

# FACULTY ASSEMBLY

March 14, 2019

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Dear Members of the Student Government Association:

I am writing on behalf of the Faculty Assembly (FA) in response to your recent “Resolution Affirming SGA Support for the Academic Senate” as reported in the *Tower* on March 8, 2019.

With you, we affirm that the Academic Senate is indeed the official governing entity for shared governance at CUA. It is for this reason that we work with the Senate on matters of concern to the University.

The most recent example of the FA’s work with the Senate is a request that the Senate deliberate on the manner in which the dismissal of Dr. Stephen J. McKenna was publicized. We have forwarded to the Senate Executive Committee and to several Senators the FA’s recent resolution on the matter. In response, the University has now removed the statement from the CUA website. Although this is a significant step, in no way is it adequate for addressing the injustice that has been done, and our hope is that our resolution will move the Senate to pass a resolution of its own on the matter. In this as in other cases, we work through the Senate and other established channels to effect change and to promote the common good.

While we acknowledge that the Academic Senate is the official vehicle for shared governance at CUA, we are of the opinion that a body so heavily weighted in favor of administrators, including the President, the Provost, and the Deans of all of the Schools, is not the best mechanism for sharing governance with the faculty. Instead of an Academic Senate, which includes some faculty but is run by administrators we would favor a Faculty Senate, which includes some administrators but is run by the faculty. In the greater Washington area alone, this is the model adopted

by Georgetown University, George Washington University, American University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Virginia, and Virginia Tech, among others. We have proposed this reform of our governance structure to the Board of Trustees, and they have expressed a willingness to “evaluate it further” if necessary. In the meantime, we believe that the FA, first convened over fifty years ago and reconstituted periodically to address important issues since then, remains a valuable deliberative body for the faculty to come together to discuss and to share insights and perspectives, especially on matters not addressed, or not appropriately addressed, by the administration. In this regard, we believe that our swift action in support of graduate students this past fall, helped to spotlight and ultimately resolve the problem of late payment of graduate stipends.

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With regard to the concerns raised by the SGA, although we believe that our conduct has been appropriate and that we have been providing the University community with accurate information supported by sound data, we do not claim to be immune from error. Indeed, we welcome corrections and criticism. Since we only have seen the *Tower* article at this point, it remains unclear as to why the SGA has concluded that the FA is involved in “continued misinformation, malalignment, incorrect implication, and circumvention of the university’s shared governance model.” The FA wishes to take your concerns seriously and looks forward to receiving your resolution in its entirety so that we can better understand them and, as appropriate, address them.

The FA would also value the opportunity to meet with the SGA. Toward that end, the FA would like to invite the SGA officers to our next meeting, which will be on Wednesday, March 20, from 12:30 to 2:00 in the Vincent P Walter Room located in Curley Hall. We also would welcome the opportunity to attend a subsequent SGA meeting in order to respond to your concerns and to share with you our most urgent concerns on matters of significance to the University and its community. Please contact me directly at [donaldson@cua.edu](mailto:donaldson@cua.edu) to accept our invitation so that we may plan time on our agenda for this important conversation.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Plitt Donaldson, Chair

Faculty Assembly