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3rd ANNUAL SPRING CONVOCATION ADDRESS

“Pencils, Podiums and Platforms: CFA as a Site of Resistance, Rigor and Responsiveness”

Tuesday, January 20, 2015
Introduction:

Happy New Year! And thank you for joining me for my third convocation as the Dean, College of Communication and Fine Arts here at LMU.

I want to thank again our students, “The One Night Stanzas” for their wonderful performance. “The One Night Stanzas” is a completely student run and directed group—and I would be remiss if I didn’t say that for a modest fee—they are available for bookings along with another group called, “The Jazz Cats” and students from our Classical Guitar Program, and vocal performance students.

I would like to begin by thanking Assistant Dean, Dr. Elaine Walker for her introduction of the day—as I wish to also thank all of the staff in the CFA Dean’s office Judy Scalin, Paul Humphreys, Gerohy, Blanca, Charisse and Rachel---for their continued dedication to the work, and particularly to Judy Delavigne in marshaling my progress on this presentation.

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I am consistently impressed and tickled by the intellect and the talent of our students, as I am also continually impressed by the work of this community of outstanding Teachers, Artists, Professionals, Clinicians and Scholars in CFA.

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As a Dean of a college that includes Communication and Fine Arts--this year I feel that I must begin this convocation in memory and resistance-- by reflecting briefly on the tragic events of January 7, 2015—

The attack on the French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo---- killing 12 people, including the editor, artists, employees, and police officers—caught in the melee.
In such acts of violence we are painfully reminded of the power of art and it’s discontents, as well as the power of radical religious fervor, and a particular performance of wrath and revenge that leaves great devastation and offers very little salvation.

And while I am troubled by the tantrums, tribulations and tremors of this happening--I am also encouraged by the triumphs in freedom of speech, freedom of expression, the power of art, and as we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – we celebrate the potential of more empowering acts of performative resistance.

I am encouraged by the guiding principles of our departments, disciplines and programs in CFA that clearly articulate their commitment to information, formation and transformation——of self and others—that are also core values of our university mission.
In his January 12, 2015 letter to the campus, our President David W. Burcham makes comment on the tragedies of around the country and worlds—and he reminds us that as “a university, our university can play a special role in dissecting and analyzing the complex issues that these events present, providing a forum for free expression and respectful dialogue amongst members of our community.” I echo President Burcham knowing that the programs in CFA are always and already engaged in such discussions.

“In Pencils, Podiums and Platforms: CFA as a Site of Resistance, Rigor and Responsiveness”

I. Review of Accomplishments
II. A Further Charge for Academic Excellence and Rigor
III. Notes about Responsiveness

In the construct of pencils, podiums and platforms—each serve as a way to remind us all about the power of the pencils—that we use to draw, write and articulate thoughts in a performed freedom of expression—which have become symbolically representative of the happening and resistance to the Charlie Hebdo incident. The title reminds us about the varying podiums of our engagements—the places from which we speak with articulate tongues to express and defend our ideas, freedoms and rights to be particular; with the requirements to articulate arguments of our worth and value. And it makes reference to the platforms on which we stand and promote—the university, the classroom, our disciplines—our faith; our positions and positionalities; our political locations in the trinity of art, communication and social justice.

In this presentation I am really pushing us to look at our achievements, how we articulate the connected notions of academic excellence and rigor in CFA, and how we (and I) become more responsive to critique as means of making us better at what we do.
We have many accomplishments and things to be proud of this year—not all of which I can cram into this short period of time. But I want to offer you only highlights in two forms---first a quick snapshot in this presentation and I have also provided a brief or brag sheet as a take away.

In **Art History** we are proud that Kirstin Noreen was selected as a Master Teacher, Center for Teaching Excellence (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). Professor Noreen, along with colleagues from BCLA coordinated a new study abroad program in Rome for the summer 2014 on Christianity in Rome: Art, History, and Theology.

