

October 24, 2018

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Chancellor Wrigley,

On Tuesday, August 14, 2018, you recommended and the Board of Regents approved the appointment of Mrs. Marion Fedrick to be President of Albany State University (ASU) during your scheduled Board of Regents meeting; we contend that this appointment may not have adhered to Board Policy.

Dr. Wrigley, after reviewing the Board of Regents Policy Manual (Section 2.0 Institutional Governance) that was last updated on July 31, 2018. It appears that your appointment of Mrs. Marion Fedrick is potentially in direct violation of the Board Policy (Section 2.1 Election of Presidents by the Board of Regents) that reads as follows:

“The Board of Regents shall elect the presidents of University System of Georgia (USG) institutions for a term of one year, which will be extended until the Board acts either to reappoint the President for the remainder of a one-year term or chooses not to reappoint the President, as contemplated in Board Policy. All appointments will be made expressly subject to Board of Regents’ policies and the Chancellor shall notify the presidents of the Board’s decision. USG presidents shall not be entitled to a written employment contract.

Presidents shall not hold tenure at the institution but may hold, retain, or receive academic rank. Persons holding tenure in the USG who receive an initial presidential appointment shall be required to relinquish their tenure before assuming the position of President. No person shall be awarded tenure while serving as President.

A person accepting the position of Acting or Interim President at a USG institution shall not be a candidate for President of that institution.”

The spirit of the Board Policy suggests that as Interim President (named on February 1, 2018), Mrs. Marion Fedrick should not have been appointed the President of ASU. How do you justify her appointment in regard to this stated policy? What qualifications does Mrs. Fedrick hold that places her above the norm for not only an appointment of university president in the USG but the nation?

Dr. Wrigley, while alumni urged you to select a president through a national search committee, the Board Policy (2.2 Selection of Presidents for USG Institutions) does not mandate that the Chancellor convene a national search committee; however, other USG institutions were granted the opportunity to benefit from national search committees. Those USG institutions recently afforded the opportunity to engage a customary national presidential search were Kennesaw State University, College of Coastal Georgia, Gordon State College, and Georgia Southwestern State University (Table 1). On August 22, 2018 you announced an 18-member campus-based Presidential Search and Screen Committee for Georgia Southern University’s next president. In that article announcing Georgia Southern University’s presidential search committee you stated, “*the work of the presidential Search and Screen Committee will be crucial to finding the right person to lead the university*”. An article release from the USG Communications Department on September 24, 2018

stated that “*the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia will conduct a national search to fill the presidential vacancy*” for Georgia Gwinnett College.

Dr. Wrigley, can you provide an explanation of why ASU was not permitted to benefit from a national search committee like other USG institutions, especially during this critical period of transition? We posit that this vulnerable transition period was the most opportune time to bring a seasoned, qualified, knowledgeable, credentialed, sought-after, donor-centered and faculty-experienced academician to lead our esteemed university forward.

Additionally, Dr. Wrigley, the USG named a few new university presidents in 2018 (Table 1), and those individuals have extensive experience with noteworthy academic and professional records in the academy. Why did the Board of Regents concur with appointing an inexperienced individual to lead an institution of ASU’s caliber or any USG institution? Historically, ASU has been led by experienced and terminal degreed scholars and we would, like other USG institutions, prefer to maintain that basic standard. After reviewing the permanent presidents at 25 of the 26 USG institutions (Table 2) they all have extensive academic-related experiences and terminal degrees, which are the expected minimal requirements for such a position. The motivation behind allowing ASU’s presidential appointment to deviate from the norm is perplexing.

Dr. Wrigley, would you appoint Mrs. Fedrick to lead your alma mater, Georgia State University (GSU), given her inapplicable background and experience? Would GSU stakeholders support you in appointing their next president without a national search committee? Would you agree that GSU alumni, faculty, staff and students would be satisfied with such a presidential appointment and process? Is the appointment of presidents at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) viewed differently than non-HBCUs? Is there an educational divide that puts institutions located in Southwest Georgia at a disadvantage?

A modest job search on an USG institution website revealed that even a Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs have minimum requirements. A position announcement at College of Coastal Georgia for Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs states “*an earned doctorate or an appropriate terminal degree from a regionally accredited institution and the qualifications to hold tenure and the rank of professor in one of the College’s programs are required.*” If this is the standard for an USG institution’s Provost/Vice President for Students Affairs, why is this not the standard for an USG institution’s Presidential appointment?

Mrs. Fedrick has an admirable background and is suitable for any human resources position; however, her background and academic experience does not lend itself to a presidential appointment.

