

School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts

Newsletter Fall 2025



It is my pleasure to welcome you to

the third annual edition of the School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts Newsletter.

As I enter my 10th year as Dean, I am filled with gratitude and pride for all that our community has accomplished together. Over the past decade, we've celebrated several exciting milestones:

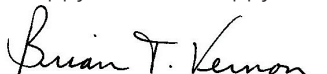
- The School grew by two departments, expanding both our reach and our impact
- We launched new curriculum including BFAs in Musical Theatre, Art, and Theatre, offering students more focused and rigorous paths of study
- Our Professional Development Day has continued to grow in both size and scope, equipping Arts Educators with current and relevant tools
- We proudly established the SVPCA Dean's Circle, in support of Student Success

Most of all, over the past 10 years, I have been constantly amazed by our talented and dedicated students. Their passion, discipline, and originality bring our classrooms, studios, and performance spaces to life in ways that continue to inspire.

This newsletter offers a snapshot of the extraordinary work happening across our disciplines—on our stages, in our gallery, in our studios, and behind the cameras.

Thank you for being part of the SVPCA community. I hope to see you at one or more of our hundreds of events that we produce each year, featuring our talented students.

Happy Fall, and Happy Holidays,


Brian T. Vernon, Dean

Dean's
Corner

Recent Student Accomplishments

Erik Hoffman (2015) Named to Snowboarder Magazine's 30 under 30 list for his distinguished photography and graphic design work for 686 Outdoor Clothing Company.

Kurt Vinci (2020) Artist and producer of *Beef Creek*. This 2024 animated short won awards from NY Animation Festival, Hallucinea Film Festival, Chicago Horror Film Festival, and 4th Dimension Independent Film Festival.

Rosemary Minkler (2017) Winner of the Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Technical Team Studio, for her audio work with USA/NBC-Peacock's broadcast of the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Alana Cauthen (2011) Debut performance at Radio City Music Hall as part of Hugh Jackman's *From New York With Love* concert series.

Berny Balbuena (2023) Currently performing in the Broadway national tour of the musical *On Your Feet!*

Dr. Isaac's Masterwork

On October 4, 2025, nearly 300 alumni, faculty, students, staff, family and friends filled the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall to celebrate the remarkable career of Dr. Kevin Jay Isaacs. Since joining WCSU in 1990, Dr. Isaacs has been a cornerstone of the Department of Music, shaping generations of musicians, educators, and performers through his visionary leadership and unwavering dedication. Over the course of more than three decades, Dr. Isaacs has taught courses in theory, composition, and choral studies, and served in key roles including Associate Chair of the department and Coordinator of the Master of Science in Music Education program.



Dr. Isaacs' contributions to WCSU are not limited to performance and pedagogy. He played a pivotal role in the development of the university's Visual and Performing Arts Center, serving on the building committee and helping to shape the future of arts education on campus. His commitment to excellence was recognized with the inaugural WCSU Excellence in Teaching Award in 2007-08. His work as a composer and conductor has earned national attention.

As Dr. Isaacs prepares to retire at the end of the Fall 2025 semester, the Western Connecticut State University community reflects on the profound impact of his career. WCSU celebrates Dr. Isaacs not only for his remarkable career, but for the lasting imprint he leaves on the university and the broader musical community. In that nature, WCSU is proud to dedicate room 104 in the Visual and Performing Arts Center as the Kevin Jay Isaacs Choral Rehearsal Room in honor of his legacy.

SVPCA Faculty Spotlight

Art: Rob Nadeau (Assistant Professor) is an American painter and educator who has served as an adjunct professor for numerous years. This Fall Semester Rob joins our Department of Art as Assistant Professor of Art.

Communication & Media Arts: Dr. JC Barone (Professor) is known for his dynamic teaching style and commitment to fostering student creativity and critical thinking. His work spans digital filmmaking, live broadcasting, and public engagement, often blending academic rigor with real-world impact.