Professor Noreen along with Caroline Peter of the Laband Art Gallery hosted a day with the LMU Heritage Association that included a tour of the Laband and a lecture on “The Virgin of Guadalupe” including colleagues from BCLA--followed with a luncheon in the Thomas P. Kelly, Jr., Student Art Gallery.
The Department of Communication Studies sponsored or co-sponsored multiple events this year. Their new faculty colloquium—this Fall with a focus on the theme "Gendered Violence: Beyond Awareness," featuring panelists from the CMST department and a representative from the San Monica Rape Treatment Center --- co-sponsored with BCLA a performance entitled “Two Women Talking: Restor(y)ing Culture, Gender, Sexuality and Tradition” – and co-sponsored the Rainbow Week event, “The Gay Rub” an exhibition with the Office of LGBT Student Services.
The LMU debate team under the direction of Jay Busse and Thomas Dowd is probably one of the most winning competitive teams on this campus, with a historic record of excellence at local, regional, national and international tournaments—what appears here is only a snapshot of their success.

Communication Studies and other sectors of the university helped to co-sponsor the LMU Forum on Media Ethics & Social Responsibility, featuring a lecture by Dr. Darnell Hunt on the Hollywood Diversity Report. The overall event was of course under the primary leadership and organization of Professor Lawrence Wenner, Von der Ahe Chair in Communication and Ethics (pictured here) – who continues his phenomenal service as a academic leader in both CFA and SFTV— and for the university at large.
The **Dance Department** celebrates a number of honors including: The release of the teaser trailer for *D-Man*, a documentary film on Bill T. Jones by Rosalynde LeBlanc Loo (Loo); the Development of Student Chapter of the National Dance Educators Association with a National Honors Society in Dance at LMU, and Damon Rago’s re-election to the *American College Dance Association* Board of Directors.

**LMU Dance also participated** in the National Water Dance on El Segundo Beach---- a site-specific movement choir and music performance, integrated as an expression of our living relationships with water headed Teresa Heiland, and supported by Judy Scalin and Paul Humphreys and music students.

In addition to offering a phenomenal season of dance, the program also celebrated a 30 year collaboration between Martial Arts and Performing Arts here at LMU—with the Korea Institute of Martial Arts--- at the
celebration both Judy Scalin and Damon Rago received honorary black belts.

The **Laband Art Gallery** hosted a range of exhibitions. The exhibition, *Voices of Incarceration* (January 25 – March 16, 2014), received a wide spread of press coverage.

The *L.A. Odyssey Project* was presented with campus and community partners—and the appearance of a Cyclops.
And the exhibition, *Following the Prescribed Path*, which included the work and effort of faculty, staff, current and former students. This year, Carolyn Peter also issued a campus brochure entitled—*The Art of Learning* that reinforced the Laband’s mission as an integral partner in the LMU academic experience—inviting collaborations from across the campus.

Our graduate program in *Marital and Family Therapy* continues its phenomenal tradition of empowering students, families and communities; 16 graduating students have been awarded $18,500.00 State and County Mental Health stipends. These highly competitive stipends are designed to recruit linguistically and culturally competent therapists committed to working with the diverse population served in public mental health. Proportionally, LMU students were awarded more MFT stipends than from any other school in the LA region. The program
demonstrates its commitment to cultural competency with sustained support for its programs in Mexico, celebrating its 10-year anniversary of the establishment of an Art Therapy training program in San Miguel de Allende.

In Music our two world-renown Clinical Performing Faculty, Wojciech Kocyan and Martha Masters, continue to perform locally, nationally and internationally--- bringing to our students the wealth of their talents and experiences. The Percussion Group Cincinnati, a trio of percussionists, played several works by Mark Saya (Department Chair) at the University of Cincinnati on November 5.

Under the current direction of Mary Breden, the LMU Choruses celebrate the 50th Year Anniversary of their modern choral tradition.” Also under the direction of Mary Breden, the LMU Choruses is planning its third European Tour to Paris & Northern France, June 2015.

Under the direction of its founder Virginia Saya the LMU Sinatra Opera Workshop celebrates its 25th Year Anniversary.” And our music students are getting into some of the most prestigious music schools like the Cleveland Institute of Music-- and performing in international opera workshops around the world—most recently in Salzburg, Austria.
The Music Department continues to provide an extensive season of performance with the always popular, Concerts for Children coming up this weekend.

Studio Arts received the Community Impact Award by the Jesuit Association for Student Personnel Administrators (JASPA); awarded for the Ethnic and Intercultural Services Rebranding Project. The department is proud that Phase 1 — of what it hopes to become a State of the Art and Design Technology Developments Innovation Lab in Burns Fine Arts Complex.
In conjunction with Art History—Studio Arts continues its second Season of the KaleidoLA Speakers Series featuring a range of practitioners and recent alumni. Studio Arts also completed a project—branding the *Heart of Los Angeles 25th Anniversary* all work completed by students.

