

The Plan

Goal
The process

Goal

Timeline

Addendum

History of Center
Mission of Center
Strategic Plan Participants

THE PLAN

Goal

The goal of this process was to produce a five-year plan that will be monitored by the Arts Center Board of Directors and implemented by the Arts Center staff, board and volunteers.

Process

My role was to create a process where the Arts Center Board of Directors, staff and the public all have a voice/stake in moving the Arts Center forward over the next five years.

Processes are meant to be respected if they are to be effective.

My planning process began October 16 with an in-person board retreat and a second mini-board retreat on November 9 for the board members who could not attend the first retreat. I had each board member complete the Don Risso enneagram test to identify enneagram types to be used during the process.

From the retreats, we formed a ten-person strategic planning committee to do a deeper dive into the plan. The role of the strategic planning advisory committee was to access the information I collected, analyze it, categorize it and prioritize it, providing assistance to the Arts Center Board of Directors in creating an effective, doable plan. I met with this group November 20 and the members who couldn't attend the first meeting December 6. We met again January 23.

As part of the process, I met with 40 people and had one-on-one conversations with them for at least an hour each. These people were chosen by the staff and board, consisting of city and county officials, developers and business owners, former and current Arts Center leadership, current and former Arts Center participants and affiliate club leadership. Others were identified as I met with the initial list of participants. All conversations were in person except two via cellphone. I circled back to several people for a second conversation. Questions for each participant were customized depending on their history with the Arts Center (if any) and role in the Arts Center and community.

Additionally, I met with each member of the staff individually for 90-minutes January 13 and with the staff as a group February 21 and March 14.

Larry Hembree, Strategic Plan Consultant

GOALS

Nine goals are listed below, followed by action items related to that particular goal.

- Goal #1** | Define Arts Center focus for the future
- Goal #2** | Run the Arts Center like a business
- Goal #3** | Revise the Arts Center's organizational chart centered on the plan's outcomes
- Goal #4** | Advocate for and build solid educational programming & partnerships
- Goal #5** | Create tools & structure for a successful Board of Directors
- Goal #6** | Create an engagement program focused on cultural equity
- Goal #7** | Create & execute plan for better government support for arts, culture, & Arts Center
- Goal #8** | Invest in and improve physical plant
- Goal #9** | Improve communication internally and externally

GOAL #1

Define Arts Center focus for the future

The Arts Center is in transition. Once the strategic planning goals are set by the board, a major rebranding process needs to begin. The populous of Kershaw County is changing and the Arts Center must figure out how to change with it. The Arts Center must reconnect to the community, find a voice, have a point of view, offer a unique experience to patrons, students and others utilizing its programs.

Action Items

Create a process to explore how to create voice and point of view including review of current mission statement. Brand this new vision.

In this vision:

- Consider each component of the Arts Center's programming connecting and interacting with another facet of arts programs with nothing existing in a single paradigm and each energizing another arts community and vice versa.
- Make the case that creativity underlines and reinforces all learning.
- Put process first in exploring all programming (playwriting, songwriting, creative writing, dance, exploring visual art, etc.) Question what it means to be in the arts, an artist, and to be an arts-infused community in the 21st Century.
- Consider creating a formal entity (i.e., Humanities Institute) focusing on the above ideas.
- Consider this question: How do you define humanities where artists and support facilitators understand their importance as leaders in moving us forward as a human community? The humanities are those branches of knowledge, including law, languages, philosophy, religion, art, music, theatre and the social sciences that work together to teach us what it means to be a human being, with our singular powers of expression, our shared values and our common history.

GOAL #2

Run the Arts Center like a business

The fun part of participating in an arts non-profit is the process of creating and exhibiting artistic endeavors. The part that usually receives low priority is focusing on the non-profit as a business. The mission of the business is to provide both the financial and emotional support to realize its strategic plan, ultimately providing the resources staff and participants need to do their best work. The Arts Center must focus on the internal issues instead of tackling all the external issues. The opposite case, tackling external first, minimizes the Art Center's potential.

The first goal is to get the financials in order and create an effective development plan for the future. For many years, a handful of wealthy donors (many who were part of the founding of the Arts Center) gave large amounts of money to support the Arts Center. These funds helped support the endowments, capital campaigns, facility improvements, etc. Many of these donors no longer are alive or have moved from Kershaw County. There must be a process to identify and cultivate new donors. The new generation of donors exists. Identifying, engaging and cultivating them must begin immediately with an understanding that cultivating these donors is time consuming and may not reap instant results.

