

# Faculty Senate

Resolution

October 26, 2023



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

*Whereas*, Board of Trustees Chairperson Rema Vassar allegedly:<sup>1</sup>

- inappropriately interfered with matters delegated to the administration;
- appeared in an advertisement for the private wealth management firm founded and managed by a former trustee;
- traveled on a donor's private jet and dismissed suggestions that her conduct was not consistent with the university's standards; and

*Whereas*, MSU is accredited through the Higher Learning Commission and must comply with its Criteria for Accreditation policy, which states, in relevant part, "**2.C.4.** The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties" and "**2.C.5.** The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters"<sup>2</sup>; and

*Whereas*, In a statement,<sup>3</sup> Chairperson Vassar acknowledged flying on a donor's private plane to sit courtside at an MSU basketball game and failed to address the allegation that she effectively endorsed an external party's wealth management firm by appearing in an advertisement in her capacity as chairperson; and

*Whereas*, Chairperson Vassar's statement did not address the allegation that she, "without the knowledge or participation of the interim president," met "with Lansing officials to pitch moving university colleges and students to a Lansing site"<sup>4</sup>; therefore be it

*Resolved*, Chairperson Rema Vassar's admitted and uncontested actions violate the standards of quality by which the Higher Learning Commission determines whether an institution merits accreditation, and, as a consequence, the Faculty Senate calls on her to resign from the Board of Trustees; and be it further

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<sup>1</sup> See Trustee Brianna Scott, *Letter to Board of Trustees* (dated October 20, 2023; sent October 22, 2023), <https://acadgov.msu.edu/-/media/assets/academicgovernance/docs/faculty-senate/fs-2023-2024/fs-2023-10-26/2023-10-20-trustee-scott-letter-to-board-re-chair.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See Higher Learning Commission, Policy CRRT.B.10.010, <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

<sup>3</sup> See Trustee Rema Vassar, *Setting the Record Straight* (October 23, 2023), <https://twitter.com/kennyjacoby/status/1716643542242840929>.

<sup>4</sup> See Scott, 6.

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*Resolved,* That, if Chairperson Vassar does not resign, the Faculty Senate calls on the Board of Trustees to remove her as chairperson and calls on the governor to begin the process of removing Chairperson Vassar from the Board of Trustees per [MCL 168.293](#); and be it further

*Resolved,* The Faculty Senate will file an official complaint with the Higher Learning Commission regarding Chairperson Vassar's actions and requests that the HLC will provide the trustees with the professional development for which the Faculty Senate has previously called.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Faculty Senate Resolution FS2223R02 (September 13, 2022), <https://acadgov.msu.edu/-/media/assets/academicgovernance/docs/faculty-senate/fs-2022-2023/fsresolutions/fs2223r02.pdf>.