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Date: April 15, 2019 at 5:26:58 PM EDT

To: "Gerard-clancy@utulsa.edu" <Gerard-clancy@utulsa.edu>

Subject: Letter from a TU supporter about the changes recently announced

President Gerard Clancy
University of Tulsa
800 S. Tucker Drive
Tulsa, OK 74104

Dear President Clancy:

I write as a University of Tulsa parent and supporter to express my disappointment over the recently-announced decision to downgrade the status and breadth of the liberal arts at TU. TU and Tulsa have a special place in our hearts because our daughter and son-in-law live in Tulsa and each received two degrees from your institution. We are fans of Tulsa as a city, so much so that we purchased a townhouse near downtown recently and plan to spend part of every year there in retirement.

As someone who works in higher education, I have followed TU with great interest for the last 15 years, and I have recommended that high school and college students I meet consider TU as a place for undergraduate and graduate study. As a sports fan I have cheered TU teams on at events at home and away, including at several bowl games. We also faithfully give a modest amount each year to support TU, which until this week we had been excited to call the Alma Mater of our daughter and her husband.

Before I set out briefly what disappointed us about the "re-imagining" that announced this week, let me say that I understand well the financial challenges facing higher education and I have some idea of the issues facing TU, which I recognize could not sustain the many commitments that the institution has made over the last decade and more. But whatever cuts were necessary, they did not need to be paired with an organizational reform and marketing roll-out that any outside observer would conclude relegates the role of the liberal arts at TU to a second-tier status. I recognize that most liberal arts programs will remain, and some may thrive, but that will be harder when the message you are sending to prospective students, parents, prospective and current faculty, and opinion leaders in higher education is that the central mission of the institution is professional or pre-professional education and that you are no longer a full-service university.

Let me say that I am no ivory-tower intellectual: when I saw that many of our majors in Political Science at Stetson were no longer going to law school, I spearheaded an effort to introduce a Public Management major, which drew on strengths in our Department as well as our School of Business and Department of Environmental Science and Studies. Believe me, as a parent, I get the need to prepare students for lives of work. But they also need to be prepared to live rich

and full lives, which are often grounded in majors in the liberal arts. My wife, for example, did a major in French literature and went on to Yale Law School, and has just retired this month from a very successful legal practice. She could not imagine her life without the broadening impact of her study in France and her knowledge of French literature.

How can I now recommend TU to curious high school students who don't yet know what path they'd like to pursue in life, or to graduate students trained in the liberal arts who are looking to start a career? Even at a relatively poor institution like my own, whose endowment is one-quarter that of TU's, we have separate departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies, with 11 faculty members between them, and majors in each area. And what are those interested in TU going to think about the flat and wholly unimaginative language chosen to convey the supposedly exciting new changes: a program of "University Studies" and a "Professional Super College"? TU can do better than this; TU deserves better than this.

We may disagree about the appropriate emphasis on the liberal arts vs professional or pre-professional education in a modern university. I hope we can agree, however, that Tulsa's constituencies extend beyond those attracted for practical or ideological reasons to STEM-based and professionally-based education. May I encourage you in future communications on the University's "re-imagining" to recognize the central contributions of the liberal arts to a TU education and to do so in language that is worthy of a top-tier American university.

Go TU!

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Huskey
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