

Before the
Council of the District of Columbia
Committee of the Whole

**Public Oversight Hearing
On
The University of the District of Columbia**



Testimony of Stanley Jackson, Acting President of the
University of the District of Columbia

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

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Good afternoon Chairman Gray and Members of the Committee of the Whole. I am Stanley Jackson, Acting President of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). I am honored to appear before you today to speak to the Committee of the Whole on the accomplishments that have occurred since July of this year when I became Acting President; and the transition strategy for the University of the District of Columbia for the remainder of the year. I am joined today by members of my executive staff.

UDC is a land grant institution. In fact it is the only **Urban** Land Grant Institution in the Nation. I believe that no universities are better positioned to meet the challenges of change than land-grant universities. Land-grant universities were born of the desire to make higher education available to all classes of citizens, not just society's wealthy and elite. I believe this concept is very much a UDC concept. We are an open admissions university offering hope to those for whom the future may have seemed hopeless. On a daily basis we are transforming lives; perhaps most importantly by opening doors of opportunity for students who seek better futures and greater possibilities in their lives. I am honored to appear before you today to speak to the Committee about the University's transition efforts that occurred over this past summer as well as the continued transition strategy for the remainder of FY08.

Accomplishments

The University has most recently been honored with the presence of several notable individuals. The featured speaker for this year's Opening Convocation was Nikki Giovanni, world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. One of the most widely-read American poets, Nikki Giovanni prides herself on being "a Black American, a daughter, a mother, a professor of English." Determined and committed as ever to the fight for civil rights and equality, she was outstanding in her presentation before an enthusiastic and receptive crowd of attendees. Convocation 2007 has been touted as among the best ever!

Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, paid a visit to the University on October 19, 2007. President Sirleaf presided over "Social Stratification, Power and Inequality," a sociology class offered at UDC. President Johnson Sirleaf's visit to UDC was arranged by mtvU, MTV's 24-hour college network, as part of their "Stand In" program.

Chairman Gray participated in our afternoon dialogue event and visited with students, faculty and staff in late October. And most recently, the Rev. Al Sharpton paid a visit to the campus to speak out against racial and social injustice.

Student Affairs. UDC is vibrant, growing, and changing. We continue to expand our student services as we continue to grow our student body. There are 3,320 newly admitted students. This represents 85% of the applicant pool. Total enrollment in full-time equivalents for the fall semester of 2007 was 3,620. The University's total headcount is 5,612 for the fall semester of 2007. There are approximately 292 international students in this class, and other students from various states. Of this number 3,479 were District residents. Every Ward of this vibrant, wonderful City is represented. Ward 4 was home to 965 freshmen, Ward 7 was home to 823, Ward 5 was home to 511 and Ward 1 was home to 507.

The students of the University of the District of Columbia have been profiled on a national stage over the past few months. Ms. Kalice Robinson, a student of Social Work, was invited to observe President Bush's signing of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act on September 26, after the White House learned of Ms. Robinson's story of overcoming adversity to pursue her education at the University of the District of Columbia. On October 17, William C. Kellibrew IV, a business major and former UDC student government president, shared his story of triumph of personal adversity on the national stage as he appeared with entertainer Bill Cosby on the nationally-syndicated "Oprah Winfrey Show." Then just two days later, 35 of our students gave Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, a rousing welcome as she appeared as guest lecture on the mtvU syndicated television program "Stand In," which is viewed on college campuses nation wide. This shows that nationally and internationally people are realizing what we've known all along – the University of the District of Columbia is a world-class institution.

Academic Affairs. As I look to the future, I commit that UDC will continue to strengthen our baccalaureate and graduate programs and improve our technology infrastructure as we explore offering online courses to our students locally and nationally. We will foster staff and leadership development as we revitalize our performance management program. Priorities for the coming year include increasing enrollment and boosting funding for student scholarships. Even though we provide some level of financial aid for most of our students, we are exploring ways in which we can provide incentives for high achieving students in the District of Columbia to make UDC their institution of 1st choice. In order to achieve the commitments that I have made, it is essential that we have an excellent strategic plan; one that builds on the legacy of success provided us by previous generations of faculty, students, and staff. This strategic plan, when completed, will chart the course for UDC's academic and institutional priorities. This plan will articulate a coherent vision statement that will express specifically the aspirational goals and priorities of UDC in the years ahead. The vision will

clarify our current focus and direction. In addition, the plan will include core values which will articulate what makes UDC the excellent university that it is. This new strategic plan will position UDC as a stronger and continuing national leader in teaching and in scholarship.

