Dear Friends,

On behalf of everyone at the UNCSA Foundation, I am honored to be able to share with you this report. We are very excited about the financial growth the university experienced over the previous fiscal year, and the overall upward fundraising trend we have seen over the last several years.

It is an honor to serve as president of the UNCSA Foundation Board of Directors, and we take very seriously our commitment to ensure a sound financial footing for this remarkable university. I am thrilled and humbled by the talent demonstrated by our students, and proud to work on their behalf so that the promise that our institution makes to our young artists—that they will learn to do what they love, and do it brilliantly—will continue to be fulfilled for generations to come.

This report contains lots of good news about the financial, artistic and academic health of the university. In addition to record-level fundraising, we saw a 10.8% increase in the market value of our endowment, as well as significant growth in new donors and alumni giving percentage.

Our students and alumni are achieving extraordinary things thanks to your support, from Tony Awards to Oscar nominations to many other forms of professional success. They cannot achieve what they do on talent alone. It takes hard work and dedication, and UNCSA students are among the hardest-working young people I have ever encountered. They have demonstrated time and again that, with our help, they can accomplish truly extraordinary things.

Thank you for supporting UNCSA and its students. Your generosity is making a lasting impact on our university, our community, our state and, ultimately, the artistic fabric of our entire society.

With warm regards,

James E. Martin
President
UNCSA Foundation Board of Directors
When playwright J.T. Rogers graduated from the School of Drama in 1990, he knew he was equipped to succeed on the world’s most prominent stages—but not without a lot of hard work.

The payoff to his hard work has arrived. J.T.’s work “Oslo” won the 2017 Tony Award for Best Play. A gripping drama about the negotiations that led to the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, “Oslo” was hailed by The Washington Post as “hands down the best new play of the season.” The play featured Jennifer Ehle, Drama ’88, who won the Lortel Award and was nominated for a Tony Award as Best Actress.

The accolades go on: “Oslo” won the Drama Desk Award, the New York Drama Critics Award, the Drama League Award, the Outer Circle Critics Award and the Obie Award for outstanding play.

Though J.T. has now taken his place among America’s most promising playwrights, he is quick to remind students that success is neither magical nor instantaneous, but the result of patience, determination and work.

“When he came to visit a few years ago, he reminded us that there were a lot of lean years between school and the exciting opportunities he was enjoying, and he urged the students to stay true to the work,” says Carl Forsman, faculty member and former dean in the School of Drama. “We’ll all try to keep following his brave lead. I am sure there are great things ahead for J.T., and we’re grateful for his continuing support of the drama school.”

The creative and professional heights that J.T. and other UNCSA alumni are reaching are a part of a proud legacy defined not by talent alone, but by rigor, persistence and devotion to craft. While not every UNCSA graduate lands a Tony, the lessons they learn on our campus—thanks to outstanding faculty, fellow students and an engaged community of supporters—help them confront life’s challenges and seek out their own career-defining moments.
A chance to tell new stories

Nikyla Boxley didn’t always want to be an actor. With the goal of becoming a forensic anthropologist, the Detroit native applied to Cass Technical High School, an International Baccalaureate World School with an alumni list that includes Diana Ross, Delia Reese and Lily Tomlin. There, she found a new path.

When her school staged a production of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s “In the Heights,” Nikyla’s friends suggested she audition. She’d been a dancer all her life, not an actor—but suddenly a passion for drama ignited.

One of her teachers was none other than Marilyn McCormick, winner of an Excellence in Theatre Education award, presented by the Tony Awards and Carnegie Mellon University. McCormick urged Nikyla to attend the National Unified Auditions in Chicago, where she was accepted to six drama programs.

Still, Nikyla wasn’t completely certain she wanted to attend an arts conservatory. Perhaps a more traditional university experience would provide her with more options for her future. Nevertheless, she visited UNCSA.

“I was instantly in love. The sense of family and community, right from the start, was a beautiful experience.”

Like many UNCSA students, Nikyla’s journey would not have been possible without scholarship support. Her mother, a public school teacher, has multiple sclerosis; her sister, who was a nursing student, was unable to work.

Thanks to UNCSA donors, however, her scholarship support has increased each year. Now, her education is almost completely covered. “I’m forever grateful for all those who support scholarships,” Nikyla says. “I have no words to ever repay them.”

As her training continues, Nikyla is looking forward to some of the upcoming productions and the chance to be a part of telling new stories.

“We’re doing a crazy play right now that’s like nothing I’ve ever seen at this school before,” Nikyla says. Lisa D’Amour’s “Airline Highway” is set in a seedy motel in post-Katrina New Orleans. It’s a story about people on the fringe of society.

“I want to keep doing things like that: plays about people who are forgotten.”

School of Filmmaking is #14 in the nation

The Hollywood Reporter 2016

$10M GIFT POSITIONS UNCSA TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS

Training rooted in time-tested methods and techniques—the classical model has undergirded our approach to educating and training young artists from the very beginning. At the same time, our leadership and faculty constantly look for innovative ways to provide meaningful experiences to modern audiences.

