Case for a new president 2017

We, the undersigned faculty of Doane University, have grave concerns about the health and stability of our institution. We think it unlikely that we can effectively capitalize on the opportunities before us and present evidence here that our current president cannot lead us successfully.
We know that the university has tremendous potential

- within its liberal arts and professional programs
- innovative interdisciplinary programs
- new initiatives in online education

Implemented with Doane's mission and the creativity of its faculty, staff, and students the university has the opportunity to forge new pathways in student learning. But we cannot envision that future with an ineffective and divisive leader.

It is for this critical reason that we here present our case that we have NO CONFIDENCE in the leadership or capacity of our current president to guide the university.

The president has provided a clear track record 1) of failed initiative implementation preventing any growth in our operating budget beyond inflation and use of significant investment resources that have not been repaid, 2) of little to no advancement success of appropriate scale for a university president entering their 7th year other than grant proposals through our collaboration with McAllister and Quinn and the hard work of faculty and staff, as well as 3) mismanagement of personnel resulting in turnover in key academic leadership positions due to micromanagement, retaliation, and marginalization of those with differing perspectives, 4) of disregard or lip-service for the expectations of accreditation and finally 5) no interest whatsoever in the academic wellbeing of Doane's students. These behaviors and attitudes have become astonishingly worse since October 2016, despite assurances by the president to the Board of Trustees that changes in communication and interaction would be made, and requisite engagement of the president with an Executive Coach, and assurance from the president to the Board of Trustees of the improvement at February, May and June 2017 Board Meetings.

For these reasons, with evidence for each charge provided below, we have NO CONFIDENCE in the leadership of this president for these highly significant opportunities on which Doane must effectively capitalize. We recognize that this is a serious charge and we do not take this proposal lightly. We feel compelled to submit this case because of our sincere and heartfelt dedication to our students and our vulnerable untenured faculty and staff colleagues across the university who have no mechanism to share their perspectives but would make the same arguments if they could. We want to be clear: we are not arguing here in opposition to change, we are opposed to our current leadership. As the faculty of Doane:

1. We present evidence that the president has failed to implement all five major strategic initiatives in his entire term at Doane costing the university significant resources and opportunities. We

recognize the members of the Board likely know more about these initiatives than most faculty. Here we share the impact on faculty, staff and indirectly, students

- Initiative 1: Grow College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) enrollment to 2000 undergraduate students. Planning work for this initiative took place in the 2011-2012 academic year with implementation begun in fall 2012.
    - Faculty across CAS participated in nearly a dozen committees and teams to research and develop new academic programs and initiatives that would attract new students in 2011 and 2012. Faculty reviewed, revised and approved programs as per the president's guidance, then began launching them by agreeing to overloads and investing their own energy. No additional resources were forthcoming to support academic program launch.
    - Faculty were significant participants in the master planning process to build our infrastructure to handle 2000 students. Faculty participated in interviews, focus groups, reviewed plans, shared plans with colleagues and took feedback to the architects, reviewed revisions and etc. The time investment was impressive and painful in retrospect
    - No progress was made on this initiative and the initiative was quietly abandoned. However the added burden on the operating budget of additional staff, such as coaches for new athletic programs, remains to the present day.
- Initiative 2: Establish a College of Professional Studies (CPS) campus in Omaha. Planning work for this initiative took place in the 2012-2013 academic year with implementation in Spring 2013.
    - College of Professional Studies faculty and staff continue to work tirelessly to support the Omaha campus staff with training and collaboration. Because the enrollment in Omaha has remained so low at about 25 undergraduates, the director position has really required significant recruiting and networking efforts. Since these have not been particularly successful it has been difficult to keep the director position filled.
    - This has impacted the remaining balance of CPS faculty and staff because they must support and serve the students in Omaha, regardless of the number. The CPS faculty and staff have faced tremendous pressure in the past 10 months resulting from the resignations of the directors and coordinator-advisors on both the Omaha and Grand Island campuses necessitating a community of faculty and staff be coordinated to keep the campus doors open and have at least one and preferably two people in each campus location at any given time. It was difficult for any faculty or staff member to keep their primary jobs moving much less keep any Adult Investment Plan tasks moving when they needed to spend days covering the Omaha or Grand Island campus locations. It is our perception that morale among CPS faculty and staff is low. Fortunately, the new dean Lorie Cook-Benjamin began in June 2017 and is working to rebuild her team. However at this point, we believe CPS is at tremendous risk of losing adjunct faculty who have been loyal instructors for the past 20-30 years – loyalty and dedication unheard of in an adjunct faculty community.
    - Very little progress has been made on this initiative, enrollment of undergraduate students remains low at approximately 25 students per term. The campus does serve some College of Education courses on the weekends all year and during the day in the summer

months and is valuable in this capacity. The initial investment has not been recovered and requires ongoing attention and redirection.

