

**ACTA**  
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF  
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

March 27, 2009

Mr. John R. Lawson, II  
President and CEO  
W.M. Jordan Company, Inc.  
11010 Jefferson Avenue  
P.O. Box 1337  
Newport News, VA 23601

Re: Virginia Tech

Dear Mr. Lawson:

As a member of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, you are responsible for safeguarding the First Amendment, ensuring that faculty members enjoy full academic freedom, and protecting Virginia Tech's good name. That is why we—as a resource to boards around the country—wish to draw your attention to the growing public debate regarding Virginia Tech's faculty promotion and tenure policies. We urgently request that you intervene, for the good of Virginia Tech.

You may know that the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences is currently voting on a new set of promotion and tenure guidelines (enclosed). This comes after the enactment and revision, over some years, of several related policies, which collectively seem to institute an ideological litmus test for faculty. This raises serious questions about the university's adherence to the First Amendment and accepted principles of academic freedom. The student newspaper, some faculty members, and national groups have expressed concern, as you can see in the enclosed letter from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

The Board of Visitors has plenary authority for the university's promotion and tenure policies. The board is also responsible for safeguarding academic freedom and intellectual pluralism on campus—the central tenets of the American university and the values underscored by Thomas Jefferson when he outlined the academic's duty to “follow truth wherever it may lead.” Given these fiduciary responsibilities, and the well-documented concern that Virginia Tech's current and proposed policies constitute a significant departure from key principles of academic freedom and place the free exchange of ideas at risk, we ask that you call for a full and immediate review—at the board level—of all policies relating to tenure, promotion, and diversity.

While faculty members have until the end of the month to vote on the newest proposed guidelines, the apparent litmus test is not confined to one document, warranting a full review of all policies regulating hiring, promotion, and tenure—as well as all diversity policies and statements—to ensure they protect intellectual pluralism and impose no

PROMOTING ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND EXCELLENCE

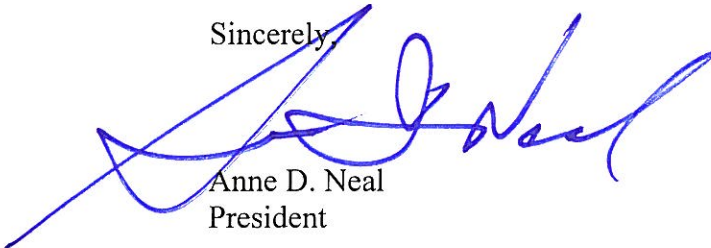
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ideological litmus tests. In seeking a full review, you and your fellow board members will be acting properly as guarantors of the First Amendment and of faculty members' academic freedom. This is your obligation to your students and faculty, as well as to the taxpayers of Virginia.

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is an independent, educational organization dedicated to helping trustees and alumni advance higher education excellence and accountability. We regularly publish reports on higher education as well as guides for trustees, which are available on our website at [www.goacta.org](http://www.goacta.org) or upon request. We would be happy to discuss this matter with you, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Anne D. Neal  
President

Enclosures

cc: George Nolen, vice-rector, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Michael Anzilotti, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Frederick J. Cobb, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Beverly Dalton, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Ben J. Davenport, Jr., member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Michele L. Duke, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Douglas R. Fahl, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
L. Bruce Holland, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Calvin Donnell Jamison, Sr., member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Sandra Stiner Lowe, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
James W. Severt, Sr., member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
James R. Smith, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Lori L. Wagner, member, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Hardus Odendaal, faculty representative, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Thomas Tucker, staff representative, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Linsey Barker, graduate student representative, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Arlane Gordon-Bray, undergraduate representative, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
Kim O'Rourke, secretary to the Board of Visitors, Virginia Tech  
Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Tech  
Mark G. McNamee, senior vice president and provost, Virginia Tech