Dear Friends,

Higher education is very much in the news these days and, unfortunately, all too often it’s cast in an unfavorable light. Every day seems to bring a new government report or news piece criticizing spiraling costs and questioning the ability of American colleges and universities to produce graduates with the skills for today’s demanding job market. Increases in student attrition, low graduation rates, and a rise in default rates on student loans are indeed alarming national trends. In Washington, lawmakers are calling for regulations that would, for the first time, tie federal student aid to a college’s ability to control the cost of attendance and demonstrate progress in preparing graduates for gainful employment.

At CCA we have been tracking all of this for some time and are happy to report that we are bucking the trend. Our continuing success is attributable to a growing reputation for excellence built around innovative new programs, ambitious strategic investments in our campuses, and our ability to attract dynamic faculty who are leading practitioners and scholars in their respective fields.

By its very nature, an education in the arts is expensive. Small class sizes, specialized facilities, and the latest equipment contribute to the high price tag. But through a generous scholarship program funded in partnership with our donors, we are able to make CCA accessible for top students who are seeking a solid, meaningful education. And after graduation, our students are thriving. A recent study showed that students of art and design graduate at a higher rate, find good jobs sooner after graduation, and pay off their student loans more quickly than the national average.

Below I have highlighted some recent developments at the college. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Sincerely,

Stephen Beal
President

An Evening with David Sedaris, May 3, 2012

The best-selling author and NPR humorist David Sedaris will give a special benefit reading for CCA scholarships on May 3, 2012, at Zellerbach Auditorium on the UC Berkeley campus. The evening will include a reading from new and unpublished material, a book signing, and, for sponsorship donors, a VIP cocktail party with the author. I have had the pleasure of knowing David Sedaris for many years—he is a former art student of mine—and he is truly one of the funniest and smartest writers working today. His readings always sell out, so don’t wait to get your tickets. Through this event we hope to raise more than $150,000 for student scholarships. For tickets to the reading ($45), call 510.642.9988 or visit tickets.berkeley.edu. For more info on the cocktail party, call Kelly Dawson at 510.594.3776 or visit cca.edu/sedaris.
Bill Moggridge to Receive Honorary Doctorate

The college will confer an honorary doctorate on Bill Moggridge, director of the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, on May 12 at CCA’s 105th commencement. Moggridge is a founder of the design firm IDEO and is widely credited with designing the first commercial laptop computer. He has been active in design education throughout his career, notably as a visiting professor in interaction design at the Royal College of Art in London, and a consulting associate professor in the design program at Stanford University. He is the author of several books and a very engaging speaker, and I am looking forward to hearing what he has to say to our graduating students.

Graduation Events

The end of the academic year is filled with events, exhibitions, readings, and more. Join us as we celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating students. Highlights include the Graduate Thesis Exhibitions (May 10–19), the Baccalaureate Exhibition (May 10–19), and the Annual Fashion Show (May 11). For details, visit cca.edu/calendar. Hope to see you in May!

Student & Alumni Success

In recent news: Maja Ruznic’s (MFA 2009) work is featured on the cover of New American Paintings. Hank Willis Thomas (MFA and MA Visual Criticism 2004) and Bayeté Ross Smith (MFA 2004), together with Photography faculty Chris Johnson and one other artist, premiered their vast inter-media project Question Bridge: Black Males at the Sundance Film Festival. Two Fashion Design seniors, Patricia Lucia Arroyo and Johnny Paul Vera, received prestigious internships at Nicole Miller. Students Sachi DeCou, Mateo Hao, Mac Low, Al Nelson, Max Pollock, Duff Ryan, and Charlie Weber made a great showing with their sustainably produced utility bike at the Oregon Manifest Constructor’s Design Challenge. Eight Illustration students (Afu Chan, Monica Garwood, Jeff Gomez, Christina Jung, Caitlin Ng, Maggie Olson, Sara Sydnor, and Jenna Trost) placed in the 2012 New York Society of Illustrators competition. Michael Sun (Graphic Design 2010) landed his dream job as a graphic designer for the Houston Rockets. Todd Shalom’s (MFA Writing 2004) Elastic City, a conceptual walk organization, was featured in a two-page illustrated spread in the New Yorker. And in the past several months, CCA alumni have been featured in Forbes, Core77, Juxtapoz, the New York Daily News, the Huffington Post, and SFGate.
We are pleased to launch an exciting new program celebrating longtime alumni of the college. This May we will host the first reunion of the Half Century Club, honoring alumni who graduated 50 or more years ago. Half Century Club honorary chairman Richard McLean (Painting 1958) invites alumni from the class of 1962 and earlier to join us on the Oakland and San Francisco campuses for a series of events on commencement weekend, May 11–12, to reconnect with old friends, reminisce, and discover what’s going on at CCA today. Highlights include a breakfast reception with longtime CCA faculty, tours of our new and upgraded facilities, special gifts, VIP seating at commencement, and honored guest status at the Honorary Doctorate Luncheon. Please save the date for this historic gathering. Official registration information will be mailed in the coming months. Questions? Contact Jessica Russell, director of alumni relations, at 510.594.3788 or jrussell@cca.edu.

We’re very proud to announce the release of the “It Gets Better: California College of the Arts” video, the college’s official submission to the It Gets Better Project, a national gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth suicide prevention campaign. CCA is among the first art colleges to create an institutional video for this internationally recognized project. Twenty-four members of our community—including students, faculty, alumni, and staff—were interviewed. You can view it and many other CCA-related videos at youtube.com/user/CCAarts.

We are saddened by the recent passing of Dugald Stermer, chair of the Illustration Program, and Steven Leiber, a faculty member in the graduate programs in Curatorial Practice and Fine Arts. Dugald Stermer started teaching at CCA in 1989. He truly embodied the CCA spirit, using his voice and prodigious talent for social good in his multiple roles as artist, illustrator, art director, educator, writer, and citizen. His warm spirit and generous manner made him a valued friend and mentor. Steven Leiber had taught here since 2005 and was also very popular and warmly regarded. He was a private art and art book dealer, specializing in art books, artists’ books, and documents concerning contemporary art. Our sympathies go out to his wife, Leigh Markopoulos, who is the chair of Curatorial Practice.

Scholarship funds in memory of Dugald Stermer and Steven Leiber have been established by their families and friends. For more information, contact Emma Sonduck at esonduck@cca.edu or 510.594.3787.