From the President

The ‘art’ of the possible is alive and well at the University

Universities, by their very definition, are the primary venues in our society for exploration.

And nowhere is this more apparent than in the fine arts.

The arts teach our students important lessons in collaboration and teamwork. They instill knowledge through the “learn by doing” model that has become one of the underpinnings of the culture of success that we stress at our University. The arts instill problem-solving skills, challenge students to achieve their personal best, and promote community engagement.

There is also a clear economic advantage associated with an investment in the arts. In a March 2014 Chronicle of Higher Education article, a study by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis traced the relationship of arts and the gross domestic product (GDP). Fine-arts schools, departments of fine arts and performing arts and academic performing-arts centers were found to have added $7.6 billion to the nation’s GDP. For every dollar consumers spent on arts education, an additional 56 cents was generated elsewhere in the U.S. economy. The article also noted that in interviews with more than 1,500 CEOs worldwide, “creativity trumps other leadership characteristics.”

At our University, this is an exciting time to be part of the arts. We recently celebrated the completion of the Act I renovation project in Church Fine Arts. This effort includes the new Edna B. and Bruno Benna Foundation Atrium entry into Church Fine Arts off Virginia Street, a remodeled Redfield Proscenium Theatre and upgraded Front Door Gallery. We are continuing to build faculty strength in the key areas of the fine arts. Joining already renowned faculty, we’ve made recent additions that include a Grammy-nominated pianist; a critically acclaimed French horn player formerly with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago; a professor in theater history; a director of graphic arts; and a director of academic bands.

As you will read in this issue of *Nevada Silver & Blue*, today’s faculty and students in the College of Liberal Arts and the School of the Arts, who are performing at a historically high level, follow in the footsteps of several important campus arts figures. Just two of them are Theodore Post (who not long after arriving in 1927, established a community orchestra and a longtime campus and community tradition, the Christmas production of Handel’s Messiah) and Art Professor Craig Sheppard who, it has been written, “not only helped bring the world of art to Nevada … took his own work to other cities and brought Nevada a reputation it had not previously enjoyed.”

Today, the faculty, students and friends of the arts at the University are ensuring that the arts continue to nurture our creativity and remind us of our humanity. Because of their devotion to these timeless important artistic disciplines, the arts remain an ongoing source of pride and achievement for our entire University. Our best in the arts is still yet to come.

Sincerely,

Marc Johnson
President
www.unr.edu/president