

Concerned Faculty <concernedfacultyoftu@gmail.com>  
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Dear President Clancy,

In response to your email "Beyond Rankings": We are pleased to hear that you are concerned about TU's serious and continuing drop in the *U.S. News & World Report's* list of top national universities. The message the faculty have received thus far from you and the provost is that the administration is not concerned about rankings. Well the faculty are *quite concerned* about TU's rank. Older and now-retired faculty worked very hard to elevate TU to top-100 status. Younger faculty chose to come work and get tenured at TU in large part because it was at the time a top-100 ranked university.

You don't ever need to ask us "to affirm, every day, [our] commitment to our students." We don't need to be reminded. We don't need to hear from your newly hired student success staff a thank you for all we do for their students. We care about the students. These are our students. We teach them. We listen to them. We evaluate them. We mentor them. We help them succeed. We answer to the students. We care about them as people, as learners, as seekers of truth, as fragile, developing minds who are trying to become better leaders and citizens. We care about them as individuals, not simply as tuition-paying, loan-and-grant-receiving cogs who need to be credentialed for a specific profession.

Alumni donate to TU because of the amazing classroom experiences they had and the wonderful one-on-one encounters with individual professors. They don't donate because of a strategic plan, a dean, a provost, a president, a board of trustees, or a student success center. They donate because of their professors. You know the importance of faculty. You know that the number one indicator whether a prospective student chooses TU is whether they have met one-on-one with a member of the faculty.

A university is more than just its students. A university is its students and its faculty. There is no university without the faculty. A new student success center may or may not have any effect on student outcomes. However, a proven way to increase student learning outcomes and job placement is take care of your faculty. Your goal is "to do the right thing for our students," but what about our faculty? If you truly want to "do the right thing for our students," you will do the right thing for our faculty. You'll trust us, you'll consult with us, and you'll compensate us fairly.

In your letter you express confidence in your plan. We do not have confidence in it. We do not have confidence in the university leadership. You and the provost have broken our trust, and it seems increasingly unlikely that you and she will be able to close the rift you have opened up between the administration and the faculty. This type of adversarial relationship was caused by you and her. It was not caused by faculty rejection of the plan, but rather by the substance of that plan and the process by which it was formed.

We do not have confidence that this plan reflects sound business or management judgment. We know it does not reflect the letter or the spirit of the commitment to shared governance that is required by our documents that govern the relationship between faculty, administration and the board and is required by the various accrediting bodies to which we, as faculty, are responsible.

Thus, your expression of confidence in this plan merely underscores for us a simple truth: we do not have confidence in you, the provost, and all those recently chosen by you or by the provost for prominent, leadership roles in formulating and/or implementing this embarrassingly bad plan. The

faculty objections to the plan are part of a very public record that cannot be ignored by the HLC, the AAUP, or any other body with accrediting or oversight authority over this university.

You mention keeping the lines of communication open. We hope you will keep the lines of communication open with us. Referring to faculty, even privately, as “wackos,” closes down communication. Continuing to pretend to the media and donors that most of the faculty are on board with “True Commitment” closes down communication. Delaying votes in the faculty senate closes down communication. When you work to limit our contact with our alumni—the students we taught, mentored, guided, prepared, and even learned from—that closes down communication. Retaliation against members of the Concerned Faculty group and against faculty senators for their votes in favor of shared governance closes down communication. We will continue, as always, to “seek solutions” and “find innovative ideas through which we all can move forward,” but your provost seems uninterested in any solutions or innovative ideas that conflict with her closed-minded, predetermined, uninformed thinking. In fact, she seems more interested in retaliating against those who disagree with her. This is not open communication. You have not demonstrated that you want actual communication. It doesn’t need to be this way.

We couldn’t help but notice that every single dean present at the recent faculty senate meeting stood up and voted with you and the provost against the faculty and shared governance. This cannot continue. Stand with your faculty.

To come full circle, rankings don't really matter in themselves, but should be seen as a way of contextualizing a university among others that do many of the same or similar things. If we want to be a respected university, we have to take care of fundamentals: good faculty, good academic programs, good students, and a kind of awareness of and respect for industry standards among these schools. Liberal arts, fine arts, social sciences, and natural sciences have to be able to hold their own here. True Commitment constitutes a great leap backwards in TU's actual commitment to all these values.

Signed,

Concerned Faculty of TU (CFTU)