

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Education to hold hearings to examine the sudden closing of the University of the Arts (UArts). The impact this sudden closing will have on the Philadelphia higher education system and most importantly the negative impacts on the current student body and staff.

WHEREAS, Founded in the 1870's, the University of the Arts is one of the oldest schools for art and music in the country; and

WHEREAS, After the School of Theater was established in 1983, the institution became the first performing arts college in Pennsylvania to offer a comprehensive range of majors in music, dance and theater. This institution eventually became the College of Performing Arts of the University of the Arts; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, the Philadelphia Museum College of Art and the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts merged to become the Philadelphia Colleges of the Arts, gaining university status as the University of the Arts in 1987. In 1996, the university added a third academic division, the College of Media and Communication. In 2011, the College of Media and Communication merged with the College of Art and Design to become the College of Art, Media & Design; and

WHEREAS, After several years of declining enrollment and due to increasing financial challenges, it was abruptly announce on May 31, 2024 by university president Kerry Walk <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerry_Walk> that the school would close on June 7; and

WHEREAS, This announcement caught many by surprise, including current students, staff, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_States_Commission_on_Higher_Education>, the university's accreditor, and the City of Philadelphia. The Middle States Commission withdrew the university's accreditation the day after the announced closure. Then on June 4, 2024, University President Walk announced her resignation after canceling an information meeting for faculty and students the night before; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, authorizes the Committee on Education to hold hearings to explore the sudden closing of the University of the Arts (UArts) and the negative impacts on the current student body, staff and the higher education system in Philadelphia.