Studio Arts also continues the branding of the Undergraduate Research Symposium—this slide features the student work last year and this year’s branding campaign.
And if you don’t know—it is Studio Arts majors who completed the design on the LMU wines labels.

Many of you may not know that the **LMU Theatre Department** was recently ranked Number 4 in "Top Colleges for Drama and Theater Arts" by College Factual.com. Only UCLA, NYU and Chapman are ranked higher than our department in this particular study.

Giving credence to the ranking: Part-time faculty member--Norma Bowles' work at LMU was recognized in *American Theatre Magazine* as being exemplary of Academic Theatre for Social Justice. 14 artists and programs in the country were featured. LMU’s New Works Festival had six plays selected to be presented...
at the Kennedy Center / American College Theatre Festival Regional Festival in St. George, Utah February 2015, the only student-written work selected to be presented on the festival's main stage will be from LMU. The Theatre Department and the college were recently selected as the first North American University to host the African Theatre Association annual conference. In July 2015, hundreds of scholars and artists from Africa and the United States are scheduled to meet on campus to discuss their work and the state of theatrical relations between Africa and the United States.

Our Sister Judith Royer is now listed as one of the top 15 Noteworthy Professors in Los Angeles as issued by The Art Career Project. The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival also recognized her with a Lifetime Achievement Award in Feb. 2014.

The college is proud to continue a collaborative relationship with Sister Royer and CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice as they continue to engage the power of performance as a tool for social
engagement, reconciliation and the illumination of lives—in their Arts that Do Justice series.

In addition, the Theatre Department engaged some dynamic performances that explore faith, the nature of the human condition, and social justice.

This along with just having fun in their collaboration with the library for the now annual—Haunting of Hannon—a series of performance that occur in the stacks—with a moving audience.
College-wide: We sponsored a wonderful event in conjunction with the Korea Foundation featuring traditional Korean music performance—hosted by Assistant Professor of Theatre, Leon Wiebers.

Under the leadership of Assistant Dean Elaine Walker---We have developed a comprehensive Peer-Mentoring Program that is being initiated this semester.
And working with ITS—and the College Communication and Technology Committee—we have a new state of the art Innovative Teaching Space in Foley Hall coming on line in the Spring 2015.

This semester we are also launching a series of talks—CFA Tech Talks focusing on technology, and CFA Talks about Teaching furthering a culture of conversation about teaching—spearheaded by faculty in the college, Communication and Technology Committee, and the Instructional and Student Affairs Committee, with leadership from Associate Dean Paul Humphreys. And in the Fall the college looks forward to hosting a professional world premier opera on the life of Sally Hemmings.
The college will soon post a more comprehensive booklet of **Scholarly and Creative Activities for 2013-2014** on the college webpage—inclusive of all submitting Full-time Faculty, Part-time Faculty, and student participation in the Undergraduate Research Symposium, with a feature of the new books published this year by Kevin Wetmore, Damon Willick, Philip Wander, and Lawrence Wenner.

This past year, professor Damon Willick also curated a phenomenal exhibition on the art and subject of his book, *Valley Vista -- Art in the San Fernando Valley* -- and he was also featured in a Pub Night event sponsored by the Hannon Library.
I would also be remiss if I did not share achievements in the area of development: With the ongoing assistance of Tara Frates, our CFA Development Officer we have raised $2.5 million in current and endowed scholarships and we’ve created 17 NEW scholarships since the launch of the Scholarship Initiative bringing the College to a total of 63 CFA Scholarships. I thank Tara and all faculty colleague, friends of the college and our generous donors who have been a part of our efforts.

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II. A Further Charge for Academic Excellence and Rigor

A couple of months ago I was invited to speak to the Board of Trustees to present and represent aspects of CFA. I was given the opportunity to have several CFA students to accompany me—and after inviting many—highly accomplished students—including a host of our most elite female students—many who had conflicts with the preparation for final exams and projects— I was able to secure the representation of four (4) young men representing the diversity of and in our programs. I was pleased with this mix of young men—who represented the CFA student body with a sincere poise of presence, each shown here in their elements of dance, theatre, photograph, as well as service and leadership to the campus. The students spoke about the critical training that they are receiving in their disciplined and their LMU experience.
In the course of both preparing to speak to the Trustees and in the actual moment of engagement, I came to realize that my words then, like part of those words that I share with you now, was a kind of a defense of the values of the disciplines in CFA.

