

## NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

February 16, 2022

Dear MassArt Community,

With the semester now in full swing, the activity on campus is increasing with each week. Nothing can replace the energy that comes from being in each other's company! So much of our lives are planned and spontaneous encounters and conversations have been a wonderful gift – so too has been the 60-degree weather!

Thanks to faculty and staff for the strong turnout at Spring semester Opening Day, and for sharing thoughts candidly in the breakout room conversations. From the 16 breakout rooms, some common themes emerged and one of the most consistent was that many are eager for more opportunities to connect and converse with colleagues. We heard you, and will be organizing some gatherings for that purpose very soon, so please stay tuned.

***With this in mind, I invite you to join me for a cup of coffee on Tuesday, Feb. 22 from 1-2pm in the DMC Atrium. There's no agenda, simply coffee and tea and a brief chance to refuel at this busy time of year!***

As we walk across campus, it is hard to miss the remarkable breadth and depth of our students' talent. Kudos to Margot Zurakowska, Chair of Illustration, and the faculty and seniors on their incredible Illustration Senior Thesis show. If you haven't seen it yet, I urge you to catch it in the DMC Atrium, the Thompson Gallery on the 11th floor of the Tower, and galleries throughout the campus before it closes on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Our celebration of Black History Month has been highlighted by the weekly messages from Interim Provost James Mason featuring influential Black members of the MassArt community. They have influenced and nurtured the talents and perspectives of our students and faculty over the years all while creating a lasting impact even beyond our campus. I am grateful to Provost Mason for highlighting leaders Professor Calvin Burnett, Professor Emerita Sharon Dunn, and more.

As we continue the essential work regarding equity in higher education, I had the honor of representing MassArt in two recent public forums. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, as part of the Ad Club's Equity Project, I shared ideas with Suffolk University President Marisa Kelly and Lee Pelton, CEO & President of The Boston Foundation. And on January 28<sup>th</sup>, at the annual COF Martin Luther King Celebration hosted by MassArt, I had the chance to speak with Imari Jeffries, Executive Director of King Boston, about the urgent challenges and ongoing work we are engaged in to make our community a more equitable and welcoming place for all.

The annual budget process began on January 26<sup>th</sup> when Governor Baker filed his recommendation with the House of Representatives. While this is the first step in a long process it is encouraging to see a proposed increase to financial aid of \$25 million and a 45% increase to \$8.7 million for Dual Enrollment/Early College program. I have begun outreach to key legislators to convey the importance of MassArt to the Commonwealth and our students, as the legislature considers levels of support for public higher education. A top priority is securing the funds to fully fund all of the recently ratified collective bargaining agreements.

While Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> may have been one version of the super bowl, Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> is a souper bowl that is commercial free and has a big impact! Thank you to our Ceramics faculty, our talented staff, our students, SGA,

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and CACP and volunteers across the campus community who have produced over 350 beautiful bowls and a sold-out fundraiser that helps support the important community work of Haley House - it is so gratifying to see the many ways that MassArt puts our creative talent to work.

It has been great fun to see how a creative idea and an entrepreneurial spirit can result in a wonderful outcome – if you have a chance to visit the Tower 3<sup>rd</sup> floor – I would like to call your attention to the “wrapped” elevators just outside the Print Lab, featuring the playful illustrations of Jeff Bartell (M’13 DMI), in a project spearheaded by Print Lab manager Clint Baclawski. The designs really bring the space to life and we look forward to seeing this project enliven additional floors.

Looking ahead, the planning for MassArt Day on March 24<sup>th</sup> has begun. Last week, Provost Mason sent out a Call for Proposals on the theme of exploring equity, diversity, and inclusion. We will hear more from Academic Affairs as those proposals come in and plans take shape. MassArt Day programming varies from year to year and it consistently offers us a valuable opportunity for professional development.

And, many thanks to the ongoing, diligent work of our COVID Operations Team and to all of you for following the protocols to remain healthy and safe on campus. As Spring approaches, current trends give us optimism that we will be able to evolve our guidance - following public health expertise, as always - and enjoy a more open campus.

With February already half way through, the sun rises a bit earlier and sets a bit later and we know that spring, and spring break are just around the corner. Thank you for all that you do and the difference that you make in the lives of our students and our community. The generosity of spirit, talent, and good will across the campus is deeply inspiring – I do not take this for granted and we sure need all of this as we move through the opportunities as well as the challenges in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

Thanks so much, hope to see you for a cup of coffee next week!



Mary K. Grant, PhD  
President  
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

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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.*