

To: Cathy Angelone

Re: Invitation to comment, size of the Brock University Board of Trustees

From: Norm Westbury

After seeing the proposal being put forward by the Governance/Nominating Committee of the Board, I felt compelled to send in my comments. 2014 has seen the University make many decisions which continue to demoralize University staff, reduce our voice within the University community, demonstrate a lack of respect for people values and all, supposedly, without any negative impact to our students. Morale on this campus is at its lowest point in my 28 years here and this proposal will only serve to keep it there.

According to the Board, the rationale behind the proposal is "...that it would operate more efficiently and effectively if it were smaller". While I somewhat agree with the concept of a smaller group possibly being more efficient, does the proposal actually serve our University's best interests? My opinion is that the current reduction proposal does not serve the University community well. The current make-up of the Board allows for 21 community members out of 32, equal to 66% of the Board. The proposal suggests 17 out of 25, equal to 68%. Why would we want to increase the voice of the constituency who does not even work at the University? It seems to me that the University community, (students, staff and faculty), have the largest vested interest in the making the University a preferred place to study and work. It also seems to me that individuals who actually attend and work at this University would have a much better understanding with respect to how to govern the University's property, revenues, expenditures, business and affairs.

The numbers contained within this proposal just do not add up. We have approximately 18,000 undergraduate students on this campus yet the board wants to reduce their voice by 50%. We have literally hundreds, if not thousands, of staff members whose voices currently are not represented on the Board and yet the proposal would reduce those voices by 66%. The Invitation document states "the Governance/Nominating Committee was careful to ensure that no constituency lost their voice on the Board". While that technically may be true, a reduction of the staff compliment from 3 to 1 would continue to shut out many groups who rarely, if ever, have had a voice on the Board such as CUPE 1295, CUPE 4207 and OSSTF. Instead of reducing the staff voice, the opposite is what should be done, increase it or at least allow it to remain at the status quo.

Now is certainly the time to make reductions to the Board as cuts have become part of our daily lives at this University. I understand the need for change but, I urge you to make the changes necessary to broaden the voices on the board, not shut them out. I have great difficulty in seeing how community members, many of whom do not even live in the Niagara Region, enhance the operation of our Board.

I would like to make a counter proposal to the Governance/Nominating Committee of the Board which would look like this:

14 – Community members

3 – Staff members (1 from the non-Union employees, 1 from CUPE 4207, 1 from OSSTF/CUPE 1295)

2 – Undergraduate students

1 – Graduate student

3 – Faculty members

The Chancellor

The President and Vice-Chancellor

My proposal would reduce the size of the Board to the desired number of 25 but, be more reflective of the voices I feel are needed in order to fulfill its mandate. I would be happy to speak further with any member of the Governance/Nominating Committee with respect to my proposal. I look forward to seeing the results of the Invitation to comment process.

Sincerely,

Norm Westbury

Member of the Brock community since 1986