



JOHN PAUL
THE GREAT
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

06

Digital Music
Emphasis Announced

12

Creative Arts Complex

10

10 Years in Escondido

16

Feature Film Premieres

03

Letter from the President

04

Pirates of Penzance

06

New Emphases: Digital Music & Cinematography

08

US News Ranking

09

New Adjunct Faculty

10

10 Years in Escondido

12

Creative Arts Complex

14

Celebrating our 20th Anniversary

15

Build for Impact Campaign

16

O, Brawling Love! Premieres

17

No Reception Wraps Production

18

Faculty Film Screening: *Don't Get Eaten*

19

Alumni Film Projects

20

Creating Graphics for World Cup Qatar

21

Alumni Spotlight: Motion Capture for Video Games

22

Alumni Companies

24

Net Ireland Experience

25

Households on Campus

26

Snapshots of 2023



Front Cover: Angelika Sowa '23 on the set of *No Reception*

President, Derry Connolly, PhD, Timothy Johnson, Heidi Ranschaert and Bridget Baker

Dear friends,

In writing this year-end letter, I reflect on all our freshman classes over the years, and in particular our newest Class of '26. I am so impressed by their keen interest and overall commitment for our mission to **Impact Culture for Christ**. We begin anew to form yet another class of future creators and innovators, leaders and entrepreneurs within the creative arts and business.

Contemplating our almost 1,000 graduates, and in particular our newest alumni – the Class of '23 – I praise God for their overwhelming embrace of our vision to be innovative and determined in their professional life, while striving boldly to proclaim His Gospel.

As JPCatholic continues to grow, we are strongly positioned to Impact Culture for Christ. This year our faculty network expanded yet again, bringing experience from Dreamworks, Industrial Light & Magic, AT&T, PepsiCo, Cartoon Network, and Rockstar Games. We have also expanded our Professional Connections outreach, and established formalized partnerships for internships and alumni employment with companies such as Yellow Line Digital and Akimbo Studios.

Our ambitious Feature Film Program, launched in 2021 to produce a feature film annually, had its first screening this year with *O, Brawling Love!* Our second film *No Reception* finished production in June, with Prof. Chris Riley at the helm as director.

Our new BFA in Visual Arts launched this Fall to strengthen and synergize our digital arts emphases. Its cutting-edge entertainment technology, along with our upcoming Digital Music emphasis, prepares students to forge collaborations across our many programs.

Our study abroad program with NET Ireland greatly expanded this year, with seven students traveling to Ireland for 3 months helping to spread the Gospel. The partnership was piloted in 2022 with just one student – the impact of her personal experience abroad was contagious.

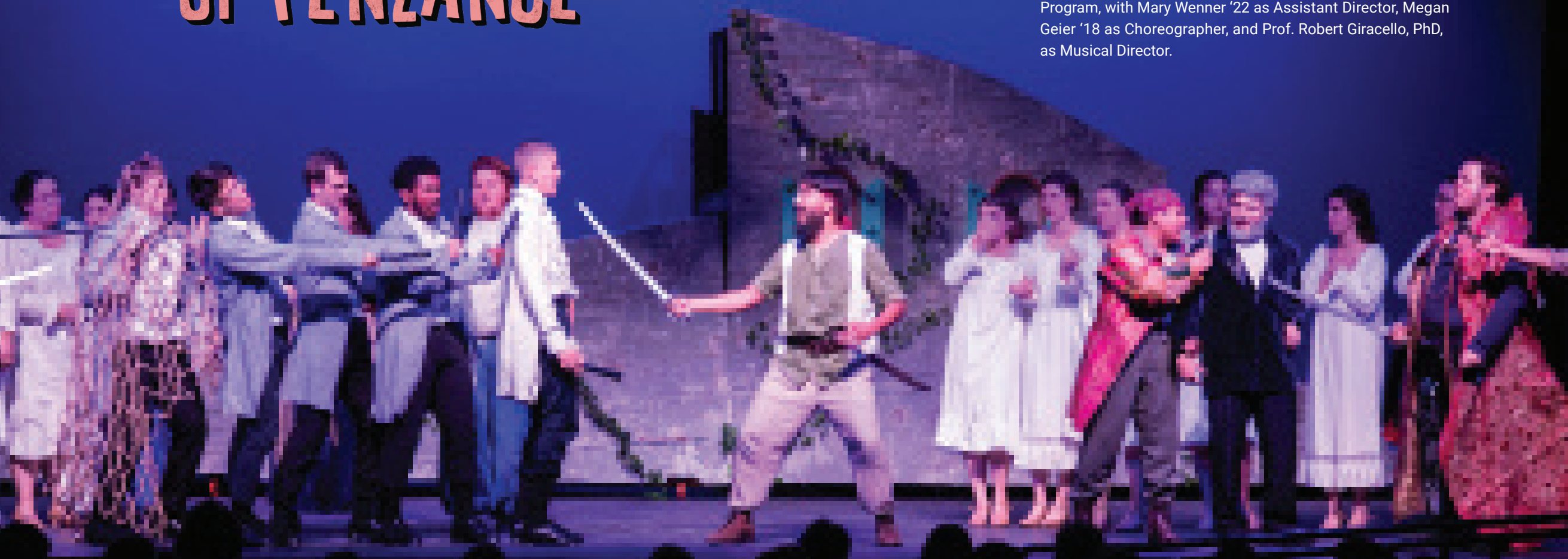
With great excitement and a long anticipation, I am excited to share that the renovations of our Creative Arts Academic Complex are expected to complete mid-to-late 2024. We sincerely thank our benefactors for enabling this expansion, allowing us to serve our growing student body.

