2016-2018 Strategic Plan
Approved 2/10/2016
SP Learning/Data Collection

- Board Interviews
- Student Surveys
- Staff Interviews
- Donors/Funders Interviews
- Faculty Focus Groups
- Competitive Analysis
- Internal Org Review
Sequence
The Underpinnings of Plan

- Strengthen organization for sustainability and growth.
- Take organization to next level--embrace evolutionary potential.
- Capitalize on strengths.
- Further support underserved communities.
To create an inclusive and welcoming community where lives are transformed and enriched through the shared experience of art.
Mission

The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey nurtures the capacity for personal expression, expands the creative experience and fosters stronger communities by empowering people to see, make and learn about art. Through museum exhibitions, studio school and community programs, the Art Center engenders connection, curiosity and creative risk-taking among its constituents.
In our work, we embrace the following values:

**Connection:** We foster connection among our community members through a respectful and safe environment.

**Inclusive Community:** We welcome and value diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, and nurture an environment that is open and supportive.

**Excellence:** We are committed to providing outstanding services and programs. We direct our collective efforts to continually improve & innovate.

**Curiosity & Creative Risk-Taking:** We value receptivity, open dialogue and innovative thinking, so as to encourage curiosity and creative risk-taking.

**Holistic Approach:** We value a holistic approach to art in the individual and community life, so that art is found in every facet of life.

**Advocacy:** We value standing up and speaking out for the arts, in order to promote our vision and values.
Goal I

Strengthen organizational structure, financial management & operations to ensure the Art Center’s sustainability and capacity to accomplish its goals.
Goal I: Rationale

The Art Center has recently undertaken a number of efforts to strengthen the organization, from hiring a new Executive Director to reworking financial management systems and mobilizing the Governance Committee to improve governance structure, policies and practices. To ensure the organization’s sustainability—financial and otherwise—and capacity to implement the strategic plan, the Art Center will continue to shore up its financial management and governance, as well as optimize usage of the facility.
Goal I: Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Ensure financial stability of the organization.

**Strategy 2:** Undertake a comprehensive review of our governance structure and procedures to improve Board effectiveness and accountability.

**Strategy 3:** Assess facility usage (inside and outside) and develop plan to both optimize usage and address aging infrastructure.

**Strategy 4:** Recruit, retain and develop our human resources to foster a productive, collaborative and learning organization.
Goal II

Deepen the participants’ experience of Art Center offerings.
Goal II: Rationale

Participants’ experiences are made richer and deeper through personalization and human connection. In developing a deeper relationship, our participants are more likely to have a transformative art experience. In order to achieve a deeper relationship with participants, the Art Center will work across its programs to offer Personal Facilitated Experiences (PFEs)—supported interactions between staff/faculty/volunteers and constituents. In order to best connect with the needs and desires of our constituents and deepen their experience, the Art Center will combine strategic visitor assessment and observation in order to guide experimentation with program formats and content.
Goal II: Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Develop exhibitions and educational programs that promote engagement and connection.

**Strategy 2:** Develop Studio School programs that expand the artistic engagement of existing and prospective students.
Goal III

Broaden the reach of the Visual Arts Center through new audience development.
Goal III: Rationale

The Art Center has long had a loyal base of studio school students, community members, and other visitors who know the organization well and have been empowered to see, make and learn about art. However, outside this base, the Art Center’s connection to both a segment of existing constituents and prospective participants is weaker. Going forward, the Art Center seeks to broaden its audience across the many segments of the region, in order to increase its impact. Additionally, those existing participants with less knowledge and connection to the Art Center represent an untapped market opportunity for future growth.
Goal III: Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Develop and implement a research plan designed to identify greatest opportunity target groups for audience development and obtain key data points in driving participate engagement and retention.

**Strategy 2:** Undergo a comprehensive rebrand of the organization in order to build greater awareness, perceived value and relevance of the Art Center among existing and opportunity target segments.

**Strategy 3:** Develop a marketing and communications plan specific to target audience(s), building on what was learned in Goal III, Strategy 1 and 2.
Goal IV

Increase access to art for constituents facing financial, physical, and other barriers.
Goal IV: Rationale

The Art Center has a long history in engaging a range of communities, from developmentally disabled adults to students in neighboring school districts, to ensure that they have access to art and have the opportunity to make and learn about art. Still, a high percentage of Art Center participants are white and affluent in a state with significant socioeconomic, racial and ethnic diversity. The Art Center is committed to increasing access to art and art programming by helping target communities overcome physical and financial barriers and designing programming to meet more diverse interests and needs.
Goal IV: Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Evaluate existing programs in relation to regional underserved communities.

**Strategy 2:** Refine or develop a program(s) based on needs assessment and barriers of target community(-ies).
Goal V

Build the Art Center’s capacity around museum practice to enable the Art Center to reach the highest professional standards.
Goal V: Rationale

The Art Center has been presenting outstanding exhibitions featuring artworks by living artists since 1935 when it presented an exhibition of works from the Whitney Museum. The Art Center has continued building organizational capacity as a museum in the years following. In 1981, the AAM accredited the Art Center as a museum and in 2010 the Art Center hired its first full-time professional curator. In order to continue strengthening and growing its mission of presenting high quality visual arts exhibitions for the people of New Jersey, the Art Center will build staff and organizational capacity and plan for future growth with the goal of reaching the highest standards in non-collecting, contemporary museum practice.
Goal V: Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Review, revise and implement in-house museum policy.

**Strategy 2:** Insure proper staff support and training in museum practices.

**Strategy 3:** Undertake long-view planning in terms of the Art Center's museum approach and space.