



WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Strategic Plan

Wexner Center for the Arts

The Ohio State University

2012-2017

Strategic Planning at The Ohio State University

Supporting Faculty, Students, and the Structures that Foster their Success

Ohio State's future will be defined and driven by an unwavering commitment to our faculty, students and the structures—physical, administrative, curricular, and financial—that will foster their success. Such a commitment is founded in the overarching principles of the institution's vision, mission, values, and core goals.

VISION

The Ohio State University is the model 21st-century public, land grant, research, urban, community engaged institution.

MISSION

The University is dedicated to:

- Creating and discovering knowledge to improve the well-being of our state, regional, national and global communities;
- Educating students through a comprehensive array of distinguished academic programs;
- Preparing a diverse student body to be leaders and engaged citizens;
- Fostering a culture of engagement and service.

We understand that diversity and inclusion are essential components of our excellence.

VALUES

Shared values are the commitments made by the University community in how we conduct our work. At The Ohio State University we value:

- Excellence
- Diversity in people and of ideas
- Inclusion
- Access and affordability
- Innovation
- Collaboration and multidisciplinary endeavor
- Integrity, transparency, and trust

CORE GOALS

Four institution-wide goals are fundamental to the University's vision, mission and future success:

Teaching and Learning: to provide an unsurpassed, student-centered learning experience led by engaged world-class faculty and staff, and enhanced by a globally diverse student body.

Research and Innovation: to create distinctive and internationally recognized contributions to the advancement of fundamental knowledge and scholarship and toward solutions of the world's most pressing problems.

Outreach and Engagement: to advance a culture of engagement and collaboration involving the exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of reciprocity with the citizens and institutions of Ohio, the nation, and the world.

Resource Stewardship: to be an affordable public university, recognized for financial sustainability, unparalleled management of human and physical resources, and operational efficiency and effectiveness.



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Letter from the Director

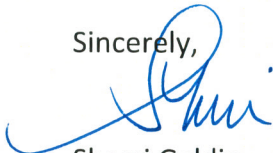
From its very inception the Wexner Center was conceived by OSU as a *breakout strategy* in itself—to create a truly distinctive contemporary arts program on campus unlike that of any other US university. Independent benchmarking performed in 2009-10 on the center’s twentieth anniversary looked across the country and abroad at both university-based and free-standing contemporary arts institutions, and indeed affirmed that the Wexner Center for the Arts has significantly enhanced Ohio State, the Columbus community, and the national and international art world. It concluded that:

- In its 20+ short years of existence, the Wexner Center has achieved remarkable—perhaps even unprecedented—success and “mindshare” in the field.
- The center has catapulted into the first rank of U.S. university museums and is widely perceived as being among the “short list” of leading U.S. contemporary art museums and art centers—namely MoMA, the Whitney, SFMOMA, LA MOCA and the Walker Art Center.
- Ohio State has something *totally unique* in the Wexner Center, which is the *only* fully-multidisciplinary contemporary art center connected to a U.S. college or university.

We believe that the center is poised to play an even more significant and catalyzing role in President Gee’s ambition to redefine and exemplify “the new American university” for our time. As a portal to new knowledge and experience rooted in the research, development, practice, interpretation, and understanding of the arts in all creative disciplines, and as a nexus for collaboration among diverse fields of inquiry beyond the arts, the center has virtually boundless potential to advance the mission of Ohio State and the stature of the Columbus community as a progressive, smart, and open place to live, work, thrive and attain personal growth.

The Wexner Center for the Arts’ strategic plan identifies those key opportunities that will allow us first to secure and amplify those core strengths and attributes achieved in our first 23 years and, more importantly, to leverage them toward creating an even more robust cultural asset for Ohio State and Columbus in the next decade. We firmly believe the Wexner Center can—and will—be an ever more vital partner to Ohio State in its ambition and trajectory to become the “world’s preeminent public comprehensive university.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sherri'.

Sherri Geldin
Director

Overview

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. At its most fundamental core, the center seeks to inspire cultural curiosity and fuel the creative expression of our time. Upon its opening in November 1989, the Wexner Center attracted international critical acclaim for its bold architectural design; since then it has drawn equivalent respect and admiration for its innovative artistic and educational programs.

Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs audiences of all ages and backgrounds, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that reflect the complexity, creative dynamism, and profound inter-connectedness of contemporary life. Presenting a kaleidoscopic array of programs each year—seven to ten major exhibitions; 200 films; 80 dance, theatre and music performances; hundreds of educational programs—which together bring 250-300 visiting artists to Ohio State and Columbus from around the world—the Wexner Center annually reaches over 200,000 visitors and patrons on-site and 400,000+ on-line.