We now begin tackling our most important real estate project – the renovation of our **Mother Teresa of Calcutta Chapel**. Emboldened by a very generous gift of \$1M from the parents of a JPCatholic alum, we continue in earnest to raise the remaining \$3M required to complete the project.

Our students, faculty, staff, trustees, and benefactors make JPCatholic an incredibly special community. I am pleased to count you among our friends and supporters, and I thank you for being part of our important mission. Please keep all of us in your prayers, as you will be in ours. May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

Sincerely,
Derry Connolly, PhD

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE



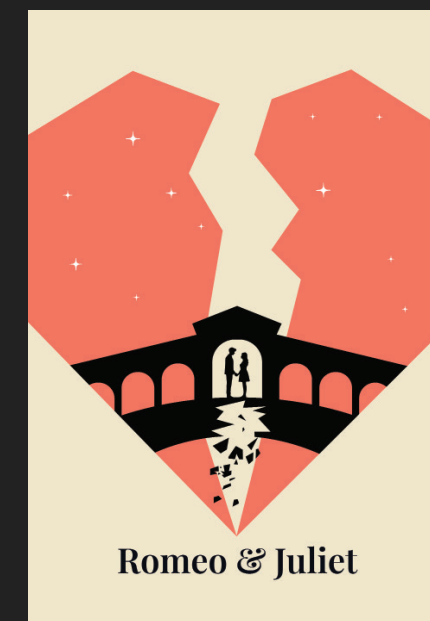
Summer 2023 Musical Production

During Graduation Week, JPCatholic Theatre Productions presented a rousing performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta to a packed house at the Ritz Escondido. The production was directed by Katelyn Slater, Creative Director of the Acting Program, with Mary Wenner '22 as Assistant Director, Megan Geier '18 as Choreographer, and Prof. Robert Giracello, PhD, as Musical Director.



UNCLE VANYA

FALL 2023



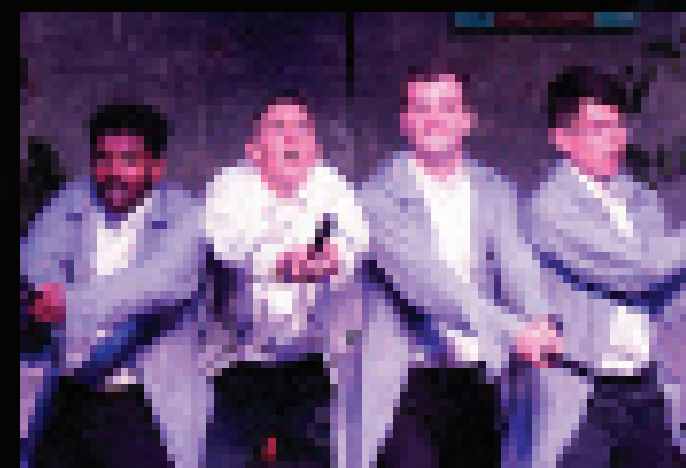
Romeo & Juliet

WINTER 2024

Watch the full show



SCAN HERE to watch



Subscribe for updates
jpcatholic.edu/theatre

DIGITAL MUSIC EMPHASIS ANNOUNCED

This summer, JPCatholic announced the addition of a Digital Music emphasis within our B.S. in Communications Media, helmed by Dr. Robert Giracello.

Giracello began teaching music electives at JPCatholic in 2017. The popularity of his classes led to the University expanding the music curriculum and instituting a minor in Digital Music in 2021.

Starting as a full emphasis in fall 2024, the Digital Music program will provide an in-depth examination of music theory and history, coupled with hands-on experience in composition and performance. Under the guidance of experienced professionals, students will develop their

creative talent as a film composer, songwriter, and music producer, exploring the act of storytelling through music. They'll work with industry standard equipment, learning professional skills for studio recording, electronic music composition, sound editing, working with a sound reinforcement system, optimizing live performances, and more.

"This is a milestone for our University, and one that is a long time in coming," said Giracello. "I'm so pleased at the prospect of expanding our Music Department with our skilled professors and talented students, and I thank Dr. Connolly and Professor Simon for being so supportive in this ambitious project."



CINEMATOGRAPHY EMPHASIS

Prof. Simon also announced exciting expansions to our film curriculum for 2024, including a new emphasis in Cinematography. This program will add to the University's diverse array of emphases in the field of filmmaking, restructuring existing coursework into a specific sequence for students interested in camerawork, as well as adding new offerings such as Digital Stills Photography and Cinematographer Case Study.



Professor Robert Giracello, PhD

Dr. Giracello is an award winning composer, performer, and educator. He received his PhD from the University of California, Riverside where he specialized in the theatrical works of Stephen Sondheim, the compositions and writings of Arthur Farwell, and electronic music composition using ChuckK music programming. As a performer and composer, Robert has appeared throughout the United States and Europe, most notably in a special audience for Pope John Paul II, at the United Nations UNESCO concert in Paris, and at a special anniversary celebration in Cologne, Germany.

He has recorded six studio albums and written two novels, most notably *Three Landscapes*, for which he received a MACRO award. Prior to becoming a full-time professor at JPCatholic, he served as Director of Music and Liturgy for Church of the Resurrection in Escondido.

