

Making Virtual Connections with Fine Arts Alumni

Colleges of Fine Arts and their respective academic departments can reap numerous benefits from a connected alumni base. Graduates feel celebrated and valued. Current students learn about the program's legacy and find potential mentors and network connections with the alumni, and as a recruitment opportunity for prospective students to see what comes from the realization of a college education. Borne from the need for greater connection and spurred on by the COVID-19 pandemic, these podcasts have provided the means and opportunity to re-engage with alumni. Across the college we are delivering a weekly series featuring recent and long time alumni. The podcast provides a new way (and possibly a more convenient connection) to communicate and highlight alumni outside of your immediate geographic area. This roundtable presentation would discuss the production of these types of programs, what makes podcasting unique as a networking program, their impact on alumni engagement, and the development of other showcases to promote fine arts programs.

William Clow is Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Western Illinois University. Billy is beginning his tenth year as Dean for the College of Fine Arts and Communication and is a professor of theatre at Western Illinois University. He served as Interim Provost and Academic Vice President from January of 2019- December of 2020. His teaching areas including Scenic and Lighting Design, Arts Management, Stage Management and Playwriting. He has designed 500+ productions over 25 years He is a founding and continuing member of the Shelter Repertory Dance Theatre and has worked professionally for numerous theatres. He has taught previously at Stephens College and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and served as the Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Montevallo. He is a member of International Council of Fine Arts Deans and the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences. He holds a BA in technical theatre/lighting design from the University of Missouri and an MFA in Scenic Design from Illinois State University. Billy is a lifelong advocate for the arts and is the proud father of three fabulous children, Edan, Cullen and Addison.



William "Buzz" Hoon is Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Western Illinois University. Hoon is the host and producer of "Alumni Chats", a weekly podcast highlighting alumni from the department of Broadcasting and Journalism. He served as department chair of the Broadcasting and Journalism department at WIU for seven years before moving into the dean's office as Associate Dean.