

# 2001 Future of the Arts Report



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO** | **Arts**

# **The Future of the Arts at the University of Chicago**

**August 2001**

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Role of the Arts</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>The Arts Curriculum</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Student Arts</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Professional Arts Organizations</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Arts in the City</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Organization and Process Recommendations</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Facilities Needs and Objectives</b>	<b>Page 17</b>
<b>Facilities Recommendations</b>	<b>Page 23</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Page 29</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>Page 30</b>

## Introduction

Experiencing the creative arts is a fundamental part of knowing ourselves as humans and of understanding those different from ourselves. Whether painting or poetry, film or theater, music or dance, artistic creation addresses the deepest questions of the human condition. A great research university should nurture the unique and powerful role of the arts in the education of the whole person. University President Ernest DeWitt Burton recognized this when he wrote in 1925: “We need to supplement science and the scientific study of all branches of knowledge with the finer arts of music and painting, of sculpture and architecture. We owe it to our students, to whom it is our ambition to give the best possible education. We owe it to our professors, that they not become dry-as-dust investigators and lecturers but symmetrically developed and cultivated personalities. We owe it to our community.”

Today, more students, faculty, staff, and general audiences engage with the arts on our campus than ever before. This increased participation has been paralleled by growth in the quality and diversity of our arts programs and activities. Academic programs in music, art history, visual arts, creative writing, cinema and media studies, and theater have expanded remarkably in recent years; the professional arts organizations, the Smart Museum, the Renaissance Society, the Oriental Institute Museum, Court Theatre, and the University of Chicago Presents, have flourished; and department-sponsored, co-curricular programs and student-organized arts groups in theater, instrumental and vocal music, dance, film, and the visual arts have created a vibrant arts community.

The growth in such activity, however, has posed major challenges. Despite many opportunities to develop joint programs and engage more faculty and students, the sheer number of programs and the local complexities of their organizational structures can impede our capacity to realize these new goals. Unprecedented levels of student interest in arts-related courses and co-curricular activities, as well as burgeoning attendance at our museums, theaters, and concert halls have created strong competition for resources. Currently, we cannot begin to accommodate the number of students who wish to take classes in creative writing, drama, and photography. The capacity and quality of many of our arts-related facilities for the arts are inadequate for our existing needs, let alone our future ones.

Our longstanding tradition of interdisciplinary study leaves the University of Chicago well prepared to bring the practice of art and the study of art together as an integral part of our mission. To do so, we should understand the practice of art not only as a recreational diversion from the rigors of academic life, but also as a central activity of the "life of the mind." The creative and performing arts should play an important role in the intellectual and cultural aspirations of our University.

To address these challenges and goals, Provost Geoffrey Stone convened a Study Group of faculty and administrators to consider how the University can best support the arts in the future. The Study Group sought to identify and prioritize competing program needs, assess constraints on space, define opportunities for campus planning, and

articulate appropriate recommendations. The Study Group regularly consulted an Arts Advisory Group consisting of faculty, students, administrators, and arts program directors. (The members of the Study Group and Arts Advisory Group are listed in Appendix 1.) The Study Group engaged an architect familiar with the campus, Robert Bruckner, to advise on facilities and campus planning issues.

The Study Group set six objectives for its work.

- Clearly articulate the role of the arts at a research university, and at the University of Chicago, in particular.
- Develop an informed understanding of the contributions, needs, and potential of each of the University's arts programs.
- Define new ways to enrich the University's arts programs.
- Identify and prioritize the short- and long-term programmatic and space needs of the arts programs.
- Initiate a comprehensive plan for meeting high-priority programmatic and space needs of the arts programs.
- Identify high-priority programmatic and space needs of the arts programs and recommend that the upcoming capital campaign address these needs.

The Study Group presents the following recommendations, which are elaborated in the body of the report.

## Study Recommendations

1. Strengthen the arts curriculum in response both to student interest and faculty initiative.
2. Respond creatively to the aspirations of our co-curricular arts programs by fostering student-faculty collaboration, increasing access to arts events and activities, and improving arts facilities.
3. Reaffirm and support the roles of the University's professional arts organizations as contributors to the University's academic mission and as vital components of local, national, and international arts communities.
4. Facilitate further collaboration among arts programs on campus and promote fuller interactions between the arts at the University and the arts in the city at large.
5. Appoint an Assistant Provost for the Arts and an Arts Planning Council to help foster collaborations and planning and inform implementation of these recommendations.
6. Address the facilities needs posed by the arts at the University. Specifically, we recommend that the University:
  - Deploy existing facilities more efficiently and more creatively.
  - Renovate Mandel Hall as a primary venue for performance of music, theater, and other arts-related activities. Enhance other specifically identified facilities to meet the needs for additional and improved space for student dance, film studies, and arts lectures, as well as for a medium-sized performance venue, and to reinforce the dispersed and interdisciplinary focus of the arts at the University.
  - Construct a new Center for Creative and Performing Arts at 60<sup>th</sup> Street and Drexel, combining the long-awaited renovation of Midway Studios with a new and larger complex of buildings to meet the immediate need for additional visual arts studios and classrooms, music practice rooms, and performance space for student theater, and to enable expansion over time to meet longer-term needs.
  - Reserve the site of the Young Building at 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Ellis for future development to enable the Smart Museum, the Renaissance Society, and the Court Theatre to collectively fulfill the Campus Master Plan vision of an Arts Quadrangle at this location.

## Role of the Arts

What is the role of the arts at a research university? In part, the answer is simple. The study of the arts, in such areas as art history, music, and literature, differs little from other research and teaching activities at the University. Here, the focus is on history, analysis, and theory. The University has always been committed to the historical and formal analysis of visual, musical, and literary texts. The question that requires deeper consideration is the role of the creative and performing arts.

This question arises because the University of Chicago's preeminent reputation in the study of the arts is not consistently mirrored in the practice of the arts. We cannot assume the relation of the exhibition or practice of art to the core of the University's mission. The University must make choices, and the determination to build faculty, archival, and curricular strength in the study of the arts does not necessarily imply the determination or the resources to cultivate the creative and performing arts. Is the English Department willing to hire a poet rather than a Renaissance scholar? Is the Humanities Division prepared to hire a sculptor in lieu of a classicist? Is the University willing to appoint a dance instructor rather than a chemist? Should the University of Chicago teach studio art and creative writing at the graduate level?

