to: Faculty of West Virginia State University

from Richard Ford, Chair of the WVSU Faculty Senate

about: concerns about the WVSU Research and Development Corporation and Land Grant administration

April 3, 2018

Dear Faculty colleagues,

The WVSU Research and Development Corporation was established as the fiscal agent of the University to allow greater flexibility in managing federal, state and private foundation grant funds and to facilitate utilization of grant funds in contracting for research support and public service activities. The Corporation is a legal entity, sanctioned by the United States Internal Revenue Service as a Section 501(c)(3) foundation and authorized under Senate Bill 520. The Board of the Corporation is composed of faculty, staff and administrators of the University, as appointed by the President. The Board oversees administration of the WVSU Land Grant program.

Recently, via Internal Revenue Service IRS 990 filings, faculty leadership became aware of significant information pertaining to salaries and relevant expenditures of the Corporation. This information is public. Because faculty leadership is aware of this information, we believe we must share it with WVSU Faculty. We hold open the possibility that there may be legitimate explanations for some particulars that would make them less egregious than they first appear. However, we think that, taken in sum, this information reveals a problem.

At its meeting of March 30, 2018, the Senate Executive Committee shared this information with President Anthony Jenkins and made our concerns clear. We strongly recommended a change in leadership of the R+D Board, and that the Board meet more regularly and do better at making its proceedings available to the public. We also recommended reorganizing Land Grant administration such that it may accomplish its mission (and the University's) more efficiently and economically. We urged that problems be rectified as soon as possible, so as to avoid casting a bad light on our institution and its hard-earned reputation for Land Grant research. President Jenkins assured the Senate Executive Committee that he takes the matter seriously, is gathering all relevant facts, and will take action to ensure that the R+D Corporation serves the best interests of the entire University, is transparent and accountable to the Board of Governors, Administration, and Faculty, and that it expends its resources in the best possible way.

The matter will be on the agenda at the **Faculty Senate meeting of Friday, April 6, 2018 at 1:30 pm in Hamblin Hall Auditorium**. A summary of the information we refer to (above) will be released at this meeting. By releasing the summary for the first time publicly in his way, there will be an opportunity to ask questions, hear other viewpoints, be informed of context, errors, etc. As always, Senate meetings are open to everyone. Let's focus on ways to help WVSU's R+D Corporation and its successful Land Grant program better advance the University's mission.

Rich Ford

Chair, Faculty Senate