University of Missouri-St. Louis
College of Fine Arts and Communication
Strategic Plan
2003-2008

September, 2003

Introduction

The College of Fine Arts and Communication of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, was created in the Fall of 2001 by Chancellor Blanche M. Touhill. In her "State of the University" address, on September 19, 2001, she announced that the then existing departments of Art and Art History, Communication, and Music, along with a newly-reactivated program in Theatre and Dance, would comprise the new academic unit.

Beginning in the spring of 2002 and continuing through the 2002-2003 academic year, the faculty has engaged in a strategic planning process to provide direction for the next five years in the development of the College. In Spring, 2002, mission and vision statements, core values, and strategic goals were developed by a faculty committee, which included representatives from each department in the college. The College Faculty approved these items in April, 2002.

Faculty Working Groups were created in the Fall of 2002, involving virtually all of the full-time faculty in the College. In the spring of 2003, the working groups developed the objectives and action steps associated with each of the strategic goals. A complete draft of the Strategic Plan was distributed to the faculty and staff, and the community board, of the College of Fine Arts and Communication in June, 2003, for action early in the 2003-2004 academic year.

Current Planning Environment

The decade of the 1990's was a period of growth and development in the arts and communication for the University of Missouri-St. Louis. During this period, the campus developed a B.F.A. degree program in Studio Art, an M.M.E. program in music education, an M.A. program in communication, and musical theatre productions were presented under the auspices of the Department of Music. The construction of a performing arts center, a part of the campus's master plan since 1979, was authorized and begun, and recently completed.

The St. Louis region is rich in cultural and artistic resources. Such institutions as the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis, Jazz at the Bistro, the Municipal Opera, and an extensive array of mid-size and smaller organizations, provide varied opportunities for mutually beneficial, synergistic, collaborative activity. Five endowed professorships within the College, along with a variety of other initiatives, are designed to develop our partnerships with the community.

With the beginning of the new century and new millennium, the U.S. economy has experienced a dramatic decline. The fiscal climate in Missouri, and in most other states, particularly during the last three fiscal years, has been extremely challenging. Decreasing tax revenues, reluctance to impose new taxes on Missourians, and structural characteristics of the state's budget, have resulted in severe, repeated cuts in state appropriations to the University of Missouri, and to the St. Louis campus. In addition, steep increases in student fees have resulted from the Missouri fiscal crisis. Although tax revenues to the state of Missouri will undoubtedly increase as the economy begins to rebound, it is difficult to predict when and to what degree the recovery will occur. Some, though by no means all, of the goals and objectives of the strategic plan will require some investment of resources, and until the fiscal situation for the campus improves (or alternative sources of funding identified), it will necessarily limit our ability to pursue certain initiatives.

With the recent decline in state support for higher education, the University of Missouri-St. Louis generally, and the College of Fine Arts and Communication in particular, must investigate other ways to find financial support for its mission. One of the first positions filled in the dean's office was that of Development Officer, reflecting the need to develop financial support for the College through philanthropy, grants, and contracts. In addition, the College has submitted a list of funding priorities for inclusion in a major gifts campaign currently being planned by the campus. Lastly, the dean and the development officer have focused on the creation and development of a Community Board, whose primary function will be to assist the college's development, and an Alumni Board designed to energize and activate the large alumni base in the College's three pre-existing departments.

Mission Statement

The mission of the College of Fine Arts and Communication is to:

Build and sustain distinctive programs of study, in selected fields of the arts and communication, that are innovative, rigorous, synergistic, and significant to the University's mission as Missouri's metropolitan public research university.

Build a fine arts and communication curriculum, emphasizing research and creative activity, professionalism, and cultivation of knowledge.

Develop analytical abilities and critical consciousness in arts and communication students.

Encourage opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative research and performance.

Recruit, retain, and support a faculty engaged in research and creative activity. The diverse backgrounds and interests of members of the faculty support both theoretical and practical elements of the arts and communication.

Recruit and retain intellectually curious students and produce graduates who are leaders in the arts and communication.

Encourage partnerships and collaborative ventures with academic and professional organizations.

Vision Statement

The College of Fine Arts and Communication aspires to excellence in teaching, research, creative activity, service, and outreach. It nurtures students' intellectual and artistic abilities and it is connected to the campus and the community through a variety of synergistic relationships. It exemplifies excellence in the fine and performing arts, and in the art and science of communication. The Performing Arts Center will provide a state-of-the-art venue for performances by faculty, students, and visiting artists. Within the next five-seven years, the College of Fine Arts and Communication will be housed in a complementary facility or facilities that will encourage interaction among the disciplines of the College, and meet the needs of faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders.

Core Values

The College is dedicated to the highest academic and artistic standards.

The College provides a learning-centered environment.

The College values diversity in all its forms.
Creative activity and research are key elements that distinguish the College.