

Francis Remkiewicz ('74)  
133 Reed Rd.  
Oakdale, CA 95361  
(209) 848-4433

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Miguel A. Santana, Chairman  
Whittier College Board of Trustees  
Whittier College  
13406 E. Philadelphia Street  
Whittier, CA 90602

Dear Mr. Santana,

I am writing to you today to express my complete and utter dismay over the current direction of Whittier College. I believe that the current President is slowly destroying the nature and character of our beloved alma mater.

My family were some of the founding Quakers of Whittier including Whittier Academy and Whittier College. My son Matthew ('02) was the fourth generation of Whittier College graduates. My grandmother, Emma Madge Horton ('17), was the first generation. Here are the graduates in between:

George K. Tenopir (Director of Admissions, Financial Aid)  
Jane (Longwell) Tenopir  
Claire Krueger  
Dave Krueger  
Kathryn (Tenopir) Remkiewicz  
Carol Tenopir  
Francis Remkiewicz  
Agnes Anne (Krueger) Remkiewicz  
Stacey Remkiewicz  
Megan Lafferty  
Matthew Remkiewicz

Together, my family spans the full life of Whittier College. Together, we have seen every single college President, and my father-in-law worked for several of them. This President is slowly choking the life out of Whittier College.

I am deeply concerned about the continued viability of Whittier College. This year's Homecoming (aka "Whittier Weekend") was a complete and total disaster. Homecoming has always lasted a full weekend, with all the classes and all the societies having a homecoming celebration. The board's recent letter cited declining attendance at college football games as one of the reasons behind canceling the program. However, the college created a self-fulfilling prophecy when it scheduled the homecoming game and

several other events against each other. Seems like someone was helping the death of football along.

Furthermore, why would one eliminate the football program anyway? Whittier is not a Division 1 school and we will never be ranked in the CFP but that is not the point. Thousands of high school football players only want to play football just to play “for love of the game,” and you have cut that off from them as an option at Whittier College, eliminating it as a source of recruitment for the school – a large source. Where do you suppose those football players go when universities and college at the Division 1 level reject these thousands of students? Apparently, no longer to Whittier College.

In addition, this seems aimed at minority athletes since so many go to college by playing sports in general, especially football in particular. You do realize you will miss the next J Stanley Sanders? Mr. Sanders was a Lancer Society member, star football player (drafted by the Chicago Bears in the NFL), Rhodes Scholar (second African-American ever chosen, 1<sup>st</sup> in 55 years at the time), prominent attorney, and continues to be a major political force in the city of Los Angeles. What if football wasn’t an option in the 1920s, would it be so far-fetched to say Whittier College may very well have missed out on one of the school’s most prominent alums, President Richard M. Nixon, who helped found the Orthogonian Society and played football for the Purple and Gold?

My concerns, however, run even deeper than that. You have indicated there was a three-year program review before making this decision. Where is the documentation for this review process? Who was involved? What stakeholders were included in the decision-making process? From the very public response to the announcement, I would venture to guess there were not many key stakeholders involved; certainly not the leaders of the programs affected nor the alumni. You said the process took three years, yet the letter announcing the decision did not demonstrate more than three minutes’ worth of thought put into it. In my career as a school district business leader, I have attempted to close four different elementary schools in a variety of districts. The research necessary is far more than a quote that says something like, “Elementary schools cannot function at less than two hundred students.” However, the college’s announcement attempted this route with its simplistic reasoning; one example being the quote below regarding the decline of youth sports:

*“According to data from the Aspen Institute and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), from 2008-19 to 2018-19 the total number of youths aged 6 to 18 playing tackle football fell by more than 620,000, from about 2.5 million to less than 1.9 million. It seems almost certain that 2020 or 2021 will see overall high school participation in tackle football drop to below 1 million players, a level of participation not seen since 1998. Over that same decade season attendance at top-level college games (Football Bowl Subdivision) declined by almost 10% (per school).”*

However, this was, as has been pointed out by several alums already, a direct copy and paste from an article published by Forbes Magazine two and a half years ago (Roger Pielke, Former Contributor, Forbes Magazine,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rogerpielke/2020/01/28/the-decline-of-football-is-real-and-its-accelerating/?sh=5a468dd2f372>).

