Dear Otis Students,

We have some exciting Otis Forward news to report.

On Friday, August 7th, the State of California released its guidelines for the Higher Education sector’s reopening for Fall 2020. In reviewing the guidelines, it is clear that the work we have been doing this summer to prepare for a safe reopening is in line with the safety requirements of the State. Protecting the health and safety of the Otis Community has been at the forefront of all of our planning.

The guidance from the State also allows us to provide safe access to labs, shops, studios, and the library. This too has been a primary focus for us. We know how important it is for our students to have the facilities and resources that our campus provides made available to make work. So, while instruction will remain online until State guidelines allow us to move to the online, blended, on-campus model we have been planning, we will be able to open up labs, shops, studios, and the library for your use when classes begin.

The wood shop, metal shop, model shop, ceramics studio, printmaking lab, lab press, computer lab, video lab, and photo lab will all be open by appointment. In addition to all of our existing labs and shops, two new maker spaces will also be available by scheduling in advance—the Ben Maltz Gallery Workplace, and the 5th floor Product Design Studio. Studio space in all of the undergraduate majors, and MFA Graphic Design, will be available, also by appointment. The MFA Fine Arts individual studios will offer unlimited access to MFA Fine Arts students. Graphaids too will be open.

These spaces will be available in a manner that prioritizes safety. Capacity in each space has been reduced by 50 percent. Spaces have been re-configured to achieve significant social distancing. Plexiglass dividers have been installed in many of the more public spaces for even greater safety. Students will be required to schedule their time in most spaces to ensure reduced density. Students will also be expected to sanitize the workspaces after use with cleaning supplies provided by the College.

The work that the Otis Community has done over the summer to prepare the campus and instruction for the Fall has been remarkable. We have created our own reopening guidelines and safety procedures that are in line with the guidelines provided by Los Angeles County and the State. All of our decisions are grounded in putting the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff first, while providing the excellent education you deserve. Access to artmaking spaces this Fall will be governed by these priorities.

Further updates will continue to be posted on the Otis Forward website as we get closer to the start of classes.

Enjoy the remaining weeks of the summer, be safe, and we'll see you back on campus soon.

Jiseon Lee Isbara
Provost