

Rider University Chapter of the AAUP

November 19, 2018

Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey  
511 Valley St.  
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Dear Ms. Jasey:

We read with great interest your comments in *Politico* concerning Kean University's dangerous plan to transition its Wenzhou-campus faculty to the direct employ of the Chinese government. As you correctly presume, this move, if successful, will seriously threaten their academic freedom. Moreover, these unionized New Jersey employees will lose protections guaranteed them under US Labor law.

Unfortunately, this situation is not unique, which makes the need for intervention even more urgent.

As you may know, Rider University is attempting to sell its world-renowned musical icon—Westminster Choir College—to a Chinese for-profit corporation. If New Jersey allows this, it will be the first time a US college falls under the direct control of an authoritarian foreign government.

The Rider University Chapter of the AAUP, the union that represents Westminster Choir College faculty, wishes to summarize our grave concerns regarding the unsuitability of the proposed buyer, Beijing Kaiwen Educational Technology ("Kaiwen"), and provide you with documentation that substantiates our concerns. In addition, we will outline how the Rider University administration and Board of Trustees have violated their role as stewards.

We have also shared our concerns with Dr. Ellis, Secretary of the DHE, Gurbir Grewal, the NJ AG, and with Governor Murphy, Senators Booker and Menendez, Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman, and your State Senate colleague, Sandra Cunningham. We request that you use your authority to work with other state officials to help stop this ill-conceived transaction, not solely because it would likely lead to the destruction of New Jersey's iconic musical institution, but because it would create a dangerous precedent that threatens U.S. higher education in general.

### **Grave concerns regarding the unsuitability of the proposed buyer**

- 1) Kaiwen is a for-profit company whose educational business has never earned a profit. A for-profit enterprise's goal is opposite that of a not-for-profit University.
  - Kaiwen's goal is to make money. Education is Kaiwen's (current) means to reach its goal. (Two years ago, it tried to make money fabricating steel bridges.)
  - A University's goal is education. Money is the means to reach its goal.

- 2) Kaiwen has no higher-education experience whatever.  
Kaiwen's experience in education of any kind is minimal.
  - For only two years, Kaiwen has run two for-profit K-12, non-accredited schools.
  - Kaiwen has never graduated a student.
  
- 3) Kaiwen is controlled by Badachu Group, which is controlled by the Chinese government.  
Chinese companies are required by law to uphold the policies of the government.
  - China does not uphold academic freedom.
  - China does not uphold religious freedom.
  - China censors all media, forbidding performance of non-state-approved music.
  - Chinese influence on U.S. universities has a chilling effect on academic freedom and freedom of expression.

### **Failed Stewardship of Rider University Administration and Trustees**

- Faculty and other stakeholders were denied any meaningful role in Rider's decision to sell Westminster.
- The entire process was cloaked in secrecy.
- Faculty played no meaningful role in creating the recent "self-study" for the National Association of School of Music (NASM) accreditation visit—a document the administration refuses to share with faculty.
- Rider's agreement with Kaiwen would result in the transfer of Westminster's \$20 million endowment to the books of a for-profit corporation in China.
- Rider's attempt to sell Westminster is illegal according to the allegations in lawsuits filed against Rider by the Princeton Theological Seminary and the Westminster Foundation (a group of donors, friends, alumni, and ex-WCC trustee)

We understand the concerns we raise are many and complex. We would be pleased to address any questions you may have and are eager to work with you to stop this unconscionable endeavor.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeff Halpern, Contract Administrator and Chief Grievance Officer

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Attached documentation:

Letter from WCC Faculty to Thomas Masse NASM.docx

a\_failure\_of\_due\_diligence\_an\_AAUP\_white\_paper.pdf

Kaiwen Complete Semi-Annual Report 2018.docx

Kaiwen Reply to Shenzhen Stock Exchange.docx

More Bad Economic News for Kaiwen.docx