

Workhouse Founder Adam Nelson Leads Pro Bono Campaign for Transparency Following University of the Arts Closure

Open Letter from University of the Arts Alumnus Adam Nelson Demands Accountability and Justice

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, June 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a shocking turn of events, the [University of the Arts](#), a beloved private nonprofit institution in Philadelphia, announced its sudden closure effective June 7, 2024. The announcement followed the withdrawal of the university's accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education ([MSCHE](#)), citing a failure to comply with accreditation procedures and inform the commission of its closure plans in a timely manner.



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*Adam Nelson, Founder & CEO,
Workhouse*

MSCHE's letter to the university on May 31 detailed non-compliance issues, necessitating immediate action. University officials, including now-resigned President Kerry Walk, expressed regret over the sudden closure, highlighting long-standing financial struggles exacerbated by unforeseen financial challenges.

Adam Nelson, Founder & CEO of [Workhouse](#) and an alumnus of the University of the Arts (Theatre, 91'), has launched a pro bono public relations campaign to ensure that the truth behind the university's closure is uncovered. Nelson's commitment is to provide the necessary resources and support for investigative journalism to delve into the mismanagement and decisions that led to this

tragic outcome.

“The recent actions by the University of the Arts' leadership are not just catastrophic failures; they are a shocking betrayal of trust and a staggering display of negligence,” Nelson stated. “This isn’t just ordinary aid; it is an essential intervention. Workhouse's commitment to providing pro bono PR services is crucial in bringing transparency to the situation and holding those responsible accountable. Investigative journalism must be relentless in uncovering the truth.”

The planned town hall meeting, which was intended to address the concerns of students, faculty, and staff, was abruptly cancelled 10 minutes before its appointed time, further fueling outrage and calls for accountability.

To draw a clear descriptive, Nelson penned an open letter in order to shed light on the mismanagement that led to the university's sudden closure. It calls for a thorough investigation and can be read in full here:

A Betrayal of Trust: The Shocking Mismanagement and Sudden Closure of the University of the Arts // An Open Letter from Alumnus Adam Nelson

The recent actions by the University of the Arts' leadership— including the recently resigned President Kerry Walk, Board Chair Judson Aaron, and the Board of Trustees—are not just catastrophic failures; they are a shocking betrayal of trust and a staggering display of negligence. The sudden announcement of the university's closure, coupled with the cowardly cancellation of a crucial town hall meeting, reveals an administration devoid of integrity, competence, and accountability.

First, the financial mismanagement is not only inexcusable—it is outright scandalous. After



wrapping up a \$67 million capital campaign in 2022 and holding a valuable portfolio of historic real estate in Center City Philadelphia, how did this administration manage to plunge the university into such dire straits? This is not mere oversight; it is an unmitigated failure. The continued acceptance of summer school and 2024-25 tuition fees up until the last moment is an act of brazen deceit bordering on potential fraud. It raises serious questions about the transparency and honesty of the university's financial dealings.

The communication breakdown is equally reprehensible. Learning about the university's closure through the media rather than directly from the administration itself is an insult to the faculty, staff, and students who have dedicated their lives to this institution. The abrupt cancellation of the town hall meeting intended to provide answers is a blatant admission of the leadership's cowardice. This is not just a failure to communicate; it is a deliberate effort to avoid accountability and transparency.

Moreover, the decision to ignore alumni and leave students and staff—many of whom had just signed long-term leases—in the lurch is a stunning display of contempt. The leadership's failure to rally alumni, who might have saved the institution, reveals a disconnect so profound it borders on the surreal. This isn't just a failure; it's a betrayal of Shakespearean proportions.

Workhouse, Founder & CEO, Adam Nelson (Alumni, Theatre, 91') has undertaken a critical mission to ensure accurate reporting and a thorough investigation into this debacle is steadfast. This isn't just ordinary aid; it is an essential intervention. Workhouse's commitment to providing pro bono PR services is crucial in bringing transparency to the situation and holding those responsible accountable. Investigative journalism must be relentless in uncovering the truth. The financial mismanagement, potential embezzlement, and academic oversight failures must be investigated thoroughly. The state attorney general should be involved immediately to oversee the proper management and dispersal of the university's assets before the current leadership does more damage. The Governor should ensure The Avenue of the Arts, where multiple university buildings reside—and the city's main artery—isn't boarded up as a result of the institution's loss.

The leadership of the University of the Arts has not merely failed; they have orchestrated a tragedy that has betrayed the institution, its community, and its legacy. The vague mention of an "urgent financial crisis" in the closure announcement demands full and immediate transparency. The magnitude and nature of this crisis must be disclosed, and those responsible must be held accountable.

Sizable tuition costs, often paid with the hard-to-find funds from artists who pour their souls into their craft despite uncertain financial futures, have supported every aspect of the University of the Arts mission. These dollars are an investment in the dreams and ambitions of a creative student body whose unique visions are invaluable. Every single cent must be accounted for.

This is not just a call for answers; it is a demand for justice. The University of the Arts deserves

better than the leadership that has brought it to this point. This failure is a stark reminder that higher education administrations must be held to the highest standards of accountability and transparency. The future of the University of the Arts—and its community's trust—depends on it.

Investigative journalists who wish to learn more about the sudden closure of The University of the Arts in Philadelphia and the events unfurling in real time are invited to contact Workhouse via Nelson@workhousepr.com

Adam Nelson

WORKHOUSE

+1 212-645-8006

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