Historically, many members of the University community, however seriously they may value the arts in the abstract, have in effect answered these questions in the negative. Any effort to "advance the arts" at the University of Chicago thus requires the articulation of a clearer understanding of how the practice of art serves the University's goals.

There are at least two models for thinking about the arts. First, the practice of art—which here means the acts of drawing, of acting, of playing the violin, etc.—enables students to express themselves in ways that are irreducible to the five-page argument, the research paper, or the lab report. The arts have a long history, inside and outside the walls of the academy, of generating a sense of belonging and instilling a distinct way of learning. This model, however, risks imagining the practice of art as a mere supplement to the rigors of academic life.

Second, the practice of art can be understood as integral to the academic life and as essential to the kinds of intellects the University aims to cultivate. Learning figure drawing changes not just the way one sees, but what one sees. The act of translating (not transcribing) an object into a charcoal or photographic representation alters one's engagement with that object, as with the material world in general. Learning to act transforms how one performs in a variety of public spheres, and learning to write fiction provides a unique access to the complexities of narrative structure. Classes in the creative and performing arts offer an education of the senses. Taken seriously, acts of performance and composition require extensive research, analysis, reflection, and revision. These are all problem-solving tasks that can expand and refine a student's creativity far beyond the studio or stage. The point of the second model, then, is not that the practice of art provides relief from the analytical and experimental work we ask of our students within traditional disciplines of knowledge. The point is that the practice of

art enhances the creativity with which our students pursue all of their work.

Of course, the two models are not mutually exclusive. But the commonly held view that links the practice of art at the University of Chicago primarily with recreation has overshadowed the model that views the arts as integral to academic life. A result has been the peripheral status of the practice of art on our campus. Advancing the arts at the University will require overcoming what John Dewey described as “the odd notion that an artist does not think and [that] a scientific inquirer does nothing else.” Advancing the arts at the University of Chicago will require us to extend the agenda expressed by programs like the Committee on Visual Arts (COVA), which has always emphasized conceptual work in both its graduate and undergraduate programs. Its general education course in “Visual Language” specifies, in a typical example, how a set of studio problems works toward “analyz[ing] the components of color, the relationship between surface organization and spatial illusion, the communicative properties of objects and materials.” Programs such as COVA’s create an “intellectual adventure,” encouraging new analytical skills and new habits of mind.

Because of our long-standing tradition of interdisciplinarity, the University of Chicago is well poised to bring the practice of art and the study of art into productive proximity. Moreover, we have the opportunity to respond to emergent practices in the art world—the emphasis, even within traditional fields, on new media and mixed media—that could make Chicago an innovative leader among academic institutions.

## The Arts Curriculum

Although the role of the arts in the intellectual life of the University can be clearly articulated, it is less obvious what ought to be part of the curriculum. This problem is hardly unique to the arts. Participation in workshops and conferences forms an integral part of the training of many graduate students, but this happens primarily outside the formal curriculum. In legal education, work on a legal journal may be the focal point of the third year of law school, but it does not count for course credit.

These analogies may be useful in thinking about the arts in the larger context of acquiring an education. To be sure, the arts can serve a valuable recreational need. Practicing the violin may be important to the biochemist who needs a break from her studies, and a role in a play may be a welcome diversion for the economist. Beyond recreation, however, the arts are often an essential part of the intellectual life of our students, even when they are not a formal part of the curriculum. For an English concentrator, the experience of directing, acting, or producing *The Winter's Tale* may be more important in shaping his understanding of Shakespeare than a literature course.

Our undergraduates are eager to pursue the practice of art within their general education, concentration, and elective course of study. But we do not now offer sufficient opportunities for our students to enhance their academic experience and fill out their liberal education with these pursuits. Many students are turned away from the Visual Language courses in the Common Core, and non-arts majors have few or no opportunities to take courses in poetry-writing or photography. There are often three times as many applicants for our beginning photography and core drama courses as there are “seats.” Given the role that the practice of art can play within an undergraduate’s intellectual life, and the desire of our students to pursue these opportunities, we should energetically expand our curricular offerings in the arts.

In the graduate programs in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, the rationale for enhancing the production, exhibition, and performance of art is easier to specify. There are well-established precedents. In addition to the Music Department's leading graduate program in composition, the department's extensive co-curricular performance program has a long history of collaboration with the graduate programs in composition, ethnomusicology, and historical musicology. In recent years, the Smart Museum and the Art History Department have built a productive relationship in which faculty and graduate students have curated shows, compiled catalogs, and organized symposia. COVA's MFA program has established its own niche: its interdisciplinary and multi-media emphases distinguish it as the most conceptually ambitious program in the Chicago area. The newly formed faculty Committee on Theater and Performance is committed to the study of performance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Our internationally prominent Committee on Cinema and Media Studies has not offered work in film or video production, but such work is an imminent prospect in conjunction with COVA. Faculty in Art History and COVA have expressed interest in developing a program in which prominent artists receive visiting appointments at Midway Studios to teach in studio workshops and conduct seminars on contemporary art.



The resources of the University must be used to create the best education possible, recognizing that not all education is formally part of the curriculum. A commitment to the arts quite independent of course credit can be vital in developing the life of the mind. Whether specific courses in dance or creative writing or theater should be a formal part of the curriculum requires a judgment by the faculty in the relevant disciplines. Meaningful faculty attention and involvement are essential. These decisions should not be made by administrators or part-time members of the teaching staff. The responsibility to appoint high-quality instructors and assess their performance properly resides with the faculty. In these respects, the arts do not differ from other subjects of instruction.