In my presentation to the Trustees, as in my presentation now, I drew their attention to the CFA calendar of events Over 100 scheduled events throughout the 2014-2015 academic year.

The Calendar of events is inclusive of a wide range of performances and recitals, exhibitions, and lectures,
workshops and colloquia offered throughout the academic year.

I encouraged the Boards of Trustees then, as I encourage you today—because sometimes we also need to be reminded -----that as they (as you) flip through the pages of events season --not to see what we do as mere entertainments and amusements that the college provides—to the campus in that manner in which the arts are sometimes unfortunately dismissed—as not being critical to the professional and intellectual lives our students; or Communication Studies is not seen as a rigorous discipline with defined learning outcomes and career pathways---
BUT to look at the contents of our events calendar and what we do as the application of practical reasoning and decision making, see performance and artistic expression as committed actions with purpose. Yes at times, forms of entertainment—but also as a form of activism, protest and historical documentation of culture and as a method of holding a mirror up to society for discernment and reflection

See the events in the booklet not only as finished products but as active processes of knowing and coming to know through the engagement of the whole person

See how our students and faculty are inviting public discourse on some of the most pressing issues of our time through artistic expression and public debate. Thus transforming our studios, theatres and recital halls into laboratories and think tanks of close examination and experimentation and then recognize these events and activities not only as talent but as critical intellect; mesmerizing athleticism in dance, and as evidence of aptitude, social collaboration, problem solving, critical and creative thinking.
I also shared with the Board of Trustees our Career Pathways documents in CFA—and see the on-going efforts in the college, to help students take the knowledge of their experiences and training and apply them to the “what’s next question” ---or “the how does this apply to a job or career and profession” question relative to the life outside of LMU.

And as I was presenting and constructing an argument for the Board of Trustees, I realized how important it is for us—in light of an ever-increasing demand in higher education and in the public sector for educational accountability of how we are preparing our students for jobs and how we are supporting innovation in our teaching.

In CFA we have initiated a series of alumni talks—to both inspire our students—and provide direct mentoring from former students who are successful in the area of our student training. [As you can see we have the wonderful Kate Micucci—and we are anticipating a great conversation on March 3—with Neil Barclay on Arts Management.]
We are also engaged in bringing performances as fundraisers to campus, with many of our formers students who are working actors and artists to interface with our students.

In CFA we need to continue to ask ourselves the tough questions that are facing us as a set of disciplines—the questions that others are asking about us?

**What is academic excellence in CFA?** Is academic excellence the mastery of bodies of theory and practice melding into a critical praxis? If so by the nature of who we are—that is what we do everyday in every CFA discipline------ it is embodied in virtuosic performance, in the critical interpretations of culture, in the use of art as an interpretative and therapeutic technology, in critical applications of qualitative methodologies to understand and transform the human condition the study of rhetoric, debate and persuasion as essential to a perform critical citizenship bridging the connections between art, culture and the politics of being.
We ask: What is the evidence of academic excellence in CFA? As brief examples maybe---

It is in the phenomenal success record of our debate program. It is the increasing numbers of our students engaged in scholarly research not only in the Undergraduate Research Symposium, but also at regional and national conferences.

It is the increased level of recognition of the scholarly activity, publications, presentations, exhibitions of our faculty on a national and international level. It is in the training and job placement rate of our graduates

We ask: What is the relation to the notion of “academic rigor”?

Is that exclusively the number of papers written, the number of contact hours, the amount of reading that students have in the classroom? If so, then our students spend countless ours in classes, in workshops, in studios, in rehearsals, as well as in the performance and presentational realms of their engagement.

Our students read volumes of books, chapters, texts, scripts, musical scores, literature—and then make manifest their understanding in embodied performances, oral presentations, written essay, community action projects, evidenced artistic expressions, and political activism.

We ask: Is rigor in the teacher-scholar model?

