

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

January 31, 2018

To the Board of Trustees:

In the past weeks, I have tried to maintain my faith that Michigan State University, despite its shortcomings and mistakes, is a place that can pave a path forward in ending pervasive rape culture and a divisive climate. I was even moved by your statements last Friday, and hopeful you would make good on your promises to listen to victims, students, faculty, staff, and all other stakeholders at this institution. And when several students leaders met with you this past Monday, January 29th, I was glad to see you sincerely wanted our input on selecting both an interim president and a permanent president. But yesterday, roughly 24 hours after you met with students, faculty, and deans across campus, many of us learned through a tweet or a news broadcast that this decision had already been made.

Disappointed does not feel like a strong enough word to describe what I felt upon learning of your hasty appointment of ex-Governor John Engler as Interim President of MSU. Even on a temporary basis, the damage that can be caused by appointing a Politician as Interim President on an already polarized campus is catastrophic. Ex-Governor Engler has passed legislation and policies in the past that are in direct conflict with our core value of inclusion.

During your joint statement and each of your individual statements last week you repeatedly stated that you would listen, that you heard the victims, and you all pledged to do better. Each of you acknowledged your shortcomings to the victims and the MSU community, and yet it seems your words were just that...words. I hope that I am wrong and that this Board will live up to the integrity of the office in which each of you have been elected to hold. I will state this very clearly: John Engler is the wrong direction. This is already spurring protests.

Lastly, you proclaimed to have wanted our campus to heal, rebuild and move forward. I hope this is true. The first step towards that goal would to appoint someone with the knowledge, skills, and demonstrated ability in creating education programs and initiatives for sexual assault prevention; someone who is themselves an educator and NOT a politician.

In this MeToo moment for MSU, I plead with you to reconsider the appointment of John Engler as Interim President of MSU. To ignore this outcry would be detrimental to the stability of our university.

Honor your words.

Respectfully,



Ashley Fuente
President, Council of Graduate Students



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