



Work by Moon Toomey '27, Fine Art.

Upcoming Events

April 9 Community Circles: Feeling GoodMatters, 3:30-4:30 pm, Room 309, with special guests from Student Affairs and Connect Counseling (*see below*)

April 12 Admissions Open House, 8:30 am to 1 pm

April 16 Committee of the Whole, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

April 25 Spring Semester Ends

April 25 All-School Picnic, 2-5 pm, Long's Park (*see below*)

If you have news, an event, or an announcement you'd like to share, please email Jen Kopf, at jkopf@pcad.edu or [share in this document](#).



Steve Jacobs

Steve Jacob joins College as Special Asst. to President

A PCA&D welcome to Steve Jacob, who joined the College last Monday as Special Assistant to the President. Jacob's work will focus on the College's strategic planning as well as external partnerships, such as negotiating our evolving agreement with the Academy of Live Technology.

Jacob comes to PCA&D from York College of Pennsylvania, where he was Executive Director for the Center for Community Engagement. He also managed the budget for Academic Affairs and was the data manager for a recent Middle States self-study. Jacob also has experience as the Associate

Provost for Institutional Effectiveness at York College, where he earned tenure and taught for more than two decades as a professor of sociology.

And Jacob is no stranger to Lancaster, living in York for more than two decades. He has written journal articles about farmland preservation in Lancaster, Amish enterprises, and has spent many evenings with his daughters at concerts at the Chameleon Club and Lizard Lounge. He's excited to join the team at PCA&D and can't wait to get started and meet the people of this great institution.



Copy That: Reflecting on the values of imitation

Copycat isn't usually meant as a compliment. In the same vein, many of us are familiar with the quote: 'Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery' (usually attributed to Oscar Wilde), but fewer of us may be familiar with the whole quote: "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness." (OUCH). In academic settings, these

ideas are contained in the concept of plagiarism, attempting to pass off someone's work as our own. The value of originality is so ingrained that there is such a thing as self-plagiarism, passing off previous work as original/new.

At the same time, there is a history of copying in visual art education. Making a copy was seen as part of the learning process: it requires the ability to recreate and the

ability to make sense of what the original artist did (reverse-engineering their process). By copying, we internalize a way of making art, requiring some understanding of the physical processes by which it was made. This makes a lot of sense in tangible mediums like drawing, painting, and sculpture (though I do wonder about the role of copying in digital imagery). With this history in mind, how do we make sense of a disciplinary history of copying in the era of creativity, originality, and generative AI?

Keep reading!...

Demuth Invitational highlights 5 with PCA&D ties

Five artists with Pennsylvania College of Art & Design ties are featured in the Demuth Invitational, one of the region's most prestigious exhibitions. *In Good Company: Demuth Invitational*, is on display at the Demuth Museum, 120 E. King St., Lancaster, through June 15 and work highlighted includes that of **Evan Kitson '10** (adjunct, Fine Art), **Leah Limpert Walt '18** (adjunct, Foundation, Illustration, & Center for Creative Exploration), Assistant Dean **Justin Phillips '01**, **Aaron M. Thompson** (assistant professor, Fine Art & Foundation), and **Christine Welch** (PCA&D co-founder). [Go here](#) for more information about the exhibition.

Directions

BY TODD SPENCER

The shows must go on: Educating a rising workforce

THE LIVE EXPERIENCE INDUSTRY has long been burnished with star power, attracting talented professionals who work their magic behind the scenes to pull off productions that delight and astonish audiences. For decades, this workforce honed its craft through an ad hoc mentorship model, with career veterans sharing their knowledge with apprentices. Let's face it: it's a cool industry, and there was a seemingly endless stream of young people eager to gain a foothold in all elements of backstage production, willing to do the grunt work to gain experience.

It is important to professionalize our work.

