

CSULB College of the Arts 2020 Commencement Message from Margaret Black, Interim Dean

Hello. I am Margaret Black. I am the Interim Dean for the College of the Arts. Welcome to my tiny backyard. I'm really sorry that this isn't happening on the athletic field at CSULB this spring, but... might still be airplanes. Anyway, congratulations College of the Arts Class of 2020.

You have done it. You have worked really hard and you have achieved a major milestone in your life. And you did this at a time of absolutely unprecedented challenges. This is a major achievement and one for which you should be incredibly proud. So let's just take a moment to sort of let that sink in and to celebrate that...

(pause)

Yeah. Okay. The moment's up.

So now, you have to answer the question. I'm sure you've already gotten this question. You're going to be hearing this question a lot. "So what are you going to do now?" "What are ya gonna do now?"

Well, now, now you are going to push past fear and you are going to break down preconceived notions of what art is and what you are allowed to make. Now...well, actually now you probably need to get some sleep. But, now you are going to make a lot of mistakes, and you're gonna fix 'em, and then you're going to make a lot more. Now, you are going to embrace challenges and uncertainty because you are artists and that is what you do.

Now, you are gonna finally figure out what to use that brush for. Now, you are going to make the art that you want to see, you are going to tell the stories that you want to hear, and you are going to make the music that is relevant to you. Now, you are going to find your focus. You're gonna lose it. You're gonna find it again, you're gonna lose it again, and then you're gonna find a new focus. Now you're going to sit outside and look at the moon. Now, you are going to have a terrible idea...that turns out to be a pretty good idea.

Now, you are going to remember empathy. Now, you are going to dance yourself silly and eat cake for breakfast. Now you are going to let yourself keep imagining. You are going to stay curious. You are going to continue to explore. Now you are going to thrive. You are going to flourish, and you are going to make good art.

So the question is not "What are you going to do?" The question is "What are the rest of us going to do?" because you are going to be busy.

Congratulations College of the Arts 2020! I could not be prouder of you.