



Valdosta State University

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To: Dr. Robert Hull, Executive Secretary, Faculty Senate

From: Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick, Faculty Senator

Date: October 18, 2000

Re.: Memorandum regarding governance at Valdosta State University

I regret that I cannot be present to deliver this memorandum in person. As you know I am away from campus this week as part of an AAUP investigation team which ironically is dealing with serious issues on a campus elsewhere that involves in part serious governance issues on that campus. It is my wish that the following memorandum be read into the record and become a part of the minutes for the October 19, 2000 meeting of the Faculty Senate.

I first prepared this memorandum to be read at the September Faculty Senate meeting. I did not do so then because at that time President Bailey had promised to deal effectively with some of these issues. Subsequent events have indicated that this may not happen. As a consequence I request that you read that memorandum dated September 2000 which is attached.

Governance Statement to the VSU Faculty Senate
September 2000
Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick

Once again, less than six months from the previous episode, we here at VSU are embroiled in yet another tree cutting fiasco. It is important to remember, as history repeats itself that this is not the first such tree episode, nor is it just trees that are at issue here.

Some of us, who serve as senators this year, remember the circumstances that established this Faculty Senate. It was another unfortunate period in our institution's history. Several accusations were made at that time. In that earlier time President Bailey asked that the full Grievance Committee investigate the accusations and come forward with a report and recommendations. The final recommendation in that report from The Spectator, April 20, 1988, should be noted and I quote.

"This report addresses some of the faculty concerns at Valdosta State College. We have asked the questions the faculty asked us to ask. Our recommendations are intended to improve procedures and practices at VSC. The recommendations are addressed not only to the President of the College but also to administrative offices and faculty committees, as appropriate. The future of Valdosta State College is a joint responsibility of both the President and the Faculty.

"As we examined faculty and administrative concerns, it became evident that there was one overriding concern - the nature of the relationship between President Bailey and the faculty and staff of Valdosta State College. That relationship has had its ups and downs over the years. We are truly hopeful that the relationship is now improving.

"The nurturing of that relationship requires mutual trust and understanding. That truism leads to our most important and most fundamental recommendation: President Bailey and the Faculty should work together to improve Valdosta State College.

"The phrase 'work together' does not mean blind loyalty or lip service on the part of the faculty or lip service to faculty concerns on the part of the President. It means developing a professional attitude marked by respect of values and toleration of differences. The achievement of a harmonious working relationship between the President and the Faculty will require dedication and hard work on both sides.

"For the faculty, it requires an even greater commitment of time to the work necessary for the governance of the institution. For the President, it requires a commitment to creating an atmosphere in which open collegial discussion can take place without fear of recrimination. It will require a sensitive, sincere, and sustained effort to re-establish such an atmosphere at VSC."

The current VSU Statutes, which created this Faculty Senate and the Bylaws that govern this senate resulted from efforts growing out of this Grievance Committee investigation. For a time there seemed to be real progress as the Faculty and the President worked to re-establish a collegial atmosphere of shared responsibility at this institution. More recently, rather than a sustained effort, we have been dismayed at the lack of adherence to university policy and the disrespect thus shown for shared governance and faculty expertise at Valdosta State University.

As the President of Valdosta State University, Dr. Bailey, you lead your administration. Your office and your behavior set the tone for your administration. We had expected better leadership from you. As senators we challenge you and your office to truly support shared governance and relay this support throughout our university community. We expect this leadership from your office.

Shared governance requires mutual respect and trust. Relationships built on mutual respect and trust can develop only between people of integrity.

At this university trust has once again been broken. "It will require a sensitive, sincere, and sustained effort to re-establish such an atmosphere at" VSU. (Grievance Committee Report, April 1988)