Compare this paragraph in the recent letter to the Whittier College universe with the above-referenced Forbes Magazine article and you will find they are identical, raising, at least, two questions.

First, why would the President of Whittier College not place this as a quote from another source and try to pass it off as original material? Most Whittier College Professors I know would immediately fail the student for plagiarism. But let's speak in more precise terms – according to Whittier College's own website outlining the "General Policy on Academic Honesty"

(<https://www.whittier.edu/policies/academic/honesty#:~:text=General%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Honesty&text=When%20these%20principles%20are%20breached,to%20expulsion%20from%20the%20College.>):

*"Because the preservation of academic honesty is as fundamental to our shared enterprise as the transmission of knowledge, the faculty and administration of the College regard educating students in academic integrity to be as important as inspiring them to rise to the challenge of learning. Students are expected to produce independent work and to cite sources of information and concepts. When these principles are breached and a student misrepresents his or her level of knowledge, the basic framework of scholarship is broken. In these instances, students will be held accountable and will face sanctions that range from a warning to expulsion from the College. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid defense. If students are uncertain of policies, they should consult the instructor for clarification. Adherence to the policies delineated below reflects the commitment of our community to a single standard of truth, a standard binding on students, faculty, and administrators alike."*

The second question I raise due to this error is just how much real research was done (and how detailed was that research) if all the research group did was to steal articles from Forbes Magazine that supported the President's pre-conceived conclusions? And, if there is additional research, who performed the research, was the research statistically verified, and why is it not published at least as an appendix?

Ironically, the Aspen Report referenced in the Forbes article which was used as a basis for canceling sports at Whittier College does not even advocate for canceling of sports programs, but quite the opposite; it focuses on parents and leaders and how to better support their student-athletes to *increase* youth involvement, not eliminate it altogether. If that one snippet is the basis for discontinuing the sports programs mentioned in the board's letter, then the College has no real data to support their claims, just someone's wrong-headed idea of Whittier athletics and athletics, in general. I, seemingly unlike those involved in this recent decision, actually took the time to review the Aspen Report; a report containing a few pages with data and statistics on decreasing numbers in youth sports, but also one with pages and pages that are filled with information for parents and leaders on how to reverse that trend, how to overcome barriers and obstacles to youth sports participation; a focus summarized as such

([https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019\\_SOP\\_National\\_Final.pdf](https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019_SOP_National_Final.pdf)):

*“The ‘Don’t Retire, Kid’ campaign recognizes that parents and caregivers are key agents in creating sustainable solutions in sports, just as they are with other aspects of their child’s life. Many start their children in youth sports with the best of intentions, but they end up stressed and confused about how to create a positive experience for them. Many parents want to get off the pay-for-play treadmill, but understandably fear that doing so will hurt their child’s chances of playing high school sports, much less reaching the longshot dream of college sports or the pros.”*

I remember watching Whittier College football as a child living on Earham Street and watching the game from my bedroom window. My mother and her sisters remember football because they would go over the day after a game and collect coins from under the bleachers. I and my father-in-law would take my son to Whittier College football games throughout his childhood, cheering on the Purple and Gold, and cheering on my young future Poet as he played scrimmage games with the other kids in the endzone during halftimes. The message now being sent is that athletics is not important for a liberal arts college. That is utter nonsense. Athletics is a proven key developer of social, leadership, and disciplinary skills from an early age through college levels. These are just some of the vital skills learned through athletics that are vital to a liberal arts education.

