

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

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Center for Borderlands and  
Transcultural Studies  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9410  
Phone: (805) 893-4505  
Fax: (805) 893-7671  
<http://www.history.ucsb.edu>

May 1, 2019

Gerry Clancy, President  
Janet Levit, Provost  
Frederick Dowart, Trustee  
Amy Freiberger, Alumni Relations

As one whose career in the private sector, academy, and research centers spans four decades and roles as entrepreneur, faculty member, administrator, and executive, I write with concern about the process, outcomes, and fallout with your “True Commitment” restructuring plan for the University of Tulsa. I fully understand that institutions must be flexible and able to adapt to evolving threats and opportunities. They must do so, however, with their core mission in mind and the learned participation of those who implement that mission on a daily basis. You state the principles beneath your mission clearly: literacy in the sciences, humanities, and arts; critical thinking and clear communication, positive roles in chosen professions and careers, ethical behavior in daily affairs, and responsible citizenship, service, and leadership. Unfortunately, the process by which “True Commitment” was crafted and announced does not reflect the very principles to which TU aspires.

The very notion of a “university” requires simultaneous breadth and depth in the student experience, and has been a hallmark of TU since its founding in 1894. “True Commitment” hollows out this experience by reducing the variety of liberal arts disciplines and the intensity with which students absorb them. The process by which “True Commitment” was crafted lacked critical thinking and clear communication and made a travesty of the tradition of shared governance in university affairs. Finally, the focus on creating “professionals” rather than the well-rounded, thoughtful citizens at the center of your core values reduces TU to a glorified (and expensive) trade school. Your “university studies” general education curriculum evokes a bare-minimum educational experience, not a first-rate immersion in critical thinking and expression. Finally, the fact that “True Commitment” was crafted behind closed doors, with participants bound by non-disclosure agreements, is anything but ethical behavior in daily affairs.

I encourage you to suspend implementation of “true commitment” and open the doors of deliberation to your dedicated faculty and staff—the very people who have built TU’s outstanding profile in higher education.

Sincerely, and with all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James F. Brooks".

Dr. James F. Brooks  
Professor of History and Anthropology  
Co-Director, Public History Program  
Editor, *The Public Historian*