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Faculty Senate Statement  
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This is awkward, but I want you to know that I'm here because I care about the senate and the voice of the faculty and the future of the university. I am a two term senator myself, and I wish I could be more involved in the senate, but I can't (for various reasons). I have too many things to say but I will try to be brief, I know you have a full agenda.

I know some people question my integrity because they say that I drank the kool-aid, became a department chair, and worst of all, participated in the President's Leadership Academy. But those who know me will attest that I am can still think for myself. I am not a candidate for any administrative jobs, and don't plan to be; I owe the president no favors, I am courting no favors. I speak only for myself. You should know, though, that some of the most vocal voices urging the senate toward a no confidence vote in the president have been agitating for this for years now. I know because I was approached by one of them a long time ago. (I will not name names here because this is not personal.) They seem to sense an opportunity with the current budget crisis but as I will explain, a no confidence vote would be both unwarranted (given the facts) and unwise (given our situation).

It's not that I can't complain about the university or its administration. Like many of you, I was trained in a top graduate program and I expected to work with graduate students at a respected research university. I landed here instead, for a number of reasons, and here I am 21 years later. I remember finding MSU bewildering and backward when I first arrived, and sometimes I still do. There are many process bottlenecks on campus, where only one person can do something; personal relationships often matter more than policies; and some of our practices are badly outdated. I could go on and on, and I'm sure you could, too.

I have tried to change some of these things. I have thrown myself into many projects over the years, some more successful than others. Each time I discovered there are people doing their best with scarce resources, aware of the problems with current practices, but unable to change without generating worse problems. (This theme seems to explain not just what happens at MSU but also what happens at many other institutions in the region.) The university is a very complex institution, and it's easy to pick one thing and criticize it without knowing all of the details and the history; once you know those things, it's not at all clear how to proceed differently. The problems do not stem from ill will or from a lack of creativity or insight on the part of the persons involved. If I bracket my ideals about how a university should be, MSU is far from perfect, but not terrible, and sometimes actually pretty good.

Based on the minutes, in my opinion, there are documents that seem to be having undue influence in senate deliberations: two no confidence statements and a faculty senate satisfaction survey administered last year. I find the arguments in these documents unconvincing, so I hope to add a different perspective to the mix. (I recognize that the minutes don't always convey every detail of a complex debate, so I may be off the mark here – I wish I could participate more in the senate, but I simply cannot

Many of the allegations made against the president in documents urging a no confidence vote are puzzling, because they are not things over which he has direct control. They hold him responsible for academic self-study results, software purchases, assessment reporting, enrollment planning, general

education revision, and financial planning. Many of these things involve lots of other people, including other administrators, staff, and even faculty.

But some will say, he's the president, ultimately he's responsible for everything. Well, there is a loose and a strict sense of responsibility. In the loose sense, the president might be responsible for some of these things, but if you go that way, then he will also be responsible for all kinds of good things that happened during his time, such as the record 2011 enrollment, the cooperation with St. Claire and UK that resulted in the CHER building, successful business partnerships in the space science program, and on and on and on. If you take responsibility in this loose sense, Dr. Andrews is going to look very, very good, in my opinion, because the list of good things in which he participated to some degree during his time here is very long.

By contrast, if you take responsibility in the strict sense, according to which he is responsible only for things that he controls directly, then he won't be responsible for the things in the statements, and then one might also see why he gets such positive evaluations from the board of regents. (If you have never seen his actual job description, I think you should really see it.) I think that he's actually very good, and I worry a lot about his replacement. His advocacy in Frankfort has been very effective (remember the UPike threat?), he is a highly articulate representative in the community who embraces its culture, and he has guided the planning process to position the university to be competitive for the dwindling pool of available students in the next generation. Is he perfect? No. Has he snapped at faculty? Yes. (But would you have been so patient?) Has he asked for overly optimistic enrollment projections in the past? Maybe so – but why? What else was going on then? If the president wanted to ruin the university's budget, why didn't he do it years ago? Who would want to navigate a budget crisis, let alone have to fire people, all of whom he knows by name? Only a demonized version of Dr. Andrews would fit this bill (a "common fast tracker," as one person labeled him in one of these documents).