## Student Arts

The student arts at the University of Chicago are thriving. Over 75 student groups and ensembles currently engage more than 2,000 students in the arts. (See Appendix 2 for a list of current student arts organizations.) From a wide variety of fields, students come together to participate in the creative and performing arts. Student arts organizations range from the oldest continuous film society in America, to swing dance classes that draw over 250 students each week, to the numerous productions of University Theater. The catalog of student-led arts activities is ever growing. This past spring, for example, students re-established the Festival of the Arts (dormant since the seventies), a five-day, campus-wide event featuring art installations, film and theater presentations, and dance and music performances. Student engagement with the arts also includes their role as audience members at performances and exhibitions both on and off campus. Strong outreach programs sponsored by the professional arts organizations have been complemented by a growing number of student-led community service efforts in music, theater, dance, and the visual arts. Arts partnerships with the Chicago Public Schools and various community agencies have become an integral part of many students' experiences on campus.

Earlier in this document, we defined the important role of the arts in the intellectual development of our students. Student arts activities benefit the University in additional ways. A robust arts program is critical to our success in recruiting and retaining high-quality students. The highest achieving applicants to the College and to our graduate and professional programs have often had extensive prior involvement with the arts. Those students consider the quality of arts programs, facilities, and resources when they select an educational institution. Even though prospective students may follow a course of study outside the arts, they often ask about the availability of arts courses and activities.

The arts also play an important role in retaining enrolled students. Studies show that students—especially College students—are more likely to remain at the University if they develop a relationship with an affinity group. For many students, participating in the arts creates a strong sense of community, whether they come together to make a film, install an exhibit, sing as an *a cappella* group, or present a play. The activity provides opportunities for students to develop as individuals while learning to work together and to apply in practical settings the analytical and critical thinking skills taught in the curriculum. While the curriculum is important in this development, students derive great benefit from their proprietary attachment to these co-curricular programs. All told, participation in the arts enhances students' satisfaction with their experience at the University.

In recent years, local professionals have been engaged to offer courses, workshops, and master classes in the arts, significantly raising the level of student engagement and presentation. Because the University does not have a significant number of departments, faculty, or degree programs devoted to training in performance and the creation of art, student involvement does not regularly come within the purview of the

faculty as a whole. But, given the personal interest that many faculty have in the arts, there should be additional opportunities for faculty and students to interact outside the classroom as they participate in the arts. This has been accomplished by some of the performance groups sponsored by the Music Department (most notably the Chorus and Symphony Orchestra) and should be expanded. Moreover, while activity levels are high, the current lack of facilities for the creative and performing arts severely limits the University's accommodation of student arts needs. Ambitious students presenting their work have been faced with facilities inferior to the ones they used in the high school or the college they attended. With enhanced collaboration, better facilities, and expanded access to arts events, student arts can be made more central to a liberal arts education at the University of Chicago.

## **Professional Arts Organizations**

The University's professional arts institutions aim to support the University's research and teaching missions by developing and presenting high-quality professional programs and by serving as a "public gateway" to its scholarly community. Court Theatre now aspires to create a National Center for Classic Theatre. The visual arts may be studied in the Oriental Institute, which houses one of the world's finest collections of objects and artifacts from ancient Near Eastern civilizations; in the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, known for its distinctive collections and the intellectual quality of its exhibitions and publications; and in the Renaissance Society, established in 1915, which is internationally recognized as a non-collecting center for the exhibition and study of contemporary art. The University of Chicago Presents sponsors early music and chamber music concerts of national and international renown. The Music Department's performance program encompasses professional artists-in-residence and the acclaimed Contemporary Chamber Players.

Each of these institutions has a distinct mission, but all share a devotion to the creation and dissemination of knowledge through exhibitions and performances of the highest quality. A critical part of their responsibility to the University is to engage with faculty and students. A faculty member may serve as curator of an exhibition, commentator on a dramatic text, researcher in a collection, or collaborator with a visiting artist. Students may serve as interns, study a collection or a performance, or participate in a seminar organized around an exhibit, play, or concert. Each of these institutions is expected to collaborate with faculty, students, and academic programs, thus enriching the academic life of the University.

To define the role of the professional arts organizations solely in these terms, however, understates their value to the University. They significantly enhance our campus life. Staff, students, and faculty have easy access to high-quality artistic productions and are regularly challenged by exhibits and performances that question received ideas about texts, images, and musical scores. Additionally, the collecting and presenting activities of these institutions—their exhibitions, plays, and concerts—establish the University's presence in regional, national, and international arts communities. Exhibits and catalogues, touring productions and artists' premieres, and lectures and screenings create an awareness of the University among scholars, alumni, and the wider public.

The University's professional arts institutions draw people to our campus. Many supporters and friends of the University make their first contact with the University through the arts. The Hyde Park-Kenwood community derives special benefits from such artistic attractions. Family-directed programs such as matinees and youth-focused weekend events enhance neighborhood life. Programming partnerships with other cultural institutions—including the Museum of Science and Industry, the Hyde Park Art Center, Robie House, and the DuSable Museum of African-American History--deepen and enrich the neighborhood's culture. Our professional arts institutions have participated with other organizations beyond the neighborhood—for instance, the Smart

Museum with the Art Institute and the Museum of Contemporary Art—to create larger cultural networks.

Despite all that these institutions now contribute, much more can be accomplished. They can involve larger audiences and engage with other arts organizations. They can be more active in the University's cross-disciplinary collaborations in research and teaching. Ideally, students and faculty would be “regulars” at concerts, exhibits, and plays. Given the quality of their collections and programs, these institutions can contribute even more to the reputation of the University of Chicago as a center for the study and practice of the arts.

## Arts in the City

In recent years, the University has recognized the importance of affording our students greater opportunities to experience the arts in the city of Chicago, which is one of the most vibrant and dynamic arts scenes in the nation. Broadening the University's connections to the arts will benefit both the individual members of our community and the University itself. The arts organizations of the city offer "laboratories" where our students can apply what they have learned, and our faculty can further engage what they research and teach. They also represent an important opportunity for the University to deepen its relationship with the city.

Peer institutions have undertaken novel initiatives to connect their students and faculty with a surrounding arts community and to promote the institution's standing in the community. For example, in the fall of 1997, Columbia University announced a new "Passport to New York" program, featuring agreements that give students free entrance to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, establish internship and work-study opportunities with the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and facilitate faculty research at the libraries of other institutions. Because New York's cultural institutions have traditionally been less inviting than those in Chicago, our students arguably have less need for a formal "Passport" program that "breaks through" barriers. These passageways are already open. But there is room for improvement, for there is little formal support for substantive intellectual and co-curricular exchange between our students and the city's arts institutions.

