



The Society for the Study of Social Problems
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901 McClung Tower University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN 37996-0490
Phone: 865-689-1531 Fax: 865-689-1534 E-mail: sssp@utk.edu
www.sssp1.org

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April 2, 2014

President Theodora Kalikow
University of Southern Maine
96 Falmouth Street
P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104

Dear President Kalikow:

I am writing to you as the Executive Officer of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), one of the country's leading and most respected social science organizations, on behalf of the SSSP's Board of Directors, to express grave concerns about your decision to lay-off tenured and tenure-track faculty and to close academic programs on a scale rarely seen, especially in higher education. Not only does this concern us because the cuts are directed at the *raison d'être* of any institution of higher education, its academic mission, and can only result in the diminution of your institution's academic reputation and reputation as an employer, but also because we fear that it is yet one more example of the corporatization of higher education, with the liberal arts and social sciences as the principal targets.

We recognize that your university is experiencing, as many universities are, difficult financial times, but at the same time we do not understand why you are choosing to solve the problem on the backs of the faculty and, even worse, students. Surely, there are other avenues open to you or avenues you can create to avert these drastic measures. Not only will these cuts undermine your efforts to recruit students and to provide them with a quality liberal arts education, but it will make it extremely difficult for you to hire quality faculty in the future. We are especially concerned with the impact of business models on public institutions of higher education and the critical social and educational mission that they have performed for the country and world, so well and for so long. If this trend continues, only students with the means to attend private institutions will have access to a quality liberal arts education. That would be tragic for the citizens of your state and the country.

As a guardian of a public institution of higher education and the liberal arts, we are asking you to reconsider your cuts in faculty and academic programs. We do not expect it to be easy, but with so much at stake, we urge you to do what it takes to safeguard the sacred trust that was bestowed on you when you became the President of the University of Southern Maine. We would of course appreciate a response from you regarding our concerns, and hope and trust that you will take them to heart as you proceed in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D., Executive Officer
The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)

Cc: Provost Michael Stevenson
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