

Academic Congress

Resolution

March 14th, 2024



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Whereas, ASMSU passed a resolution of no confidence in the Board of Trustees¹, citing among other factors, Trustee Scott's allegations of Trustee Vassar's misconduct; and,

Whereas, The Faculty Senate passed a resolution², calling on the Board of Trustees to remove Trustee Vassar as Chairperson, calling on Trustee Vassar to resign, referring her to the governor for removal per MCL 168.293, and authorizing the filing of a complaint with the university's accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission, that outlined Trustee Vassar's transgressions of Criterion 2C4 and 2C5, including:

- inappropriately interfering with matters delegated to the administration;
- appearing in an advertisement for the private wealth management firm founded and managed by a former trustee;
- traveling on a donor's private jet, accepting courtside tickets from an MSU donor, dismissing suggestions that her conduct was not consistent with the board's ethics standards; and,

Whereas, The Miller & Chevalier report³ substantiated several allegations against Trustee Vassar including all allegations cited in the October 26th Faculty Senate Resolution and new findings against Trustee Denno, that included, among others;

- interference in the final draft of the after-action report from February 13th, 2023;

¹ See ASMSU Bill No. 60-35 (November 2, 2023), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14CrIZL7NaZgC5GoDOwxX7HV4ikIwu5IA/view>.

² See Faculty Senate Resolution FS2324R03 (October 26, 2023), <https://acadgov.msu.edu/-/media/assets/academicgovernance/docs/faculty-senate/fs-2023-2024/fs-resolutions/fs2324r03-board-chairperson.pdf?rev=602ffa45d20e40aea2e1f8c637f3ac47&hash=EFB61BCD74BC6F471A0DDEECEF1379EE>.

³ See *Michigan State University Independent Investigation Report* by Miller & Chevalier (February 28, 2024), <https://msu.edu/-/media/assets/msu/docs/issues-statements/msu-independent-investigation-report--feb-28-2024--redactedupdated-links.pdf?rev=6e36cfca79374c28b9d81e4baacc0706&hash=483929D1FD6EC34599D00C3B77E870A2>

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- providing students with confidential information against university interests;
- Trustees Vassar and Denno retaliating against the Faculty Senate Chair through the manipulation of students; and,

Whereas, The Board of Trustees voted on March 3, 2024⁴, to censure Trustees Vassar and Denno, remove them from all current and future appointments during the Board's term ending December 31, 2024, except those activities and duties required as an elected official, and refer them to the governor for review and potential removal under MCL 168.293; therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Academic Congress endorses the actions laid out by the previously cited Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees Resolutions, and the Miller & Chevalier Report, calls for the resignation of Trustees Vassar and Denno, and endorses the removal of Trustees Vassar and Denno by the governor under MCL 168.293; and,

Resolved, That the Academic Congress condemns the retaliatory behaviors of Trustees Denno and Vassar, for exploiting students for political gain, inducing a culture of fear, weakening academic governance, jeopardizing the free, open expression of civil discourse, risking the accreditation of the university, unnecessarily dividing the Spartan community, and carelessly exposing the university to potential litigation; and,

Resolved, That, although censured by the Board of Trustees for revealing confidential information regarding ongoing litigation, the Academic Congress lauds Trustee Scott's courage for exposing transgressions substantiated by the Miller & Chevalier investigation including violations of the Board of Trustees Code of Ethics, Board policies,

⁴ See the Board of Trustee's Executive Action Summary (March 3, 2024), [Miller and Chevalier Report Resolution.pdf](#)

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UNIVERSITY

and Criterion 2 of the university's accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission; and,

Resolved, That the Academic Congress commends those who bravely came forward to sit for interviews and provide information to the Miller & Chevalier investigators; and,

Resolved, That the Academic Congress calls for mandatory, comprehensive Trustee onboarding and annual training, designed by internal and external experts, to prepare them for the rigors of the role and to restore confidence in the Board from the university community.