"The center has become a powerful force in the national and international art world—one of the most important contemporary arts facilities in this country, and certainly perhaps the most important on a university campus." —

**E. Gordon Gee, President
The Ohio State University**

Whether commissioning new work by leading artists and designers in all fields; hosting forums with leading thinkers, innovators, and cultural commentators; or presenting a stimulating menu of top-tier programs in the galleries, on stage, or on screen—the Wexner Center has become an essential destination for anyone intrigued and engaged by contemporary arts and culture. Throughout, we are guided by a Wex-specific set of institutional core values:

- To be artist-centric and audience-focused
- To *feed* the culture and *lead* the culture
- To inspire the "*aha!*" moment
- To remain ever porous to possibility

Both independent third-party assessment and our own experience over the last 23 years suggest that the center's unique value proposition lies in the following:

- An innovative and egalitarian approach to *all* contemporary art disciplines under one roof and one institutional identity, allowing for a kind of creative osmosis and combustion that serves artists, campus constituents, and community audiences alike

- A consistent presentation of the highest caliber programs, equivalent to leading cultural institutions nationwide (even despite the center’s somewhat idiosyncratic facility and constrained spaces)
- A laboratory-like commitment to support and enable working artists in the pursuit of their creative endeavors
- A habitat that encourages creative experimentation, innovation and interdisciplinary thinking year-round
- An integral relationship with multiple academic departments, professional schools, and campus associations (both arts-related and not), while maintaining the distinctive and cohesive institutional identity that has helped to propel the center’s remarkable success so far

“The Wexner Center is a force, a field, a provocation, a marvel. I have never known exactly what I would see there, but I have always known that having seen it my vision would not be the same again.”—Catharine R. Stimpson, former Dean, Graduate School of the Arts and Sciences, New York University

This fundamental value proposition in turn allows the center to uniquely contribute to each of the university’s four core goals:

Teaching and Learning:

Students and faculty remain a vital focus of our planning efforts throughout the Wex; virtually every programmatic choice we make—whether an exhibition, performance, film, lecture, or panel discussion—is conceived with the imperative of teaching and learning in mind. The center’s commitment not only to integrate its program planning with curriculum development, but also to “share” illustrious artists, critics, academics, and leading cultural thinkers with students and faculty through master classes, studio visits, or sustained artist residency projects enhances the academic experience for undergraduate and graduate students well beyond the arts disciplines.

Research and Innovation:

The center’s robust Artist Residency Award program—an essential aspect of our mandate as a research and development laboratory for the arts in all disciplines—continues to be a model for the field—providing moral, intellectual, logistical, and financial support to artists in the creation of original works that often go on to national and international acclaim. Putting the “full faith and credit” of the Wexner Center and Ohio State behind these initiatives fosters an unusual (perhaps even unique) relationship between these artists and the campus community in ways that often lead to even more ambitious collaborations, situating OSU at the nexus of artistic creative research and practice.

Outreach and Collaboration:

The center’s outreach initiatives are first and foremost directed at OSU students. Concerted efforts are made to engage student audiences through both academic units and student affairs groups variously constituted on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, cultural background, religion, or sexual preference. The center also seeks to extend its reach beyond the “obvious” arts and humanities departments to explore and exploit affinities with faculty and students in business, law, medicine, agriculture, and engineering. These truly cross-disciplinary partnerships further underscore Ohio State’s commitment to collaborative, integrated learning opportunities that help to burnish the University’s national and international stature as a hub for progressive educational approaches befitting an ever more inter-connected globe.

Resource Stewardship:

Referring again to the results of independent benchmarking performed in 2009-10, relative to its peers, “the lean and mean Wexner Center has done a lot with a little.” In fact, consensus suggests that “bang for the buck” at the Wexner Center has been startling in its magnitude, especially given the center’s youth in a field where so many peers enjoy 50 – 100 year histories, if not more. The center has established and sustained a diversified financial base while maintaining strong fiscal controls, which has led to strong and steady financial health throughout its existence, even amidst a consistently challenging climate for the arts in Columbus. That said, there is no questions that the Wexner Center is comparatively undercapitalized for its size and ambition, and the center’s board has established an ambitious \$60m capital campaign goal to be allocated to annual program/operating costs, one-time capital investments, and endowment funds. Additionally, we are focused on building a work ethos and environment that supports innovation, inclusion and growth.

Core Ideology

Our work is grounded in and informed by a shared vision, mission and core set of values:

Vision

The Wexner Center will be a universally recognized cultural engine and social hub of Columbus and an institution perceived *both* internationally and locally as a pioneer and treasure.

Mission

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University’s multidisciplinary international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance their understanding of the art of our time. In its programs the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university’s mission of education, research, and community service.

Core Purpose

We exist to inspire cultural curiosity and fuel the creative expression of our time.

Shared Values

The following beliefs are embraced by the Wexner Center team regarding the essence of the center’s work and how it will be conducted:

Artist-centric, audience-focused

- Support creative vision/expression
- Provide artists with moral, financial, professional support
- Pursue the experimental/experiential
- Be open and welcoming
- Provide meaningful access/exposure
- Connect art to personal experience

Inspire the “aha!” moment

- Illuminate and surprise
- Provoke thought/transform thinking
- Foster fresh interpretations
- Catalyze creativity
- Spark creative, intellectual, cultural connectivity and appreciation
- Embody and promote overarching value of the arts

Feed the culture, lead the culture

- Enable creative research/instigate innovation
- Facilitate artistic production
- Contribute to learning and academic impact
- Activate cultural and civic engagement
- Spark cross-cultural curiosity/connectivity
- Reach beyond the comfort zone

