

# *Pullin Piano Studio*

*Piano, Harpsichord, Organ*

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August 25, 2019

To: Board Members, University of Oklahoma Friends of Music  
Dr. Roland Barrett, Director of the School of Music at the University of Oklahoma  
Dean Mary Margaret Holt, College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma

Re: Closing of the American Organ Institute at the University of Oklahoma

Dear Friends:

Due to the recent actions of the University of Oklahoma Administration toward the American Organ Institute (AOI) at OU, I am hereby tendering my resignation as vice-president of the Friends of Music effective immediately.

The OU administration has, contrary to its various press releases and “fact sheets”, engaged in back room, secretive behavior in the dealings with both faculty/staff and the students of the AOI. There has been no transparency regarding the actions of the Administration. The only reason given for closing the AOI is financial—a slap in the face of reason.

1. Since the program’s inception, Dr. Schwandt has personally brought in donations of \$5,000,000.00 to the program prior to January, 2019.
2. Soft-funded salaries for the AOI total \$333,291.00, not \$400,000.00 as reported in the papers. Of the nine total faculty/staff, only 3.5 were paid by OU, the rest were paid from “soft” money raised by Dr. Schwandt.
3. The AOI shop, through its many activities, brings in enough revenue to completely support its program costs while at the same time providing training for all organ students.
4. The American Theatre Organ Society donates enough money to fund two Graduate Assistantships assigned to work in the Archives. One is for an organ student, the other goes to a Library student.
5. The degrees offered by this program are not one, but the following nine; a far cry from OU’s statement of “Bachelors of Music”:
  - Bachelors of Music - organ performance
  - Bachelors of Musical Arts- Organ, secondary emphasis Organ Technology
  - Bachelors of Musical Arts - Organ, secondary emphasis Theatre Organ
  - Masters of Music - Organ performance
  - Masters of Music - Organ, Technology Concentration
  - Masters of Music - Organ, Church Music Concentration
  - Masters of Music - Organ, Theatre Organ Concentration
  - Doctor of Musical Arts - Organ Performance
  - Doctor of Musical Arts - Organ Church Music
6. AOI received \$1,200,000.00 this past June.
7. Dr. Schwandt raised \$6.6 million last month for an endowment to save the program; those donors were called and the monies were refused by the Administration stating the program was terminated. A request from the representative of the foundation donating \$5 million to speak to OU’s president was denied.

I was present at the student sit-in at Evans Hall on Thursday, August 22. To say I was disappointed in the run-around, evasion and lies presented to the students by the representatives of the Administration as well as the lack of support and non-answers given to students by the Dean of the College of Fine Arts is to put it mildly.

I am beyond anger at the lack of action and lack of support shown to the AOI students by Roland Barrett, Director of the School of Music.

I grieve for the loss of future musicians that would have been trained by the AOI. We need them.

I reached this decision with great reluctance. I am a founding member of this board who has served faithfully since its inception. I firmly believe in our mission of support to the students of OU's School of Music. However. Out of all the those students, there are 25 who lay claim to my support and help more than any other. Former interns of mine (at University Lutheran Church and Student Center) are finishing degrees this year not knowing how their classes will be affected (since the shop is closed how can they finish their projects?). How can I not stand with them in their fight to keep a one-of-a-kind program open? I must—I'm one of the mentors in the program.

Respectfully,

*Cindy Pullin*

President  
Norman Area Music Teachers Association (NAMTA)

Moore/Norman District Achievement Audition Chair  
Oklahoma Music Teachers Association (OMTA)

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