

October 28, 2022

Dear BJU Board Members:

Thank you for serving on the Bob Jones University Board of Trustees. This year we have the privilege to serve on the Student Leadership Council (formerly called Student Body Council) and were elected by our peers to represent the student body. We consider it an honor to study at BJU and grow in our knowledge and understanding of God and His Word. We are undeserving of these leadership roles and are humbled to serve as student leaders. God has taught us so much during our time at BJU, and we wanted to share with you from our hearts concerning the situation with Dr. Pettit's contract.

First, we desire to express our apologies and ask for your forgiveness for anything we have said or done as a student body to reflect poorly on Dr. Pettit's leadership. We realize that as college-aged young adults we do not always make the best decisions or represent our Christian university in a way that honors and glorifies God. We certainly are all still works in progress. Please be assured that our collective desire as a student body is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—and though at times we fail—we marvel at God's amazing grace as He continues to work in our hearts and lives. If there are areas that we as a student body can improve on in this regard, we would greatly appreciate you sharing those areas with Dr. Pettit so he can communicate those to us. We commit to doing our best as student leaders to influence our peers to be Christ-like in every circumstance.

Second, we desire to express our gratitude for the board's leadership at our university. While many students don't know who you are or what the board does, we do know that you spend much time and many resources serving us. We appreciate many policy updates that the board has approved over the years that both align with the BJU mission and allow us to experience a positive environment for discipleship, personal Christian growth, and academic excellence. A few examples are:

1. Church attendance policy: This policy is very helpful to us as we must work through a proper biblical framework for what a Bible-believing and Bible-preaching church is, and then with prayer, wisdom, and guidance from our parents, we are allowed to fully connect with a local church. This policy update has enriched our experience at BJU and enabled us to be more involved in our local churches as we interact and learn from believers in our community. It is also very helpful for us after we graduate, as we will have learned how to decide on a local church. Working through this process in a careful and wise manner is preparing us well.
2. Accreditation: Many of us need to graduate from an accredited university in order to best serve the Lord in our callings. We know that this is an intense process for the board, administration, and faculty and we appreciate this policy update. We, as a student body, would be very concerned that any major disruption with the faculty or administration may bring into question the accreditation of BJU. We, as students, are depending on this as part of our degree programs and we are asking the board to fully consider this concern.

3. Student life: We greatly appreciate the updates in relation to student life. We understand that we need to dress in a proper manner that is both modest and also appropriate for the event, class, or activity. We believe the class dress of business casual has been beneficial in creating an atmosphere of professionalism and is in line with what a large majority of us will experience in our work environments.

4. President Pettit: We appreciate this board bringing President Pettit in many years ago. We believe he has done an exceptional job through some difficult times.

Third, we desire to express our support for Dr. Pettit's leadership at BJU. His love for God is poured out through his passionate preaching and his love to us. He smiles, remembers our names, speaks kindly to us, and genuinely cares for us and our experience at BJU. We know he loves us, and we love him as our president. We have heard from countless students of their appreciation of Dr. Pettit, his intentionality towards them, and his influence on their decision to come to BJU. Specifically, many students have expressed Dr. Pettit's positive impact on their decision to go into ministry. He has been an example to us of a Christian dedicated to God's will. We love how he encourages our teachers to integrate God's truth and a biblical worldview into every academic discipline. We are thankful for the emphasis that the administration, led by Dr. Pettit, has placed on learning experientially to prepare students to enter secular and Christian workplaces in a way that glorifies Christ in any career. In addition, for many of us, chapel has become a great highlight as it is very practical, biblical, and helpful, and we appreciate Dr. Pettit's intentional leadership from the chapel platform. We wish to express our sincere and solemn belief that many students will not return to BJU if Dr. Pettit's contract is not renewed and many future students that would be a great BJU fit will not attend if there is confusion over Dr. Pettit's contract. He is the reason a majority of students decided to come to BJU as he spoke to many of us when we were high school students during his travels around the country.

Fourth, we desire to express our love and appreciation for the BJU faculty and staff. We believe the BJU faculty and staff are some of the most loving and Christ-like people on the planet and that they too are thriving under Dr. Pettit's leadership. Again, we have heard many student testimonies of appreciation towards the faculty and staff and how they have influenced students' lives for the glory of God. From the executive offices to facilities workers, the faculty and staff have embodied a Christ-like lifestyle. We believe that many of our teachers may consider employment opportunities elsewhere should Dr. Pettit not have his contract renewed. We see them each day and realize how discouraged many of them are in light of the current situation. This creates a lot of fear among the student body. The faculty and staff are the backbone of the university and are vitally important to the future of BJU, and we ask the board to please consider their well-being.

Fifth, we desire to express our firm commitment to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and our support of the BJU creed. We understand the importance of the creed from the intentional teachings from the past and current president(s) of BJU. We too are committed to uphold the university creed and stand firm for the fundamental doctrines of God's Word. We believe the doctrines of the BJU creed and seek to follow the admonition Dr. Bob Jones III shared in chapel years ago: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Finally, we desire to express, as representatives of the student body, our humble request for the Bob Jones University Board of Trustees to vote in the affirmative to renew Dr. Pettit's contract as the president of Bob Jones University. We desire to learn, love, and lead in a way that honors God. We desire to remain a student body that is growing in Christ. We desire to remain unified in the essentials, exercise liberty in the non-essentials, and demonstrate charity in all things for the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Thank you for considering our letter. We continue to pray for God to give you His wisdom from above during these important days.

Sincerely,

The 2022-2023 Bob Jones University Student Leadership Council