Porous to Possibility

- Ask questions; question answers
- Be open; be nimble
- Make anything happen
- Take risks
- Abide and learn from the occasional failure
- Value collaboration and inclusivity; embrace difference

Strategic Scan

In formulating the center’s strategic plan, we assessed the current and desired future state of the Wex. As part of that review, we re-examined our mission, programming, unique attributes and aspirations in the context of the current civic and cultural landscape. Our planning also took into account the priorities and objectives coincident with the university’s new strategic plan and recently launched capital campaign. This strategic internal and external scan pinpointed the following strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities for advancement:

Strengths

- Breadth, depth, and consistency of organizational fundamentals, including a unique mission and brand identity; visionary support of a founding benefactor together with that of a great university; dynamic, high quality, trans-disciplinary programming; leadership continuity on the board and senior leadership team; and a strong funding model forged between the public and private sectors.
- Research confirms the center is the premiere university-based contemporary art center in the country, producing significant reputational capital for the campus and broader community. Our standing continues to grow in Columbus and beyond, perhaps even disproportionate to the scale of our enterprise. Hence, despite traditional art world hierarchies, the center enjoys a rare status, well beyond most university arts institutions.
- Among our cultural peers in the city and statewide, the center is widely viewed as *the* foremost contemporary art institution; and in the greater Midwest, it ranks among the Walker and the MCA Chicago for the rigor of its program, albeit with a significantly smaller building, staff, or budget than either.
- Nationally, the Wexner Center has developed a reputation for excellent programming and regularly collaborates with such first-tier institutions as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; LACMA in Los Angeles; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Dallas Art Museum; the Film Society of Lincoln Center; UCLA Film and Television Archive; the Harvard Film Archive; the Sundance and Toronto international film festivals; the Brooklyn Academy of Music; the Public Theater (NY); Dance Theater Workshop (NY); PS 122 (NY); ICA Boston; MCA Chicago; and Red Cat (Cal Arts at Disney Hall, LA); among many others.
- The center is considered an authentic “lab” for artistic creation and experimentation and an unusually artist-centric institution. An impressive roster of Wex residency artists has seen their work travel to major national and international venues and/or have gone on to receive MacArthur Foundation fellowships, National Medal of Arts awards, Tony Awards, “Bessie” Awards, Oscar nominations, Cannes Film Festival awards, Film Independent Spirit awards, the Wexner Prize, and similar elite recognition.

Vulnerabilities

- Notwithstanding an improving Ohio economy, the national economic climate continues to create uncertainty and present challenges for both all nonprofits, including higher education and cultural organizations. The Federal government faces increasing pressure to decrease spending and increase taxes in order to reduce the national deficit. Of the many possible fiscal policies under consideration, some may have the effect of scaling back or even eliminating tax incentives for charitable contributions to non-profits, potentially shrinking that particular revenue stream for the Wexner Center.
- Despite the center’s “outsized reputation and impact” among national arts peers, there remains something of a lag in local appreciation and understanding of the center’s civic value among general audiences and some opinion leaders. And while exhibitions such as *Annie Leibovitz* help draw widespread local attention to the Wex, it is a challenge to sustain that level of engagement across everything the center undertakes.
- Despite an unerring commitment to the most innovative artistic practices of our time, the center struggles to stay ahead of the cultural curve with respect to providing artists, academics and the general public with state-of-the art facilities, infrastructure, and programmatic capabilities to support the production, presentation, and interpretation of diverse art forms, along with fit-for-purpose spaces to accommodate arts and educational experiences for diverse audiences.
- City Hall and the State House have remained relatively stable with respect to cultural policy and funding, and economic realities suggest that even with the best of intentions, government funding for the center will likely stay flat. But in any case, the center’s collective income across all government funding sources doesn’t provide more than 3% of our budget in any given year.
- One particular longtime and significant revenue source for the center--the Limited Brands Corporate Campaign--is not automatically ensured in the decades to come. As a highly successful, but unusual fundraising campaign conducted among vendors to the company over the last 20 years, there is no guarantee that future leadership of Limited Brands will continue this commitment indefinitely. Likewise, while the center appreciates its steady and generous allocation from OSU, we are mindful that this isn’t necessarily enshrined in the decades to come.

