

MESSAGE OF THANKS

September 10, 2021

Good Afternoon,

As we wrap up the week, I wanted to take a moment to thank all of you for helping to launch the new semester and the new year so very well.

You did so with optimism, creativity, experience, joy, patience, grace, and humor. As more of us have returned to campus, we have literally been switching on machines and lights that have been dormant, cleaning out files and refrigerators, turning over calendar pages and, in some places, have found “super plants” that have continued to grow – quite possibly thanks to a caring member of our great Facilities staff ensuring they had some water along the way.

Over the last 18 months and more, you did not skip a beat in teaching and engagement – and the business of the college carried on, most of it from a physical distance. Throughout that time and even still, you have all been innovating and responding to continued challenges.

Students were recruited and supported as they navigated the complexities of choosing a college, preparing portfolios, financing an education, and selecting classes. They were welcomed through a variety of modalities by our extraordinary faculty and studio managers into classrooms and studios – virtual and remote. Thank you to the faculty who worked so closely with the students in the classes of 2020 and 2021 to complete their work and requirements and cross a virtual stage to enter the ranks of our prestigious and talented alumni.

With great appreciation, we witnessed and benefitted from the strength and talent across the campus as Studio Managers and colleagues in the Library, Facilities, Public Safety, Administration and Finance, Housing, Residence Life, Dining Services and Technology were on site day in and day out keeping so many pieces moving and helping us stay connected, productive, and safe. Our team in Student Development reached new heights in continuously reaching out, engaging, and supporting our students as they faced unprecedented challenges on so many fronts. The tireless Admissions team created a host of virtual events and brought in a robust incoming class for this Fall.

Thank you to Financial Aid, the Registrar, and the Academic Resource Center for working to make the path smooth. Thanks to our JET team, we remained focused on the essential and ongoing work of equity and inclusion on campus, and our COVID Operations team led us all in protocols and practices to keep us all safe. Thanks also to our colleagues in HR – all of whom are new to the team – for arranging gatherings to say thanks and welcome us back, and to MarCom for helping to get the word out and keep us aware of what was happening on campus. To the countless members of our talented staff at every level who worked behind the scenes and remotely to ensure that reports were filed, bills paid, time sheets entered, and the college kept moving, thank you!

The MassArt Auction was a resounding success as a virtual event, scholarship dollars were raised, we continued to be astounded by the accomplishments, impact, and leadership of our alumni, and the MassArt Art Museum created an array of virtual programs, “MAAM From Home,” for a new online audience of all ages. Artward Bound prepared for its 10-year celebration this year, just as Compass prepared to celebrate its 20 year anniversary, and the Center for Art and Community Partnerships (CACP) remained focused on its mission of keeping art alive in our neighborhoods.

Over the summer our Architecture students enhanced the courtyard, and our Graduate, Continuing Education and Summer Youth programs all carried on seamlessly thanks to our talented faculty and dedicated team behind the scenes solving the inevitable challenges to their work brought on by the pandemic. Our colleagues in Academic Affairs worked through countless details in partnership with departments across campus as we moved into the new year. Primers and RAs arrived energized for orientation, pre-semester programs for first year students were delivered virtually, and move-in days were executed so very well.

Our students have certainly rallied, doing their part to adapt to different modes of instruction and the challenges of studying and making from home or on campus or both – demonstrating clearly the creativity, resiliency, work ethic and problem-solving skills that are the hallmarks of a MassArt student. It is so gratifying to meet our students and to see them in action – I invite you to pay a visit to the 11th floor of the Tower Building to see a beautiful, new student installation entitled – “Welcome Back.”

The members of our Board of Trustees, the MassArt Foundation, and the Alumni Leadership Council have all stayed the course in guiding and supporting our work, advocating for and demonstrating their belief in the importance of an art and design education.

It has been such a pleasure to continue to meet so many of you, now, in person. And it has been wonderful to witness old friends and colleagues coming together, overjoyed to be connecting with each other and with students, without the help of zoom. I haven't heard a single person say “you're muted!”

This is a time to be enormously thankful for all we have endured, individually and collectively, and to look ahead. At MassArt, we are enriched with all the right elements to build a bright future for our students and for our institution.

I am also mindful that as we wrap up this week, we do so on the 20th anniversary of 9/11 – a tragic event that so many of us remember vividly, and other members of our community may only know as part of our national history. Throughout the weekend there will be a range of services and reflections around the City of Boston, and across the country. In the aftermath of that day, one of the ways we began to step forward through differences was through the arts – seeking common ground in our shared purpose, our belief in the essential goodness of humankind, and our determination to pursue an optimistic future.

As we all forge ahead through this year, it is that shared purpose and shared humanity that will keep us grounded and inspire us to work passionately as we continue to make a difference in the lives of our communities and our world.

I am so very grateful to be a part of this community and to know that we will pursue that often challenging, but very hopeful and very bright future together.



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MassArt is a public, independent institution that prepares artists, designers, and educators from diverse backgrounds to shape communities, economies, and cultures for the common good.