

Seems like the walls are talking

Shelby, NC – What a couple of weeks this has been for Cleveland County. Actually, what a couple of days it has been IN Cleveland County. First, the community college and the scandals that have overtaken the chatter in the county, and then, the mess with the Cleveland County employee who has resigned, effective June 30, 2017. (employee was first said to be on administrative leave) The common thread that tie these two events together, is the fact that the employee in question, has been allowed to set their own time-line, as to when they will leave.

First, Cleveland Community College President L. Steve Thornburg, first resigned via email to staff and trustees, effective December 31, 2017. Then, on Tuesday, June 6, 2017, the trustees voted to terminate Thornburg, effective upon the hiring an interim president. (by the beginning of the fall classes) Now, allegedly, Thornburg is threatening to sue the college, all because of a local media report in the local newspaper, The Shelby Star.

This whole saga at the college began over a year ago, and details have been kept under wraps, or at least, that's what the powers-that-be thought. It all came to a head back in April, when the James G. Martin Center For Academic Renewal published a story titled [In North Carolina, Community College Controversies Open Pandora's Box](#). But, a little later on in April, it became more personal when they also released an article that included some [less than flattering information](#) in regards to Cleveland Community College. It not only revealed some problems within the dual enrollments programs, but also brought attention to some administration issues that finally came to the forefront. The rug had been removed and all the trash was now laid bare.

Now, the County of Cleveland seems to have committed the same error, in not moving swiftly enough in cutting their problems completely and being a little more swift about it. This only gives ammunition to others who may be willing to speak up and embarrass the powers that be even more, while at the same time, revealing just how unprepared the leadership is.

Why did the trustees at the community college not stand together for the common good of the college and the students in this time of crisis? Trustees are not there to be a BFF to the president. They are there to hold the administration accountable, and as you can see with the vote count from the meeting on June 6, 2017, only 6 of the 12 trustees voted. The vote to remove Thornburg upon the hiring of an interim president, was decided 4 for and 2 against. The rest did not vote. Trustees, your main obligation is to lead, and not be a good friend to those who hold positions of leadership. As the old saying goes, if you want a friend, get yourself a dog!

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