Thanks to a $10 million gift from an anonymous donor, we can lean into the future with even greater purpose. The gift will create the Institute for Performance Innovation, focused on developing cutting-edge training that changes the face of the arts and entertainment. The Institute will support the groundbreaking Animatronics Program in the School of Design & Production and advance our cutting-edge graduate program in Gaming and Virtual Reality in the School of Filmmaking.

Approximately half of the gift will be directed toward scholarships and faculty, with the balance providing an endowment to support infrastructure and operating expenses for the new programs. The gift “will enable us to offer classes in areas that are not offered in any other school in the world, to train students in the fastest-growing markets in the entertainment industry,” Provost David English says.

“We are profoundly grateful for this transformative gift, and deeply moved by the donor’s guiding vision and passion for UNCSA,” Chancellor Lindsay Bierman says. “It allows us to develop new career pathways for our students through a future-focused laboratory where designers, filmmakers, musicians, dancers, actors, and artists of all kinds can reimagine, reinvent, and reshape arts experiences for 21st century audiences. I feel confident our donor will take great pride in what we accomplish through this extraordinarily generous gift.”

Today’s artists face an unprecedented level of competition for audience attention, but the combination of refined artistic technique, meaningful storytelling and cutting-edge technology will help to ensure that our students and alumni can continue to create art that stands apart.

Annual Report
2016-17
Stories
Highlights
Points of Pride

$14 in the
nation

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Eva Wetzel has always had a musical instrument in her hand. “I started piano when I was three and violin when I was four,” Eva says. “I’ve taken organ, voice, trumpet, and clarinet lessons too.”

Growing up in small town near Waimar, Germany, Eva was surrounded by music. Her mother taught piano and recorder, and her older siblings played the violin and cello. “My plan was to learn every instrument, but at some point that was too much,” Eva says with a laugh.

When she was eight, she met someone who set the course for her future in the arts: violin legend and UNCSA faculty member Ida Bieler. As high school approached, Eva auditioned for Bieler’s violin program in Germany. Bieler introduced her to UNCSA. She enrolled in the High School program her senior year with the intention of returning to Germany to continue her training, but UNCSA helped her hone her craft more than she had imagined.

“In my senior year, I improved more than I had any time before because I was surrounded by music.”

Many of the programs back home were integrated into larger institutions with classes in a number of non-artistic fields, and the music conservatories included performers of many ages and experience levels. She found she preferred what UNCSA offers—a close-knit environment among her peers.

“Here you don’t have to deal with travel and taking the train and all that. You wake up, walk two minutes, and there’s all your friends who also need to practice six hours a day and understand the journey you’re on.”

In addition to the many classical performances that have moved her in her time at UNCSA, she’s enjoyed taking part in opera performances and musicals such as the 2015 performance of “Guys and Dolls.” Through UNCSA connections, she was also able to take part in last summer’s Aspen Music Festival.

“I got to work with some wonderful musicians and conductors, and the school made it possible.”

After graduation, Eva plans to return to Europe, at least for a while. She is grateful for the lessons she has learned and the scholarship donors who made her time at UNCSA possible. “I don’t think I could have finished my last three years without scholarships.”

Eva also notes that she has received enormous moral support from scholarship donors such as Bill and Judy Watson, who attend her performances and send her encouraging messages. “It’s not just the money. They’re very supportive. It’s personal.”
Greg Hamilton grew up just fifteen minutes from the UNCSA campus, but he never imagined himself attending until late in his senior year. In fact, he didn’t even know the school existed.

A native of High Point, Greg was exposed to dance from an early age through dance ministries at his church, but he never found many opportunities to directly participate.

As middle school approached, Greg enrolled at an arts magnet school for grades 6-12. “In sixth grade I was thrown into dance class and I started learning lots of new things,” he says. “But I didn’t get serious about it until high school.”

His dance teacher focused on exercises based on the work of early 20th-century choreographer Lester Horton. “It was also heavily influenced by West African tradition,” Greg adds. “It was really funky. Really cool.”

When it came time to apply to colleges, Greg selected several traditional, four-year universities. He was very curious as a freshman and sophomore. “I didn’t really know what type of school I needed to be looking into to perfect my craft.”

“My dance teacher pulled me aside and said, ‘Do you really want to do this seriously? Is dance what you want to do? Because it’s needed to be looking into UNCSA.’” His teacher told him to look into UNCSA. “I remember thinking that I couldn’t believe a place this beautiful existed so close to home,” Greg says.

After being accepted to study contemporary dance, Greg was determined to learn everything he could from both faculty members and fellow students. “I was very curious as a freshman and sophomore. I’m still very curious,” he says. “I would watch the third year class and the fourth year class and I would see how hard they worked.”

He was fascinated by the work ethic of one person in particular: Savannah Spratt, a 2016 graduate who is now a company member in the Limón Dance Company. “If a choreographer called her to do a certain part, she’d work on that, but even after that moment of focus was on her, she’d still be on the sidelines rehearsing or working on something,” Greg recalls. “That really inspired me.”

His own hard work has been recognized through merit-based scholarships. “I believe you never stop growing and that there’s always something else that can be achieved,” Greg says. “Yes, you’ve done this step a million times, but there’s always something new that you can learn about that one simple step.”

