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# Reductions, Changes and Dismissals Are Expected at Hellenic College & Holy Cross as Crisis Deepens



BOSTON – The administration of Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology will start implementing reductions and dismissals of personnel due to the dire financial situation of the institutions, The National Herald has learned. Directives were given to the President, Fr. Christopher Metropulos by the Board of Trustees during their meeting on January 25 presided over by Archbishop Demetrios according to a news release issued after the meeting.

TNH has also learned that there were have been some critical attacks from professors who are former deans against Fr. Metropulos. Presently there are at least three different factions at the School fighting each other while each tries to protect “its own people.”

Discussion took place at the Board meeting about the viability of Hellenic College and its possible elimination. Two opinion trends were manifested. One is in support

of keeping Hellenic College, arguing that the priests who study at both Hellenic College and Holy Cross for seven years are better equipped than those who only study three years at the School of Theology. The other trend maintains that there are graduates who studied for seven years and were ordained but were still completely unprepared.

It is widely believed that the release which was issued after the Trustees meeting indicates a negative predisposition about the future of Hellenic College because it makes reference to the closing of small colleges in the United States.

The release states among other things that, “a full presentation on the state of the school was presented by Trustee committees as well as the President, Rev. Christopher Metropulos. This included, but was not limited to, the financial condition of the school as well as past and expected enrollments for the fall of 2019.”

It was also emphasized that, “throughout the United States, numerous small liberal arts colleges are facing closure or planning to close or to shutter programs in light of decreasing enrollment across the country. HCHC functions in this environment. The Trustees reiterated their commitment to the strengthening and growth of the school, but also directed the leadership of the school to ensure that we live within our means and offer programs which create and nurture future leaders for our Church and society.”



The announcement also stated that, “it was decided by the Trustees to authorize the administration to begin immediate modifications of the operating budget in order to strengthen the school’s mission and to bring about a more balanced budget. In addition, the Board of Trustees directed the President to form a committee of Trustees, Faculty, and Administration to seek new ways to strengthen the institution and re-imagine education on the Hill of Hope. Updates will be provided as plans take shape.”

It is reminded here that last year Archbishop Demetrios of America, who is also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hellenic College-Holy Cross School of Theology, dismissed most of the trustees and replaced them mainly with obedient priests and some laypersons. The dismissed Trustees had challenged both Archbishop Demetrios and Fr. Metropulos on accountability, because they could not defend the spending and the School’s dire financial situation.

In June of 2018, TNH published the entire contents of a confidential letter to Archbishop Demetrios by 11 Trustees, including some from the Executive Committee, warning that the College faced the danger of closure and the School of Theology of losing its accreditation, even as its own future was doubtful.

They wrote about “the very serious state of the institution” and requested Metropulos’ immediate removal: “as trustees of HCHC, we have become recipients of a special spiritual and legal duty. How we exercise this duty is not only something for which we must answer to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts but, much more importantly, something for which we must answer to God and to all the faithful members of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America who love and depend on HCHC. In addition, those of us who are members of the Executive Committee serve as representatives of all of the other trustees; they depend on and expect us to oversee the institution’s well-being, to report to them, and to communicate their insights and concerns to Your Eminence and the other corporate officers.”

The letter’s authors revealed that, “The overall financial trend is alarming and is not sustainable. Over the three-year period, HCHC has incurred or will incur cash deficits ranging from $2.2 -$3.1 million per year. Over the past 36 months, we have been averaging a monthly cash deficit of $190,000, and HCHC is now unable to make payroll without further endowment borrowing. During Fr. Christopher’s presidency, we have borrowed a total of $6.7 million from our unrestricted endowment funds (pooled accounts), and as of April 30, 2018, HCHC only had $1.1 million of such unrestricted pooled account funds remaining, as compared to a projected cash deficit through the calendar year ending December 31, 2018 of $2.6 million. Absent a significant cash infusion, HCHC will run out of money before the end of the current fiscal year (June 30). Realistic projections for the next two fiscal years are equally dire. As is evident from these figures, which project cash deficits over the next two fiscal years ranging from $3.7-$3.9 million per year, HCHC’s financial situation has reached crisis levels. In order to fund operations for the balance of this fiscal year (which will require $1,050,000) and achieve a balanced budget for the next two fiscal years, which is essential in order to justify admitting the next incoming class, HCHC will require $8.7 million of incremental funds through either additional revenues or reduced costs.”

They emphasized the oversized faculty. “HCHC has 22 full-time faculty for only 164 students. This overall ratio is nearly three times higher than the ratio at comparable institutions, and the ratio comparisons are even worse for some specific programs.”




(Source: The National Herald)