

15 May 2009

To: Chancellor Charles Reed
Board of Trustees of the California State University

From: John W. Powell, General Faculty President
Saeed Mortazavi, Chair of the Academic Senate

CC: John Tarjan, Chair, ASCSU
Craig R. Smith, Faculty Trustee, CSU

Re: Notice: The HSU General Faculty have voted no confidence in President Rollin Richmond and asked that he resign within two months

On Tuesday the 12th of May, at an emergency meeting of the General Faculty of Humboldt State University, a quorum having been established, it was moved, seconded and passed on a vote of 128 yes, 4 no, with 2 abstentions, as follows:

Resolved: That the faculty has no confidence in President Rollin Richmond as a result of a pattern of failed leadership on issues core to the creation of a positive communicative and working environment at HSU and because his lack of leadership is undermining the integrity and success of the university and that he be asked to step down within two months.

Discussion leading up to and following the motion, which is available in the posted notes, made clear that the issues have nothing to do with the performance or the potential of the interim Provost, but rather are a continuation of the issues regarding communication and shared governance which have been a source of escalating tensions between the President and the faculty for over three years.

The precipitating action on the President's part consists of his having received strong, clear, often unanimous, opinions from several different faculty bodies--the Senate Executive Committee, the full Senate, and the Chairs of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences--endorsing the necessity of holding a national search for provost, and then brushing all those voices aside by acting to the contrary without answering our arguments or granting them any weight. This insulting behavior included failing to communicate his decision to the last meeting of the Academic Senate, suggesting that he was timing his decision in such a way as to minimize the ability of the faculty to respond before the end of the academic year.

Further, the faculty have been endeavoring to work with the President to improve communication and to address issues of shared governance through various measures for three years. In the fall of 2006, the Academic Senate passed and had rejected by the President three resolutions in a row on budget priorities and the role of the Senate and the role of the faculty in decision making (see the Senate Resolutions web page for that year at <http://www.humboldt.edu/~acadsen/res06-07.htm>). In the fall of 2007 some faculty members were asking for a no confidence vote, to which an administration spokesman responded by telling the media that it was the result of only a small group of disaffected faculty. The Senate responded by checking to see if that was true. The Senate asked faculty to respond to an informational survey ballot in October 2007, and 156 agreed (to 60 who disagreed) that we should initiate a no confidence vote (for this and the following items, see the Academic Senate's web pages for Reports at <http://www.humboldt.edu/~acadsen/reports.htm> as well as the web pages for packets and minutes). After intense discussion in the Senate and elsewhere on campus, the Senate appointed a committee to draw up a Bill of Particulars to which the President would be asked to respond. Eleven Particulars were identified in a report dated February 19, 2008. A motion was then introduced to stave off a no confidence vote by asking another small committee to negotiate with the President regarding the issues raised in the Bill of Particulars, with the goal of reaching written agreements, with any unresolved issues to be brought back to the Senate for review and possible consideration as basis for a no confidence vote. The Senate Executive Committee then reduced the issues to four main problem areas: shared governance, managing budget, communication, articulating a vision.

These meetings took place through the spring semester of 2008, and President Richmond sent a statement to the Senate Executive Committee during the summer, which was placed in the Senate's packet for the August 26 meeting. This response was not satisfactory to the Senate. During that same spring 2008, the administration's proposal to eliminate the German program made its way up through the chain of command. That this proposal divided the administration from the faculty, staff and students was denied by the administration despite the overwhelming evidence in the feedback binder kept in the Provost's office, until it came before the Senate for a vote, which was 22-2 with two abstentions against the proposal. The senate formed a third subcommittee during the fall 2008 semester to continue discussing their concerns with President Richmond. This subcommittee reduced the pending issues to one item: shared governance. The President forwarded a document on shared governance for the Senate packet of January 27. The Senate was divided whether President Richmond's response was satisfactory or not. During the February 10, 2009 meeting, a motion was made to place the issues with President Richmond in the past, partly with the hope that the severe criticisms in the Keeling Report and its recommendations might offer hope of resolutions to the issues. The summary of those arguments are in the Senate packet for February 10.

