

Sent by e-mail 10/13/07

Dear Class of 1969 Alumnae,

It has been difficult for me to see the goings on in the last year and I feel it is time for me to weigh in on the issues now before us. Before going further, I want to thank Ginger for her willingness to serve in a time of difficulty and at the expense of her family and professional relationships, and applaud her accomplishments in her chosen fields, none of which, whoever, is higher education administration.

First, let me provide background for my comments. I was a very early volunteer for RMWC, having been elected by you as our first Class Agent. I remember well all the drafting and signing of solicitation letters, folding, stuffing, hand addressing and stamping, which largely went for naught as none of us as newly-weds, entry level employees or graduate students had much money to give. My husband and I have hosted visiting college administrators in our homes, as they have made calls around the country. When called upon, we have served. Also, in the 1980's we offered an endowment gift to the college but were turned down by the administration, saying "We don't accept anything less than \$25,000." Our funds were happily accepted by another institution and have been helping students for years. Also since that time, we have funded endowments at three other institutions, so we are not averse to supporting institutions which instill confidence in us.

My husband, Charles, and I have been members of the academic community since 1975, when we joined the faculty at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). I also have served in the administration at the University of Pittsburgh and The University of Texas at Austin in development, compliance and legal affairs functions. He has served as department chair at UTSA, associate dean of the College of Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin, dean of the School of Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, president of The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB) (+ or - 3,000 students) and The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA)(+ or - 25,000 students), and as Vice Chancellor of The University of Texas System. The budgets, faculty, staff and students involved at UTPB and UTA were significantly higher than those of RMWC. He has never been paid in excess of \$300,000, or even close to that, for his services at either institution. When he began his tenure at UTPB, there were enrollment issues, no active development function (even as a 25 year old institution), and 25 years of deferred maintenance. In the eight years of his administration, these issues were resolved; apartment-style student housing was built (funded by an external entity); a new visual arts complex was built to include studios, and state of the art ceramics labs; a new library/lecture center was built; numerous endowments to support scholarships and faculty were donated; a major western art collection was donated; several inter-collegiate athletics teams were established and are flourishing; and the institution is now on sound footing, financially, development and enrollment-wise. These sorts of problems are not insurmountable without "giving away the store," but with appropriate leadership. After retirement for about a year, he was called back quite unexpectedly last May to oversee the Office of Student Financial Services at UT Austin, after ethical improprieties and management issues by the prior director, unfortunately recorded in the press in great detail, compelled the president of UT Austin to termination that person's employment and another to quit.

So much for background.

The bottom line is that our experience has caused us to be appalled at the current events at RMWC. While we have not had direct access to the financial records of the college, we feel it is clear that the current situation could not possibly have come to exist had there not been mismanagement by the prior president, and perhaps the one before that, as well as vice presidents for finance and other administrators. There has been an apparent lack of appropriate oversight by the Board of Trustees of the management of the prior administration(s). According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, the average tenure for college presidents nation-wide is 4+ years. If the prior president could not accomplish significant progress toward resolving the issues, of which she was well aware when she took office, during those 4 years, she should have been asked by the Board to "return to her first love of teaching and research," as the saying in the academy goes. It is at least misfeasance, in our view, and perhaps malfeasance and breach of fiduciary duty, to have permitted this situation to have continued as long as it did.

Unfortunately, the Board of Trustees of the college is a self-perpetuating institution, and the qualifications for membership are not set out. It appears to be how much money you have or have access to, and who you know. None of the current Board members has any real experience in the day to day process of higher education administration, and therefore is unlikely to have understood some of the inherent nuances and ask the really tough questions early on when things might have been turned around, and know when the answers by the prior administration were insufficient and not merely flim-flam. We think it would be the wiser course to have a board that was, at least in some part, elected directly by the constituency, based on realistic qualifications, as well as some association with and love for the college, and not only potential donations and "good old girl" relationships. Unfortunately, the Alumnae Association can do little about that situation at this time.

You are now being asked by the Alumnae Association to vote to continue in office the very people who have been subservient to the Board of Trustees of the college which has brought us to this situation, and to "trust us." The inbreeding would continue. About the only thing that alumnae can do now is vote for a board that will not be "in the pocket" of the Trustees and will show some independent thinking. Then, perhaps, the alumnae will have an adequate voice on the board, and not just a rubber stamp as currently exists. Further, in our view, it is not a good thing for the Alumnae Association NOT to be a totally separate 501(c)(3) organization, as opposed to in name only, which serves the interests of its members and not the Trustees. Of course, that means that the Association will have to become self-supporting, and not accept large amounts of funding from the college, other than perhaps minimal office space. That is how most other institutions with which we are familiar do it. We are willing to support that, and you will have to pay dues as well. It would be refreshing to receive an Alumnae Bulletin that was not merely a house organ for the administration, telling us only good things. We would find it appropriate for the president to make a state of the college report annually to all alumnae, so that we could know what is going on, what the issues and problem areas are, and what we are being asked to support. "We want; you give" is not acceptable. It would be nice to be treated as reasonable, well-educated adults who can process information and might have a cogent thought about how to resolve some issues, rather than being treated like small children who need to be kept from issues affecting them.

Since you cannot vote for any members of the Board of Trustees, this vote is your only opportunity to express yourself in any way that will affect the college. I encourage you to think long and hard on these issues and how they affect the future of the college. Perhaps others of you have been involved in higher education administration and would like to express your

opinion. Regardless of your professional background, if any of you disagree, so be it. As for me, I have already had too much of "Isn't that the college that..."

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