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COLLEGE OF VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Office of the Dean

City Council President Linda Morad and  
Honorable Members of the New Bedford City Council  
133 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

June 20, 2016

To the Council:

I write in support of the Proposed Home Rule Petition to establish an Arts, Culture, and Tourism Promotion Fund for the City of New Bedford from a portion of the proceeds of the hotel and lodging tax. In doing so I join Mayor Mitchell and many other civic leaders of New Bedford in furthering one of the action items first proposed by the New Bedford Creative Economy Task Force in 2008, creating a position to coordinate the diverse arts and cultural events and activities in the City. New Bedford may be unique, given its history and stature, in not already having such a position.

As noted in Mayor Mitchell's letter, the arts and culture are dynamic catalysts for economic growth and revitalization. The arts and culture are also central to promoting an engaged City that actively promotes its diverse and rich history. I was recruited in 2007 to serve as the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at the University of Dartmouth. What left a lasting impression on me was not the Brutalist architecture of the campus in Dartmouth but the beautifully re-purposed Star Store located within the Historic Downtown of New Bedford. I knew after that eventful interview that I wanted to be part of the UMD family, and to do so living within proximity of the Star Store. The creative vibrancy that was then just beginning to resonate along Purchase Street convinced me to leave the greater Chicago area.

Nine years later I still work in the Star Store, shuttling between the two campuses on the LOOP. I also own an artist's condo at the Ropeworks just across from Market Basket, two action items from the Creative Economy Task Force. And I share a large studio farther north at Hatch Street, a growing community of artists, designers and performers. Taken all together it is not surprising that New Bedford has received high rankings for creativity and livability by recognized publications such as *Atlantic Monthly*.

I recognize how important a full-time Arts and Culture Coordinator will be to the City as we position to be among the best communities in the country that reflects the collective efforts of those who work within and support the intersection of the arts and culture with commerce. All we need is a dedicated office that knits together the various entities from within the City, and then works with the Office of Marketing and Tourism to promote our creative products, performances, and collective history to the outside world.

Mayor Mitchell is correct is writing that creativity fosters meaningful opportunities for every segment of the City. Please join me in supporting the Proposed Home Rule Petition to establish an Arts, Culture, and Tourism Promotion Fund to achieve this noteworthy goal.

Sincerely,

Adrian R. Tio, Dean