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An open letter from an Antioch alumna to the Board of Trustees

6 min read · Jul 1, 2026



Liz Flyntz



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Editor's Note: This letter was sent to the full Antioch College Board of Trustees on June 14, 2026, addressed to a vote on Dr. Jane Fernandes's contract renewal that was expected to take place at the board's July 17, 2026 meeting. That vote never happened. Under Antioch's 2019 Amended and Restated Code of Regulations, the Executive Committee holds all authority of the full Board except where the Code specifically provides otherwise, and board co-chairs Emily Seibel and Shalini Deo used that authority to execute a two-year contract extension for Fernandes before the July meeting convened, without bringing the matter to a vote of the full Board. Feinberg Lopez wrote this letter believing a vote was still coming. By the time she sent it, the decision had already been made.



Bertolucci, *The Conformist*, 1970

June 14, 2026

To the Antioch College Board of Trustees,

It has come to my attention that the current president of Antioch College, Jane Fernandes, is up for a two year renewal of her contract, to be voted on at the next board meeting on July 17, 2026. I am writing to express my utmost concern regarding the state of the college after four years with Ms. Fernandez at the helm, and urge you to VOTE NO on this renewal.

The issues of concern are outlined as follows:

Tenured professor Michael Casselli has been treated inappropriately and unprofessionally by Ms Fernandes, as exhibited by the letters received from the American Association of University Professors and Ohio State law. Thanks go to the Board of Trustees for stepping in to stop the illegal firing of Prof. Casselli. Ms Fernandes instead placed Prof Casselli on leave without pay, again in violation of proper protocol.

Prof. Casselli has a record of excellence with the student body, extensive professional accolades, and a deep concern for the well-being of Antioch College. This treatment is uncalled for, and due process has been denied. Even limited research reveals that the behavior displayed by Ms. Fernandes is a pattern, consistent with the undermining of faculty at her previous posts, both at Gallaudet University and at Guilford College, the latter leading to a vote of no confidence by the faculty body and directly resulting in her resignation.

Her current behavior is not consistent with the values of Antioch College, nor the State of Ohio, and is of grave concern to myself and the Antioch alumni. VOTE NO.

The governance of Antioch College is unusual, and yet a critical component of the identity of the College, and the learning process of the students. The three components of Antioch governance include the administration, the faculty, and the student body. It has come to my attention that the student body has been taken out of this formula, and the faculty contribution has been severely weakened. While it is common place at other institutions for the administration to be the only element of governance, it is specifically and directly against the values of Antioch College to undermine the college's tripartite governance process. Ms Fernandes has compromised this process, and the treatment of Professor Casselli could be seen as an act to undermine the value of the faculty participation of the governance of the college. This is unacceptable. VOTE NO.

Poor financial planning has once again put the College in dire financial circumstances. Ms.Fernandes has done little to repair the financial issues of the College. The Social Enterprise and Enrollment plan, put in place in 2023, has not been a success. The endowment has been depleted, undermining the financial safety net critical for the survival of the College. Money borrowed from the endowment has never been repaid resulting in an endowment that is at 10% of the original total. Instead of repayment that would have allowed the College use the interest as a funding source, the physical assets of the college have been sold off at below-market rates as ineffectual attempts to shore up the systemic underfunding, while demolishing other assets despite professional estimates for economical repairs.

Ms Fernandes's management has alienated alumni, donors, and development officers who have consistently supported Antioch College, further creating a financial deficit that

undermines the financial future of Antioch. This is unacceptable. VOTE NO.

The physical condition of the campus is in an unforgivable state of disrepair. A hole in the roof is a small repair cost, while leaving the hole to undermine the foundations, walls, and total structure multiplies the cost exponentially. Buildings requiring attention include Spalt/Cory Hall,

McGreggor, the Science Building, the Art Building, Sontag Fells, and Main Building. An existing extensive evaluation of all structures on the campus along with a master plan and maintenance plan have been largely ignored by Ms Fernandes and her administration, despite grants being available from the State of Ohio for needed repairs. This puts additional financial strains on the College, reduces the value of the College's assets, and creates a substandard college experience for students of Antioch. Critically, it introduces the real possibility for a health and life safety catastrophe.

These issues have the very real probability of further damaging the solvency of the College, and exemplify the short-term thinking by the current head of the administration. VOTE NO.

Antioch College has a history of educational innovation, experimentation, and the intense support of the student body having a full exploration of self, personal expression, and how to be engaged participants in the advancement of humanity and global community. The construction of the Antioch experience has been deliberate and incremental in design, in order to support students in their endeavors. It has created an unusual and meaningful experience that can be difficult for the administration to govern, and often beyond the comprehension of outsiders who have not experienced the impact of an Antioch education. This does not mean it should be dismantled.

During my introduction to my son's university experience, I was able to witness the initial training for new students — it was heavily influenced by the Antioch Sexual Offense Policy, including many of the bullet points as stated when as a student I sat in then-President Al Guskin's office all those years ago. The internships my son was encouraged to participate in were a feeble imitation of the Antioch Coop Program. Antioch College has had a significant ripple effect throughout US education systems. The innovations are real, even if the credit is not given to the College and the efforts so many

have made. These innovation were made by the support and encouragement of free speech, free thought, and creative innovation. We have seen these values under attack at other universities and colleges, Antioch must not be one of them, and it certainly cannot be governed by an individual without the vision and integrity to support the Antioch experience.

Long term stewardship is required of the position of President, with a real understanding of economics, development, and the value of teachers, students, and alumni. Antioch must be able to continue to make new innovations, with the strong support of an administrative head who appreciates the significance the institution and the impact it has on students, education, and the global community. Antioch deserves a real leader, and it is time to find a new president for the College that will unite our community, create financial stability, and make us all proud of the future innovations yet to be discovered.

I understand that I am asking the Board of Trustees to trust that there is a better candidate for the position, and the search takes real effort, but the alternative may very well be the nail in the coffin of the institution of Antioch College, and this I cannot bear.

BE ASHAMED TO DIE UNTIL YOU HAVE WON SOME VICTORY FOR HUMANITY.

We are at a critical moment in history where we need more victories for humanity than ever, with an acute need for a bootcamp for the revolution. It breaks my heart to think of a world without Antioch College. I believe you will find a milieu of alumni who agree. I hope I can count on you to understand and feel the same.

Thank you for your time and attention, I appreciate your consideration.

Best regards,
Natalie Feinberg Lopez,
Class of 1994

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Written by Liz Flyntz

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