

From: Tom Fetzer
Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 6:45 PM
To: Lou Bissette; Margaret Spellings

Chairman Bissette
President Spelling

We have serious concerns about actions, and in some cases, inactions, on your part in the last 48 hours.

First, most, if not all of us, found out about the murder of a 5 year old in UNC-CH graduate student housing thru the media or other campus sources rather than either of you or UNC GA. When we did finally hear from you, far too many hours after the tragic event, it was an afterthought (3rd paragraph of a 3 paragraph letter that began "In addition") in a letter about another matter.

While this is wholly unacceptable, it is also wholly consistent with the manner in which many of us on the Board of Governors feel that we have been regarded when it comes to the dissemination of vital information.

Which leads into our second concern, that being the letter signed by both of you to Governor Cooper yesterday.

We have several concerns about the letter:

The letter was not vetted through the entire board. We understand that it was discussed on a call with committee chairs yesterday, but only in regards to notifying the Governor and requesting advice for enhanced security. Several committee chairs on the call have vouched that requesting the Historic Properties Commission to weigh in on the removal of the monument known as "Silent Sam" was not discussed. Which means that was a unilateral decision made on your part without sufficient Board knowledge or input.

That also is wholly unacceptable. A conference call of the full Board should have been arranged or, at minimum, a rough draft of the letter should have been sent to each of us for approval. Which you would not have received because we do not believe that letter was the right course of action to take to achieve the top priority of protecting our students and secondarily, our campuses and public property. As a matter of fact, we believe that it had the opposite effect.

The letter exuded a weakness and hand wringing that does not accurately reflect the Board's opinion about how the potential of campus unrest should be treated.

We would have preferred a strong statement from each of you to the Chancellors, with the expectation that the Chancellors, in turn, would communicate the message to their campuses, that while our campuses have long been a hospitable forum and meeting place for the peaceful dissemination of contrasting views, lawlessness, vandalism, and violence will not be tolerated and will be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Compounding the error of exuding weakness rather than firm resolve, the letter to the Governor and his political manipulation of the situation by sending his response to the press first, has dramatically and dangerously escalated the potential for unrest and violence at the Chapel Hill campus and perhaps others as well.

Witness the front page headlines in Durham and Raleigh today as evidence of how your strategy to ameliorate this situation backfired.

All of which could have been avoided if you had sought our advice and counsel first--as we believe it is your duty to do.

Let us be clear, we expect you and the Chancellors to do everything in your power to protect our students, our campuses and public property from malicious mayhem. We stand ready to assist in those efforts.

These are our most grievous concerns. But we have others.

There are also reports of an ongoing financial crisis at Elizabeth City State University that some of us are hearing about only anecdotally, but taking very seriously. Again, there has been no formal, or even informal, communication from either or you to the full Board. It is incomprehensible to us, who have a fiduciary responsibility for the campuses as well as the system as a whole, that this apparent crisis could have existed without a briefing from UNC GA.

Your chosen method of communicating with committee chairs (appointed by the Chairman, not the Board) and leaving it to the discretion of those chairs to communicate important information to the remainder of the Board is not working and would not be acceptable even if it were. The full voice of the Board should and must be heard on issues of vital importance, such as these we have just enumerated.

In closing, we wish to make it clear that our expectation is to receive more and more timely information about issues of critical importance to the UNC system even if, as stated in President Spellings' last missive to us, that "it isn't practical to convene the full Board publicly to discuss them."

Respectfully yours,

Harry Smith; Jim Holmes; Marty Kotis; David Powers; Alex Mitchell; Philip Byers; Mike Williford; Thom Goolsby; Pearl Floyd; Wendy Murphy; Bob Rucho; Randy Ramsey; Kelli Blue; Tom Fetzer; Bill Webb