

RESOLUTION OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESIDENT OF
PIEDMONT UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS: Faculty, staff, and administrators of Piedmont University share an abiding commitment and wholehearted dedication to promoting and maintaining an educational environment where student learning is central to the mission of the University; and

WHEREAS: *President Mellichamp's management has been damaging to the University's reputation, stature, and sustainability.*

Evidence of this is readily observed in the number of CFOs employed under President Mellichamp's presidency. The lack of consistency in the financial offices has not led to a reputable and reliable budgetary formation. This lack of supervisory oversight and lack of full understanding by the President has left Piedmont University in a dire financial position. Evidence of this is our current financial status as well as his self-statement of the administration making a two million dollar "boo-boo in the budgeting process."

Other evidence is as late as November 2021. In a faculty meeting, Mellichamp announced that Piedmont University was on solid financial standing, and things were moving ahead with the construction of a new dormitory and reconstruction of an existing dormitory. Three months later, in a called faculty meeting, Mellichamp stated that because of the lost student population, significant cuts would have to be made to staff and faculty to compensate for budget shortfalls. President Mellichamp's stated budget formation was determined from the previous comparative semester. As stated by the President in a faculty assembly during the reduction in force meeting, he stated he knew as early as the first of January of the University's dire financial standing for the remainder of the fiscal year.

President Mellichamp's refusal to provide budgetary information to faculty and staff clearly represents a lack of financial transparency within the financial administration of Piedmont University.

During President Mellichamp's tenure, Piedmont University has engaged in extensive and numerous expansions in real estate ventures that have led to significant financial obligations for the University. None of these ventures have provided any financial return on the incumbent of these funds. The lack of a guaranteed financial return does not represent sound financial reasoning by the President. On the contrary, the President has informed the faculty and staff at previous assemblies that Piedmont University was "out of the construction business."

WHEREAS: *President Mellichamp has failed to establish and maintain a clear academic mission for Piedmont University.*

Evidence of a lack of academic focus and the lack of consistency on the Curriculum. The establishment of two separate faculty-led committees for the same purpose, one within the faculty senate and one at the direction of the provost, reflect the duplication and inconsistency of academic direction.

The lack of communication during the president's tenure as evidenced by the creation the two committees for faculty input is evidence of a disregard by those members of Piedmont University who are entrusted to deliver academic structure for the student body. A lack of the compilation of data reflecting the effectiveness of the existing core curriculum and the basis of the need for change to pre-existing core curriculum reflects a general disconnect from faculty and lack of understanding. A lack of communication represents President Mellichamp's indifference to overall faculty input, design, and expertise.

The President has consistently stated that retention of faculty is not an issue at Piedmont University and is evidenced in the "strategic" plan for the University. The desire to expand online academic delivery without consideration of faculty staff sufficient to deliver existing courses is evidence of indifference and lack of sound management practices. The lack of focus has further compromised existing graduate and undergraduate students' desire for in-person instruction. This is evident by the recent exodus of students from the graduate online programs from last fall to spring semester.

These actions further contradict Piedmont's presentation to prospective students and parents of low student-to-faculty ratios and lend themselves to large class enrollment with less student-instructor engagement. This is not a successful strategy for student retention.

WHEREAS: *President Mellichamp has failed to appropriately manage personnel issues.*

The President has repeatedly stated to faculty, administration, and publicly to faculty and staff that if faculty did not like his management, they could "leave" and identified himself as not liked and an "Ogre."

Faculty from the Nursing and Health Sciences College requested a meeting with the administration to discuss issues within the management structure of the College. This request was made in November of 2021. The faculty met with the administration the first week of December 2021. The President advised the issue would be addressed. The information expressed to the President in confidence by a faculty member was leaked to Nursing management, which led to retaliatory adverse and unprofessional behaviors on behalf of the Nursing management. When the President advised that a reduction in force was needed due to budgetary constraints, one of the original complainant faculty was terminated, and one was reduced to a part-time position. This can only be viewed as a retaliatory action.

The issue remained static until late April 2022, when a faculty senate member openly discussed the events during a faculty senate meeting. The following week that senate member received an administrative email detailing a potential course of action to remedy the issue. In the first week of May 2022, the President held a round table meeting and discussion with the Nursing faculty concerning the issues previously brought forth. The faculty member questioned about the leak of confidential information as well as the idea of nursing faculty retention and the President was indifferent to the members present and their concerns.

When a poll was taken as to which faculty were searching for new jobs, each person raised their hand, as well as the President. The President's concessions for the remedy of the management of the Nursing and Health Sciences College issue was to hire a leadership coach for the manager.

WHEREAS: *President Mellichamp has exposed the University to multiple civil liability issues through indifference and lack of continuity of generally accepted policies and protocols.*

The President has had three pending legal issues in the past few years, which have damaged the reputation of Piedmont University in that fairness, equitable treatment, and protections against inappropriate behaviors are no longer guaranteed. These actions are against the mission and focus of Piedmont University and its Faculty.

The President is currently facing a civil action by a former faculty member, which currently is pending and appears not to be resolved without further litigation.

The President has recently settled a civil action by a second faculty member, which equally brought stress and embarrassment to the University and Faculty.

The President and the University are now named as a defendant in a pending civil action involving a Title IX investigation and has responded publicly to the news media qualifying his handling of the investigation.

The President has openly discussed the complaint and has stated in a faculty assembly that "he" had "looked" into the matter, and it was unfounded.

RESOLVED: The Faculty of Piedmont University has no confidence in the ability of President James Mellichamp to lead Piedmont University in a professional manner that enables our faculty to educate and serve our students effectively in the spirit of shared governance, transparency, trustworthiness; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the faculty will welcome a new President who embraces shared governance as well in the presentation of speech, transparency, and mutual trust and respect, and will work actively to correct these issues identified in this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the faculty participate in this referendum on this resolution in accordance with the Senate bylaws for elections.

RESOLVED: That copies of this resolution be sent to the Piedmont University Board of Trustees, the full Senate of Piedmont University, the appropriate media outlet, and President James Mellichamp.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees appoint an interim President while it conducts a national search for a new president with all due speed. One suggestion for an interim President is the selection of an existing Board of Trustee Member of Piedmont University.