Dr. Wrigley, in short, we are questioning your logic, motives, and conventional wisdom. As concerned citizens, alumni, retirees, and supporters, we do hope that you will provide a response. Dr. Wrigley, it is in good leadership that you address our concerns as alumni and supporters with a high level of seriousness and sensitivity irrespective of your cultural preconceptions or misconceptions.

We eagerly await your response, and we’re excited about maintaining Albany State University as Southwest Georgia’s premiere institution for higher education with reflective standards and top-notch leadership.

Sincerely,

Dr. Renaldo Blocker, c/o 2003
Mrs. Connie Marks Leggett, c/o 1976
Dr. Kelvin Rachell, c/o 2003
Mr. Rickie Frazier, c/o 2003
Ms. Tawanda Shivers, c/o 2004
Mr. Allen Sewell, c/o 2003

Mrs. Antoinelle Chisholm, c/o 1991
 Mr. Jamicah Hunter, c/o 2005
 Ms. Regina Nelson, Supporter
 Mr. Larry Brown, c/o 2002
 Mr. Randy D. Williams, c/o 2004
 Mrs. Gwendolyn Campbell-Williams, Alumni
 Mr. Xavier Kimbro, Supporter
 Mr. Trevor Hill, c/o 2003
 Mr. Detreich Fluellen c/o 2005
 Mrs. Shienke Warren, Supporter

TABLE 1. USG 2018 Presidential Appointments Process & Brief Presidents Bio

	Kennesaw State University (n=35,846)	College of Coastal Georgia (n=3,663)	Gordon State College (n=3,900)	Albany State University (n=6,615)
Previous President Final Date	Feb. 15, 2018	June 30, 2017	December 31, 2017	Jan. 31, 2018
National Presidential Search Committee Announced	February 1, 2018	November 10, 2017	September 6, 2017	N/A
New President Name	Dr. Pamela Whitten	Dr. Michelle Johnston	Dr. Kirk Nooks	Mrs. Marion Fedrick
Date Appointed	July 16, 2018	May 22, 2018	June 1, 2018	August 14, 2018
President Bio	<i>Previously served as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at the University of Georgia (UGA), a position she has held since 2014.</i>	<i>Previously served as the 22nd president of the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College in Ohio, a position that she has held since 2014.</i>	<i>Previously served as president at Metropolitan Community College (MCC)-Longview in Lee’s Summit, Mo, a position that he has held since 2013.</i>	<i>Previously served as the interim president of ASU since Jan. 12, 2018. Prior to that served as ASU’s interim executive vice president beginning Oct. 16, 2017.</i>
Years of Academic Executive Administrative and/or Faculty Experience at an University	22+ years	12+ years	20+years	12 months
Educational Background	Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Kansas, a Master’s degree in Organizational Communication from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Science in Management degree from Tulane University.	Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Mississippi State University. Master’s degree from Louisiana State University. Bachelor’s degree from the University of Alabama, a	Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration from George Washington University, MBA in Marketing and a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management from Mercer University.	Bachelor of Science in Human Resources and Master of Public Administration/Human Resources from the University of Georgia.

TABLE 2. USG List of Current Permanent Presidents

Institutions	President Name
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	Dr. David C. Bridges
Albany State University	Ms. Marion Fedrick
Atlanta Metropolitan State College	Dr. Gary A. McGaha
Augusta University	Dr. Brooks A. Keel
Clayton State University	Dr. Thomas J. "Tim" Hynes
College of Coastal Georgia	Dr. Michelle Johnston
Columbus State University	Dr. Chris Markwood
Dalton State College	Dr. Margaret Venable
East Georgia State College	Dr. Robert G. Boehmer
Fort Valley State University	Dr. Paul Jones
Georgia College & State University	Dr. Steve Michael Dorman
Georgia Gwinnett College	Dr. Stas Preczewski
Georgia Highlands College	Dr. Donald Green
Georgia Institute of Technology	Dr. G.P. (Bud) Peterson
Georgia Southwestern State University	Dr. Neal Weaver
Georgia State University	Dr. Mark P. Becker
Gordon State College	Dr. Kirk Nooks
Kennesaw State University	Dr. Pamela Whitten
Middle Georgia State University	Dr. Christopher Blake
Savannah State University	Dr. Cheryl Davenport Dozier
South Georgia State College	Dr. Ingrid Thompson-Sellers
University of Georgia	Dr. Jere Morehead
University of North Georgia	Dr. Bonita Jacobs
University of West Georgia	Dr. Kyle Marrero
Valdosta State University	Dr. Richard A. Carvajal

** Georgia Southern University is not included in this table; currently have an interim president.