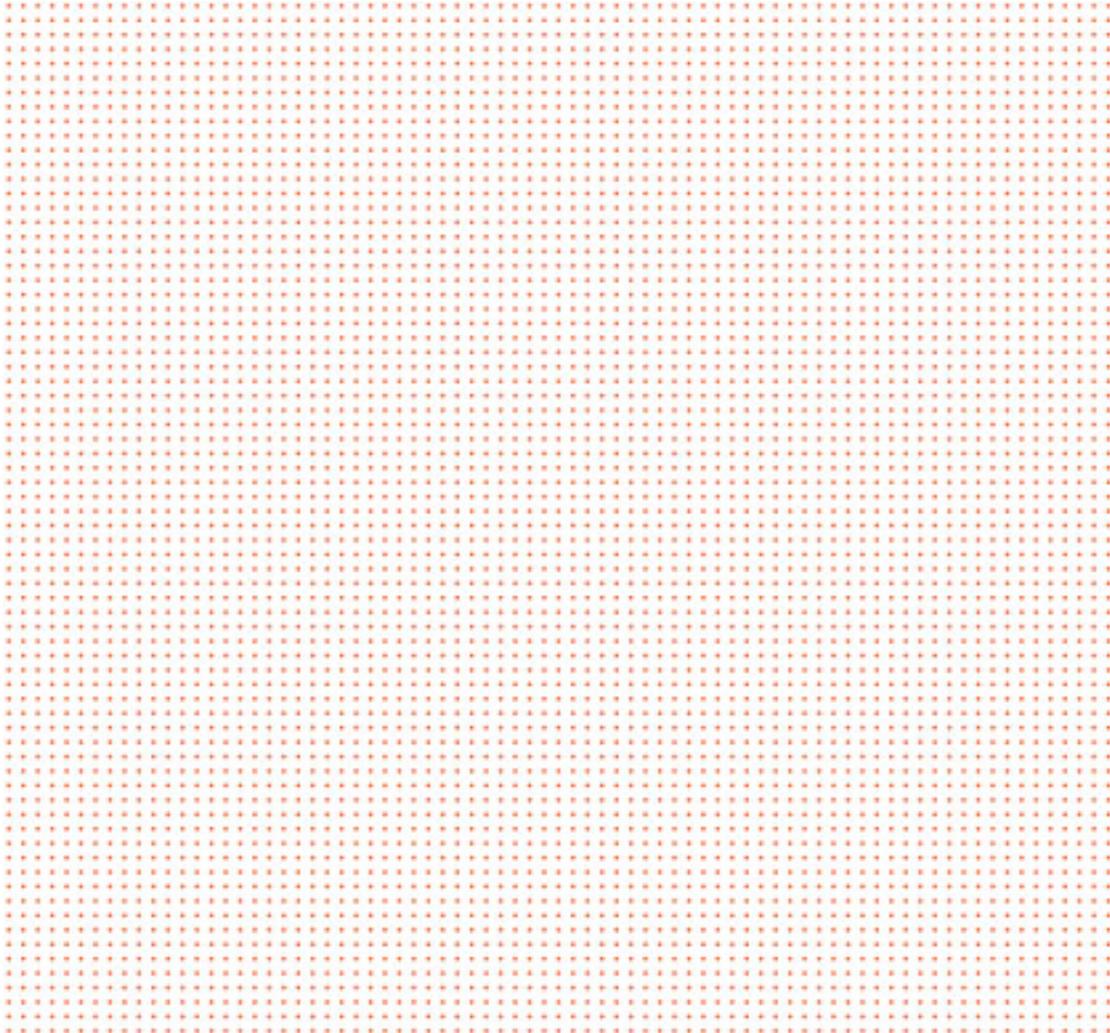


VPA Academic Strategic Plan

An Interim Report: October 2017



Syracuse University
College of Visual and Performing Arts

Questions?

Please contact VPA Office of Academic Affairs at 315.443.5955

COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

VPA ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN: AN INTERIM DRAFT

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This report should be considered as a DRAFT version of the College's Academic Strategic Plan. With the arrival of new Dean Michael Tick this academic year, the creation of a highly participatory faculty and staff process was necessarily delayed until Dean Tick had time to gain a solid perspective on the College's needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A college-wide academic strategic planning committee, with faculty and staff from all areas of the College was established in early January, 2017. Working in subgroups, the committee has generated a wide range of strategic initiatives and action steps, many of which are included in this draft report.

This interim plan incorporates a brief SWOT analysis and identifies six broad categories of academic and corresponding fiscal initiatives: (1) the undergraduate experience, (2) graduate education, (3) administrative infrastructure and facilities, (4) faculty research, (5) community engagement, and (6) budget collaboration and accountability. Please see appendices I – III. The plan concludes by articulating how we will monitor progress as we implement the various strategic initiatives and action steps.

Each of these initiatives will be pursued and framed by the College's vision and mission statements as well as the Syracuse University Academic Strategic Plan and Campus Framework. The College of Visual and Performing Arts has articulated the following vision and mission statements:

Vision: The vision of the College of Visual and Performing Arts is founded upon the belief that art and scholarship can impact social change.

Mission: The College of Visual and Performing Arts at Syracuse University is committed to the education of cultural leaders who will engage and inspire communities through performance, visual art, design, scholarship, and commentary. We provide the tools for self-discovery and risk-taking in an environment that thrives on critical thought and action.

STATE OF THE COLLEGE: A BRIEF SWOT ANALYSIS

A strong academic strategic plan begins with an assessment of how the organization views its current situation. One way to do this is to conduct a SWOT analysis, identifying strengths to build upon, weaknesses to eliminate or better manage, and opportunities to take advantage of, and threats that need to be anticipated and responded to strategically. Each of the college's academic units has recently conducted its own SWOT analysis, and will draw upon that analysis in drafting its own unit-specific strategic plan. The following represents those issues that are particularly relevant to the college as a whole.

Strengths:

Excellence in teaching is a hallmark of the VPA experience, both in terms of our many devoted individual instructors, but also due to the intimate nature of studio-based learning, including small discussion sections, ensembles and private lessons.