What’s next for Greg? “My plan is to move to New York and audition for everything,” he says. “I’m going to be present, try hard, and hope for the best. I’m nervous, but really excited because I feel very prepared.”

WHERE SUMMERS GET INTENSE IN THE BEST OF WAYS

During the summer, our campus never sleeps. Eager to immerse themselves in classical technique and innovative approaches to arts education, artists from all over the United States and around the world make their way to Winston-Salem for Summer Intensives.

In the summer of 2017, however, participants in the School of Dance’s summer programs were exposed to something brand new: well-established and emerging choreographers creating fresh works as a part of the Choreographic Institute.

“The Choreographic Institute is an example of innovative programs and curricula that will propel UNCSA to the forefront of performing arts and media education in the United States,” Chancellor Lindsay Bierman says.

The Institute includes two programs—the Choreographic Development Residency for up-and-coming choreographers still early in their careers, and the Choreographic Professional Residency for seasoned contemporary ballet choreographers.

Participants in the Choreographic Development Residency received mentoring from Visiting Distinguished Artist Helen Pickett, a dancer, actress and resident choreographer for Atlanta Ballet. They participated in daily technique classes, workshops and lectures led by Summer Dance faculty and guests, held afternoon rehearsals with their cast of dancers selected from the Summer Dance Intensives, and enjoyed evening access to UNCSA’s studios for further choreographic research.

The choreographers were excited to work with Summer Intensive participants, which included 16 dancers from Japan. The collaboration between these promising choreographers and talented dancers culminated in a world premiere of the works at the Stevens Center on July 21.

Meanwhile, Susan Jaffe and Ethan Stiefel, both former principal dancers of American Ballet Theatre, were the first participants in the Choreographic Professional Residency. They worked with professional dancers who were in residence on campus for two weeks.

“This intimate setting allowed us to work deeply and collaboratively with the dancers to either research choreographic ideas or build towards a new work,” Jaffe says.

The Choreographic Institute is a reminder that while UNCSA will always be a place of careful study rooted in classical training, it is also a place where originality and artistic exploration are encouraged. The choreographers and dancers who participated in the inaugural Institute came away with inspiring new work refined through collaboration and the experience of creating and honing new art. Meanwhile, audiences in Winston-Salem and around the world gained a fresh artistic perspective from some of the industry’s most talented choreographers.

50th anniversary of the Nutcracker 2016
UNCSA artists are prepared to succeed on all kinds of stages and screens. Our students and alumni demonstrate that through hard work and refined technique, they know how to make our world more interesting, more beautiful and more meaningful—whether at Carnegie Hall, the Stevens Center, a corporate boardroom or, as we saw not too long ago, the White House.

In October 2016, students, faculty and alumni in the School of Design and Production (D&P) headed to the South Lawn of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. to assist with an event hosted by former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama: the annual party for children of military-affiliated families.

Fourteen D&P students, a handful of faculty members, and about a half-dozen alumni volunteered to create a storybook landscape with decorations, life-sized puppets, a trampoline with aerial performers, and more. As a centerpiece, the South Portico of the White House—where the President and First Lady greeted their guests and passed out treats—was decorated in an “Alice in Wonderland” theme. The D&P participants then donned costumes and took an active role in setting the scene.

“We developed the narrative concept from top to bottom,” Dean Michael J. Kelley says. “And we transformed the South Lawn of the White House into a literary fantasy land using scenery and props, lighting, costumes, wigs and makeup, and sound tracks. Just about all the disciplines taught in the School of Design and Production were involved.”

“It was an absolute honor and privilege to have worked on this with students, faculty, and my fellow alumni,” says Kim Ross, a 2011 graduate of D&P’s Stage Properties program. Kim served as the project manager. “The impact from this experience is immeasurable, and all of our lives have been changed because of it.”
Foundation net assets at beginning FY17 $46,910,000

Income
- Contributions $15,476,000
- Net Investment Income $4,092,000
- Other Income $272,000
- Change in Split Interest Obligations $30,000
Total Income $19,870,000

University support and expenses
- University Program Support $1,647,000
- Scholarship Grants $1,904,000
- TSKIA Programs $1,643,000
- University Advancement $383,000
- Investment Management Fees $179,000
- Administrative Expense $482,000
- Transfer to University $5,679,000
Total University Support $11,917,000

Foundation net assets at end of FY17 $54,863,000

Contributions by Purpose
1. Scholarship $604,000
2. Guest Artists and Other $855,000
3. Special Projects $3,489,000
4. Programs $1,070,000
5. Endowed Scholarships & Program Support Funds $8,852,000
6. General Support $626,000
Total $15,476,000

Annual Fund
Dollars raised
<1,500 $233,188
Giannini $392,341
Total $625,529

Total donors
FY17 1,202
FY16 956
FY15 1,060

New donors
Total new donors 997
Increase over FY16 25%
New annual fund donors 353
Increase over FY16 38%
New alumni donors 124
Increase over FY16 28%
We celebrate each and every one of our donors and their generous gifts. For a full list, please visit our online Annual Report at uncusa.org/annualreport.