



Northeastern University

July 9, 2018

Gloretta Baynes



Dear Gloretta,

We are writing to follow up on our meeting with you and your invitees on Friday, July 6. As we discussed, this meeting was a continuation of our ongoing communications with you about the hazardous conditions at Northeastern's Atherton Street warehouse, where the African American Masters Artists in Residence Program (AAMARP) has occupied two floors of space completely free of charge.

As you know, these hazardous conditions—and our serious concerns for the safety of artists and visitors in the building—were the subject of our June 28 letter to you, and a Northeastern-led inspection and meeting with you on April 11.

As we discussed, the university must conduct upgrades and repairs to the building as a whole. Many of these upgrades relate to code and life safety systems. The additional inherent risks posed by work of artists in the building, coupled with the dangerous conditions created by the AAMARP artists on the third and fourth floors, necessitate that the university take immediate action to protect life and safety—not only for the occupants of the building, but the public and potential first responders.

As the university outlined clearly in its June 28 letter to you, many of the safety risks are the result of AAMARP occupants modifying the interior of the building, including the construction of "false walls" made from flammable materials, and plumbing that fails to meet code and poses additional fire risk. The overall risks to safety in the building have been identified by multiple parties, including the university's Facilities department, fire safety officer, our insurance carrier, and a third-party professional engineering firm that we contracted for a more in-depth assessment of the conditions.

To reiterate our recent discussions, we would like to make it clear that AAMARP is not being singled out in any way. Northeastern professors and artists, with no AAMARP affiliation, must also cease their activities and vacate the building while major renovations are completed.

While we believe it is important for the building to be vacated as soon as possible to allow for a full, unimpeded assessment and necessary repairs to take place, we have decided to honor your request to extend the deadline beyond this Friday, July 13. We do this out of a willingness to work collaboratively with you, and in the same spirit that Northeastern has allowed AAMARP to take advantage of rent-free space and other support for more than 40 years.

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Nevertheless, safety continues to be our top priority and we must now insist that AAMARP vacate the building by Tuesday, July 31. We are more than willing to assist artists with the removal of their belongings to alternative locations, presumably other studios or their places of residence. If such assistance is needed, please let us know well prior to July 31 so that arrangements can be made.

In the interim, the university will enforce the 8:00 am – 6:00 pm hours of the building. And as we discussed in Friday's meeting, there can be no further programming or public gatherings in the building. Although we have continuously repeated the no smoking restrictions with AAMARP, we must again insist on no smoking, candles or other sources of ignition in the building. This includes wood burning activities and cooking. The focus should be on packing up and evacuating the building. Further, all locks for which Northeastern does not have a key must be removed to permit immediate access in the event of an emergency.

Despite your assurances to the contrary, we remain concerned that artists—and perhaps their acquaintances—have been residing in the building overnight. As you know full well, the building is *not* zoned for residential use, yet we have seen ample evidence of people using some of the makeshift interior rooms as living space. In fact, public records obtained from the Boston Police Department indicate that, over the past 15 years, a total of nine people (two of whom remain AAMARP artists) have listed the warehouse (76 Atherton Street, Boston) as their home address. This is completely unacceptable.

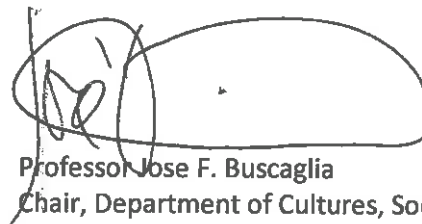
Your concern for the welfare of the artists is both evident and admirable. Therefore, we can only assume that you would not take any actions—or engage in any intransigence—that would put their health and safety at risk.

As we have reiterated to you in repeated occasions, the university remains committed to furthering our historic relationship in line with the mission and program of AAMARP. Once the space has been fully vacated, we will gladly continue our ongoing discussions geared toward strengthening, expanding and reimagining our historic partnership.

Sincerely,



Sonya M. Ross, CPCU, ARM
Director, Risk Services



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