

Board of Trustees  
Hardin-Simmons University  
2200 Hickory Street  
Abilene, Texas 79601

September 21, 2020

To the Trustees of Hardin-Simmons University,

We the undersigned have given our time and resources to Hardin-Simmons University (HSU) out of our love for the school and our dedication to its founding vision: “To bring young men and women to Christ; to teach them of Christ; and to train them for Christ.”

Altogether, we have devoted over 1,000 years of our lives to Hardin-Simmons University and donated more than \$10,500,000. Our commitment to the school remains unwavering.

However, HSU’s direction over the past several years troubles us deeply. We know that you, as trustees, share our desire to see HSU thrive and grow in its important work. Yet, we worry that The Way Forward is actually taking the university toward financial and spiritual bankruptcy.

Difficult financial decisions for small, private universities like ours must be made, particularly as our country faces an unprecedented health crisis. But those decisions must be made with abiding respect for donor intent.

We write to you today as individual and diverse donors who share a common disappointment concerning how the university has handled our gifts. We also write on behalf of donors who can no longer express their concerns: for Dr. Virginia Connally, whose gift helped to create a dedicated space on campus and an endowed Chair of Missions to enhance the preparation of missionaries; and for Charles and Koreen Logsdon, whose bequest built a seminary and academic program to train young women and men for ministry in the world.

HSU has broken our trust – and theirs.

Many of us have dedicated our support to programs which you have voted to close, like the Logsdon Seminary of the Logsdon School of Theology, and programs within the Irvin School of Education, and the School of Music. The dreams we had when we made our donations to HSU cannot possibly be fulfilled, yet the university has refused to act in good faith and return our gifts, in order for them to be used as they were originally and clearly intended.

Regrettably, when trying to work with HSU’s leadership, we have been met with stalling tactics or worse – with silence.

We appeal to each trustee to consider the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” We feel that you have been given not just any trust, but a most sacred trust.

Consider also what Jesus tells his disciples in Luke 16:10a–12: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much. . . . So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” We feel that you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property.

HSU is entrusted with much more than finances – it is entrusted with the hearts and minds of students. We pray that the university trustees and administration serve as a godly example for the students at HSU by exercising humility and wise stewardship.

As trustees, you have a legal, fiduciary responsibility to ensure donor gifts are used in accordance with the terms of gift documents, not in subjective ways that could undermine donor intent. You also have the power to act and restore our confidence in HSU’s future. We ask that you undertake a thorough review of all restricted gifts. If the university cannot honor our intent, please work toward solutions with donors, up to and including the return of our charitable gifts – many donated to honor the memory of our loved ones, but all given to honor the university we love.

Respectfully signed,

Concerned HSU Donors and Supporters:

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Josh Bowerman  
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