

I have been asked to forward this letter to members of the Faculty Senate. Professor Jack Karns, Vice Chair of the Faculty, will address his concerns at the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 5, 2000, in the Mendenhall Student Center, Great Room.

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November 30, 2000

Mr. Phillip R. Dixon  
Chair, ECU Board of Trustees  
Chair, ECU Chancellor's Search Committee  
DIXON, DOUB & CONNER  
Attorneys at Law  
105 E. Arlington Boulevard  
Greenville, NC 27858

RE: On-Campus Visits for Chancellor Search Finalists

Dear Mr. Dixon:

At the November 14, 2000, meeting of the East Carolina University (ECU) Faculty Senate, as Chair of the ECU Chancellor's Search Committee (Committee), you made one of several scheduled reports to the ECU Faculty Senate regarding the state of the Chancellor's search process. Such reports are now of special interest and importance not just to the ECU faculty, but to the greater East Carolina University Community, as well, given the Committee's decision not to permit public access to key activities and deliberations.

At the aforementioned meeting, I specifically asked you whether the top two or three finalists for the Chancellor's position, as chosen by the Committee, would be afforded an opportunity to visit campus to meet and speak with faculty, students and those who constitute the Total ECU Family. I asked this question because Dr. Robert Morrison, current Chair of the Faculty, is a member of the ECU Chancellor's Search Committee and is sworn to the agreement of secrecy voted upon by a majority of your Committee. Accordingly, given that Dr. Morrison is de facto recused from his elected leadership role of the entire faculty electorate in this matter, as Vice-Chair, I hereby assume that responsibility of leadership as to the crucial questions and comments asked on November 14th and repeated herein. Finally, I note that these questions are presented for the greater good of the University and the Community which has graciously served as its home for nearly one-hundred years.

As for the information I sought on November 14th, I note for the record that my question to you concerned the "top two or three finalists" and not the current number of candidates the Committee was then considering. At the time of my question, the Committee had not narrowed the possible candidate list to less than fifteen, and I never presumed that candidates would be willing to risk identity disclosure until a much higher degree of interest and seriousness had been pointedly indicated in his or her candidacy by the Committee.

However, you did not address the specificity of my question and commented, instead, as to how several candidates stated that anonymity at this stage was critical to remaining in the pool of applicants lest it become general knowledge that another employment opportunity was being sought. I understood this at the time the question was both asked and answered. I understand it even better now given your apt response that there are a number of fine individuals included in the fifteen-plus persons still being actively considered. It is clear that our University stands to gain tremendously by having someone with experience as a sitting president or chancellor express a desire to consider joining us in Greenville, and that possibility ought not be jeopardized at a juncture too early in the selection process. However, this was not the point of my question, and I stand compelled to make this issue clear before final recommendations are made to the ECU Board of Trustees.

As stated at the November 14th meeting of the ECU Faculty Senate, other universities such as the University of Wisconsin at Madison, make it a point to maintain confidentiality until the finalists are chosen. Wisconsin is presently in the midst of a similar search and according to the November 10, 2000, issue (page A10) of The Chronicle of Higher Education: "The finalists planned to visit the campus late last week for interviews with a regents panel and the University of Wisconsin System's president, Katharine C. Lyall. **The three were also expected to meet with faculty and staff members, as well as students.**" (emphasis added) This underscores the absolute critical requirement that a future chancellor be afforded the opportunity to meet his or her future faculty and students as part of the interview process. As Professor Cope, ECU Department of Psychology, so eloquently put it, he would be suspect of any Chancellor candidate who refused to meet his or her primary constituents prior to appointment.

Add to this President Broad's comments at the June 2, 2000, meeting of the Search Committee and as summarized in the minutes of that meeting: "Likewise, the quality of the faculty is the single most important item in the reputation of a University and the relationship between the Chancellor and faculty must embrace the UNC value for shared governance." How can this goal to be achieved when finalists are not brought to campus for meetings with faculty, students and community leaders? As the "Tentative Search Schedule" for the Committee indicates, there is no mention that finalists will, or even may, be brought to campus for such meetings.

In short, Mr. Dixon, the faculty at East Carolina University are being denied their right to participate in the process of selecting the next Chancellor. This right does not reside exclusively in the hands of the Search Committee, the ECU Board of Trustees, or even General Administration, for that matter. This is a serious issue which was not addressed on

November 14th, and it is a matter of sufficient consequence that the faculty cannot sit idly by without adequate explanation as to why its objection should be abandoned.

I suggest to you that it is imperative that a dialogue on this matter be initiated at the earliest opportunity if the Committee is to reach its expected deadlines without the obvious criticism that the entire East Carolina University Community was improperly disenfranchised in this process. After all, everyone shares the goals of finding a quality individual to lead us into the infancy years of the next millenium, and to accomplish that task in a manner which instills confidence not only in the nominee, but also the process by which he or she is chosen. Let us not put that person at a serious disadvantage prior to the assumption of duties at East Carolina University.

Therefore, I inform you that this question will be raised again by the undersigned at the Tuesday, December 5, 2000, meeting of the ECU Faculty Senate, to be held in The Great Room, Mendenhall Student Center, said meeting to begin at 2:10 PM. As a matter of courtesy and protocol, I will be seeking a direct answer to my specific question. Further, I stand prepared to meet with you at any time to discuss the questions and concerns set forth herein.

Sincerely,

JACK E. KARNS  
Professor & Vice Chair of the Faculty

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cc: President Molly Corbett Broad, UNC General Administration  
Chancellor Richard Eakin  
Members, ECU Board of Trustees  
Members, ECU Chancellor Search Committee  
ECU Faculty Senators