

Joey Shaista Horn
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February 20, 2017

BY EMAIL

Williams College
Office of the President – Board of Trustees
880 Main Street
Hopkins Hall, 3rd Floor
Williamstown, MA 01267

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, I resigned from the Williams Board of Trustees last week. Your next meeting is not until April, and I know there is a good deal of incorrect or incomplete reporting on the circumstances behind my resignation. I therefore wanted to reach out to you in writing to explain my decision.

It has been my great honor to serve Williams for the last twenty years. Every aspect of my work for Williams – from my service as a class agent and my involvement with alumni initiatives to my eight years as a member of the Board of Trustees – has been incredibly meaningful to me.

Unfortunately, my personal situation has made it necessary for me to step down. As some of you have been aware, my husband Ragnar and I have been involved for the last two years in a legal case in Norway relating to au pairs we hired to help us manage our two-career family.

The coverage of this case by Norwegian tabloids, fueled by the country's politics, has been extremely sensational and has taken a number of facts out of context – including admittedly insensitive remarks I made in a private electronic chat conversation with a friend that are not relevant to the legal proceedings.

I want to be sure this tabloid coverage does not obscure the essential facts that Ragnar and I acknowledged from the start: we employed two au pairs when Norway's laws restrict each household to just one and we allowed paperwork to be filed suggesting that one au pair would be working for our neighbors. At the time that the au pairs were hired, we had just moved back to Norway from Singapore. Both of us were working full-time while raising three teenagers, and I was traveling about half the time, including spending long stretches in

New York after my mother became seriously ill. It's undisputed that we paid the au pairs a salary above the standard set for au pairs by the government, and that we provided them with room and board in a comfortable and independent living space. But Ragnar and I made a mistake, for which we are sorry.

The Court rejected a number of the allegations made against us, but found that the au pairs worked 40 hours a week when Norway's au pair regulations permit only 30 hours. Importantly, the Court rejected a number of civil claims brought by a lawyer for two of the au pairs. They sought \$125,000 in damages; the Court awarded just about \$4,000 to only one of the au pairs. However, in what we believe is a grossly disproportionate act given the nature of the violation, the court ultimately sentenced Ragnar and me to five months each in prison and assessed a fine of \$45,000.

We are appealing the judgment given our acknowledgment from the beginning of the mistake we made and the facts that the Court found in our favor. It's important to note that we agree with the essential facts recited by the court. We do not agree, however, with the Court's legal conclusions and do not believe that the penalty is a just or reasonable punishment. The sentence is suspended pending the result of the appeal, which we expect will be heard some time in 2018.

It was with great regret that I resigned as a Trustee last week, but I thought it was necessary to reduce the chances that my legal case would disrupt the important work the Board is doing on behalf of the college. The best interests of Williams have always been my primary concern and remain so today.

Again, it has been an honor to work with all of you and to serve the interests of this wonderful institution. Thank you for giving me that great privilege.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joey Shaista Horn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Joey Shaista Horn '87