

**From:** Gioia Elisa Woods <[Gioia.Woods@nau.edu](mailto:Gioia.Woods@nau.edu)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 6, 2020 4:50 PM

**To:** Rita Hartung Cheng <[Rita.Cheng@nau.edu](mailto:Rita.Cheng@nau.edu)>

**Cc:** Bruce Edward Fox <[Bruce.Fox@nau.edu](mailto:Bruce.Fox@nau.edu)>; Edward J Smaglik <[Edward.Smaglik@nau.edu](mailto:Edward.Smaglik@nau.edu)>; Blase S Scarnati Jr <[Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu](mailto:Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu)>; Marianne October Nielsen <[M.Nielsen@nau.edu](mailto:M.Nielsen@nau.edu)>; Tammy L Mielke <[Tammy.Mielke@nau.edu](mailto:Tammy.Mielke@nau.edu)>; Cathryn G Ellis <[Cathryn.Ellis@nau.edu](mailto:Cathryn.Ellis@nau.edu)>; Dorothy J. Dunn <[Dorothy.Dunn@nau.edu](mailto:Dorothy.Dunn@nau.edu)>; Michael Colin Caulkins <[Michael.Caulkins@nau.edu](mailto:Michael.Caulkins@nau.edu)>; Jeannie L Copley <[Jeannie.Copley@nau.edu](mailto:Jeannie.Copley@nau.edu)>; Ishmael Irungu Munene <[Ishmael.Munene@nau.edu](mailto:Ishmael.Munene@nau.edu)>; Danielle Kristina Ross <[Danielle.Ross@nau.edu](mailto:Danielle.Ross@nau.edu)>

**Subject:** travel audit

Dear President Cheng,

At this afternoon's Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting we discussed the well-publicized news about the travel audit and its results. Because there is a lot of campus and community angst over the news, the FSEC respectfully requests your office make a public statement explaining and acknowledging the situation. We have all heard from colleagues, students, and community members, especially regarding the confusing use of NAU Foundation funds to cover travel expenses. Any official clarification from you would be most welcome given the current climate of austerity.

We make this request in the spirit of transparency and concern for the well being of our campus.

Sincerely,

Gioia

**From:** Rita Hartung Cheng

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2020 1:23 PM

**To:** Gioia Elisa Woods

**Cc:** Bruce Edward Fox; Edward J Smaglik; Blase S Scarnati Jr; Marianne October Nielsen; Tammy L Mielke; Cathryn G Ellis; Dorothy J. Dunn; Michael Colin Caulkins; Jeannie L Copley; Ishmael Irungu Munene; Danielle Kristina Ross

**Subject:** RE: travel audit

Gioia,

Thank you for your email. I do appreciate your concern as well as that of the Faculty Senate. It is unfortunate that exaggerated media reports distract from the overall OAG report which clearly reflects a financially healthy University playing a vital role in the strength of the Arizona economy. If you have not yet done so, I encourage you to read the full report where, on page 9, you will find our response.

Please note that while the auditor general does characterize the travel reimbursement as "inappropriate," this word was used solely because the auditor general found that documentation was insufficient—importantly, the report does not question the legitimacy of the travel itself. I can assure you that the travel was appropriate. The audit has given us all the opportunity to ensure that best

practices regarding travel documentation will be consistently implemented going forward. We have also worked with the auditor general to implement additional internal controls and checks and balances to ensure this does not happen again.

I would also like to clarify that the reimbursement of funds was done through the Foundation President's Fund and did not impact any foundation funds dedicated for students. The President's Fund has been historically provided to NAU Presidents, and is designated for such things as donor outreach, travel, sponsorships, the University Leadership Program, memberships, and large campus-wide events like retirement programs and last month's holiday reception.

Finally, the trips referenced were part of the normal course of business for the president of any major higher educational institution. These trips were key to successfully implementing our enrollment strategy, which calls for the development of critical relationships in countries with high enrollment growth potential. The significant outcomes of our international relationships must not be overlooked. It is trips just like these have resulted in an increase in the number and diversity of our international student population and expansion of our international partnerships, including funding opportunities. I have attached an article outlining one outcome from the Russia trip – the opening of the new Center for Forest Biosecurity with Tyumen State University.

If I can answer further questions please feel free to reach out.