- VPA includes a number of nationally highly ranked professional programs (#3-ranked Industrial Design; #4-ranked Drama; #5-ranked Musical Theater; #9-ranked Interior Design; #14-ranked Transmedia; #16-ranked Ceramics; #19-ranked Printmaking; #20-ranked Sculpture, #21-ranked Setnor School of Music; #23-ranked Film; and #32-ranked Museum Studies). In addition, while disciplinary ranks do not exist for communication studies programs, our Communication and Rhetorical Studies M.A. program is one of the top PhD feeder programs in the U.S. VPA itself is ranked #33 in U.S. News and World Reports 2017 Best Graduate Programs in Fine Arts (up from #45 in 2012).
- VPA's Drama program is the most selective program at Syracuse University in terms of percentage of applicants who are admitted to the program, and the program has a long list of alumni who are prominent in the theater and in television and film acting and directing.
- In conjunction with Syracuse University Study Abroad programs, VPA offers a wide range of enticing opportunities for study abroad in London, Florence, Strasbourg, Berlin, Bologna, and Prague, and equally exciting off-campus domestic programming in NYC, LA, and D.C. Highlights include the Tepper Program and Gilbert Week in NYC, Sorkin Week, Ginsburg-Klaus Week, and the Turner Semester in LA, and "Political Communication inside the D.C. Beltway" in Washington, D.C. Getting more students to participate in these programs, especially study abroad remains a goal and a strategic opportunity.
- VPA has made a habit in recent years of successfully targeting and attracting impressive groups of new faculty members, more often than not, landing the top candidate in each of our applicant pools.
- VPA has several "heritage" programs (we offered the first BFA in fine arts in the U.S.; the first four-year music degree in the U.S.; rhetoric was one of the initial programs of study at Syracuse University's founding; the School of Art has a long and glorious reputation, particularly in sculpture and painting, while the School of Design's industrial and interaction design program has produced a prestigious group of design entrepreneurs. These legacy programs represent a strong foundation for continued excellence.
- VPA, like many other schools/colleges at Syracuse, has very strong and active alumni networks, but these are not utilized in as comprehensive and strategic manner as they could be.

Weaknesses:

- With some exceptions, undergraduate and graduate application pools to VPA programs are not deep. We need to strengthen recruiting messages and efforts in order to be more selective in admissions, as one of many measures of academic excellence.
- On average, VPA faculty carry one of the heaviest teaching loads on campus (3/3, with Drama at 4/3, Art and TRM at 3/2, CRS at 2/2 for research-active faculty). This creates a difficult challenge for many of our faculty to engage in the level of robust research activity expected at a Research I university.
- One result of heavy teaching loads is that VPA faculty in some programs have less time to attend conferences and participate in important national and international conversations about the future of the arts and the academy.
- We are a geographically dispersed college (8 buildings, 4.4 miles from the Warehouse to Comstock Art Building), raising challenges for our faculty and students to engage in cross-disciplinary activities within the college and the larger university. This dispersion also results in duplication of technical shops and other services that would be far less expensive to provide if shared across academic units located in greater proximity to one another.
- VPA has too many tenured faculty and not enough students in some academic programs, and too many students and not enough faculty in other program areas. Retirements and other strategies are necessary to enable reallocation of resources.
- VPA is over-reliant on part-time faculty in some programs, particularly in the Setnor School of Music.
- VPA needs to improve on its 4-year undergraduate graduation rate (51.6%) and 1st-year retention rate (76.4%). The range across academic units in terms of graduation rate is 29%-67%. The 1st-year retention

rate varies from 52%-87%). We also have one 5-year program with a graduation rate of 62% and 1st-year retention rate of 90%.

Opportunities:

- In any given year, 11-12% of all VPA students participate in full semester, summer, or short-term study abroad programs. During the junior year, when most VPA students typically go abroad, between 48-57% of that cohort is engaged in study abroad. This number could be even higher and represents an opportunity for improvement, perhaps aiming at being consistently above 60% of juniors participating in study abroad.
- The college can take a greater role in offering courses to non-VPA students by participating in a new university-wide core curriculum and proposing new minors and dual majors (see Appendix I Big Ideas for VPA).
- Opportunities abound to further Internationalize our curricula, invite more international visiting scholars to campus, and engage in more thorough planning to enhance the student experience of international students here at Syracuse and better prepare domestic students for successful study abroad and follow-through upon their return to campus.
- The college has an opportunity to engage in more strategic enrollment management practices to minimize the number of low-enrollment classes offered and more carefully align enrollment caps with pedagogical best practices and capacity of facilities.
- There is significant potential for VPA's Transmedia program to partner with state, county and SU in operation of the Central New York/DeWitt Film Hub (see Appendix I Big Ideas for VPA).
- Build on and build out alumni networks for each of our program areas to take greater advantage of the energy and desire to assist current students that is a hallmark of Syracuse and VPA alumni.
- The impressive growth of programming for veterans and military families at Syracuse is something programs in VPA can align with in more effective ways, particularly in terms of arts healing, mindfulness and interpersonal communication practices.

Threats:

- Inadequate emphasis on assisting students with career planning and job placement, particularly in relation to increasing federal scrutiny regarding gainful employment rules.
- Risk of programs becoming less attractive to prospective students because of outdated or inadequate facilities and equipment, or facilities poorly suited to support essential learning outcomes.
- Potential challenges to some areas of academic programming due to tuition subsidies for students who enroll in public universities, particularly in New York State. High cost of SU tuition and high VPA program fees make our programs financially out-of-reach for many potential students.
- Risks if unable to reallocate financial resources to areas of greatest need and opportunity within the college.
- Risks if unable to resolve the college's ongoing structural budget deficit through the RCM budget model.

GOAL 1: The Undergraduate Experience

The overall strategic goal for enhancing the undergraduate student experience is to recruit, matriculate, retain, and graduate in four years a diverse, talented, and intellectually curious student with the skill set to become innovative makers and leaders of cultural change in our global community; they will engage and inspire audiences through performance, visual art, design, scholarship, and commentary.