Music: Dr. Kevin Jay Isaacs (Professor) joined the faculty of WCSU in 1990. He has been a cornerstone of the Department of Music, shaping generations of musicians, educators, and performers through his visionary leadership and unwavering dedication. Dr. Isaacs will retire from WCSU in December 2025.

Theatre Arts: Clifton Chadick (Adjunct Professor) is a New York-based scenic designer and creative director. He received a 2025 Drama Desk award nomination for Outstanding Scenic Design of a Musical for his work on *Music City*, produced by BEDLAM Theatre Company in New York City.

Creative & Professional Writing: Kate Katcher (Adjunct Professor) is an actor, playwright, director, and enthusiastic teacher of our Playwriting Workshop.

SVPCA Dean's Circle

The SVPCA Dean's Circle is a premier leadership society for annual giving towards the SVPCA at WCSU. The members of the Dean's Circle provide vital contributions towards the Dean's support funds, used to sustain and grow the school's wide-ranging and ever-expanding educational opportunities. Supporters receive recognition in SVPCA programs and on the SVPCA website.

Dean's support funds are used for:

- Supporting SVPCA students in financial need
- Sponsoring student trips to supplement student's education
- Enhancing technology in our educational and performance spaces, allowing students the ability to explore emerging technologies and expand industry knowledge
- Funding renowned guest artists of diverse backgrounds and offering masterclasses and workshops to enrich our students' education.

Thank you to our active members of the Dean's Circle:

In Memory of

Willie Ruff (Mitchell-Ruff Duo)

In Memory of

Professor Robert Farris Thompson

Soloist 2025

This year your contributions helped:

In November 2024, Dean Vernon received a request for funding from Music Department Chair, Dr. Laurel Larsen. Dr. Larsen applied for, then received SVPCA Dean's Circle funding to help subsidize travel expenses for four music majors. The College Band Directors National Association had invited each of the four music students to perform in the National Intercollegiate Band, an honors ensemble at their March 2025 convention in Fort Worth, Texas. As noted by Dr. Larsen, "Having four students accepted into such a prestigious event is a great honor for the School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts. This experience will be a memorable and transformative event for these four students, musically, personally and educationally."

The Three Tiers of the Dean's Circle are:

Supporter Level \$500+

Soloist Level \$1,000+

Principal Level \$2,500+

Upcoming Events

Music | Holiday Pops

December 6 and 7, at 3:00 p.m.

Join the WCSU Department of Music for an afternoon of holiday music, featuring performances by the Percussion Ensemble, University Choir, Chamber Ensembles, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, and more. Get in the holiday spirit with holiday treats, music, and photo ops.

Art | WCSU Faculty Exhibition

on view February 5 through March 8

Opening Reception February 5, 6:00 p.m.

This exhibition will feature new work by the talented visual artists who comprise the faculty of the Department of Art at WCSU. A variety of media and styles will be represented, reflecting the breadth of expertise our instructors lend to the various degree programs offered by the department, including Graphic Design, Illustration, Painting, and Photography.

Theatre Arts | Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown February 20 through March 1

A musical adaptation of Pedro Almodóvar's beloved film of the same name, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* is the brainchild of the talented team behind *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Set in 1980s Madrid, *Women on the Verge* is a story about women and the men who pursue them ... finding them, losing them, needing them, and rejecting them.

Directed by Justin P. Cowan.



Scan this QR Code to view upcoming SVPCA events

For Dean's Circle information visit wcsu.edu/svPCA/circle/ or scan this QR Code:



Congratulations

to these students whose artwork was chosen by Dean Vernon to be on view in the Dean's Suite Student Exhibition Gallery, VPAC 104

Kailyn Leon, Sophomore, BA Studio, Art: *Blue Ladder*, oil on canvas panel

Lorinda Pallisco, Senior, BA Studio Art: *Leopard in the Grass*, ink on bristol paper

Cayden Nadolny-Pallatto, Senior, BFA Graphic Design, Kathwari Honors Program, Prisma Art Club President: *George de Forest Brush*, mixed media/collage on paper