

F&PA Strategic Plan
Goals/Objectives and Actions

Preamble

1. Our Mission

The School of Fine & Performing Arts (F&PA) is guided by a belief in the transformative power of art and scholarship. Our liberal and professional studies encourage rigor and risk by challenging tradition while recognizing the value of history. Our programs foster intellectual and creative work informed by contemporary socio-political and cultural contexts. We inspire students to become creative and informed artists, critical thinkers, educators, music therapists, entrepreneurs, and leaders who actively contribute to our global community.

2. About the School of Fine & Performing Arts

The School of Fine & Performing Arts comprises nationally accredited programs in [Art Education](#), [Art History](#), [Art Studio](#), [Music](#), and [Theatre Arts](#). Approximately **100 full and part time faculty members**, actively involved in creative work, performance, and independent scholarship, teach and train more than **1,000 student majors**.

The School of Fine & Performing Arts is committed to providing a significant range of opportunities to research, study, create, produce, perform, and present ideas and issues of the arts, so that students can explore how aesthetic experiences offer particular insights and ways of communicating in and about the world.

Our students are challenged to attentively experience and critically engage different aesthetic experiences, to develop and improve communication skills including oral, written, and performative processes, and to relate and connect art to other fields, disciplines, and experiences.

Undergraduate studies prepare students for graduate work and employment in many dynamic professions—in the arts, entertainment, and cultural institutions, but also business, education, marketing, law, and any number of related fields that demand creative problem-solving, innovative thinking, aesthetic understanding, and entrepreneurial initiative.

Graduate studies prepare students for college and university teaching, music therapy, and other professional careers in the arts and arts-related fields that demand a high level of skill, creativity, and ingenuity. The students who earn a graduate degree attain a mastery of the discipline(s), the ability to think critically about the work, and an understanding of the place of the work in history.

Encouraging an expanding international perspective, the curriculum of the School includes studies in **history and aesthetics, theory and criticism, process and technique**, and issues of the **contemporary arts**. Seeking a balance among practice, theory, research, and criticism, all areas of the School continue to integrate new technologies and computer applications in the study and production of the visual and performing arts.

The [academic programs](#) of the School are complemented throughout the year by public presentations, performances, and exhibitions of [The Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art](#). National conferences and competitions, workshops, and public lectures by distinguished visiting artists enrich the stimulating academic environment.

The School of Fine & Performing Arts' commitment to high-level academic programs and a generous range of [special events](#) supports a pedagogical mission of **focus with flexibility**. Our students live in a time of rapid change and transformation that requires intensity and agility. The School encourages students to study deeply and broadly and to develop a balance of conceptual and technical skills, so that they will have the background and capacity to imaginatively engage new ideas and possibilities.

College Strategic Plan and the School

The College has identified eight essential initiatives, all in which the School will naturally participate. But there are several intersections between the College Plan and the programs, events, faculty and students in the School that must be highlighted.

NURTURE INNOVATION AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

“...while we maintain our focus on liberal education, we understand educational markets, new modes of organizational structure and innovative teaching methodologies. Traditional modes of teaching have given way to different approaches, driven in part by advancing information-technology inside and outside the classroom....The AAC&U report on College Learning for a New Global Century (2007) recommends that teaching and learning must be “active, hands-on, collaborative, and inquiry-based” (p. 11).

- Focus on hiring and mentoring faculty committed to innovation and “high impact” practices
- Re-invigorate graduate education, including delivery approaches to address current trends, meet student needs, and support the region

The School has an already well-established use of high impact practices. Hands-on, experiential training, group problem solving, and peer mentoring/critique are just a few of the high impact practices typical in the School’s classrooms. In addition, the School is at the cutting edge in its use of technology, and its blended learning environments.

