

August 5, 2003

Dear Alumni,

Somewhere, deep down in the core of your being, you knew this day would come. An envelope would arrive in the mail, bearing that old, familiar Fredonia logo. And in that envelope would be a polite form letter from the Art Department announcing the creation of an Alumni Association for the Department of Art.

Well, that day has come, although perhaps not quite in the same way you might have imagined. Many changes have taken place lately. The Department of Art is now the Department of Visual Arts and New Media, having merged last year with the college's new Media Arts program and incorporating their vision in technology and the visual arts. The department's current chair is not one of those old familiar names from the classes you took, but a refugee from the Department of Theatre who worked with John Hughson and Paul Bowers to develop the Media Arts program originally, and was selected last year to chair the newly merged department. Dr. Daniel Reiff, who was promoted this past year to the rank of Distinguished Service Professor, will be retiring in June 2004.

Yes, there have been a few changes in the department, and more are on the way. One of the biggest changes, however, is not happening to the department as such, but to SUNY Fredonia and all across the SUNY system. I'm sure those of you still living in New York State know of the financial situation in the state, but of course the problems in NYS are happening all across the country. Where once SUNY Fredonia received 90% of its operating budget from state funds, that number is now down to about 23%. This academic year the college is undergoing a \$1.8 million reduction in operating costs. The SUNY system as a whole took a 27% reduction in funding from the state, more than twice the percentage cut in funding than any other state-funded agency. These cuts are having an impact just at a time when the department is making a commitment to moving into new technology, new forms of making art, and growing at a rate where now there are over 250 majors in the department across all programs, making us the 6th-largest department on campus in terms of majors.

And so it is that, as a department, we must now turn towards finding ways to supplement our budget. We are moving in three directions: looking for more funding through grant programs, holding juried exhibits in our gallery, and invigorating our alumni network. We are also working with the College Foundation to begin the preliminary steps towards finding an endowment to name the art gallery, which is the last unnamed and unendowed significant art space on campus.

It is my hope as Chair to offer our alumni news of the department, invitations to department events, and hopefully alumni events during Homecoming. It will no doubt take the coming academic year to get things up to full strength. I'd like to get out two newsletters and hopefully arrange some sort of gathering in the coming year to get a chance to meet and talk with as many of you as possible. This letter is our first attempt to locate you, verify your address, get an email address from you and begin to build our database. We must reach out to our alumni to help us continue to provide the same high quality of education to our current students that you received during your time at Fredonia.

Of course, in this electronic age we can also take advantage of web technologies to keep in touch. To that end I invite you to join our new Yahoo! Alumni Group. The web address for this group is **<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FredoniaArtGrads>**. You're more than welcome to check out this location and begin the conversation. The site features an opportunity to re-connect with old friend and colleagues, post art events happening in your area, upload pictures of your latest art creations, and in general promote communication and networking among VANM graduates.

Below you'll find a form which we hope will allow us to form a more accurate database of our alumni. At this point we're really looking for your information and an opportunity to get re-acquainted with you. Of course, we won't turn down any tax-deductible contributions you may want to make at this time. If you feel so motivated, you can make a check payable to the SUNY Fredonia College Foundation and specify the donation for the Art Department. We do have an immediate need to try to fill a \$2,000 projected deficit in funding the art gallery for this academic year, and any funds we get this year will immediately go to this purpose. Contributions of \$50 or more will be gratefully acknowledged in the art gallery during this year's exhibits.

Please feel free to contact me via phone or email with any questions, concerns or suggestions you might have regarding any alumni issues or concerns you might have. I look forward to hearing from many of you in the coming weeks as we begin this endeavor together. Thanks for your time and your help. I appreciate it, but most of all I know our current students, who will be the ultimate beneficiaries of your generosity, will appreciate it the most.

Sincerely,



Thomas W. Loughlin, Chair  
Visual Arts and New Media

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Please take the time to fill out the following information and return to:  
Ms. Dawn Geary, Secretary, Dept. Visual Arts and New Media, SUNY Fredonia, Fredonia NY 14063

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Year Graduated/Degree Program \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief update on your career/life since graduation (Use back if necessary):