Opportunities

- Columbus civic and corporate leadership is increasingly focused on the ways in which art and culture can strengthen the area's economy, contribute to greater urban vitality, and play an important role in attracting and retaining the best and the brightest—especially the 100,000 collegians in the region at any given time and the area's growing population of young professionals. This demographic tends to be more receptive to contemporary art, and we see significant potential to further build and cultivate this audience.
- Widely regarded as national models, WCA's educational programs provide world-class arts experiences for audiences of all ages, interests, and backgrounds, despite lacking a dedicated education space (a major deficit for the Wex relative to its peers). With the proper infrastructure, the Wex will have the "band-width" to leverage our collaborations with Columbus Public Schools (and a range of other private and charter schools) and non-profit partners and social service agencies and provide a range of innovative programs designed specifically for youth and teens, who are traditionally underserved by community arts (and other) organizations.
- The emergence of *I-citizen* via the proliferation of new media and social networks has redefined the fundamentals of consumer transactions, especially among cultural patrons who want and expect new choices and dynamics when they engage with cultural institutions. The center had fallen behind its peer institutions with respect to industry standard technology tools and infrastructure until a recent investment in a CRM solution. That, coupled with a highly committed team of "social marketers" on staff at the center, represent a distinct advantage for us in better understanding, targeting and engaging our constituents—existing and potential.
- Given the national diversity of artists with whom we work (spanning all continents) the center is one of the truly global entities on campus. As the university expands its own international initiatives, the center is well poised to complement those efforts. As but one example, our significant Mellon Foundation grant focusing on Brazilian contemporary art will allow us to work in parallel with the university's Sao Paolo Gateway, expected to open in 2013.
- The center continues to focus considerable time and attention on work climate and core ideology issues. Our senior leadership team and staff Committee on Inclusion and Diversity have articulated a core purpose, core values, and a BHAG to focus and drive our strategic plan and our daily work. Our team is uniformly focused on and committed to *inspiring cultural curiosity and fueling the creative expression of our time* outwardly, and in developing a generative ecology of innovation and inclusion for our work inwardly.

Based on this environmental scan and the findings from the aforementioned benchmarking study, our strategic plan, while forged with prudence and realistic expectations, is forward-thinking and aspirational. The center's five year planning trajectory also emphasizes primary focus areas that are aligned with the university's four core goals:

Teaching & Learning – remaining at the absolute forefront of artistic production, presentation, and practice while elevating audience engagement, experience, and appreciation; securing a dedicated education facility with a special emphasis on teen and collegiate audiences.

Research & Innovation – building sustained trans-disciplinary campus partnerships that enhance research, academic advancement, creative achievement and institutional standing.

Outreach and Engagement – deepening the center's position as a *leading* local cultural engine and social hub; broadening the “footprint” and “mindshare” of the center—both programmatically and virtually—on the national and international landscape.

Resource Stewardship – successfully executing a \$60m “*But For*” capital campaign to secure the Wex into the future; developing a generative work ecology that promotes innovation, inclusion and growth within the center.

Succeeding in Our Strategic Focus Areas

Teaching and Learning

The center’s role as a “lab” in support of contemporary artistic practice, creation and innovation is well established nationally and internationally among artists, cultural leaders and major university arts presenters. Its multi-disciplinary artist residencies, commissions of new work and presentation of emerging artists have informed and even redefined the national dialogue about creative campuses. In fact, major universities from Stanford to Harvard to Michigan and beyond regularly seek our counsel as they expand their own respective arts and culture infrastructures.

“The Wexner Center is very clearly amongst the finest institutions in America when it comes to supporting contemporary art, living artists, and active learning.”—Jock Reynolds, The Henry J. Heinz II Director, Yale University Art Gallery

The center serves as both a physical venue and intellectual platform for collaboration and exchange across diverse OSU academic endeavors. We are a distinctive and highly differentiating asset in the university’s arsenal to enrich the teaching and learning experience for students and faculty, whether through their direct participation in the center’s artistic programs; through complementary symposia, lectures, and master classes; or through other campus initiatives to which the Wex staff can bring particular expertise. The center’s stature as a hub for creative cultural discourse in the broadest sense and as a magnet for leading cultural thinkers and practitioners from throughout the world benefits multiple campus constituencies. To sustain its role as a leader at the locus of creative combustion in both academic and cultural realms, the center will pursue two major strategies: (1) advance the Wex-Lab and (2) secure a dedicated education facility.

Advance the Wex “Lab”

To better serve the field, the University and the community, all aspects of the institution must remain at the forefront of the contemporary arts field—not only in the programs we present, but also in our professional practices, our physical space, and our technological capabilities. In order to keep pace with the ever-changing landscape of artistic production, presentation and practice while simultaneously enhancing audience experience, engagement and appreciation we will:

- Amplify the scope, impact and trans-disciplinary focus of the Wex “Lab” - artists residencies, commissions
- Invest \$2m to upgrade facilities, including advanced technology in lighting, projection, and sound, for both artistic production and presentation to both stay ahead of and inform professional standards and practice
- Explore innovative presentation venues, formats, experiences
- Initiate and/or pursue selective campus and community collaborations that leverage respective resources and areas of expertise for the benefit of multiple constituencies.

Secure a Dedicated Education Facility

In the center’s first two decades, we have established a highly respected track record for our educational programs aimed at all ages, but have done so without the benefit of an exclusively dedicated space. Among its peer institutions—including the Indianapolis Museum of Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Guggenheim in New York; the Dallas Museum of Art; and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis—the Wexner Center alone lacks appropriate facilities for this purpose. Wexner Center educational programming, outreach, and service to the central Ohio community and campus have become impossible without the addition of dedicated studio and classroom space.

In 2013, Ohio State’s Billy Ireland Cartoon Art and Research Library will vacate its current space (immediately adjacent to the center) for new quarters in Sullivant Hall. This space was originally designed as part of the Wexner Center itself, and shares not only our design aesthetic, but also our building infrastructure. We have secured approval from the university to “colonize” the space and the Wexner Center Foundation board established a capital campaign goal of \$2.5million. AEP has already provided a \$500,000 planning grant. While the space will serve multiple constituencies, its primary focus will be targeted to serving teens and collegiates, who are among the most under-served audiences.

