



# New England Humanities Consortium

*A voice for the humanities in New England*

Dr. Suresh Garimella  
President  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, VT 05405

December 15, 2020

Dear President Garimella,

I am writing, on behalf of the New England Humanities Consortium (NEHC), of which UVM is a founding member, to protest, in the strongest possible terms, the proposed elimination of and consolidation of several humanities and arts departments at the University of Vermont.

Former President Obama recently noted that the nation is in the midst of an “epistemic crisis”—even as we face a devastating pandemic and unprecedented challenges to our electoral system. We understand that all institutions of higher education face terrible decisions because of the latter two crises.

*But we also know that in order to solve the crisis of knowledge and truth eating away at the foundations of our democracy our students—and the public at large—need the lessons we learn from the study of religion, languages, arts, classics and historical preservation. We can’t understand where we come from, what we value, and how we live while ignoring historic foundations, thinkers like Lao Tzu and Plato and knowledge about the politics and wisdom of religious experience. The state of Vermont—indeed the nation—cannot lose current and future voices who reflect these global lessons and the contributions they will make to a more inclusive and diverse workforce. Without them, we are spiritually, intellectually and civically worse off.*

As noted, the University of Vermont has been a regional leader in the humanities and a founding member of the NEHC, an active consortium of public and private institutions throughout the region funding humanities research, engaging in public outreach and implementing a Mellon-funded Faculty of Color Working Group. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the

**New England Humanities Consortium**

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University of Vermont Humanities Center and an undiminished and robust slate of humanities departments at the university.

Therefore, we respectfully implore the University of Vermont to reconsider these proposals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ML', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael P. Lynch  
Director, New England Humanities Consortium  
Director, University of Connecticut Humanities Institute  
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, University of Connecticut

Darryl Harper  
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