the university community. Nonetheless, the following expansion captures the best of what I think me and many of my colleagues mean by faculty mental health and well-being/university's climate:

2. Faculty mental health and well-being relates to the stress of working face-to-face when facilities and resources are not adequate for faculty and staff to feel safe and how these things impact productivity. An example of this might be the problems that we have had with Research Administrative Services in processing grant paperwork to get faculty and graduate students paid quickly or the challenges that some faculty have had getting paid and/or hired. Another example involves trying to conduct classes in rooms and buildings that don't allow for social distancing, etc. Finally, when undergraduate advisement reverted back to schools and colleges, several faculty expressed concern that sufficient training did not occur in those schools and colleges to make the process easier for both advisor and advisee. (This may no longer be an issue as much of the discussion related to it was done earlier in the semester.)

3. The university's climate and its impact on faculty productivity. I have discussed with some faculty in the School of Education and as I have heard in Faculty Senate meetings, faculty seem to be operating under a culture of fear and disregard for faculty, staff, and students. The sentiment seems to be that "the administration does not care about us." Individuals feel that if they speak out on behalf of their interests, they might be penalized and targeted. Many feel that there is a strong absence of shared

governance.

As I indicated earlier, I cannot be certain of the specifics of each issue. I have provided a summary of themes. However, if you think it would help you find the right person to speak with the Faculty Senate Council, I will be happy to engage that body, as well as the Faculty Welfare Committee to assist in providing you with a more focused agenda for the issues above. Please let me know how I can help.

Respectfully,

JJ

It has been suggested by the Chair of the Faculty Senate that the Faculty Welfare Committee try and meet with the University's administration to hear the responses regarding the issues. He specifically points out that we might have unanswered questions after the Faculty Town Hall this evening. Please read below:

As an example, there are a lot of questions regarding the recent pay increases - who got it and how much. You all might be able to get that information. Or for the union faculty, find out exactly how much they are paid, and who does or doesn't have a contract. I know the union faculty have a lot of questions that aren't getting answered - and some are senate members.

It might be also useful to get answers on how the administration intends to protect tenure - Texas, Georgia, have or are pretty much in the process of getting rid of tenure as we know it. The union's proposal is aligned with aaup on tenure - but the administration's stance seems to weaken tenure at HU. Why not accept the union proposal? Why treat them so poorly?

Marcus

The purpose of this email is to determine from you whether there needs to be a follow-up meeting with the administration, after the town hall. Please let me know your thoughts. Once I get consensus that there will be a need for a meeting, I will send some dates and a Zoom link. Please try and attend the meeting today. Your voice in this discussion is really needed! Please forgive for such extensive verbiage, but I want to provide you with a context. See you at the Faculty Town Hall! JJ

James T. Jackson, Ph.D., M.F.A.
Professor of Special Education and Project Director of HU-TRP
School of Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
jt_jackson@howard.edu
240-422-0963 (C)