The Keeling Report in October 2008 recommended appointing the interim Provost permanently. The President convened an Expanded Executive Committee, facilitated by Interim Dean Ayoob, to discuss and evaluate the Keeling Report and its recommendations. In this configuration, the University Executive suddenly became a participatory rather than a listening body. The group evaluated the report as generally correct and to be taken seriously, and took up recommendations in turn. Based on the consensus of that group, the President agreed not to appoint the interim provost to a permanent position based on several arguments having to do with consistency with practice, the need to show commitment to diversity, legitimizing the authority of the provost, and the need to proceed in a way that builds trust on campus. During April and May 2009 the President revived the proposal to appoint the interim provost to the post permanently without a search. The Senate Executive Committee heard this proposal, complete with the draft letter the President had already composed making the announcement, and then voted unanimously against

the proposal. The full Senate asked for a report regarding that Senate Executive Committee action, and then on a motion from the floor voted unanimously against the President's proposal. During these discussions several other arguments were added, including (1) the need to proceed in a way that does not damage further the fragile relationship between the President and the faculty and the rest of the campus community, (2) the need not to damage the Provost's relationship with the faculty, and (3) the fact that the permanent appointment is not needed for the Provost to lead effectively (and to take on the designation as chief operating officer or senior vice president). During this same time period, the college chairs discussed the proposal. The chairs of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences held a vote. It was unanimously against the proposal. At the last Senate meeting of the year, the President was present but did not report whether he had decided to implement his proposal, and the appointment announcement was distributed the next morning via e-mail.

The faculty have been very slow to take this action. It was pointed out at the Emergency meeting and afterwards that some faculty had been in favor of such action two years ago. Others remarked on having been against a vote of no confidence until recently concluding that the President is unteachable on these issues. The manner of this last action in the face of strong opposition including unanimous votes by faculty leaders to the contrary struck many faculty as insulting and contemptuous of faculty roles in decision making. We conclude that the President has to go. We are confident that a review of the enclosed materials will compel your agreement.

The General Faculty and the Academic Senate Executive Committee advised the General Faculty President regarding documentation to accompany this notice. Here is a summary.

First, because there is a question among faculty whether the Chancellor and whether some of the Board will take the views of faculty seriously, based on Board and Chancellor actions in the face of two previous findings of no confidence regarding two CSU Presidents, the documentation includes evaluations and reports and references to visitors who are not HSU faculty. These include accreditation evaluators, consultants, and visitors brought to us by the CSU system. Reports which are available from some of these are attached and others may be available to Trustees. Attached reports include the Feb 2008 report by the visiting WASC accreditation team; preliminary and final versions an original and then a sanitized version of a report from October 2008 by Keeling and Associates, consultants from outside the system brought to campus based on recommendations of the accrediting team; the report from the consulting visit to the campus by retired CSU Chico President Manuel Esteban (November 2006); and the report regarding budget decision-making processes from Maddox Management Consulting (January 2009). In addition Trustees may have or be able to get reports from retired CSU Long Beach President Bob Maxson's September 2007 visit, and visits to the campus by members of the Board of Trustees Dr. Glen Toney (February 2008) and Margaret Fortune (April 2009). Further documentation emphasizes how the situation at Humboldt State University is different from that on other campuses and that the process we followed, with its seemingly interminable and patient time line, lends more weight to the grave action by the General Faculty of Humboldt State University.

Documentation
Annotated Table of Contents:
Section One, Strategic Plan and Outside Evaluators:

Spring 2004: (Attached NoConOneA.pdf p. 1) Two pages from the Humboldt State University Strategic Plan 2004-2009, the process for which was begun by President Richmond in April 2003. The entire plan is posted on the web at

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~planning/docs/FullStrategicPlan.pdf>

Pages 205-206 are enclosed. Of twenty strategies to improve decision-making, some requiring only distribution of documents and some emphasizing shared governance, from XIXa1 through XIXh2, not one has yet been fully implemented. This two-page excerpt is posted separately in the Council of Chairs documents on governance at

http://www.humboldt.edu/~aavp/Department_Chairs/042309/Pgs205_06.pdf

June of 2006: It was announced in an Administrative Affairs Directors meeting in connection with questions about distributing budget documents that Bob Maxson, the former President at Long Beach, would be visiting campus to review the 07-08 budget. Following his visit in September budgeting process was changed to emphasize transparency and to give faculty a more clear role.

