

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



March 14, 2012

University of Illinois
Board of Trustees
352 Henry Administration Building
506 S. Wright Street, MC-350
Urbana, IL 61801

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees:

We, the majority of the chaired professors on this campus, write again – this time to express our deep gratitude for the actions you have taken thus far, and to reiterate that the best interests of all stakeholders in the University of Illinois, including you, will be served by a rapid and decisive termination of the Presidency of Michael Hogan. Indeed, the deterioration in the perception of Hogan since your Board meeting on the 5th of March makes it all the more urgent that action be taken quickly to preserve the credibility of the Board in the public arena as well as internally amongst the faculty, staff and students of the University. A Board that does not act when there is a President who is so ethically and reputationally compromised as to be unable to function is one that is, in truth, itself unable to effectively govern the institution that it stewards. Given the challenges that the University faces in an uncertain period for the State of Illinois, we view it as essential that Hogan’s failed Presidency be seen for what it is, and that a path be forged which can rapidly restore a healthy governance structure.

First, we sincerely thank you for the expeditious response to the concerns that we, amongst others, had raised about Michael Hogan’s presidency of this University. The emergency meeting of the Board on Monday, March 5, a week after receipt of our letter of February 27, was a welcome indication of the seriousness with which the Board regards our complaints about Michael Hogan’s presidency. We applaud you for acting quickly and for the unequivocal statement of expectations that your Chairman expressed publicly at the close of your meeting. This attitude of the Board stands in stark contrast to that of Michael Hogan himself, who continues his disdain for the views of us, the senior faculty of this university, about his Presidency. Hogan repeated this week before the Illinois Senate his view that our letter did not represent “a no confidence vote” in his Presidency, being merely “a letter written by 114 faculty members dealing with certain issues in the university...” (News-Gazette, March 13, 2012, p. A-1.) [The actual number of signatories was 130.] We thus thank the Board for taking our views

more seriously than does President Hogan, who still apparently views us as a small band of disgruntled “employees.” (News-Gazette, February 25, 2012, p. A-6.)

Second, we stand behind the specific allegations about Hogan’s presidency contained in our letter of February 27 and leading to our conclusion that Hogan should be removed at the earliest opportunity. These allegations were questioned by Tom Hardy, the University spokesman, who at times appears to be more focused on representing the views of the Office of the President than on speaking for the University: “There are a number of inaccuracies...that the letter hangs on,” Hardy said, “So I would question some of the veracity of some of the contentions contained in the letter.” (Illinois Public Media News, February 24, 2012.) When pressed for examples by reporters from the News-Gazette, Hardy referred to the fourth bullet point of our letter (then still in draft), which stated:

“Hogan has by-passed the chain of command by meeting with deans and with the Council of Deans on matters of substance without securing the presence of either our Acting Chancellor or Acting Provost...”

In rebutting this alleged “inaccuracy,” Hardy stated that Hogan “maintains he’s never done that.” (News-Gazette, February 25, 2012, p. A-6.) Yet the facts that have been verified since our letter of February 27 made clear that Hogan not only met “with the Council of Deans without securing the presence of either our Acting Chancellor or Acting Provost,” he positively ordered them to absent themselves while he, Hogan, addressed the Council of Deans without their presence. (Daily Illini, February 29, 2012, p. A-3.) The only “inaccuracy” of our allegation was that it had been understated.

Similarly, facts subsequently revealed have confirmed the accuracy of the other allegations contained in our letter to the Board of February 27. The petulant bullying of Chancellor Wise was further revealed with recently FOIA-ed e-mails of Hogan to Wise about his having to walk to the stadium and his non-appearance on the field at the Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl, as well as about the details of the Urbana campus' new football coach’s contract. (News Gazette, March 2, 2012, p. A-1.) Hogan’s insensitivity to the ethics of conflict of interest as regards Lisa Troyer, was manifest a few days ago in Hogan’s holding open the possibility that he would not recuse himself if and when it comes time for the Office of President to review the disciplinary action against Troyer that may be initiated by the Urbana campus. (News Gazette, March 10, 2012, p. A-1.) This position has elicited amazement and disbelief amongst a faculty already jaded by earlier revelations in this case.

Third, at the conclusion of its March 4 meeting the Board in effect put Hogan on probation with its charge that either he change, or “people” would be changed. More specifically, the Board has charged President Hogan: (1) to exercise his leadership to make the university once again a place “where shared governance is fully embraced...”; (2) to exercise his leadership to restore a “collaborative atmosphere,” including one “where there is a respectful dialogue between our senior leadership...”; (3) “to play a leadership role in” rebuilding faculty support, in restoring relationships between himself and the faculty, and in finding ways to make “the faculty feel welcome and important.”

