Dear Incoming Drama Majors,

Welcome to the 2016 - 17 academic school year!

As we move into UC Irvine's second half century, it is an exciting time for you to join one of the five original schools on the UCI campus. The Department of Drama, named a Department of Excellence by the university in 2005, is rooted in the tradition of conservatory training while leading the way in progressive artistry and intellectual curiosity. Throughout your time here you will have many chances to learn and create, perform and discover; I recommend that you embrace and explore every situation. Aside from your classwork and performing opportunities such as "Director Class Projects," you should audition for the MainStage Season "THEM!," as well as participate in improv groups, independent projects, and classroom acting companies.

Whether you are entering the Department as an aspiring actor (including music theatre), designer, director, or stage manager, you will enjoy a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum that will not only prepare you for a life in your area of interest, but will provide a thorough understanding of various career options. You will be exposed to theoretical ideas as well as real world practicalities, and will learn not only your chosen craft, but how to integrate your intended career into the fabric of the community at large. In addition to spending the next four years acquiring visionary performance and design techniques, you will be studying great literature, and learning about cultural tradition and expression from around the world.

Here at UCI Drama, you will have opportunities to perform, crew, direct, and design everything from classic plays to world premiere musicals. Whether or not you ultimately decide to pursue a career in the arts, the breadth and depth of knowledge with which you graduate will arm you to be successful in any area you wish to pursue. You will leave UCI with heightened communication skills, a sharpened sense of intuition and self-reflection, and creative problem-solving ingenuity that will help you in any professional field - as well as in life. It is our School's mission to create "Citizen Artists," individuals who by pursuing personal excellence in their chosen field also enrich the fabric of society at large.

Taught by a faculty who remain active and engaged professionally, our graduates go on to distinguish themselves on Broadway, in film and television, and throughout the entertainment industry. Our alumni newsletter (available on the Department of Drama website) is constantly updated to show a sampling of what our graduates are up to. We are always thrilled to watch as former students are nominated for Oscars, Tonys, and numerous other awards and honors; more importantly, we are
heartened to see them fulfilling their own promise, and in turn enriching the lives of others in countless ways. We are proud of the legacy our "Anteaters" forge as they go on to pursue their respective passions, whether those be artistic, educational, medical, legal, political, or otherwise.

You may be wondering if this is a rigorous major; the answer is a resounding YES! You will be expected to work long hours, maintain an attitude of dedication and good citizenship, and demonstrate the kind of committed perseverance that will convert to success for the individual as well as the group. We encourage you to remain curious, think creatively, go the extra mile, ask questions, and knock on your professors' doors any time you feel you need more clarity or additional information. Your faculty is here to mentor you, and to help you grow both as artists and as human beings.

I welcome you to the Drama family, and look forward to embarking on this journey together. You are part of a lineage of artists and thinkers who are creating a richer and more exciting tomorrow. I look forward to getting to know each one of you. One last bit of advice...in school, in life, in love: Show up. Pay attention. Tell the truth. Let go of the outcome.

Here's to a great year!

Dr. Daniel Gary Busby
Chair, Department of Drama

Theatre is the laboratory of civilization; the dreamspace where we prove the soul, dissect politics and religions, and re-enact – always with our own particular spin – the universal struggles of humankind: survival, love, ambition and reconciliation. Who would not want to spend a lifetime investigating this?

—Robert Cohen, Founding Chairman, UCI Drama