Because our students and professors work in constant collaboration; In museums, in coaching, debating, in theory building for innovative and collaborative research and exhibitions in directing and preparing plays, opera, chorus, multi media----presentations; in choreography as a critical technology that combines exacting realism, unbridled imagination. Rigor is made manifest in the practical, theoretical and scientific application in our training of clinical art therapists using principles of art and art making with psychotherapeutic methods of human psychic and social engagement. Like our continued efforts in the CFA based evening of the Undergraduate Research Symposium—under the director of Associate Dean Judith Scalin---we take the critical opportunity for our undergraduate students to perform and present in the intellect of their artistry—presenting in a double voice that articulate not only what is reductively perceived as their talent but the intellect—giving diverse audience the ability to access their intellect and the power of art and performance.
III. Notes about Responsiveness

Briefly on the notion of responsiveness: I am asking us all to be responsive to the questions “how we define and defend academic excellence in CFA?” And “how we define and evidence academic rigor” in CFA?” I present these not as rhetorical questions but as challenges and prompts that we need to face.

This year we have a number of our programs that are going through varying aspects of academic review.

The Department of Communication Studies has just submitted a memorandum of understanding relative to a program review of a couple of years ago. Now the challenge is to act on the agreement.

Our program in Interdisciplinary and Applied Programs while popular must find and define its purpose in alignment with department, college and university standards and the inevitable realities of an environment of prioritizing academic programs--- relative to academic excellence, rigor and financial models of efficiency.

Our departments of Theatre, Dance, and Art and Music are all accredited—and are in processes of responding to external questions and queries or preparing to articulate their academic excellence in relation the external standards of those disciplines.

And we recognize and are responsive to the fact that our Graduate program in Marital and Family Therapy continues to exceed the academic requirements for California State Marital Family Therapy (MFT) licensure and is consistently registered and approved by the American Art Therapy Association.
This past year—as the Dean, I went through a second year feedback process in which all faculty in CFA—full-time and part-time faculty, along with staff, and members of my professional colleagues around the university—were invited to weigh in and provide critical commentary—on my performance across multiple dimensions including an Inventory of Leadership Skills, Emotional Competency Inventory, and a Organizational Climate Survey.

I thank you for your critical input on these surveys that are extremely informative with insights that are invaluable to my personal growth and my continued leadership in the college. This past semester I have been reviewing the results along with a representative from Eddy Associates who administered the process for the campus.

The overall results have me ranked rather high in all categories, but the results also give me some areas of further discernment and growth. As we move through this Spring semester—I will be inviting small discussion groups of, full-time faculty, part-time faculty and staff to talk through aspects of the results—to both evidence my responsiveness to the process, and to make real my commitments to using the results of your involvement to address issues of promise and possibility.

For me the notion of responsiveness is also linked to an acknowledgement of the social changes and shifts around us.
In his play, *As You Like It*—Shakespeare writes

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,

*His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms.*

Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school.

*And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress’ eyebrow.*

Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard . . .
Last year—I ended my convocation with the acknowledgment of new CFA additions to the CFA/LMU family—as I documented a celebration of babies born to CFA faculty and staff—several more have since arrived and many have recently celebrated their first year—all are thriving. Recently we lost several important colleagues in and of CFA:

![IN LOVING MEMORY](image)

Each a giant in his own right: Choral Director Extraordinaire, Property Master in Theatre, and beloved Teacher/Artist/Scholar in Theatre.

Each leaves an indelible mark on the hearts, minds, and lives of their students and those who worked with them. Beloved by students and colleagues- they will be missed.

Later this semester I will host another kind of community celebration—one of recognition and responsiveness; an end of the year gathering for the college that will celebrate another year of excellence and will also serve as an opportunity to honor our senior faculty who have recently retired or at this time, have announced retirement—Katherine Harper (Art History), Katharine B. Free (Theatre History), Jay Busse (Debate and Communication Studies) and others who may come to that happy place to which we all strive—that place of committed years of excellence and service who may offer us a brief moment, along with all other university rituals to say thanks and wish them well as they continue to thrive in a different journey of retirement and personal well-being.
In closing: Once again, Carolyn Peter of the Laband Art Gallery has offered you the opportunity to get a sneak peak of the current show going up in the Laband—entitled “Artist Proofs Studio: A Journey to Reconciliation”: The exhibition explores the story of the South African print workshop—this community-based arts organization has followed a trajectory of reconciliation and growth parallel to that of South Africa as a whole.

Thank you for joining me . . .
I invite you all to lunch in the George A.V. Dunning Courtyard.