JPCATHOLIC RANKED AMONG TOP COLLEGES IN WESTERN US

US News & World Report upgraded JPCatholic from #19 to #15 out of 103 schools in Regional Colleges West

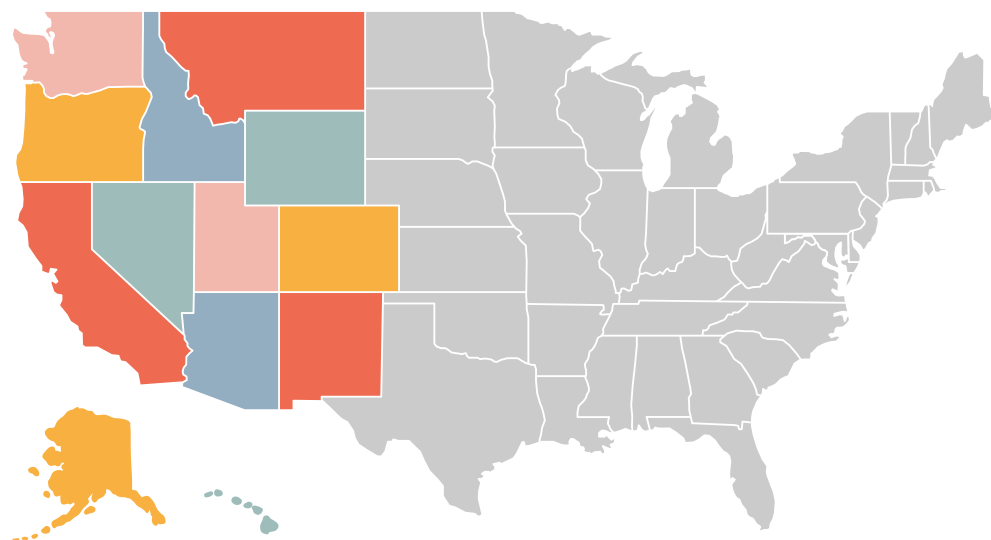


U.S. News & World Report, one of the go-to sources for national college rankings, placed John Paul the Great Catholic University at #15 in its list of Best Regional Colleges West for 2023-2024. Among the 103 schools of the Regional Colleges West category, JPCatholic ranks #15 overall (tie), as well as #4 in Best Value and #31 on Social Mobility (tie).

Every year the publication conducts extensive research of schools across the nation, first by arranging them into various subcategories (national universities, liberal arts colleges, regional colleges, etc.) and then ranking them within those categories according to a wide array of metrics. It is important to note that the rankings are driven primarily by quantitative data; that is, by measurable quantities such as retention rate and student-faculty ratio, rather than opinion surveys or third-party oversight.

The category “Regional Colleges” refers to schools that focus primarily on undergraduate education, but that grant fewer than half of their degrees in the liberal arts. JPCatholic meets these criteria because, although the humanities and liberal arts form a substantial part of the undergraduate core curriculum, our BA in Humanities is just one out of the four bachelors degrees offered.

The many Regional Colleges throughout the nation are then grouped according to geographic region: North, South, Midwest and West. The West region, which covers 14 states, is by far the largest geographically, extending from the Pacific coast through Texas and including Alaska and Hawaii.



NEW ADJUNCT FACULTY

We were pleased to add a number of distinguished professionals to our adjunct faculty this year, including:

Brian LaFrance

Animation

Brian is a highly experienced visual artist who has worked for Disney, DreamWorks, and currently at Industrial Light & Magic. His credits include *Star Wars Episode I*, *Zootopia*, *Stranger Things*, and *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*.

Course taught:
Texturing & Lighting II



Cristina Weinheimer

Graphic Design

Cristina is a seasoned Creative Director and partner at Concept-Zombie LLC, a leading advertising and design agency in Southern California, with over 13 years of senior-level designer expertise in the advertising industry and a diverse portfolio of 60+ brands.

Course taught: Typography

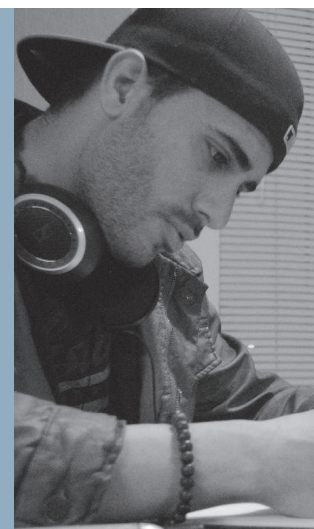


Carlos Vázquez

Illustration

Carlos is a Character Designer, Art Director, and Visual Development Artist who has worked for companies and clients such as Enemy Spawn, Big Grin Productions, mobile gaming company Playstudios, Salesforce, and Cartoon Network / Warner Bros. Animation (*Animaniacs*).

Courses taught: Character Design, Digital Illustration



Jonna Schuster

Theology

Jonna is Co-Founder & Director of Catholic Revival Ministries, which she launched in 2019 with her husband Jim. Together, they serve the Church by equipping Catholics to bring supernatural impact to all areas of life by partnering with the Holy Spirit in power and love.

Course taught:
Activation in the Spiritual Gifts



Tito Zamalloa

Business

Tito is a marketing and management expert who has worked with brands such as AT&T, McDonald's, PepsiCo, and HP. He is currently Marketing Director/VP of the San Diego Consulting Group.

