

David Howse Appointed President of California College of the Arts



San Francisco, CA—October 25, 2023—The Board of Trustees of California College of the Arts (CCA) has announced the appointment of David C. Howse as CCA's 10th president following a nine month search. Howse brings over 20 years of experience leading arts organizations through strategic visioning, fundraising, and community building, working primarily in educational institutions. He will come to CCA from Emerson College in Boston, MA, where he has worked since 2015 as Vice President in Emerson's Office of the Arts, as the Executive Director of ArtsEmerson, and also serves as Special Advisor to the President; prior to that, he was the Executive Director of Boston Children's Chorus. Howse will begin his role at CCA in December.

"We are thrilled to welcome David to lead CCA into its next chapter," said Lorna Meyer Calas, Chair of CCA's Board of Trustees. "Through his work at Emerson and in the city of Boston, David is a widely recognized figure in the arts and culture community, acknowledged for his dedication to nurturing and advancing arts and culture. He has demonstrated his strengths in collaborating with an array of campus stakeholders and managing complex projects, while also championing the strategic priorities of inclusion and belonging that are central to our vision, too. Moreover, between his fundraising work at Emerson and at Boston Children's Chorus, and his commitment to community engagement, his professional and personal experiences make him the ideal person to further CCA's mission at this important moment of transition and growth."

"Becoming the president of CCA is an incredible opportunity, because it brings together my interests in and professional dedication to the arts with my passion for teaching, innovating, and engaging the community," said David C. Howse. "I am incredibly proud of and grateful for the successes during my tenure at Emerson College, during which I helped launch creative programs, and greatly expanded and deepened our audience experience, while ensuring that our work remained connected to Emerson's educational

mission. Boston is a wonderful city and it has been such a great pleasure to work with dedicated colleagues to make an impact on the city through the arts. At CCA, I look forward to bringing similar collaborative strategies to bear, supporting our growing San Francisco campus and innovative curriculum at this moment of transformation. It will be an honor to support and engage with faculty, staff, and students who are creating incredible and important work that not only impacts San Francisco, but the world.”

David Howse's Arts Leadership

At Emerson College, Howse served in two separate but complementary roles, as the Executive Director of ArtsEmerson, the school's professional producing and presenting arm, and as Vice President in Emerson's Office of the Arts. In his role as Vice President, Howse led the Office of the Arts' fundraising efforts, securing over \$40 million to support core programs and the innovation of new ones. Annually, his office raises 40% - 50% percent of the College's overall fundraising goal—results that led to his appointment as the interim Vice President of Institutional Advancement.

Building on these successful fundraising outcomes, Howse has consistently applied both these resources—and the knowledge and creativity of those on campus—to identify new opportunities that would benefit Emerson and the Greater Boston community. In 2017, he established the Gaining Ground Fund with a \$3 million artistic risk capital fund to support the development, production, and touring of epic works by Black American theater artists—an underrepresented part of American theater. The result of this was the elevation of a number of Black American theater artists with productions such as *Iphigenia*, a collaboration with Esperanza Spalding, the late Wayne Shorter, and iconic architect Frank Gehry, and *The White Card*, by Professor Claudia Rankine, a poet, playwright, and MacArthur Foundation “genius grant” recipient, combined with an active and successful approach to engaging both traditional and new audiences.

In response to an RFP from the Mayor of Boston, in 2023 Howse jointly led a project to create new arts activations in Boston Common—an historically important civic space that was nonetheless often struggling with problems that discouraged wider public use. Leading the collaboration with a team of internal stakeholders at Emerson, as well as designers, architects, construction companies, vendors, and local and state agencies, the project identified an opportunity to create a new performance venue—the Emerson unCommon Stage and the Trillium Garden on the Common—which was fully operational within three months. The team programmed 30 hours of live music per week, bringing new life to the Common.

At the same time, as Executive Director of ArtsEmerson, the school's professional producing and presenting arm, Howse led the organization in selecting creative works of contemporary theater to present to both campus and public audiences in Boston. The impact of ArtsEmerson' curatorial practice is felt across the city and more broadly across the country. In addition to its production work with professional performing arts companies, ArtsEmerson also serves an important educational role by providing pre-professional opportunities for Emerson College students in assisting with these productions.

David Howse's Background

Previously, as Executive Director of Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) from 2009-2015, Howse spearheaded a financial turnaround, building the organization's first marketing program and significantly increasing its national visibility. He led BCC's Board and staff through a strategic planning process that resulted in key strategic imperatives to guide the organization, clarify its mission and vision through the intentional integration and growth of programming, and identify an opportunity for strategic partnerships. Howse oversaw BCC's successful raising of \$12 million over 5 years from foundations, individuals and corporations, including securing the organization's largest individual multi-year gift of \$350,000. Together with the strategic and financial leadership, Howse inspired a refreshed culture for BCC, characterized by the high energy and enthusiasm of constituents, an emphasis on artistic, programmatic and organizational excellence, and with an unwavering respect for people and ideas at its core.

"The search committee was thrilled with the exceptional pool of candidates who applied for this important leadership role," said C. Diane Christensen, Chair of the Search Committee and a Past Chair of the Board of Trustees. "After a thoughtful and rigorous process, David clearly emerged as our top choice and we are pleased that he has accepted the position. David's commitment to diversity and equity, to a collaborative working environment, and to building financially strong institutions directly aligns with CCA's mission, vision and values. We also see David's strengths working on Emerson College's public-facing programs as important given the ongoing work to expand CCA's campus in San Francisco, where such community engagement remains important."

A graduate of Bradley University with a B.A. in Music, Howse has a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He has completed a number of continuing education programs, including Executive Leadership Certificate from Harvard University, a certificate from the Institute for Nonprofit Practice at Boston University, and from the Emerging Leaders program at University of Massachusetts, Boston. In 2020, driven by a commitment to racial equity and coalition building, Howse co-led the creation of the Boston Cultural Leaders Coalition, which

brings together 35 nonprofit arts leaders to collectively address equity challenges—and the inertia that sometimes prevents change—supported by a \$1 million gift. He is also an active participant and current or past board leader for a number of other Boston and national arts organizations, including: New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund; the Black Trustee Alliance, where he is a founding member; the Norman Rockwell Museum, the Boston Symphony Orchestra; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In November 2023, the French Government will bestow upon Howse the title of *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, an acknowledgment of his contributions to the arts and cultural diplomacy. In San Francisco, David will be accompanied by his wife, Charisse, and their two sons, Kennedy, currently a junior at Morgan State University, and Channing, who is a sophomore in high school. Their dog, Pluto, will also be joining them.

Added Meyer Calas, “On behalf of the entire Board, I want to express my gratitude to Steve Beal, our outgoing president, for his exceptional service to CCA over the last 25 years, and for his commitment to providing support to aid in David’s transition into his new role. I also want to thank the members of the Search Committee and CCA’s senior management for their hard work throughout this process, which has resulted in such a terrific outcome with the selection and appointment of David Howse.”

About California College of the Arts (CCA)

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through the practice and critical study of art, architecture, design, and writing. Benefitting from its San Francisco Bay Area location, the college prepares students for lifelong creative work by cultivating innovation, community engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.

CCA offers a rich curriculum of 22 undergraduate and 10 graduate programs in art, design, architecture, and writing taught by a faculty of expert practitioners. Attracting promising students from across the nation and around the world, CCA is among the 25 most diverse colleges in the U.S. Last year, U.S. News & World Report ranked CCA as one of the top 10 graduate schools for fine arts in the country.

Graduates are highly sought after by companies such as Pixar/Disney, Apple, Intel, Meta, Gensler, Google, IDEO, Autodesk, Mattel, and Nike, and many have launched their own successful businesses. Alumni and faculty are often recognized with the highest honors in their fields, including Academy Awards, AIGA Medals, Fulbright Scholarships, Guggenheim Fellowships, MacArthur Fellowships, National Medal of Arts, and the Rome Prize, among others.

CCA is creating a new, expanded college campus at its current site in San Francisco, spearheaded by the architectural firm Studio Gang. The new campus design will be a model of sustainable construction and practice; will unite the college's programs in art, crafts, design, architecture, and writing in one location to create new adjacencies and interactions; and will provide more student housing than ever before.

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