

TESTIMONY FOR DISTRICT COUNCIL: BY ESTHER L. BARAZZONE PHD NOMINATED TO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. JANUARY 9, 2020.

Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Council and Council representatives:

It is my pleasure and honor to appear before you today. I thank you for convening this hearing and the Mayor for renominating me to the Board of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC).

I have served UDC since late 2016 as a replacement Board member. During that time have served on the Academic Affairs Committee, the Operations Committee, a task force on Student Outcomes , and the Executive Committee (by virtue of my selection as Secretary of the Board). I hope you will find it fit to permit me to continue to serve UDC and the District.

I and II: BACKGROUND and RELEVANCE

I believe my credentials are highly relevant to the duties of the UDC Board. For 24 years I was President of Chatham University (yes, the Mayor's proud alma mater). Chatham was a struggling undergraduate women's college when I became president. At the end of my service, the institution had become a coeducational university, quadrupled in physical size and

enrollment, with an endowment 2.5 times larger, and was receiving accolades for academic quality and innovation.

Prior to my time at Chatham, I held positions as faculty member, academic dean, and full-time fundraiser, at the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College and Philadelphia University.

Service on many boards gave me national and international perspective: I am still a member of the Tuition Plan Consortium (TPC) to help families prepare financially for college, as well as of the American University of Rome in Italy. My civic leadership in Pittsburgh and West Virginia helped me understand the role of public institutions better. I served on the Southwest Pennsylvania regional economic development association Board (the Allegheny Conference), as well as on the Board of the Benedum Foundation dedicated to economic and social betterment in West Virginia and Southwest Pennsylvania.

For these and other activities, and among other awards, I was named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania, and given a lifetime achievement award for business and civic leadership by the Pittsburgh Business Times.

Another part of my background relevant to UDC is that I am a native West Virginian from a family with few means. I had opportunities which are much rarer today than they used to be. Because of individual philanthropy and federal programs, I was able to get my undergraduate education and a doctoral degree from Columbia University basically for free .

I want such opportunities to be available to others. I believe in the vision of the University of the District of Columbia as THE public institution of the District. UDC can and should be the engine of personal social mobility, overall economic development for the District, and personal and civic growth for all citizens of the District.

For supporters of Statehood for DC, UDC should be seen and built as the future State University of the District. Furthermore, we should aspire to make it the “City College” of DC. New York’s flagship public institution educated many such as Colin Powell and Jonas Salk for whom it might have been the only choice based on cost and access. City College also provided excellent preparation for work and life

UDC as the only public institution in the District can be both an HBCU and the university for all the people of the District, providing workforce training, continuing education and personal development. I have seen this institution come a great distance in just the three years I have been on the Board, with the excellent leadership of Ron Mason and the current team, and the support of this Council and Mayor. Just in that time, UDC has added to its roster of degrees two doctoral programs—in engineering and in urban leadership. This is all for the lowest tuition in the District. The mechanical engineering and business programs have been highly ranked for quality and affordability.

III. MOVING FORWARD

My vision for the University is of course, guided by the strategic plan, "The Equity Imperative."


Some specifics within that plan that particularly resonate with me. In great brief they are:

1. Funding to support UDC's academic program growth and improvement. In the area of academic program development there is truth to the idea of "build it and they will come." More high demand professional opportunities for the future should be planned for in the UDC curriculum and be funded. For example, nursing from the RN (an associate's degree) through the doctorate in nursing practice, and other health sciences added. Students will come in great numbers for programs such as these.
- 2.) The UDC physical infrastructure must be repaired. Health and human safety drive this goal. Two buildings are currently at risk of having to go offline if critical elements break down. And...students should not have you wear their coats and gloves in class.
- 3.) We at UDC must demonstrate further that we are able to provide successful student outcomes. There is a Student Outcomes Task Force of the Board, that, along with the excellent leadership of the Dean Team and faculty at UDC is working on this challenge. But this too is not free or easy. Support for hiring more excellent faculty and training them to teach successfully students from a wide variety of backgrounds is needed.

4). We need to get the word out. We need to get good word of mouth for all the great things that are happening. Institutions are all either rising or falling. You don't usually know about the ones that are falling, but you need to hear about the ones that are rising as UDC is. More need to know about the achievements just mentioned, or that the Engineering programs this summer garnered \$4.85 million from NSF for a nanotech research center .

5). Finally, clarity needs to be achieved that UDC is a comprehensive university offering all degrees through the doctorate, as well as workforce non-degree programs. UDC is not nor should it be only an associate degree granting institution. Every capable hard-working young person should know they could find an affordable and excellent academic home in the District. It would be good for the District, for its economic development, and for its citizens to fulfill this vision.

With these thoughts, Chairman Mendelson, I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I hope the Council will give me the extended opportunity to serve the District and UDC.



Esther Barazzone, PhD

January 9, 2020