



## College of Visual and Performing Arts

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Greetings Colleagues,

Congratulations, you made it through the most difficult semester I think any of us have ever experienced. While we still have final examinations to give, grade, and final course scores to assign, I want to sincerely thank you for your generosity of spirit that has allowed the arts to not only succeed in this time of difficulty, but to thrive. Recently, I have read outstanding Honors theses, heard from students who have been accepted into prestigious graduate programs, and heard from faculty who have persevered in their teaching and scholarship during these extraordinary times. All of your work inspires me and adds fuel to my resolve to keep highlighting the power of the arts in the world and at JMU.

Today I wanted to begin by sharing with you a few exceptional examples of your colleagues work this past week:

When teaching about music education in China to her students, **Dr. Lisa Maynard** invited **Professor Liz Lee** from South Central University for Nationalities, China to her on-line classroom. Not only did her students learn from an expert first-hand, but it helped to re-establish JMU's relationship with this Chinese university.



**Dr. Paulo Steinberg** invited his former piano professor from Indiana University, internationally acclaimed pianist **Evelyne Brancart** to visit his piano studio class through Zoom. Ms. Brancart answered questions regarding her career as a pianist, chamber musician, and educator. It was a special way to wrap up the academic year and to connect students who stayed in town with those who are back home as far away as South Korea.



**Assistant Professor Ben Lambert** adjusted the final project for his Shakespeare acting class (THEA 453). The newly adjusted final project, and the culmination of his students' semester work, is the creation of 10-minute cuts of one Shakespeare play, solo performed, and shot/edited/scored into 10-minute movies. Every movie will be streamed back-to-back as a Facebook event with a live discussion board for conversation and comments amongst audience members.

I know as we plan for the summer and fall that this creative and collaborative approach to our classes will continue to provide an exceptional education for our students. This isn't to brush aside some of the real issues experienced by our students, faculty and staff this semester. I want to hear those stories, as does senior leadership. There will be several coordinated surveys to understand the perspectives of our students, their families, and you. The faculty survey will be sent to you in mid-May and I encourage you to recover from the semester, reflect upon your experiences, and share them with us.

In the meanwhile, here are a few things to remember for this semester:

- JMU will hold its virtual commencement on Friday, May 8th at 7 pm. You can watch the

ceremony on JMU's webpage.

- Grade rosters opened on Friday, May 1st and will remain open until Tuesday, May 12th at 3 pm.

Lastly, good news is always welcome. I want to offer my congratulations to:

- **Dr. Jenny Ramirez** from the School of Art, Design, and Art History has been selected for the 2020 Provost Award for Excellence in Part-time Teaching.
- **Dr. Sarah Brooks** has been appointed Gen Ed Cluster One Coordinator.
- **Karen Gerard** from the School of Art, Design, and Art History received the CVPA Staff Recognition Award for this year.
- **Dr. Jesse Rathgeber** was the first ever CVPA recipient of the All Together One Award, given by the Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society. Congratulations, Jesse!
- **Tomona Mims** (String Music Education, from the studio of **Dr. Wanchi Huang**) has been selected as the recipient of the 2020 Joy Hollar Costello '58 Endowed Scholarship in Music Education. Tomona will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$1,300.00.

Thank you again for your work and collegiality over this semester and the past year. I will continue to seek your perspective and update you throughout the coming months as the university makes decisions about the fall semester. Until then, I wish you best of luck on grading and I hope that you are able to find some respite as we move towards summer.

Rubén Graciani, Acting Dean  
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