

Stuart Jenkins

From: Traci Bliss [blistrac@isu.edu]
Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2006 7:05 PM
To: Stuart Jenkins
Subject: Selected Response/ Confidential all around

Dear Stuart,

What I'm about to say, I've said to you before in person but without the urgency I now feel. I appreciate your professionalism in supporting and not undermining George such as backing off private meetings with John. However, I would like to outline the data which shows that after

11 years George is a square peg in a round hole:

1. The PEC gave George very low ratings on the first ever evaluation from colleagues last May. Inspiring, brilliant speeches do not make for good management skills or forthright, transparent communication with faculty and staff.
2. Faculty evaluation is absolutely essential to quality teaching and necessary to avoid "mission drift". Of course no one who has been coasting wants to be evaluated and as I said a year ago they will continue to delay as long as their leader does not hold feet to the fire. A leader is one who does the right thing, not the popular one. You attract and retain quality faculty when you have a leader who understands and is committed to quality teaching and learning and who won't tolerate half-hearted faculty.
3. I am in the camp, with more experience in this arena than I would like, that says the AQUIP report is very, very serious on the negative side and feel that George's spin on it is intellectually dishonest. As I mentioned in the summer--section 8 of the report shows you the seriousness of the management problem.
4. The college enrollment is extremely low and more importantly we have lost takers for the most generous scholarships. The response is just more more spin from the College.
5. If this is not a problem of leadership then what is it? How far into a hole are we going to dig ourselves before saying there must be a change?

I like George and find him very intellectual and delightful with parents. However, what confirmed for me that all your best mentoring will never turn him into a round peg was a call from him this past week.

He mentioned that Faith was doing a proposal for you about systematic data collection. I asked him for the big picture of what she was proposing and he responded with, "Oh I don't ever bother with anything like that--it is Faith's job." Stuart, it *must* be the President's job to know precisely what does or doesn't need evaluation and accountability. He doesn't like to get his hands dirty with the day to day issues of running an effective organization. My personal view is that the disgruntlement with Merlin Lewis is that he tells the truth and won't go along with the egregious spin. Were you to have him report directly to you, I believe you would get honest and straightforward answers, albeit sometimes lengthy. I think he could be vital to your reconstruction efforts because, unlike George and Faith, Merlin does know what structural problems need to be solved and doesn't try to cover error by blaming others.

I hope that you will see love for the College as your continued determination to have the "right people on the bus" especially the bus driver. Or to use your favorite analogy, what do you do with Colonel Sanders if people aren't buying the chicken?

Supportively,
Traci