In order to create a truly pioneering education facility, with a special emphasis on teen and collegiate audiences the center will:

- Establish the Design Institute for Youth(DIY) to ensure the “end-user” is at the table from the start
- Use our IMLS/MacArthur Foundation grant and its defined network of five leading Columbus institutions (Columbus Metropolitan Library, COSI, the Columbus Museum, WOSU and the Wex) to research leading educational/cultural organizations so as to create a truly unique network of teen/collegiate labs
- Select an innovative, nationally respected architectural team who can deliver a unique, youth-centered learning habitat; collaborate with them on all aspects of design
- Secure the full \$2.5m – 3m necessary to construct and furnish a state-of-the-art the education space (including required technologies)
- Further build our Education team by 2-4 staff members to program and operate the new center
- Meaningfully engage teens/youth not only in the new education center, while also encouraging their integration into the center and its programs over all.

Research and Innovation

The center is committed to Ohio State’s mission as a leading research institution and continues to make contributions that advance scholarship and innovation in both the cultural and academic realms. Specifically, we are focused on building sustained trans-disciplinary campus partnerships that enhance research, academic advancement, creative achievement and institutional standing through two core pathways – our artist residencies and our international programming and initiatives.

Artist Residency Synergies

As noted earlier, the center’s Artist Residency Award program serves as one crucial component of the center’s standing as a research and development laboratory for the arts in all disciplines. Celebrating its 21st anniversary this last year, we have made possible hundreds of residencies and creative commissions across all artistic disciplines. On behalf of these artists, the center brokers in-depth collaborations across campus—not only with faculty, staff, and students in the arts and humanities, but with those in the sciences, as well as in business, law, medicine—and in the community. New work created under the auspices of our residencies and commissions frequently travels to major national and international venues after premiering here. In turn, artists who have benefitted from this support help to “spread the word” about the Wex, further encouraging others to avail themselves of the opportunity. The network of former commissioned or residency artists stretches around the globe, and brings ever reverberating prestige to the Wex and Ohio State. During the life of this strategic plan, artist residencies will not only be sustained but enhanced in scope, impact and trans-disciplinary focus, in a manner that advances not only art, artists and the creative process but also the “academy.”

“Your residency program is certainly a model for the nation and we are proud to support it. In a tough economic time like this, I am delighted the Nimoy Foundation can continue funding your important work.”—Katharine DeShaw, Program Director, Nimoy Foundation

International Initiatives

Already a significant player in the international arts arena, the Wexner Center is keen to become a more distinctive and highly differentiating asset in the university’s efforts to be *the land grant campus to the world*. The center is selectively and strategically strengthening its international engagements with an eye toward serving as a cultural bridge to the best creative minds and networks from around the globe in a manner that advances OSU’s profile, scope, and reach. Our Mellon Foundation project *Via Brasil* (made possible by an award of \$782,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation—its first ever to a university-based contemporary arts center or museum) has taken off in earnest engaging faculty and students from the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese, Comparative Studies, and Film Studies, as well as the Center for Latin American Studies and the Office of Global Strategies and International Affairs. This grant is allowing us to make meaningful research forays into Brazil’s contemporary art scene, even ahead of the university’s anticipated Global Gateway to be established in Sao Paulo in 2013. Over the next three years, we will unfurl the entire panoply of our *Via Brasil*

programming in the galleries, on stage, and on screen, and will use this as a model for future in-depth international engagement. In addition to documenting the program’s impact on community, campus and the cultural field, we will document and apply the lessons learned as we pursue new strategic international initiatives consistent with WCA mission and OSU priorities.

Outreach and Engagement

The Wexner Center believes it must be deeply embedded in the DNA of both the campus and the community, and vice versa, in order to fully realize its mission – *inspiring cultural curiosity and fueling the creative expression of our time*. The center is continuously challenged in balancing its outreach across the multiple--and occasionally unaligned—core constituencies it serves: the art world, the university, and the Columbus community. The independent benchmarking analysis cited above cites the Wexner Center’s “outsized reputation and impact” among recognized arts professionals, educators and cultural aficionados, but also notes the center’s dexterity in serving these diverse audiences.

“When the Wexner Center opened on Nov. 17, 1989, the building was hailed as a major cultural happening. Writing in The New York Times, the architecture critic Paul Goldberger called it ‘one of the most eagerly awaited architectural events of the last decade,’ and since then it has helped turned Columbus into a cultural destination.”—Robin Pogrebin, New York Times

On campus, the center is highly valued for engaging faculty, staff, and students in unparalleled artistic programs that affirm the University’s mission of education, research, and community service. The center’s expertise is continuously leveraged on behalf of the university in a variety of ways, such as strategic planning for trans-institutional university initiatives (e.g., Sasaki Master Planning Process), recruitment of senior campus academic and administrative leadership, enhancement of overall campus aesthetics, formulation of international initiatives, etc.