This lack of structure is all the more noteworthy, given the recently increased interest in the arts on campus. The Cultural Policy Program and the Committee on Theater and Performance exemplify this interest. The Committee's faculty have begun to explore the intersection of interdisciplinary research in performance studies with the practice of performance on campus. The Committee plans to build on the success of its recent symposium, held in conjunction with Court Theatre's production of "In the Penal Colony," by developing symposia in cooperation with other arts organizations in the city such as Steppenwolf Theatre and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Additionally, our students continue to seek real-world engagements for their academic interests. A growing number of BA projects have exploited the resources of the city for independent, original research.

One of our greatest assets in the recruitment of students, staff, and faculty is the city of Chicago. With the recent addition of the downtown bus service and the creation of a variety of internship programs, increasing numbers of students are exploring the city's arts offerings. Each year, College students participate in artistic and administrative internships at institutions from the Joffrey Ballet to the Art Institute. Beyond their creative contributions, our students benefit from attending performances and exhibits. Despite these successes, students say that they would take greater advantage of these opportunities if they had more information and better access, including reduced ticket prices. In recent years, students have formed an organization, Carbon Copy, to promote student access to the city and its arts organizations. Along similar lines, the Office of the

Reynolds Club and Student Activities has begun a program that promotes events and offers discounted tickets. Ensuring that these opportunities are well publicized will increase students' participation in what we already have to offer. Additional opportunities can be developed by building on our relationships with Visiting Committee members and Trustees involved in the arts, as well as with the arts colleagues of our professional arts organizations and faculty.

Finally, by strengthening our partnerships with the city's cultural institutions, we can enhance the University's visibility. For many years, some believed the University had little interest in the world outside our campus borders; a misperception that may still persist in some quarters. Much has been done in the last several years to alter this reputation, such as the joint planning with the Chicago Park District for the Midway and the recent University of Chicago evening at the MCA. By collaborating with other cultural institutions, we can better position the University as a partner in the life of the city.

## **Organization and Process Recommendations**

The following recommendations address operating and organizational issues that span unit and constituent boundaries. These can be addressed in the near term, usually with modest space and budget investments. Our organization and process recommendations fall into two categories: enhancing collaboration across the arts, and publicizing and promoting the University's arts resources.

### **Enhancing collaboration**

The desire to improve communication, planning, and collaboration among the individual arts programs is widely shared. There are many opportunities to create or strengthen connections among academic and co-curricular programs; among student, staff, and faculty participants; and among the University's professional arts organizations and their city counterparts. Steps for promoting these collaborations are outlined below:

1. Appoint an Assistant Provost for the Arts. This individual will report to the Provost, as an expression of the importance the University ascribes to the creative arts; of the centrality of the arts in our academic mission; and of the Assistant Provost's responsibility to foster collaboration among the University's academic, extra-curricular, and professional constituencies. Needless to say, the independence and integrity of the many arts programs and organizations on campus must be respected. The Assistant Provost should serve as a facilitator and coordinator, as a centralized resource for information on what is happening in the arts on campus, and as an advocate for the arts to both local and city-wide communities. The Assistant Provost should lead the effort in developing stronger relationships with arts organizations in the city and in making the University's cultural resources known to broader audiences. The Assistant Provost should help guide resource allocations in the arts and help acquaint outside donors with the opportunities to support the arts at the University.
2. Establish an Arts Planning Council to Advance the Arts. We recommend that the Provost appoint an Arts Planning Council with representatives from academic, professional, and student arts organizations. The Assistant Provost for the Arts will be an *ex officio* member of the Council, and the Council will help the Assistant Provost establish the agenda for advancing the arts at the University.
3. Engage Trustees, Visiting Committees, and Boards. The University and its arts programs and institutions have no better friends than our Trustees, Visiting Committee members, and the board members of our various professional arts institutions. The University should work with these friends to foster joint programs with arts organizations in the city and to seek funding for the arts on campus.
4. Develop more robust partnerships with cultural and community organizations. The University, through its professional institutions and its academic programs, has



established significant partnerships with such organizations as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the DuSable Museum, and the Hyde Park Arts Center. Such partnerships are important to the University and should be actively encouraged.

5. Coordinate arts outreach activities among the University's arts organizations. The University's high degree of commitment to arts educational programs in the community significantly enhances our students' experience and that of thousands of schoolchildren each year. Many of the on-campus programs sponsored by our professional arts organizations serve schoolchildren and families, who view exhibits and attend theater productions. A number of programs sponsored by the Music Department and student arts organizations encourage our students to partner with area public schools by leading drama programs, enhancing music education, and engaging in a variety of visual arts programs. As in other areas of the arts, increased collaboration could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these programs. Opportunities exist to coordinate "volunteer training" programs and strategic relationships with the Chicago Public Schools. Other community partnerships can be strengthened through coordinated communication and planning.
6. Expand internship and work-study opportunities for students. Our students are hungry for experience in the real world of artistic creation and presentation, be it backstage or onstage at Steppenwolf Theatre or in the galleries at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The University should expand internship and work-study opportunities for our students with cultural organizations in the city, and our own professional arts organizations should actively promote such opportunities for direct student involvement.

### **Publicize and promote the arts resources of the University and the city**

We have some way to go in our efforts to provide information about arts opportunities to campus constituencies and to promote our cultural resources in the city. A system should be put in place for regular exchange of information on arts activities and connection to the College Programming Office and Orientation, the Student Housing Office, Recognized Student Organizations, and the Office of the Reynolds Club and Student Activities. The campus following of the professional arts institutions could be expanded through receptions for new faculty and staff, special student-directed programs, and the like. Though the professional organizations have built solid individual reputations, the collective artistic riches of the university are not as well known or widely explored as they might be. As described above, we expect the Assistant Provost for the Arts to play a key role in heightening awareness of the university as an arts provider to the city. Such promotional efforts would be assisted by more cooperation among our professional arts organizations and the News Office, Community Affairs, and Development and Alumni Relations.