Dr. Rachel Petty, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is among an elite group of District of Columbia educators and leaders invited to attend a reception celebrating the launch of the Early Childhood Teaching Excellence Partnership on October 24, 2007. The partnership includes the University of the District of Columbia, the Early Care and Education Administration, and Georgetown University and will train over one hundred teachers in a variety of settings (pre-k classrooms, head start centers, child care centers) in the science of effective early childhood education. The partnership is being launched with the support of a U.S. Department of Education grant of \$4.5M.

Dr. Daryao Khatri, Physics, along with colleagues Professor Brenda Brown, Mathematics, and Dr. Anne O. Hughes, Professor of Education/Sociology, ret., CAS, delivered a very successful UDC 2007 Summer Gateway to Algebra program for a selected group of entering freshmen whose initial placement test scores placed them at the lowest level remedial math course, Basic Math 005. The students showed great progress at the end of the program.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) awarded the Institute for Public Safety & Justice at the University of the District of Columbia a three-year \$2.9 million award to develop and implement a national training program to address legal issues relating to preparation, response, and recovery from terrorist attacks and major disasters through the establishment of the DHS National Legal Preparedness Training Program (NLPTP). The Institute was one of twelve award recipients in the Department of Homeland Security's "2007 Competitive Training Grant Program."

Forty different classes are offered at our four community satellite locations; P.R. Harris, Ferebee Hope, Friendship Collegiate Academy and McKinley Technical High School. We have enabled our space at P.R. Harris for full wireless internet access for staff and classrooms.

David A. Clarke School of Law. Dean Shelley Broderick was elected President of the American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capitol Area on September 5, 2007. The law school continues to attract an ever-increasing pool of applicants. More than 1,300 applicants vied for 95 seats in the entering Class of 2010. The admitted class is 62% women and 38% men. 48% are students of color, of whom 27% are African American and 11% are Hispanic or Latino.

Within 9 months of graduation, 73% of the Class of 2006 obtained legal employment and another 4% were enrolled in full-time, post-doctoral programs. Of particular note, 43% were employed in the public interest or public service sectors, and 13% obtained judicial clerkships. 63% of the graduates are pursuing their law careers in the District of Columbia.

Finance and Operations. Effective with the last quarter of FY07, the Office of the UDC CFO has been under new leadership with an Interim CFO, Interim Deputy CFO and Interim Budget Director. The new leadership team has proposed a restructuring of the Office of the UDC CFO to meet the re-defined business needs of the University. The restructuring is also planned to establish a strong financial structure similar to other comparable public and private University Finance Offices, while simultaneously strengthening critical financial processes to ensure compliance with financial policies and procedures for the University of the District of Columbia.

After an initial and thorough review of FY07 expenditures, the new team conducted an in-depth FY 2008 Budget Call to meet with all executive leadership, Deans, Department Chairs and Directors to prepare a

revised/reallocated FY 2008 Budget for the University. As a result of the FY08 Budget Call, the FY 2008 budget has been properly realigned and funding has been properly reallocated to establish a base-line spending plan in accordance with the strategic direction of the Acting President and most importantly, to support the critical needs of the University.

Our new internal review process also revealed significant inappropriate purchasing violations and practices at the University, which placed several employees in the District's Ratification Process. While the Interim CFO and staff are aggressively working and training the University community to emphasize immediate corrective behavior, to date ratifications in excess of \$1.0 million have been identified at the University and have been forwarded to the District's Ratification Panel for resolution.

Finally, as a part of the routine city audit plan, the University's Land-Grant Endowment Fund is currently undergoing its triennial review by the DC Auditor for fiscal years, 2003 – 2006. We are coordinating with the DC Auditor's office and will advise Council of our outcomes.

On the operational side, we have completed conversion of the University telephone system from Siemens and Verizon to DC-Net. The conversion allowed UDC to retain their existing telephone numbers, and replaced an aging 20-year old telephone system. We expect the conversion to reduce the University's local telephone and switch costs by \$200,000 annually.