Course taught:
Business Career Strategies

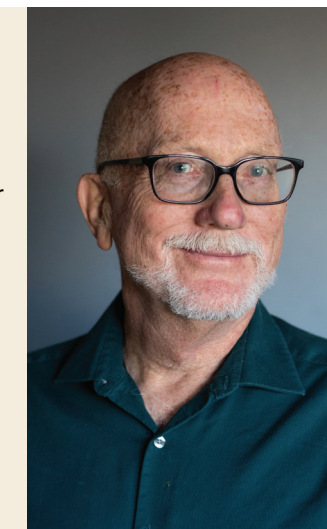


Tom Carroll

Game Development

Tom is a veteran video game developer, writer, and artist. His credits in 3D art include Rockstar Games' *Red Dead Redemption* and *Midnight Club* racing series. He is also a comic book writer and illustrator, and wrote the graphic novel *P.O.D.: The Nexus* (Zondervan Press) for Mat Broome.

Course taught:
Survey of Video Game Technologies



2013–2023

10 YEARS IN ESCONDIDO

by Dr. Derry Connolly

God’s plan for our permanent campus began to unveil before our very eyes in May of 2013. Frustrated by the zoning challenges at our leased campus in Scripps Ranch – we were anxious both to move out of the city of San Diego and to buy our own real estate – even though we didn’t have very much money. We trusted that our important mission to form graduates to **Impact Culture for Christ** would get a better-than-expected solution with God’s providence.

Mingei Museum’s satellite location on Escondido’s Grand Avenue had closed in mid-2010, dealing a blow to the city’s downtown. It had brought prestige and culture for much of the previous decade after JCPenney vacated the building in the mid 1980’s. When Kevin Meziere—JPCatholic’s COO and a co-founder who grew up in Escondido—toured our team through the 24,000-square-foot building, it was love at first sight. Central to the building was an ideal Soundstage space for our film productions.

And Escondido offered more—the brand new 198-unit Latitude 33 apartment complex, one of only two being developed post-2008 real estate crash in all of North San Diego County,

was less than a half mile away, and they would rent a large block of apartments to us. And there was even more. Escondido’s magnificent Performing Arts Center was across the street, while a new commuter train station had just opened a short walk away. Perfect infrastructure – thank you God!

So, with the extraordinary generosity of trustees and many benefactors, we moved forward to providentially purchase five contiguous buildings in less than a decade.

Escondido has been a huge blessing for JPCatholic—a true miracle. It has the friendliness of a mid-western town, a supportive city government, and a vibrant creative arts scene—we feel very much at home. Our students love Escondido and they are much loved by the community. Here our enrollment has grown from 125 students to 300 during a decade dominated by COVID.

Going forward, our renovation of two critical growth-enabling buildings is about to commence. Our 32,000 sq. foot Creative Arts Complex should be open by mid-to late 2024, and will enable the doubling of our student body over time. Our most important building, our Mother Teresa of Calcut-

ta chapel, is up next for renovation—praise God we have reached the 40% mark in our fundraising campaign. We hope that this beautiful chapel will draw our students to a deeper encounter with Jesus, and that it will also be a place for people of faith to visit and pray.

In closing, I never would have imagined that God would have brought us to historic downtown Escondido—but He has and He is genius. Let us always give praise, honor, and glory to God, our creator and Father.

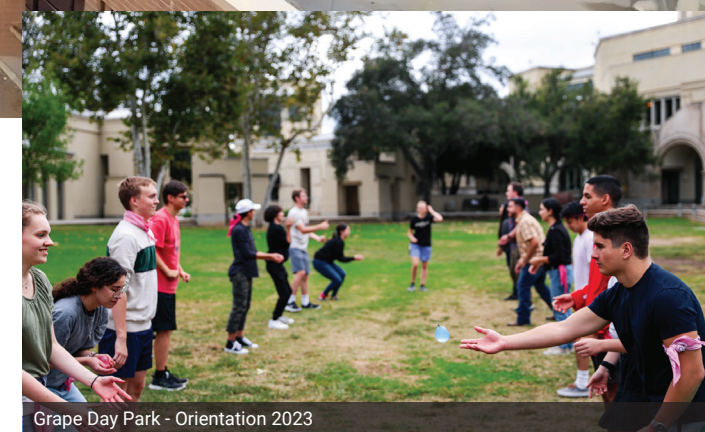
“Escondido has been a huge blessing for JPCatholic—a true miracle. It has the friendliness of a mid-western town, a supportive city government, and a vibrant creative arts scene—we feel very much at home.”



Global Roots Project & Esco Alley Art install mural mosaic on our Administration building (2023)



JPCatholic’s art club hosts their spring art show at the Escondido Arts Partnership Municipal Gallery (2023)



Grape Day Park - Orientation 2023



Maple Street Plaza - Pelican Blues Christmas Performance (2022)

CREATIVE ARTS COMPLEX

Coming in 2024, the 30,000 sq. ft. facility will more than double our academic space

Watch the Video Tour



SCAN HERE

The loading dock will allow for large sets and equipment to be easily moved in and out of the soundstage.

The new soundstage is 25% larger than our current one, providing ample space for film sets and virtual productions with motion capture technology.

The new computer lab will host work stations for post-production and visual arts students.

Entering the Cinematic & Visual Arts building, students will be greeted by a wide open lobby featuring student artwork.

A courtyard will serve as a venue for community events, outdoor performances, and student life.



