

[APUO translation of the Director of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies' open letter]

Ottawa – October 14, 2025

Mr. Jacques Beauvais
Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs

Mr. Provost,

The Faculty of Arts, to which I have belonged for over twenty years, is about to embark on a process of restructuring its departments and programs. In fact, my academic unit, the Department of Classics and Religious Studies, has just learned that its honours program in Greek and Roman studies will now be put on hold. The previous year, the master's program in late antiquities suffered the same fate. It seems that we are at the beginning of a process that will profoundly change the nature of the Faculty of Arts and, by extension, its place in the University of Ottawa's overall functioning.

Before going any further with this restructuring project, I believe it would be useful and necessary to ask ourselves about the place of the humanities in our institution. After all, it is essentially the Faculty of Arts that embodies the humanist tradition at the University of Ottawa.

That is why, Mr. Provost, I am addressing you, as the person responsible for academic affairs, **to ask you to set up a commission to study the place of the humanities at the University of Ottawa.** At a time when technology is rapidly transforming the way we learn, and when a certain definition of interdisciplinarity, the new buzzword in academia, is calling into question the identity of certain disciplines, it is important to remember the fundamental role of the humanities in education and give them the place they deserve.

This committee, if you agree to establish it, would bring together representatives from your office and the office of the Vice-President, Research, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Marc Charron, faculty members (full-time and part-time), and representatives from student associations. My colleagues in the Faculty of Arts, whose names are listed at the end of this letter, join me in inviting you to reflect on the place of the humanities at the University of Ottawa.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Dominique Côté

Director of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies