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[All Staff] Year-end update from the president and senior leadership team

1 message

Presidents Office <presidents-office@cca.edu>

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Dear CCA Community,

As this long, strange, and challenging year draws to a close and the college begins a well-deserved winter break, we are writing to share updates on several key topics that together offer a snapshot of the state of the college. There is some sobering news as we continue to face substantial challenges, but there is also light on the horizon.

While this has been a year of tremendous uncertainty and sacrifice, CCA entered this period from a place of stability built over years of prudent planning and operation. This stable foundation, combined with decisive actions early in the pandemic, has enabled us to navigate the disruption while keeping our curriculum, academic experience, and culture true to our values.

It is a precarious time for higher education, particularly for small, private colleges. Some will not survive. *CCA will*. We will turn the page on 2020 and continue to deliver an education in accordance with our mission and vision well into the future.

We hope you find the updates below helpful and informative. We are grateful for the extraordinary work you've done and support you've shown one another throughout this difficult year. As we enter this holiday season, you remind us daily that our CCA community is what will bring us through this crisis.

Finally, we invite you to spend some time admiring the work of our newest CCA graduates on the [Fall 2020 Showcase](#). There couldn't be a better testament to the perseverance, resilience, and talent of our students than this profound example of what they have accomplished in the face of unimaginable challenges.

Warm regards and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and productive new year,

Steve Beal, president
and the CCA senior leadership team

Enrollment

We knew this pandemic year, with teaching and learning happening remotely, would result in a decline in enrollment. Fall enrollment fell within our projected range—down 230 students (about 12%) from the previous year. (For context, our closest peer institutions saw enrollment declines ranging from about 10% to 25%.) Our early decision to shift to a remote fall semester gave students and their families, as well as faculty and staff, more time to prepare. Our highly personalized approach to working with students to address their needs in this new environment also helped keep enrollment from declining further.

For spring 2021, here's where enrollment stands currently:

- 1,075 enrolled undergraduates (down 271 from spring 2020)
- 321 enrolled graduate students (down 56 from spring 2020)
- Anticipated spring 2021 enrollment is about 1,400 students—approximately 300 fewer (20%) than last spring.
- 50 new undergraduate students starting in spring (slightly more than our typical entering class for spring; these students have gone through the entire admission and enrollment process during the pandemic)

New applications for fall are promising, and we sent out a record number of first-year early-action admissions decisions this month. We also expect many students who postponed their admission or took a leave during the pandemic to return as soon as we are back in person, and we look forward to welcoming a full—and highly qualified—cohort in fall 2021.

Budget and financial management

In September, CCA's Board of Trustees approved a budget dependent on the use of reserves for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021). This budget included \$12 million (15%) in expense savings we were able to realize through shared sacrifices across the college, including measures such as furloughs, a limited number of layoffs, suspension of the employer contribution for the retirement plan, no regular salary increases, and salary reductions at the cabinet level. Even with these cost-saving efforts, however, for the first time in more than twenty years, the Board approved a \$5.6-million-deficit budget. The budget was based on anticipations of a hybrid spring 2021 semester with approximately 300 students living in Founders Hall.

Last week, we presented the Finance-Audit Committee of the Board with an update on financial expectations for the current fiscal year that reflect the impact of the pandemic's winter surge, which has delayed our planned return to hybrid instruction and lowered the demand for campus housing. With the revised spring projections, we now forecast the shortfall for the year, despite the expense-saving measures we've implemented, to be \$8.2 million.

Fortunately, the college has built limited reserves through years of careful fiscal management. The Board has agreed to the temporary use of some of these reserves to limit further reductions, enabling us to maintain the quality of our students' academic experience and preserve the college's ability to return quickly to a full, on-campus program as soon as it is safe to do so.

To mitigate this deficit and replenish reserves, President Beal and the Board of Trustees are engaged in a focused fundraising effort that has already addressed nearly a quarter of the shortfall. Additionally, the San Francisco Mayor's Office has granted an emergency order to allow rooms in the Panoramic—which CCA leases but does not currently need—to be offered to non-students. With CCA's support, the building's owner is working with nonprofits and agencies to make these rooms available as transitional housing, providing some financial relief to CCA and preventing these rooms from sitting empty in the midst of a housing crisis.

Spring planning

As we've seen throughout the past 10 months, this virus is unpredictable and requires plans that are flexible and responsive. We are fortunate to have a creative, collaborative community, and our staff and faculty have worked tirelessly to adapt to the changing circumstances and support our students. We will continue to communicate quickly and thoroughly as the spring semester approaches, and beyond as circumstances evolve.

Academic schedule

Building on what we learned from students and faculty about their experience this fall, and with input from the deans, program chairs and academic staff have done outstanding work to create a spring 2021 course schedule and delivery model that will be successful.

