

## 2001 Press Releases

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### **LAEDC Board of Directors treated to presentation by Otis College of Art and Design President Sammy Hoi**



LAEDC President Lee Harrington with Otis College of Art and Design President Sammy Hoi at June 20, 2001 Board of Directors Meeting.

### **Otis College of Art and Design focuses in areas of educational programs and external relations to keep creativity thriving in LA**

LOS ANGELES - Otis College of Art and Design [President Sammy Hoi](#) is working with the business community to position students for a smooth transition from campus to career, by providing the appropriate training to fill those positions needed to keep the \$200 billion creative industries going strong in Southern California.

"Creativity is LA's top industry," said Hoi, "we need to think big." According to Hoi most Southern Californians do not realize that Los Angeles is an international fashion and fine arts center, hub of the toy industry in addition to being the entertainment capital of the world. Hoi said Los Angeles is home to fashion, jewelry, and toy industry. The creative industries bring \$120 billion in sales revenue into the region annually, according to Hoi.

"We need to claim our rightful place as the design capital of the world. This is our best chance for continued success. To make this claim, we need to lead by example. LA can assert itself," said Hoi who is positioning Otis' students to become contributing members of this thriving yet often invisible industry within several industries.

"Businesses don't always see the value of design. Design is seen as dispensable," said Hoi who explains that with this rebirth of design comes a mainstream concern of creativity and functionality as seen by retailers such as Target.

"Good design is good business. Design sells," said Hoi who believes businesses could play a vital role in creating the next generation of emerging designers. Hoi said many Otis alumni have contributed to crowning LA as a creativity capital. Hoi stressed the need to tap their current creative resources and possible student resources into the LA business community.

In order to keep up with the growth it is estimated 2 million newly created design-based jobs will need to be filled, said Hoi.

"Employers are hungry for talent to fill the need," said Hoi and turning out first-rate designers is a top mission for the oldest college of design in Los Angeles.

"Business and schools can work together," said Hoi. Otis is working to join with businesses to enable students to work on projects for businesses giving them applied learning and real world experience before they graduate.

"This program will support the talent that will come to serve all of us. Programs are being designed to meet businesses needs," said Hoi cites the example of the Otis Design Group, a student design team that takes on projects for businesses on a sliding fee scale. Hoi is counting on feedback from businesses to help him design the schools curriculum to achieve this goal.

Another example of business and colleges working together is the collaboration of Otis and Mattel on the formation of a toy design program. Mattel provided the faculty and in turn the students were able to make a smooth transition into the work world with the hands-on training provided through the schools program.

Hoi sees California as a pioneering land that is free of constraints of convention and "where we can make our own rules here," in a metaphoric sense. This enthusiasm to pioneer is encouraged at Otis, according to Hoi through special training and encouragement.

Otis is the most diverse private college of art and design in the United States in regard to household income level, race and ethnicity. Hoi stresses the need to keep diversity alive in the creative industries. Yet, even with its diversity, the college is very selective and only accepts 300 students from about 20,000 applications received each year.

"Otis is 80 years old but it's at its best," says Hoi. In 1918, LA Times founder and publisher General Harrison Gray Otis donated his home to the city of Los Angeles for "advancement of the arts" by supplying art instruction to students. The college broke off from the county in 1970 and became part of Parsons College. Otis gained its independence from Parsons in 1992 and became Otis College of Art and Design.

Hoi would like to see the United States take a lead in expanding creative programs in Southern California colleges by following the example of the United Kingdom in the 1980s. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher introduced more design curriculum into all schools in an effort to compete with Asia's cheaply produced goods. Although England could not compete on the same terms and as cheaply, they instead offered better quality goods a more money. The strategy worked and today design is the 4th largest topic in UK schools.

For details on the LAEDC business development services, phone 1-888-4LAEDC-1. The LAEDC is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1981 with the mission to attract, retain and grow businesses and jobs in the regions of LA County.

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