

Dear President Clancy, Provost Levit, and TU Board of Trustees,

We are a group of TU alumni. We graduated in different years with different majors. Yet, we are united by our concern regarding the planned changes to our alma mater.

We understand that some change is necessary. We share your desire to see TU flourish. However, given the planned severity of cuts in some departments, the novel reorganization of the College of Arts and Sciences, and as yet unanswered questions regarding the methodology of selecting programs for elimination, we cannot have confidence that these announced changes are necessary or advisable.

Our specific concerns are numerous, but the following are the highest among them.

Firstly, the reduction of the philosophy and religion majors into a combined minor calls into question both the future availability of courses in those subjects and also the viability of the Honors Program. Philosophy and religion are foundational subjects, and many students not in the majors take courses in these fields. The planned reduction will presumably narrow the number of course offerings, depriving many students of a critical opportunity to embark on a thorough observation of life itself.

Furthermore, we are concerned that having a single minor will make it difficult to recruit and retain well-respected faculty in these areas.

Additionally, although the University has indicated some intention to maintain the Honors Program, we are unconvinced that it will be viable in coming years given financial cuts to the program itself and the reduction in those departments that provide a disproportionate number of its professors.

Secondly, the evisceration of the Department of Languages and associated interdisciplinary programs is perplexing given the administration's goal of making TU more prepared for an interconnected and globalized world. Chinese appears to have no backing beyond a minor. Russian appears to be eliminated entirely. Even French and German are apparently losing their upper-level courses beyond study-abroad programs. These language programs are valuable to a well-rounded, globally-oriented student populus.

Our concerns are not restricted to cut programs. The reorganization within the Henry Kendall College of Arts and Sciences into four divisions causes concern about the future goals of more traditional programs. By emphasizing the interdisciplinary aspects of traditional majors and potentially dividing departments into one of four divisions, we are concerned that even those majors that have been maintained will lose their character.

Tailoring these new divisions to "address cross-cutting contemporary issues" might actually make students less prepared for the future. There are indeed new challenges facing

humanity. However, emphasizing the contemporary risks neglecting the timeless. Emerging challenges are not isolated from the past and are rarely, if ever, unique. As former students we recognize that our educations benefited from the depth of our classes as well as the breadth.

Furthermore, we are skeptical that the challenges of the 2020s will necessarily be the same as those of succeeding decades. We are concerned that a program immersing students in problems of “the now” will leave students increasingly ill-prepared to confront challenges arising after graduation.

We find the language of the division “Humanities & Social Justice” troublesome. Perhaps it is unintentional, but framing academic disciplines as relating to social justice signals an intent to turn traditional disciplines into mechanisms for pushing a particular agenda. “Social Justice” is an inherently ideological term that we fear will both politicize traditional academic disciplines and encourage the neglect of disciplines not directly related to contemporary challenges.

Finally, because of numerous allegations from professors that the data allegedly supporting the need for changes is inaccurate, we cannot have confidence that these changes are warranted. President Clancy’s statement that the PPRC “wasn’t budget control” and “did not see money at all” only further confuses us as to the motivation behind the cuts.

Had these changes been in place when we attended TU, we believe it would have been detrimental to our educational experience. We are saddened to believe that with these changes future students, including those outside of the directly affected programs, will receive a lower quality education than we did. For this reason, we urge your reconsideration of the announced changes and a fuller, more transparent engagement with the faculty in order to secure TU’s educational and financial sustainability.

With respect but severe concerns,

Dolores Duke, 1961
Judith Welham, 1965
Ralph Tucker, 1974
Virginia DeMerritt Schumpert, 1974
Kevin Byrne, 1975
Melissa Whiting, 1978
Julie Giovannetti, 1988
Jamie (Osterhout) James, 1989
Steven D. James, 1989
Anne Glidewell Bridgforth, 1990
Mary Fitzgerald, 1990
Frank Conatser, 1990

Melissa Schiavone, 1991
Mari Ramsey, 1991
Holly (Conner) Kyner, 1991
Karen Kuchar Karsten, 1992
Kim Mooney Koch, 1992
Chris Burnham, 1993
Matthew Oberrieder, 1993
Ashleigh Siegfried Williams, 1998
Wendy Benford, 1998
Brian Surratt, 1998
Shannon (Hill) Zuercher, 1999
Amber Tait Litwack, 2001

Emily Tallant, 2002
Julianne Romanello, 2003
Samuel King, 2003
Justin B. Jacobs, 2003
Julianne Hand, 2004
Megan (Decker) Desmarais, 2005
Julie Ward, 2005
Grace Baldrige Carnes, 2005
Nicholas Carnes, 2006
Brigid DeCoursey Bondoc, 2006
Kevin Pearson, 2008
J. Matthew Huculak, 2008
Andy Trevathan, 2008
Katie Baker, 2009
Andrew Pratt, 2009
C. S. Day, 2010
Elena "Lanie" Williams Hubbard, 2010
James Ryan Tognazzini, 2011
Garrett Gibson, 2011
Timothy J. Orr, Ph.D., 2012
Catherine Roberts, 2012
Alexandra Braun, 2012
Amber Drew, 2012
Lydia Cheng, 2013
Teresa Morales, 2013
Carly Putnam, 2013
Kristen L. Marangoni, Ph.D., 2013
Leanna Duncan, 2013
Malia Castillo Fields, 2013
Cara A. Dublin, 2013
Kimberly Poff, 2014
Britelle Smith, 2014
Wendy Voss, 2014
Joshua Pauls, 2014
Michael Paraskevas, 2014
J. Christopher Proctor, 2014
Christopher O'Neal, 2014
Jeffrey Wilson, 2014
Maria Sudibjo, 2014
Magdalena Sudibjo, 2014
Elizabeth Cohen, 2014
Alyssa Burscough, 2014
Conor Fellin, 2015

Tara Moses, 2015
Hope Forsyth, 2015
Lily Clough Branstetter, 2015
Amritha Harikumar, 2015
Kaitlyn Ptacek, 2015
Katherine Boul Svejkosky, 2015
David Chandler, Ph.D., 2015
Ryan Fox, 2015
Kelly Bezan, 2015
Baris Gurun, 2016
Sara Douglas, 2016
Abigail Gschwend Harris, 2016
Joshua Rodriguez, 2016
Destiny Hrcir Womack, 2016
Fraser Kastner, 2016
Heather Ryan, 2016
Walker M. Womack, 2016
Christina Rardin, 2016
Luke Lehman, 2016
Brennen VanderVeen, 2017
Josiah Alexander, 2017
Ronald Curtis, 2017
Jessica Pongonis, 2017
Andrew Trac, 2017
Morgan Jackson, 2017
Seth Blair, 2017
Lauren E. Kesterson, 2018
Kayleigh Thesenvitz, 2018
John Turner, 2018
John Talmage, 2018
Carlie Wiseley, 2018
Tristan Loveless, 2018
Kyle Crutchfield, 2018
Jacob Patterson, 2018
Hannah Kloppenburg, 2018
Zane Mackenzie Cawthon, 2018
Heather Morgan, 2018
Sydney Herring, 2018
Daniela Rosales, 2018