In the past few years, extremely competent and well-loved faculty have retired (Dr. McBride this coming year) or died (Ann Farmer, Anne Kiley, Fred Bergerson) and have been replaced by young, inexperienced, or just second-rate faculty looking to skate into retirement, not really caring about the students. Whittier is renowned for the faculty-student relationship. That fails to meet even the minimum requirements of the Whittier College I once knew. My concern is that, under President Oubré’s tutelage, Whittier College has lost its way:

*“As a college of the liberal arts and sciences, we have a tremendous strength. We provide our students with a set of skills that employers need and want. I can confirm that from my own experience.”*

*Linda Oubré, President, Whittier College*

“We provide our students with a set of skills” is not the quote I want to hear from any President of a liberal arts college, let alone my alma mater. Quotes about critical thinking, strong decision-making, creative ways to solve problems, and unique programs are the goals of a liberal arts college. Whittier is known for differentiated instruction, close student contact, balancing student course work, and a unique Quaker influence. What Ms. Oubré seems to be talking about is trade schools and technical colleges.

I spent over 34 years working in public education and I have seen some of the best and brightest students that needed to be academically challenged, they can get the same

set of skills anywhere and usually do. What has set Whittier apart for over 100 years is the school's ability to create a more well-rounded individual, ready not just to go to work, but to make a difference in their community and in the world.

As a Business Assistant Superintendent here is what I see, from a strictly business perspective. Let's assume 55 football players, 16 lacrosse players, and 18 golfers for a total of 89 students. Of that group, just 80% leave because they want to play the sport they love, giving you an attrition of 71 students. One half-year's tuition and fees are \$27,000.00 so the college will come up with an approximate shortfall \$1,917,000.00. For arguments sake, let's assume a savings of \$500,000.00 in scholarships, work study, and the like. Does Whittier College have a plan to work with a \$1.4M immediate decrease in revenue? I assume the college does multi-year projections so we'll assume an average 6% inflation year over year. Taking that \$1.4M shortfall into next year, times two (both semesters) times 6%, gives us a projected shortfall of \$2,968,000, or let's just round up and say an even \$3 million. If the website [collegetuitioncompare.com](http://collegetuitioncompare.com) is close in projected enrollment for next year, Whittier's decline in enrollment of approximately 300 students for 2023 will be another, roughly, \$12,500,000.00. The total loss of revenue will be over \$15 million (obviously these are approximations but the point is to wonder if anyone has taken the time to figure this out). This doesn't even take into account the absolute public relations nightmare the college has created for itself in the mishandling of this entire process, further eroding future enrollment. Plus increases in salaries and benefits and increases in fixed costs and increases in loans, increases in long term contracts, and so on, and by the end of the second year the College goes into bankruptcy.

But what I really want you to take away from this letter more than anything else is that this President is clearly and plainly destroying the very thing that is Whittier; and I am talking about much more than just a handful of athletic programs.

*"In a centennial service sermon of Oct. 5, 1986, Ruth Kinsey, First Friends Church associate pastor said, "Whittier is not a community that happened accidentally. A group of Quakers decided to form a Friends community in the west, and they came here for that purpose."*

*Kinsey noted: "Quakers have always had a concern for education." It is not unusual for them to have established an "academy" the year they laid the foundation stones of a city. This academy later became Whittier College.*

*In keeping with their belief of God in every person, Kinsey added the college was for girls and boys. Also the schools were open to all in the community.*

*"Specifically, the Quaker influence is often invisible because Quakers don't have a need to dominate," Moody said. But what they insist on is education. "There is this Quaker idea that if we gather together in a corporate search for knowledge that the spirit will guide the search," he said. (My emphasis added).*

*Both Moody and Kinsey noted that Quakerism rests on the principle that each person is divine in the eyes of God.*

*“There is that sense of God in everyone. It means each person has the capacity to learn what God wants them to learn. We have to treat each person spiritually as a spark of God,” Moody said.”*

My grandmother, Emma Madge Horton attended the Whittier Academy and then Whittier College, graduating in 1917. Whittier College has grown and matured over the past century. However, the Quaker principles have always stood as the foundation principles of Whittier College. Our graduates include Richard Nixon, former President of the United States, and Jessamyn West, a founding member of the Palmer Society and world-renowned author. There are titans of industry, art, film, sports, and politics that have roamed the grounds of Whittier College for more than a century.