Objective #1.1: RECRUIT A DIVERSE AND TALENTED STUDENT BODY. *Increase recruitment and enrollment of strong candidates with a focus on underrepresented populations and diversity of all kinds, greater selectivity, and growth of applicant pools.*

Strategy 1.1.1: VPA's Office of Recruitment and Admissions will reassess how it connects with prospective students, school counselors/teachers through virtual info sessions, stronger online presence, and targeted engagement with feeder schools, including community colleges and performing arts schools; maximize the involvement of alumni with recruitment efforts; explore the reasons why accepted students decide to go elsewhere.

Strategy 1.1.2: Recruitment must be recognized for faculty promotion and considered in Performance Evaluations.

- **Strategy 1.1.3:** Develop international partnerships (including through the sponsorship of visiting scholars), especially in China and Latin America with 2+2, 3+1 and bridge programs. Continue to explore establishing a Confucius Institute at SU, either campus-wide or within VPA only.

Objective #1.2: ENGAGE IN ONGOING CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT (see Appendix I Big Ideas). *Foster rich and communal curricular and co-curricular experiences that enhance students' academic and personal development and promote local, regional and global engagement.*

- **Strategy 1.2.1:** Take a leadership role in helping to develop the University's 4+4 core competencies, and deliver a curriculum fully in alignment with the accompanying principles.
- **Strategy 1.2.2:** Identify and implement curricular changes to allow more flexibility in course sequences, easier movement between programs, and the addition of minors. Examine curriculum bias and reset areas to provide broader or more diverse learning, research, experience, etc. Explore co-ops, service-learning and other experiential learning initiatives across the curriculum, where appropriate. Promote greater participation by students in study abroad and strengthen curricular connections to study abroad opportunities.
- **Strategy 1.2.3:** Increase opportunities for individual and faculty-led undergraduate research.
- **Strategy 1.2.4:** Raise awareness (within and across academic units and university-wide) of public screenings, performances, exhibitions, and college initiatives; incentivize student attendance.
- **Strategy 1.2.5:** Create and fund extraordinary research opportunities.
- **Strategy 1.2.6:** Further enhance our efforts with alumni in NYC, LA, and Washington DC to show student work to industry professionals (Fashion Show in NYC, Drama Showcase, NYC Design Shows, Araca Project).

Objective #1.3: IMPROVE RETENTION AND TIME TO DEGREE. *Cultivate a culture that ensures the success of the whole student.*

- **Strategy 1.3.1:** Establish college-wide professional advising to increase retention and improve time to degree.
- **Strategy 1.3.2:** Facilitate awareness of and connection with university-wide support systems (e.g., Office of Disability Services, Center for Learning and Student Success, Health Services, Slutzker Center, etc.)
- **Strategy 1.3.3:** Implement a robust and ongoing cultural competencies training program for faculty and staff; strengthen and support cohort and community-building activities to combat isolation.
- **Strategy 1.3.4:** Explore the reasons that matriculated students leave before graduating. Work with the Office of Student Success to develop retention efforts specifically geared towards the needs of sophomore and junior students (who tend to receive less attention in our current student support systems).

Objective #1.4: BUILD A MULTIDISCIPLINARY IDENTITY. *Cultivate a culture that fosters a strong sense of identity around multidisciplinary education.*

- **Strategy 1.4.1:** Identify and nurture interdisciplinary collaboration within the College and across the University.
- **Strategy 1.4.2:** Create and require a common experience for all VPA students in which they share space and encounter other disciplines such as a fall convocation.

Objective #1.5: ESTABLISH A VPA CAREER SERVICES OFFICE. *Help students develop their career path.*

- **Strategy 1.5.1:** Establish a VPA career services office to assist students seeking full- and part-time employment, both here and abroad; secure internships and locate capital for creative scholarship. Establish a VPA-dedicated job posting site, and build up an associated alumni network.

Rationale:

Much of the reasoning for the initiatives outlined above reflects: (1) a desire to see academic programs in VPA emerge from their silos to enhance opportunities for students to experience intellectual diversity that exists across the College; (2) a desire to see all SU students, regardless of major, benefit from courses offered by VPA.

GOAL 2: Graduate Education

Graduate education is central to the mission of VPA, and vital to maintaining competitiveness and leadership as a tier-1 research university. Premier graduate programs attract top faculty, drive research discovery and innovation, contribute to undergraduate teaching and mentoring, and deeply enhance campus life and community.

Our vision is to position the VPA’s graduate programs to be leaders in graduate training in the U.S. and globally, and to be leaders in exploring new approaches to graduate training in the visual, performing and communicative arts.

Objective #2.1: RECRUIT A SELECTIVE AND DIVERSE GRADUATE POPULATION. *Attract the top students and support them as appropriate.*

- **Strategy 2.1.1:** Add graduate recruiting to VPA’s Office of Undergraduate Recruiting and Admissions (change name of office); liaison with Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Internationalization and unit DGS’s.
- **Strategy 2.1.2:** Renew focus on engaging alumni to become personally involved in graduate education in the College through social, intellectual, and professional development activities.
- **Strategy 2.1.3:** Increase recognition of former students through the creation of electronic and print materials on the various contributions of alumni.
- **Strategy 2.1.4:** Enhance promotional activities emphasizing the value and competitiveness of graduate education in the college through collecting, aggregating, and publicizing relevant data, such as job placement and marketability statistics, graduate program rankings, funding and fellowship data.

Objective #2.2: BUILD A NURTURING AND SUPPORTIVE STUDENT ENVIRONMENT. *Focus efforts on addressing the financial, cultural, emotional and intellectual needs of all students.*

- **Strategy 2.2.1:** Benchmark peer institutions for stipends, teaching loads, tuition discount and benefits; explore new sources of revenue for financial support.
- **Strategy 2.2.2:** Explore potential funding sources, possibly from the private sector, to support new interdisciplinary graduate programs.
- **Strategy 2.2.3:** Implement a robust and ongoing cultural competencies training program for faculty and staff; strengthen and support cohort and community-building activities to combat isolation, particularly of international students.
- **Strategy 2.2.4:** Create and fund extraordinary research opportunities.
- **Strategy 2.2.5:** Explore the reasons why admitted students decide to go elsewhere.
- **Strategy 2.2.6:** Re-evaluate TA assignments throughout the College.
- **Strategy 2.2.7:** Develop a faculty-led program to welcome and support international graduate students in VPA.