For civic leaders, policy makers, and major area employers, the center is viewed as a vital asset that enhances the reputation of Columbus as a creatively driven, sophisticated and forward-looking city. It advantages their recruitment and retention of new talent and businesses to the community, particularly from cities perceived to be more cosmopolitan or culturally sophisticated. And yet there remains a lag in local appreciation and understanding of the center among general audiences. While urban hipsters and thirty-somethings have certainly found a second home at the Wex, and while most people in central Ohio view the center as a first-class institution and one of a handful of distinctive cultural jewels in the region, too many of them have yet to discover or consistently “embrace and own” the institution as *the place—their place—to experience and learn about the most compelling art and culture from across the globe.*

In order to better engage this untapped patron base and to reaffirm the center as *the* cultural resource and social hub – a nexus – for campus and community audiences alike, we will:

Advocate for and Help to create A “Gathering Place” at 15th & High – To realize President Gee’s aspiration for the kind of “smart” campus articulated in the Sasaki master plan, university leaders are increasingly focused on redefining and differentiating the *experience* of campus life which includes the design of buildings, landscaping, and our live/learn habitats. Among other opportunities, a major rethinking of the Plaza at 15th and High can potentially transform this major campus gateway that the Wexner center shares with other academic arts buildings and with the university at large. The aim is to create a lively and welcoming venue where town and gown can gather; a hospitable and dynamic public place—a signature spot that announces the university’s commitment to 21st century learning and cultural experiences. In addition to establishing this major portal into campus as a true destination unto itself, this proposed capital investment also would have the added benefit of serving as a significant anchor for and “down payment” on the university arts district that is envisioned both for east and west of High Street in the Master Plan. The center seeks to be a significant partner with key campus leaders to plan and secure resources (estimated \$2-3million) for what would certainly represent a transformative initiative on this site.

Focus on Wex Publics & Profile – As already noted, the center is ever mindful of the need to balance its outreach across the multiple and diverse core constituencies we serve, near and far. Locally, the number of arts and cultural offerings across the city has increased, thereby intensifying the competition for patrons’ limited leisure time. In addition, patron expectations of their chosen cultural organizations have significantly changed with heightened focus on their *overall* experience—not solely on the programming. In an effort to maintain and expand the “mindshare” we already enjoy with the “art world,” enhance the center’s reach within the university, *and* deepen the center’s reach, relevance and reputational impact within our own “back yard” (Columbus and Central Ohio) we will:

Broaden the “Footprint”

- Reposition the Wex Prize as a significant gateway “moment” for all the Wex publics locally, nationally and internationally
- Reconstitute and rethink the role of the center’s International Arts Advisory Council
- Expand our network of collaborators, across *all* disciplines - visual, media and performing arts – among leading cultural centers nationally and abroad
- Virtualize the Wex by leveraging technology to extend the center and its signature programs (i.e., endowed lectures, artist talks, Prize Award, etc.) beyond physical confines
- Leverage select university-wide efforts to cultivate national and international constituents (including but not limited to OSU alumni) that align with the center’s core work

Provide a Patron’s Edge

- Create welcoming, informative, “cool” but unthreatening, and ultimately compelling visitor experiences (on-site and on-line) and ensure an on-site patron experience that is service-driven across and through all levels of the visitor’s engagement with the center.
- Further strengthen and engage our existing auxiliary corps – Donor Circles, Shumate, GenWex, and DIY Councils – to support the Wex in refining, personalizing and sharing the patron experience
- Provide appropriate contextual information surrounding all programs, including a balance of high-touch and high-tech content, that help patrons find the “sweet spot” between the works of art they encounter and their personal experience.
- Be recognized as a leader in the field in leveraging social media pathways for patrons.
- Consistently upgrade our IT and CRM database to allow the Wex to fully harness the potential of these tools in support of building new audiences; expanding services to patrons; extending our marketing reach and raising additional financial support.

Resource Stewardship

Secure and Leverage the Base

Based on deliberations with the Wexner Center Foundation Board of Trustees and our senior leadership team, the center’s strategic plan is built on two key assumptions. First, our foremost priority is to “preserve the core” which simply means securing and sustaining the center’s current base of operations and present stature in the field. Second, the plan also assumes the center will simultaneously “leverage” that base with strategic initiatives and selective investments designed to advance and enhance institutional capacity and standing (e.g., new education facility).

“For the size of their staff and budget, the bang for the buck is enormous. They are seen as being a cut above in terms of the breadth and the range and consistency of their program.”—Adam Weinberg, Director, Whitney Museum of

In its brief 23 year history, the center has established a solid track-record of balancing its now approximately \$10 million annual budget; navigated a complex \$16.5m facility renovation; recruited and retained a talented and respected curatorial team among its approximately 70 staffers (a level unchanged since 2000); and built a modest \$10m endowment, not yet counting a pledge of \$15 million to the Wexner Center’s “*But for Ohio State*” campaign. (Note: The total principal of endowed funds for the center should be closer to \$40-50 million in order to more closely adhere to “industry” norms for major cultural organizations of our scope and scale.)

Going forward, the center will need an even stronger financial foundation to reduce the risk it will face from economic fluctuations, the ebb and flow of annual gifts, and the potential diminishment of major historic funding sources like the annual Limited Brands campaign. Further, to remain a leader in the field, and as previously noted, selected investments in a

new dedicated education facility; more sophisticated IT, database and electronic communication infrastructure; a rigorous capital investment in programmatic innovation and building stewardship are necessary.