*“The only valid criterion of greatness in collegiate institutions is academic excellence.”*

*William C. Jones '26, President, Whittier College*

The administration speaks of cultural diversity on the campus. Here is a quote from our own history:

*“Today, Whittier College is a cosmopolitan vanguard of 21st century society, recognized worldwide as a distinctive and relevant liberal arts college, offering additional graduate degrees in both education and law. More than 50 percent of Whittier College undergraduates, and three of its four Rhodes Scholars, are from underrepresented ethnic and international groups; this kind of cultural diversity, which permeates both classroom and campus community, profoundly strengthens intellectual discourse and provides a realistic exposure to the kind of world students will enter upon graduation. Students and faculty continue a long tradition of community service, echoing the Quaker conviction that helping others is a moral obligation. International study opportunities enrich every field and major, reflecting the Quaker idea that truth transcends the boundaries of race, culture, and nation.”*

Here is a little more. You all must have forgotten Martin Ortiz '48. Let me refresh your memory:

*“Affectionately known as “El Jefe” (the boss), Ortiz served Whittier for more than 40 years. In 2004, he received an honorary doctorate from Whittier College and the title of director emeritus of the Center of Mexican American Affairs—now known as the Ortiz Programs in his honor. He also helped establish Alianza de Los Amigos, an alumni association for Latinx graduates. Between 1968 and 1979 Mr. Ortiz tripled the number of Latinx students at Whittier.”*

A clear sign that the current President does not understand her assignment has recently been brought to my attention. The current Whittier College President does not live in the Wardman House and is, instead, attempting to rent it out as a public event center while spending nearly half a million dollars of the college's money to renovate an older building to become her private residence. Why? Every college President before her lived in the Wardman House – it is an integral part of the college. It is also been brought to my attention that she has lived for months outside the City of Whittier, presumably at

the college's expense throughout the Covid Pandemic. No wonder the President does not get it, she does not understand nor live the Quaker experience.

The college needs more Harry Nerhoods, Ben Burnetts, Albert Uptons, Hai Tai Kims, Fred Bergersons, Mike McBride's, Don Nuttals. Presidents like Sharon Herzberger, Katherine Haley Will, Walter Dexter, William Mendenhall, and Thomas Newlin.

I, arbitrarily and at random, searched for qualities and characteristics of a college. I found this from another liberal arts college (substituting Whittier College for the specific college named) but it embodies today's Whittier College:

*"First and foremost, the [Whittier College] President embraces, embodies and champions the community's collective values. The ideal candidate for the position must therefore appreciate the history, culture and spirit of this distinctive institution. It is essential that the President convey a passion for [Whittier's] character and be willing and able to enthusiastically communicate its strengths and priorities and serve as its champion."*

It is my considered opinion that the current President of Whittier College has none of these qualities and one need look no further than the Wardman House. The current President eschews all that Whittier College is and hopes to be. With every move she has made since her arrival, both listed above and others (i.e. hiring her own son for a position to which he was unqualified) she has clearly demonstrated that is unfit to lead the alma mater that raised me since childhood, the alma mater that raised my wife since childhood, and the alma mater that raised my own son since childhood. Furthermore, any and all members of the Board of Trustees who have supported her throughout the process have, also, clearly lost their way and are unfit to continue. I summarily ask that President Linda Oubré resign, or be removed from her post, immediately, and that all supporting members of the Whittier College Board of Trustees resign their positions, effective immediately. Until such time, I and my son (Matthew Remkiewicz, '02) will be withholding all future donations to Whittier College, as well as strongly advocating for prospective college students, including my own four grandchildren, to seek better education elsewhere.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
/s/  
Francis L. Remkiewicz ('74)