A larger art studio will serve as a dedicated space for illustration students.

Production Offices will provide dedicated space for the annual Feature Film Program, and potentially alumni productions, or other key partnerships.

A public lounge and storefront facing Broadway will provide opportunities for business and art students.

A wide open rehearsal studio provides a dedicated space for our acting students, including more room for sets, costumes, and props storage.

This classroom will also provide additional editing workstations.

An adjacent parkette provides an additional venue for outdoor events involving lawn games, food trucks, etc.

CINEMATIC & VISUAL ARTS

PERFORMING ARTS



Please Note: Plans for the building are subject to change.




CELEBRATING OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Thank you to everyone who came to Escondido this May to join us in celebrating this milestone at our Parents Weekend and Scholarship Gala.



Mother Teresa of Calcutta Chapel Renovation

BUILD *for* IMPACT CAMPAIGN

Scholarship Fund

Creative Arts Academic Complex

40% RAISED
\$18M GOAL

Major Gift Accelerates Chapel Renovation Project

This summer, in honor of our 20th anniversary, we received a \$1M lead gift for our St. Teresa of Calcutta Chapel renovation. The donor family, who have asked to remain anonymous, are the parents of a JPCatholic alum. Their transformative gift brings the amount raised to \$2M, which is 40% of the estimated \$5M required. The donor's charge is: "Let's build a chapel!"

See ways to give at jpcatholic.edu/giving



“O, BRAWLING LOVE!” PREMIERES AT THE RITZ THEATER

The premiere represents a landmark moment for the Feature Film Program

On August 24th, JPCatholic premiered *O, Brawling Love!* at the Ritz Theater in Escondido. The Shakespearean-inspired rom-com is the first project in JPCatholic’s Feature Film Program, an initiative the University launched in 2021 to integrate annual feature film productions into the curriculum.

“This is a huge milestone for the Feature Film Program,” said Prof. George Simon, who spearheaded the curriculum. “Our students and alumni worked incredibly hard on this film and demonstrated that they are capable of telling incredible stories on a feature length scale.”

O, Brawling Love! was pitched by student Isabella Lake ‘22 at the first Feature Film Pitch Night in October 2021. Directed by alumna Maggie Mahrt ‘10, production took place over several weeks in summer 2022 in Escondido and surrounding area. Over 50 JPCatholic students were involved in the production both on and off set.

The story centers on two rival acting students Saf (Yelena Friedman) and June (John Howard), who are cast to play lovers Romeo and Juliet in their high school play, vying for a life-changing



prize. She comes from a wealthy home with an emotionally abusive mother; he’s from a poorer family whose deep care for each other is usually masked in sarcasm. These starkly differing family dynamics provide the backdrop for a comical journey of selfishness, misunderstanding, and compassion.

“Playing June was an incredible experience to say the least,” said Howard, who graduated from JPCatholic in 2022. “It’s truly magical to see all the hard work we did on set last year come together on the screen. The best part was being surrounded by friends as we all watched the story unfold for the first time in the theater. So grateful to everyone who brought this story to life!”

The film will be available for streaming in early 2024.



The cast of *O, Brawling Love!* at the premiere

“NO RECEPTION” WRAPS PRODUCTION

The second project in our Feature Film Program will premiere in 2024

No Reception was filmed over our summer break, wrapping on June 30th. The original script was written by seniors Mark Westin and Natalia Roberts, and was directed by JPCatholic professor Chris Riley. Riley is a screenwriter with over 25 years of experience, and from 1995-1998 he worked as Manager of Script Processing at Warner Bros. His credits include work for Touchstone Pictures, Paramount Pictures, and Fox television network.

The family-friendly comedy is about a posh city dweller who gets lost in the wilderness with nothing but his hand sanitizer, and is soon caught up in a longstanding feud between two forest hermits.

In addition to two sets in JPCatholic’s soundstage representing bunker and treehouse interiors, production locations included Felicita Park, Elfin Forest, and a cabin in Julian. The cast includes JPCatholic students Timothy Johnson and Donovan Bakin.

“*No Reception* is ridiculous fun,” said Riley. “And it’s meaty. It’s about things that really matter within our families.

I’ve taken to calling it a family revenge comedy. The production represents a wildly ambitious collaboration between students, faculty, and other industry professionals. We’re not making a student film. We’re making a world-class film with students. JPCatholic students hold positions of serious responsibility on this project and they’re delivering exquisite results. Making a feature film is a massively complex project and our students are rising to the challenge in every department.”

Over the summer quarter, students in Prof. Melinda Simon’s “Feature Film: Post-Production” class assembled the first cut of the film. Post-production and distribution planning continues this fall, with an anticipated premiere in 2024.



From left: Natalia Roberts ‘23, Anna McKellar ‘23 & Prof. Chris Riley



Students built two sets in our soundstage of a tree house and a bunker

FACULTY'S FILM SCREENING:

DON'T GET EATEN

Professors George & Melinda Simon premiered their indie feature to our campus community

On August 13th, Profs. George and Melinda Simon held a private screening of their indie feature *Don't Get Eaten* at The Ritz Theater in Escondido. In this zany family comedy, an exasperated mother tries to keep her family afloat while her internet streaming husband ekes an existence creating "zombie survival" videos with their daughters. A couples therapist prescribes a technology-free getaway, which seems to be going well – until an actual zombie apocalypse intrudes on their family's weekend.