Personnel. We have strengthened our ability to operate the University more effectively by making changes in key functional areas including Academic Affairs, Finance and Operations, Student Affairs, Athletics, Public Safety and Emergency Management, and the School of Business. Additionally, there are several proposed new hires and other personnel actions:

- Athletic Director
- Vice President of Student Affairs
- Division of Real Estate
- Transfer Student Counselor (NCAA)
- International Student Counselor
- Director of Admissions

Facilities. Improving the appearance and comfort of our campus continues to be a priority. We have made several strides in our efforts to provide students with a campus conducive to learning. Renovation of the Disability Resource Center is scheduled to be completed by April, 2008. The newly renovated 4.0 Lounge for students has led to over 1,600 student contacts in September and October combined. It has provided a forum for discussions with Councilmembers, the International Student forum and poet Nikki Giovanni.

Beautification of Van Ness Campus. Prior to the fall semester's registration, the Registrar's area was painted and new plants were provided in order to make the area more attractive to our incoming and returning students. Additionally, new umbrellas were ordered for outdoor seating areas and new flowers and shrubs were planted around campus.

In the early part of this month the University, in conjunction with the DC Master Gardener Program, held the University's First Fall Bulb Planting Extravaganza.

In terms of our Capital Projects, the replacement of the Fire Alarm System has been completed. The Exterior Door replacement project has been completed. Six high definition flat panel LCD screens have been installed across the campus. The LCD screens will serve as message boards to inform the university community of events, special dates such as registration and academic advising, and emergencies on or near the campus.

Other improvements to the Van Ness campus are completion of installation of our Electronic Access Control System. Access cards will be issued to selected groups to begin using after-hours.

Challenges

As I stood before the several hundred students, representing every Ward of this City and many foreign countries, attending the New Student Orientation, I made a commitment to them and to the Board of Trustees and I make that same commitment to the Committee today --a commitment to provide enriched educational opportunities and experiences to every student who attends the University of the District of Columbia. I make a commitment to provide the best learning environment possible and to provide all of our resources so that the students receive all the services they need to be successful here and in the future. We have made several major accomplishments; however there are several challenges that my team and I were confronted with and that we must tackle in the days ahead.

Academic Affairs. There is a lack of coordination and cohesiveness between Academic Affairs and Operations and a need for better coordination of program service delivery within the budgetary constraints.

The Workforce Development programs present a tremendous challenge. Review of these programs has revealed that registration processes are manual and not centralized. Additionally, there is underutilization of the University's 143 acre farm. We are working to revamp that area and will be able to report back to the Council later in the fiscal year as to our results in this area. One initiative that we will be undertaking is a composting initiative in partnership with DPW. Meetings have been held to determine how the University's farm can be used to increase the efficiency of the leaf collection and composting operations within DPW.

Student Affairs. As a result of an inquiry into our student loan process it was discover that approximately 97% of all student loans were originated by Independence Federal Bank. Corrective action has been taken to ensure that students were not steered to any one lender and to diversify the available lenders offered to students. The Office of Financial Aid continued its efforts to comply with the *College Cost Reduction Act*, signed into law on October 1, 2007. The office met with 6 lending institutions that may possibly be included on the University's preferred lender list. The federal guidelines state that an institution must have a minimum of three lenders on their list. The University is in compliance with the mandated regulation.

Another challenge in the area of Financial Aid that was discovered during one of my many dialogues with students was the inordinate amount of time it takes to process financial aid refunds. The Office of Financial Aid implemented new procedures and deadlines for the 07/Fall semester to increase efficiency and decrease the amount of time it takes for students to receive financial aid refunds. As of October 26, 2007, approximately 80% of financial aid students have been processed for student aid refunds. In the past, students have received their refunds, on average, three months after the start of the semester.

Operations. The University has not taken advantage of several operational improvements that have been made city-wide. There are virtually no standard operating procedures in existence. As a result of this finding, we have begun to work with all Vice Presidents and their staff to create standard operating procedures where none existed and to revise those that do exist.

It was also discovered that the majority of staff did not have performance plans in place and had not received performance evaluations, on average for the last three years. As a result, it was mandated that every full-time permanent employee of the University have a performance plan in place for this current

rating period and receive a mid-year evaluation in March and the annual evaluation in September.

