

January 24, 2024

Dr. John Z. Kiss
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
University of North Carolina Greensboro

Dear Dean Kiss:

I write to offer my resignation as Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and as Interim Head of the Department of Anthropology, effective May 31, 2024. I take this action to protest the APR process currently underway at the University.

I have come to understand that some of the decisions made to place programs and courses on the discontinued list—specifically, the BA in Anthropology, the MA in Mathematics, the minors in Russian and Chinese, and the courses in Korean—have not been made in the fair, transparent, and collaborative way in which the University has repeatedly described the APR process. Both the BA in Anthropology and the MA in Mathematics scored in the “Meets Expectations” section of the rubric that the administration largely developed and approved. (Of course, neither minors nor individual courses were part of the APR process and were not scored in the rubric). The CAS Budget and Planning Committee did not recommend that any of these programs/courses be discontinued. And my understanding is that you also did not initially recommend that any of these programs/courses be discontinued. Rather, the provost pressured you to add these programs/courses to your list. I believe that you went along with these suggestions in the reasonable belief that to do otherwise would put other programs in the College of Arts and Sciences in danger of being added to the discontinuation list. Of course, that strategy has proved to be not entirely successful. You agreed to the discontinuation of the MA in Mathematics in the hope that the provost would not follow through on her desire to eliminate the Ph.D. in Mathematics. And yet, that program has now also been recommended for discontinuation, justified by the provost in part by the “decision” you made to discontinue the MA in Mathematics.

I have held administrative positions for 31 of my 34 years in academia (10 as a center director, 15 as a department head at two institutions, and 6+ as an associate dean), and I know egregious behavior from senior administration when I see it. When I was at the University of Southern Mississippi serving as a department head, the president of the University decided, without consulting anyone, to reorganize the University from 9 academic units to 5. While not on quite as grand a scale, I believe that the pending recommendations at UNCG to discontinue the BA in Anthropology, the graduate programs in Mathematics, and the foreign language minors and courses are equally heavy-handed and capricious, decisions made by one individual (Provost Storrs) in an unfair, nontransparent, and uncollaborative way. Certainly not a model of shared governance in an academic environment and not actions worthy of an institution like the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

The date of my resignation is made to allow the College time to find a replacement and not have that person start in the middle of a semester. My hope is that such a departure date will minimize any problems for CAS administration. However, if you need/want me to vacate these positions earlier, I will completely understand that decision.

In closing, let me say that I have enjoyed my time in the CAS Dean's Office, and that can be attributed in no small part to your leadership, your friendship, and your demonstration of the core values that are essential to a healthy academic environment.

Respectfully,

Charles C. Bolton
Professor of History
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Interim Head, Department of Anthropology

cc: Greg O'Brien, department head, History
Anne Parsons, Faculty Senate representative, History
Mark Elliott, chapter president, UNCG AAUP
Faculty and staff of the Department of Anthropology