

FROM THE BRAFFERTON

Building on the Arts

Are the arts alive and well at William & Mary? Yes, robustly! And they should be. They help us see ourselves and the world around us in new and different ways. They stimulate creative thinking. If given half a chance, they make our lives more meaningful.

Artistic thinking is also an important force in 21st-century commerce, where innovations increasingly rely on a blend of science and design and where communications increasingly rely on visualization. America's place in the global economy may well hinge on maintaining our competitive advantage in creativity and innovation. Apple's Steve Jobs noted, "A lot of people in our industry haven't had very diverse experiences. So they don't have enough dots to connect, and they end up with very linear solutions without a broad perspective on the problem. The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have." The arts help us understand human experience.

William & Mary's programs in art and art history, music, theater, speech, dance and film contribute richly to the liberal arts education so prized at the

America to include the "fine arts" in the curriculum. In 1779, Reverend Robert Andrews became professor of "Sculpture, Painting, Gardening, Music, Architecture, Poetry, Oratory and Criticism." Clearly, the reverend was a talented man of sweeping confidence in his artistic prowess.

One talent common to many W&M students is music. More than a quarter of our students participate each semester through courses, lessons and ensembles. The Music Department fields groups ranging from the 80-member Symphony Orchestra to the 20-member "Bots" (Botetourt Chamber Singers) to string quartets. There are ensembles specializing in styles from Appalachian to Middle Eastern. Most of the students involved in music major in other subjects, like David Adley '12, a double major in government and music and an all-conference member of the track team, Stephanie Mutchler '12, a kinesiology major, and Meredith Farnham '12, a biology major. Together these three formed the Viola de Gamba ensemble. Meredith's father recently wrote me that she "was drawn to William & Mary because it is among the few uni-



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College. One in 10 W&M students majors or minors in the arts. Every student takes at least one course in the creative or performing arts. As Provost Michael Halleran has observed, the arts are "part of the broad-based foundation the College provides for life-long learning and for a richer and more satisfying understanding of the world," and they help develop "habits of mind such as critical thinking and creativity." As with so much else, William & Mary led the way for American higher education in the arts. We were the first college in

universities that allow students majoring in another subject to participate fully in music programs."

In addition to department offerings, there are 30 student-organized music groups on campus into everything from Gregorian chants to hip hop. William & Mary has so many *a cappella* groups that there's a council just to coordinate all 11 of them. Every Wednesday night features a Wren Ten, when one of the 11 sings on the Wren Portico.

Our students also bring their talents to the stage in theatre and dance produc-

tions throughout the year. Last fall's "Cabaret" involved 28 students on stage, 18 in the orchestra, and 23 more backstage. Only 11 of these students received academic credit for their work. Most participated just for the joy of it. Each spring brings "An Evening of Dance" by Orchesis, a student dance company. The show features work by student choreographers and performers developed over the academic year.

Our students get involved in film as well. Their creativity yields high quality work, such as *South East Side Story: A Williamsburg Community Musical*. This project, created by William & Mary's Global Film Festival fall production team, brought together students and alumni, faculty and staff, and College and City. The team even talked me into a non-dancing bit. Student films from around the world are screened each year as part of the festival.

And, of course, there are the visual arts. Our students can take classes in drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics,

printmaking and architecture. All of these enhance visual awareness, which medical schools find important to producing better doctors and scientists. This spring, 13 studio art majors presented an array of works from bronze sculptures to charcoal drawings as part of the annual senior art exhibition. Works by student and faculty artists fill our Andrews Gallery.

Since 2007, nearly 110,000 patrons, many from the Williamsburg community, have attended cultural events on campus, such as theatrical, dance, choral, and symphonic performances. Last year alone, events in Phi Beta Kappa Hall drew almost 19,000 people.

The College's Muscarelle Museum of Art, the first museum at a Virginia university to be accredited by the American Association of Museums, houses approximately 4,800 works and has an exhibi-

tion schedule of stunning range and quality for a museum its size. In the past six years, annual attendance has increased to more than 80,000 people. More than 700 works were added to the collection during that period. Recent major exhibits have included Medici collections, Andrew Wyeth, five centuries of landscape paintings from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Tiffany glass, Andy Warhol, Dutch landscapes from the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, and rarely-seen drawings by one of the greatest Old Masters, Michelangelo. This past semester, the Muscarelle provided the first public viewing of a recently discovered painting by El Greco, an exhibit that was featured in the *New York Times*. Faculty and students make great use of the museum. Students in Dr. John T. Spike's seminar course, Curating and Connoisseurship, actually designed and hung a

recent Muscarelle exhibition, *Grand Hallucination: Psychedelic Prints by William Walmsley and Friedensreich Hundertwasser*.

All this is splendid. But our existing facilities for the arts do not do justice to their high quality. The arts thrive at William & Mary despite numbers of students, faculty and programs that have outgrown the available space. We must do better soon. Along with completion of the Integrated Science Center and renovation of Tucker Hall, providing new quarters for arts at the College has our riveted attention.



W. Taylor Reveley III
President, College of William & Mary

Give Us Your Best Shot!



Every issue of the *William & Mary Alumni Magazine* now includes double-page photos of the College and its people — but we need your help. We are on the hunt for interesting, unique or captivating images of William & Mary from the individuals who know it best: our readers. Whether they are recent or from years past, if you have photos that exemplify what William & Mary means to you, we'd love to see them. If they catch our eye, we just might print them in the *W&M Alumni Magazine* ... in a big way. Share your Tribe Pride with us.

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