## **Facilities Needs and Objectives**

Despite the importance of operating and organizational issues in advancing the arts, facilities issues are at least as great a concern to the University's arts organizations. Figure 1 shows the distribution of arts facilities and programs throughout the campus. As a first step in assessing current facilities and identifying future program requirements, the Study Group interviewed department and committee chairs, other faculty, administrators, directors of the professional arts organizations, and student groups. These interviews, together with previously commissioned facilities program studies, provide the background for this analysis and the recommendations that follow.

### **Midway Studios**

The Committee on Visual Arts is located at Midway Studios at 60th and Drexel. Midway Studios houses classrooms for instruction in painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, and other media; darkrooms, workshops, and studios; and a gallery space for displaying student work. Midway Studios is a complex of several buildings, originally assembled by the renowned American sculptor, Lorado Taft, who was inspired by the Renaissance model of apprentice artists living and working together with master artists as a community. The complex is one of three surviving studios of great American sculptors, and it is the only such studio in continuous use since its founding. Midway Studios has been designated a landmark by the National Register of Historic Places and by the Commission of Chicago Landmarks.

The historic part of the facility, Taft's original buildings and home, is in a serious state of decline. Walls, floors, ceilings, and doors are cracked, peeling, and/or non-functional. The exteriors of these structures—masonry walls, windows, and roofs—have been inadequately maintained since a renovation in 1962. Temperature control, air circulation, and lighting are insufficient. A comprehensive renovation is necessary to preserve this historic facility. However, such a renovation will not in itself meet the University's needs for classroom, exhibit, and studio space for the visual arts.

### **Objectives**

- Renovate Midway Studios, ensuring a balance between required renovation and the efficiency of new facilities construction.
- Provide additional arts classroom, workshop, studio, exhibition, storage, and office space to support course offerings in the arts and co-curricular student activities.

### **The Reynolds Club**

The Reynolds Club currently houses the University's two student theaters, including a 130-seat, black box theater on the first level, adjacent to Mandel Hall, and a 140-seat theater on the third level. The offices and shop for University Theater are located next to the 140-seat theater. Storage space for properties and costumes is located in the basement of the Reynolds Club, requiring materials and sets to be moved through the public spaces.

The current space configuration has seriously limited the potential of University Theater and compromised the growth of course instruction in theater and performance. Although a comprehensive renovation could address technical deficiencies, the need for additional space cannot be met in the Reynolds Club. Moreover, a comprehensive renovation of the theaters, shops, and storage spaces would probably trigger an expensive set of building repairs.

#### **Objective**

- Provide adequate performance, rehearsal, office, shop, and storage space for course offerings in theater and performance and co-curricular student theater and performance activities.

### **Goodspeed Hall and Music Practice Facilities**

Goodspeed Hall currently houses space for music practice. The dedicated music practice rooms are too few; they are unable to accommodate the size and range of practice groups; and their HVAC systems are inadequate to maintain the temperature and humidity control essential for the preservation of musical instruments. Besides individual practice rooms, large rehearsal and ensemble rooms are needed for the sectional rehearsals of a variety of orchestras, chamber groups, and choruses. The current facilities do not adequately serve the needs of undergraduate concentrators and graduate students. They are often unavailable for the general use of performance groups sponsored by the Music Department, for recognized student activities, and for individual musicians and performers.

#### **Objective**

- Provide adequate music practice facilities for students, faculty, and staff.

### **Mandel Hall**

Mandel Hall, constructed in 1903, has served as the University's primary large (985-seat) performance hall for music, dance, and theater. Mandel Hall is a superb acoustical setting for musical performance, with the largest stage on campus. In addition to its use as a music practice and performance hall, notably as the primary venue for University of Chicago Presents, it is frequently scheduled for student assemblies, lectures, and theatrical performances. To optimize its use, a number of technical and functional improvements are required: installing an HVAC system for patron comfort and the preservation of musical instruments, updating the lighting and acoustical control systems, and renovating the dressing rooms and green room.

#### **Objective**

- Make much-needed functional, technical, and aesthetic improvements to this acoustically exceptional performance hall.

### **500-seat, multi-purpose performance hall**

The campus currently has an exceptional small music performance space in Fulton Recital Hall in Classics (150-seat) and a potentially superb large performance space in Mandel Hall (985-seat), but the campus lacks an intermediate-sized performance space to seat approximately 500. Such a space could provide a more intimate atmosphere with acoustics appropriate for the presentation of chamber music, early music, and contemporary music. Beyond being a venue for musical performances, including opera and musical theater, this space could serve the broader needs of the arts, including the presentation of theater, film, dance, and other multi-media events. Such a facility would require a flexible stage and pit configuration, backstage and technical support spaces, dressing rooms, green room, and front-of-the-house facilities including a lobby, rest rooms, and reception space. This facility would relieve scheduling pressure on Mandel Hall and Fulton Recital Hall.

#### **Objective**

- Provide a viable multi-purpose facility for performances in music, theater, dance, film screening, large lectures, and University special events with anticipated audiences of 500.

### **Film and video**

Increased interest in film and video courses offered by Cinema and Media Studies and Visual Arts in Cobb Hall has placed considerable stress on the auditorium and the video- and film-editing functions of the Film Studies Center. Additional facilities are

required to meet the expanded teaching needs of film and video studies and to offer another venue for the screening of films, supplementing the Max Palevsky Cinema in Ida Noyes Hall. More space for film editing and a film sound studio is also needed to accommodate the growing interest in Fire Escape Productions and other film-related student organizations, which currently share a room in the basement of Ida Noyes Hall, below the Max Palevsky Cinema.

### **Objectives**

- Provide 35-mm screen capability to support the curriculum of Cinema and Media Studies and Visual Arts as well as student-sponsored film studies.
- Accommodate the increased demand for video/film editing and film sound studios.

### **Student dance**

The current dance rooms in Ida Noyes Hall and Woodward Court do not meet the needs of dance-related student organizations. Additional space is required. Any future rehearsal space should be suitable for dance performance as well, because many of the current performance venues on campus are too large for audiences that patronize dance.

### **Objective**

- Provide appropriate student dance rehearsal and performance space.

### **The Smart Museum**

The Smart Museum, located at 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Greenwood Avenue, was renovated in the spring of 1999, improving the gallery spaces, updating the mechanical systems, and adding much needed study, classroom, preparation, and storage areas. To improve and enlarge its activities, the Smart Museum envisions a further expansion of exhibition, program, office, and storage space. The museum also desires convenient access to a lecture hall with 200-250 seats. Such a facility would also provide teaching space for the Department of Art History, which is located adjacent to the Smart Museum in the Cochrane-Woods Art Center.

### **Objective**

- Ensure the feasibility of longer-term growth at 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Ellis Avenue.

### **The Renaissance Society**

The Renaissance Society is housed on the fourth floor of Cobb Hall. To overcome existing functional constraints, improve visibility, and enhance access, the Renaissance Society envisions the long-term expansion of exhibition, office, support, and storage space; the addition of a video viewing room; and convenient access to a 250-seat lecture hall.

#### **Objective**

- Ensure the possibility of long-term growth and enhanced function and visibility.

### **The Oriental Institute Museum**

The Oriental Institute is at the intersection of 58<sup>th</sup> and University. Constructed in 1931, the Oriental Museum forms a portion of what was originally conceived as the chapel block. Like Rockefeller Chapel, the building, designed by the same architect, Bertram Goodhue, represents one of the finest adaptations of the campus's gothic architecture to more recent stylistic influences—in this case, Art Deco and Art Moderne. In an effort to preserve the Oriental Institute's building and collection, the University recently completed a comprehensive renovation and addition to the museum. This renovation improved the galleries while adding significant archival, preparation, and storage areas. The renovation also updated the climate control system to ensure the preservation of the vast collection of antiquities housed at the museum. This renovation addressed the current and the longer-term facilities needs of the Oriental Institute.

#### **Objective**

- Appropriately maintain this splendid facility to ensure its continuing service to the University and the larger community.

### **Court Theatre**

Although the Court's present home, Abelson Auditorium (251 seats), is widely admired for its intimacy, the stage, wings, backstage shops for set and costume construction, dressing rooms, and green rooms are undersized for Court's production requirements. Moreover, the lobby, box office, restrooms, and concession areas are inadequate for patron comfort. Court currently uses space elsewhere on campus and in the neighborhood for its administrative offices and for rehearsal and costume and property storage, resulting in significant inefficiencies. Court envisions a significant expansion, housing all performance, production support, and administrative functions in one complex. This expansion might include a new 400- to 500-seat theater with shops

and storage for scenery, property, and costume construction; a more spacious lobby and reception area; rehearsal space; and administrative offices.

**Objective**

- Provide improved functioning for the short term and ensure the possibility of longer-term growth.

## Facilities Recommendations

The following facilities recommendations, which build upon the principles set forth in the University's Campus Master Plan and its South of the Midway Study, outline general concepts to meet near-term and long-term needs. The Study Group considers these recommendations as the foundation on which the arts at Chicago can thrive and evolve, at both curricular and co-curricular levels, and with respect to both the University audience and the wider Hyde Park and Chicago communities. Indeed, without these renovations and new facilities, the arts at the University will be seriously, if not irreparably, constrained.

We present our recommendations under four broad categories: (1) enhancing use of existing facilities; (2) improving Mandel Hall; (3) creating a new center for the arts at 60<sup>th</sup> and Drexel, next to Midway Studios; (4) reserving the site of the Young building at 56<sup>th</sup> and Ellis for the future development of the Court Theatre, the Renaissance Society, and the Smart Museum.

### 1. Enhancing Use of Existing Facilities

The University should make a set of specific investments to enhance its use of existing facilities, addressing both near-term and long-term needs. Figure 2 identifies the facilities we propose to enhance. By focusing first on existing facilities, the need for more expensive new building can be reduced, though not eliminated. It is essential that we use existing facilities more creatively, cooperatively, and efficiently. The habit of claiming “ownership” of space by specific departments or organizations often prevents the broadest group of arts participants from gaining access to the most appropriate facilities. Opportunities exist to improve the allocation of our resources across organizational boundaries to support a broader array of arts organizations more effectively. One step toward the enhanced utilization of space is to better inform prospective users about what is available. Too often, prospective arts users are not even aware of the facilities that already exist on campus, and too often, even when they are aware of their existence, they are denied access. Where issues of rental income or financial support for operating expenses preclude full utilization of our arts facilities, these constraints should be reviewed through the University's budget process to ensure that our facilities are being used well. The enhanced use of existing facilities will not only address many unmet needs, but it will also help to disperse arts activities across the campus, reaffirming the interdisciplinary character of the arts at the University.

The need for additional student dance rooms should be met by the rehearsal and performance space now being developed in the newly renovated Bartlett Hall and by the multi-purpose performance space that will be available in the new Ratner Center. With the existing dance room in Ida Noyes, three venues will be available in the near term for dance rehearsal and performance, each with appropriate floor surfaces and adequate



mechanical systems. In the longer term, the area now occupied by the swimming pool at Ida Noyes Hall may be made available as another potential space for dance.

Three existing venues can be made available for 35mm film screening. (1) The Max Palevsky Cinema already has capability for 35mm projection. Improved sharing and scheduling of this facility, particularly during the day when conflicts with Doc Films screenings are at a minimum, will support the teaching functions and other projection needs in Film Studies. (2) The Law School Auditorium—once the home of Law School Films—should again be used for 35mm screening. This should be possible with a minimal investment in new projection equipment and with improved processes for sharing and scheduling. (3) When, as recommended below, the 140-seat theater in the Reynolds Club becomes available for other uses in the future, it can be adapted for film screening, offering a more intimate setting for the teaching of film studies and other performance-related teaching.

Two longer-term options are available to meet the needs of student film activities. In Ida Noyes, the student film studio group space could be expanded into the adjacent room currently used by dance activities. Dance office space might be relocated to Reynolds Club space vacated by theater activities, as described below. This option is especially attractive if the increased need for 35mm film screening is met by the Max Palevsky Cinema immediately upstairs and/or by the Law School Auditorium, directly across the Midway from Ida Noyes. Alternatively, the third-floor offices and shop space of University Theater in Reynolds Club may become available in the future for student film activities. This space is adjacent to the 140-seat theater, which might be adapted for 35mm screening.

