

**From:** A. David Trubatch, President of the University Senate

**Subject:** Statement to the Board of Trustees

**Date:** October 26, 2016

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I want to thank you for the invitation to address the Board at a regular Board of Trustees Meeting in my capacity as President of the University Senate.

To briefly introduce myself, I have been a member of the faculty here at Montclair State in the Department of Mathematical Sciences since 2006. Like many of my colleagues, I have taught a full range of courses, from pre-calculus to graduate courses. My research is in applied mathematics, including the use of high-performance computing for mathematical and physical simulations. I have served on the University Senate since 2014 and was elected President of the University Senate, along with a new set of Officers and Senate Council Chairpersons, in May of 2016.

President Cole ended her Opening Day Address by emphasizing that, as a university, Montclair State is “hallowed ground” in that it embodies, and has some stewardship of, the traditions that constitute the idea of a University. While many of the buildings may be new, and our origin as a normal school was just over a century ago, the now-University we have become has both the benefit of, and obligations to, a great tradition.

One of the distinctive aspects of a University is peer review. The self-directed and somewhat autonomous activity of individual faculty (in collaboration with librarians, specialists and professional staff), as well as the activities of entire Departments, and even the University itself, are largely regulated through examination, assessment, and feedback, provided by peers. At the institutional level, the contemporary arrangement for meaningful peer review is periodic reaccreditation by a regional accrediting body, in our case the Middle-States Commission on Higher Education. As you are no doubt aware, the current reaccreditation process is well underway, including the drafting of a Self-Study Report, which serves as a guide to the Commission-appointed team who will visit Montclair State University this spring.

As reported by the Provost to the University Senate, the Self-Study Report, and the recommendations included therein, will also serve, logically, as a starting point for the University's next strategic plan. As such, the contents of the Report are directly relevant not only to the Middle-States Commission but also to all members of the Campus Community, including the Board of Trustees. It is my intention that the University Senate will support the refinement of the Self-Study Report in order to put the University on the best possible footing for both the completion of reaccreditation and the following development of a new Strategic Plan.

While the cycle of reaccreditation is determined by the Middle-States Commission, the current imperative is well-timed. In the previous year, Montclair State University has been: classified as an R3 Doctoral University under the Carnegie Classification of U.S. institutions; designated as a Research University by the state of New Jersey; ranked by U. S. News and World Report among National Universities; and recognized as meeting the criteria that define a Hispanic-Serving Institution, each for the first time. These milestones serve as both a recognition of previous accomplishments as well as an indication of an ongoing trajectory. As you are well aware, the University has, in recent years, transformed itself, quantitatively through significant growth, and perhaps more profoundly, qualitatively in the scope of its missions and goals. Hence, now is an opportune time to 'take stock' and make adjustments that prepare the University to move ahead strongly and decisively.

A second distinctive aspect of the University Tradition is shared governance. I will not take the time here to characterize or summarize shared governance, except to note that the sharing of information, as well as organized processes of consultation and deliberation, need not impinge on the decision-making responsibilities of the Administration and/or the Board of Trustees. Moreover, it is important to note that shared governance is distinct from, but complementary to, collective bargaining. Shared governance makes use of the special expertise and knowledge that is widely dispersed among the members of the University Community and fosters the alignment of goals among the Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, Librarians, Professional Staff and Specialists.

The recent evolution –transformation– of Montclair State University strongly suggests that the institutions and practices of shared governance be re-examined, with a view towards strengthening and revitalizing these, so that they may well-serve the current and emerging University. Indeed, the origin of the University Senate in 1991 (as the then-College Senate) was, in part, a response to the recommendations of a previous accreditation review. As the preceding Faculty Senate prepared the plan for the successor College Senate, it is my hope and intention that the University Senate, in cooperation with the Administration and the Board of Trustees, will plan for a future of effective shared governance that supports the ongoing growth and evolution of Montclair State University.