- Initiative 3: Develop significant international enrollment by partnering with Chinese universities and agencies, as well as establishing opportunities in other countries.
  - While enrollment of students from China and Taiwan has remained less than 10, and more frequently less than 5, it has had broad impact on faculty, needing to adjust teaching strategies to support international students arriving with little warning, limited English language skills, and alternative perceptions of plagiarism and authority. Faculty in Crete are pleased to welcome international students to campus, but the implementation came with no warning and students from Asia continue to require significant support and alternative teaching strategies and no additional resources have been invested in faculty development for teaching international students.
  - Faculty have traveled to China to work on agreements and teach courses as required by the 2+2 agreement established at one university. These efforts are time intensive. As investment resources are increasingly directed to online education, faculty wonder whether continuing to work on initiatives with international students and universities is time well spent.
  - Enrollment levels have never hit double digits, much less the triple digits first promised. While current tuition revenue supports the travel required, supporting the students and relationships with Chinese universities and organizations requires ongoing work, this appears to be a stagnant initiative.
- Initiative 4: The Adult Investment Plan to revitalize operations and enrollment in on-ground adult programs and simultaneously establish Doane as a university providing programs by distance delivery with mission focus on student engagement and interaction.
  - Implementation has been significantly impeded by the micromanagement of decision-making and undercutting of the authority of key leadership by the president's direct, intrusive and disruptive interventions in decisions and processes several levels in hierarchy below the cabinet level.
  - Micromanagement and undercutting of authority by the president has led directly to turnover in key academic leadership positions important for effective and timely implementation, see item 5 below.
  - Continued distraction of cabinet and Adult Plan leadership to pursue the president's secret projects pursued with hopes of shoring up the half million dollar budget deficit identified in spring 2017 may have prevented those leaders from being able to focus adequately on Adult Plan Implementation.
- Initiative 5: Advancement fundraising to bring a capital project to fruition at any time in the president's tenure at Doane.
  - At no time in the president's tenure at Doane has he been an effective fundraiser able to bring new resources to the university. Capital projects and foundation relationships have foundered. Grant resources have increased dramatically due to contracting with McAllister and Quinn at the president's direction; however, the work to develop and write proposals is still the result of hard work by faculty and staff.

- While it would seem that these activities and lack of success do not impact faculty, they are frequently called upon to participate in the process of shaping building campaigns and place a great deal of energy in planning the trajectory their program will be able to take once their new space is prepared. On a lesser scale, the same holds true for grants written for foundation resources that can be used to launch new or reinvigorate existing academic programs. Faculty spend time and energy crafting the ideas, shaping them into proposals and investing their passion and hopes in these opportunities.
- Being asked year after year to invest energy and passion in ideas only to be told they will not be funded is exhausting.

2. We present evidence that the president does not care about Doane students or prioritize their academic needs. Given the mission of Doane University as an institution of higher education this should be the highest calling of the university. And while a president's job may not be focused on instruction or overseeing instruction, the president should still be focusing the work of the institution so that the student experience is prioritized.
   - The president has not spoken about students or the academic needs of students at any faculty meetings as far as the authors are concerned but certainly not in the 2016-2017 academic year.
   - When asked in the past 12 months by College of Professional Studies faculty whether they should teach Doane's mission and support the student's best interests or prioritize revenue at all costs, the president replied that they must prioritize revenue.
   - The president has referred to students from China as cash cows.
   - When lamenting the negative coverage of himself in the Doane Owl student newspaper, the president described how it was time to take over the newspaper and put professional staff in charge of publishing it. He was confounded by the fact that the newspaper was supposed to be a learning experience for students and might not always be well written or carefully edited. It took a significant discussion to make the point to the president that it was not in the students best interest to take the Owl over.
   - Despite meeting with one author regularly in the past years, the only conversation about students was a description about how they would all now visit the president's office during orientation to see the observatory. It was not about what that would do for the students but was rather about impressing the students with the president's office.
   - The president has not followed or requested information regarding student learning, assessment results, national interest in our general education curriculum, or what student learning outcomes the university values and aligns with the mission.