Recent retirements and vacancies around the School have created an opportunity to find new faculty already well-versed in these practices, in delivering online and hybrid courses, and experienced in interdisciplinary activities. For example, the need in our nationally ranked Metal program and the creation of the Digital Design and Fabrication program has resulted in a search for an artist and educator with mastery in both areas. While we must certainly sustain our current programs, we are also looking to expand and broaden these programs with innovative organizational structures that are both focused and flexible.

At the graduate level, we are building our Music Therapy program and actively seeking international students and more aggressively pursuing internships. Our Art Education graduate program has created and implemented a more active recruiting plan as well as beginning the process of broadening the appeal of the program beyond K-12 certification.

ESTABLISH AN ENGAGED LIVING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY

“We need to be more focused on helping students make connections between their classroom work and applying what they learn outside the classroom in regional and global communities...”

- Encourage and support collaboration among academic and support departments, creating opportunities to increase familiarity with other programs that will enhance opportunities for partnership
- Support a culture of teamwork, tolerance and collaboration through student clubs, campus organizations and athletics that encourages active support from faculty, staff, alumni and students

The School is a leader in application of classroom learning to real-world problems. No other unit produces as many events for patrons--both internal and external--so extensively, and often within budgetary and temporal constraints. These events have direct curricular connections--our students and faculty are engaged in the making and reflecting upon art. In addition, many of our events and curriculum are collaborative by nature, as well as by choice. More than any other unit, the School works across the campus with partners in Liberal Arts & Sciences (many examples), Science and Engineering (Digital Design and Fabrication), Business (Arts administration and entrepreneurship) and Education (Art Ed).

While several of the programs in the School are collaborative by nature, beyond that, the culture of teamwork is strong. The study of art and art-making, even by the lone scholar, necessarily involves an audience. Art is meant to be seen, heard, and experienced, often communally. Research and scholarship in art will necessarily include consideration of audience, and necessarily demands tolerance and open-mindedness. We will continue to encourage participation between faculty, students, staff and the entire campus community.

We recognize that communities exist in numerous configurations of students, faculty, and staff, within Departments, majors, interest groups, classes, and careers. In addition, communities transcend individual roles— spiritual, domestic, local, origins, regional, national and global. The School seeks to extend, draw in, and expand our communities purposefully, through global communication, study abroad, opportunities to study and work, through our students’ and faculty’s reputation, and our proximity to New York City. We must create an environment in which each member of our community feels welcome and wanted. To that end, we must ensure that our living and working spaces meet needs and offers possibilities; that we offer flexible time for opportunities to emerge, develop and complete; that our various communities prompt exchanges of ideas/creativity; that we open to guests and visitors’.

ENGAGING ALUMNI IN THE LIFE OF THE COLLEGE

“Alumni may mentor students, and serve as inspiring and informative speakers. Working alumni are often key to identifying internship, research, or cooperative educational opportunities that are critical in the learning and career preparation of current students.”

- Develop and implement a program of effective alumni relations and engagement
- Engage faculty, departments, schools, and other units in alumni affairs

Several of our Departments already have significant and thriving alumni relations. Using those successes as models, we will develop programming for every Department and across the School, including school-wide events, activities, and communication. Alumni are one of our greatest resources to enrich our curricular and co-curricular programming, as well as act as our best ambassadors for recruiting and retaining students, faculty and staff.

MARKET NEW PALTZ INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

- Increase impact of outreach activities to enhance visibility and quality of public perception about New Paltz as the public university in the region

The events and programs of the School are well known on campus and enjoy a reputation for excellence. However, Departments continually report that potential students and audiences are not aware of this. Limited resources to advertise our programs, recruit students, and engage audiences have prevented the School from getting the message out there about the quality of our students, faculty, majors, programs, and public events. We have embarked on an ambitious plan to update the School website, and to more effectively coordinate our publicity with the Office of Communication and Marketing.

STRENGTHEN THE REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

New Paltz enjoys assets of “place” that are unparalleled within SUNY: proximity to New York City and Albany; the beauty, outdoor and recreational amenities, and cultural and historic resources within the Hudson Valley...

