



February 12, 2013

An open letter to the 24 members of Florida State University's animation and digital arts inaugural class in West Palm Beach:

Dear students,

Four years ago, Florida unfortunately made a bad bet. It invested \$20 million in the promises of a California film company in what is now regarded as one of the worst economic disasters this state has ever seen. And despite good intentions, one of our state universities was tangled up in the mess.

As we understood it, Florida State University's partnership with the Digital Domain Media Group in West Palm Beach was supposed to provide you, the students, with a seamless path to digital film careers via the Digital Domain Institute. It was supposed to spur economic development for the area and give Florida a foothold in a lucrative national industry. But, like the rest of Florida, FSU saw its promises broken when Digital Domain declared bankruptcy and retreated from the state late last year.

Now FSU has accepted the recommendation of a Board of Governors committee to move the program back to its main campus. We want to make certain you understand how we came to that recommendation, as well as assure you that those who wish to complete the program in West Palm Beach will absolutely be accommodated, as FSU works to transition it back to Tallahassee.

The Board of Governors has the constitutional responsibility to regulate and manage the State University System as a whole, and we take that job seriously. Hundreds of thousands of students just like you have entrusted us with ensuring that their investments in higher education pay off. You have all made a substantial investment in your futures—even more so than the majority of our other students. It is our duty to ensure that your investment provides a commensurate return.

Understandably, FSU has made a strong case on behalf of the program and you, the students, for remaining in West Palm Beach. The university had high hopes for the project's success, and invested much effort into building a curriculum, recruiting faculty and seeking other partner companies to fill the gap. Likewise, the City of West Palm

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Beach has been unwavering in its support. The intentions are laudable, and the State University System shares their fervor in encouraging economic development. But, in the case of this particularly tenuous venture, investing any more would be a mistake.

After much consideration, the fact remains that the uncertainty surrounding this film program, as it exists today, makes it impossible for us to guarantee to you and future students a return for which you have paid. And that is simply unacceptable. As you work hard toward achieving your dreams, goals and aspirations, we must hold up our end of the bargain, too.

It may be difficult at this point to absorb, but trust that a tremendous amount of time, energy and research went into this decision. We will work with each of you to ensure that you are able to continue your studies without upheaval. We have no doubts you will succeed, just as we have no doubts that FSU's world-class film school in Tallahassee will continue to flourish as it has for more than 20 years.

Thank you very much for your letter. We will distribute it, with this response, to the Board of Governors.

Sincerely,



Frank T. Brogan
Chancellor