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 To: ["UniversitySenate \(Listserv\)" <universitysenate@listserv.ccsu.edu>](mailto:universitysenate@listserv.ccsu.edu)
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 Subject: Speaking my truth to power

(referenced attachments to be sent in a series of 5 separate follow-up posts due to file size.)

Dear colleagues,

Please accept this as my own first-hand account of the abusive treatment received at the hands of President Toro. I was hoping not to have to relive this trauma by searching emails for the attached documents, simply because I knew I'd reread them and once again be traumatized. I share this as further evidence that there is a serious leadership problem that needs to be dealt with on this campus.

I originally attempted to resolve the matter by reporting the behavior in violation of the Board of Regents Code of Conduct. Feeling that there was no internal independent safe haven in which I could report the violations – either on our campus or at the System Office – I filed my complaint with the State Auditor of Public Accounts, as the Code itself advises is acceptable. I was ultimately told that there were findings, and that those findings were sent to the System Office and the Board of Regents during the Ojakian/Fleury administration. The issue was then swept under the carpet, deemed “too minor” to be of their concern. My complaint is laid out in the attachment “*LMB Whistleblower Complaint*,” accompanied by an annotated copy of the Board of Regents Code of Conduct, also attached (*BOR Code of Conduct – marked up to show violations*). Recent attempts to FOIA what the System Office has on file garnered the response that whistleblower complaints are not covered by FOIA.

Lest you feel that I over-reacted to the treatment I received, I point you to the two attached emails authored by our colleague Mark Jackson, who was the sitting Senate President at the time. Mark was not only present at both of the meetings where I was bullied, disparaged and belittled, he also attempted to understand why President Toro reacted to the UPBC budget report the way she did. In the attached emails, Mark describes both of the meetings in which the abuse occurred, as well as his subsequent attempts to understand the cause. (See attached Outlook messages titled *RE: Emergency discussions on UPBC and shared governance* and *Dear UPBC, Plan for moving forward*).

I also addressed President Toro's bullying behavior directly with her by sending her the attached email (*Subj: Sharing correspondence with Dr. Toro*), which was copied to everyone who witnessed the abuse. Much later, I shared it with Mark Ojakian, Andy Kripp and Chris Henderson at the System Office, and the State auditor handling the whistleblower complaint. As an aside, sadly, the dozen or so attendees at each meeting in which President Toro misbehaved sat frozen in their seats looking at the floor while the abuse happened (except Michael Jacek, who was laughing. Little did he know, he would be “unceremoniously beheaded” soon enough.) The fact that so many people sat idle while I was abused eventually sparked me to research what I came to learn is called the “Bystander Effect.” If you aren't familiar with it, spend some time Googling. In short, as defined by the Academy for Social Change, it occurs “*when the presence of others discourages an individual from intervening in an emergency*.” I firmly believe that the Bystander Effect continues to prevent members of the current Management team, as well as bargaining unit colleagues, from stopping President Toro when she employs abusive tactics (e.g., screaming, banging her fist on the table, belittling people in front of their colleagues, etc.) I wish them the courage to step up.

Following the abuse, I needed to take FMLA leave from the end of March 2019 to sometime in July 2019, to receive treatment and recover from the abuse. Unfortunately, the abuse did not end with this first episode. My return to work was met with an invitation to meet a Union Representative in Human Resources at 9 a.m. on my first day back from FMLA leave for a meeting with Anna Suski-Lenczewski. At that meeting, I was told to immediately vacate my office in Davidson Hall and that I would be moved to an office in East Hall, but that my assigned parking space would remain in the Davidson lot. I was told at the same time, that a “business decision” had been made to relieve me of all of my professional responsibilities. It was nearly one full year before I was asked to do any University work again. During that period, I came to campus every day to sit idle, counting the ceiling tiles in my office, feeling guilty I was cashing a paycheck. To use current terminology, I was “quietly fired.” The goal was clearly to push me to resign or retire, but I persevered. And the experience made me stronger.

I could go on, but I'll end with this: I was not at the Open Forum on Monday, but I have been told by several people that President Toro stated in the forum that members of her executive team have “a contract with me.” While there is no question these individuals are employed at the will of the president, I beg to differ with President Toro's interpretation of the parties to their contracts. Technically speaking, all Management & Confidential employees have a contract with the Board of Regents, our employer. Morally speaking, they have a contract with the taxpayers of the State of Connecticut, in that all State employees are custodians of the public's trust. CCSU is not a third-world dictatorship, where the dictator is unaccountable. We are all accountable to the Board of Regents as the Code of Conduct makes clear. It's time we and the Board hold Dr. Toro accountable for her anger-fueled behavior that leads to abusive treatment of members of the “Central Family.”

I have laid my trauma bare for all to see. I know others still suffer in silence, and others, like me, still have recurring nightmares in which the abuse happens all over again. How many more people will need to be traumatized before we say ENOUGH!??

12/13/2022

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