

## Shannon Jackson tapped as faculty leader for arts and design

By **Cathy Cockrell**, Berkeley News | APRIL 16, 2015



Longtime professor Shannon Jackson has been named UC Berkeley's first associate vice chancellor of arts and design, a role that will be pivotal in revitalizing the campus's commitment to the arts.

Chancellor Nicholas Dirks and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Claude Steele, in an April 16 email message announcing the new faculty leadership position, said a "creative ethos" accessible to all students is essential to a thriving campus culture. In her new role, Jackson will be charged with leading the effort to foster this creative ethos, they said.

The new associate vice chancellor is also charged with "tapping the enormous interdisciplinary strengths" of the campus's presenting organizations and academic enterprise, wrote Dirks and Steele, and "positioning the arts as an essential bridge" between UC Berkeley and the Bay Area community and beyond.

A faculty member in rhetoric as well as theater, dance and performance studies (TDPS), Shannon Jackson currently directs the campus's Arts Research Center and serves on the boards of Cal Performances and the Berkeley Art Museum. During her 17 years teaching at Berkeley, she established an interdisciplinary doctoral program in performance studies and chaired the TDPS department. Among other campus-level duties, she served as a member and then chair of the Budget Committee for the university.



**Professor Shannon Jackson**

Jackson welcomes the opportunity to nurture and communicate "the centrality of the arts, design and creativity to our campus identity," marshal resources for the campus's arts enterprises and foster community engagement through the arts. "Berkeley builds from a position of strength in the arts," she said, beginning with a "terrifically talented brain trust."

(Shannon Jackson elaborates on her vision for Berkeley as an "arts research lab and arts engine" in [this Q&A](#) with the NewsCenter.)

"The creation of this role will be welcomed by everyone in the arts," noted Dominic Willsdon, curator of education and public programs at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "It is a great sign of UC Berkeley's commitment to the essential place of art in public education."

Michele Seville, arts and culture manager for the City of Richmond, cited fruitful collaborations with UC Berkeley, facilitated by Jackson, dating back to a 2007 project based on oral histories conducted in the East Bay city. Recently, MacArthur "genius" and socially engaged artist Rick Lowe collaborated with the Richmond community [during a 10-day residency](#) at Berkeley.

The establishment of a new arts-focused leadership position will extend Berkeley's commitment to cultivating public artistic literacy. It also aims to more fully integrate art encounter, art inquiry, artmaking and design into the fabric of student life, helping students develop critical skills such as group collaboration and self-expression.

The position results from a visioning process led by Anthony Cascardi, dean of arts and humanities in the College of Letters and Science, to reimagine the future of the arts at Berkeley. Cascardi said the goal, in part, is to "afford opportunities for all students to gain meaningful exposure to the arts" via courses, studios and apprenticeships on and off campus.

The visioning group reported preliminary data on student arts participation. Among its findings: Each year more than 25,000 Berkeley students take a course in the history and analysis of art and culture, and more than 9,000 participate in art-making. And there are more than 160 student groups on campus devoted to the arts or design.

"As a public university with a large and varied student body, we are a central pathway for the development of a Millennial audience," noted Jackson.

Currently on sabbatical as a Guggenheim fellow, she will assume her new role this fall.



### YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE



Microbiologist elected to National Academy of Sciences



Three faculty named to the American Philosophical Society



Campus announces new date for talk by conservative pundit...



Two honored with 2017 Faculty Service Award