The worldwide work stoppage in the industry during the pandemic broke this model, resulting in massive attrition as workers retired or transitioned into other industries. We saw more than a third of our most skilled talent leave and never come back, which resulted in losing that brain trust of mentorship. The pandemic years also revealed problems in our industry that can no longer be ignored as our industry matures as a professional career pathway.

As I see it, there are four key problems affected by four factors to address in our industry: the lack of talent to support the industry; the lack of talent to support the industry; the lack of talent to support the industry; and too many siloed groups working out of sync.

Lack of talent to support the industry

As an industry, we have a mishmash of training programs that leave it to each individual employer to outline what skills are required

to meet the needs of roles in our industry. This disjointedness has led to an inability to effectively on-ramp new entry-level talent into our industry, show them a clear career path and the growth skills needed to achieve advancement level, and effectively measure the volume and economic contributions of that broad employee base at a federal level. It's a vicious cycle that we can break by striving for better entry-level skill set training, clear delineation of skills required for roles, and becoming visible in the context of the federal government and broader economy.

Lack of uniformity in the skill sets

Every employer, union, or individual contractor has their own idea of what they need for training (some programs are better defined than others), but none of them is aligned to any overarching standard that could split the entire industry by de-mythologizing the path required to grow from an entry-level employee in the industry through the advancement of higher roles and the additional skills or certifications required to achieve that.

The training model of the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE) union is robust, as are many large private employers; however, only the members or employees of each organization can attend these trainings and, as a result, they are siloed. Universal standards and certifications are needed to professionalize our industry.

Three years ago, Jim Digby and I hosted the Creative Industry Roundtable. Instead of one leader attempting to speak on behalf of the whole event industry, we flipped that model to host a table of key industry influencers that as a body represented all the stakeholders. Each year, the group selects the most important and

timely effort to put their collective support behind. In 2024, that effort was workforce development. The result was to rally in support of the EREW (Events Education Workforce Development Federation) with Laura Parker and her initiative to update the NAICS codes, ONET codes, and a career cluster framework that would benefit everyone across the entire event industry.

Lack of uniformity in funding and support to properly develop our workforce, we need standardized funding and support. This doesn't mean that we need one entity to rule them all because frankly, we are an industry of creatives who tend to recoil at the idea of centralized authority. But we do need consensus and collaboration to grow to our potential.

The Creative Industry Roundtable also resulted in forming The Exhibitions & Events Empowerment Foundation, with founding board members Laura Parker and Odie Parkins as co-chairs, Mark Johnson as vice chair, Erin Grabe as Secretary, and myself as treasurer, with strategic advisor Jim Digby. This Foundation will act to secure funding by way of grants and sponsorships that can then be given to organizations in need of support who are directly working on industry training or workforce development programs, including apprenticeships.

Too many siloed groups working out of sync

Our industry developed organically, serving many different audiences and stakeholders across the globe, but as shows move from regional productions to worldwide tours, standardization is paramount so that we all can share a common technical language, even when we don't share a native tongue. When

we are in silos, our initiatives can work against each other and are especially confusing to a young workforce without enough hands-on experience to be discerning. We can tend toward tribalism in our own clubs of people on tour or at industry events. While this can serve to build camaraderie and belonging during a production, it doesn't serve as a welcoming model for those hoping to break into the industry.

To combat these problems, I see six solutions that can change this dynamic:

- **Entry-level and intermediate student education:** We need to engage the great resources and training facilities that already exist and coordinate and collaborate for a more unified set of career cluster frameworks.
- **Workplace on-ramping:** We need to codify observation programs, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships to ensure we continue to have great on-the-job training resources.
- **Mentorship from experts in the field:** As our industry grows, we need more opportunities to garner advanced knowledge. A way to do this is by making training available to entry-level employees through numerous organizations and trade-show environments, including NAMM, LDJ, InfoCOMM, USITT, and others.
- **Funding to move initiatives forward:** In order to effectively see industry-wide projects through, we need more centralized funding resources. The formation of the Exhibitions & Events Empowerment Foundation aims to secure larger government funding and disburse funds to organizations that meet specific criteria for workforce development.
- **Access to trade certifications:** After seeing the need, ESTA has pioneered this with ETCP certifications in rigging and electrical (with variations of each). Additionally, Audiovisual and Integrated Experience Association (AVIXA) offers professional certifications in AV design knowledge, installation, and networking.
- **Access to national standards:** By adopting national standards in the industry, we could