To that end, the Wexner Center Foundation Board has formulated a \$60 million capital campaign that is inside of and aligned with the university's larger *'But for Ohio State'* campaign. During fiscal years 2012-2016, the Wex trustees and advancement team are committed to securing:

- New and direct investment in capital infrastructure (\$7million)
- Enhanced investment in programs and community engagement (\$23 million)
- A significant increase in sustaining endowments (\$30 million)

A five year financial plan undergirding the center's strategic plan is attached. The fiscal forecast reflects current and projected sources of income, including the results of a successfully executed capital campaign; current and projected uses, including planned program, operations and capital expenditures; and estimated annual operating and endowment fund balances.

Build a Generative Work Ecology

While financial sustainability, cutting edge technology, and quality physical environments and infrastructure are essential elements of the center's resource stewardship strategy, so is building an organization that is anchored in a generative work ecology. The center remains committed to recruiting and retaining the talented, diverse and experienced staff who have joined our ranks over the years, but it is newly focused on building an organization in which the working ethos and environment methodically and readily supports innovation, inclusion and growth for individuals, teams, departments, and the center as a whole.

Our senior leadership team is researching and pursuing an organizational development strategy designed to advance the center's mission and foster institutional progress by:

- Committing to discuss, refine, and "reinscribe" our core ideology (purpose, values, BHAG) across all members of the Wex team
- Regularly and rigorously assessing institutional capacity, needs and work climate
- Building connective, supporting infrastructure (i.e., new IT & HR systems & protocols; integrated communication & decision-making forums)
- Implementing compensation strategies consistent with resource constraints and market conditions (within the university and relative to the broader field of cultural organizations)
- Pursuing opportunities that develop both individual and team skills and enhance staff dedication to "live" the center's core ideology
- Investing time and financial resources in on-boarding, professional development and advancement
- Celebrating the successes & wins centerwide

Tracking Our Performance

The challenge for any institution—cultural or otherwise—is to formulate a comprehensive and rigorous “dashboard” of indicators that meaningfully captures the objective and subjective criteria for achievement pertinent to that particular entity and industry. While numeric stats tell a part of the story, they fail to portray the full profile and measure the full impact of any given organization.

As but one obvious example, “public engagement” with the center would ostensibly rank as an important means of validation, yet in order to be a useful measure, it is essential to distinguish among the multiple “publics” served by the institution, each with its own respective set of expectations and deliverables. Further, the term “engagement” itself can be defined in numerous ways: by presence and participation, by financial support, by media attention, by reputational buzz, by academic credibility, etc. And that is just one among many different vectors of analysis that come into play, especially given the many overlapping constituencies we serve, and the multiple ways in which they demonstrate their respective investment in the center,

For an arts institution, the overarching commitment to “program quality, rigor, and innovation” might well argue for a qualitative approach to analysis, where success is defined largely as the consistent creation and presentation of rich and diversified cultural occasions and experiences unified only by artistic excellence, first-class viewing conditions, meaningful interaction with artists and creative thinkers, and exposure to new and evolving viewpoints, including non-mainstream views and voices. But focusing on the qualitative alone (even if independently assessed by third parties) is insufficient to the task at hand.

Yet, while measuring success strictly from an external “consumer” perspective may initially appear a more objective exercise (number of visitors, dollars raised, articles written, etc.), such data only becomes truly meaningful when pushed through the finer, more complex sieve of those qualitative issues enumerated above. An intricate and carefully calibrated set of benchmarks is required—one that recognizes the sometimes conflicting and even inversely proportional measures that may come to play in any given area of evaluation.

We believe the attached performance dashboard reflects a mix of metrics that will best capture the full measure of the center’s performance.

**WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS
FY12-FY17 FINANCIAL PLAN**

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY2017
Total Endowment(s) Principal Balance¹ :	10,494,296	10,741,448	10,741,448	17,741,448	28,241,448	40,741,448	40,741,448

Current & Projected Sources

Support for One-Time Capital Investments	-	500,000	2,200,000	2,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
University Support ²	4,224,236	4,087,852	4,090,778	4,172,594	4,256,045	4,341,166	4,427,989
Corporate Annual Fund/Wexner Center Foundation Support	1,654,619	1,689,619	1,790,000	1,790,000	1,790,000	1,790,000	1,790,000
Contributions and Grants ³	1,912,789	2,128,523	2,480,000	2,580,000	2,300,000	2,300,000	2,300,000
Endowment Income ⁴	341,518	354,382	410,061	754,012	1,200,262	1,731,512	1,731,512
Earned Income ⁵	997,590	804,700	918,122	950,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Total Current Sources	9,130,752	9,565,076	11,888,961	12,246,605	11,546,307	12,162,678	12,249,501

