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I want to update you on my engagement with university matters.

I believe I will be serving on the Legislative Council being formed. I have also submitted suggested names. I am hopeful and I will work to make it a fruitful exercise. To the extent I can shape the proceedings, I will be focused on themes that I have pushed on throughout my tenure as a regent. I commend you for the work you have done on strategy. It is far deeper than anything I saw during my first five years as a regent. Under your leadership we have gone from averting our eyes from the elephants in the room to talking about and working on the issues. Thank you! Among other things, the Deloitte work reveals the practical limits of campus "autonomy". I have long felt and expressed that a bottom up strategic reset starting with the chancellors is really not capable of resulting in a viable strategic response to the current crisis engulfing higher ed in general and most of our campuses in particular.

It will not be surprising that I will also focus on the impact of the cultural antipathy common on campus toward a high percentage of the state's residents and the impact that has on enrollment and public support. I am opposed to restrictions on freedom of thought and speech for professors and students. I think we all can benefit from more thought and discussion about the relationship between freedom and responsibility. Telling people of any color that they bear an inherent moral stain unique to those of their skin color, is unjust and inaccurate, if not illegal. We should stop telling ourselves that such things as this happen only rarely, if at all. The fact that it happens (and it does), has much to do with the recent dust up over DEI funding. We need to respect and serve all of the people of the state. I support our efforts to remove obstacles to enrollment and to support student success for all of our prospective and enrolled students.

When I came on the board, I did not expect to see the stunning absence of and frequent misuse of data. I am happy the Deloitte project has happened, but they are not doing anything that should not have been done by our internal staff. Financial reporting and analysis remains dangerously weak and too often misleading. Studies like our biennial economic impact reports assert that the higher lifetime earnings of university graduates is entirely attributable the universities are shallow, inaccurate and highly insulting to parents, the students themselves and to the community institutions who also help form young people. The non-response to my inquiries about Covid data is unconscionable. How can we not report to our governing board the statistics on deaths and hospitalizations? How can I not get an answer as to how many of our faculty and staff quit or fired because of our vaccine mandate? What will we do differently when the next pandemic event happens? Are going to just take the instructions and the money from headquarters again? We have to have the courage and the humility for honest self-reflection. There are plenty of wonderful things that happen across our campuses, but we certainly screw somethings up. It doesn't make us weak to own our screw ups. We don't have to submit to the inaccuracies of our critics, but we would do well to take them seriously.

While I am convinced that we need to make more painful changes, we somehow have to pay our people better. Our faculty, staff and administrators lost lot of purchasing power during the Covid crisis (at least those on the bottom end did). We will likely have fewer employees in the future, but people who work for us must be paid better.

Lastly, Speaker Vos brought to my attention that the statute directs that, in the absence of a resignation regents remain in office until their successor is appointed and confirmed. Jay has recently confirmed this understanding. In light of that, I will remain on the Board until I resign or my successor is seated. I hope that my temporary continuation as a regent can support good communication between the Legislative Council and the BOR. As always, please communicate with me any time.

Despite my criticism of UWSA, I am being very sincere when I say that I deeply appreciate the work you are doing. Karen, you are a very fair, hardworking and engaging President (the best I have seen). Jay; Yours is a very challenging job and you are by far the best at it I have seen. I harbor no illusions that I could do your jobs better than you do (that includes you too Megan). I'll stick my John the Baptist role.

Bob

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