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unify the capabilities in the workforce. Currently, ANSI standards are available for free through ESTA. Groups of industry experts write the standards, which are exclusive to the industry, covering things like rigging, lighting, video, staging, fog effects, etc. The Event Safety Alliance has also published The Event Safety Guide (part of which is an ANSI standard), which is billed as "the definitive collection of event safety knowledge." By making their annual conference

open to students, it's a real opportunity to obtain this knowledge at the start of a career.

Many of us in the industry are already working toward these solutions. We all know that a concerted effort to build the next generation workforce is imperative, especially with so many mentors gone. We have a real skill shortage in the industry. As we look toward our future, it is important to

PCA&D/ALT highlighted in industry publication

Protocol, a publication of the entertainment technology industry, has published a think piece highlighting the collaboration between Pennsylvania College of Art & Design and the Academy of Live Technology at Rock Lititz in its Spring issue. It is authored by Todd Spencer, President of Ventana, a business consulting firm that specializes in serving event, entertainment, and hospitality companies. *The Shows Must Go On: Educating a*

rising workforce focuses on the need of the live event industry to renew itself after the pandemic and the vital role that training and educational initiatives such as the PCA&D/ALT collaboration provide. You can read the full Protocol piece [here](#); it begins on Page 8.

What **MATTERS**

Circles
for
Community Building

Find out what you and your community think about important topics, build connections, and develop capacities to engage in difficult conversations.

Wednesdays 3:30PM RM 309

Facilitated by Dana Jain, Student Success Advisor, and open to the entire PCA&D community. A different topic and special guests with informed perspectives on the topic each week. Tea and a light snack will be served.

Community Circles open to entire College

Come join the Student Affairs community conversation series, *Circles for Building Community*, from 3:30-4:30 pm Wednesdays in Room 309. Circles, one of the oldest

forms of group process, are by design inclusive, nonhierarchical, open, and co-creative. They are used to facilitate community conversations about important subjects and to help support healthy relationships within communities, among community members. This series is facilitated by Student Success Advisor **Dana Jain**, who has experience working with circles for community building. A different topic will be explored each week with invited guests who will contribute their informed perspectives on the subject. Everyone in the College community is welcome! Come every week or just for the topics that interest you most. Tea and a light snack will be served.

Here's the upcoming schedule:

April 9: *Feeling Good Matters with special guests from Student Affairs and Connect Counseling*

April 16: *Money Matters with special guest Maria Provencher, Assistant Dean of Career Development and Internships*

April 23: *Community Matters with special guests to be announced*



Save the date! All-School Picnic April 25

It's that time of year to look forward to the All-School Picnic to celebrate the end of the year with the PCA&D community. All faculty, staff, and students are invited, so please **save the date!**

We'll be at [Long's Park](#) on **Friday, April 25 from 2-5 pm** with food, drinks, music, and games. Folks are invited to bring guitars, frisbees, friends, and pups along. Rain location will be in the Atrium.

If you need to carpool or if you are able to offer carpool, please [fill out this form](#) so we can get folks connected!

Open in Hayden Gallery Touchstone show

The Touchstone Foundation Show now is hanging in the Hayden Gallery, next to the Atrium. Artwork is the product of a class run by **Jason Ward** for a coloring book to celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Touchstone Foundation, an organization that works to expand access to local youth mental health resources in Lancaster County. The exhibition will be open on First Fridays through May, and when the room isn't in use for a class or meeting.

