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RETHINK the True Commitment Plan

steve liggett <[redacted]@yahoo.com>
To: "president@utulsa.edu" <president@utulsa.edu>

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Dear President Clancy,

I am an alum of TU and have both a BFA and MA from the School of Art there. I worked on my MA while being a single parent and appreciated the great guidance from Tom Manhart as my professor. Since my graduation in 1979 I have had the good fortune to:

- be the Resident Artist and the Director of Johnson Atelier, the Fine Arts Center for the Tulsa Park and Recreation Dept.
- teach Ceramics and Photography at Holland Hall Preparatory School
- teach Art at Riverfield Country Day School
- build Liggett Pottery to create my personal work
- established and worked with Mayfest International Children's ArtZone
- help organize and lead the Tulsa Artists' Coalition
- help organize and lead the Tulsa Center for Contemporary Art
- become the Artistic Director for Living Arts of Tulsa for 26 years
- establish and now run Liggett Studio, a Community-based Arts Organization
- help establish the Tulsa Arts District with the help of GKFF
- established and facilitated many community-based programs that have benefited many Tulsa Artists such as: El Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Arts Festival, The Tulsa ArtCar Weekend, the Living Arts Poetry Slam, eMerge Dance Festival, Champagne & Chocolate, the Living Legends Award and many others.

And so, I do not speak from a hollow lack of experience when I say that the education that I was given by Tulsa University in the area of ART has made many ripples that have benefited many others in our fair city and state. These skills have developed since my time at TU, but really started in critiques in Phillips Hall with others like me willing to discuss and philosophize about subjects like "whose job is it to market one's artwork: the artist or the gallery/museum" and "what is the difference between the ornament and the decoration?" posed by great professors like Tom Manhart. These questions, and many others, and the pondering that took place in my early career years, set me on a course that has led to not only aid in the advancement of the Arts in Tulsa and led to Tulsa now experiencing a virtual "renaissance" in the Arts, but also has contributed to the economic and development that we currently see in the Tulsa Arts District.

Your job is not an easy one - I get that! But, rather than reduce and cut programs in the Arts and Humanities at TU, it seems to me that you should reconsider and reverse your course in this "True Commitment" plan. TU is really the only graduate institution in Tulsa that has been a place for advanced learning in the Arts and it seems counter-productive to think that all of the potential future advancement in the culture of Tulsa could go on very far without leaders in the Arts and the Artists themselves getting the needed start from TU.

Many of my peers have told me that this is a terrible plan and I agree. Please reconsider and let's build a greater Arts School at TU as opposed to reducing it's cultural and economic impact on the lives of Tulsans.

Thank you for your consideration,

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