



San Francisco
State University

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17 March 2023

Derrick Spiva
Synergy School of the Arts and Technology
3612 West Avenue K-11
Lancaster, CA 93536

RE: Teaching the Business of Media

Dear Derrick:

I am very happy to write this letter of wildly enthusiastic support for the proposed Synergy School of the Arts and Technology, to teach artistic, technical and academic skills to students throughout their K-12 years.

As you know, I am an Associate Professor in the Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts department at San Francisco State (SF State). I have taught at SF State for almost 25 years. Prior to joining the faculty at SF State, I practiced entertainment, sports and business law in Los Angeles. One area that I have devoted my career to is how to best connect students with the industry.

The past two decades have seen a huge transformation of media and media business. Technology has caused this transformation. The old ways of producing and distributing media have been disrupted. We live in a new world. Acquiring literacy and fluency in arts and production is now as important as learning to read and how to manage one's finances. One needs to be able to think critically and intelligently, to understand one's place in history and culture and to communicate effectively using the tools of electronic media.

There are many college-level programs that teach media theory and production. One we need more of is a holistic approach as you have proposed: performing arts, technology and academics.

The prospect of providing high school students with instruction in these areas is both brilliant and exciting! Pre-pandemic, the U.S. television and film industries supported 2.1 million jobs paying out \$139 billion in total wages. 14 of the most in-demand careers in the entertainment industry in the Los Angeles area were "middle-skill professions" that did not demand one possess a college degree.

While the pandemic shut down production for months, we are in an era of peak production. As I routinely tell my students, the demand for

quality content is greater now than it has ever been and given the expanding channels of distribution—it is a great time to work in media!

I am also very impressed by the school's focus on reaching out to all communities. As you know, San Francisco State has a diverse student population and is a means for many to change the trajectory of their lives. Some 40% of our graduates are the first in their family to graduate from college.

One thing that makes this letter so easy to write is that we have worked together on various projects for many years. The opportunities you brought to my department for students to gain experience in performance, technology, and virtual reality have been a great boon.

While preparing SF State students to visit Los Angeles during Spring Break this year, I naturally reached out to you. You have been a fabulous and much-appreciated facilitator of connecting students with the industry in LA. The last time students visited LA in person, in 2019, our schedule included a visit to Warner Bros post-production facilities that you arranged for us. Your students will benefit greatly from your extensive knowledge and contacts!

It is also interesting to note that post-production is one area where one needs a grounding in both art and technology. In today's environment, you can't produce the art without mastering the technology. They can no longer be separated!

I am very excited to support and recommend your work to provide a school devoted to teaching art, technology and academics. It is both a well-timed and a well-placed endeavor!

Very truly yours,



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