Dear Friends,

You have been a part of the success Watkins College of Art, Design & Film has achieved, and the faculty, staff, students and I are most grateful. In this year’s annual report, our focus is think, see and do, words that capture the essence of the College’s mission, the curriculum, and the works of art, design and film that are created by students and alumni.

Since our beginnings as a community education program in 1885, higher education accreditation and other recent milestones have marked Watkins’ progress toward greater levels of excellence. In 2012-2013, we made significant strides in strategic planning, new program development, improved facilities, notable alumni and student accomplishments, and continued financial stability in a challenging economic climate.

- Enrollment in Fall 2012 was 378 students, and those students came from 27 states and six countries internationally. The 378 students enrolled in six majors—the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fine art, photography, film, graphic design and interior design and the Bachelor of Arts in art—each of which had a very strong year. The culmination was Commencement in May, when we celebrated with graduates and their friends and families the successful completion of a rigorous program.

- The College added a sustainable design concentration within the interior design major, placing Watkins in a leadership position by ensuring that students and alumni are able to address the environment in which we live, work and play. New coursework in the ecology of design, global sustainability and sustaining building systems directly apply to employment opportunities that did not exist ten years ago.

FROM THE PRESIDENT
Watkins achieved its 11th consecutive year with a budget surplus, due to strong management of expenses.

The recently completed strategic plan, which can be found on our website, addresses four core areas: institutional effectiveness; financial health and stability; academic programs, student support services, community outreach and public service, and operational, organizational and physical resources. These focal points form the foundation for the College’s future, and are designed to guide us through the coming years.

In this year, faculty and staff are deeply involved in the preparation for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It is a dynamic time for all who are involved in this process, as the paradigms in higher education are shifting. Most importantly, with more and more online programs and concern for costs, we are addressing the questions: What is genuine? And, how do we grow the creative talent for a realistic future demand?

We will continue to keep our fiscal feet on the ground as we dream, think, see and do. Indeed, it is an extraordinarily interesting time.

All of us are grateful for your support that has allowed the College to reach its 128th year. We look forward to working with you in the future—our future—as we set the course for Watkins and an even more creative city and region.

Ellen L. Meyer
President
think. see. do.

Our Mission
Watkins College of Art, Design & Film offers a studio-based curriculum, supported by a strong academic foundation. The faculty and staff are committed to a learning-centered environment that challenges the student to engage the mind, train the eye, and cultivate talent and skill into an active realization of creative potential.

Engage the Mind
Challenging students to engage their minds is the first, foundational goal of Watkins. Above and below and around all else, we want them to consider, to examine. Determine and evaluate. Understand. Ideate. THINK.

Academics
Nearly 400 students are enrolled in Watkins’ baccalaureate degree programs, coming to our campus from 27 states and several foreign countries.

Faculty and staff are from some of the most noted academic institutions, galleries, design houses and film communities in the country, infusing talent, time, resources and contacts to benefit the artistic community in our region.

In its 128th year of continuous educational service, Watkins College of Art, Design & Film offers Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Film, Fine Art, Graphic Design, Interior Design and Photography, a Bachelor of Arts in Art, and a Professional Certificate in Film.
Holly Carden, a junior in Graphic Design from Smyrna, TN, was awarded the 2013 Robb Swaney Prize for her exquisitely detailed hand-drawn and digitally created illustrations.

Established in 2006 by Mary Jane Swaney in memory of her husband, noted Nashville architect Charles Robb Swaney, the $1,000 cash prize honors a student for producing “visual designs and patterns that speak to others.”

Holly Carden, a junior in Graphic Design from Smyrna, TN, was awarded the 2013 Robb Swaney Prize for her exquisitely detailed hand-drawn and digitally created illustrations.

Established in 2006 by Mary Jane Swaney in memory of her husband, noted Nashville architect Charles Robb Swaney, the $1,000 cash prize honors a student for producing “visual designs and patterns that speak to others.”

The program explores image making from both sides of the lens, enabling students to expand their field of creative vision and preparing them for careers in fine art, in professional and commercial fields such as arts organizations, galleries, museums and studios, and in many other fields that value new ways of looking at the world.
Train the eye.