Action Items

- Create a list of top 100 donors.
- Create a group of 30-somethings to act as a fundraising/social group.
- Create a robust donor plan incorporating new donors, corporations, and grant opportunities keeping in mind that donors support an organization with sound fiscal substance, self-reliance, high value programming, a history of self-sustainability, broad community support, no debt, and strong board leadership.
- Engage new owners of larger, historical properties and downtown development investors. Have a series of one-on-one conversations with these potential donors and a customized engagement plan.
- Create a compelling case statement that will at least pique the interest of potential donors.
- Have a sponsor for all events/program or question their validity.
- Require all affiliate groups to pay to use the facility after clarifying their missions.
- Create an easier way to donate on the webpage and also include building rental information on the webpage.
- Decide how the funds left to the Center by Sally and Austin Brown should be utilized.
- Research the possibility of reapplying to the Upton Foundation.
- Create physical and/or online library of the Center's history.
- Create a plan for how to best utilize interest from the endowments.
- Create a mission for the art gallery, thinking through potential increased revenue from Gallery programming.
- Clarify all existing partnerships

GOAL #3

Revise the Arts Center's organizational chart centered on the plan's outcomes

Staff structure must be based on executing an effective strategic plan. That is key to the Arts Center's success. Over the past five years, the Arts Center has been unsuccessful in keeping top leadership positions filled. That, in addition to the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic, has led to an unfocused vision for the future. Staff is not sure what to focus on, what to prioritize leading to random decision-making and a lack of forward motion. How do you hire staff when you don't know where you are headed? Job descriptions need to be rewritten and should evolve over time. The Arts Center's power system must be a shared power, not just one staff leader in charge of executing the plan. The Arts Center has major capacity issues as current staff has difficulty combining time to get tasks accomplished with quality work in the forefront. The board must decide the best role of the Executive Director that will ensure success and prevent burnout.

The staff needs to be proactive and visionary rather than reactive.

The team is only as healthy as individual staff members who make up the team. It could be advantageous to contract professionals who focus on things like diet, mindfulness, financial planning, etc. to help staff in both inter-personal relationships and communication with the public. Also included would be topics like best professional behavior practices, professional attire for the workplace and social media protocols.

Action Items

- Create more effective organizational structure based on strategic plan.
- Create professional development opportunities for the staff.
- Rebirth the volunteers! Make it lively, fun, creative to volunteer, taking some of the burden away from paid staff.

GOAL #4

Advocate for and build solid educational programming & partnerships

Creation of the Arts Center's Arts Arising program was the catalyst for building the Daniels Arts Education Building, allowing the Arts Center to establish stellar arts education programs and work with local and surrounding school districts.

Throughout the last decade, due to challenges like less district financial support from state and federal government, the focus on academic testing and less interest in integrating arts into the curriculum, school arts education programs have suffered. This has trickled down to the Arts Center. Arts education partnerships have been waning, resulting in less revenue and a more watered-down approach to arts education programming. We must rethink this part of the Arts Center's success and reclaim the Arts Center's past leadership in this sector.

Action Items

- Hire a Director of Education focused solely on educational programming (or share position with a school district partnership.)
- Tie all Arts Center programming to every event/performance for both youth/adults.
- Secure funding to help individual schools in arts programming, train public school teachers in the arts, create a teaching artist-residency program, create both short and long-term partnerships with local groups like Boys and Girls Club and Girl and Boy Scouts.
- Have consistent spaces at the Arts Center to teach classes each week and find a solution to sound proofing in music studio.
- Provide transportation for Arts Arising students who need it and consider an Arts Arising model year-round for classes.
- Investigate a formal relationship with current Dance studio contractors.
- Utilize the gallery more with a focus on youth art.
- Create more one-off classes to get new folks through the door at the Arts Center.
- Work on better coordination with other afterschool activities in the county such as karate and tennis.
- Create learning opportunities for using media tools to learn the business of art, entrepreneurship and expression.

GOAL #5

Create tools and structure for a successful Board of Directors

The Arts Center's Board of Director's must take a major leadership role or the plan will fail. A common understanding between each other and understanding the role of staff must be present it in order to succeed.

