

Dear Esteemed Senators,

My name is Philip Vilaro and I am a Howard County resident, professor of sociology and the former Dean of the Social Science division with over thirty years of experience at the college. I am also the proud parent of a JumpStart student.

Employees have always described Howard Community College (HCC) as a great place to work, with wonderful and supportive colleagues. That, unfortunately, is no longer true. Today HCC can best be described as a hostile workplace where people live in fear of losing their jobs. Indeed, just recently our senior administration suspended or terminated the entire Human Resources department.

Were there problems in HR? Yes. For example, it took nearly eight weeks and multiple communications and resubmissions of paperwork for me to receive the tuition reimbursement I am entitled to. Many adjunct faculty have completed an entire term of instruction before receiving any payment for their labor. And this struggle to receive entitled benefits, or to be paid for teaching contracts in a timely fashion, has become routine for me and my colleagues. But why was HR a mess? Responsibility ultimately rests with the President.

The troubles in HR coincided with the arrival of Joseph Whalen, a trusted lieutenant of the presidents from Everett Community College, to head up HR and “Workforce Culture”. That workforce culture quickly became one of fear. There was a great deal of turnover in the HR department with two associate vice presidents of HR and eight other HR employees being “separated” during his tenure, resulting in a real breakdown in HR processes. Hiring, onboarding, contracts, payroll, any process involving HR soon stuttered and stumbled to a stop. And then Mr. Whalen was unceremoniously escorted off campus, bringing an end to his brief tenure as the head of HR and Workplace Culture.

I share this with you so that you can understand why I am asking you to support SB-813 including the proposed amendments. I would like to speak in support of Amendment C, requiring the opportunity for public comment at each board meeting. College and community constituency groups currently have no right to address the board about matters of public concern and this oversight potentially puts the college at considerable risk.

When senior administration fired the entire HR department, they signed a multi-year contract with Campus Works to provide HR staffing for HCC for the next five years. One entire operational area of the college was subcontracted. I'm sure that the BOT is aware of the termination of the entire HR department, and they approved the nearly \$8,000,000 contract to Campus works, but is the BOT aware of how this contract, and others like it, place the institution at risk in our approaching Middle States Reaccreditation? The reaccreditation of the college is a matter of grave concern to the board, and they should want to be informed of issues that might threaten that reaccreditation.

I bring this up because Middle States has clearly established, in its Third Party Providers Procedure, specific advice against such wholehearted outsourcing of college operations. In section III. Part H. of the procedure states that while:

*The Commission is not prescriptive and does not set a threshold limit on the number of written arrangements or contracts; ..., excessive outsourcing of key business operations or functions will receive intense scrutiny. For example, the outsourcing of 100% of finance operations is considered problematic.*

The current leadership of our college has embarked on an expansive outsourcing of college operations and may not have fully informed the BOT of the problems this may present for our upcoming reaccreditation. Without public comments there is no formal way for constituencies and community members to communicate these kinds of concerns to our board. And without the board being informed of the breakdown of operational processes at the college, there is no way for them to hold the President accountable. This is why we are asking you to support SB-813 as amended.

Sincerely,

Philip Vilardo, Ph.D.

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