Uses

Salaries & Benefits ⁶	5,499,539	5,485,986	5,812,832	6,129,089	6,451,670	6,680,704	6,814,318
Operations ^{7,8}	1,605,776	1,505,286	1,799,689	1,919,683	1,984,396	2,024,084	2,064,566
Program ³	2,044,307	1,978,248	2,500,000	2,600,000	2,300,000	2,450,000	2,550,000
Capital & Equipment Expenses⁹							
Education Space Renovation			500,000	2,000,000	500,000		
Programming, Building and Security Equipment			211,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
IT Infrastructure	250,000	0	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Plant/Capital Improvement Funds			0	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Total Current Uses	9,399,622	8,969,520	10,823,521	13,448,771	12,036,067	11,954,788	12,228,884

Total Sources Less Uses:	(268,870)	595,556	1,065,440	(1,202,166)	(489,760)	207,890	20,617
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Total Fund Balance:	\$1,107,665	\$1,703,221	\$2,768,661	\$1,566,495	\$1,076,735	\$1,284,624	\$1,305,241
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FOOTNOTES & ASSUMPTIONS:

¹ Endowment principal balances are expected to increase as outlined above, based on capital campaign targets

- FY14, FY15, FY16 endowment principal balances increase \$5M per year (\$15M Wexner Family Commitment)
- FY14 (\$2M), FY15 (\$5.5M), FY16 (\$7.5M) endowment principal balances increase per capital campaign targets

² University support projected to increase at an average of 2% per year

³ Historically around \$2M, FY13 projection includes \$273k Maya Lin Restoration; FY13-FY14 revenue/expense for a 4-year \$782k grant from the Mellon Foundation (FY13-\$230k & FY14-\$526k)

⁴ Endowment interest income is based on principal balance and assumes a spending rule of 4.25%

⁵ Earned income assumed to increase at a rate of 1% from FY13 to FY14 and maintain an average of \$1M/year

⁶ Salaries and benefits assumed to increase at 2% per year through FY17 plus adding 8 (3 new FY14, 3 new FY15, 2 in FY16) for increased programming and public affairs

⁷ Wexner Center will assume an additional 7,228 ASF for its education space beginning Sep 2013; POM = \$15.53/s.f. and for FY13 Q2-Q4 this totals \$84k ; \$112k in FY14 and beyond

⁸ Other operating expenses assumed to increase by 2% per year FY14-FY16

⁹ The following assumptions underly capital expenses for FY14-FY16

- Programming, building and security equipment directed for updating assets beyond their usable life; assumed to increase as programming is expanded
- Plant fund monies will be earmarked for proactively addressing capital improvements not covered by POM
- The IT infrastructure investment made in FY11 upgraded all computer workstations and implemented a comprehensive ticketing, point-of-sale and CRM system; IT Infrastructure beyond FY13 assumes cascading replacement of workstations for 75 FTEs at an average of \$1,500/FTE plus network, server, switch and software upgrades

Advancing the Wex: Performance “Dashboard” (to be achieved by 2017)

Resource Metrics

Successful completion of Wex capital campaign as evidenced by:

- \$60m – total funds raised
 - Increase endowments by \$30m (total corpus of \$40m)
 - Increase in memberships to 3,000 households (currently 2,000)
 - Increase Donor Circles revenue to \$600,000 per year (currently \$400,000)
 - Increase Corporate/Foundation revenue to at least \$4m annually (currently \$3.5m)
- New Education Center opens in 2014 coinciding with Wex 25th Anniversary
- WEX Plaza at 15th & High transformed to a destination not a thoroughfare
- One-time capital investments in equipment and technology completed and annual sustaining capital allocation secured in Wex budget with future “one-time” investments anticipated

Sustained and targeted growth on key work culture indicators as measured by:

- Core ideology is “baked into WCA DNA” and staff effortlessly “live” the core values—as measured by:
 - Internal survey metrics re: mission & work climate will reach an aggregate average score of no less than 70% positive responses across all staff.
 - Internal survey metrics re: diversity and inclusiveness will reach an aggregate average score of no less than 85% positive responses across all staff.

Reputation & Reach Metrics

WCA’s status as a vanguard leader in the field is sustained as evidenced by:

- Periodic benchmark studies (*ala* the Galligan Report) confirm among national and international peers that the quality of the Wex programming and the significance of its contributions to the field continue at the highest level
- Sustained reputational standing as measured by national and international cultural media
- Peer institutions look to the Wex for innovative teen/youth education programs and practices; for artist residency/commissioning models; and for program typology models
- Wex receives attention and financial support from most rigorous and reputable national foundations (e.g., Doris Duke, MacArthur, Mellon, Surdna, Warhol, and the like).

Wex visibility, standing and patronage is unrivaled in the community as measured by:

- Overall attendance and participation of patrons on-site
- A sustained “very satisfied” rating from members/patrons for providing quality programming and culturally engaging activities and events (Fisher College surveys)
- Significant mind-share among civic and corporate leaders who view the center as an important cultural asset and a point of pride for the entire community (Fisher College surveys)
- Demonstrating yearly increases in breadth, depth and impact of affiliate groups/councils (e.g., DCC, GenWex, Shumate Council, etc) actively serving Wexner Center
- Teens/collegiates actively own, shape, and consume youth programming (attendance usage metrics)
- Increase electronic/digital engagement by 50% or more (as measured by wexarts.org visitors; social media followers; and online ticket, membership, and store sales)