



**Otis is not just a campus; it's a community.**

## President's Letter no.1

February 03



**Otis is synonymous with creativity.**

Dear Friend of Otis,

This is the first in a new series of President's Letters to bring you up to date with the latest Otis news. In over 80 years of our history, one thing remains clear: Otis is not just a campus; it's a community. Periodic letters afford me the opportunity to keep the community in the know. In addition, Otis is renewing its semi-annual publication of a formal alumni newsletter, the first of which you will receive this spring.

You may be familiar with Otis from any one of several perspectives: as an alumnus/a; as an Otis parent; as an Otis patron, or as an Otis partner. I'd like to share some intriguing facts about Otis that we learned during a recent survey, as well as some forms of outstanding recognition for our students.

### **Otis Through the Eyes of Those We Serve**

A recent third-party survey of hundreds of prospective students, high school art teachers, alumni, prospective employers and current employers yielded many insights.

Creativity, the currency of our time, distinguishes Otis' educational emphasis and therefore provides our alumni their competitive edge in the world. Otis is synonymous with creativity. Our research tells us that creativity is highly valued by employers and prospective students alike. Both groups strongly associate creativity with Otis.

Consider the following findings:

- When hiring a creative staff, employers search for individuals who are creative problem solvers, can work as part of a team, and can be flexible and adapt to changing conditions. When Otis was measured against its peers, Otis was most highly rated as an institution that not only nurtures creativity, but also develops other critical professional attributes.
- When students were asked what they considered the single most desirable type of college, they overwhelmingly selected "an institution that cultivates the development of an individual's vision, and advances the creative problem-solving abilities of its students." When prospective students compared Otis with other arts colleges, Otis was identified as best at providing such an education.

Students also expect career success from an Otis education. When students select a college, aside from valuing an arts college where the curriculum emphasizes innovation and creativity, they are very concerned with their professional future. They seek a college that will help guarantee long-term success in their career.

Otis reinforces creativity through integrated learning; students take advantage of a coordinated set of offerings and disciplines to gain deep training in each discipline. They graduate with cross-boundary thinking and the ability to formulate trans-disciplinary solutions to problems that may not even exist at the time of their matriculation.

An Otis education fosters success and changes lives. Most Otis students come from very modest family backgrounds, but their careers propel them to economic success. The average household income of students' families is approximately \$45,000. Ten or more years after graduation, the average household income of Otis graduates is approximately \$91,000.

Otis alumni are satisfied with their work and life choices in art and design. When our alumni were polled, they overwhelmingly expressed very positive attitudes about Otis and about their subsequent careers. In fact, 93% claimed an overall satisfaction with their education and with their choice of a career. A similar percentage felt they had achieved success in their career. Researchers also noted that these percentages were much higher than similar statistics from other schools, whether colleges of art and design or liberal arts institutions.

Otis graduates have major influence on art and design. Because of their vision and their competitive edge, our graduates have become thriving fine artists who exhibit and teach, as well as design leaders in such companies such as Disney, Mattel, Paramount Pictures, Nike, Guess?, DKNY, Bob Mackie, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Sony Pictures, Industrial Light and Magic, and Warner Bros.

Approximately 90% of our alumni derive some or all of their income from activities in the fields of art and or design. For me personally, this is a very gratifying statistic. I know how dedicated our students are, and I understand the passion that drives them toward their goals. Over and over again, I hear students say, "I'm getting my degree at Otis because I want to make a living doing something I love." These statistics offer proof—dreams can become a reality.

The above findings demonstrate that for prospective students, the term truth in advertising applies to Otis. The research shows that Otis can "deliver on its promise." In other words, our claims about the value of an Otis education are substantiated by real evidence—our alumni.

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**External honors and attention objectively substantiate the value of Otis students' talent and education.**

## Otis Student Achievements

On the way to becoming achieving alumni, current degree students are winning recognition at a clip pace.

Over the past two years, spotlights have shined on Otis students from virtually all the major departments. For example:



### Communication Arts

- Otis Design Group and Otis Illustration Group have created numerous projects for non-profit groups in the city, including the L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs, Reprise, St. Elmo Village, and the Natural History Museum
- The only U.S. design program presenting at the Profile Intermedia conference in Germany

### Digital Media

- For the second year in a row, students have won the top prize in the International Promza-Broadcast Designers Association Student Portfolio Scholarship Competition.
  - Digital shorts by students have been shown at the Los Angeles County Museums of Art's Institute for Art and Cultures

### Environmental Design

- Grand Prize Winner of the International Association of Exhibition Designers (Otis students also won a total of three of the top five awards)
- Two-person exhibition in October at L.A.'s new Art + Design Museum

### Fashion Design

- Multiple winners of the Council of Fashion Designers of America Annual Scholarship Competition
- First Prize Winner of the Target/CFDA Scholarship Competition (other Otis students also won awards)
- Grand Prize Winner in the fashion category of the international Samsung Art and Design Institute Student Design Competition

### Fine Arts

- Installations by a team of Otis BFA and MFA students currently on view at the LACMA Lab, as part of the "Making" exhibition, an unprecedented collaboration between the museum and four top art colleges in Southern California (on display through June 2003)

### Toy Design

- Major television and news features on ABC World News and NPR Market Place

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These external honors and attention objectively endorse the quality of Otis students' talent and education.

Both Otis alumni and Otis parents know this well—Otis students are highly driven to make whatever sacrifices necessary to attend Otis. Their dedication leads to very beneficial returns, as our research findings and the many awards listed above demonstrate.

Recognizing their motivation, Otis is committed to helping quality students enroll and complete their studies at Otis regardless of their socio-economic background. Financial aid is granted to 74% of our students. We are committed to make scholarships available to as many students as possible, to enable the College to remain one of the most diverse colleges of art and design in the nation. The different perspectives and experiences brought to our campus by this diverse group of students inform their lives and work. At Otis, students are exposed to multiple points-of-view and multiple practices of art and design. They also understand and appreciate different approaches to problem solving. As the boundaries between disciplines and cultures collapse and change is constant, art and design, as well as business, are advanced by individuals who see things in fresh and global ways. The College's diversity is its strength; it prepares students to imagine what lies ahead, and benefits employers who know the value of creativity.

I thank you for your attention, and look forward to sharing more Otis news with you in the future. For information on current activities, please visit [www.otis.edu](http://www.otis.edu). I welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,



Samuel Hoi

President



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