Making the Arts and Design Central at Penn State
College of Arts & Architecture Strategic Plan 2014–19
July 1, 2014
Preamble

The spring of 2013 marked two important milestones for the College of Arts & Architecture: first, the close of the university's 2008-13 strategic planning cycle and, second, the fiftieth anniversary of the college’s founding in 1963.

The 2014-19 planning period inaugurates the opening chapter in the college’s next phase of growth and development, during which we will build on the achievements of the previous five years as we embark on Arts & Architecture’s next half-century. An accomplishments update on the 2008-13 strategic plan is available at: artsandarchitecture.psu.edu/about/strategic-plan

Through a year-long series of consultations, focus group discussions, and conversations involving college academic administrators, unit heads, faculty, and staff we have developed this statement of our goals for the next five years. Rooted in our Mission, Vision, and Values, this plan will guide the college’s decision-making, budgeting, and development priorities through 2019.

Considered a “living document,” our plan charts a clear course for the next five years, while allowing us to respond nimbly to unexpected challenges and opportunities. We will review and update the plan annually and measure our progress against clearly defined performance indicators.
Mission

The College of Arts & Architecture is committed to providing the highest quality training for artists, designers, scholars, teachers, and arts professionals, and to advancing research and creative activity in our disciplines. We grant professional and liberal arts degrees, and we play a fundamental role in the university’s general education curriculum. We enrich lives and build community by offering opportunities for the university community and the general public to engage with the arts and the creative process. In this regard, we provide an important public face for the university.

Vision

To create a rich and dynamic intellectual ecosystem that fosters excellence in teaching and learning, research and creative practice, and exhibition and presentation across the arts and design disciplines within the college and the university.

To provide a culture that embraces diversity, encourages intercultural experiences, and affirms the value of differing perspectives within and between our disciplines.

To position the college, our units, and our faculty and staff, and students as leaders in the arts and design disciplines within regional, national, and global communities.

Values

Our mission and vision are rooted in the Penn State Values:

**Penn State Community:** We are Penn State, one community geographically dispersed, united in our commitment to our common values, goals, and relationships to one another, the University, and our communities.

**RESPECT:** We honor the dignity of each person, treat each individual accordingly, engage in civil discourse, and foster an inclusive community.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** We meet our obligations and hold ourselves accountable for our decisions, actions, and their consequences.

**INTEGRITY:** We act in accordance with the highest ethical standards, making certain that our behavior reflects our values.

**DISCOVERY:** We seek and create new knowledge and understanding, and foster creativity and innovation, for the benefit of our communities, society and the environment.

**EXCELLENCE:** We strive to give and do our best in all our endeavors.

In the coming months, we will identify and define additional values that are particular to Arts & Architecture and determine ways in which these values are, and will be, lived out in the college.
The arts and design disciplines offer timely answers to timeless questions, helping us understand what it means to be human. Rooted in ways of knowing that connect mind and body, the arts and design teach the eye to see, the ear to hear, and the heart to feel. They foster imagination and innovation, which form the essential foundation of nearly all human thought and the scientific and social progress that has accompanied it. And, in an increasingly diverse world, engagement with the arts and design disciplines plays a vital role in creating an educated and humane citizenry.

Guided by these principles, our goal for 2019 is to ensure that the arts and design disciplines become, and are recognized as, core elements of the Penn State identity and experience.

Indicators of our success in reaching this goal will include:

- Our research and creative practice is, and is recognized as, central to the Penn State research mission, valued for both its intrinsic merit and its significant role in university-wide collaborations and initiatives.
- Our courses and academic programs—in our disciplines and in the university’s General Education curriculum—are, and are viewed as, models of pedagogical excellence and innovation at Penn State and beyond.
- Students—regardless of major or program of study—identify “the arts” as influencing their decision to attend Penn State, and upon graduation understand arts experiences as having helped prepare them to succeed in their chosen careers and to be educated, humane citizens.

To achieve this ambitious, aspirational goal we will pursue four supporting goals, outlined below along with strategies for achieving them. Over the coming months, we will devise measurable outcomes to aid us in assessing our progress toward attaining these objectives.
2014–19 Supporting Goals and Strategies

Supporting Goal 1: Create Transformative Experiences for Students

The college embraces its dual mission to prepare students for careers in the arts and design disciplines and to provide meaningful experiences for all students through our general education courses, as well as our performances, exhibitions, and other programs. As the arts disappear from K-12 education (and none are required for admission to the university), we must ensure that all students are afforded opportunities for transformative engagement—in the classroom/studio and beyond—with the arts and design. Such engagement not only has intrinsic merit, but also facilitates the development of important values and life skills with wide-ranging applications, including intellectual risk-taking, self-expression, empathy, materials-based inquiry, cultural competency, respect for difference and diversity, and visual and aural literacy that is crucial in our media saturated culture. To create the highest quality experiences for students, we will:

Play a central role in shaping and delivering the university’s General Education curriculum by offering courses that are relevant to the lives and experiences of our students, and that equip them to attain their professional and personal aspirations, regardless of major.

