

DR. VALERIE CISLER TO RETIRE AS COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION DEAN

Dean Valerie Cisler



After eight years of service to UW-Stevens Point, College of Fine Arts & Communication Dean Valerie Cisler will retire at the end of June. She announced her intention to retire this past November in an email to the college's faculty and staff. "It is with mixed feelings that I inform you of my intent to retire in the summer of 2025. I want you to know that I absolutely love this job and this college. I get to work with some of the most amazing people and our students are thriving. Those who know the story of how I based my decision to accept this position on a very strong internal feeling—that it was exactly the right position to take at that point in my career, will understand that my decision to depart my role as Dean comes from a very similar internal feeling—that it is 'the right time' to retire next year. I have learned to listen to that internal guide for most decisions in my life and it has served me well. Is this easy to express? Absolutely not."

During her tenure as dean, Cisler led the college in curricular changes, expansion of programs, communication strategies, and creation of college initiatives. One of the biggest changes was the restructuring of the college into two schools, including the integration of interior architecture. She was instrumental in leading the college through curricular changes, supporting faculty in creation of the fully online Master of Music Education program, pre-art therapy program, addition of contemporary voice and vocal jazz studies, elevation of both media studies and graphic design to fully independent programs, and the creation of multiple graduate certificates in both music and media studies.

Dean Cisler's work included support of the expansion of our general education program offerings in critical thinking, expansion of arts coursework and moving emphasis areas into combined programs. She was instrumental in fundraising for the college, working with the COFAC major gifts officer to double the college's Foundation Endowment, creation of and shepherding the Bukolt Faculty Endowed Professorship in Cello/Music Advocacy, the first faculty endowed position with the Copernicus Cultural Foundation.

Cisler supported the college's engagement with the local community by engaging with alumni, donors and community organizations. She created the COFAC Advisory Council, a group of community members that serve as advocates and 'spread the word' about all the events that the public has access to in COFAC. Event highlights include the multidisciplinary Take Me to the River: Healing Waters events, master classes, guest speakers, performances, and exhibits sponsored through the COFAC Point-to-Point Connections. She successfully increased college communication through the development of a quarterly newsletter and engagement with retired faculty and staff on an annual basis and by serving on the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra Board.

During her time as dean, Dean Cisler completed a 15-year research project that resulted in a book publication "Functional Skills for Pianists." Her research focused on piano pedagogy, specifically the successful development of fundamental keyboard skills inclusive of theory, technique, sight reading, transposition, harmonization and improvisation for college level music majors and keyboard performance students at undergraduate and graduate levels.

A reception will be held in the Noel Fine Arts Center prior to the end of the semester to celebrate Dean Cisler's accomplishments and her retirement.

