

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT**

## **Spring semester 2006**

### **Executive Summary**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document reflects the collaborative and inclusive planning efforts that took place over a period of 18 months (September 2004 through December 2005) and involved over 200 dedicated faculty, students, staff, administrators, trustees, alumni and community allies. Through immersive retreats, committee work, focus groups and research, the CalArts community worked to create a living blueprint to help the Institute advance its aspirations and goals over the next five years, 2006-2011.

## **I. MISSION STATEMENT**

The California Institute of the Arts educates artists in a learning environment founded on artmaking excellence, experimentation, critical reflection and the diversity of voices. To advance the exploration of new forms and expressions, CalArts urges active collaboration and exchange among artists, artistic disciplines and cultural traditions – both on campus and in ongoing engagement with communities.

## **II. BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE**

Walt Disney created CalArts to meet a need. He believed the contemporary world required a new way of thinking about art that matched the interdisciplinary and professional developments in science. CalArts, he reasoned, would provide a place to nurture artists who would aspire to the highest quality of achievement in creating new forms, techniques and aesthetics.

Why should CalArts have a strategic plan? The truth is that the institution has made remarkable, consistent progress and met accreditation expectations over the years without a formalized strategic plan, in spite of setbacks such as the 1994 earthquake. But in these early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are at least four major reasons to be more explicit about the future of planning at CalArts:

- (1) At a time of rapid change in the world and across the arts, it is essential to keep the conversation about CalArts' future vital with participation from a range of constituencies involving students, faculty, staff, administration, trustees and alumni, and, where useful, artists and thinkers beyond the campus community.
- (2) To have a more open and focused discussion about CalArts one budget. The institution needs to struggle harder to make clear priorities and tradeoffs in deciding how to allocate resources in a very decentralized environment.
- (3) Even though CalArts has made great strides over the years, some facets of campus life, such as quality academic advisement and consistent progress in diversity of faculty, have not entirely kept pace with accomplishments elsewhere at the Institute. In this way, the plan provides an opportunity to fill in some gaps and provide consistency.
- (4) To make sure that CalArts makes the most powerful impact possible in such areas as diversity, post-disciplinarity in the arts, stronger articulation between the metiers and critical studies, new models for how educational and professional work can be mutually supporting, helping students create the tool-kit they will need for life, and strengthening the professional arts communities that are of such vital significance to our students, faculty and alumni.

Many facets of the education provided to students at CalArts are thriving and flourishing. This plan is not intended to change the best of what the institution is about and what it has to offer. Rather, the plan is framed as a vehicle to sustain the institute's greatest assets and to ensure that CalArts' most important aspirations come to fruition.

The large, crosscutting strategic areas described in this document provide a way to organize the thinking about the future of CalArts. Already the plan has brought together hundreds of people to talk about the essence of the institute and what it should aspire to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most importantly, the plan will mandate that the CalArts community work to shape the institution's priorities and provide a basis for making the inevitable tradeoffs that help build the strongest and most resilient institutions.

Here is the conceptual thinking behind the creation of the four major themes:

(1) CalArts has always functioned as both an educational institution and a creative laboratory. Within this dual context, the Institute's fundamental goal is to educate students—to equip them for sustainable lives as citizen-artists. Still, CalArts' student survey findings illustrate that students demand a curriculum reflecting an expanded view of art and the world, as well as career guidance to prepare them for their lives beyond campus. The curriculum and living/learning communities need to be kept responsive to the changing arts professions and a changing world. To provide a **superior educational experience for students** is the first commitment of the plan.

(2) Optimized operations require more than a proactive budgeting process. Strategic decisions are impossible without adequate information. CalArts must develop a culture and infrastructure of appropriate information sharing among all the entities comprising the Institute. **Information sharing across CalArts** is the backbone of strategic action. In order to enrich learning and professional experiences, the Institute must manage its operations for maximum efficiency. Only through a **more strategic use of resources** can the Institute capitalize on the limits of what it has to offer and best serve the entire Institute.

(3) Human resources are the greatest assets for this enhanced educational experience. Faculty and staff define the Institute, in and out of the studio. They also serve as models for working lives in the arts. Thus, it is essential that CalArts provide its professionals opportunities for progress in their own fields and areas of expertise, and, at the same time, with the tools to offer strong and consistent support for students. To **encourage the growth of leadership, both through professional development and advancement of faculty and staff** is to make a critical investment in the life of the Institute.

(4) Finally, CalArts has an educational and creative mission that extends beyond the campus, into the community and the world. This happens through performances and other events on campus and at REDCAT, through the work of CAP, as a result of the exploration of international opportunities, through pilot curricular structures (such as the January interterm) and through collaborative relationships among schools. These are examples of how CalArts reaches both beyond the campus and more deeply within the campus, so that **CalArts and its citizens can strategically make an impact on the world, both near and far**. The Institute will continue to educate young artists to make a difference in peoples' lives and to influence how society thinks about the arts. Through these activities, the CalArts community will have access to a diverse array of life experiences that will powerfully enhance both the CalArts mission and the CalArts education.

### III. FOUR STRATEGIC AREAS

The following is a list of the four broad initiatives that have been developed. The process of illuminating each of these themes will begin in the inaugural year, 2006-2007. Selected goals for next year are listed in this document.

## **1. Provide a superior educational experience for students.**

- Develop an enhanced academic advisement infrastructure for undergraduate and graduate students at CalArts to improve consistency in academic advising and mentoring.
- Increase awareness of diversity as a crucial component to educational and artistic life and create a genuinely inclusive and supportive educational environment by fostering a diverse student body, faculty and staff; greater student, faculty and staff appreciation for and sensitivity toward differences in culture and/or ethnicity; art making through broader cultural interaction; advocacy for marginalized student and faculty populations, and an across-the-board presence of multiculturalism as a curricular and campus norm.
- Develop a systematic approach to program review at CalArts
- Reinstate the institute-wide Curriculum Committee with specific mandates
- Establish Learning Resource Center in the Dean of Students/Student Life Area

## **2. Ensure the strategic use of resources and information sharing across CalArts.**

- Improve the CalArts website to provide up-to-date information for both internal and external audiences.
- Create a comprehensive and sustainable Information Technology Plan to ensure the ongoing security and stability of the CalArts network.

## **3. Encourage the growth of leadership, both through professional development and advancement of faculty and staff.**

- Create a Faculty and Staff Center within a Virtual Framework.
- Initiate a Process to Identify Preferred Areas of Professional Development for Faculty and Staff.
- Evaluate the Administrative Structures of the Schools.

## **4. Enhance the opportunities for CalArts and its citizens to make an impact on the world, both near and far.**

- Implement a winter break from métier studies during the academic year for students to explore cross and/or interdisciplinary and international opportunities.
- Clarify REDCAT's function as an institutional and strategic resource.
- Strengthen the Community Arts Partnerships' educational function as a bridge between the Institute and its surrounding communities.
- Enhance international relationships between CalArts and the world.
- Explore and support new vehicles such as the Center for New Performance.