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Faculty Senate Chronicle Special Meeting July 23, 2020

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July 23, 2020

SENATE ACTIONS

1. The Senate met to discuss the reduction in force to personnel by the Board of Trustees on July 15th. President Miller and Provost Wiencek answered questions.
2. Referred a resolution to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for revisions and review and to reconvene the body in two weeks to discuss the motion. (See Appendix A)
3. Adopted the following motion:

We the Faculty Senate of The University of Akron want to express our concern to the Board of Trustees and Administration about the current elimination of tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty due to retirements and involuntary separations. The impact of this on our students, our academic programs, and our community must be reconsidered. The Senate expresses dissatisfaction to the BOT and administrators with the cuts to faculty and the process for selecting those individuals that will take effect by 8/21/2020.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

APPENDIX A

In the spirit of shared sacrifice; in the spirit of doing what is best for the University of Akron; and in the spirit of doing what is best for the Greater Akron community, I present the following resolution, which is the work of several members of this body. I read this resolution because I agree with it and I recommend passage of this resolution.

WHEREAS, The University of Akron is a 150-year-old institution of higher learning, supported by the state of Ohio, and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association,

WHEREAS, the public relies upon the University to improve the lives of Ohio citizens through education, research, and public service; and

WHEREAS, the mission statement of the Board of Trustees establishes the purposes of the University

The University of Akron, a publicly assisted metropolitan institution, strives to develop enlightened members of society. It offers comprehensive programs of instruction from associates through doctoral levels; pursues a vigorous agenda of research in the arts, sciences, and professions; and provides service to the community. The university pursues excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry, and creative activity.

; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees is charged with governing the University; and

WHEREAS, for decades the Board of Trustees has made numerous imprudent fiscal, hiring, and other decisions, due either to lack of expertise or misfeasance, which have driven the institution to the brink of financial disaster, reduced student opportunities, and squandered the goodwill of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Board claims a \$65 million shortfall, and athletics support from the General Fund that results in a loss of approximately \$21.5 million per year; and

WHEREAS, the Board has refused to pursue other means, such as eliminating athletics, to save faculty and academic programs in reducing the purported shortfall; and

WHEREAS, the Board has consistently ignored the concerns of faculty, has shown a profound lack of understanding of the functioning of education, and has generally ignored faculty expertise when offered in the operation of the University; and

WHEREAS, rationale provided by the administration in support of proposed cuts are disingenuous and illogical; and

WHEREAS, on July 15, 2020, the Board decided to fire close to 20% of teaching faculty, with no regard for tenure, rank, or merit, thereby impacting the academic mission; and

WHEREAS, for years, the Board has disinvested in the academic mission, while embarking on ill-conceived construction projects; and

WHEREAS, the Board has clearly violated its obligation to protect and promote the primary educational mission of the University

WHEREAS, the Board has clearly violated its fiduciary duty. Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED,

We call upon the 70th governor of Ohio, Richard Michael (Mike) DeWine to request the resignation of all current Board members, and to replace them with qualified persons having the requisite skills, and commitment, to guide this University back to its mission. At least two of these new appointees should be retired or active higher education faculty, in order that the Board may have the benefit of their direct experience and be informed for all of its deliberations. The people of northeast Ohio need the University of Akron, and the people need your help.