



August 20, 2018

Dear Interim President Grimes,

As a direct result of questionable information you presented Monday, August 13th, at the Faculty Institute, University faculty met on Friday, August 17th and voiced overwhelming concerns regarding our financial futures and roles in supporting this University and its students.

While these are indeed difficult days for Bethune-Cookman University, the faculty, staff, administration, and board of trustees should all have the same goals: a financially secure, academically sound, and fully accredited university worthy of the legacy of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune. The health and sustainability of any university rely upon administrators, faculty, and staff all acting and working together in good faith on behalf of that institution.

Faithfully, over the years, Bethune-Cookman University faculty has worked diligently and effectively with previous presidents and administrations. However, as of late, University faculty is blatantly disregarded, the Faculty Senate mocked, and the work of the Faculty Senate discounted. A good example of this is the Faculty Development project that was put together by the Faculty Senate Committee charged with the development of a plan.

Given the aforementioned, University Faculty respectfully requests specific and detailed answers – in writing and with supporting documentation on the following four issues:

1. B-CU's Financial Situation

In light of the specific steps presented at the Faculty Institute to address the current financial situation, (1) is there an across-the-board percentage that faculty salaries are being reduced? What is it? Do exact calculations reveal that faculty are being asked to take a reduction in excess of 7%? Does the 10% reduction for any faculty making \$100,000 extend to all administrators? Are administrators exceeding \$140,000 being asked to take a higher reduction percentage? If so, what percentage? Is the effective date the same for all and is that date September 1? Should faculty expect to receive new contracts? If so, will this take place before September 1?

Are the individuals responsible for our current financial situation still affiliated with the university? What safeguards have been put into place to prevent future problems? Who is responsible for developing and implementing the specific steps presented at the Faculty Institute last Monday? What is the timetable for the implementation of the plan? Is there a freeze on hiring and on bonuses for all employees?

2. SACS Probation

How did B-CU end up on probation with SACS? Are the individuals responsible for our probation still affiliated with the university? Who is working on the 2019 SACS Report and what are their credentials? What is the timetable for the plan to correct the problems? Why haven't we taken advantage of our retained consultant? What input will faculty have on the preparation of the new report?

3. Proposed Furloughs

Has B-CU approved a furlough and how is it defined? What is the impact of furloughs on administration, faculty, staff, and students respectively? How will furloughs be implemented for 9, 10, and 12-month faculty, staff, and members of the administration? What is the anticipated financial benefit of furloughs?

4. Discontinuation of Retirement matching

How much does B-CU expect to save by doing this? What other alternatives have been seriously explored? Does the change affect administrators as well as faculty and staff? What is the impact on TIAA and/or METLIFE's continuation of service to B-CU employees?

The overlying question remains: how will your administration accomplish real, honest, transparent, and shared governance as required by all faculty and SACSCOC? The Faculty Senate has provided ample explanation and continued requests over the past year for you to exercise good faith in accepting, and by responding to the Memorandum of Understanding for Shared Governance, which has yet to be signed.

In closing, on Monday, August 27, 2018, at 11:15 am in the Center for Civic Engagement, the Faculty Senate will meet with the University Faculty to discuss its next steps in securing a genuinely inclusive voice and shared seat in University governance. We ask you, Dr. Patel, and the new CFO, to respond with documentation and confirmation of the meeting to address the above faculty concerns on or by this date.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Joanna Showell
Chair, Bethune-Cookman Faculty Senate