

Utah Tech University Faculty Senate Resolution

Subject: Resolution of No Confidence and Requested Action Plan

Resolution Number: 1004

Date Introduced: November 19, 2024

Introduced By: Julie Chew, President and Glenn Webb, Past President

We, the Faculty Senate of Utah Tech University, express our profound concern regarding recent allegations of misconduct involving former President Richard "Biff" Williams and the administrative handling of these matters by the current university administrators. The federal lawsuit brought by Rebecca Broadbent, Jared Rasband, and Hazel Sainsbury describes a culture of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation that is antithetical to the core values of this institution.

The specific allegations include:

- Inappropriate actions by the former president, such as an incident involving suggestive and degrading materials attributed falsely to university employees without their knowledge or consent.
- Intimidation, defamation, and professional retaliation against staff who filed Title IX and Title VII complaints, creating a hostile work environment and undermining trust in the university's grievance processes.
- A failure to conduct fair and transparent investigations into these allegations, raising serious questions about the integrity of the administration and its commitment to accountability.

As representatives of the faculty, we believe these issues strike at the heart of our university's mission to foster an educational environment based on belonging, equitability, and respect. The alleged handling of these matters reflects failures (a) to uphold these principles and (b) to prioritize the success and well-being of our academic community. Additionally, the allegations are serious enough such that:

- Faculty and students—as reported in the *Sun News*—have called into question the individuals' ethical judgement, leadership ability, and suitability for their roles at Utah Tech University;
- Faculty and students have raised serious concerns of compromising the integrity and reputation of Utah Tech University;
- The former president, Richard "Biff" Williams, has publicly admitted to and apologized for various allegations in the lawsuit toward his new institution, but not Utah Tech University;

The processes alleged in the lawsuit have violated federal, USHE, and Utah Tech University policies for handling such issues of misconduct. Considering these concerns, we, the Faculty Senate as representatives of Utah Tech University's faculty body, and in solidarity with our Utah Tech University student body, express our lack of confidence in the current administrative processes and leadership. We call for immediate decisive action to restore trust and integrity at Utah Tech University. **On November 20, 2024, the Faculty Senate and the general faculty will meet at noon and anticipate a call for the following actions:**

1. A full, independent review of the allegations and the university's response to ensure accountability and transparency and that those named in the lawsuit not be allowed to select the independent body for this review.
2. Immediate steps to strengthen protections for whistleblowers and all individuals engaging in protected activities under Title IX and Title VII including mediation and support for Jared Rasband, Hazel Sainsbury, and Rebecca Broadbent—if she chooses to return.
3. A publicly shared, detailed plan addressing recommitment to fostering a workplace culture grounded in respect, equity, and shared governance among administration, faculty, and students.

4. An acknowledgement and apology issued by Interim President Courtney White for these circumstances that (a) negatively affect students, faculty, and staff, (b) result in diversion of time and resources, impacting the regular functions of job duties especially those of the Office of General Council, and (c) caused harm to the good name and reputation of Utah Tech University.
5. A vote of no confidence in the following administrative individuals with executive duties in leadership positions at Utah Tech University: Interim President Courtney White, Provost Michael Lacourse, Vice President of Student Affairs Del Beatty, Vice President of Marketing and Communication Jordon Sharp, Assistant to the President for Government and Community Relations and Interim Chief of Staff Henrie Walton, and Executive Director of Human Resources Travis Rosenberg.