

THE STUDENT•FACULTY•COMMUNITY COALITION TO SAVE MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE

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CUNY BOARD OF TRUSTEES INSISTS ON JIM CROW AT MEDGAR EVERS

On July 14, 1982, the CUNY Board of Trustees took the following action when it met to act on the Acting Chancellor's recommendations regarding the interim administration to be imposed on Medgar Evers College:

"In other actions, the Board suspended the University ByLaws as they pertain to the governance of Medgar Evers College, and the college's governance plan."

EXPLANATION

This action by the CUNY Board of Trustees is clearly JIM CROW. Why is this College's governance plan being suspended during the period of a presidential search when it was not required for Queens College, Brooklyn College, City College, etc. Are we the victims of martial law after a perceived "rebellion?"

1. Undoubtedly, the Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan is a racist response to the college community's determination and ability to govern itself during a crisis, having convened college-wide committees which made decisions to continue the educational process as it applies to grading policy, convocation, graduation and summer school -- in the face of Board-supported, incompetent leadership.
2. The Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan is designed to project the view that what the MEC Community needs is "order" (even if it means suspending the law) which serves to enhance racist propaganda about "mobs", "outside agitators", etc. fed to the media by Trent and CUNY in earlier months.
3. The Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan would give any incoming administration the broad discretionary authority which Trent had and abused for the first seven years of his administration, thereby creating an atmosphere of instability, insecurity and intimidation.
4. The Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan excludes formal and recognized participation in the MEC Community by community members of Central Brooklyn and elsewhere.
5. The Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan strips faculty, staff and students of their power and rights to: formulate policy for the general college and in the areas of academic regulations, administrative support activities, affirmative action, commencement ceremonies, student services, curriculum, operation of the library, recruitment and admission, public and private development activities, student financial aid, long range plans, research proposals, teacher evaluation procedures, student discipline, etc.
6. The Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan allows any interim administration to make independent and unilateral decisions about appointment (and the waiver of CUNY bylaws regarding appointments), reappointment, promotions, and tenure without faculty and student input. It also opens the door for indiscriminate participation in such decisions.
7. The Board of Trustees' suspension of the Medgar Evers College governance plan strips the College Community of "Due Process" guaranteed under Part VIII of the Medgar Evers College governance plan.
8. The Board of Trustees' suspension of its own CUNY bylaws as they apply to governance at Medgar Evers College means that it will not enforce its own regulations, in the case of Medgar Evers College, for matters regarding the Instructional Staff; Academic Due Process; Organization and Duties of the Faculty; Organization and Duties of Faculty Departments; Duties and Qualifications of the Administrative Officers and Members of the Instructional Staff; Leaves; The Non-Instructional Staff and Students. (Also, remember the report, "Dereliction of Duties of the President by Richard D. Trent as defined by Section 11.4 of the CUNY ByLaws"?)

9. Protection of the faculty by the Agreement/Contract between the University and the Professional Staff Congress is nullified in large measure if there is no empowered college-wide personnel & budget committee or other committees; if the definitions of Instructional Staff, Leaves, Workload, etc. are not in effect; and if professional evaluation, personnel files and disciplinary actions are not subject to normal University procedures or guidelines.

NO JUSTIFICATION

There is no justification for the suspension of Medgar Evers College governance plan.

1. The fact that there has been no designation of a person in the title of "Acting President" is not justification; the CUNY Board of Trustees can pass a resolution to make any interim administrator the equivalent of Acting President for the purpose of keeping the governance plan in effect.
2. The flexibility to make administrative designations is not justification; an Acting President can remove and hire Deans serve at the president's pleasure and can create and abolish other administrative titles with the governance plan in effect.
3. The rationale that committees will meet "as usual" is not justification; to have committees with no power hold meetings is a game, and reminiscent of Trent's irregular remarks at the time the College was converted to a community college -- that the institution would keep the name Medgar Evers College, although he failed to mention that the college had a reduced funding model, a reduced library budget, increased faculty workload, increased class size, etc.
4. The defense that the governance plan will be reinstated "as soon as possible" is not justification; African-Americans understand the meaningless jargon of "with all deliberate speed" as it was stated in the Brown vs. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education decision to effect the elimination of "separate and unequal" status for predominately Black schools.
5. The assertion that the Board of Trustees is on vacation is not justification; it only takes four Board members to call an emergency meeting, and nine members to make a decision. The Board of Trustees has held meetings in previous summers.

If the interim administration is in effect for one year only, then why this drastic measure by the Board? History speaks for itself. Some of us recall the "kangaroo courts" that the Trent-Watkins administration conducted in the context of college-wide committees (with no power), only to ignore or intimidate faculty in order to make unilateral decisions about firing of faculty activists (e.g. the late Dr. Charles Romain) and student activists (e.g. James Stein).

STUDENT-FACULTY-COMMUNITY ACTION

1. No endorsement of any interim administrators unless the Medgar Evers College governance plan and applicable bylaws are reinstated.
2. A policy of "noncooperation" in all matters such as curriculum planning, evaluation, etc. unless the governance plan and applicable bylaws are reinstated. No responsibility without authority. If the CUNY Board of Trustees has given any interim administration "unlimited authority" to make changes, let it also have "unlimited responsibility" and do the work! With no governance plan or CUNY bylaws regarding governance in effect, faculty members are not required to do anything other than the most narrow definition of their job., i.e. teach classes, or work 30/35 hours/week.
3. Start litigation under the N.Y.S. education law as it applies to "academic freedom".
4. Request the American Association of University Professors to conduct its own investigation to censure the University for denial of academic freedom and for instituting JIM CROW educational policies.
5. Initiate litigation for violations of civil rights.

NO MARTIAL LAW! REINSTATE THE GOVERNANCE PLAN!