

Dear Members of the Board,

I write to communicate my absolute disgust with the university that I was once proud to call my alma mater. I recently reflected on how it is possible for me to proudly speak at my class's graduation in 2008 to currently not be able to recognize anything that I was so proud of in the university today. The most recent anecdote along those lines: I was recently informed by a friend who is the head football coach at one of the most prestigious high schools in Texas that he just read Washington & Lee's brochure this year to prospective students. His only reaction: "There is no mention of either Washington or Lee." I find that profoundly disturbing and embarrassing, and I frankly cannot imagine how it is possible.

I have penned several emails in the past but ultimately thought better and decided not to send them, as I didn't want to be hyperbolic or reactionary and figured that whatever trends I was seeing or hearing about would surely pass. But this time is different. It seems like the university has finally gone off the deep end in a way that it will never be able to recover from.

I am certain that your natural reaction would be to point to the decision to retain the name of the university as evidence that it is still W&L as I once knew it. However, to that I would respond first that the fact that you even entertained the question, and for as long as you did, is ridiculous in its own right. On top of that, after taking months to decide what should have been rejected in minutes, your communication announcing the decision--and President Dudley's immediate follow-up email--somehow managed to disavow the two namesakes of the institution while saying the university would retain the name. In a remarkable turn, I am quite certain that you managed to infuriate both factions of the university and its alums in your attempt to split the baby. It was a truly cowardly decision executed in an even more cowardly way.

It is clear at this point that the school no longer cares for its past or what it stood for--and in turn for the majority of its alumni. The recent decision to hire Chawne Kimber could not be a bigger indication of that. To that point, that was the most shocking, disappointing, embarrassing, and troubling hire I have ever seen from the school. Although I suppose I should remove shocking from that list, as all indications are that the current administration would have made exactly such a hire.

I'm not entirely sure how to end this other than to say I have no confidence in you or President Dudley. He has done more to harm the school in four years than

anyone in the previous 50. But it has all happened under your watch. You have reaped what you sowed by hiring him. You will do so in the next four years under the unfortunate stewardship of Ms. Kimber. So do not be surprised when your donations plummet further. Nobody wants to give to a school that (1) they do not recognize, and (2) seems to distance itself from them with every major decision or announcement. I will proudly count myself among that group.

To close, as I mentioned above, it is alarming to think about how I could have been the graduation speaker for my class just 13 years ago at a school that I would be embarrassed to currently attend. But unless there is a serious course correction-- and I have no doubt there will not be--that's sadly going to be the situation moving forward. And for what it's worth (and I would think that as the Board, this should mean something), I would not allow any of my five children to even apply, let alone attend, my former university.

I don't say these words lightly, but you all should be ashamed of yourselves for what you have allowed to happen to the school that timidly calls itself Washington & Lee.

Sincerely,
Jordan Campbell, Class of 2008