The film was written and directed by George and his brother Joe Simon, and produced by Melinda (Collins) Simon, who also stars. All three are alumni of JPCatholic, and *Don't Get Eaten* is a passion project over a decade in the making. George completed and submitted the very first draft of the screenplay when he was a student at JPCatholic, just days before graduation.

"It's incredible to think back on all the events that transpired to make this

movie possible," said George. "From finishing that first draft of the script on my balcony in college, to having a discussion with Melinda and Joe about making our first feature eight years later, to flying from San Diego to Michigan with seventeen suitcases and three small children to film the movie. It's been a ten year process and we are all so grateful that we were able to complete the journey."

Since completing their degrees at JPCatholic in 2012 and 2013, respectively, George and Melinda have each worked in various sectors of the film industry for both secular and Catholic productions, including Emmy-winning projects with Spirit Juice Studios. Now married with three kids, they both teach at JPCatholic while continuing their career as independent filmmakers. They are a creative team, with George normally writing and directing, Melinda producing and editing. In recent years, their award-winning short films *Almost Home* and *The Scar* helped pave the way for their first feature length project.

Principal photography on *Don't Get Eaten* took place over four weeks in Michigan in March of 2022 with a small crew consisting completely of JPCatholic alumni and students.

"Every person who worked on this movie was driven by love of the game and a genuine desire to support one another in this crazy life we've chosen as filmmakers," said Melinda. "I will never cease to be thankful for our crew."

Over the coming months, the Simons will be submitting *Don't Get Eaten* to festivals and pursuing distribution. They can be followed on Instagram @simonsmakesmovies.



\$90K RAISED FOR ALUMNI PRODUCED FEATURE

Letting Go of Jack, an independent feature film written and directed by Andrew Koltuniuk '20, wrapped production in November. The roadtrip drama is a collaboration by a group of JPCatholic alumni through their production studio The Guild. It follows a young man on a roadtrip to overcome his grief, who gets tested by hitchhikers and breakdowns along the way.

The Guild was founded in 2022 by Koltuniuk along with Rachael Workman '20, Joseph Kusic '21, Charley Blum '21, and Connor McLaughlin. The team collectively brings experience from hundreds of sets, including three feature films. *Letting Go of Jack* is their first feature together as a company, and in just a few months this year they raised \$90k from investors to shoot the project.

Production took place from Oct. 10 to Nov. 1 primarily near Joshua Tree National Park in Yucca Valley, CA. A majority of the crew hired for the film were JPCatholic alumni and students.

“*Letting Go of Jack* explores what it means to heal from grief, and how helping others through their grief can be a method of working through your own.”

-Andrew Koltuniuk '20, Writer & Director



ALUMNAE WIN EMMY FOR DOCUMENTARY ON CATHOLIC POW HERO

JPCatholic alumnae Haley Rossi '14, Danielle Conklin '14, and Jessie Schiffer '14 were awarded an Emmy on July 15th for their work at Spirit Juice Studios on the documentary short film *Fr. Kapaun Comes Home*.

The film won in the "Documentary - Historical" category, which was announced at the 2023 Heartland Emmy Awards in Denver. Rossi was director and cinematographer on the project, with Conklin producing and Schiffer serving as field producer on site.

Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun was a chaplain with the US Army who died in a North Korean prison camp in 1951. Kapaun posthumously received the Purple Heart, Legion of Merit, and Medal of Honor from the US Military for his "extraordinary heroism and selflessness." In 1993, Pope John Paul II declared Fr. Kapaun a Servant of God, the first step toward a possible canonization.

Fr. Kapaun Comes Home was created by Spirit Juice Studios to document the return of his recently identified remains from Hawaii to his home state of Kansas.

“I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to tell the story of a true hero, and document his journey home. My hope and prayer is that the story and legacy of Father Kapaun will continue to inspire people to live a life of sacrifice and love for others.”

-Haley Rossi '14, Director & Cinematographer



Alumni Spotlight

CREATING GRAPHICS FOR WORLD CUP QATAR

Throughout 2022, three alumni from JPCatholic were busy developing motion graphics for the World Cup. As part of the team at |drive| studio, they were involved in creating the graphics and branding package for the U.S. broadcast on FOX Sports, and even the design of the physical set used for the broadcast from Qatar.

|drive| studio is a design agency based in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Nashville. Their large portfolio of clients and projects has included NASCAR, the NFL Super Bowl, The Masters, and National Geographic. They were also behind the graphics package for the Womens' World Cup in France (2019) and the World Cup in Russia (2018).

Yssa Mitra and John Paul Diodati both graduated in 2021 with an emphasis in Game Development and started working at |drive| shortly after. Mitra was Production Coordinator on the World Cup Qatar project, keeping the pipeline organized and assisting with logistical operations.

Diodati's role was to use Unreal Engine to create 3D models of the stadiums and help design the broadcast set that was built in Qatar. "Working on this project alongside all the talented people at |drive| has been an amazing experience for me," said Diodati. "I am very grateful for this opportunity to learn and grow, and for the help I've received from co-workers along the way. It is truly fulfilling to see our work airing live for millions of people to see."



Yssa Mitra '21 & John Paul Diodati '21

|drive| studio has had a close relationship with JPCatholic for many years, with co-founder and Creative Director Nick DiNapoli currently sitting on JPCatholic's Board of Trustees. Over the years, |drive| has employed nine alumni and numerous interns from the University—a significant proportion given that their current staff is under 20 people. One of these alumni, Nate Sjogren '11, worked at Drive for nearly a decade; in 2020 he launched his own design studio Akimbo, and he also teaches Adobe After Effects as an adjunct at JPCatholic.