Training the eye is about observing, discerning and recognizing, realizing and envisioning. Taking a look and taking it in. It’s what and where and how to SEE.

**Department of Graphic Design**

The complex field of Graphic Design demands artistic talent, an eye for details, conceptual thinking, technical skills and the ability to communicate clearly and concisely—and Watkins students enjoy a reputation for confidently meeting those requirements, bringing intelligence and wit to the table in a variety of media. In addition to the illustration concentration, the department introduced in Spring 2013 a web concentration, a directed course of study in web design and development.

Watkins artists are consistently among the most honored in the country through their submissions to regional, national and international advertising design competitions, particularly the ADDY Awards (hosted by the American Advertising Federation). At the 2013 Nashville Student ADDYs, Watkins won more
Department of Graphic Design (cont.)

top-level awards than any other school competing, for the second year in a row. Student work claimed twelve Golds (four more than last year), nine Silvers and a Judges’ Choice Award. Overall, 21 of the 35 entries were recognized.

Watkins’ talent is consistently recruited to promote signature happenings such as the American Artisan Festival, the Tin Pan South Songwriters Festival, Music City Hot Chicken Festival, Nashville Sister Cities Program, Nashville Symphony and Nashville Opera performances, and Murfreesboro’s JazzFest, as well as the Nashville Scene’s annual “Best of Nashville” issue.

PROFILE

HANNAH MASTERSON
Interior Design ’12

Immediately upon graduation, Hannah landed a position as junior designer at the boutique firm Beth Haley Design in Nashville, involved in virtually all the planning, drawing and designing details as well as writing for the BHD blog and a local style publication.

As a small school, Watkins is a great entry into a relatively small field; I loved the class size and one-on-one attention, because my teachers understood who I was and what I could give. One of my favorite things about the department is its focus on hand drafting and sketching. Too many designers skip this phase, and when this element is eliminated you lose a sense of connectedness to the design and the process, and creativity diminishes as well.

Most students can produce a strong portfolio by graduation, but is the recommendation you get, from what you have shown at school and through your internship, that can set you apart from other applicants. My teachers were willing to give me a strong recommendation for a position that would challenge any new graduate.
Cultivate talent and skill into an active realization of creative potential.

Our students create, make, produce, design and direct. They practice, perform, achieve, accomplish and succeed. They DO.

With contemporary art—indeed, the modern world—constantly shifting, transforming and re-setting boundaries, Watkins’ studio-based Fine Art program challenges students to consider the role of art in the present and the future, and their place in shaping it.

A visual immersion in various technologies and mediums; language and methods with which to communicate, and attention to theory and cultural issues all support and inform the practice of critical thinking, an essential element in becoming a successful, practicing artist. Through public exhibitions, artists gain a better understanding of how their ideas fit into the world around them; work by dozens of students was on view throughout Nashville in shows with outside groups, in addition to eight
John Henley is a member of A.S.A.I. (American Society of Architectural Illustrators) and works at a Nashville architecture firm in the visual/creative department, providing and creating renderings, concepts, illustrations, plans, elevations, models, perspectives and animations for local and national projects. During an internship in 2010, he received his first publication in Architectural Record from an honorable mention in a sketch contest: "Since then it hasn’t really stopped."

Most every class I had at Watkins helped to form my creative process. So much of what I do involves type, form, space, line, light, etc. There is not a day that goes by at work that I don’t think back to some method I learned in a drawing or sculpture class.

I find myself asking ‘What if?’ a lot. I think it was something that I developed at Watkins, where it has caused me to constantly question everything—how does A affect B?

I used to be concerned with, ‘Well, if I make the wrong mark, it will ruin the whole thing.’ You can waste a lot of time that way, and nothing ever gets learned, and nothing great ever happens. Make a mark and don’t be afraid to make mistakes. 

So much of my job is talking through a design or a user flow with developers, and because of my coursework I’m able to articulate why a particular design would be more effective.
The Handmade & Bound Nashville festival, presented by the Watkins Library and the Community Education department, is a unique celebration of book, print and paper: It’s the original interactive media!