New Paltz is a cultural hub in the region with arts, cultural, and educational events open to the entire community.

- Integrate the campus community with Mid-Hudson Valley and greater New York City metro area through New Paltz publications, curricular planning and fieldwork opportunities, performances and other events

Clearly, the School is already engaged with the region and community. Our events and performances are well attended and enjoy an enviable reputation for quality and consistency. However, there are always opportunities to do better. The School can do more bringing the region and community in--not just as audience members and visitors, but as part of the curricular and co-curricular program. The region is rich with talented, experienced, and well-connected individuals. We can do better at identifying and providing regular opportunities for these individuals to engage with both faculty and students. There are also many institutions and groups who might be quite valuable, and we can do a better job of welcoming them, providing space for their programming, and functioning as a true hub of activity, connecting people and groups to one another as well as with the School.

Challenges Ahead

Across the nation, enrollments are declining as the college-age population shrinks. In addition, recent economic uncertainty has increased the expectation that degrees should lead to jobs. Newly important statistics, for good or ill, are being employed to help prospective students (and their parents) compare costs, time to graduation, job placement, and “bang for the buck.” Competition among Colleges is creating a more relentless consumer culture, one that in many ways runs counter to the sense of mission in which our School is truly engaged: to guide students toward personal transformation. Concurrently, there appears to be an increased yearning at large for potential competencies inherent in the study and making of art:--creative problem-solving, the ability to think “outside the box,” and the connections that are fostered between art, artist, and audience.

Facilities

Along with these external challenges, the College and the School, are facing a serious space deficit and long overdue facility maintenance, repair and rehabilitation. While our spaces are minimally meeting our curricular needs, we cannot continue to compete with other Schools when we cannot keep up with technological advances or with the basic maintenance of our studios, classrooms, and performing arts venues. The Smiley Art Building renovation, planned since the 80's, has been on hold due to financial

restrictions on the capital fund by the State. Music cannot grow beyond the limitations of College Hall, Photography and Graphic Design must make do with the infrastructure problems of Old Library, and Studley Theatre continues to need major renovation. While the theater spaces have seen some upkeep, both could use major rehabilitation for the ease and comfort of our patrons. This all besides the extensive need for additional space--a manufacturing facility for building sets and housing large art studio equipment, and the dream of a new Cultural Arts Center that could meet the cultural needs of the Hudson Valley.

Three priorities that the faculty identified include

1. The creation of flexible, communal space(s)
This is imagined to be a place (or places) where student, faculty and staff may come together to present work, to engage in dialogue, or interact socially. This responds to the desire for greater interdisciplinary work that emerges organically out of the natural connections each constituency makes with the others.
2. The creation of satellite spaces off-campus
the goal is to more fully integrate our work with the community, and to supplement the limited spaces on campus
3. New Paltz Cultural Art Center

Curricular and Co-curricular

Our Departments—majors, minors, programs-- and events continue to be a real strength of the School. Our students are deeply engaged in the making art and reflection upon that making.

1. Interdisciplinarity
 - a. Curricular structure affords opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration & modularity provides for individualizing program study
 - b. Physical structures of buildings supports cross-campus interdisciplinary. Connections through exhibition/visibility of student work in well-traveled & used public spaces.
2. Community connections
 - a. Curricular structures & content incorporate expertise from across campus & through an "extended" conception of campus community (e.g., NYC artists)
 - b. Curricular opportunities provide audible/visible insertion of student work into campus life.
3. Professional Preparation
 - a. Curricular opportunities present unique conditions to develop a professional portfolio through interdisciplinary projects that involve real work in public/shared/visible spaces

Personnel

Our faculty, staff and students are universally recognized as being THE major asset of the School. Our artists, scholars, and teachers are among the most highly rated and recognized on campus, the region, nationally and internationally. We count among our ranks Fulbright Scholars, Guggenheim fellows, acclaimed teachers and professional artists working at the highest levels. Our staff works well beyond the rule, and supports not only our students and faculty, but our programs and events, as well. Finally, our students are among the most talented intellectually and artistically, as well as cohesive, engaged, enthusiastic, and hard working. But we must continue to diversify in each area in all aspects of the term--race, gender, orientation, socio-economic status, and the kind of learners, artists and scholars we attract.

1. Create opportunities for faculty interaction
 - a. Share research, etc.

- b. Opportunities for new kinds of information w/students
 - c. Mentoring/professional development outside classroom
2. Students – characteristics
- a. Selective in the discipline, diversity, connection to community
 - b. Diversity
 - c. Connection to community
 - d. Caliber of students increased
 - e. Students who are well-rounded and willing to take risks

Community

The School serves a wide and diverse population and a variety of constituents. First, and foremost, we serve our students. The majority of patrons at our School events are students. Although student patrons of the Dorsky Museum are not the majority, they still represent a significant proportion of those who attend events there. We must continually strive to make our events and spaces more accessible, affordable, and available for the use and enjoyment of our students. Our second largest group is the campus community. We have no more staunch supporters than the faculty, staff, and administration of the College. We must continue to provide a variety of offerings that not only serve the curricular needs of the various Departments, but also is a source of entertainment and enlightenment for our colleagues. Parents make up a large portion of our attendees. While they may come to support their children, we want them to become supporters of our work beyond graduation. Alumni. The greater Hudson Valley community, from New York City to Albany and beyond—our events and programs and educational offerings are

1. Commitment to diversity of populations
2. Multiple ways to connect, interact, partner and participate
3. Known for ambitious/inspiring vision, supported fully by all our diverse audiences

Conclusion

The School of Fine and Performing Arts is poised to build on its strengths, meet its challenges, and seize opportunities as they arise. The strategic plan will guide the School in making wise and effective choices in managing all its resources. We are excited about the next five years, but we acknowledge that the pressures on higher education across the nation must be addressed. Our goal is to anticipate our needs and to be in front of, and therefore, in charge of change.

School of Fine & Performing Arts Essential Initiatives

- I. Foster and support interdisciplinary co/curricular activities, research, scholarship and creative production
 - A. Identify organic/natural alliances within existing Departmental/Unit offerings
 - B. Create a research link on FPA webpage to facilitate faculty/student engagement, assistance, connection
 - C. Coordinate semester/year-long events/activities more systematically (rather than incidentally)
 - D. Generate and support new interdisciplinary initiatives across School and College
 - E. Develop and implement a plan to increase resources for professional development

- II. Repair, rebuild, repurpose spaces to support co/curricular activities
 - A. Identify priorities, submit proposals and secure funding for rehabilitation of current spaces (excluding SAB, which already has funds identified).
 - 1. Studley
 - 2. College Hall
 - 3. Old Library
 - 4. FAB
 - 5. McKenna and Parker Theaters
 - B. Identify flexible spaces/temporary spaces, and work with Facilities to develop appropriate/safe/sustainable/movable structures
 - C. Identify office space for adjunct faculty

- III. Seek out and devote resources to diversify faculty, staff, student body
 - A. Through Community Arts Program (SAL & Pre-college), collect data and identify prospective students from under-served populations
 - B. Create scholarships within each Department
 - C. Expand outreach to under-served populations

- IV. Partner with purpose with external constituents
 - A. alumni—
 - 1. create Schools-specific alumni e-newsletter
 - 2. Develop alumni programming for each Department
 - B. patrons--expand our Vendini operation to reach more patrons
 - C. institutions--convene a colloquium of arts organizations in the region

- D. professions--each unit to create database of professional contacts
 - E. industry--working with Development, establish effective an on-going partnerships with local industry to support the School
- V. Create and implement Fund-raising plan to support current and new initiatives
- A. Entry Building/Cultural Arts Center (see Masterplan)
 - B. Guest Artist Line for each department/program
 - C. Student scholarships