

Welcome to DCAD!

New president, partnerships making Delaware College of Art and Design one of Diamond State's not-so-hidden gems

BY SUSAN COULBY

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1997, Delaware College of Art and Design has strived to develop connections within all of its communities – educational, commercial, philanthropic and, of course, creative. The associations and partnerships these affiliations have bred enhance DCAD's presence and ability to carry out its mission.

And yet, despite 20 years of successfully creating relationships while developing artists, designers and its city locale, DCAD may not be as well-known as one might think. Its new president, for one, wasn't aware of the institution until the leadership opportunity arose.

"DCAD has a fantastic mission and an exciting, extremely unique product," says Jean Dahlgren, the College's chief executive as of August 1. "It shouldn't be a 'best-kept secret.'"

DCAD is the Mid-Atlantic's only two-year professional art and design college and is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. In addition to associate of fine arts degree programs in animation, fine arts, graphic design, illustration and photography, it offers courses for continuing education students seeking personal enrichment and professional development; programming for young artists in middle and high school; and community engagement ranging from internships with local businesses to artistic collaborations with area organizations to exhibitions and event spaces available to the public. DCAD also serves as an anchor institution in the revitalization of downtown Wilmington.

Not content for all of that to remain a best-kept secret, Interim President John Hawkins recently spearheaded an effort to boost awareness. The approach? Create stronger relationships, new relationships and new opportunities for relationships.

Among the results is a partnership with NextFab makerspace that enhances DCAD's curricula. Faculty now have NextFab memberships to help them integrate the latest in traditional and digital technology and artistic innovation into their classes. The partnership also involves conducting courses at NextFab so students can learn and create with state-of-the-art equipment and software and holding collaborative exhibitions such as April's NextFab-hosted show of DCAD student work.

Other academic developments include establishing or updating dozens of articulation agreements and creating a dual-enrollment program. The articulation agreements facilitate transfer of DCAD students into baccalaureate programs at local institutions such as Goldey-Beacom College and Wilmington University as well as nationally respected art schools such as Pratt Institute, Maryland Institute College of Art, Moore College of Art & Design, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, School



of the Art Institute of Chicago and University of the Arts. The dual-enrollment program offers Cab Calloway School of the Arts students the opportunity to take DCAD-instructed courses at Cab for both high school and college credit.

Another result of the awareness effort is the hiring of DCAD's first galleries and events manager, Kelicia Pitts. She is charged with expanding the inspirational and educational capacity of the Toni & Stuart B. Young Gallery and the Tatiana Copeland Student Center Gallery; curating rotating exhibitions by high school students at DCAD; helping students, faculty and staff take advantage of off-campus exhibition opportunities; and coordinating rentals of campus spaces as event venues.

All of the awareness activities occurred simultaneously with the search for DCAD's new president. According to DCAD trustee and Presidential Search

Committee co-chair Tom Shopa, the Committee sought a leader with a collaborative mindset, an outward-facing focus and a vision for the future.

“We were looking for someone with outstanding skills as a listener, a communicator and a motivator, someone both entrepreneurial and responsive, who will be an exemplary ambassador for DCAD,” Shopa says. “Jean is all of that and much more, and we are thrilled she will be DCAD’s next president.”

Dahlgren, who most recently was dean of undergraduate programs at Sage College of Albany in New York, has been a working artist

and designer throughout her career as an instructor and academic administrator. She is equally thrilled with the opportunity to continue DCAD’s path forward.

“Creating dynamic curriculum choices, fostering strategic partnerships, supporting the faculty and expanding the boundaries of what is possible for artists and designers intrigues and energizes me,” Dahlgren says. “Developing strong internal and external relationships is extremely important to supporting those goals and creating a vibrant learning environment.” ■

Delaware Tech Offers Delaware High School Students Economical Degree Pathways

BY ALLISON HAYES

TWO OF THE BEST-KEPT SECRETS at the state’s only community college provide high school students with an economical pathway to a college degree.

Delaware Technical Community College’s Student Excellence Equals Degree (SEED) scholarship program provides eligible Delaware high school graduates the opportunity to attain an associate degree tuition-free. And by combining the SEED program with one of the College’s 260+ connected degree programs, students can enter a four-year institution as a junior and earn a bachelor’s degree for half the cost of a student attending for four years.

The SEED scholarship program is available to Delaware high school graduates who maintain a 2.5 grade point average and stay out of trouble. Since the fall of 2006, approximately 10,000 Delaware high school graduates have benefited from the SEED scholarship program at Delaware Tech. This program has helped students be successful with data showing that SEED students complete more credits, have a higher grade point average, and are more likely to complete a degree than non-SEED students.

Connected degrees, formally called articulation agreements, provide Delaware Tech students with clear and accessible pathways to continue their education. These agreements between Delaware Tech and four-year higher education institutions allow students guaranteed admission as a junior, so students only have two years of coursework or less remaining before they graduate with a bachelor’s degree.

Currently, the College has agreements with 23 different senior institutions in a wide variety of majors ranging from business to engineering to health sciences. And new agreements are constantly being crafted with student value in mind.

“Earning an associate degree is a key milestone for students who want to transfer from Delaware Tech through a connected degree. It ensures that students are on track to complete a bachelor’s degree without losing time or money,” said Karen Deichert, collegewide articulation coordinator at Delaware Tech.

For Cole Barratt, a hospitality management student at Delaware Tech,



combining a SEED scholarship with a scholarship from Wilmington University allowed him to earn his bachelor’s with no educational debt. “After graduating from Delaware Tech, I completed my degree in a little over a year at Wilmington University and due to the flexibility – much like Delaware Tech – I was able to work full time as well. I gained the knowledge, education, and practical skills to become a successful business leader. I can say with 100% certainty I felt more than prepared when I transferred to Wilmington University.”

Today Barratt works as a human resources generalist with the Casino at Delaware Park. Of his experience, he says “I would definitely recommend a connected degree - it fits your schedule, offers smaller class sizes, and you gain a valuable education.”

To learn more about the SEED program, visit www.dtcc.edu/seed.

For a list of all of the connected degree options offered by the College, visit go.dtcc.edu/connected. ■