Open Letter to Academic Senate

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I find myself in the very odd position of not knowing what to write here. Despite being the person that suggested these statements from candidates, I am suffering from the paralysis of analysis. So let me begin.

My paper qualifications are simple: I have been teaching at the university level since 1982 and came to YSU in 1991 as an Assistant Professor of History. I served in administration here from 1999 through 2020, when I returned to the faculty. I am currently the Charles Darling Endowed Chair in American Social/Cultural History. For those that might have some concerns about my scholarly agenda (since I spent so much time as an administrator) I have had twenty-three publications since 1989, and three since Fall 2020, with a book chapter forthcoming. I am thoroughly enjoying being a “recovering administrator.”

In terms of my leadership style, I would describe myself as a servitor leader: someone who leads by example and is willing to take responsibility for the body’s errors or missteps. I rarely ask others to do something I have not tried or that I am unwilling to do myself. My training as a cultural historian also requires that I assume that there is rarely a singular answer to any question. That many perspectives exist and should be acknowledged. My belief and trust is in our senators and their ability to problem solve and compromise. Do I always agree with the decision made by the Body… No, but once the decisions have been made, I will promote and defend them.

I also feel that my sojourn into administration provides me with a unique point-of-view; I understand how both sides work. I think that the discussions and final resolution surrounding our new “reciprocal responsibilities” document clearly illustrates this capacity. My familiarity with administration has also allowed me another advantage; I am not afraid to tell the truth, no matter how uncomfortable that might make people.

I realize that my leadership style is different than that of most of my predecessors; I am not a “rules wonk,” and my grasp of *Robert’s Rules* is a bit rusty, but that is why I continue to surround myself with good, fair-mind, capable individuals who value the institution as much as I do. I believe that good leaders delegate to the most capable people around them.

My association with YSU stretches back fifty years when I enrolled as a student athlete. As a graduate of the university, I am proud to serve the institution which provided the foundations of my career. My children have all attended YSU and two are graduates. This place is part of the fabric of my being, and I will always attempt to serve it well.