



FACULTY UNITED SERVICE ASSOCIATION (FUSA) OF HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE (HCC) VOTED “NO CONFIDENCE” IN PRESIDENT KEN ATWATER FOR THE 2<sup>nd</sup> TIME IN HIS TENURE

**TAMPA, FLORIDA, MARCH 10, 2023**-The faculty have spoken. On March 10th, 209 faculty voted they have “No Confidence” in Dr. Atwater’s ability to lead the college and 10 voted they have “Confidence.”

Dr. Atwater has repeatedly been advised that his communication with his faculty is poor and his messaging can be unclear. In fact, “communication” is a consistent agenda item in the semester-standing meetings between Dr. Atwater and the FUSA Leadership. For example, he recently made contradictory statements to different audiences regarding revenue shortfalls. In a public interview on July 11, 2022, with Jack Prator of WUSF, President Atwater stated that any shortfall in revenue from a pandemic-related decrease in student enrollment had been offset by an increase in state funding. Just two months later, in a September 16, 2022, administrative update to faculty, he stated that HCC had lost more than \$17M in revenue since Spring 2020, but he did not tell faculty about the balancing effect of increased state funding.

For the past eight years, Dr. Atwater has held the position that faculty salaries are not part of the college’s cost of doing business. He stated this viewpoint during his initial meeting with the FUSA Council on May 15, 2015, despite being told that there was a serious morale problem and a perception by his faculty that they were not a priority. His position on this topic has not changed during his entire tenure at HCC. He even emphasized this point again with the FUSA Council during our November 10, 2021, meeting. He has continued to maintain this stance which he has demonstrated repeatedly during the 2022-2023 academic year including during the latest round of bargaining. Dr. Atwater’s recent statement to the Board of Trustees that “a grievance filed by faculty unions is not uncommon during bargaining” exemplifies his dismissive attitude toward bargaining and is just one of the troubling issues with his leadership.

Furthermore, Dr. Atwater acted irresponsibly when he promoted an Administrative Salary Step System that inevitably caused financial hardship and necessitated drawing down faculty compensation. Board of Trustee member Betty Viamontes warned of this recklessness in her speech to the board. She stated that this scheme (which was projected to cost the college \$1,000,000 to implement and serve only 58 employees) was “financially irresponsible.”

For immediate comments, contact:

Professor Richard F. Gaspar, FUSA Chief Negotiator and Professor of Communications, (813) 679-7427, [drgaspar@gmail.com](mailto:drgaspar@gmail.com)

FUSA President, Sheryl Sippel, (813) 545-4465, Professor of Mathematics, [ssippel03@gmail.com](mailto:ssippel03@gmail.com).

FUSA Vice President, Jeremy Bullian (813) 802-8718, Librarian, [victornil@yahoo.com](mailto:victornil@yahoo.com)

Attachments:

FUSA LETTER TO BOT (2023)

FUSA LETTER TO BOT (2015)