Zach Sadler graduated from JPCatholic in 2015 and throughout his seven years at |drive|, he has now had the opportunity to work on three World Cups. For Qatar, he served as Senior Designer, sharing a large responsibility for shaping the direction and aesthetic of the on air package.

"I could not ask for better leadership than what we have here at |drive|," said Sadler, who works out of the new Nashville office.

At the 44th Annual Sports Emmys, FOX received 5 Emmy nominations for their coverage of the World Cup, including Outstanding Live Special, Outstanding Interactive Experience—Event Coverage, and Outstanding Studio Show—Limited Run.



Alumni Spotlight

TAYLOR PRUDENCIO '21

Motion Capture Technician at 2K Games

What do you do as a mocap technician?

I wear multiple hats when it comes to being a stage mocap technician, ranging from capturing the motion data, doing quality assurance of data, getting talent ready for a shoot, or utilizing Unreal Engine as pre-visualization for in-game cinematics. This year I received my first game credit, on *NBA 2K24*; I also technically did some DLC work for *WWE 2K23* but was too late into the development cycle that I was not able to get a credit for that project. Still, there are plenty more projects on the way!

How did you develop an interest in this career?

My interest in motion capture started in Max Hulburt's Intro to Virtual Production class in which we got to learn about Unreal Engine's latest tech for filming cinematics. I came up with the short film *A Knight's Journey* and was extremely excited with how the final result of that project came to be. Until that course, I only understood Unreal at an Environment Artist level and a handful of basics on how to operate the software. I want to give a very special shout-out to Liam Arter, Ezra Ho, Sophia Pappas, and Sebastian Romero for all their knowledge and expertise that brought that project to life. It was such a fun experience working with all my classmates to make that short, and it sparked a desire to continue doing more of that throughout my life.

What was your experience finding work after graduation?

I feel very fortunate with how it unfolded. About a week before graduation, Professor Hulburt reached out to me with the opportunity to work for AMGI Studios. The company had a close connection with the school, and it was a great fit with my interest in virtual production work. After some time at AMGI working on a variety of animation and game projects, I took a chance to apply for 2K. I still remember the anxiety I felt when interviewing, up until I got the final offer to be a part of the team - you would not believe the amount of excitement I felt when I received that phone call!



Taylor in a Motion Capture Suit at AMGI

What were the biggest takeaways from your education at JPCatholic?

I cannot thank my professors enough for teaching me everything they know and preparing me for my future. Shoutout to Rodney Figueroa, Max Hulburt, Nate Sartain, Joe Shoopack, and Fr. Andy Younan. And to all my fellow classmates, who still to this day continue to inspire and push me to achieve greater heights; it was also a great honor to learn just as much from them as it was from my professors. We had such a collaborative, creative class.

What do you love most about working in game development?

Growing up playing video games, it's a dream to now be working in the development process on creating them. I see video games as a medium that goes beyond what you can experience in comparison to film or books; they offer a more interactive experience that allows you to be immersed in the life of a character, going on your very own personalized adventure. Being able to bring those stories and experiences to life brings me a tremendous amount of joy and fuels my love to be working in the game industry.

INNOVATOR SPOTLIGHTS

Many students and alumni have founded their own companies over the years, and below is a sampling of some of the successful entrepreneurs among our graduates.



BLUEBIRD ART STUDIOS
Cierra Campbell '18
 Tulsa, OK

Bluebird Art Studios offers art classes for children, ranging from ages 4–17. The studio won Best New Business of the Year by Bixby Metro Chamber of Commerce in 2022.


www.bluebirdartstudios.com

FLORALOOM

FLORALOOM
Colleen Monroe '11
 Kansas City, MO

Floraloom is a floral design studio that builds custom installations for corporate parties, marketing events, and film sets.


www.florloom.com



FUND YOUR INVOICE
Jason Cuevas '17
 San Diego, CA

Fund Your Invoice is an invoice factoring company that helps truckers and other independent contractors get paid earlier.


www.fundyourinvoice.com



AKIMBO STUDIOS
Nate Sjogren '11
 Boise, ID

Akimbo Studios is a motion graphics design firm that has served clients such as Rocket League, Life Fuels, and Scott Hahn. Since founding the company, Nate has hired several JPCatholic students and alumni.

www.akimbo.tv



HYPURO FIT
Chase Crouse '16
 Austin, TX

HypuroFit offers online fitness coaching from a Catholic perspective, promoting both physical and spiritual fitness.

www.hypurofit.org



LIONESS STUDIOS
Hailey Jackson Boucher '19
& Dominic Boucher '20
 Boise, ID

Lioness Studios serves clients with promotional videos and social media content.

www.lionessstudiosfilms.com



YELLOW LINE DIGITAL PARTNERS WITH JPCATHOLIC FOR STUDENT INTERNSHIPS & JOBS

This year we announced a formal partnership with digital marketing agency Yellow Line Digital. Since its founding in 2012 as a LaunchPad project by faculty and alumni, the company has had a close relationship with the University, and roughly two-thirds of all employees have been JPCatholic students or alumni. The new partnership gives JPCatholic students first opportunity for internship openings, as well as employment opportunities.