Pres. Maxson's report is not available on campus except as summarized in notes from the September 9, 2006, meeting of the University Executive Committee, at

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~hsupres/09092006.html> .

December of 2006:)Attached NoConOneA.pdf p. 3(Former President of CSU Chico, Manuel Esteban (who had been Vice President for Academic Affairs here at Humboldt) filed a report from his November visit to evaluate our budget and budgeting processes. In that report (p. 3-4) he notes several items evidencing problems of trust. Here are two. He commented that:

“6. The prevalent opinion is that recommendations, whether made by student groups, faculty senate, labor council or other groups, are ignored.

7. Many believe that the consultants who have been brought to campus, including my own presence, are just “window dressing,” because decisions have already been made.”

He prefaced his recommendations with three bold-faced “challenges” we face, including accomplishing tasks “with full understanding and involvement of all constituents.”

President Esteban's report is enclosed. It is online at
<http://www.humboldt.edu/~hsupres/documents/ManuelEstebanBudgetReport.pdf>

Feb 2008: WASC Visitation Team Report, (Attached NoConOneA.pdf p. 10)

Quote from p. 22:

The Visitation Team was much impressed by the manner in which the essay on Resource Planning was concluded. It said that “a number of people in this campus community remain unhappy with both the allocation results and the budget process. A major concern is that the approaches that have been taken to the allocation of resources so far have tended to favor the status quo, making it difficult to formulate decisions around strategic priorities.” The Visitation Team saw ample evidence of the validity of this commentary.

Quotes from pp. 23-24:

[I]t seems to the Visitation Team that the process for allocating annual operational resources to the CSU system does not favor a smaller campus like Humboldt. . . .

The Visitation Team also observed that governance and decision-making processes at the University are complicated, cumbersome, and difficult to understand. HSU seems to take a fragmented approach to institutional decision-making which creates internal confusion and sometimes unclear results. There are several examples of this including the decentralized and somewhat disconnected departmental focus on many curriculum matters; the loose structure of faculty governance over curriculum, in general; the absence of a centralized faculty based focus on general education; and in the University-wide budget and priority setting process which is the subject of a recommendation for study at another point in this report. This situation contributes to an environment lacking in transparency since the complexity of process and fragmentation of information makes everything more opaque. These problems surrounding decision-making appear to be deeply embedded in the culture. Nevertheless, for an institution of only 7,500 students, there seem to be too many organizational layers and too many committees, some of which appear to operate at cross-purposes.

Quote from p. 32:

The effort to move from crisis to continuity in resource planning would be facilitated by additional time. In its concluding presentation to the HSU family and in this report the Visitation Team noted the complex and confusing processes currently in place to make resource decisions and recommended that HSU consider conducting a comprehensive functional analysis (process re-engineering) of its budget development and management process, most likely to be facilitated by a third party.

[Note: In accordance with this last statement and in recognition of the seriousness of problems needing to be addressed, the visiting team recommended a delay before their return visit to allow the campus time to work with consultants and to revamp decision-making, and to achieve a shared vision. One "third party" presented a harsh report, attached next and from which the next quotes are taken.]

October 7, 2008 and October 14, 2008:)Oct 7 is in Attached NoConOneA.pdf p. 43, Oct 14 is in Attached NoConOneB.pdf, p.1(Keeling Associates report, "Creating a Shared Vision"
[The first three paragraphs from the October 7 document, in full]:

A series of State budget reductions ramifying through the California State University system (CSU), linked with the CSU enrollment-based institutional funding model, has challenged Humboldt State University. Humboldt (HSU), both by limiting available fiscal resources and by exposing serious internal and organizational problems. The pure financial challenge created by reduced funding has been substantial, painful, and difficult. But, equally or more important, the University's responses to those reductions have not always been functional. The University's record has been characterized more by finding ways to avoid the hard decisions made necessary by budget cuts than by adapting to or accommodating those cuts in a thoughtful and strategic manner.

The accumulation of these decisions has resulted in a dysfunctional campus culture that is characterized by ineffective presidential leadership, a lack of shared institutional vision and governance, ineffective decision making, and a fatigued if not demoralized administration, faculty, staff, and student body. In short, the campus is "stuck," lacking in trust and resistant to change, mired in a culture largely of its own making.

