

SENATOR PAUL T. ANDERSON

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Senate

State of Minnesota

September 12, 2019

President Joan Gabel
University of Minnesota
202 Morrill Hall
100 Church St. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear President Gabel,

The recent media reports regarding the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota are deeply concerning and raise several questions about their hiring practices and the propriety of hiring a sitting state legislator to influence the actions of his colleagues at the Capitol.

I know we share a love for the University of Minnesota and its varied roles in our state's history, culture, intellectual and academic contributions, and, most importantly, the vital part it plays in our economic prosperity.

For these reasons, in my role as Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, I'd like your help in understanding the nature of this story. The following questions need to be answered for clarity and transparency to the Senate and for accountability to the numerous University graduates and students, and the people of Minnesota, all of whom take great pride in the work of this world class institution.

Hiring Process

1. It appears that staff at the Energy Transition Lab (ETL) crafted the position with a specific candidate in mind. Is this a common hiring practice at the University?
2. As Executive Director of ETL, Ellen Anderson asked a prospective candidate, Rep. Jamie Long, to assist her in creating the position description for the fellowship. Is that a common practice at the University?
3. Besides Ms. Anderson, how many staff members at the University were involved in the hiring process of Rep. Long? How many staff members participated in creating the position description?
4. Was Ms. Anderson in communication with any other prospective applicants prior to posting the position?
5. What internal controls does the University have in place to ensure that every hiring process is fair and equitable?

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6. Was there any consideration from the University on how Rep. Long's position as a legislator could have influenced his hiring or his ability to succeed in this fellowship?
7. During Rep. Long's time at the ETL, what steps did the University take to maintain separation between his role at the ETL and his position as a legislator?
8. What were Rep. Long's responsibilities in his time at the ETL?
9. Does the University have any other staff, faculty, or contractors who are current legislators?

Donations

1. Is it common practice for the University to solicit private donations to pay for a specific position or hire specific individuals?
2. Is it common practice for the University to solicit, or accept, donations with the explicit purpose of hiring certain individuals? If so, does the University return donations when the certain individual is not hired?
3. How does the University ensure that donors do not have an undue influence on the work of the University?

Ellen Anderson's role

1. What were Ellen Anderson's duties and responsibilities as Executive Director of the ETL?
2. What is Ms. Anderson's current title?
3. When was Ms. Anderson reassigned?
4. Does Ms. Anderson's new position include any supervisory responsibilities?
5. Does the University have any plans to review the hiring process of Rep. Long?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response by Friday, September 20.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul T. Anderson". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Senator Paul T. Anderson
Chair
Senate Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee