



URBAN ARTS SPACE

FEBRUARY 2020

STRATEGIC PLAN

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VALUE PROPOSITION

Buddhist Faith

Buddhism was well established in China by the second century C.E. The Silk Route served as a means of trade and as a conduit for Buddhism with Chinese Buddhist monks traveling to and from South Asia. Buddhist images and relics traveled as goods traded along three of four routes. One route to Silk Road travelers was a Buddhist grotto in northwest China on the edge of the Gobi Desert. The Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, one of the world's largest and finest during the fourth through tenth centuries, the discovery of the caves in the early 20th century revealed centuries of Buddhist art, including murals and Chinese Buddhist. The discovery of the caves in the early 20th century demonstrated the power of Buddhism in the region of China.

Urban Arts Space facilitates an experimental gallery that adapts to the dynamic needs of the curriculum and communities served.

INTRODUCTION

We believe that arts education and community arts experiences are improved by the mission of Urban Arts Space.

The work to connect experimental learning with the vibrant downtown community is exemplary. We were honored to facilitate the strategic planning process to elevate Urban Arts Space's position as a valued partner to The Ohio State University's visual arts curriculum.

The strategic plan is based on six months of studying, analyzing, collaborating, and coaching. The goal was to challenge the past and chart a path for the future.

Peter Drucker's "Five Questions" created the framework for planning.

1. *What is our mission?*
2. *Who is our customer?*
3. *What does our customer value?*
4. *What are our results?*
5. *What is our plan?*

We believe that mission drives everything in an organization. Following the wisdom of Drucker, new mission, vision, and values statements for Urban Arts Space were created.

Our work began with clarity — time spent getting to know your "what" and your "why" through interviews, surveys, document review, and a Strategic Planning Committee retreat.

In November, we shared what we learned in a clarity presentation with the Strategic Planning Committee and held conversations with Urban Arts Space leadership to outline strategic pillars.

We then entered a period of strategy development — getting to next. Through discussions with the team we articulated strategic pillars (engagement, visibility, experience, and capacity) and the short, intermediate, and long-term goals.

We shared the logic model in December with Urban Arts Space leadership. The final strategy — outlined in this report — was developed through reflection and discussion with the director and leadership.

To complete Urban Arts Space's strategic planning process, the director and staff will develop tactics to serve as a companion to this document.

Although the scope of our work was not to dive into how this plan will be operationalized, we do outline recommendations and action items to build next steps in the process.

We remain your partners as you tailor the plan and would be honored to continue to facilitate discussions on the next phase of your journey.

— Mollard Consulting

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Strategic planning is underpinned by the mission, vision, and inherent values of Urban Arts Space. As part of the planning process, the Strategic Planning Committee assisted in the creation of new statements to guide the organization and clarify its purpose.

MISSION

To challenge perceptions, deepen learning, and increase access to the arts.

VISION

Vibrant arts experiences between campus and community.

VALUES

Creativity

Cultivating ideas and experimenting with how art is imagined, made, viewed, and understood is fundamental to our purpose.

Access

Every exhibition increases opportunities for artists to make, and audiences to experience, art.

Curriculum

A thriving student experience is driven by the needs of each visual arts unit.

Connections

We foster conversations, relationships, and careers that represent and welcome diverse perspectives.

Exploration

Participating in the cultural life of the city deepens students' understanding and broadens their horizons.

SWOT ANALYSIS

INTERNAL

Strengths

- University and College support
- Capable and respected staff
- Engaged professors and students
- 10+ years of history and impact
- High-quality exhibitions and programs
- MFA and BFA student experience
- Open design and adaptability of gallery
- Downtown presence on bus line

Weaknesses

- Funding model/reliance on OSU
- Limited number of full-time staff
- Limited budget, minimal marketing
- Limited brand identity and awareness
- Lack of philanthropy and earned income
- Short planning time for exhibitions
- Limited performance space
- Hidden location off campus

EXTERNAL

Opportunities

- Alignment with OSU arts district
- Community arts partnerships
- College of the Arts and Sciences enrollment
- Community interest
- Vacancies in downtown office buildings
- Proximity of downtown residents and employees
- Central Ohio population growth
- Additional public funding for the arts

Threats

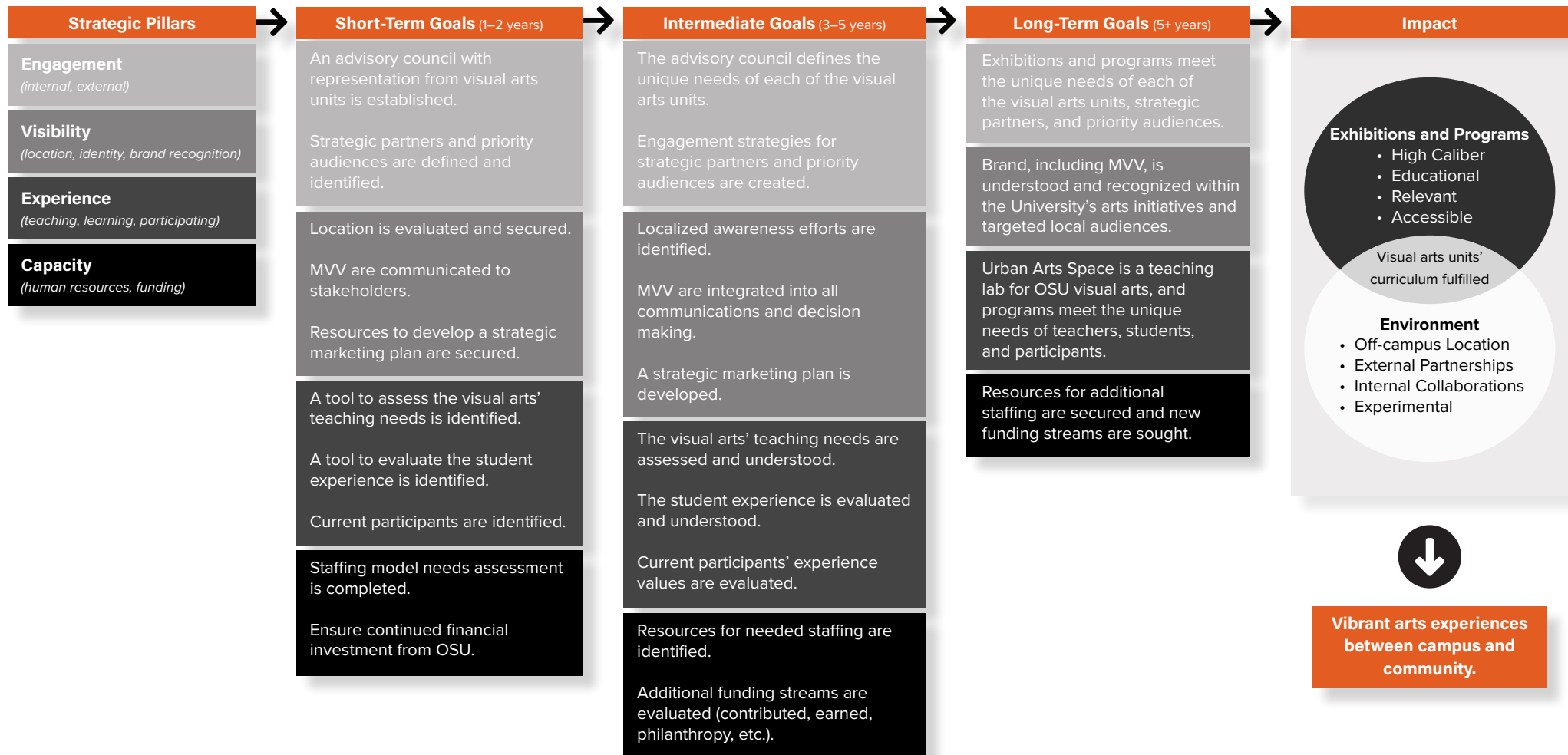
- Focus on 15+HIGH development
- Departure of OSU president
- Changes in College leadership
- Competing interests amongst the arts community
- Booming Columbus real estate market
- Economic uncertainty
- Perceptions of inaccessible location
- No dedicated parking

LOGIC MODEL

URBAN ARTS SPACE

Mission: To challenge perceptions, deepen learning, and increase access to the arts.

Value Proposition: Urban Arts Space facilitates an experimental gallery that adapts to the dynamic needs of the curriculum and communities served.



Internal and External Influencers: Columbus real estate market, economy, OSU funding and leadership priorities, enrollment, arts funding, competing interests.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCERS

The logic model on the previous page illustrates the overarching direction and impact of Urban Arts Space. It is meant to be used and referred to often. The ultimate aim is to guide the organization from current state to future state; however, there are influencers that will contribute to, or hinder, the attainment of the stated goals. Those elements can be internal, such as an executive director departure, or they can be external, such as an economic downturn.

The following graphic is a reminder that while influencers can move the organization forward, there is an equal possibility that influencers can stall an organization's progress. It's important to scan the environment regularly and be cognizant of how influencers are impacting the work in the current academic year and for future years.



A group of children are gathered in a gallery space, interacting with a mobile art installation. The installation consists of numerous colorful paper birds, each suspended by thin white strings from the ceiling. The birds are made of various colored papers (blue, yellow, red, green, white) and some have long, thin ribbons or streamers attached to their tails. The children, of diverse backgrounds, are looking up at the birds and reaching out to touch them. One girl in the foreground is holding a pink string, and another girl on the right is reaching up to a blue bird. The background shows other children and a white wall, suggesting a museum or gallery setting.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

URBAN ARTS SPACE — AN EXPERIMENTAL GALLERY

“Urban Arts Space could be a place that really highlights what’s new and also the experimentation that occurs through education. I would assume it could play a really vibrant role in giving a venue and a voice to a lot of people’s perspectives.”

— Stakeholder Interview Quote

“Something important for the artist is when you take the work outside the studio. It is an intellectual and creative outlet.”

— Strategic Planning Retreat Quote

The guiding force of this plan, and the work of the team, is to leverage expertise — the professionalism of the staff, the knowledge of the faculty, and the talent of the artists presented — in order to ensure the curriculum of the visual arts units is fulfilled. Urban Arts Space adapts to the dynamic needs of the curriculum and communities served.

An experimental gallery is at the heart of the Urban Arts Space value proposition, and ultimately delivering a space that aligns with that promise is the intended outcome of this plan. To achieve this, four strategic pillars will serve as the foundation for the work ahead. These pillars will guide Urban Arts Space's planned movements toward goals, impact, and vision, which are illustrated in the logic model and described in more detail on the following pages.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Engagement

Connecting to visual arts units and external partners to enhance the arts community.

Visibility

Creating an identity and purpose that is recognized and understood.

Experience

Promoting experiential learning and relevant visual arts education.

Capacity

Ensuring sustainability through adequate human and financial resources.

ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT

Connecting to visual arts units and external partners to enhance the arts community.

*"I think because Urban Arts Space is affiliated with OSU, it is important for students to focus and practice in ways that they can't do otherwise. Urban Arts Space has done that very well for many years, but that world is changing a little bit for artists. **We need to prepare them for an arts world focused on engagement.**"*

— Stakeholder Interview Quote

"The space facilitates differing kinds of relationships."

— Strategic Planning Retreat Quote

Short-term goals:

- Internal: An advisory council with representation from visual arts units is established.
- External: Strategic partners and priority audiences are defined and identified.

Intermediate goals:

- Internal: The advisory council defines the unique needs of each of the visual arts units.
- External: Engagement strategies for strategic partners and priority audiences are created.

Long-term goal: Exhibitions and programs meet the unique needs of each of the visual arts units, strategic partners, and priority audiences.

Among stakeholders and the Strategic Planning Committee, engagement was identified as the biggest opportunity for Urban Arts Space. Within the short and intermediate goals, internal engagement refers to the OSU Department of Art's visual arts units, and external engagement is outside of the visual arts units. Engagement, both internally and externally, is how Urban Arts Space can build bridges between OSU and the downtown arts community. Collaboration, connections, partnerships, and resources will be critical to engaging teachers, students, and priority audiences.

Urban Arts Space will know these goals are achieved if:

- The advisory council is robust and adds value.
- Audiences are understood, educated, and engaged.
- Relationships and partnerships are strategically identified and built to enhance engagement.
- Proactive approaches are in place to meet the needs of the primary customer — the visual arts units' curriculum.
- The gallery and programs meet curricular needs while authentically engaging the community.

VISIBILITY

VISIBILITY

Creating an identity and purpose that is recognized and understood.

“The space is needed. Wherever it is. It needs to serve and build relationships in the arts community. If it can do that, then the question of the location changes. We could be physically somewhere else if we are living out the core values.”

— Strategic Planning Retreat Quote

Short-term goals:

- Location: Location is evaluated and secured.
- Identity: Mission, vision, and values are communicated to stakeholders.
- Brand Recognition: Resources to develop a strategic marketing plan are secured.

Intermediate goals:

- Location: Localized awareness efforts are identified.
- Identity: Mission, vision, and values are integrated into all communications and decision making.
- Brand Recognition: A strategic marketing plan is developed.

Long-term goal: Brand, including mission, vision, and values, is understood and recognized within the University's arts initiatives and targeted local audiences.