These conditions have resulted in WASC's recommendation that its scheduled visit for Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) be deferred for one year, a clear signal of problems of crisis-level proportions. The WASC report and its implications constitute a legitimate institutional emergency.

[The President's explanation for the existence of two versions of this report, one more negative than the other, is in the Academic Senate Minutes for November 4, 2008, below. Copies of both are enclosed. Contrast especially the characterization of the President's leadership on p. 9 and p. 14 of the Oct 7 document with the prose of the later version. Other variations are scattered throughout.]

January 16, 2009: (Attached *NoConOneB.pdf* p. 34) Maddox Management Consulting report: **“Role of the Academic Senate.** One of the major issues in budgeting at HSU has been the faculty's role in budgeting, and in particular the role of the Academic Senate as the faculty's representatives. This has informed some of the conversations about the composition of the University Budget Committee. Under its current configuration, the UBC is not a strong vehicle for communicating the voice of the Academic Senate. “

[Maddox Management Consulting's report also stressed the need for attention to communication fundamentals, which by implication have been neglected. In particular, he recommends that the President and the Provost communicate with the campus community regularly at key points in the budget cycle and academic year.

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~budget/documents/FY08-09/Final%20Maddox%20Budget%20Report.pdf>]

Section Two: Faculty Proceedings and Reports, Other Documents

October 2006: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 1) Academic Senate, List, with links, Resolutions for AY 2006-2007

[These are evidence that the tensions between the President and the Academic Senate and between the President and the Senate Executive Committee antedate the issue of the appointment of the interim provost to permanent without a search. See Resolutions numbered #06, #07, and #08—all originating with the Executive Committee.]

September and October 2007: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 4) Academic Senate Minutes for September 11, 2007 (see pp. 5-11 re: open forum on President)
September 25, 2007 (see pp. 13-16 re: survey on no confidence vote etc.),
October 9, 2007 (see pp. 1-6 for Senate construction of survey ballot)

October 22 2007: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 23) “Information Ballot”

October 22 2007: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 24) “Information Ballot Results”

In addition to this tabulation, written comments are online at
<http://www.humboldt.edu/~acadsen/reports.htm>

November 6, 2007: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 25) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 7-12 for discussion of results of the survey ballot)

December 4, 2007: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 31) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 5-10, empaneling *ad hoc* Bill of Particulars Committee)

February 26, 2008: (In Attached *NoCtwo.pdf*, p. 39) Bill of Particulars (report, *ad hoc* Bill of Particulars Committee)

February 26, 2008: (In Attached NoCtwo.pdf, p. 42) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 10-15 for discussion of Bill of Particulars)

April 29, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 1) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 4-7 for discussion of German discontinuation and vote, 23-2, 2 abstentions against discontinuation of German. Further, see p. 13 for President's plan to hold national search for provost in AY 2009-2010.)

May 30, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 7) Rollin Richmond, "Response to the Humboldt State University Academic Senate Executive Committee Summary of Concerns with Presidential Leadership"

August 26, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 15) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 6-13 for discussion of President's Response to Bill of Particulars and the possibility and desirability of a vote of no confidence.)

September 9, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 25) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 4-10 for continued discussion of President's response and question whether it is satisfactory or whether there should be a vote of no confidence. President Richmond was present and participated.)

September 23, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 33) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 9-14 for continued discussion of President's response, new motion and formation of second committee for conferring with President re: four categories of items from Bill of Particulars.)

October 7, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 40) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 10-12 for subcommittee's clarification of Senate vision of shared governance.)

November 4, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 44) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 10-16 for discussion of the Keeling Report, including explanation for the two versions and the issue of how extreme the situation is HSU faces.)

November 29, 2008: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 52) President Rollin Richmond, "My view of the meaning of shared governance for Humboldt State University Faculty."

February 3, 2009: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 61) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 5-10 for discussion on whether or not the President's document on Shared Governance resolves the Bill of Particulars issues.)

April 7, 2009: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 68) Academic Senate Minutes (see p. 2 for President's proposal to appoint the interim to permanent position without a search.)

April 21, 2009: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 70) Academic Senate Minutes (see pp. 6-7 for Senate's discussion and unanimous recommendation that the interim provost not be appointed permanently without a search.)

May 14, 2009: (In Attached NoCthree.pdf, p. 73) Academic Senate web home page, with notice of General Faculty meeting results and links to tallies and notes.