The president of YLD is Prof. Joe Szalkiewicz, who currently integrates students into the company's workflow through a hands-on course called Digital Agency Workshop. YLD is a full service digital agency that has provided video and social media marketing solutions to over 100 businesses and nonprofits, including five Archdiocese and a Vatican organization.

Watch Prof. Joe Szalkiewicz's video below to learn more.



NET IRELAND STUDY ABROAD EXPANDS

Last fall, Genevieve Pride pioneered our NET Ireland Study Abroad as the first student to participate in NET’s evangelistic outreach for credit. The program radically expanded this year, with JPCatholic sending seven students (and one alumni) to Ireland. In this unique opportunity, students earn practicum credit for participating in programs including parish retreats, street evangelization, and coffee shop ministry.

Watch Genevieve’s video to hear about how her experience with NET last fall transformed her life and deepened her own relationship with Christ.



HOUSEHOLDS

Providing Spiritual Community & Growth

Households at JPCatholic have grown tremendously over the past year, with 4 households currently including over 40 students. A “household” is similar to a fraternity or sorority, but focused on spiritual growth and service. Their weekly commitments as a group include activities such as Daily Mass, Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, and service projects.



THE YOUNG AUGUSTINES

Stemming from the motto *Corpus et Anima*, the Young Augustines aim to build the body and soul of each member, supporting physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. Activities together like Mass, hikes, and Rosary build up fellowship among their group and more broadly among the men on campus.



IN CORDE SUO

In Corde Suo is an intentional community of women who desire to develop deeper intimacy with the Lord, specifically through the Holy Spirit and the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Together they aim to grow in charismatic spirituality, cultivate their feminine genius, and walk alongside each other in virtuous friendships.



THE MARIPOSAS OF GUADALUPE

The Mariposas of Guadalupe build a fellowship of women through faith formation and active ministry. Their charisms include dedication to the pro-life ministry, faith formation through Scripture reading, and active prayer. They gather in community for weekly “Coffee and Christ” Bible Studies as well as Rosary hikes on Sunday mornings.



BROTHERS OF THE FIAT

In modeling Mary’s lifelong *Fiat*, this household strives to recognize and say “yes” to God’s holy will at every moment. They cultivate strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and build fraternity through encouraging one another’s growth in holiness.



FR. DOMINIC ‘18 RETURNS TO CAMPUS AS SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Fr. Dominic Smith, O.S.A. graduated from JPCatholic in 2018 with a degree in Communications Media, and was ordained a priest in the Order of Saint Augustine in 2022. This year, we welcomed Fr. Dominic back to campus to say Mass three times a week, and serve as a spiritual director for students.



LETTER TO ARTISTS SEASON 2

Bailey Garland’s podcast *Letter to Artists* entered its second season this year — the podcast is inspired by St. John Paul II’s *Letter to Artists* and highlights the vocation of the artist. Each week, Bailey interviews JPCatholic students, faculty, alumni and other Catholic artists about their creative pursuits and professions. You can find the podcast on all major platforms or at jpcatholic.edu/go/podcast.

SNAPSHOTS OF 2023



Spring Formal - Rooftop at the Ritz



Field Day



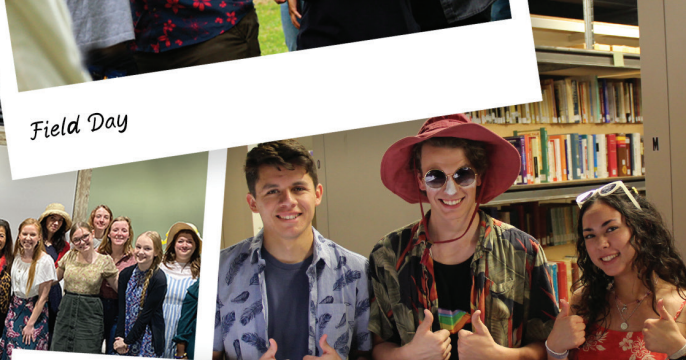
Peli the Pelican



Bishop Ramon visited JPCatholic



Women's Leadership Tea



Spirit Week



Congratulations to the Class of 2023!

When this group arrived on campus three years ago, they were embarking on their college adventure in the midst of the pandemic. We are so proud of this remarkable group of men and women, and all they have accomplished during their time here.



Ping Pong at Student Life Center



Campfire Skits & Songs



New Student Orientation

In September, we welcomed 98 new freshmen and transfer students to campus for Orientation. Combined with students who began in Winter, Spring, and Summer, a total of 125 students joined the University this year. The new cohort comes from 22 different states, plus several from Europe and Canada.

Class of '23 Institutional Awards

Business Acumen

Naylin Cruz

Humanities

Lily Blando

Cinematic Artist & Valedictorian

Alan Hewitt

Fine Arts

Keyana Harrod

Visual Arts

Joshua Martin

The Founder's Award for Impacting Culture

Alec Williams

Performing Arts

Kyra McAlister



Senior Dinner



New Relic of St. John Paul II



Norbertine Visit



Winter Retreat



Senior Screening



**JOHN PAUL
THE GREAT**
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
220 W. Grand Ave,
Escondido, CA 92025
www.jpatholic.edu

NONPROFIT.ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN DIEGO CA
PERMIT NO. 3326

Storytelling & *the Gospel*

A FREE ONLINE COURSE FROM JPCATHOLIC

COMING 2024



SCAN HERE
to learn more

jpatholic.edu/story

