

Faculty Senate

Resolution

September 13, 2022



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Whereas, The Code of Ethics for the Trustees of Michigan State University state that they will “properly elect, support, and evaluate the President; and avoid involvement in administrative matters not subject to the direct authority of the Board” and that they will “support open communication, transparency, and the free expression of ideas and will not condone any form of deceit, incivility, intimidation, silencing, or retaliation”; and,

Whereas, Recent actions of the Board of Trustees—including inappropriate involvement in academic management, unbecoming statements to the press, and a general lack of transparency—violate best practices for good governance;¹ therefore be it,

Resolved, The Faculty Senate has been disappointed with the lack of transparency and prior actions noted. In order to maintain full confidence in its Board of Trustees, and in the spirit of working together as Spartans will and can to uphold the success of the entire MSU community, the Faculty Senate requests that the Board of Trustees hire a professional governance firm within the next 60 days and undergo professional development, which shall include the President of the University.

¹ See, e.g., John W. Nason, THE NATURE OF TRUSTEESHIP: THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BOARDS, 22, 86–87 (1982) (“Alert and conscientious boards provide quiet counseling of a kind to enhance the president’s effectiveness. . . . A rapid turnover of presidents is a sure sign of a weak, uncertain or divided board. An effective board is one that delegates responsibility for administration to the president and is prepared to concentrate its attention on policy issues.”); J. Victor Baldrige, ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE: RESEARCH ON INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS AND DECISION MAKING, 112 (1971) (“Boards sometimes claim the prerogative of identifying and appointing [top-level administrative] officers. Such actions are inconsistent with the policy of acting through a single executive officer.”); “The governing board of an institution of higher education, while maintaining a general overview, entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers—the president and the deans—and the conduct of teaching and research to the faculty. The board should undertake appropriate self-limitation.”; Barbara R. Snyder, AAU PRESIDENT EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN ABOUT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES’ INTERFERENCE IN SCHOOL OPERATIONS (September 12, 2022) (“As president of AAU, which represents Michigan State University and our country’s other leading research universities, I am appalled at reports of interference in MSU’s day-to-day operations by the university’s trustees, who are elected officials. If the reports are accurate, then this is inappropriate meddling by a board charged with governance, not management.”); AAUP et. al, STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (1966) (“The governing board of an institution of higher education, while maintaining a general overview, entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers—the president and the deans—and the conduct of teaching and research to the faculty. The board should undertake appropriate self-limitation.”)