

July 17

USC Provost <uscprovost@usc.edu>

Dear Jacinto and other students of the Roski MFA'15 class:

President Nikias has asked that I write back to you on behalf of both us, in reply to your letter of July 16. (Mr. Roski and other trustees do not make academic decisions at our university.)

Your passion for the good of the school comes through very clearly. It is heartwarming to know of your enthusiastic dedication to the program, and your appreciation for its stellar reputation, the faculty's commitment, and the relationships you have forged,

We all share your sadness over the decision of seven students to withdraw as a group. Completing the program would have given them opportunities to continue to learn and grow as artists.

Those students' situation has been portrayed inaccurately. Dean Muhl did not break curricular and funding promises to them. She has explained that the 2014 offer letters sent to them by the school were honored in every respect, without exception. She also made the commitment that, even if the students refused to follow university policy about teaching assistantships, the school would make sure they would feel no financial impact. No curriculum changes were made after the students arrived at USC, and the only change made, months earlier, was a course substitution in the summer schedule. I'm afraid that the students were given very bad advice. We all hope that they will decide to rejoin the school in the future.

Dear Muhl and the faculty are deeply committed to strengthening the MFA program and the entire Roski School. The recent successful search for a senior Art faculty member, to start mid-year, is one of several hires under her leadership that add to the already remarkable talent of the faculty.

As your own artistic careers flourish in the years ahead, I am confident you will be able to view with pride the upward trajectory of the program, and its enhanced stature.

I thank you for writing me to explain your point of view. I wish you all the best, and welcome you to the honored ranks of Roski MFA alumni.

Sincerely,
Michael

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