

September 29, 2020

RE: Response to Faculty Senate resolution

Dear Dr. Madan and the Stockton Faculty Senate,

On behalf of the members of the President's Cabinet, we submit this letter of unequivocal support of Interim Provost Dr. Michelle McDonald's academic leadership.

We have reviewed this matter thoroughly and we acknowledge that Dr. McDonald did not cite or reference the author of material that she used to craft her email to the University community.

As Dr. McDonald's administrative peers, we view this action as a single, unfortunate lapse – an isolated incident that does not influence our professional judgment of Dr. McDonald, her performance as Interim Provost, or her ongoing commitment to Stockton University.

As universities across the country work to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been unprecedented collaboration and sharing of plans, messages, and other internal communication. Dr. McDonald's multiple statements and public and personal apology satisfy our concern that she fully understands that she must provide appropriate attribution in her public statements.

The past nine months have been a difficult time for Stockton, particularly in light of several state and national issues that have impacted higher education as a whole and our University in particular. During this time, Dr. McDonald has consistently demonstrated an inclusive, collaborative, and honest approach to addressing these issues including: allowing faculty flexibility to choose course delivery this fall, advocating for faculty lines in a time of fiscal crisis, and an unwavering commitment to equitable treatment of staff throughout the University while ensuring excellent student service. These actions are just a few examples of the leadership she has shown in helping Stockton navigate these challenging times.

We do not wish to minimize Dr. McDonald's recent oversight; we recognize both the perception and the reality of the matter. However, we judge it within the context of the extraordinary demands of these times and the totality of her exceptional performance in service to the University.

Dr. McDonald maintains our full support, and we are confident she will continue performing her duties as the University's interim chief academic officer with integrity and dependability. This concludes and closes our investigation.

We look forward to continuing to serve alongside Dr. McDonald as a valued member of the President's Cabinet.

Susan Davenport
Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff
Stockton University
609-652-4776
susan.davenport@stockton.edu

