

## Setting the Record Straight

I am compelled to set the record straight regarding Trustee Brianna Scott's October 22<sup>nd</sup> letter circulated broadly to members of the MSU community and the media. The allegations leveled against Trustee Scott and two of her enablers are fabrications, misstatements, innuendo, and untruths. I am disappointed by Trustee Scott's clear disregard of the very codes of conduct she accuses me of violating. Trustee Scott disingenuously purported to invite Board discussion while disseminating this letter to the public.

At a time where we have a responsibility to show leadership on a Presidential search, our Title IX roles and responsibilities, a search for a head football coach, and lawsuits both pending and imminent, three Board members are focused on what I can only guess are personal grievances. This letter and the false accusations underlying it are a tremendous distraction from the important work we need to do.

- Trustee Scott accuses me of unilaterally attempting to settle the ongoing dispute with Sanjay Gupta. First, the entire Board was then and is still now engaged in this matter. Second, settlement communications are confidential and Ms. Scott, an attorney, should not have raised this in a letter she distributed to the public.
- Ms. Scott alleges that on March 31, 2023, I “unilaterally (without discussing with the BOT)” released the Quinn Emanuel report. This is inaccurate. In February, after lengthy discussions, a majority of the Board *voted* to release the findings of the Quinn Emmanuel Report in the interest of transparency and accountability, and affirmed that decision just before it was released.
- Trustee Scott also misstates the turn of events leading up to the Board's failure to release Nassar documents to the Attorney General's office. Five current Board members ran on the promise to release the documents. After releasing the Quinn Emmanuel Report, four Trustees approached me wanting to vote on their release. When the AG's office reached out to me, I communicated the appetite of the majority of the Board to transfer the documents to the AG's office. The AG's office sent a letter of request and a majority of the Board was willing to honor her request. Trustee Scott then said she spoke with Attorney General Dana Nessel, incorrectly represented our intentions, and was reportedly told that, in fact, the AG did not want the documents. Therefore, the Board decided not to give them to the AG. There is nothing improper about my actions.
- In the spirit of full transparency, I released a text exchange between myself and Trustee Emeritus Pat O'Keefe to MSU's FOIA office in response to a FOIA request, which was then released to the media. Again, contrary to Trustee Scott's characterization, the text exchange was one-sided with no input from me. While her letter seeks to make me responsible for the statements of others, Trustee Scott's position lacks factual support. I have been steadfast in my duty to ensure confidentiality in all RVSM matters.
- Jones Day was hired to investigate (1) the alleged leak of Brenda Tracy's identity to the media, (2) the recent leak of a privileged document circulated to the Board of Trustees and limited members of the University administration related to the alleged leak of Brenda Tracy's identity, and (3) the initial leak of the Mel Tucker investigation to the media. To be clear, as I have said before, I had no involvement with the alleged leak and am not aware of any Trustees knowing the identity of Brenda Tracy prior to its public dissemination. I have been forthcoming and cooperative with Jones Day's investigation and will continue to be. Trustee Scott's letter, while inappropriately discussing details of an ongoing investigation, which is a breach of confidentiality and highly disruptive to the Jones Day investigation, also misstates facts about my participation in the Jones Day investigation. To date, no Board member, including the three trustees manufacturing this distraction, has produced their phones for a forensic review, and that request is part of an ongoing discussion between the Board and Jones Day. I am surprised

that Trustee Scott, an attorney, would issue public statements that could interfere with an active and confidential investigation being conducted by outside legal counsel. I will continue to be cooperative and await the conclusion of the Jones Day investigation.

- As it relates to the After-Action Review of the Feb. 13 shooting incident on campus, it was another Trustee, not me, that raised appropriate questions and concerns about the methodology and contents of the report. A core obligation of the Board is to ensure the safety of our community and it was appropriate to engage the firm on the contents of their report—particularly as the specific request was for recommendations around our roles during crises.
- Certain Board members seek to cast dispersions on my travel decisions. The Board currently does not have a policy regarding private travel to MSU events. Previously, Board members have flown on donors' planes without question. In fact, in 2021, I traveled with Trustee Emeritus Melanie Foster's friend, a MSU donor, and five other Trustees and Coach Izzo to review athletic facilities of three universities. On the second flight the letter addresses, my friend, a MSU donor, invited me and several others to a basketball game. While my travel expenses are already minimal compared to most members of the Board, this trip cost the University nothing. This targeting of my travel is a testament to the disparate treatment I continue to experience while serving on this Board.
- Finally, I wholly reject the coded language of “bully” when describing me in any context. None of the assertions made regarding me and the Interim President are true. However, I did tell Trustee Scott that she should read about leadership, race and racism, and literature related to Board responsibilities. Transformative leadership calls for transparency, accountability, and clear communication—that's how I lead.

In short, there is no basis in any of the allegations in Trustee Scott's letter. Dysfunction on the MSU Board of Trustees long pre-dates my tenure as a board member. And as the first African American woman ever elected to chair this Board, it is very disappointing that instead of showing unity and a steady hand during a tough time for our university, three members of our MSU Board of Trustees are more focused on undermining me instead of working together to do the job we were elected or appointed to do. Though I regret that we are engaging in a public debate, I could not allow these meritless allegations to go unaddressed. However, it is my hope that we can put such divisions behind us and attend to the important work of the University. After Saturday's antisemitic debacle, the persistent racism Black students have endured, questions around the administration's decision-making in unresolved issues related to OIE investigations, and perhaps most importantly, the task of selecting a new president, there is much work to do. Students, faculty, and staff are counting on us to ensure a bright future for this university. I will not let them down.

Rema Vassar, PhD  
MSU Board Chair