Objective #2.3: INCREASE INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND COLLABORATION: *Foster policies and incentives to promote faculty involvement in transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and graduate training opportunities, creating a supportive, ‘bridge-building’ culture across the college, university, and into the wider community.*

- **Strategy 2.3.1:** Revitalize the “Interdisciplinary VPA Committee” to encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary initiatives across the college, whether they be one-time projects, the development of interdisciplinary courses (often involving several faculty) or portions of courses that include exploring common subjects from the perspective of several different disciplines. Enhance interdisciplinary collaboration among graduate students by identifying and removing barriers.
- **Strategy 2.3.2:** Increase the number of joint degree graduate programs within the VPA, across the University, and with other institutions.
- **Strategy 2.3.3:** Initiate a “VPA New Scholars” program to bring together graduate students to share their work with each other and discover collaborative opportunities for research and creative work across their respective disciplines.

Objective #2.4: STRENGTHEN MENTORING AND CAREER ADVISING

- **Strategy 2.4.1:** Establish a VPA career services office.
- **Strategy 2.4.2:** Explore opportunities for developing mentorship relationships between graduate and undergraduate students to provide advanced graduate students the opportunity to develop and practice mentoring skills in higher education.
- **Strategy 2.4.3:** Identify and address specific issues related to advising international students, and introduce strategies to help with their support; explore a graduate assistant position to mentor fellow international students.
- **Strategy 2.4.4:** Encourage graduate student participation on departmental, school, and college-level committees.
- **Strategy 2.4.5:** Establish formal mentoring and advising training for faculty.
- **Strategy 2.4.6:** Include evaluation of mentoring activities in faculty promotion and annual review.

Objective #2.5: ENHANCE THE GRADUATE CURRICULUM

- **Strategy 2.5.1:** Explore new graduate program opportunities in the context of systematic review of all existing programs.

Rationale:

Financially attractive offers are essential to effective recruitment and are also important for degree completion. A thriving research community requires various kinds of support to enable faculty and graduate students to study and

teach. This includes an adequate material environment in terms of the amount and quality of space for producing work. To stay current, relevant, and attractive to prospective students and employers, graduate degree programs need to continuously evolve to encompass emerging disciplines, anticipate skills needed by future employers, and enable the creation of new knowledge at the boundaries of disciplinary fields. The ability to navigate in interdisciplinary professional and research environments and to engage in meaningful collaborations across disciplines is thus increasingly a crucial ingredient for professional and creative development and success. Surveys administered by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) to graduated arts alumni reveal that interdisciplinary work is a significant element of success for artists in their careers.

GOAL 3: Administrative Infrastructure and Facilities

Objective #3.1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. *Build an organizational infrastructure that supports the academic mission, student experience, interdisciplinary study and research, efficiency and consistency of college operations.*

- **Strategy 3.1.1:** Review the administrative structure of the college to ensure that it supports the academic mission and the vision of the faculty, staff and administration.
- **Strategy 3.1.2:** Review VPA's brand strategy.

Objective #3.2: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. *Improve the academic and research environments to strengthen our commitment to the education of cultural leaders who will engage and inspire audiences through performance, visual art, design, scholarship, and commentary.*

- **Strategy 3.2.1:** Assess the college's current buildings and prioritize all capital projects including new construction and major renovations, including equipment and furnishings (see Appendix II for specific capital projects to be prioritized, including relocation of the School of Design to main campus and major renovations and expansion of the Drama/Syracuse Stage complex and construction of a new Setnor School of Music building across the street from Drama/Syracuse Stage).
- **Strategy 3.2.2:** Establish a Facilities Committee to develop a review process for assessing facilities, safety, fixtures and furnishings, etc.
- **Strategy 3.2.3:** Provide training and guidelines to faculty and staff in identifying and reporting physical plant needs related to repairs, safety and emergency response plans, and other topics as appropriate.
- **Strategy 3.2.4:** Ensure VPA facilities meet or exceed unit accreditation standards (where applicable) and recognized best practices.
- **Strategy 3.2.5:** Develop new or improved training programs for faculty, staff and students on safety and security measures, i.e., shop safety, hazardous materials, physical safety, ergonomics, etc.
- **Strategy 3.2.6:** Standardize the scheduling of classes to ensure facilities are available to students, faculty and staff and used effectively and efficiently.

Objective #3.3: LONG-TERM PLANNING AND FUNDING. *Engage in systematic long-term planning with regard to funding facilities and infrastructure. (Please see Appendix II Facilities.)*

- **Strategy 3.3.1:** Continue to work with the upper administration, including the Office of Advancement and External Affairs to address planning and funding capital projects and operating budgets.

Rationale:

The college has a current enrollment of approximately 1900 undergraduates and 200 graduate students and is housed in 9 buildings located on main campus, south campus, and the City of Syracuse. The college also conducts

significant academic programming using rental property in both New York City and Los Angeles. Evidence exists that the physical state and location of facilities has a direct effect on recruitment and retention of faculty and students, rankings, and effective delivery of curriculum. Current facilities range in age from 26 to 128 years and all need refurbishment or replacement to meet the goals of the Campus Framework: i.e., support academic excellence, enrich student life and contribute to a vibrant campus setting (see Appendix II).

In addition to the age and location limitations of the current facilities, the College is faced with inadequate or nonexistent mechanical systems, funding for refreshing technology, specialized equipment, fixtures and furnishings. These limitations have resulted in our diminished ability to attract and keep quality students, faculty and staff and to effectively deliver curriculum and provide a superior student experience.

