

October 24, 2016

To: Chair of the Board William A. Longbrake
Vice Chairman of the Board Mary A. Neagoy
President Sarah Ruth Bolton
Provost Carolyn Newton

Dear Colleagues:

We, the undersigned faculty of Color, strongly endorse the Board of Trustees' announcement "that significantly increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff is urgent, and that doing so is critical to strengthening The College of Wooster," and we view establishment of the \$1 million Reggie Williams and Dale Perry Fund for increasing diversity among College of Wooster faculty and staff as a first step in that campaign.

We believe, however, that these actions alone are insufficient to remediate comments made by one member of the Board of Trustees to student representatives who requested additional support in recruitment and hiring of more minority faculty last Thursday. Specifically, we reference the following comment, "Do you want good faculty, or do you want Black faculty? Do you want competent faculty, or Minority faculty?"

It grieves us as educators and mentors that such irresponsible comments were directed at students, who were bravely trying to create dialogue in support of faculty of color and increased diversity at Wooster. Sadly, we are all too aware that this cannot be regarded as merely isolated talk. Rather, it is a reflection of a more systemic problem of racial insensitivity and lack of cultural competency, which is hurtful and offensive to the minority communities targeted.

Reconciliation within the College of Wooster family can only come when the leadership of the Board and President Bolton jointly acknowledge publicly and disavow the racially insensitive statements made by this Trustee to students in reference to faculty of color at the college. We also look forward to our Faculty colleagues to firmly denouncing such utterances and the mindset they reflect, and to join us in fighting their corrosive effects on our community, especially our students.

In addition to a public apology and reaffirmation of support for faculty of color, we strongly encourage the additional steps be taken by The College to address the challenges faced in creating a campus climate supportive of diversity:

- Hire a cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer who reports directly to the President;
- Increase the number of under-represented faculty to 33% within 5-10 years to reflect the demographics of the student body and a culture of equity;
- Implement a strategic plan to promote cultural competency throughout the campus community;
- Provide resources, support, and development to aid in the retention of the current faculty of color.

It is important that we clarify that this joint statement serves as a starting point for what we regard as a continuing conversation on these matters.

cc:

The Wooster Voice

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