Ensure that students in our undergraduate degree programs can identify and successfully pursue career opportunities in their chosen fields.

Offer the highest quality graduate training and placement in light of shifting university priorities and national trends.

Develop curricula and assume a leadership role in the emerging field of arts entrepreneurship in order to equip our students for a wide spectrum of careers in, and related to, the arts.

Educate students to thrive in an increasingly globalized world by emphasizing engaged scholarship, study abroad, and other opportunities for cultural competency and interchange, and by working actively to recruit and retain faculty from diverse backgrounds.

Continue to innovate in on-line education for both residential and World Campus instruction, and diversify our portfolio of courses and programs.

Collaborate with PSU Student Affairs, Residential Life, and other university partners to position the arts at the heart of the PSU student experience beyond the classroom and studio.
Supporting Goal 2: Engage Communities Through Research, Curricula, and Arts Presentation

We are visual and performing artists, design practitioners and researchers, humanists and curators, and social and environmental scientists. Our research and creative practices generate new knowledge through narratives, objects, exhibitions, images, movements, sounds, landscapes, performances, structures, and texts. We create meaning and recognize patterns. We interpret the past, make sense of the present, and shape the future. Our work is crucial to the PSU’s mission as a research-intensive, public, land-grant university, and we will continue to pursue and support research and creative activity of the highest quality and impact across the diverse range of our disciplines.

A particular point of focus during this planning period will be community-engaged research and creative practice in close alignment with teaching and presentation. The arts and design disciplines offer a compelling site for exploring complex economic, political, social, and cultural issues. Moreover, engaged learning is in the DNA of arts education, which often requires students to perform and design for community audiences. Therefore, the college is well positioned to play an important role in meaningful and transformative public engagement, which lies at the heart of the land-grant mission in the 21st century. In order to do so, we will:

Actively pursue opportunities to play a significant role in university-wide research initiatives with community impact on regional, national, and international scales, and when possible take on a leading role in such opportunities.

Collaborate on interdisciplinary research projects to position Arts and Architecture faculty as important partners in the expression and dissemination of scientific and social science findings. In an iterative process, understanding and measuring the effects of such dissemination will feed back into arts and design practices and research.

Create arts presentation programming that addresses important contemporary issues and problems, and seek curricular and co-curricular partners from across the university in order to create opportunities for broad, campus-wide and community engagement.

Support and nurture research and creative practice that explores core behaviors in arts and design disciplines—including creativity, innovation, risk-taking, self-expression, and interpersonal communication—that are essential for entrepreneurship and have the possibility of transforming professional fields such as health care and law.

Reassert our leadership role at Penn State and beyond in research, teaching, and outreach that engages with sustainability.

Incorporate engaged learning opportunities in both degree programs and general education curricula.
Supporting Goal 3: Lead in Technology in the Arts and Design Disciplines

Information technology is essential to arts and design pedagogy, research and creative practice, and presentation. We will be aggressive in incorporating leading-edge technology in our activities, and will do so without losing sight of the value of traditional media, materials, tools, and experiences. We will aspire to a position of IT leadership at Penn State and nationally among peer institutions of arts and design. With these aims in mind, we will:

Make certain that our students—both undergraduate and graduate—have access to, training in, and ample opportunities to explore leading-edge technologies relevant to their fields of study.

Link technology-centric research and teaching initiatives and infrastructures across the College so as to create efficiencies and maximize impact. We will seek to strengthen connections between college technology initiatives and university-wide ones.

Develop interconnections at the college level between e-learning, web design and communication, information technology, and research so as to strengthen each of these functions.

Maintain our position of leadership in on-line teaching and learning at Penn State and extend this leadership nationally.

Exert greater influence at the university level in order have a hand in shaping technology policy.

Effectively use technologically based communications tools, such as social media and livestreaming, to extend the reach and visibility of our activities.
Supporting Goal 4: Maximize the Visibility of the Arts and Design at Penn State and Beyond

In support of our aspirational goal of ensuring that “the arts and design disciplines become, and are recognized as, core elements of the Penn State identity and experience,” we will increase the college’s visibility at multiple scales. To do so, we will:

Better define the college’s identity by promoting core values and signature activities that transcend our individual disciplines.

Encourage schools, departments, and programs in the college to build national and international reputations in targeted areas of strength.

Sustain our leadership role in key national organizations.

Increase our research profile and expenditures, particularly in sponsored research and nationally competitive fellowships for faculty, and devise non-monetary metrics that effectively capture the scope and impact of our research and creative activities.

Increase the quality and raise the profile of our graduate and undergraduate research and creative activity.

Establish effective strategies and mechanisms to better communicate with our multiple constituencies at the university and beyond.

Continue to advocate for our facilities needs and for support for the “Arts District” on the University Park campus.

Explore opportunities to work with administrators, faculty, and staff at Commonwealth campuses in order to raise the profile of the arts and design disciplines across the full breadth of the university.