The College strives for a safe and healthy work and learning environment, while recognizing that certain health hazards and environmental risks are associated with the creation of art. Many of our buildings are not current with health, safety and security best practices. Facilities are spread around and beyond the main campus, forcing students to travel at off hours due to performances, rehearsals and studio work, while dependent on public transportation that is often unreliable. The college is dependent on audiences for presentation of student and faculty work and has many visitors on a regular basis. This requires us to be conscious of their safety in our practices. Best practices in sustainability and environmental compliance are necessary for the health and safety of all, in the present and for the future.

The College recognizes that technology and major equipment frequently provide the vehicle by which our students, faculty and staff create and provide their work to audiences. As such, technology and major equipment permeates all aspects of teaching, learning, research and support in VPA. Our students, faculty and staff are savvy users of technology and we must provide an environment where equipment and technology is as state of the art as practicable. As we provide these resources they must be backed up with clear policies, training and access to support centrally.

The scope of needs for the college require a longer-term plan with regard to physical spaces and buildings. Capital improvements are inherently dependent upon donor support and funding. Within the next ten years, the College must consider its future needs and plan accordingly.

GOAL 4: Faculty Research

Objective #4.1: INTERDISCIPLINARY AND GLOBAL RESEARCH. *Bolster interdisciplinary research by facilitating more team-teaching across units and creating problem-oriented research hubs within VPA and with other schools/colleges.*

- **Strategy 4.1.1:** Explore options for more curricular creativity, flexibility, and load relief (1 credit workshops) to incentivize more collaborative teaching opportunities that lead to research.
- **Strategy 4.1.2:** Create appropriate “research hubs” within the college or in collaboration with other schools/colleges to attract, retain, and develop faculty scholarship. Increase the number of VPA faculty who participate in University committees, competitions, faculty fellow, and mentoring programs designed to promote research activity.
- **Strategy 4.1.3:** Pursue alumni or donor options as well as greater use of the SU office of Research to support interdisciplinary research and global scholarship.

GOAL 5: Community Engagement

By their very nature, programs in VPA are instinctively involved in a variety of forms of community engagement. The work of our students and faculty require audiences or are project-based, with many of the projects taking place within local, regional, even global communities. These forms of engagement are critical to our pedagogical mission as well as our faculty and graduate student research.

Objective #5.1: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT. *Formalize Engagement Across Curricula.*

- **Strategy 5.1.1:** Continue to enlarge and enhance involvement of students and faculty in community engagement, building on activities like the Syracuse Poster Project, Talent Agency, public art commissions, Connective Corridor, etc. Research and catalog current VPA programs and projects that fall under the umbrella of “Community Engagement” and link to other SU initiatives. Explore or implement an Arts Engagement Conference. Explore college curriculum requirement for Community Engagement (e.g., service-learning, internships and the like).

GOAL 6: Budget Collaboration and Accountability

Objective #6.1: BUDGET COLLABORATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY. *Create clear and explicit reporting documents for senior leadership identifying current and prior year budget performance to facilitate effective collaboration and communication between responsible parties and appropriate monitoring of performance and accountability.*

- **Strategy 6.1.1:** Create a financial reporting package to be distributed on a regular basis to the College leadership team (Dean, Chairs and Directors).

Objective #6.2: INTERNAL CONTROLS. *Ensure there are effective internal controls in place to prevent excessive financial commitments and overspending.*

- **Strategy 6.2.1:** Implement procurement policies (IT, supplies, travel, entertainment, etc.) that are clearly defined and monitored, and perform a monthly audit of expenses to ensure spending is appropriate.
- **Strategy 6.2.2:** Review processes and procedures to identify efficiencies by eliminating duplication, automating processes, consolidating services, etc.

Objective #6.3: NEED-BASED BUDGETS. *Develop budgets that are reflective of each units’ funding needs (based on enrollments, curriculum, strategic initiatives, research, equipment, etc.) that are in alignment with the College’s resources.*

- **Strategy 6.3.1:** Work with chairs and directors to perform a needs assessment and related budget. Each unit’s budget should be reflective of the priorities in the University, College, and unit strategic plans.
- **Strategy 6.3.2:** Identify areas of significant investment and calculate return on investment (ROI) for activities performed (i.e., academic initiatives, recruiting, advancement, student services, etc.).

Objective #6.4: PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY. *Evaluate the fiscal health of academic programs to ensure they are sustainable.*

- **Strategy 6.4.1:** Work with the central Office of Budget and Planning to appropriately allocate revenue and expenses to identify the net contribution for academic programs.
- **Strategy 6.4.2:** Continue to assess cost-benefit of community partnerships (i.e., Syracuse Stage, Talent Agency, Photo & Literacy Project, 914 Gallery, etc.)

Objective #6.5: COURSE ENROLLMENTS. *Refocus our efforts to identify appropriate min/max enrollments in all VPA courses and develop a plan to minimize the occurrence of low-enrollment courses.*

- **Strategy 6.5.1:** Systematically review enrollment caps in all VPA courses, providing a pedagogically sound justification for each cap, as well as a tolerable range above each cap by which students could be added by permission without significantly impacting the quality of instruction.

Objective #6.6: RESOURCE ALLOCATION. *Ensure the College is utilizing available resources to achieve goals outlined in the strategic plan.*

- **Strategy 6.6.1:** Shift resources (salary and operating) as necessary in response to changes in enrollment, curriculum, market demands, and strategic plan needs. This should consider faculty retention, academic programming, student needs, research initiatives, equipment upgrades/replacement, etc.
- **Strategy 6.6.2:** Further explore opportunities to fund research through external sponsored sources.

Objective #6.7: ADVANCEMENT PLANNING. *Establish short and long-term development plans with specific funding targets.*

- **Strategy 6.7.1:** The Assistant Dean for Advancement will work with the College leadership team to identify needs that are appropriate to fund through advancement efforts and are in support of the priorities outlined in this strategic plan.
- **Strategy 6.7.2:** Work with units to develop a network of students and alumni.

Rationale:

Creating and maintaining a balanced budget through effective stewardship of the College's financial resources is critical to the College of Visual and Performing Art's ability to implement its academic strategic plan. It is imperative that financial planning be transparent, and effective in protecting the College's fiscal health and in supporting its College-wide and unit-level priorities.