In its second year, H&BN established itself as a signature Watkins event, drawing more than 400 guests for the Oct. 4-6 weekend of activities including a community book sculpture, opening reception for the juried gallery show Familiar Relics, and book arts marketplace with dozens of vendors, demos and hands-on art projects.

handmadeboundnashville.com
After being staged its first two years at Watkins’ lakeside campus, the 2013 edition of The pARTy – led by chair Debbye Oliver and co-chair Stephanie Conner – found a place like home at the striking arts and event space OZ. The annual fundraising evening, designed to “celebrate the creative” in Watkins students and the Nashville community, welcomed 300 arts, civic and business leaders for cocktails, dinner, music by Art Four Sale and Thomas Cain, and a fabulous silent auction with unique works of art, home décor, fashion, jewelry, and entertainment experiences.

New this year was a live auction segment, expertly steered by auctioneer Mac Hardcastle, with special travel packages to the art-scene destinations of the Venice Biennale, New York City and Los Angeles. Per the efforts of a stellar volunteer committee the 2013 pARTy was the most successful and well-attended yet!
CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Charitable Contributions to Watkins 2012-2013

Gifts to Annual Fund $474,367

Unrestricted $232,027*
Grants $207,640
Temporarily Restricted $ 34,700

Gifts to Capital
$500,000 pledge to Phase One of Ten-Year Plan for Expansion, added to anonymous $1 million pledge previous year

GRAND TOTAL: $977,887

*This unrestricted amount includes all gifts and scholarships, as well as gross revenue from The pARTy 2013

EXPENSES 2012-2013

- Instructional 44%
- Auxiliary 12%
- Institutional Advancement 5%
- Student Services 17%
- Institutional Support 16%
- Academic Support 6%

REVENUES 2012-2013

- Tuition and Fees 81%
- Other 1%
- Auxiliary Enterprises 10%
- Endowment 1%
- Annual Fund 7%
The 2012-13 Report includes the names of donors as they have requested to be listed and whose gifts were received during the fiscal year 2012-13, beginning July 1, 2012, and ending June 30, 2013.

The Office of Institutional Advancement has made every effort to ensure that the information is correct in this publication. In preparation of reports such as this one, errors occasionally occur despite best efforts.

If you have any questions or corrections, please contact Hilrie Brown, Vice President for Institutional Advancement at 615.277.7401 or hbrown@watkins.edu.

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**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Enclosed in this publication you will find a donor envelope. We ask that you carefully consider how you might support Watkins in the current year. Your gifts sustain our College and move us confidently toward our future. We need your continued help, and we thank you for your ongoing financial support of Watkins.
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The Film School

One of the College's oldest degree programs, The Film School offers a demanding curriculum that explores the artistic, technical and business aspects of filmmaking to provide a truly hands-on, immersive experience for aspiring professionals.

While rooted in dramatic narrative, the program encourages documentaries, commercials, music videos, experimental films, and television/web programs as students develop technical skills and sharpen the focus on their unique artistic vision.

Through deep study of the primary roles of writing, producing, directing, imaging and editing; access to the latest—and next—technologies; a portfolio reel of increasingly complex projects, and opportunities to connect with the professional creative community, graduates are prepared for a variety of careers in film, video, news and entertainment.

The 2012-13 "Above the Line" showcase (named for the film industry budget term that covers a production's major creative talent) screened the year's 12 best projects to a packed house at the Belcourt Theater in May.

PROFILE

TYLER BLANKENSHIP
Photography '12

Tyler shoots about 1,500 images weekly as a full-time photographer for Nelson Mazda, a dealership with three locations throughout Nashville. In addition to his first love, photography, his interests have expanded to video, music, sound engineering, screenprinting, sculpture and installation work.

Watkins created an environment of pure creativity for me. Having unrestricted access to school resources gave me the freedom to explore any idea I wanted. My core art classes blew my mind open to new media and made me realize the importance of choice of medium when creating personal work. I can't live without all disciplines of art being available to me. Epiphanies about music, life and art came to me during my time at Watkins, and the freedom of discussion allowed a philosophic environment to take root. These philosophies were guided by theory classes pertaining to understanding art...they helped form connections to everything in life and explain why we are who we are!

