



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY'S

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# SCHOOL *of the* ARTS CONVOCATION

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SECOND OF MAY, TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR



# SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

## Message From the Dean

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Graduation, hard-won and long-coming, is a liminal space that marks the separation of two points in time—the before and the after. As nineteenth-century American writer Henry David Thoreau sagely expressed, “Things do not change; we change.” Marking a point of personal evolution, graduation is a time of reflection and anticipation, for which our graduates are well prepared.

The arts cultivate courage. They teach us to be daring, inquisitive, and bold. They are a vehicle for communication, the practice of which is transformative, both for our audiences and viewers as well as for ourselves. Our graduates know the sting of rejection and the heartbreak of setbacks. They understand that obstacles are not barriers, but opportunities to refine processes and think in new ways. Propelled by perseverance coupled with a deep passion for the arts, our graduates will continue to forge their own unique and metamorphic pathways. In the words of celebrated dancer and choreographer Martha Graham, “There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique.”

Although the story of each graduate is unique, the journey of education is never a solitary one. Graduation is a time to express gratitude to all those who gave assistance and support from the beginning to the end, from family, friends, and four-legged companions to faculty and staff cheering every step of the way.

Today, we celebrate the persistence, innovation, and imagination of our incredible graduates of the 2023-2024 season. We, the faculty and staff of the School of the Arts, express our joyful and heartfelt congratulations to those completing programs in art and design, dance, music, and the theatrical arts.

Congratulations, graduates, on your tremendous achievement! As you celebrate the fruits of your hard work, sacrifice, and resilience, we wish you continued success in all your endeavors, wherever life takes you. As you open new doors and chart new pathways to the infinite, always remember the power of the arts to inspire, encourage, teach, and transform. In the words of playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw, “Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”

In celebration,

Courtney R. Davis  
*Dean*

# SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

1:00 p.m., Thursday, May 2, 2024  
Rebecca Lockhart Arena

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## PROGRAM INFORMATION

|  |  |
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| Prelude and Processional .....                       | UVU Jazz Ensemble<br>Carter Dall, <i>Trumpet</i><br>Jordan Daynes, <i>Saxophone</i><br>Julian Mitton, <i>Guitar</i><br>Field Behrens, <i>Bass</i><br>Sean Coburn, <i>Drums</i> |
| Welcome and Comments .....                           | Courtney R. Davis<br><i>J.D., M.A., Dean, School of the Arts</i><br><i>Executive Director, Museum of Art</i>   |
| Outstanding Students Recognition.....                | Presented by Jamie Johnson<br><i>MFA Associate Professor, Dance</i><br><i>Dean's Award of Excellence for Faculty</i>   |
| Valedictorian Introduction and Address .....         | W. James Godfrey<br><i>MFA, Associate Dean</i><br>McKenna Ryan Goade<br><i>Bachelor of Fine Arts, Drawing &amp; Painting</i>   |
| Presentation of Graduates .....                      | Courtney R. Davis<br><i>J.D., M.A. Dean, School of the Arts</i><br><i>Executive Director, Museum of Art</i><br>W. James Godfrey<br><i>MFA, Associate Dean</i>                  |
| Names of Graduates Read By .....                     | Dr. John Newman<br><i>Professor, Theatrical Arts</i><br><i>Director, TYE Center</i>  |
| Presentation by the Department of Art & Design       |  |
| Presentation of Department of Art & Design Graduates |  |

Performance by the Department of Music ..... *Hommage à Manuel de Falla*,  
 Composed by Béla Kovács for  
 Unaccompanied Clarinet  
 Performed by Robert Gabbitas

Presentation of Department of Music Graduates

Video Presentation by the Department of Dance ..... *Featuring Anahi Aguilar, Chauncey  
 Bricker, Ariana Castaneda, Ciera Erekson, Madison  
 Foulger, Olivia Perry, Emma Crow, Kenady Vereen*

Presentation of Department of Dance Graduates

Performance by the Department of  
 Theatrical Arts for Stage and Screen..... *Merrily We Roll Along*  
 Composed by Stephen Sondheim  
 Performed by Makenna Ashby, Kathleen Balanzategui, Autumn Bickmore,  
 Nathan Bowser, Caroline Clawson, Isabel Eardley, Jonathan Francis,  
 Abigail Haws, Haley Howe, Dominique Morrison, Kalena Nielson,  
 Erica Schoebinger, Caleb Voss, Desmond Walker

Presentation of Department of Theatrical Arts for Stage and Screen Graduates

Closing Remarks ..... Courtney R. Davis  
*J.D., M.A., Dean, School of the Arts  
 Executive Director, Museum of Art*

Postlude and Recessional ..... *UVU Jazz Ensemble*  
 Carter Dall, *Trumpet*  
 Jordan Daynes, *Saxophone*  
 Julian Mitton, *Guitar*  
 Field Behrens, *Bass*  
 Sean Coburn, *Drums*

*Please remain seated until graduates exit the arena.*



# VALEDICTORIANS

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## MCKENNA RYAN GOADE

*Bachelor Valedictorian*

Mckenna Ryan Goade is from Kent, Washington, and attended Lone Peak High School. She is receiving a bachelor's degree in art & design with a painting and drawing emphasis. Goade has maintained a 4.0 GPA and is graduating summa cum laude. When not in classes or in the studio, Goade served as the Department of Art & Design representative for Academic Senate and was a student technician for Events and Production Services in the School of the Arts. Goade has been accepted into the fine arts MFA program at Parsons School of Design and is in the final round of interviews for New York University.