GOAL 7: Monitoring Implementation of VPA's Academic Strategic Plan

Objective #1: MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION. *No strategic plan can be successfully implemented without someone charged to monitor its progress and keep everyone on the same page as the plan unfolds and evolves.*

- **Strategy 7.1.1:** Establish a VPA Strategic Plan Implementation Committee through Faculty Council to meet regularly, develop an implementation and monitoring plan, and document and track progress in accomplishing the goals, objectives and strategies outlined in this plan. Committee should report regularly to the dean and to the faculty at large.
- **Strategy 7.1.2:** Create an Excel spreadsheet to track progress, identify due dates, stakeholders, expertise and resources needed, and persons accountable for each objective/strategy.
- **Strategy 7.1.3:** Charge the VPA Strategic Plan Implementation Committee with periodically reviewing the major goals outlined in the Syracuse University Academic Strategic Plan to monitor alignment with VPA strategic objectives and strategies.

Appendices

Appendix I: Big Ideas for VPA

Facilities

Recently, an RFP was sent to six world-class architectural firms to conduct a feasibility study and program a renovation and expansion of the Department of Drama/Syracuse Stage Regent Theatre Complex and construct a new Setnor School of Music building on the block currently housing Phoebe's Restaurant. We are also in discussions with the Provost and Pete Sala's group about moving the School of Design in its entirety back to campus, to create synergies with the College of Engineering and the School of Art. The Shaffer Art Building (home of the Department of Transmedia and part of the School of Art) supports approximately 1,000 students. The facility is dilapidated, dirty, and depressing. The same holds for the ComArt facility, which should be expanded to include all studio arts under one roof. VPA is working with the Libraries to expand and renovate Belfer Laboratory, a teaching sound studio for students in the Music Industry and Bandier programs, the Sound Recording and Technology program and the Audio Arts program. Communication and Rhetorical Studies should be relocated from Sims Hall to Crouse College after the Setnor School of Music relocates. Smith Hall and the first floor of Sims should be vacated.

VPA is interested in exploring a collaborative endeavor with the accredited Everson Museum, which could anchor SU's Museum Studies program; perhaps one day the Everson Museum would morph into the "Syracuse University Museum."

For more information concerning VPA facilities, please refer to the document titled, *College of Visual and Performing Arts Facilities Goals and Objectives*

Student Affairs and Career Services

VPA must implement professional advising and establish a career services center. We therefore seek funding to hire a Director of Student Affairs and additional funding to transition our current Student Affairs office to an entirely professional advising operation. We also seek funding to hire a Director of Career Services and one additional staff member with the goal of improving retention and time to degree; jobs for our graduates can only be enhanced by a Career Services Center.

Core Curriculum

As a result of the new 4+4 initiative, I'm encouraged that all undergraduates may one day be required to participate in a core curriculum supported by more than one college; that our students will select electives in arts and creativity as they are required to do at many excellent institutions, for example Duke, Penn State, West Virginia University, Carnegie Mellon, LSU, Ohio University and the University of Kentucky to cite just a few that I am most familiar with. These schools offer a comprehensive arts and creativity core in design thinking, public speaking, dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Carnegie Mellon's BXA Intercollege Degree Program would be an ideal model for SU as it allows a select group of students who demonstrate interest and accomplishment in the fine arts and the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences, computer science, and emerging media to explore beyond the traditional academic major, or integrate more than one field of study across disciplines.

Specific Academic Initiatives

Implement BS in Gaming -- interdisciplinary program between VPA's Department of Transmedia and Setnor School of Music and the College of Engineering; two faculty members would be needed in virtual reality and gaming theory; VPA currently offers a minor in gaming.

Establish Department of Arts Administration -- offer traditional BA/BS in Arts Administration and MA in Arts Administration (online degree); an interdisciplinary program with the Whitman School and perhaps with the School of Law; all students would be required to minor in an arts area. The new department would share faculty with the School of Design's Museum Studies Program and the Department of Drama's Theatre Management program; Syracuse Stage and Everson Museum would be key partners.

Create a partnership between the State, County, and SU whereby VPA's Department of Transmedia's film program and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication partners with the Central New York/DeWitt Film Hub -- this bold initiative would require additional tenure-track film faculty and staff, but would strengthen our connection to the entertainment industry and increase job placement. Please see the following link for additional information: http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2017/01/5_reasons_the_states_15m_syracuse_film_hub_has_flopped_so_far.html

Implement BFA/MFA in Theatrical Props: Design and Technology -- only LSU, the University of North Carolina School for the Arts, Ohio University, University of Delaware and Yale offer this degree. We envision a collaborative endeavor between the Department of Drama, the Schools of Art and Design and Syracuse Stage.

Implement MFA in Theatrical Projection Design -- only the Yale School of Drama, Carnegie Mellon and the University of Maryland have viable graduate programs. We envision an interdisciplinary program between the Departments of Drama and Transmedia (computer art and virtual reality), College of Engineering and Syracuse Stage.

Expand BS in Drama to include direct entry -- this program would require three full-time faculty lines; at present the drama faculty have a three-four teaching load, one of the heaviest loads on campus. Metrics suggest that this unit has the national reputation to attract a highly competitive cohort; the program can't be implemented without additional facilities on campus and/or after a Department of Drama/Syracuse Stage Regent Theatre Complex expansion and renovation.

Expand the BM in Sound Recording Technology and Music Industry Programs -- job placement is robust; additional faculty and space would be required. In addition, implement a BS in Music Engineering degree in collaboration with the College of Engineering. Setnor's BM in Sound Recording majors already have the option to minor in Electrical Engineering (EE) or Computer Science (CS), following minor plans designed specifically for BM in SRT majors by the College of Engineering. BS in Music Engineering degrees are jointly accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). MUE degrees thus require a NASM accredited Music program and ABET accredited Electrical or Computer Engineering program at the same institution, which SU has. Both the extant and STEM centric BM in SRT major and the proposed BS in MUE degrees would retain music study at their core, with a greater emphasis placed on College of Engineering coursework in the BM in MUE degree. If implemented, we would be one of a few exclusive programs that offer a music degree of this type, with proven job placement opportunities across many industries.