The need for a 250-seat teaching auditorium for lectures and teaching can be met by using existing spaces better. (1) Breasted Hall Auditorium, used primarily by the Oriental Institute, is well equipped for audio/visual presentations and could be more widely and efficiently used without appreciable capital investment. (2) With moderate investment to improve its audio/visual capability, Kent 107, in the central campus, may become a suitable location for arts lectures. (3) The Law School Auditorium, which has a projection booth, screen, and amplification equipment, is available for arts lectures, both in the evening and during the day.

The lobbies at the Law School and the School of Social Service Administration, designed by Eero Saarinen and Mies van der Rohe respectively, provide striking, desirable settings for art exhibition and for performance. Additionally, classrooms at both facilities are well equipped for lectures in the visual arts. In the future, the display, discussion, teaching, and debate of art can be appropriately associated with the two most successful examples of modern architecture on the campus. The presence of the arts at these locations will build upon the diversity of the South of the Midway Campus and extend the tradition of the arts long associated with Midway Studios.

Many of the needs for a medium-sized performance hall can be met by the 450-seat Assembly Hall at International House. The floor is open to a variety of seating configurations, including risers, if desired. The stage in its current configuration is large

enough to accommodate performances of the Chamber Orchestra, Jazz X-tet, and other chamber ensembles, including some performances of the Contemporary Chamber Players. In addition to these music groups, the Assembly Hall may also meet the needs of theatrical performances. The Hall has a technical booth, storage rooms, dressing rooms, and restrooms for patrons. The Midway provides abundant street parking in the evenings.

Further study of the International House Assembly Hall could identify specific investments to improve acoustical, lighting, and storage capabilities as well as strategies for enlarging the stage. These technical improvements, together with minor functional and aesthetic improvements, may ensure that the International House Assembly Hall meets near-term needs for a medium-sized performance hall.

## 2. Improving Mandel Hall

Mandel Hall needs comprehensive renovation to improve it as a performance venue for music, theater, dance, and student assembly. In addition to the many functional and technical improvements required, renovating the 130-seat theater on the first floor of the Reynolds Club as a reception space would significantly enhance the use of Mandel Hall.

## Recommendations for New Facilities

Even the most efficient use of existing facilities will not meet the current and future needs of the arts at the University. We therefore recommend the development of two sites for new arts facilities. In the near term we propose developing the site at 60<sup>th</sup> and Drexel, next to Midway Studios. For the longer term we propose developing the site at 56<sup>th</sup> and Ellis, the location of the Young Building, for the professional arts organizations. Figure 3 identifies these sites.

### 3. Creating a Center for Creative and Performing Arts at 60<sup>th</sup> & Drexel

To advance teaching, research, and co-curricular activities, we propose the siting of a new arts center, including visual arts, music practice and rehearsal, and theater and performance, in a complex adjacent to Midway Studios at 60<sup>th</sup> Street and Drexel Avenue. Broadly defined, the focus of this new center will be the practice of arts. An obvious benefit of this concept is the cross-fertilization of ideas and debate that will be promoted by the common location of these activities. We envision the creation of a home for "inter-media exchange" that reflects Chicago's distinctive interdisciplinary culture. Building on the long tradition of Midway Studios as a historic site for the visual arts on campus, the new center for the arts will both benefit from and stimulate the continued development of the South Campus and the ongoing improvements of the Midway Plaisance, including the new Children's Garden directly across 60<sup>th</sup> Street. The increase in activity will have a positive impact as the new center for the arts becomes a magnet for students, faculty, and the wider community. Importantly, this location offers a large site for new construction that will allow the University to implement an ambitious concept with few site constraints.

We recommend developing this site in two phases, reflecting the priorities of needed facilities for the arts. (Figure 4 illustrates the programs included at the end of both phases of development.) The University should undertake a formal space programming study to outline the size, number, and adjacencies of space for each activity and to provide a detailed and accurate description of the components of the complex. However, our preliminary assessment of needs suggests that the new Arts Center should incorporate the following, broad program elements.

The first component of this proposal is the renovation of Midway Studios. One possibility would be to renovate the entire facility, including the additions of 1977 and 1991. Another possibility would be to renovate only the historic components of the facility, replacing the more recent additions, which are not historically significant, with new, more serviceable construction.

A comprehensive renovation of Midway Studios will markedly improve the capacity of the current facility to meet the need for individual studios and shared studio and classroom spaces. Beyond the renovation, the needs in the visual arts call for constructing additional painting, sculpture, film, and other visual arts studios, darkrooms, technical shops, offices, and storage areas. These new spaces will enhance the programs

of COVA and provide much needed studio and technical facilities for student organizations that currently do not have access to the facilities at Midway Studios. The new visual arts space should be adjacent to the renovated Midway Studios, achieving efficiency in the teaching, research, and investigation of the visual arts. Significantly, the placement of these new facilities could complete Lorado Taft's historic sculpture courtyard. The choice of a design for this component of the project should be governed by a careful balance between renovation and the efficiencies of new construction.

The new Center for Creative and Performing Arts should also include new theater facilities adjacent to the new visual arts studios, providing space for performance-related teaching, University Theater, and other student organizations associated with theater. This location will enable services such as restrooms, mechanical rooms, and storage areas to be shared. These new facilities would replace the existing facilities in the Reynolds Club. Although a comprehensive program study is yet to be undertaken, the theater and performance facilities are likely to include two new theaters, of differing configuration, each seating 150, with adjacent rehearsal space, scenery and costume shops, dressing rooms, green room, and offices for student theater groups. The space is also likely to include a common lobby that can accommodate simultaneous performances. The theaters can be served by ample parking on the Midway Plaisance and by the future parking envisioned in the South of the Midway Study.

To complete the early-initiative version of the new Arts Center, we recommend that the University locate new music practice rooms and ancillary facilities next to the new theaters and the visual arts studios. As much as a threefold increase in the number of individual music practice rooms currently available on campus may be needed. In addition to individual practice rooms, larger rehearsal and ensemble rooms are envisioned for string quartets, percussion, and the Javanese Gamelan. The common location of these programs will enable services and storage areas to be shared.

