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Subject: FW: Medical University of South Carolina Continues to Mistreat Black Employees

Attachments: Medical University of South Carolina Continues toMistreat Black.wpd
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Medical University of South Carolina Continues to Mistreat Black Employees

by Robert Ford, Senator/Public Servant

Recently, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) gave a formal apology to the Black Community for activities that led to the 1969 Hospital Workers Strike.

I find this to be very insulting and totally unnecessary.

In February 1969, I received a phone call from Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, who was Dr. Martin Luther King's successor after his assassination. Thereby being, Dr. Abernathy became the leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The SCLC came to Charleston, South Carolina because 1400 Black Employees had lost their jobs when they tried to organize a labor union at MUSC. At the time, MUSC was paying Nurses, Nurses Aides, Housekeeping Staff, and Food and Beverage Handlers, between 60 & 90 cents per hour. The highest ranking Black employees, at that time, were Licensed Practical Nurses. Subsequently the strike was a reality. The duration of the hospital strike was about 5 months and finally, everyone was returned to work with salary improvements.

Since 1969, I have worked with each President of the Medical University of South Carolina to improve conditions for Black employees. The only

President that progress was made with, was Dr. Raymond Greenberg.

Now, there is OVER 3,000 employees at MUSC that are paid \$100,000.00 or more per year and only 19 of those are Black.

There has been five Diversity Coordinators at MUSC and four of them lost their jobs because they tried to get the conditions for Blacks improved at MUSC.

MUSC gets several hundred million dollars each year for research grants. Every cent of that money is controlled by Whites.

I served as Chairman of the Civil Rights, Affirmative Action and Diversity Committee of the Legislative Black Caucus for 19 years. During that time, my committee met with all the State agencies and institutions of higher learning. These agencies and institutions were willing to hire Blacks in major positions as they qualified for. These agencies included, The Department of Public Safety, the Highway Patrol, SLED, and the Department of Social Services. We were able to make tremendous progress with each of these agencies. MUSC was the exception. Several hundred Black persons have lost their jobs at MUSC since 1969, because of discriminatory practices and racism.

Working with Dr. Raymond Greenberg in 2009, there was 900 White Supervisors chosen to take Diversity Training. These supervisors have hundreds of Blacks working under them and they refused to treat those Black employees like human beings.

Since 1969, only one Black Charlestonian has served on the Board of Directors of MUSC. Maurice Washington, who is a Candidate for Mayor of Charleston, was able to get then Governor Mark Sanford to appoint Dr. Paula Orr to serve on that Board. When Dr. Orr tried to improve the conditions of Black employees at MUSC, she was replaced. At the present time, two Black persons serve on the MUSC Board of Directors and both of them live in the Midlands of South Carolina.

The three highest paid Black men at MUSC are from outside of South Carolina and they were hand picked by Congressman James Clyburn,

which makes me think, that not only Whites discriminate against Blacks in Charleston, but even our own Congressman does.

MUSC, the Citadel, and the College of Charleston are the only State Institutions that have Black board members that are not residents of the county in which the school is located.

If Black leaders and Black elected officials do not fight for Blacks that are employed at MUSC, then who will? We must demand, once and for all, that MUSC treat our brothers and sisters with respect and dignity and discrimination of Blacks stop. There are qualified Black candidates that have applied for positions and are continually turned away.

At last report, there is more than 1000 doctors employed by MUSC and none discriminate against Black patients and they all treat their patients with respect and give them the best possible treatment, but 99% of them are White.

In closing, I recently read a book about World War II and the apology that MUSC gave to the Black Community, reminds me of Prime Minister Chamberlain of Great Britain, after he had several meetings with Adolph Hitler of Germany. Prime Minister Chamberlain finally got Adolph Hitler to sign a Treaty indicating there will be “Peace in our Lifetime.” Within days of signing that agreement, Adolph Hitler declared war on all of Europe.

Is this where we are headed with MUSC?

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