3. We present evidence that the president has disregarded and dismissed the concerns of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in their review following the University's most recent Fourth Year Assurance Report. The University has been in good standing with HLC but an increase in their oversight would make approval for new initiatives slower and require more site visits and reporting. The HLC report cites over and over again:
   - A lack of "systematic processes" for data-based decision-making.

- The need for formalized faculty governance and strategic planning processes that are an integral part of the university operation – this is the one aspect of the HLC report that has been addressed at least in terms of the establishment of faculty governance and the formation of the Planning and Effectiveness Committee structure which would formally take on the strategic planning role for the university and evaluation of effectiveness of strategies. However, three initiatives were already started in Spring 2017 without going through the Planning and Effectiveness Committee process until well into their planning or implementation: Institute for Human and Planetary Health, edX, and the Great Books Plus Initiative.
- Repeated urging for "frank, two-way" discussion between all stakeholders of the university – administration, faculty, staff, students and board members. The president does not engage in frank, two-way discussions at any time or at any level, and his response to this report from HLC has been to inform faculty of his decisions more frequently. This pattern progressed to the point that when he spoke at spring 2017 faculty meetings he specifically forbade faculty from asking any questions and did not offer to take questions in any alternative format. Item four below provides another example of the president's dictatorial leadership style.

- While not part of the Fourth Year review, the president spent last spring secretly supporting the development of an academic program, what is now referred to as the Great Books Plus Initiative, outside of the faculty oversight structure. HLC is clear and adamant that faculty oversee development of curriculum and control decisions about academic curriculum. The president is pushing development of this curriculum in hopes of appealing to a potential donor and being able to present an advancement success to the Board – not because of interest in the potential student learning experience or because he values this particular academic curriculum or learning outcomes. The advancement win would come at the cost of student learning and disrupt the Honors and Doane Core programs to which faculty have devoted extensive work, as well as potentially undermining our solid reputation with HLC of abiding by their expectations for accreditation regarding faculty responsibility for curriculum oversight.

4. We present evidence that the president continues not to value or accept input from faculty, staff or students in the hiring process for employees who will report directly to him. However, the president still requires that faculty, staff, students and vice presidents conduct the charade of a committee and community search, interview and feedback process, even though he misrepresents information provided to him through that process and/or has interfered with the interview and selection processes. Serving on the search and interview committee requires faculty, staff, student and vice president time, energy, and emotional investment and each time has resulted in an increase in frustration and resentment when the outcome of each process has been misrepresented. After the hiring of the VP for Student Affairs, faculty have requested that the university no longer use a committee structure for hiring of staff who will directly report to the president if information from the committee is going to be ignored, only to be reassured that the next time a hire is made the process and outcome would be different.

- Hiring of the Vice President for Student Affairs
    - Committee members can verify that they were never provided the opportunity to discuss their perspectives on the campus finalists with the president. The president decided on his own that all campus finalists were considered viable just by invitation and participants in the committee can verify serious misrepresentation of search results by the president.
- Hiring of the Chief Diversity Officer
    - Committee members can verify interference in the search process and the falsification of search results by the president. It is standard practice at Doane for Search and interview committees to collect feedback from all interview participants and consider that feedback as they make recommendations to the president. The committee members were not permitted to see the survey results, the president disregarded the feedback, "took his own survey" and refused to hear the range of committee perspectives.

These two examples highlight again the president's unwillingness to engage in frank, two-way discussion as HLC is expecting.

5. We present evidence that the president cannot retain high quality leadership in critical academic leadership positions indicated by the following resignations in the 10 months from October 2016-July 2017, a time of intensive work to implement the Adult Investment Plan and seize the edX opportunity. This incredible turnover in key academic leadership positions during the critical academic implementation of the Adult Investment plan has been a significant contributor to the delay in return on investment. It is the perception of the faculty that all of these personnel left their positions in part or whole to escape the toxic environment of mismanagement, micromanagement, retaliation, and marginalization from the president or his consultant for the Adult Investment plan.
    - Names redacted

Again, we the faculty of Doane University, have NO CONFIDENCE in the leadership of this president for the highly significant opportunities on which Doane must effectively capitalize. We agree with the Board of Trustees that Doane needs to move forward with the opportunities before us. We recognize the importance of innovation in this time of disruption in higher education. The faculty of Doane have always been leaders in higher education innovation and we embrace the opportunity to do so again.