The size and flexibility of the Arts Center will make it possible to add programs in the future. For example, although the Center in the near term should encourage informal exhibition of student work in the lobbies, reception areas, and lounges, in the long term it should be possible to add a dedicated space for student exhibitions. In the long term, moreover, the University will be able to add a new, 500-seat, multi-purpose performance hall at the new Arts Center. Such a facility should be sufficient to accommodate musical, theatrical, and film presentations.

#### 4. Reserving the 56<sup>th</sup> & Ellis Site for Professional Arts Programs

The site at 56<sup>th</sup> and Ellis was identified in the Campus Master Plan as a location for the arts. Given its more limited size, its contiguity to the Smart Museum, Cochrane-Woods Art Center, and Court Theatre, and its proximity to the new parking structure, we recommend that the University reserve this site for the long-term growth of professional arts organizations: Court Theatre, the Smart Museum, and the Renaissance Society. It is critical that these organizations work together to assure that the long-term needs of each

are met to the greatest extent possible and in a coherent plan. (See Figure 5.) Above all, the development of this location should maximize the ability of these professional arts organizations to collaborate with one another and with curricular and co-curricular programs.

Development at this site is not likely to occur in the near term, since it depends on relocating University services currently housed in the Young Building. Although the University has no immediate plans to replace that building, a planning and feasibility study for the new arts facilities on this site should begin soon. The diverse needs for performance and exhibition at this site pose a considerable design challenge, and the scale of this new facility must be integrated with that of the new Ratner Athletics Center and the Max Palevsky Residential Commons, completing the Campus Master Plan's vision for a dynamic entryway to the campus at 55th and Ellis.

## Conclusion

Although many of the arts organizations and programs on campus were previously familiar to members of the Study Group, we all were surprised by the sheer number of student arts groups, the intensity of the work taking place within our professional arts organizations, and the excellence of the limited arts curriculum we currently offer. There is no doubt that the arts serve a critical function at the University of Chicago—they vitalize the life of the campus, and beyond.

There is also no doubt, however, that the arts at the University of Chicago confront a pivotal moment. Faculty and students bring forward exciting ideas for new projects and programs while contriving to function in facilities that inadequately serve their existing programs. If the arts are to attain and confirm the innovation and effectiveness that we associate with work done at this University, then the University will need to devote new resources to these initiatives. Recognizing the challenges the University faces in securing additional resources to make these investments, we have worked hard to set priorities and to make difficult choices. We believe the recommendations of this report are the right steps to insuring the advancement of the arts at the University.

Appointing an Assistant Provost for the Arts and an Arts Planning Council are important first steps in supporting the arts at Chicago. With their direction and guidance, it will be possible to foster greater cooperation among our many arts constituents, make more efficient use of our existing resources, and initiate the process of renovating our existing facilities in an orderly manner.

Finally, with the construction of a Center for Creative and Performing Arts, the University will inaugurate a new era for the arts on this campus, responding not just to our programmatic and co-curricular needs, but also to the creative combinings of media that typify the art world today. This Center will help to broaden and intensify the flow of intellectual energy and ideas across our campus. Above all, it will enable our students and faculty to realize their creative aspirations by establishing the University of Chicago as an institution that is committed to nurturing and supporting the arts of the future.

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## Students Co-Curricular Participation

CREATIVE WRITING: Student creative writing has found an increasing number of outlets in student-edited publications, from Euphony, a new literary journal, to the Chicago Literary Review. Publications include:

Aubade Literary Magazine  
Chicago Literary Review  
Euphony  
Kilmok  
Moim

DANCE: The number of dance organizations on campus has significantly expanded in the past three years, bringing a new variety of styles and genres to campus. Groups include:

Ballroom Dancing	Swing Dance Society
Experimental Movement	UC Dancers
Fusion Performance Group	Underground Tap Movement
Jazz Alive!	UT Dance Studio
Middle Eastern Dance Workshop	Workshops in Dance
Modern Ballet Workshop	

FILM: Students have come together to form a vibrant filmmaking community that features student film festivals and the oldest continuous film society in the country. Groups include:

Documentary Film Group (DOC)  
Experimental Film  
Fire Escape Productions  
Hey Guys, Lets Make a TV Show!  
Hindi Film Society  
Icarus Productions  
Japanese Animation Society



**MUSIC:** The Department of Music supports eleven ensembles that together present ninety concerts per year on campus. Student-conceived and led organizations involve many more in nine *a cappella* groups, numerous bands, and other musical organizations. Groups include:

Ad Astra	New Music Ensemble
African Music Ensemble	Pep Band
Chamber Music Program	Rockefeller Chapel Choir
Folklore Society	Shape-note Singers' Association
Golosa Russian Choir	Shircago
Grassroots	Soul Umoja
Harmony 8	Unaccompanied Women
Jazz and Jamband Advocated and Musicians	University Chamber Orchestra
Jazz X-Tet	University of Chicago Central Javanese
Loose Roots	Gamelan
MaJ'N (Make A Joyful Noise)	University Chorus
Men in Drag	University Symphony Orchestra
Middle East Music Ensemble	University Wind Ensemble
Modern Musicians Network	Vivace
Motet Choir	Voices In Your Head
Music Students Association	Whistling Choir

**THEATER:** University Theater presents over 30 productions annually as well as numerous staged readings, workshops, and student volunteer programs in the community. Students are reaching into local schools with theater, music, and other performance programs. Groups include:

Occam's Razor  
University Theater (including Off-Off-Campus and the Blackfriars)

**VISUAL ARTS:** In addition to student artists who practice on their own, several co-curricular arts clubs have been created in the last few years. They include:

Glass Eyeball, the Photography Club  
Kefermenot  
Midway Arts Club  
Outside the Lines, The Univ of Chicago Art Club

In addition to the organizations dedicated to the arts, a number of organizations present annual cultural shows that highlight our students' talent in music, dance, and theater as expressed through a variety of different cultures. Each year hundreds of students present through groups such as the Chinese Undergraduate Students Association (CUSA), Organization of Black Students (OBS), Samahan, and the South Asian Students Association (SASA)