SOCIETY FOR CINEMA & MEDIA STUDIES
640 Parrington Oval • Wallace Old Science Hall #300 • Norman, Oklahoma 73019-3060 US
405.325.8075 • scms-office@ou.edu

SCMS joins in Multi-Society Statement on Proposed Cuts at the University of Tulsa

The undersigned associations urge the University of Tulsa to reconsider and rescind its recent recommendations calling for the elimination of undergraduate majors in philosophy, religion, theater, musical theater, music, languages, law, and of several graduate and doctoral programs, including those in anthropology, fine arts, history, and women's and gender studies and to eliminate undergraduate minors in ancient languages and classical studies.

The University of Tulsa appears to relegate liberal arts programs to a supporting role in a new university focus on pre-professional and vocational programs. There is much convincing evidence that college graduates can be expected to change careers—not just jobs, but careers— several times in their working lives. By focusing on preparation only for a very few careers and ignoring evidence of the career-enhancing value of humanities and social science majors, University of Tulsa administrators restrict opportunities for their students and reinforce the notion that higher education should focus on workforce preparation rather than preparing lifelong learners who can use their educations to pursue a range of careers. We are especially concerned about the effect of such a message on first-generation students and students of modest means, who may be discouraged from pursuing a major in a humanities or social sciences field in the mistaken impression that such a major cannot prepare them for career success.

A true commitment to the liberal arts allows for deep study in the liberal arts and does not see them merely as context and background for pre-professional studies. We encourage the university to retain its commitment to the programs in question--programs that develop students' capacity for critical thought, evaluative judgment of values, and the means to grapple with the cultural, linguistic, and visual dimensions of a shared world.

Faculty members at the university have expressed serious concern about the lack of meaningful opportunities for consultation and input into the university's deliberative process that generated these recommendations. We urge President Clancy and Provost Levit to follow the recommendations of the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences and revisit the planning process, including full representation from all departments and examining all applicable data about the value of the programs that will be affected by the plan.

We would be happy to provide research assistance to the university in its efforts to understand the post-graduation value of degrees in the fields our associations represent.

Thank you for your consideration.

American Anthropological Association
American Comparative Literature Association
American Historical Association
American Musicological Society
American Philosophical Association
American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
Archaeological Institute of America
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Medieval Academy of America
Modern Language Association of America
National Communication Association
Rhetoric Society of America
Society of Architectural Historians
Society of Biblical Literature
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Classical Studies
Society for Ethnomusicology

2 May 2019