

October 28, 2009

**VIA FACSIMILE (336-750-2049)
AND U.S. MAIL**

Chancellor Dr. Donald J. Reaves
Winston-Salem State University
Blair Hall
601 S. Martin Luther King Drive
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27110

Re: WSSU National Alumni Association

Dear Chancellor Reaves:

The undersigned firm has recently been retained by the Winston-Salem State National Alumni Association. I write to you on behalf of the Association in an effort to address a number of serious concerns. It is our sincere hope that these issues can be addressed in a constructive manner that benefits the University. The Association's efforts to date to engage in meaningful dialogue, however, have largely been met by closed doors or non-answers.

As you know, the University's recent decision to abandon its reclassification as a Division I athletic program has generated strong feelings among the Alumni and others. The Association has recently surveyed its financial members and received responses from 66.1%. 87.4% of survey respondents disagree with the decision to return to Division II, 11.3% of respondents support the decision, and 1.3% of surveys returned did not include a vote either way. Further, 94.13% of the Association's chapters indicated that they do not support the decision. I want to make it absolutely clear that the Association does not believe that athletic matters should be given higher priority over academic affairs. To the contrary, the Association feels strongly that a strong athletic program supports the University's mission to educate its students.

While the Association feels strongly that the University should have continued on its path toward Division I, it is deeply troubled by the manner in which this decision was made. Coaches, players, and other stakeholders were not involved in substantive discussions, even though they are the most closely affected by the decision. In addition, the Board took action at a special meeting that was sparsely attended when it had a regularly scheduled meeting just a week later. The Association believes that the University went out of its way to avoid public input and scrutiny.

The Association has information about this issue that it would like to share with you, including some thoughts about athletic facilities and revenue-generating opportunities, as well as data from other Division I universities. Association President Victor Bruinton's efforts to meet with you and to address the Board regarding this information before the decision was made both proved to be unsuccessful.

The Association is also deeply concerned about the University's decision to close the Child Development Center and Lab School. In addition to serving the children of our community, the Center

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provided University students with the opportunity to gain valuable practicum and observation experiences. As Rep. Larry Womble already stated so aptly at a protest on the Center's last day of operation: "It doesn't make sense to cut education at an educational facility." The Association is confident that a solution could have been developed that would have allowed this facility to continue to serve our University community.

The Association has also for some time been concerned about student safety on Martin Luther King Drive on campus. As you know, plans were put in place to build a median and fence along the road, and work has begun. The Association has been informed that you asked the City to stop construction until the students moved back into the dorms this summer. That date has long since passed and work is still stalled. In the interim, another student was struck in a hit-and-run incident on Friday, September 28. Thankfully, the student's injuries were not life threatening. The Association implores you to do everything in your power to see this project through to fruition as soon as possible.

Finally, the Association is concerned that the University missed its enrollment target for the 2009-2010 school year. As you know, HBCUs have long served students that other colleges and universities might deem not to be "college material." While the Association supports efforts to improve the academic program at WSSU, it feels strongly that the University must continue to serve students that might be denied opportunities elsewhere. As you know, there are very practical consequences to missing the enrollment target—next year, the University will be penalized in its appropriation from the State. The Association believes that these admissions and enrollment issues warrant careful study and attention before the University suffers further financial penalty.

Please understand that the Association believes that the University is suffering from a crisis of leadership. Even more than the substantive decision made in any particular case, the Association is extremely concerned about the University's failure to engage University stakeholders in dialogue centered on solving problems. We fully understand that the University is struggling financially, as is nearly every other public entity in North Carolina. Financial constraints do not justify turning inward and shutting out key members of the University community. If anything, such constraints demand strong collaborative leadership that brings different perspectives to the table to brainstorm solutions.

Since the Association's efforts at constructive dialogue have so far proved futile, and to alert you to the seriousness of the Association's concerns, the following actions have been planned:

- Alumni Association members plan to circulate a petition of no-confidence in the University's leadership at this weekend's Homecoming events; and
- Association members and other stakeholders plan to hold a forum (i.e., press conference) on Friday afternoon to address the concerns described above.


While the Association sincerely regrets needing to undertake such measures, it feels that it has no choice given the response received to previous efforts to reach out to you and others in the University leadership. Should you wish to address these issues through a meeting with Association leadership, please contact me at your earliest convenience and I will be happy to arrange for such a

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meeting. The Association will continue to explore all options, legal or otherwise, that may be available to it.

Sincerely,

THARRINGTON SMITH, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Adam S. Mitchell

C: F. Scott Bauers, Chair, Board of Trustees
Camille Kluttz-Leach, Esq., University Counsel
Victor Bruinton, WSSU NAA President

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