A consistent message heard throughout the strategic planning process was that those who know Urban Arts Space have positive perceptions of the space, staff, and programming. Many stakeholders expressed that Urban Arts Space is lacking a clear identity and direction in relationship to the greater arts community. Elevating the brand is an area of great potential for the organization.

Urban Arts Space will know these goals are achieved if:

- The location has been assessed and a lease signed to create a plan for location stability.
- A strategic marketing plan is developed and executed to enhance brand recognition.
- The organization is recognized by the internal and external audiences as an experimental gallery leader.
- Audience data is captured and analyzed.
- Increased exhibitions and program attendance by diverse and growing audiences.

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE

Promoting experiential learning and relevant visual arts education.

"In the studio you close your door. In the gallery you open the door."

— Strategic Planning Retreat Quote

Short-term goals:

- Teaching: A tool to assess the visual arts' teaching needs is identified.
- Learning: A tool to evaluate the student experience is identified.
- Participating: Current participants are identified.

Intermediate goals:

- Teaching: The visual arts' teaching needs are assessed and understood.
- Learning: The student experience is evaluated and understood.
- Participating: Current participants' experience values are evaluated.

Long-term goal: Urban Arts Space is a teaching lab for OSU visual arts, and programs meet the unique needs of teachers, students, and participants.

Initially, the Urban Arts Space was created to bring the visual arts downtown to connect the work being done at OSU with the greater arts community. However, since clarity has been generated around the primary customer, the purpose of the space has shifted. The shift lies in arts education and how teaching and learning can be enhanced through an experimental space for participating audiences.

Urban Arts Space will know these goals are achieved if:

- Tools are created and used annually to ensure Urban Arts Space is at the forefront of the curriculum.
- Consistent evaluation is conducted to ensure teaching and learning needs are being met.
- Professors look to Urban Arts Space as a partner and leader to enhance teaching.
- Student experience is elevated.
- MFA and BFA students view the gallery as a contributor to their creative process.

CAPACITY

CAPACITY

Ensuring sustainability through adequate human and financial resources.

“I worry that Urban Arts Space does not have enough gas to make the decision which way this car goes, but they have to because there is no one else in the driver's seat.”

— Stakeholder Interview Quote

Short-term goals:

- Human Resources: Staffing model needs assessment is completed.
- Funding: Ensure continued financial investment from OSU.

Intermediate goals:

- Human Resources: Resources for needed staffing are identified.
- Funding: Additional funding streams are evaluated, including contributed, earned, and philanthropy.

Long-term goal: Resources for additional staffing are secured and new funding streams are sought.

Urban Arts Space is primarily funded through the OSU College of Arts and Sciences' budget. It will be critical to ensure continued financial investment from OSU while evaluating opportunities to diversify funding streams, including contributed and earned income.

In order to increase financial resources and enhance programming, additional staff will be needed. In the short-term, a staffing model needs assessment will be conducted to understand the human resources needed to carry out intermediate and long-term goals.

Urban Arts Space will know these goals are achieved if:

- A diverse mix of contributed and earned income is evaluated and initiated.
- Additional staff is secured.
- OSU's financial investment is sustained or increased.
- Deeper relationships with faculty are achieved.
- Commitments from deans and College leadership are secured.

A photograph of an art gallery interior. On the left, a vertical light installation of warm white string lights is attached to a white pillar. In the center, a woman with long red hair, wearing a tan coat and jeans, stands looking towards the right. To her right, a man in a red shirt and a woman in a black polka-dot shirt are looking at a brochure. The background shows a large, open space with a concrete floor, white walls, and a high ceiling with exposed metal beams and track lighting. A framed portrait is visible on the wall in the background.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages identify key recommendations, which begin with the foundation of strategic pillars — capacity. Some recommendations are a continuation of the good work already being done, while others are new and may require additional financial and human resources. As staff continues to identify the specific tactics related to the short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals, the new advisory council members can also play a role in the attainment of action items for each key recommendation.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the strategic planning retreat, it was decided the current primary customer is studio art faculty, staff, and students, while the desired primary customer is the visual arts units' curriculum. The following recommendations shift from current state to future state, focusing on the primary customer and the alignment of activities to support these recommendations.

KEY RECOMMENDATION #1: ADVISORY COUNCIL

Goal statement: Establish and engage an advisory council.

According to *BoardSource*, an advisory council is a collection of individuals who advise and support the management tasks carried out by staff.