Implement BS/BA in Design -- it is our contention that there is a market for design students who want to pursue a more generic design program with more electives. This program would cater to those students who want to study a design-based program that is less focused on studio work and leverages the full breadth of learning at a research university. We feel that there is a good chance this program would be the highest recruiter in the School and would reduce or even eliminate those students who currently transfer.

Design and Design Thinking is big news; many students from majors across the University are interested in studying design as a means of augmenting and enhancing their chosen program. For example, architecture students may want to study Interior or Industrial design, journalists may want to study fashion design to inform a specialist area of engagement, business students engaged in entrepreneurial activity would certainly be interested in design as a tool in business and product development.

We propose the following School of Design minors:
Industrial Design
Interaction Design

Service Design
Fashion Design
Interior Design
Communication Design

Implement MBA Design Management -- we propose the development of a collaborative MBA in design management with the Whitman School of Management and/or a minor in design management.

Implement Arts in Healing graduate programs (music, dance and art therapies) if/when the University opens a College of Medicine (could also explore a clinical partnership with Crouse Hospital prior to establishing a med school) -- Harvard, UCLA, Johns Hopkins, University of Florida, University of Kentucky, Dartmouth, NYU and the University of Southern California all have one thing in common and that is arts education in their med schools, a growing trend: <http://www.harvard.edu/media-relations/harvard-joins-growing-trend-arts-education-med-schools> *It may be worth noting that art is part of the military continuum – promoting readiness during pre-deployment as well as aiding in the successful reintegration and adjustment of veterans and military families into community life; service members and veterans rank art therapies in the top 4 (out of 40) interventions and treatments.*

Implement Ph.D. in Communication and Rhetorical Studies -- will need one tenure-track line; the unit has identified a person of color they would like to recruit from the University of Illinois to round out the faculty needed for this new degree.

Implement Dance Minor -- national data shows that students in the STEM fields gravitate to institutions that offer dance as a minor; VPA would not benefit under the current RCM model, but the University as whole would benefit from offering this minor. In short, dance is a powerful recruiting tool. (Note: although the School of Education currently offers a minor in Dance, it is focused on exercise science and NOT dance as an art form: ballet, modern, jazz, musical theatre style – the genres the aforementioned students seek.)

Create a VPA “Designing the Future” Initiative—serious proposals have been advanced, calling for the U.S. government to establish a cabinet-level Department of the Future (see <http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2016/12/department-of-future-trump-000258>). While not likely to happen anytime soon, there is need for those in the creative arts to partner with schools of citizenship, media, and politics to imagine future scenarios in which the basic institutions of governance and social life, as seen from the perspectives of visual art and design, the performing arts, and communication studies, could reinvent such practices and ostensibly create a better social world(s). VPA’s proposal for a “Designing the Future” initiative would establish an ongoing conversational “thought experiment” among faculty with common and intersecting research interests. The project could involve an extension of both the Cosmopolis 2045 Project (co-directed by a VPA faculty member) and the Canary Project (directed by two VPA faculty members). At the heart of this collaboration is a truly multidisciplinary initiative, built around themes of designing and planning for alternative futures, reinventing communication practices and employing design thinking and creative practices for government, industry, military, cybersecurity, healthcare, education, journalism, etc. Imagine turning the creative communities in higher education loose and letting them take the lead but partnering with engineers and public administration types in imagining a better future, redefining everything from politics to pleasure.

Appendix II: College of Visual and Performing Arts Facilities Goals and Objectives

The June 2016 release of the Syracuse University Campus Framework solidified the need to address substantial concerns facing the College of Visual and Performing Arts facilities. The college has a current enrollment of approximately 1900 undergraduates and 200 graduate students and is housed in 9 buildings located on main campus, south campus, and in the City of Syracuse. Current facilities range in age from 26 to 128 years and all are in need of refurbishment or replacement in order to meet the goals of the Campus Framework: i.e., support academic excellence, enrich student life and contribute to a vibrant campus setting.

To begin the process of developing a strategic plan for VPA facilities it is necessary to supplement the findings of Sasaki and the Campus Framework. The arts are a glaring absence from the Framework and must be included if the University is to be successful in reaching the Framework's goals. It would be beneficial to the University and VPA to engage a consultant, be it Sasaki or another firm, to develop a vision for arts facilities on campus.

Until such time that a strategic plan for arts facilities can be developed, the college has identified five facilities that require immediate attention:

1. Nancy Cantor Warehouse – School of Design

VPA would like to explore the feasibility of renovating an existing building or constructing a new facility in proximity to the Shaffer Art Building, Comstock Art Facility, the School of Architecture, the College of Engineering and the iSchool.

We continue to see and hear from current and prospective Design students and their families that the location of the Warehouse causes hardship. Students are significantly removed from campus life, spend considerable time bussing to and from the facility, and incur additional expenses by being located off-campus (i.e., parking fees for private lots, lack of bookstore access, etc.).

A facility located on or near main campus would alleviate these hardships for Design students and also provide an opportunity for synergy between programs that is currently lacking or difficult to facilitate. Prior to 2005, Design programs were located in various facilities on main campus, but within reach of the School of Architecture, the iSchool, and the School of Engineering. Since being consolidated within a single facility the collaboration within the School of Design has grown exponentially, while the synergy between the School of Design and our most obvious partners has waned, perhaps due to an “out of sight, out of mind” mentality.

Additionally, a new Design facility located on main campus (or adjacent to Comstock Art) would provide the college opportunity to improve our operational processes by eliminating redundancies in services across the college that are currently necessary simply due to location, particularly wood, metal and print shops, all operated at considerable cost. (For example, we operate wood/metal shops at the Cantor Warehouse, Smith Hall, and Comstock Art.)

2. Crouse College – Setnor School of Music

The College would like to explore the feasibility of development of a School of Music Building in close proximity to the Regent Theater Complex (home of the Department of Drama and Syracuse Stage), 820 E. Genesee Street. The building would become the new home to the Setnor School of Music, as well as support facilities for the Theater Design and Theater Management programs with the Department of Drama, currently housed above Phoebe's Restaurant.

