

RIDER UNIVERSITY CHAPTER
American Association of University Professors
2083 Lawrenceville Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-3099
[609-896-0092](tel:609-896-0092) email aaup@rider.edu

Contact: David Lerner [\(917\) 612-5657](tel:917-612-5657); David@riptidecommunications.com

**OUTRAGE OVER RIDER UNIVERSITY'S PLAN TO SELL LEGENDARY
CHOIR COLLEGE TO CHINESE FOR-PROFIT COMPANY WITH NO
EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Future of Westminster College Choir Threatened by Administration's Efforts to Make
Windfall Profit at the Expense of Premier American Music School*

Faculty, Students, Alumni Mobilize to Save WCC

February 26, 2018, Lawrenceville, NJ – News that Rider University has named a Chinese company that only two months ago changed its name from a construction business to a for-profit educational company and whose stock price has plummeted over 42% in the last two years as the prospective buyer for the world famous music school, Westminster Choir College (WCC), has stoked increased outrage from the college community, including faculty, students, donors and alumni.

The proposed sale has been a highly controversial issue at the University and is the subject of 3 lawsuits from key stakeholders in the WCC.

On February 21 Rider University's Board of Trustees announced that Kaiwen Education Technology Co., Ltd, until this year Jiangsu Zhongtai Bridge Steel Structure co. Ltd., a company that helps build steel bridges, is the proposed purchaser of the College including its valuable 23 acre campus in Princeton. The prospective buyer owns Kaiwen Academies - two Chinese K-12 academies established only 2-3 years ago. Neither the buyer nor Kaiwen Academies has any experience in not-for-profit higher education.

“It is completely beyond belief that the buyer has the ability, not to mention the desire, to run a world-renowned choir college,” said, Elizabeth Scheiber (Professor of French and Italian and President of the of AAUP). She pointed out that in its own announcement of the proposed deal; Kaiwan Educational Technology, Inc. stated that it is purchasing the college to increase its own profitability. “We believe that goal can only be accomplished by stripping Westminster of its assets, laying off faculty and administrators and then closing it and converting the land and buildings to other purposes, further evidence that Rider’s administration, with approval of Rider’s Board of Trustees, is acting in complete disregard of both its legal and moral obligations to Westminster Choir College,” said Jeffrey Halpern (Associate Professor of Sociology and Contract Administrator of the AAUP)

In addition, Arthur Taylor Professor of Information Systems and member of the AAUP Executive committee charged that Rider's administration is not being honest about the size of the potential deal pointing out that the net transaction for any sale of Westminster must account for the significant assets Rider would relinquish, including \$20 million of Rider's already small endowment, at least \$8 million in a mortgage on the property that will have to be paid back before any sale is complete and the costs relating to the sale itself. "President Dell'Omo's boast of a \$40 million deal would be reduced by at least \$29 million, not to mention the cost of the very expensive ongoing litigation concerning the sale. At best the net proceeds from such a transaction would be in the range of \$10 to \$12 million dollars," said Taylor

The proposed sale has also led to a loss of public confidence in Rider, a collapse in donations to Westminster, and a general decline in morale among all of Rider's stakeholders. Elizabeth Scheiber said: "We believe that for the good of the institution, the Board of Trustees must rescind its decision to sell Westminster and take steps to restore confidence in Rider's institutional leadership. We remain ready and willing to work with Rider's Board of Trustees to find a way forward that does not ignore the academic mission of the institution and destroys the culture gem, which is Westminster Choir College."