

## **Motion For a Vote of No Confidence in Provost Wilbur Stanton**

**(Dr. Gwen Brown)**

**October 8, 2009**

**Resolved;** That the Radford University Faculty Senate has no confidence in the academic leadership of Dr. Wilbur Stanton, Provost.

### **Rationale**

What I am about to ask us to do is not a pleasant task, but it is a task that we must undertake--in fairness to all and in an effort to resolve the tensions we have all felt. And though we've felt these tensions especially so in the last few days, this campus has been in turmoil for a long time. Even from the distance of my academic leave last semester, I could see the turmoil increase in magnitude, and it reached still new proportions during the late spring and early summer when, as the Ad Hoc report makes clear, many faculty members felt so strongly about the chasm between faculty and administration that they came before that committee to testify about their concerns. And the report tells us that still others would have done the same thing if they'd felt confident that they could do so without fear of retribution. The sense of discontent, at the very least, and anger and fear, at the very worst, is palpable on campus and is a constant topic of discussion and focus of faculty attention. It seems to me that the faculty are embarrassed by the public display of the problems we have faced. Some are shaken, many are affronted, and all are troubled by the seeming disregard for their proper role in governance and curricular issues. All of this has resulted in an extremely low level of morale as is evidenced in the Faculty Survey results. The discontent and angst, also abundantly clear in the Faculty Survey, must be addressed and resolved so that we can then return our attention and energies to their proper place—the education of our students. Failure to address these problems would be an abdication of our responsibility as professionals—to the university, to ourselves, and to every student who has come here for an education.

And for his part, the Provost must also surely feel the need to have tensions resolved; his work may be affected and his ability to lead the faculty is certainly severely diminished in such an atmosphere. So in fairness to the faculty, the students, and the Provost, we must turn our concerted attention to this issue. Are the faculty and the Provost able to work together and move the university forward in an appropriate, thoughtful, and collegial way? That is the question that must be resolved, and it is our duty as Senators to ask this question and represent our constituents' views in relation to that question. It is, therefore, appropriate that we—the entire Senate, all of the elected Representatives, and not a small subset or committee—answer that question decisively.

I understand that the motion I am about to make will be immediately tabled, and I believe that is highly appropriate, for—as Joe, Ed, and Helen have argued so well in their recent emails to Senators—we will need time to consider this issue, to make certain that our constituents are well informed, that we have provided answers to all of their questions, and that they have had ample opportunity to convey to us their response to this motion. And we should not take this motion from the table until we are all thoroughly convinced that this has occurred. In fairness to everyone, it is imperative that all Senators vote having clearly understood their fully informed constituents' views on this issue.

To end the uncertainty, the distraction, the anxiety, the anger, and the fear, we must address this issue, and I believe that this motion is the appropriate way to adjudicate and resolve this matter. Thank you, Mr. President.