

**Center For Documentary Studies
@Duke University**

The CDS Board of Directors reaffirms its support of Opeyemi Olukemi as our Executive Director and looks forward to assisting her in her efforts to build CDS into a national leader in the practice and production of documentary arts. The board acknowledges the challenges that have arisen over the past year, and appreciates the passion of the faculty, staff, and artists who have been the lifeblood of CDS for more than 30 years. At this point in the life of CDS, however, the board must take the necessary steps to ensure CDS' future success.

In 2021 a search committee comprised of CDS board members, faculty and staff conducted a national search, considered many candidates, and selected Opeyemi, because of her experience outside of higher education and for her ability to take CDS to national prominence. The board gave her the directive to review our current operations and make the changes she believed were necessary to achieve the vision the board has for CDS. Unfortunately, this review uncovered concerns than were not anticipated including substantial operational issues, budgetary shortfalls, and fundamental lapses in the legal documentation of CDS and its relationship to Duke University. These discoveries will require changes to practices, procedures, and, sadly, personnel. Furthermore, the process of discovery and restructuring is still ongoing, which the board understands has been frustrating for the entire CDS community.

While the board sympathizes with the hardship these changes have had, and likely will continue to have on many, the board also recognizes these conditions were years in the making, did not occur under Opeyemi's leadership, and are ultimately the board's responsibility to resolve. We board members share in the collective regret that many of CDS's programming staples had to go quiet during COVID-19, and more recently, have had to remain quiet during the current challenges, but the priority during this critical time must be getting CDS's collective house in order so that it can flourish again. While Peter Lange remains Chair of the CDS Board through Dec. 31, 2022, he has passed the leadership for planning for CDS's future to Barb Lee and Jon Jensen who were elected the new co-chairs during our most recent board meeting. They formally begin their roles on January 1, 2023, but have already begun to transition leadership with Peter and will continue to do so through the rest of the year.

During the coming year, under Jon and Barb's leadership, the board and the appropriate departments within Duke, will conduct a comprehensive review of the events that have transpired under Opeyemi's direction to ensure that all voices are heard, and to gain valuable insight from what has transpired. Both Opeyemi and the board want a transparent organization where stakeholders are encouraged to question and challenge leadership, and where they can expect clear answers even if they disagree with those answers. We also acknowledge that everyone in our community deserves clear, timely and respectful communication as to ongoing changes and we are committed to providing this. While members of the board realize difficult decisions remain, we see a very bright future for CDS, and encourage everyone who loves CDS to join us in working toward a future of which we can all be proud.

Sincerely,

The members of Board of Directors for The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University