## BETHANY RASMUSSEN

*Associate Valedictorian*

Bethany Rasmussen is from West Jordan, Utah, and attended Copper Hills High School. She is receiving an associate degree in music performance. Rasmussen is currently a member of the UVU Chamber Choir and played the role of Sandman in UVU's fall 2023 production of Hänsel and Gretel. She plans to teach private voice and piano lessons after graduation while auditioning for theatre and vocal programs across Utah. Rasmussen enjoys developing her musicianship by playing the piano, guitar, and ukulele.

# OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARDS

S.A.

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## MARISSA SABIN

*Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design  
Dean's Award of Excellence for Students*

Marissa Sabin is from Highland, Utah, and attended Lone Peak High School. She is receiving a Bachelors of Fine Arts in graphic design. Sabin currently works for UVU's School of the Arts designing signage for performing arts events. She has also designed dozens of race medals for local half marathons and marathons and received the American Graphic Design Award for her publication "Solved Identity." Sabin plans to work at a design agency after graduation, with a focus on branding and packaging design. When she is not designing, she enjoys running, rock climbing, skiing, and playing games with family.



## JESSICA DOWNS

*Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting and Drawing  
Outstanding Student Award, Art & Design*

Jessica Downs is from St. George, Utah, and attended Enterprise High School before coming to UVU. She is receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting, drawing, and printmaking with a minor in art history. Downs' work has been chosen as two of the covers for UVU's Touchstones journal, where she also received a first-place award for art. She participated in the Utah Conference of Undergraduate Research in 2022, 2023, and 2024 and the UVU Showcase in 2022, where she won the UVU Showcase Award. Downs and her husband, Dixon, have three incredible daughters. She enjoys hiking, riding horses, playing volleyball, and reading.





### FIONA BARNARD

*Bachelor of Science, Dance Education  
Outstanding Student Award, Dance*

Fiona Barnard is from Delta Junction, Alaska, and attended Delta Senior High School before coming to UVU. She is receiving a bachelor's degree in dance education. After receiving her associate degree from Weber State University, Barnard decided to transfer to UVU because of the university's dance education program. She said UVU helped her not only achieve her goal of becoming a dance teacher but also helped her become an advocate for dance as an art form and as a conduit for healing. Barnard credits her husband, Chandler, for being there for her through thick and thin. She is an avid hiker and loves backpacking, rafting, and basically anything outdoors.



### ROBERT GABBITAS

*Bachelor of Music, Music Performance (Clarinet)  
Outstanding Student Award, Music*

Robert Gabbitas is from Springville, Utah, and attended Springville High School. He is receiving a bachelor's degree in music performance (clarinet). Gabbitas is a co-founder of the UVU Music Student Association and was elected its president in 2023. He won the 2023 UVU Composition Competition and was the principal clarinetist in both the Wind Symphony and Symphony Orchestra at UVU since 2022. Gabbitas plans to attend graduate school and study wind band conducting. He is most grateful to share this journey with his wife, Emily, who will graduate with him and receive a bachelor's degree in flute performance.



## DREW CANNON

*Bachelor of Science, Theatre Education  
Outstanding Student Award, Theatre*

Drew Cannon is from Lehi, Utah, and attended the American Leadership Academy. They are receiving a bachelor's degree in theatre education with a minor in music. Cannon worked as the assistant director for *The Diary of Anne Frank* as part of the theatre department's fall 2023 season. They also directed a series of short plays as part of the Platform Series at UVU. Cannon has also served as the president of the UVU Queer Student Alliance and hosted the first-ever Queer Prom event at UVU in 2022. They hope to become a high school theatre teacher in Utah and inspire the next generation of students to value the art that is all around them.

