

Laurence D. Captain DMA,FRSA Biography



Laurence Dickinson Kaptain, - Class of 1970 - b. 1952 From the EHS Yearbook, The Maroon: Nickname: Larry; Intended Career: Musician; Band 2, 3, 4 - President 4;

Orchestra 2, 3, 4; Pep Band 2, 3, 4 - Leader 4; Pep Club 3, 4; Dramatics.

In his current position as Dean of the College of Arts & Media (CAM) at the University of Colorado Denver, Laurence Kaptain leads a unit of 1,200 students that has leading-edge programs traditionally not found at other national public institutions of higher education. CAM has 3 departments: Music Entertainment & Industry Studies, Visual Arts and Theatre, Film and Video Production, with 3 nationally ranked programs (Jazz Guitar #9, Music Business #10 and 3D and Digital Animation #19). A champion of accessibility to creativity and the arts for all students in public education—Kaptain is involved on the national level in arts integration initiatives and hosted the 2016 National Conference of the Alliance for Arts in Research Universities.

As a percussionist and symphonic cimbalom artist, may also be heard on recordings with the Chicago Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Czech National Symphony, LaScala Opera (in Milan), the University of Michigan Symphony Band and a Grammy-winning recording with Orpheus.

Before coming to CU Denver he was Dean of the College of Music and Dramatic Arts and Penniman Family Professor at Louisiana State University. Prior that he was Dean of Shenandoah Conservatory and Director of the highly regarded Schwob School of Music in Georgia. He received the first doctorate in percussion instruments at the University of Michigan, where he was a Fulbright Scholar to Mexico and received the prestigious Rackham Graduate School Pre-Doctoral Fellowship.

Kaptain serves on two important national boards: Arts Schools Network and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project. In Denver, he is on the boards of Opera Colorado, the Denver School of the Arts Friends Foundation and the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts.

He credits the late Douglas Steensland (former director of the Elgin Symphony and the EHS Bands) with cultivating his passions and interests in music. In the area of percussion instruments,

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he was a private student of EHS alumnus George McNabney, Duane Thamm, and James Lane of the Chicago Symphony.

Greetings from the College of Arts & Media (CAM) at the University of Colorado Denver!

Not only is our unit Colorado's first arts and entertainment college—but we are also one of the few public institutions nationally to be offering programs at the intersection of arts, technology and commerce. It's at that location that our art changes lives.

It has only been within the past 20 years that significant research has illuminated new career paths for prospective students and their parents to consider. Please read the following sentences from Steven J. Tepper and Elizabeth Long Lingo (formerly of Vanderbilt's Curb Center for Art, Enterprise & Public Policy),

“Artists need to be masters of navigating across historically disparate domains, for example, specialization and generalist skills, autonomy and social engagement, the economy's periphery and the core, precarious employment and self-directed entrepreneurialism, and large metro centers and regional art markets.”

That is what CAM is all about. Our faculty have high expectations for our students—and in that regard, a core belief we all share is the importance of assuring that young artists, designers and scholars have the tools to form their own creative identity. They will then be able to establish their role in the new contingent economy by leveraging entrepreneurship and enterprise for their success as artist citizens.

Please explore our web site, printed materials—and then plan a visit to our campus. When you meet our faculty and students you will understand the special nature of how an education at the intersection of arts, technology and commerce changes lives.

With best regards,



Laurence D. Kaptain, DMA and FRSA
Dean, College of Arts & Media
Professor of Music, Entertainment and Industry Studies
University of Colorado Denver

Note: I have a doctorate that is equivalent to a PhD, it's called a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts). In universities, the music history professors have PhDs and the performers, composers and others have the DMA. That's the terminal degree in our field.

I'm usually listed as Laurence Kaptain DMA and FRSA (FRSA is the abbreviation for being a Fellow in the Royal Society of Arts).