There is an insider/outsider, "us-vs.-them" mentality in the senate: we are the principled, enlightened faculty, and then there are the others (the administration, the staff, the students, etc.). In one way, this is natural and unavoidable, but in another way, it's idealistic and dangerous. One influential senator has actually described the administration as composed of "evil people" in public. When I first joined the senate long ago, under a different president, I quickly learned that one of the senate's primary goals was to oppose and embarrass the administration. John Philly was the EVPAA (now provost) before Michael Moore and Karla Hughes; I watched a senator goad him into red faced rage, and noted that this was perceived as some kind of victory, even though the senator's proposal (overtime pay) was clearly fiscally impossible. I'm afraid this culture still haunts the senate – I don't blame Beth Patrick for declining the invitation to explain the budget to the senate, because for non-faculty, the senate floor can be a place of cross examination, hostility, and even ridicule.

The "us-vs.-them" mentality makes shared governance pretty difficult – who can justify compromise with evil people? There is an important difference between two senate functions: advocacy for faculty and shared governance. Sometimes these two roles pull us in very different directions, and I don't know how to resolve the tension. I think the senate is constantly engaged in advocacy, but not always effective in shared governance, for a variety of reasons. There are many highly competent faculty who will not serve on the senate because they would have to endure endless academic debates and repeated speeches of complaint from the same people over and over again – those folks might be interested in shared governance, but they tire of endless advocacy. I think reconciliation committees actually work well in terms of shared governance, probably because there is a limited time frame and a small number of people.

As far as failing to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise possessed by the faculty: the faculty do not speak with one voice. Which faculty would you have Dr. Andrews follow? The ones with whom you agree? Do people really think that by adding faculty to, say, a budgeting meeting, things would go better? Do they think that faculty possess a special way of discerning budgetary impropriety that would help here? In my opinion, based on my experience, this is another case of dangerous idealism. Once they were immersed in the budget details, those faculty would see immediately, like everyone else involved, that budget decisions are very complicated, require extrapolation from incomplete information, and always involve risk – nobody has a crystal ball, there are no formulas, this is not an exact science. It is the job of administrators to make decisions with consequences about limited resources under moving deadlines to handle the business side of the university. I am grateful not to be responsible for those kinds of decisions, and I would not want to insert more faculty into that process or give the faculty senate a veto over the budget – too much is at stake there for academic debate.

One question comes up often in these discussions, and that is the extent to which the senate represents the faculty. In the electoral sense, the senate is clearly a representative body (although how many departments actually have contested elections?), and plays that role in university governance. In another sense, though, often the senate does not represent the faculty, because the opinions of the faculty do not mirror those of the senate. I asked several senators recently who claimed they did not need to ask faculty in their department what they thought about things because they were elected to represent the faculty. This means that the faculty voice on campus is not reliably conveyed by the senate, and it undermines the senate's credibility. I am grateful to those who are willing to serve on the senate, but the faculty has not given them carte blanche to do whatever they see fit – the faculty as a whole can and should be consulted sometimes, even if an email needs to go through a convoluted channel to reach us.

According to the minutes (and I could be wrong about this, as I have admitted before), the question was raised about whether to consult the whole faculty with regard to censuring the president, and the argument was made that last year's faculty satisfaction survey told us what the faculty as a whole think. But with all due respect to the faculty involved in that project, who were working hard to complete the task assigned to them, that survey was deeply flawed – it was clearly designed to elicit negative responses. It was an embarrassment to the faculty that the survey results were made public, in my opinion, and I think it was properly ignored by nearly everyone – except on the senate floor, evidently. Ironically, that survey actually helped to deepen discontent and the low morale on campus for which people like to blame Dr. Andrews.

I worry about finding next president. Who would want to come here, given the governor's budget? Why would you want to come to this area of the country? Why would you come to MSU after the faculty senate has censured Dr. Andrews, given his impressive record? Who could advocate effectively in Frankfort without having a history there? I think the senate is chasing away potential future presidents by crying wolf. From the no confidence vote documents, one gets the idea that one day, we will find a real president who will know the future and plan accordingly, who will take money from the administration and restore it to academics, who will fully fund our travel and fix our salaries and balance our teaching loads and value our programs and listen to our voices of reason and cleanse the temple of evil administrators and reduce their number accordingly – and still run the business side of the institution effectively and advocate successfully in Frankfort. If you know anything about trends in higher education, this is dangerously idealistic and completely unrealistic.

By censuring the president, the senate lost credibility again, not just in the eyes of the administration, the board of regents, and the local community, but also in the eyes of many faculty. Considering what is best for the university as a whole, over the long term, and not just advocating for faculty concerns in the short term in order to score points against the administration, the senate needs to look ahead to help the university to attract a new president, not saw off the branch on which we are currently sitting.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and for your kind attention.