The edX opportunity was identified, the portfolio for application was prepared by and the process of consideration and adoption was facilitated by the Vice President for Information Technology Mike Carpenter and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Andrea Butler. The portfolio depended on the innovative and impressive accomplishments of Doane's faculty and the quality of our emerging distance programs. The president was only peripherally involved in development of this opportunity from conception to contract, and even then his involvement was limited to a rushed

concept of an Institute for Human and Planetary Health represented at that time largely by a secretly launched webpage.

Concerning the Institute for Human and Planetary Health, the president and Amanda McKinney, M.D. made plans to attend the Planetary Health Alliance conference in the northeast in late spring 2017 and considered creating an institute at Doane without any apparent conversation with other members of the Doane community. After the meeting, sharing and collaboration with Doane faculty with relevant expertise that could contribute to such an institute. Apparently upon returning from the conference a largely virtual institute was created as a webpage for the institute with a photo of the Lied science building – essentially giving tacit geographic location to the institute which was at best misleading. This was apparently motivated to build a portfolio in pursuit of a partnership with edX, but faculty were not informed at this point either. It was not until a Crete student stumbled on the website several weeks later and asked a science faculty member about the institute and faculty began asking questions that faculty were finally informed with disingenuous explanations regarding the timeline and need for secrecy.

To this day there has been little or no effort to engage science faculty in the institute. Science faculty have been working tirelessly the past 10 years to build relationships with UNL and Nebraska Medicine researchers. In addition, extensive collaborations with a number of other esteemed research institutions, gaining their respect as legitimate scientists and research collaborators. An institute put together in secret, hidden from the faculty but fraudulently placed among them and propagating research at the fringe of the fields they represent does, not serve the university well. Furthermore, the president and McKinney have asked a student to form a student group connected to the institute. Science faculty have appropriately told the student it sounds like a great idea and that the president will support them and want to see that they are successful, even though the president openly told the student it was a political hot potato. The fact that the president was perfectly comfortable tossing a student into a political vise like this suggests he is not particularly concerned with the student's well-being, and is only concerned with the appearance of success of his institute.

Given the clear and consistent record of failed leadership for critical strategic initiatives, the disregard for our students, the penchant for driving away talented leadership, and the president's arrogant dismissal of the requirements of accreditation, the faculty of Doane have NO CONFIDENCE that the president will be successful now.

We respectfully submit our proposal that the Board of Trustees consider terminating the president's appointment as president <u>effective immediately</u> and allow the university the opportunity to develop or identify effective leadership for the critical opportunities we have before us. The path of destruction wrought by this president has become much wider in the past 12 months. Waiting any longer will result in loss of more high quality faculty and administrators. Some have already started looking for other jobs out of despair for the retaliatory and marginalizing working environment. Many are struggling to meet with prospective students because they cannot in good conscience recruit students to a university where the student experience is no longer the main priority. A few

untenured faculty have asked if it is even safe for them to attend non-voting faculty assemblies where we discuss and refine policies – or will their attendance and participation be reported to the president and make them vulnerable to retaliation based on questions they ask or statements they make. This is the degree of toxicity wrought by our current president: sneaking around to create programs outside the Planning and Effectiveness Committee structure, interfering with search processes and retaliating and marginalizing faculty to create a climate of fear that keeps faculty oppressed and quiet. While students may not be overtly aware of the environment faculty are navigating, they are negatively impacted by the campus climate.

Based on the president's inability to deliver on a single strategic initiative in the past 6 years, as well as aspects of his leadership which call into question his fitness as Doane's president, there seems little chance that edX will launch well and a very high probability that it will consume millions in resources with very little to show for it, if this president remains in place. Thank you for your consideration.

Danelle DeBoer
Professor of Sociology

Tessa Durham Brooks
Associate Professor of Biology

Barbara Herzog
Associate Professor of Mathematics

Marilyn Johnson-Farr
Professor of Education
Dwight Porter Endowed Chair

Linda Kalbach
Professor of Education

Heather Lambert
Professor of Psychology

Kate Marley
Professor of Biology

Les Manns
Professor of Economics

Deryl Merritt
Professor of Business and A.R. Kinney Chair

Julie Kozisek
Professor of Education