Hogan's performance to date on the three tasks with which he has been charged, is anything but reassuring. Hogan's actions thus far appear to be two in number. First, even before reaching out to the senior administration and faculty of the University, his first priority was to engineer something of a media blitz, giving a two hour interview to the News-Gazette (March 9, 2012) appearing on local television, and giving other interviews (ten in just one day according to the Chicago Tribune, March 9 2012). Second, on March 8 he sent a mass-mailing entitled, "Restoring trust, achieving our goals," addressed to "everyone" on the UIUC campus. The tenor of both efforts is the same.

The problem, as Hogan sees it, is that he just hasn't communicated well his many successes as President (these alleged successes are recited at length in his mass-mail letter) nor has he communicated adequately the obvious merits of his views on future proposed changes. He thus promises in his letter to "redouble [his] efforts to better communicate." "Shared governance" for Hogan apparently means explaining to faculty, senators, deans, and chancellors why his way is the right way. It is still a one-way learning experience, a top-down imposition of policy. Similarly, what a "collaborative atmosphere" means for Hogan isn't a genuine, two-way collaboration; such an atmosphere is achieved, says Hogan, when he doesn't lose "track of the fact that even when people don't agree with you, they feel better about it if they think you've listened to them." (News-Gazette, March 9, 2012, p. A-1.) This focus on form over substance reveals a truly cynical approach to governance, one which was at the root of Hogan's political and ethical problems, and of which he is manifestly either unrepentant or not sufficiently sensitive to recognize. The effect is the same in either case: further confirmation of the widespread view that Hogan is not up to the job of running the University of Illinois – a position that requires consensus-building so that the University can adapt without dysfunction to the difficult environment for the State and for the Nation's higher education system in general.

It would be a lot to expect that Hogan could restore the trust and respect of this faculty, its senate, or campus administrators, by any Board-ordered eating of humble pie. For it is inevitable to view his efforts here as we do indeed view them: whatever patina of affability, openness, tact, grace, or humility that Hogan can manage to affect under the threat of losing his job, is not the real Michael Hogan we came to know over these last 20 months. Trust and respect, once lost, are not so easily recaptured by any such facade, no matter how skillfully manufactured. And this one is not that artful. Hogan's imperial ways make it impossible for him to give an apology that doesn't offend more than the behavior for which the apology is being given. His "apology" for the Lisa Troyer scandal in January was that he couldn't be expected to oversee beforehand the ethics of all 100,000 employees and students of the University but only to discipline those who lapse. His "apology" now? Only that he "regrets that this failure occurred" – not that any action of his made it occur. Leopards do not change their spots, no one believes that they can, and this one doesn't really want to.

Moreover, trust is particularly hard to reclaim when the person who wishes to reclaim it is less than forthcoming on facts he knows are of high importance. Today's News Gazette contained the remarkable revelation that Troyer's separation from administrative tasks for Hogan was purely formal – she continued working for the University Administration on Hogan's behalf after stepping down as his Chief of Staff, and now wishes to be compensated for her efforts. It is difficult to exaggerate the impact that this finding, obtained again through FOIA'd emails, is

already having on the university community. First, there is the clear lack of separation from her duties of an ethically-compromised administrator. These duties included, according to the emails, drafting statements made by Hogan since her dismissal and spending “many hours” (her words) reviewing Hogan’s emails to respond to FOIA requests! Second is the stark contrast evident from the now-revealed state-of-affairs in Hogan’s office post-dismissal and the statement offered by him on Jan 20 in response to a question posed by a reporter from the News Gazette: “Asked if he has talked to Troyer since the investigation, Hogan said, ‘I call her from time to time to check up on her. ... I’ve been a good friend of hers for many years.’”. In other words, Hogan’s public statements are now at direct odds with the public record of his connections with his disgraced aide. This shows at best extremely poor judgment by Hogan, and at worst a level of openness that is not appropriate for a leader of the University of Illinois. Trust in such circumstances is out of the question.

In closing, we wish to communicate again to the Board our belief that the Presidency of Michael Hogan should be terminated as quickly as possible. We believe that no constituency will be alienated or harmed by such an action, because he has isolated himself from the faculty and even the administration that serves under him, building up a residue of ill-will, distrust, and disrespect that no amount of public posturing can erase. The sooner this is recognized, the sooner the inevitable change of leadership can take place. And the sooner all levels of the University, from its Board to its faculty, staff and students, can engage to meet the challenges facing their various missions in education, research and service to the State and to the Nation.

Respectfully submitted,