RESOLUTION 1920-AU-004

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY REGARDING THE RECENT HIRING OF MR. CLINTON WOODS BY THE COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Authors: Carlyn LaRosa (.15) – Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility Chair, Robert Dahlberg-Sears (.1), Utkarsh Shah (.1285)

Sponsors: Executive Committee

WHEREAS the founding goal of The Ohio State University (originally instantiated as Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College) has been understanding, gaining benefit from, respecting, and protecting the environment¹; and

WHEREAS the stated vision of the university is “The Ohio State University is the model 21st-century public, land grant, research, urban, community engaged institution”²; and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University has demonstrated a strong commitment to both public health and sustainability³; and

WHEREAS with generous funding from Nationwide Insurance’s foundation, the College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) created a new position of Director of Strategic Partnership, which requires extensive collaboration between researchers at The Ohio State University and external partners; and

WHEREAS the university recently hired Mr. Clinton Woods, a former deputy assistant administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to fulfill this role of Director of Strategic Partnerships, effective October 14, 2019; and

WHEREAS Mr. Woods, in his previous roles, has directly advocated against the stated values of this university, the interests of our community, and the current scientific consensus regarding issues of sustainability, environmental stewardship, and public health; and

WHEREAS in his role at the EPA, Mr. Woods was directly involved in loosening regulations designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which by the EPA’s own estimates increased premature deaths by 1,400 and new cases of asthma by 48,000 each year⁴; and

WHEREAS during his tenure at the EPA, Mr. Woods made suggestions regarding how the agency should assess toxic chemicals and radiation based upon information from a controversial toxicologist best known for asserting pollution and radiation is beneficial for humans⁵; and

WHEREAS air pollution is a serious public health issue in Columbus⁶, and particularly for low-income and African American communities, which was shown by CFAES faculty⁷, and

³ “Ohio State Sustainability Goals” https://www.osu.edu/assets/pdf/sustainability/sustainabilitygoals.pdf
⁵ Los Angeles Times, “Scientist says some pollution is good for you — a disputed claim Trump’s EPA has embraced “ https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-secret-science-20190219-story.html
WHEREAS Mr. Woods was previously employed by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a group that lobbies on behalf of corporate interests, often at the expense of the environment. Mr. Woods served as the Director of the Energy, Environment and Agriculture Task Force during his time at ALEC⁸; and

WHEREAS while external partnerships can be of great mutual benefit to both parties, such partnerships must not compromise the independence of the research conducted at Ohio State; and

WHEREAS Mr. Woods has previously demonstrated a willingness to overlook scientific consensus in favor of advocating for corporate interests, which have had tangible effects in terms of public and environmental health; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with the university’s stated values of integrity, transparency, and trust², the Council of Graduate Students requests from Dean Cathann Kress a more detailed explanation of the role of the Director of Strategic Partnerships, and why the position was newly created; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we ask that Dean Kress explain why Mr. Woods was hired, and what qualities of Mr. Woods set him apart from the approximately 30 other applicants⁹; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of Mr. Woods’s previous work, the Council of Graduate Students requests a detailed mechanism by which any interested stakeholders may be informed about any existing, pending, or intended external partnerships to ensure such partnerships are in the interest of the OSU community and resources, and coincide with the university's stated sustainability goals; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to The Ohio State University President Michael V. Drake, Executive Vice President and Provost Bruce McPherson, Dean of CFAES Cathann Kress, and Director of Strategic Partnerships for CFAES Clinton Woods.

Approved: Yes/No

Date: 11/8/19

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Stephen J. Post, President

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