PROFILE (STRESE, cont.)

At Watkins I loved the camaraderie; it was such a positive environment where everyone is trying to do their best work and help each other out. I learned that the best solution isn't always the prettiest (it's hard to let some things go as a visual person), but design is more than just creating visual elements—it's also important how someone interacts with what you've made.
Through evaluation of student requests, special attention was paid to ensure courses include introductory and intermediate choices. Expanded offerings and distinctive topics helped raise enrollment by 15% from the previous year, yielding a 30% increase in revenue. Spring 2013 marked the inception of a weeklong, full-day Intersession Multi-Arts Camp, designed for Metro Nashville Public Schools students during the intersession period before spring break; 17 elementary school students enjoyed lessons in mixed media, drawing, painting, book arts, stop-motion animation and sculpture.

Nearly 1,000 students of all ages participated in more than 80 classes and workshops taught by talented practicing artists during re-designed summer, fall and spring sessions.

From its beginnings in 1885 through a bequest by Samuel Watkins, Watkins has served the community by providing a variety of educational and public service opportunities to people of all ages. The institution has always had a particular interest in the arts; in fact, one month after Watkins Institute opened its doors, the school held Nashville’s first comprehensive art exhibition. Instruction in the visual arts has continued without interruption for 128 years, and today’s Community Education Program at Watkins is firmly established as a place to learn the process of creating art through a wide variety of affordable classes.
Watkins also introduced an internship program for high school students interested in arts education. Ten local juniors and seniors worked closely with teaching artists and children during spring and summer camp classes and activities.

The Pre-College Program, a three-week intensive designed to give highly motivated high school students the experience of life and culture in an art college environment, saw its largest class to date in its fourth year, with several students attending from other states. The program expanded with a dedicated graphic design study joining the fine art and film concentrations. For the third consecutive year, the Pre-College film students’ production was accepted into the Nashville Film Festival for screening in the Young Filmmakers Category.

In January, Watkins hosted free teacher in-service training for more than 45 Middle Tennessee K-12 art teachers. Workshops focusing on experiencing place through art were held in book arts, site-specific installation and guerilla art through the combined efforts of the College and the Community Education Department.

For more information, contact Mary Beth Harding, Director of Community Education, at mharding@watkins.edu or 615.277.7455.
Artist talks come and go, but rarely are they as well-rounded and intelligent as last year’s series at Watkins.
Watkins 2012-13 Visiting Artists Series welcomed four exceptional guests to campus: video and performance artist Liz Magic Laser (New York), 3-D illustrator and animator Chris Sickels (Indianapolis), social practice pioneer Harrell Fletcher (Portland, OR), and photographer Deborah Luster (New Orleans). In addition to lecturing, each artist met with students for critiques and project reviews.

The Nashville Scene named Watkins winner of “Best Visual Art Series” in their Best of Nashville 2012 issue.

Artist talks come and go, but rarely are they as well-rounded and intelligent as last year’s series at Watkins.

Nashville Scene
We proudly welcomed the Class of 2013 to the ranks of Watkins alumni during ceremonies at the historic Downtown Presbyterian Church on May 18. David Macaulay, internationally acclaimed author and illustrator (Cathedral, The Way Things Work, The Way We Work) and MacArthur “genius grant” Fellowship recipient, was awarded the Honorary Degree, Doctor of Fine Arts by President Ellen L. Meyer, then delivered a Commencement address filled with encouragement, inspiration, surprise, and sly humor.

"Your unique personal traits and your experiences here at Watkins also make you problem designers," Macaulay shared in his commencement address. "It is simply not in your nature to accept the problems confronting you without question. And this is good because in fact you won’t always be given problems that are neatly defined and ready to solve."

Degrees were conferred upon 46 students by Board of Trustees chair Samuel E. Stumpf, Jr., in the film, fine art, graphic design, interior design, and photography programs. Erika Thompson, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design, received the Samuel Watkins Award of Excellence for the highest GPA.