Action Items

- Restructure board committees for effectiveness, concentrate on single responsibilities with strong chair leadership.
- Add lay citizens/volunteers to board committees.
- Have committee chairs form a Director's Task Force that meets regularly.
- Keep a focus on finding future Arts Center leadership.
- Create more opportunities for board to support, engage with and work with staff.
- Create opportunities for board to make personal relationships with potential Arts Center supporters/donors.
- Create more effective board committees to oversee a successful strategic plan:
Finance/Development - Programming - Cultural Equity - Facility - Strategic Plan -Executive

GOAL #6

Create an engagement program focused on cultural equity

Due to the current political climate, organizations across the country are now tasked with understanding, embracing and executing equity plans that focus on programming and empowering all in our communities.

A cultural equity plan should be created ensuring that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.

Action Items

- Reach out to adjoining communities including Bethune, Elgin, Lugoff & Northeast
- Create a board committee focused on integrating equity into all Arts Center decision-making, including all marketing strategies.
- Create intentional experiences for the military and the Latino community.
- Consider bringing back successful past programs like the Celebration Gospel Ensemble if the intention is authentic.
- Explore the role of the multi-cultural committee and give it, or something like it, a new vision and move to affiliate status instead of making it a board committee.
- Consider adding more regional programming that is inclusive of non-traditional art forms.

GOAL #7

Create & execute plan for better government support for arts & culture & Arts Center

The City of Camden's ten-year comprehensive plan includes a section on cultural resources. Within that section is a description of three pieces of the cultural community encompassing Camden: First, Equine, then History, and last, Arts and Culture. City leaders agree that arts and culture is the area lacking the most support.

Action Items

- Figure out effective ways to connect to City and County Council.
- Use Arts Center's engagement programs that have the most impact to pitch these to the City and County.
- Create a stronger partnership and opportunities with the Main Street program, the Kershaw County Library System, Central Carolina Technical College, equine community, historical community and other existing programs and events that the City and County already support.
- Create a signature event for the Arts Center that the City and County would buy in to. This could be Oktoberfest, patterned on the Irish Festival, or perhaps Arts & Antiques or MAD Festival. The one-day event should be held the same date every year and garner support from many existing local

GOAL #8

Invest in and improve physical plant.

Once people find the Arts Center, does it look like an artistic, fun, vibrant place to become a part of? Also, the perception is that the Arts Center is off the beaten path as the City Center is being more and more developed (Broad Street) Even though the Arts Center is part of the state's designated cultural district, it's on the periphery. Tourists want to park and then walk to restaurants and retail spaces. Rutledge Street, connecting Broad to Lyttleton Streets, has little to entice visitors, especially after 5pm.

Action Items

- As a map for future leadership, create a capital reserve action plan for all buildings/equipment on the campus.
- Redo the exterior and landscape of the facility to convey it's a fun place to visit.
- Create more presence in the City Center including better wayfinding, kiosk marketing stations, etc.
- Consider moving the Arts Center's front entrance to the current parking lot entrance.
- Design and create murals on the Bassett Building and include additional fun artworks on the campus.
- Perhaps use the gallery to host youth competitions as part of the process.
- Work with Woolard Technology Center and others students/schools/organizations in the community to help upgrade the exterior of the Arts Center
- Implement a more effective use of the PAW and the Shull Pavilion.

GOAL #9

Improve communication internally and externally.

The facts prove that organizations collecting the best data receive better government funding, have better return on investment and create an easier pathway to engaging big donors and corporations. The Arts Center must implement current technology to maximize outreach potential. This also includes production equipment in both the Wood Auditorium and Black Box Theatre.

Long term, the current setup of office spaces in the Arts Center complex creates a disconnect – staff is spread out over three different buildings. Pulling staff together into a central working space would improve staff communication.

Action Items

- Create a technology plan.
- Choose a database and systems that will maximize development potential with easy access.
- Collect more effective data.
- Supply both theatre spaces with state-of-the-art sound, lighting and intercom systems.
- Use technology to enhance staff communication and social media communication with the public.
- Create working spaces that allow staff closer physical proximity to each other.

TIMELINE BY SEASONS

Year One 2022-23

- Create strategic plan
- Vote to move strategic plan forward
- Begin process to create and execute process of giving the Arts Center a Voice and a Point of View, review mission statement
- Create 2023-24 budget with limited programming and a focus on quality, gather sponsors or delete program
- Secure list of top 100 donors and create development plan
- Make decision on Sally and Austin Brown money
- Decide role of affiliates and partners
- Make website more accessible to donors and renters
- Decide on how board committees will be structured
- Come up with the reorganization plan for staff and decide timeline on implementation
- Decide on a new signature event and plan for Fall of 2023 or 2024
- Create technology plan
- Start planning 50th Anniversary year festivities

Year Two 2023-24

- Continue process to create and execute process of giving the Center a Voice and a Point of View and create case statement and assign expenses to plan
- Continue working on reorganization plan
- Create new and improved education programming with process as focus
- Continue planning 50th Anniversary
- Create group of 30-somethings
- Explore Upton Foundation funding
- Create Arts Center History library physical and online
- Create professional development opportunities for staff
- Create new volunteer program
- Create equity committee and lay out cultural equity plan
- Meet with City and County Councils and other partners to inform of plan and progress on plan
- Create capital reserve plan based on long range needs
- Create plan for improving inside and outside of facility
- Implement part of technology plan

TIMELINE BY SEASONS

Year Three 2024-25

- 50th Anniversary Year-Long Celebration
- Continue working with government on increased funding
- Continue focusing on reorganization plan
- Start on facility improvement plan and technology plan
- Implement cultural equity plan

Year Four 2025-26

- Continue working with government on increased funding
- Continue facility improvement plan, cultural equity plan, technology plan

Year Five 2026-27

- Continue working with government on increased funding
- Continue facility improvement plan, cultural equity plan, technology plan

ADDENDUM

History of Center

The Arts Center of Kershaw County was founded in 1974 by the Camden Art Association, the Camden Music Association, and the Camden Community Theater as a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing arts experience and exposure to all ages. The Arts Center also provides arts education for Kershaw County youth through its close partnership with the Kershaw County School District.

Originally founded to serve as the artistic hub of Kershaw County, this is the goal that the Arts Center continues to build upon. The Art Center's campus consists of three buildings in the heart of Camden that include two theatres, a gallery, classrooms, and studios. The Bassett Building houses the Wood Auditorium, Bassett Gallery, offices, and Performing Arts Wing, which includes the Black Box Theatre and Shull Pavilion. The Daniels Education Building houses space for arts education classes and studio space for music, dance, and visual arts instruction. The historic Douglas-Reed House is used for a variety of events.

ADDENDUM

Mission of Center

To create an environment that promotes artistic and cultural experiences and provides superior educational, instructional and entertainment opportunities that elevate and enrich the community for all residents of Kershaw County and beyond.

Strategic Plan Participants

Arts Center Board of Directors:

Missy Ferguson-Peebles - President
Regina McDonald - Vice President
Lynn Bennett - Secretary
AJ Bracey - Treasurer
Mary Ellen Green - Past President
Kathy Stitt - Member at Large
Bill Dewitt - Member at Large
Board Members-at-Large:
Boykin Beard
George Carruth
Claude Eichelberger
Charlotte Hodge
Dionne Hough
Lee Inabinet
Chris Matney
Angie Morgan
Amy Tinsley

Arts Center Staff:

Dolly Patton – Executive Director
Audrey Kimbrell – Marketing & Events Assistant
Richard Kiraly – Resident Technical Director
William Mitchell – Marketing Director
Jami Steele Sprankle – Theatre & Education Director
Charleston Thompson – Office Coordinator
Katie Willens – Box Office & Database Manager

ADDENDUM

Strategic Plan Participants

Strategic Plan Steering Committee Members:

Margaret Buckelew
Neal Clark
Claude Eichelberger
Missy Ferguson-Peebles
David Foster
Dionne Hough
Regina McDonald
Laurie Parks
Billy Shepherd
Amy Tinsley

One-on-one interviews:

Bryant Herring Barrett
Cheryl & Boyd Black
Amanda Britt
Karen & Ron Brown
Joseph Bruce
Nancy & Earl Bryant
Margaret Buckalew
Louise Burns
Walker Canada
Catherine Cantey
Kristin Cobb
Marty Daniels
Staige & Michael DeBenedeti
Alfred Mae Drakeford
Claude Eichelberger
Missy Ferguson-Peebles
Matia Goodwin
Jeffrey Graham
Mary Ellen Green
Debbie Gregory
Susan Harper
Jaston Hawes
Stephen Manion-Bredesen
Rengy Marshall
Chris Matney
Vicky Nooe
Becki O'Hara
Laurie Parks
Mollye Robinson
Melissa Colvin Saavedra
Amy Schofield
Tony Scully
John Shaylor
Amy Sheheen
Alex Singleton
Kathy Spadacenta