There was no system of position control because the University has not prepared a Schedule A in many, many years that would allow the university to track the actual number of FTEs in order to ensure that the authorized number has not been exceeded. A personnel management system that is used in several other District agencies is being implemented to allow the University to track our FTEs.

Additionally, there are several hundred employees appointed with Not to Exceed dates (NTE) and have had this classification for two years or more. The University must release these employees or create permanent positions for them. The loss of some of these employees could create a considerable drain on institutional knowledge and a seasoned experienced workforce.

One of the major concerns for the benefits division has been the inordinate number of employees who have experienced interruptions of their benefit programs. The frequency of such interruptions has been reported to the D.C. Office of Human Resources, who has the ultimate authority in correcting these issues. In dealing with the frequency of employee health insurance eligibility issues, an electronic tracking mechanism has been developed to record the issues as they are reported. This report will identify the employee and their issue; record any collateral contacts as well as the ultimate disposition of the matter. The document will be stored on the "X Drive" and can be accessed by any member of the OHR. More importantly, this document can serve as a tool for management to gauge the frequency in which eligibility issues are reported as well as monitor the division's success in resolving these matters.

Another issue was compensating nine month faculty members that worked on adjunct appointments in the summer through PeopleSoft payroll system. As a result, employees were paid through the supplemental process. The issue was

addressed with the PeopleSoft readiness coordinator and the project manager to ensure resolution prior to next summer school session.

Facilities. The University of the District of Columbia has an aging physical infrastructure that is going to require substantial investment in order to raise the buildings and grounds to acceptable levels for the benefit of the health, safety and well-being of our key stakeholders – our students. Improving the appearance and comfort of our campus continues to be a challenge as the capital budget has been flat for the past couple fiscal years with no money for new projects. There is an urgent need for the University to obtain control over its capital budget. This control would allow us to prioritize our needs based on the ever-shifting list of critical projects. Construction starts have been delayed on many of the projects that would repair the campus facilities (for which funding was approved several years ago) and these delays have caused additional damage to those facilities.

The University has historically taken a band-aid approach to repairs to the physical structures. We must eliminate this band-aid approach and address the major deficiencies that exist on our campus. This band aid approach has also contributed to the continued, and in some instances, the accelerated deterioration of our structures. In order to be the world class institution that we are striving to become, we must provide an environment that is conducive to learning.

Some of our current capital projects include:

- Building 52 – relocation. The move to Intelsat is 94% complete. This will accommodate faculty and staff persons. We have also leased 410 8th Street, NW and have successfully moved our GED, Cooperative Extension, Nursing and Allied Healthcare, continuing Education and Gerontology programs which are now functioning. Students are being

served in the storefront of Building 52 on Connecticut Av. We have identified two locations for student advising during this transition period.

- Student Center – Conceptual Design Award Amount - \$364,367. The conceptual design is underway and is scheduled to be complete by the end of January 2008. Planned Construction Start Date – June 2008; Planned Construction Completion Date – June 2010. The construction phase is presently unfunded.
- Replace two high pressure steam boilers – building 43 – Estimated Construction amount - \$2,319,882. Planned construction start date – spring 2008. Planned completion date – fall, 2008. This project will be incomplete without the funding of the Energy Management System.
- Renovation of Plaza Deck and Parking Garage; Repair Concrete Stairs – Budget Balance - \$6,750,000. OCP has terminated the original architectural firm is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2008. The construction will follow in the fall of 2008. The estimated completion date is June, 2009.

These projects have been funded in our capital budget; however, there are several other capital projects for which enhancements were requested but were denied and still more that have just recently been discovered. These include: coming into compliance with items listed on the ADA report; the construction of the University's student center; constructing dormitories for student athletes; the Energy Management System; repair of the retaining wall at the University Residence; installation of a sprinkler system in the parking garage; decontamination of hazardous pigeon droppings throughout the garage and campus; and the study and assessment of the campus electrical system for upgrades, just to name a few.

Conclusion

The University has some daunting challenges ahead; however, I believe that the appropriate management team has been assembled. I have instituted greater

levels of accountability and responsibility and I am raising the bar on performance. Failure is not an option.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My staff and I are available to respond to any questions that you may have.