2013 COMMENCEMENT

The ambitious, eager, confident, creative mind will not be short of work.
—David Macaulay, author, illustrator

Every day is another design problem. It’s what you’ve been training for.
—David Macaulay
PROFILE

BRENNAN EAGLETON
Film ’12

The summer prior to his senior year, Brennan landed an internship with Hollywood power-player Participant Media, producer of such films as Lincoln, The Help and An Inconvenient Truth. After proving himself with that experience, he was hired earlier this year when Participant launched their cable network pivot, whose target audience is millennials. Brennan lives in Santa Monica and is now writer’s assistant on the network’s daily talk show, “Take Part Live,” which blends social action and entertainment.

Watkins taught me to think critically and creatively, to see all sides of a situation and do something that not only got the job done, but done in a way that was authentic and inspired. My relationship with my mentor and advisor was probably the most important element to my success. Because of him, I was able to do more than manage a film project, but also see the importance of people and friends in the community.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR DESIGN

The Interior Design program encourages students to develop imaginative, responsible solutions to problems created by social needs and economic constraints, as well as re-configure the material and physical limitations of the built environment. The department offered another opportunity to help students differentiate themselves in their future workplaces by introducing the Sustainable Design concentration in Spring 2013, a study committed to work that meets human needs without compromising the environment, emphasizing non-toxic or recycled materials in building materials and fabrics.

Watkins students are consistently recognized for their creativity and professionalism in both academic competitions and community involvement. Watkins won the 2012 student competition at the annual conference of the Tennessee Chapter of ASID (American Society of Interior Designers) and, for the past two years, a Watkins student has received the chapter’s top honor, the Jane D. Reagor Award.

Alumni of the program can be found in commercial, residential, hotel, restaurant, healthcare and furniture design; all members of the 2012 graduating class are either practicing interior designers or pursuing graduate degrees.

PROFILE

QUINN DUKES
Fine Art ’07

Within weeks of her final BFA critique, Quinn moved to New York, determined to continue her development as a performance artist. In the past six years, her work has been performed throughout New York as well as in Seattle, Boston and Miami. Currently she is curator of the dB visual artist series in Dungeon Beach/Brooklyn, and is assistant director of admissions at the School of Visual Art, where she is pursuing an MFA in Art Practice. (cont.p.24)
I wanted to pursue a creative field and started as an Interior Design major…but discovered freedom through my Fine Art courses [and realized] I wanted to make a mess.

Throughout my studies at Watkins I was pushed to be ambitious, to activate my vision and to follow through. At the time, performance art was not exactly a popular or understood medium within Tennessee, so the advice provided from my advisors really helped me flourish; I felt steadily supported and challenged. My grandmother always encouraged me to remain focused. I keep this with me. Watkins taught me to listen. To be thoughtful. So when I approach any project, I listen, I focus and I remain thoughtful. And that’s led me to incredible opportunities and experiences.

Assistant Professor Christine Rogers, who earned an MFA from Tufts, joined the school’s Photography faculty after spending six months in India as a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Scholar. Her research project focused on the landscapes of the northern hill stations, all of which lay claim to being “the Switzerland of India,” and the significance of visiting one place for the vista while imagining another.

Her stunning solo exhibition, Photographing Imagined Landscapes: The Switzerland of India, debuted at 1 Shanthi Road Gallery in Bangalore, and received critical acclaim in several Indian, British and American media outlets.

Assistant Professor Morgan Higby-Flowers, who holds an MFA in Electronic Integrated Arts (Alfred University), teaches 4D design and digital imaging and is developing Time-Based Media courses. His work in the "dirty new media" world of electronic art has been performed and exhibited extensively in Chicago and New York as well as in Mexico City, Barcelona and Cairo.

Chair of the Film School and Associate Professor Richard Gershman spent more than 25 years as a Los Angeles-based director, production manager and second unit/assistant director in network television, film and theatre in addition to teaching at several universities across the country. He holds MFA degrees in Film Directing and in Theatre Directing, was awarded a directing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and is a member of the Directors Guild of America.
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