Advisory council's role:

- Provide the organization with specialized expertise.
- Act as ambassadors to your community and connect you to a greater constituency.
- Perform important duties such as:
 - (1) Fundraising
 - (2) Advocacy
 - (3) Program/event evaluation
- Members could become candidates for the OSU College of the Arts Dean's Advisory Council or other University committees.
- Define the criteria on which the advisory council's work can be evaluated.

Advisors can play a critical role in guiding the organization to the next level. An advisory council creates an opportunity to bring primary and secondary customers together. In addition, a council can help staff leadership solve challenges and leverage opportunities. To comprise diverse membership, inviting visual arts faculty to serve on the advisory council will make a significant impact on the organization's ability to move from current state to future state.

Once the advisory council has been established, the group can help support decisions and expand opportunities through the following goals and action items:

- Support the director in their work to bolster the staff and make changes as needed.
- Build relationships that will result in expanded connections with the visual arts community, wider arts community, and with downtown companies and residents.
- Identify new partnerships and sources of funding.
- Understand, analyze, and identify ways the advisory council can assist in evaluating the customer needs and values.
- Determine KPIs (key performance indicators) for the advisory council in supporting the fulfillment of the new mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Note: Currently, Urban Arts Space and Hopkins Hall Gallery have a combined Projects and Exhibitions Advisory Committee. The committee's role is to make decisions regarding exhibitions that will be displayed in each space. The recommended advisory council would be formed in addition to the Projects and Exhibitions Advisory Committee and would have a broader role than exhibitions.

KEY RECOMMENDATION #2: DEVELOP ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TOOLS

Goal statement: Evaluate human, financial, and programmatic resource allocations against the needs of your primary customer and supporting customers.

PRIMARY CUSTOMER:
Visual arts units' curriculum.

SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS:
Faculty, students, administrators, landlord, downtown residents, funders, donors, arts partners, and professionals.

We referred to Peter Drucker's "Five Questions" framework throughout this process. The following quote from Drucker is a reminder of the power of simple questions.

"What does the customer value?" may be the most important question. Yet it is the one least often asked. Nonprofit leaders tend to answer it for themselves. 'It's the quality of our programs. It's the way we improve the community.' People are so convinced they are doing the right things and so committed to their cause that they come to see the institution as an end in itself. But that's a bureaucracy. Instead of asking, 'Does it deliver value to our customers?' They ask, 'Does it fit our rules?' And that not only inhibits performance but also destroys vision and dedication." — Peter Drucker

Action items:

- Learn what the primary customer values by asking directly through assessment practices and evaluation tools.
- Assess the following:
 - Visual arts units' teaching needs — how can Urban Arts Space be a partner in collectively fulfilling the curriculum of the individual units?
 - Student experience — how can Urban Arts Space be a partner in positioning theory (classroom) to practice (gallery)?
 - Audience — how does the audience support and engage with the programs and exhibitions of professors and students?
- Review what your primary customer values and needs by determining evaluation timing, method, and follow-up.
 - Interview and survey data compiled during the strategic plan clarity process is the basis for future evaluations.
 - Determine how the primary customer will be engaged so evolving needs are understood and met.
 - Decide if evaluation tools will be used with supporting customers in addition to the primary customer.
 - Use assessment practices to facilitate conversations for ongoing communication and decision making.
- Align programs with the needs of customers and determine if additional financial resources are needed for program plans.
- Share what Urban Arts Space learns with College and University leadership to further reinforce the organization's value and impact on the needs of the curriculum and experiences of the students and audience.

KEY RECOMMENDATION #3: LOCATION

Goal statement 1: Identify and develop targeted awareness and outreach efforts surrounding the current location.

Goal statement 2: Work with unit, College, and University leadership to determine if a different location should be secured or if lease renewal should be signed.

Although only a few miles from OSU's campus, Urban Arts Space's location is not considered a campus entity. Since its inception, the space has been a bridge from campus to community, but the clarity findings shed a different light — Urban Arts Space may be trying to be too many things to too many entities. By developing targeted awareness and outreach efforts around the current location, focus can be narrowed, leading to enhanced brand identity and strategic deployment of resources.

Note: The value of the current location, and its challenges, were brought up time and again in the stakeholder interviews. So much so that the clarity process was not able to give direction on whether the organization should remain in its current location in the Lazarus building or if it should move to another location closer to campus. This decision is critical; the organization needs a final answer on its location so that the question can be put to rest and outreach activities can be deepened.