Students whose work is represented in the exhibition are: **Mary Auble** '26, Illustration; **Alanna Botscharow** '26, Illustration; **Julia Burns** '26, Illustration; **Shontae Dashiell** '26, Illustration; **Jossalyn Dolin** '26, Illustration; **Morgan Earley** '26, Illustration; **Madi Edmiston** '26, Illustration; **Finn Jones** '26, Illustration; **Jamie Little** '26, Illustration; **Gelian Mesa** '25, Illustration; **Ava Morgan** '26, Illustration; **Sophia Replogle** '26, Illustration; **Logan Vedral** '26, Illustration; **Sierra Weidman** '26, Illustration; and **Julia Wychryst** '26, Illustration.

SuperHero Project Exhibition on 2nd floor

The SuperHero Project Exhibition celebrates the collaboration between PCA&D student interns and the SuperHero Project, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering children facing serious illnesses and disabilities through custom artwork. As part of their internships, students created Power Posters — bold, inspiring designs that reflect the unique strengths and personalities of these young heroes. Through their creativity, they transformed real stories into impactful visuals, bringing joy and confidence to children and their families. Check it out in the 2nd-floor Gallery.

Students whose work is on display include **Endia Clark** '26, AGA; **Sandy Farrare** '25, AGA; **Onix Guadalupe-Rivera** '25, Illustration; **Abby Howe** '26, AGA; **Connie Saunders** '26, AGA; **Samantha Sidesinger** '25, AGA; **Aaron Vankirk** '26, Illustration; and **Bryana Walker** '26, Illustration.

Final Thursday Night Figure Drawing session

Looking for more creative community? Come join Thursday Night Figure Drawing, open to students, faculty, staff, and alumni, in Room 404, 6-9 pm. Come work with a live model and long poses that are good for drawing and painting. This week, April 10, is the final session of the semester!

Hanging student artwork? Let us know!

We love to celebrate everyone's creativity on campus -- and we want to make sure everyone has a chance to see new work that's being hung on our walls, too! The next time you're putting student work on display -- from a full-blown exhibition to work from a class assignment -- please reach out to communications@pcad.edu so we can share the exhibition campus-wide. Thanks!

Learn a new skill: Sign up for a CCE class

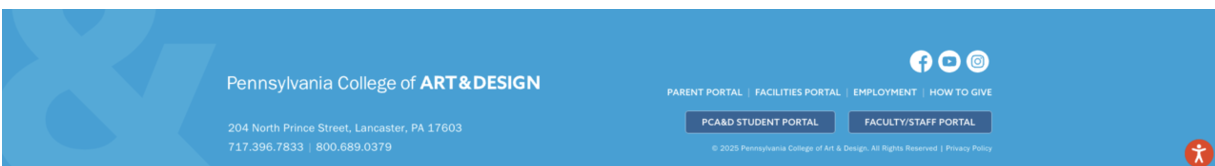
Faculty and staff: Check out the slate of classes and workshops offered by the College's [Center for Creative Exploration](#). You can request your employee benefit for discounted CCE classes for yourself as well as for your children or spouses. Email ce@pcad.edu to let them know the class or workshop you're interested in and they can work with you to get you a special code. Also, as educators, you can request scholarships for students in grades 1-12 for CCE classes. If you know a student in our community who would benefit, [head here](#) and complete the request form. Questions? Email ce@pcad.edu.

Hear of gig work, part-time or full-time jobs for students and alumni? Let Career Services know

Help fill our Student Portal Job Boards with opportunities for our students and alumni. They can range from gig work to part-time, and even some full-time jobs.

There is a high demand for work opportunities among our student body in both the creative and non-creative sectors.

If you hear any great opportunities please pass them along to the Career Services Team at CareerServices@pcad.edu so we can connect our students to employment opportunities.



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Web resource: The Faculty/Staff Portal

You can find a [Faculty/Staff Portal](#) at the very bottom right corner of the PCAD.edu homepage. It links to all sorts of useful information, from retention reports and class schedules to the academic calendar, maintenance and events requests, and much more.



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