# STUDENT MERIT AWARDS

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## Art & Design

**ALLISON SINK**

*Award of Merit, Art Education*

**EMBER MARTINEZ**

*Award of Merit, Art History*

**MEGAN BARNUM**

*Award of Merit, Graphic Design*

**PARKER NIELSEN**

*Award of Merit, Illustration*

**STEVEN DORAN**

*Award of Merit, Entertainment Design*

**TOMMY ERVIN**

*Award of Merit, Photography*

**KYLIE BEUTLER**

*Award of Merit, Sculpture and Ceramics*

**MAKELA KAMIYA**

*Award of Merit, Art and Design*

## Dance

**OLIVIA PERRY**

*Award of Merit, Ballet*

**CHAUNCEY BRICKER**

*Award of Merit, Ballroom*

**EMMA CROW**

*Award of Merit, Modern Dance*

**EMILY KEARSLEY**

*Award of Merit, Dance Education*

## Music

**JULIANNA CARLSON**

*Award of Merit, Commercial Music*

**HANNAH BOYACK**

*Award of Merit, Music Education*

**SOFINA CHILD**

*Award of Merit, Performance*

**ADRIENNE SHRADER**

*Award of Merit, Music*

## Theatrical Arts for Stage and Screen

**ABBY HAWS**

*Award of Merit, Acting*

**MAKENNA ASHBY**

*Award of Merit, Musical Theatre*

**KAYLIE WALKER SHORT**

*Award of Merit, Theatre Arts Education*

**KARA MCCARTHY**

*Award of Merit, Theatre Studies*



# FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS

F&S

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## JAMIE A. JOHNSON

*Associate Professor, Dance*

*Dean's Award of Excellence for Faculty*

Jamie A. Johnson is from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and holds bachelor's degrees in ballet and English from the University of Utah as well as an MFA in dance from the University of Washington. Since 2015, she has served as the co-artistic director of UVU's Repertory Ballet Ensemble. Johnson has performed with the Sacramento Ballet, Ballet Pacifica, Ohio Dance Theatre, and Boulder Ballet, reaching the status of principal dancer. Later, with MOMIX, she served as dance captain and performed on world-renowned stages, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Joyce Theater in New York, and Teatro Municipal in Rio de Janeiro. Johnson loves traveling, hiking, and trying out new restaurants with her husband and son.



## AMY WHIPPLE

*Costume Manager*

*Dean's Award of Excellence for Staff*

Amy Whipple is from Orem and holds a bachelor's degree in theatre arts from Brigham Young University. She has worked as a costume stitcher for numerous theater organizations, including the Utah Shakespearean Festival, the Tuacahn Center for the Arts, and the LA Opera, among others. She also serves as an adjunct instructor for costume construction classes in UVU's Theatre department and has designed costumes for multiple productions at UVU and elsewhere. Whipple said she loves that her job at UVU allows her to have a tangible, positive impact on the educational experience of the many students in the School of the Arts. She lives with her husband, Graham, and their dog, Nixon.



## JESSICA ROSEWINTER

*Box Office Assistant Manager*

*Dean's Award of Excellence for Staff*

Jessica Rosewinter is from Orem and holds a bachelor's degree in exercise science and outdoor recreation with a minor in music from UVU. Rosewinter has worked at The Noorda for four years, including working as front-of-house staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her favorite thing about working at The Noorda has been the people she is able to work with – she says she has never felt so respected, taken care of, or appreciated. Rosewinter married her best friend and secret crush, Treydn Rosewinter, in 2018. Their first child, Solstice, was born in May 2022, with another baby due this year.



## CHRISTA ST. JOHN

*Assistant Professor, Dance*

*Faculty Senate Excellence Award*

Christa St. John calls Longmont, Colorado, home and is an assistant professor of ballet for the UVU Department of Dance. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in dance with a minor in performing arts administration from Western Kentucky University and a Master of Fine Arts in dance from the University of Oklahoma. St. John has performed with Ballet Chicago, Ballet Austin, Louisville Ballet, Charleston Ballet Theatre, Atlantic City Ballet, and Northwest Florida Ballet. Her favorite parts of working at UVU are the daily interactions she has with driven students who are looking to learn more about their craft.



# DEPARTMENT CHAIRS, ACADEMIC ADVISORS, AND OFFICE STAFF

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## DEAN'S OFFICE STAFF

Courtney R. Davis, *Dean, School of the Arts;*  
*Executive Director, Museum of Art*

W. James Godfrey, *Associate Dean*

Danielle C. Shipley-Crook, *Assistant Dean*  
*of Community Engagement*

Tess Fontanetti-Rice, *Director of*  
*Development*

Karen Watson, *Assistant to the Dean,*  
*Financial Manager*

Jennifer McCole, *Administrative Support*

## DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

Staci Owens, *Art & Design*

Laural Hill, *Dance*

Chris Gines, *Music*

Curtis Cluff, *Theatrical Arts for Stage*  
*and Screen*

## DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Travis Lovell, *Art & Design*

Monica Campbell, *Dance*

Jeffrey O'Flynn, *Music*

La Beene, *Theatrical Arts for Stage and Screen*

## ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Andrea Calaway

Kristy Giles

Deanna Pitts

Clark Slater

John-David Sorensen

*Your financial contributions can make a real difference by supporting scholarships, performances, and exhibitions in UVU's School of the Arts. For information on how you can help, please contact Tess Fontanetti-Rice at 801-863-4962 or [tessf@uvu.edu](mailto:tessf@uvu.edu). All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*