Rita

**From:** Gioia Elisa Woods <[Gioia.Woods@nau.edu](mailto:Gioia.Woods@nau.edu)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2020 8:33 PM

**To:** Rita Hartung Cheng <[Rita.Cheng@nau.edu](mailto:Rita.Cheng@nau.edu)>

**Cc:** Bruce Edward Fox <[Bruce.Fox@nau.edu](mailto:Bruce.Fox@nau.edu)>; Edward J Smaglik <[Edward.Smaglik@nau.edu](mailto:Edward.Smaglik@nau.edu)>; Blase S Scarnati Jr <[Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu](mailto:Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu)>; Marianne October Nielsen <[M.Nielsen@nau.edu](mailto:M.Nielsen@nau.edu)>; Tammy L Mielke <[Tammy.Mielke@nau.edu](mailto:Tammy.Mielke@nau.edu)>; Cathryn G Ellis <[Cathryn.Ellis@nau.edu](mailto:Cathryn.Ellis@nau.edu)>; Dorothy J. Dunn <[Dorothy.Dunn@nau.edu](mailto:Dorothy.Dunn@nau.edu)>; Michael Colin Caulkins <[Michael.Caulkins@nau.edu](mailto:Michael.Caulkins@nau.edu)>; Jeannie L Copley <[Jeannie.Copley@nau.edu](mailto:Jeannie.Copley@nau.edu)>; Ishmael Irungu Munene <[Ishmael.Munene@nau.edu](mailto:Ishmael.Munene@nau.edu)>; Danielle Kristina Ross <[Danielle.Ross@nau.edu](mailto:Danielle.Ross@nau.edu)>; Gerald Kenneth Wood <[Gerald.Wood@nau.edu](mailto:Gerald.Wood@nau.edu)>; Joshua Tyler Hewes <[Joshua.Hewes@nau.edu](mailto:Joshua.Hewes@nau.edu)>; Brian Register <[Brian.Register@nau.edu](mailto:Brian.Register@nau.edu)>

**Subject:** Re: travel audit

Dear President Cheng,

Thank you so much for your swift, thoughtful, and well-detailed response. In order to facilitate transparent communication around this issue I have added the Auditor General's report to the Faculty Senate webpage and have urged senators to consult it in their search for facts. I agree that it's important for folks to go directly to the source.

We appreciate the manner in which you advocate for NAU at home and abroad. Our sustainable and meaningful growth depends to a large degree on your efforts to represent the great work we do at NAU. I don't think anyone disputes the legitimacy of your travel agenda. And thank you for clarifying the various applications of NAU Foundation funds.

Given the fact that many in the NAU community still have questions, and assuming that faculty also serve to represent the institution to the public and thus need to understand the situation, I have three relevant requests:

1. Can you join us at our **January 27th full senate meeting**? We meet as usual from 3-5pm in duBois. I know your schedule is tight, but if you have 20 minutes to spare during that time I know senators would appreciate hearing directly from you.
2. Can I share your email response to the FSEC, below?
3. Is your office planning a public statement that acknowledges or apologizes for the situation?

regards

Gioia

**From:** Rita Hartung Cheng <Rita.Cheng@nau.edu>

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2020 4:02 PM

**To:** Gioia Elisa Woods <Gioia.Woods@nau.edu>

**Cc:** Bruce Edward Fox <Bruce.Fox@nau.edu>; Edward J Smaglik <Edward.Smaglik@nau.edu>; Blase S Scarnati Jr <Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu>; Marianne October Nielsen <M.Nielsen@nau.edu>; Tammy L Mielke <Tammy.Mielke@nau.edu>; Cathryn G Ellis <Cathryn.Ellis@nau.edu>; Dorothy J. Dunn <Dorothy.Dunn@nau.edu>; Michael Colin Caulkins <Michael.Caulkins@nau.edu>; Jeannie L Copley <Jeannie.Copley@nau.edu>; Ishmael Irungu Munene <Ishmael.Munene@nau.edu>; Danielle Kristina Ross <Danielle.Ross@nau.edu>; Gerald Kenneth Wood <Gerald.Wood@nau.edu>; Joshua Tyler Hewes <Joshua.Hewes@nau.edu>; Brian Register <Brian.Register@nau.edu>

**Subject:** RE: travel audit

Gioia,

Thank you for your continued communication and positive outlook.

With regard to your follow up questions, currently my schedule shows that I am attending a conference on the 27th. However, I appreciate the invitation and am looking for an opportunity to quietly exit and join you via technology. If that is not an option, I am open to attending on another date. And, of course, should availability on the 27th open on my calendar, I will prioritize attending in person.

Please do feel free to share my response. An understanding based on fact, rather than conjecture or speculation, is always appreciated.

We have been both responsive and very clear regarding the audit and our response. We have responded honestly, openly and promptly to any and all requests for information and will continue to do so.

Rita