Action items:

Goal 1

- Develop targeted outreach efforts with businesses and residents in close proximity to the gallery.
- During the evaluation and assessment process, determine if current programs and partnerships align with the location.
- Continue membership in the Columbus Cultural Leadership Consortium (CCLC) and assess potential partnership activities with other members.

Goal 2

- Confirm decision to remain an off-campus entity.
- Confirm decision that Urban Arts Space will not be a tenant in the new OSU arts district on High Street.
- Create a task force to review terms of the current lease and begin negotiations on terms of a renewed lease.
- Evaluate other off-campus location options based upon price, lease terms, access to audiences, and space flexibility.
- Confirm location and develop communication plan to either solidify current location or announce new location. If a new location is decided upon, determine potential audiences and partners.

KEY RECOMMENDATION #4: STAFFING MODEL

Goal statement: Develop a staffing model needs assessment and secure resources needed to implement the new model.

While the Urban Arts Space staff is small, it is highly regarded, effective, and nimble. In order to fulfill the vision, staffing resources will need to be assessed and expanded.

The positions that are needed and how they will be funded will need to be determined once the first three recommendations are addressed. However, there may be immediate staffing needs that require those conversations to take place sooner. Since all staffing needs, immediate and future, have budget implications, these conversations could occur during the lease discussions in order to have a full understanding of the financial resources needed for fulfillment of the Urban Arts Space strategic plan.

Action items:

- Identify the staffing needs in order to manage the priorities and programming outlined in the strategic plan and affirmed with advisory council support.
- Determine the financial resources needed to employ identified staff.
- Consider revising job descriptions and assigning current staff and volunteers to new responsibilities.
- Utilize the advisory council and assessment data to understand how the organization can expand its reach via programming, academics, and engagement.
- Determine the University's financial commitment to Urban Arts Space and report the return on investment annually to leadership.
- Evaluate the feasibility of additional funding streams to financially support a new staffing model and an increased budget.
 - Work with University advancement to determine the potential for a philanthropic growth.
 - Work with the advisory council to determine the potential for revenue generation through earned income opportunities.

KEY RECOMMENDATION #5: STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN RESOURCES

Goal statement: Secure financial and human resources to assess current marketing practices and determine a new strategic marketing plan.

In the clarity process, it was found that audiences who are not connected to the arts community and University arts community have very little awareness of Urban Arts Space. Understanding how to communicate and engage with current and future constituencies will be a key component to expanding reach and resources. The largest barrier to fulfilling opportunities for outreach, engagement, access, and connection is the lack of awareness. Additionally, a barrier exists for those who are aware but are not communicated with consistently.

The new mission, vision, and values statements are a critical element of gaining clarity on purpose. The customer and location decisions will further reinforce positioning and messaging. But, as already noted, the staff is small. Determining what University resources are available, such as a student or class project, will be essential in assessing and planning for marketing.

Action items:

- Create a roll out plan for communicating the new mission, vision, and values statements to internal and external stakeholders.
- Understand how Urban Arts Space will fit into the new OSU arts district planning, marketing, and communications.
- Identify internal University resources for marketing assistance.
- Identify external agencies that specialize in arts marketing to either add to internal resources or serve as the marketing partner.
- Evaluate and secure financial resources to assess, plan, and implement marketing.
- Identify staff who will be responsible for marketing.

CLOSING

Your goals and priorities are ambitious.

Urban Arts Space, as an experimental gallery, is changing the conversation around arts education by meeting the unique needs of the teaching and learning environment while partnering with the University and arts community.

It was evident through the interviews and conversations that this is not easy work. However, a shift in mindset from trying to be everything to everyone to a more targeted approach of engagement and programming will make the work more manageable. Those that know you express that Urban Arts Space is a valued, critical resource to visual arts units' curriculum.

We have seen evidence of your commitment to this work throughout our partnership and believe that the four strategic pillars — engagement, visibility, experience, and capacity — will govern your planned movements toward robust outcomes. By utilizing the goals as your guideposts paired with objectives and tactics, we are confident it will propel you along your path to realizing the impact and vision you have set for yourself.

We began with Peter Drucker's "Five Questions" as our framework and we encourage continued reflection on these questions as the organization implements the strategic plan.

1. *What is our mission?* — Completed
2. *Who is our customer?* — Completed
3. *What does our customer value?* — In process
4. *What are our results?* — Completed
5. *What is our plan?* — Completed

Because of Urban Arts Space, the visual arts units' curriculum will be fulfilled. And in the end, the impact on teaching, learning, creating, and experiencing the visual arts will be significant.



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