- The course schedule has been adjusted to accommodate our global student body.
- The spring semester will start one week later than originally planned—on Monday, January 25,

2021. Classes will end as originally planned on May 9, 2021.

- We will not have a spring break in order to maintain required health and safety guidelines around quarantining. If we were to schedule a spring break, it would add extra weeks to the semester because of quarantine and testing requirements.
- We are committed to getting back to in-person and on-campus instruction as soon as it is safe, and at that time we will return to a regular course schedule.

Facilities

We are readying facilities, including tented space on the Backlot, to support a mix of in-person, hybrid classes and individual studio makers' spaces as soon as state and local health department orders allow.

Return to Campus (Prevention) Plan

- We've updated our [Prevention Plan](#) for a safe return to campus to reflect new directives issued by the State of California and the San Francisco and Alameda County health departments. We will continue to update it as guidelines and restrictions evolve.
- The plan now includes information on [testing and screening](#) for campus-based staff and students in the spring.
- In developing our plan, CCA worked closely with health officials, including infectious disease experts from Kaiser and Stanford.

Housing and Dining

Founders Hall is open and housing and dining options are available for students who need them. Detailed information is available on the [Housing and Dining COVID-19 Protocols](#) page on Portal. A few highlights include:

- All rooms are single occupancy.
- Required meal plans are available at Makers Cafe, and all meals are take-out only until further notice.
- Residents may move in on either January 23 or March 6.
- Advance COVID-19 testing is required prior to move-in.
- All residents will be required to quarantine in their unit for 14 days upon arrival.

Campus planning

Construction on Double Ground, the Studio Gang-designed expansion of our San Francisco campus that is at the center of our plans for unification, was scheduled to begin last April and was paused due to the pandemic. Unification of our two campuses remains central to CCA's long-term success and sustainability, and the two-year construction process will commence as soon as we are able to proceed with clarity and confidence. This delay does not mean progress has stopped toward our ultimate goal of creating a unified, residential campus.

Several positive steps have taken place this fall, including:

- Founders Hall, CCA's new on-campus residence hall and dining facility, opened on schedule this fall. Currently home to about 100 CCA students, at full occupancy it will house more than 500 students as the cornerstone of our new residential campus.
- Clifton Hall, the former dorm on CCA's Oakland campus, was sold to the City of Oakland to provide much-needed, deeply affordable housing for homeless families and seniors. The first residents are scheduled to move in at the end of this month.
- "The four-plex," a small building adjacent to Clifton Hall, was also sold, as has long been planned.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

Throughout the summer and fall, work has been taking place throughout the college to increase accountability and promote anti-racism and equity at CCA. Over the summer, the President's Diversity Steering Group (PDSG) solicited and organized recommendations from the CCA community. Some of these recommendations were implemented immediately and others are being developed, as this work is ongoing.

President Beal, Provost Carland, Gesita Tafesse (Assistant Dean of Students for Diversity, Inclusion & Community Engagement), and Adriana Lopez Lobovits (Special Assistant and Board Liaison, Office of the President) have met regularly through the fall with representatives from three student groups—Black Brilliance, Students of Color Coalition, and the Working Class BIPOC Grant Campaign—to address a list of ten demands from the students to support the needs of CCA's BIPOC community and create systemic change at the college. We look forward to reporting the progress we've made in addressing these demands early in the new year.

Another group has been meeting with people across the college to develop a framework for building diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging fully into the institutional structure, culture, and curriculum of CCA. Some of this work has been done with guidance from [Dr. Sonia Mañón](#), whom CCA engaged as a consultant to advise on the development of the diversity, equity, and inclusion framework; facilitate an equity-focused retreat session with the Senior Cabinet; and aid the Board of Trustees in their efforts to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

Also this year, the college developed guidelines and resources, collectively authored by the [Decolonial School](#), intended to help the CCA community integrate the practice of [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement](#) into the school's culture.

Advancement and fundraising

Acknowledging the extraordinary financial pressures and disruption the pandemic has created for many of our students and their families, the Advancement team's primary fundraising focus this year is student aid in the form of scholarships, emergency funds, and housing grants.

- Our goal for this fiscal year is to raise \$1.5 million in incremental gifts for scholarships and student aid, with a focus on support for diversity students and students with immediate financial need.
- Six months into the fiscal year, Advancement has raised \$1.2 million toward that goal.
- Gifts and pledges specifically for diversity scholarships total \$702,000.
- We have created several new scholarships for diversity students, including the [Sandra Vivanco Scholarship](#) and [Diversity in Design Scholarship](#), and have renewed existing diversity scholarships, such as the Kalmanovitz Scholarship.

Collective bargaining

Bargaining continues regarding the two separate and equally important sets of labor negotiations with SEIU Local 1021. You may find ongoing updates on Portal for [staff collective bargaining](#) and [adjunct faculty collective bargaining](#).