Built in 1888, Crouse College is a beautiful, impressive and historical fixture on the Syracuse University campus. It is, however, not an appropriate facility for a 21st century school of music, most notably for nonexistent sound abatement, inconsistent HVAC (including humidity control), and lack of modern performance and practice/rehearsal venues.

Ideally, the Setnor School of Music and the Department of Drama would be in close proximity as they share similar needs for curricular space for delivery of music lessons, performance, stage management instruction, and prop, costume, lighting and sound shops.

In addition, having a highly visible performing arts center and concert hall on campus can serve the entire campus community as a central hub and venue for major on-campus events and performances while remaining sensitive to its primary purpose in serving the educational mission of the School of Music and Department of Drama.

3. Regent Theater Complex (home of the Department of Drama and Syracuse Stage)

The need for renovation and updating the Regent Theater Complex becomes essential. The degree programs in acting and musical theater are the most competitive programs at Syracuse University and yet are housed in facilities built in 1919 and last updated in the 1980's. A state-of-the art theater complex is crucial to maintaining the caliber of students applying for admission to the BFA in acting/musical theater. Current facilities are inflexible and utilize outdated technology, lighting, sound, rigging, etc. and do not support academic excellence.

4. Crouse College – Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies (CRS)

As one of the first academic programs in the country to offer an academic program in communication and rhetoric, it is fitting to provide a historic facility to house CRS. The development of a performing arts center to house the Setnor School of Music would allow the college to relocate the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies from Sims Hall to Crouse College. Crouse College was built in 1888 and is in need of restoration to its fully glory, as well as integration of appropriate HVAC systems, instructional spaces, technology, etc. With this renovation, we anticipate having the ability to increase undergraduate enrollment, implement a new PhD program, and reestablish a competitive debate team.

5. Shaffer Art Building – Department of Transmedia

The Shaffer Art Building was completed in 1990 and has not been updated since. We have consistent complaints from students and faculty about the lack of air conditioning, ventilation, and functioning windows. The Department of Transmedia offers a highly-ranked program in film, yet has limited facilities and technology to deliver its curriculum. We propose that Shaffer Art Building be renovated to more fully accommodate the Transmedia curriculum, to include film and photo studios, sound studios, editing suites, and graduate student studios.

6. The Belfer Laboratory -- Setnor School of Music

The Belfer Laboratory, administered by SU Libraries, features a Live End/Dead End recording studio and control rooms designed by Chips Davis, nationally recognized acoustic expert and recording studio designer. One control room is furnished entirely with digital equipment by Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music. It is used as a teaching laboratory for students in the Music Industry and Bandier programs, the Sound Recording and Technology program, and the Audio Arts program. With increased enrollments in these programs, we have outgrown this antiquated facility. Last semester VPA discussed with David Seaman, Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, the idea of expanding this facility by adding a second floor that would connect to Byrd Library. Dean Seaman is supportive of the project.

Upon completion of these renovations the college would release associated spaces currently utilized in the Nancy Cantor Warehouse, Smith Hall and Sims Hall.

Appendix III: Work/Life Balance

Issues of Work/Life balance allows faculty, staff and students the best ability to meet the goals and mission of VPA and Syracuse University

Objective #1: CULTURE: *Provide a welcoming, supportive, collaborative atmosphere that supports high job satisfaction, values individual ideas and contributions, and provides good governance with respect, positivity, creativity, and fun for faculty, staff, and students.*

- **Strategy 1.1:** Build positive and productive faculty-staff relationships and community by fostering a culture of accountability for actions, responsibilities, etc., and to recognize exemplary work.
- **Strategy 1.2:** Improve mentoring for faculty and staff (Faculty Council Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Mentoring may provide a model for both faculty and, with modification, staff).
- **Strategy 1.3:** Promote transparency in terms of the operations of the college.
- **Strategy 1.4:** Review resources within the college to identify where sharing of assets may be of assistance.
- **Strategy 1.5:** Support healthy governance structures; cultivate strong communication among Academic Council, Faculty Council, and Staff Council and from these representative bodies to faculty and staff.
- **Strategy 1.6:** Provide information during on boarding so faculty and staff understand the expectations of their position, the protections, and the responsibilities.
- **Strategy 1.7:** Schedule campus-wide experts to present in a number of areas, including but not limited to Title IX, Crisis Management, Safety, Implicit Bias, Cultural Competency, Bystander Training.
- **Strategy 1.8:** Address retention strategies to keep current employees.
- **Strategy 1.9:** Continually review faculty/staff workloads by examining current organizational structures.

Objective #2: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: *Support greater diversity and inclusion. Create an understanding of diversity, broadening the spectrum of what a diverse faculty, staff and student population includes and create an atmosphere that values diverse experience and varied point of views.*

- **Strategy 2.1:** Engage faculty and staff in diversity workshops and awareness seminars, etc.
- **Strategy 2.2:** Evaluate recruiting and hiring practices, recognizing that current standards may be excluding or limiting some demographics.
- **Strategy 2.3:** Encourage diverse experiences to provide for better recruiting, retention, and workplace satisfaction for all.
- **Strategy 2.4:** Create a diversity and inclusion statement for the college.

Rationale:

Most programs and guidelines regarding work/life balance at the University are the purview of the Office of Human Resources, and thus beyond the scope of our College's strategic plan. The issues outlined above are those that can be managed at the College level and would promote greater overall well-being among faculty and staff.

Conclusions

This VPA Academic Strategic Plan provides a general blueprint for the collaborative effort of VPA faculty, staff, and administrative leadership to strengthen the College's future, acknowledging threats and weaknesses and taking steps to manage them; identifying opportunities to build on existing and emerging strengths; and exploring best practices from beyond our usual sources to make VPA an even better place for students to thrive in the company of great faculty and staff. Our goal is to accomplish this plan in the most fiscally responsible way possible, with appropriate assistance from University leadership, because this academic strategic plan instills a level of confidence about the directions we are pursuing and the way we plan to accomplish them.