

Statement to College Community

Re: Whistleblower Allegations

In July 2023, the Board of Trustees of Pittsburgh Technical College received anonymous complaints. The Board of Trustees elected to engage outside legal counsel to conduct an independent review and investigation of those complaints.

The investigating law firm produced its report. The vast majority of the allegations were summarily found to be without merit, but the report highlighted three areas of concern for further evaluation and consideration by the Board.

The first area was the award of a Presidential Scholarship to a Black student at a predominantly Black local high school. It was subsequently determined that institutions routinely award scholarships in similar circumstances, that Dr. Harvey-Smith had the authority to award such a scholarship and appropriately engaged leadership in the award of the scholarship, and that the scholarship promoted the College and advanced its mission.

The second concern was the award of a copying contract to a local, Black-owned business. It was determined that Dr. Harvey-Smith merely introduced the business owner to Pittsburgh Technical College, and thereafter, a competitive bid process was undertaken in which Dr. Harvey-Smith was uninvolved. The bid committee sent recommendations to Dr. Harvey-Smith and invited her to make the final decision. Dr. Harvey-Smith then awarded the contract to the low bidder after consulting with the College's outside legal counsel. Dr. Harvey-Smith had the authority to award the contract and under the circumstances the award represented an appropriate exercise of that authority.

The third concern was the College's payment of limited costs related to the publishing of a book authored by Dr. Harvey-Smith. Dr. Harvey-Smith did not break any law, regulation, rule, policy, or directive with respect to the College's payments and upon publishing the book in 2022, had offered to donate proceeds from the book to the College's scholarship fund. In the future, the Board of Trustees will establish concrete rules governing the use of college resources for scholarly publications.

The Board of Trustees now considers the investigation closed.

During the investigation, a non-binding vote of no confidence was held by some faculty and staff members. The Board of Trustees has significant reservations about the timing and circumstances of the vote and, accordingly, has decided that no action is required. It will continue to engage the College community to provide the best experience for our students, our administrators, our faculty, and our staff.

It is important to remember, though, that Dr. Harvey-Smith was offered the Presidency at Pittsburgh Technical College with the understanding that she would be an agent for change as the institution continues its metamorphosis from a for-profit technical institute saddled by crushing debt to a not-for-profit college striving for financial stability. Change is never easy, but often necessary, and the Board of Trustees reaffirms its full support and confidence for Dr. Harvey-Smith and transformative change.

Such a change, though, will require all of us to work together. Dr. Harvey-Smith has pledged to do her part, and we would ask the community to do the same. We can and must renew our commitment to our mission and students. The College's funding, recognition and positioning have increased dramatically under Dr. Harvey-Smith's leadership, but we cannot afford steps back.

**Respectfully Submitted,
The Pittsburgh Technical College Board of Trustees**