

# Letter from the President

CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS  
SPRING 2024

Hello friends,

I am honored to have been called to serve CCA at this important moment in its history, and it is my pleasure to provide you with an update on my first four months in my new role.

While still relatively new, I am concurrently engaged in listening, learning, and leading—all while envisioning the bright future of the college. It feels as though I have been a part of this vibrant community for much longer than four months, and I am beginning to find my place within it.

Building on the rich legacy of those who came before me, I recognize the importance of meaningfully engaging with our diverse community of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and supporters. As I step more fully into my presidency, their collective passion and commitment to CCA's mission is an inspiration to me. Together, we are shaping art and design, not only in the Bay Area but also on a national and global scale.

I am excited to share my early observations and to outline what to expect in the months ahead. One important highlight is the opening of our expanded campus this fall, which is both physical and symbolic of CCA's intention to thrive and lead.

## Immersive learning and understanding

In my first semester as CCA's president, one of my top priorities has been to understand this beloved community. I have always admired the West Coast spirit, yet I never dreamed I would call the Bay Area home. I feel it is incumbent upon me to immerse myself in the longstanding artistic and creative communities whose threads are woven into the fabric of the college.

In December, I connected with CCA's roots: Visiting the Oakland campus gave me an opportunity to honor our college's rich history and experience a chapter that many hold close to their hearts. Walking through the main thoroughfare of the campus, observing the mural wall, glimpsing the old dormitories, and peering into the library, I couldn't help but envision the vibrant energy that once filled those spaces. As we navigate this transition, the history of our past will help guide our future as we weave threads of this legacy into our continued CCA story. We are presented with the opportunity to create something entirely new as one unified campus—a process akin to stitching ourselves into one fabric, one CCA.

Here in San Francisco, I have also visited classrooms, studios, and campus communal spaces, as well as talked with students about what inspires and moves them. Their boundless creativity and passion for making art that matters and designing for our collective future leaves me in awe and pinching myself to know that I have the privilege of serving this community.

On January 23, we held our inaugural All Community Assembly, the first of its kind in our collective memory, which was widely attended by a cross section of CCA faculty, students, and staff in the center of the Nave. During the gathering I asked: What are you most proud of about CCA, and if you could change one thing, what would it be? Answers sparked many ideas and opportunities for additional dialogue to come together around some of the urgent issues of our present moment.

As I immerse myself in conversations about the CCA of today, it is clear that this community is focused on and excited about the CCA of tomorrow. I have received thoughtful and incredible ideas from a wide spectrum of the community regarding the college's future.

Each interaction gives me hope for what this community can build together.



California College of the Arts welcomes David Howse as its 10th president.



A close-up of Individualized Studies student Jaya King's work at the Disability Is Diversity Week exhibition (top left).

The 2024 Barclay Simpson MFA Award Exhibition featured the work of award recipients Lynse Cooper, Kelley Finley, Dottie Lo Bue, and Yue Xiang (bottom left).

President Howse meets with students in the Illustration studios during his campus listening tour (bottom right).





## Our future is just beginning

As the campus gathered for a heartfelt farewell to the Oakland campus in 2022, a rare white dove appeared, I have been told, blessing the gathering with its presence. Symbolizing hope and new beginnings, the dove led the campus community, quite literally, out of the campus gate and symbolically toward our new home here in San Francisco.

Now in 2024, I am excited to announce that our future is here. Our expanded campus opens for students, staff, faculty, and the wider community of friends, neighbors, and collaborators this fall, adding over 80,000 square feet of all-new maker spaces, studios, classrooms, and exhibition spaces.

One of the most significant transformations will be how individuals approach our campus. A grand new entrance on Hooper Street, directly across from Founders Hall, will greet all with an open courtyard. From there, you can veer left into the lower level of our new building, home to the Resource Hub, and continue forward to explore the Machine Shops, Ceramics Lab, Metal Shop, and expansive maker yards. Alternatively, ascend a broad staircase to reach an upper level boasting sweeping vistas of San Francisco and lush green spaces. Or you can turn right to access a new entryway leading to the Nave. A newly constructed bridge links the existing main building to the upper level of our expanded campus. Can you imagine it?



President Howse takes a hard-hat tour of the campus expansion, set to be completed by the time students return this fall.

I am grateful to my predecessor, Steve Beal, and our dedicated Trustees for their vision. This is all possible thanks to them and to the generous support of our donors. Their advocacy for art and design education and their commitment to the Maker/Meets/Future campaign helped make this a reality.

We are planning for a public opening in October—I hope you will stop by for a visit.

### Imagining a center for art and design in San Francisco

With the opening of our extended campus, we have an unprecedented opportunity to redefine our role here in San Francisco and to create a dynamic space that welcomes all, while serving as a hub for artistic exploration and community engagement.

Partnership and collaboration will be key to our success, and to that end, I am meeting many of our partner organizations such as SFMOMA, MoAD, Apple, San Francisco Opera, the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, and more to learn how CCA is situated within the larger creative ecosystem of the Bay Area. I know that our work is never done in isolation, and the more voices in alignment with common goals across the arts, the more powerful and strategic we can be in our efforts to leverage what we each do best.

I am working closely with the President’s Cabinet and the Board of Trustees to develop a comprehensive framework for a strategic plan. This plan will engage our many stakeholder groups and serve as a guide for our endeavors in the years to come. I anticipate that we will launch into the planning process by January 2025, and I look forward to sharing updates on our progress. As we collectively envision our future, I hope we can embrace the pulse of this new day with hope, courage, and ambition. I feel called to do this work and am energized by the possibilities of what we can do together.

We continue—onward and upward!

Cheers,

David C. Howse



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1. A close-up of Jewelry and Metal Arts Studio Manager Russell Larman’s *Engagement Rings* at the 360 Degree Ring Exhibition.
2. Students come together outside of class to share prototypes and models for the Architecture Show and Tell.
3. Furniture undergraduate Nathan Sheu activates his work.
4. A close-up of staff member and MFA Fine Arts student Kelley Finley’s artwork at the 2024 Barclay Simpson MFA Award Exhibition.
5. A detailed look at Associate Professor of Interior Design Negar Kalantar’s work on display.



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