

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**
Senate Executive Committee
(Final; Action)

SC.12.09 Endorsement and Support of University Senates Conference Chair Donald Chambers' Statement on the Ethical Dimension of Leadership to the Board of Trustees on January 19, 2012

The following statement was made by University Senates Conference Chair Donald Chambers to the Board of Trustees on January 19, 2012.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS TO THE BOARD
ON THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP
(JANUARY 18, 2012)**

Thank you, members of the Board, for the opportunity to speak with you today, in the midst of one of the worst scandals ever to confront this university.

This is a time when faculty leaders must speak up about our commitment to ethical standards, as you have. I am speaking here on behalf of the current elected senate leadership of Urbana, Matt Wheeler and Joyce Tolliver; of the Chicago senate, Phil Patston and myself; and of the University Senates Conference, Nick Burbules and myself.

These have been long and difficult days for all of us, so I will be brief and direct.

We believe that the Investigative Report on Anonymous E-Mails contains evidence implicating a wider scope of involvement in the controversy than simply the question of who wrote the anonymous e-mails themselves.

Today, we want to articulate a number of principles:

First, ethical conduct means more than merely legal conduct; and there are things which may be legally permissible, but which are nevertheless ethically reprehensible.

Second, direct causal responsibility is not the same as moral responsibility; and responsibility for setting an ethical tone and promoting a culture of accountability is a central dimension of leadership.

Third, as Trustee Edward McMillan has so aptly articulated, leaders must accept responsibility for what happens on their watch even if they may not have personally directed or approved it.

No one can read the Investigative Report, including the Appendices, without being shocked by a widespread pattern of inappropriate, secretive, and deceptive behavior. The content of some of the secret communications is unbelievably mean-spirited and nasty. I am sure that readers to whom these individuals are just names would wonder, *Who are these people?* This pattern of sleazy conduct, now on open display, is as damaging to the university as the production of the infamous e-mails themselves.

In closing, I want to reiterate our central concern with this scandal. This pattern of behavior, including but not limited to the production of the anonymous emails themselves, is the most serious assault on the principles and processes of shared governance that has ever occurred in the history of this great university.

But beyond this, we speak to our concerns as educators, conscious of our role as models and exemplars to our students in how to conduct themselves. Our behavior, as professors or as administrators, is always on display to them; and when we fail to hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior, we fail as educators as well.

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