



Summary: Education & Community Engagement Strategic Work Plan

The UMS Education and Community Engagement (ECE) department launched a departmental strategic planning process in the summer of 2016. This overview summarizes the contents of the full “ECE Work Plan: 2017-2020” document, presented to the UMS Board of Directors on January 24, 2017. The ECE work plan grew out of UMS’s organizational strategic plan, adopted by the UMS Board of Directors on January 26, 2016.

Animating concepts of the Strategic Plan

The vision for the UMS Education and Community Engagement department is to make the performing arts accessible to everyone, and to help individuals make relevant, inspiring, and transformational connections between the performing arts and life. Several key concepts, all of which emerged as common themes among the robust stakeholder engagement process, animate the newly-articulated vision for the department:

- A. Community development + social justice.** UMS exhibits a reinvigorated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, moving beyond representation into meaningful dialogue and advocacy. We lead civil discourse around challenging social topics, using the power of art to bring people together across difference. In this three-year plan, our community engagement focuses on collaborating with two minority communities with both 1) historical roots particular to southeast Michigan, and 2) existing relationships with UMS.

- B. Increasing permeability + accessibility.** Community-delivered programs successfully demystify and reinforce the value of arts experiences, and increase the visibility of UMS. UMS also seeks to build and strengthen a culture of arts in K-12 schools, both by expanding access to our beloved School Day Performances (especially for underserved students), and by bringing artists and performances directly into the classroom.

- C. Bold programmatic experimentation.** We want to explore new avenues for engaging with youth beyond our existing school-based programs and experiment with offering sophisticated performances to kids and parents directly. Creative use of our venues will surprise, delight, and deepen the performance experience of those who are currently UMS ticket buyers.

- D. Sustainability.** We anticipate our education and community engagement efforts will result in a more knowledgeable, curious, appreciative, empathetic community, which



could only be positive for UMS's long-term sustainability. All the same, however, this plan acknowledges the need to increase departmental capacity through increased paid staff and contractors, strategic use of volunteers and interns, and the pursuit of dedicated funding necessary to support the work ahead.

Work Plan Goals

Community Engagement

- Goal 1. Reinvigorate UMS as a hub for dialogue and action around important issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion by deliberately placing ourselves at the center of conversations about the most pressing social issues of our time

- Goal 2. Refocus the deployment of adult learning programs to create true "front door" experiences that intentionally broaden access to people who are not current UMS ticket buyers

- Goal 3. Use venues in innovative and surprising ways to deepen the performance experience for people who are currently UMS ticket buyers

K-12 Program

- Goal 4. Become a regional leader in infusing more arts and arts-integrated resources directly into K-12 classrooms

- Goal 5. Shift the K-12 engagement focus so that by 2020, 65% of participants in UMS K-12 programs will qualify as underserved

- Goal 6. Amplify our role in offering sophisticated live arts experiences for young audiences beyond the traditional School Day Performance format

University Partnerships

- Goal 7. Formalize, enhance, and expand arts integrative experiences across campus

Internal Capacity

- Goal 8. Develop ECE departmental capacity

- Goal 9. Increase financial resources dedicated to Education and Community Engagement



Education & Community Engagement

DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC WORK PLAN: 2017–2020

In the winter of 2016, UMS adopted an organizational strategic plan that recognized an interest in conducting a strategic planning process around the organization's Education and Community Engagement (ECE) department. The desired outcomes of this process were to articulate a shared vision to guide the overall approach of the ECE department, and to define a set of worthy goals and strategies that will serve to advance the organization meaningfully toward this vision. The work plan herein is specific to ECE programs, yet it supports an integrated, collaborative approach to achieving the overarching goals of UMS's organizational strategic plan.

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Executive summary

In the winter of 2016, UMS adopted a strategic plan that recognized an interest – expressed by both Board and staff – in conducting a strategic planning process around the organization’s Education and Community Engagement (ECE) work. The desired outcomes of this process were to articulate a shared vision to guide the overall approach of the ECE department, and to define a set of worthy goals and strategies that will serve to advance the organization meaningfully toward this vision in the near term.

The strategic planning process launched in the summer of 2016 and gained momentum in the fall with substantial engagement of external stakeholders, including: key partners on the University of Michigan campus, a diverse set of individuals and community organizations who have collaborated with UMS to deliver joint programming initiatives, multiple representatives from the local K-12 education system, and a contingent of local and national thought leaders in the field of arts education and community engagement.

The findings from these conversations were foundational to the development of a suite of nine compelling goals that define this work plan:

Community Engagement

- Goal 1. Reinvigorate UMS as a hub for dialogue and action around important issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion by deliberately placing ourselves at the center of conversations about the most pressing social issues of our time
- Goal 2. Refocus the deployment of adult learning programs to create true “front door” experiences that intentionally broaden access to people who are not current UMS ticket buyers
- Goal 3. Use venues in innovative and surprising ways to deepen the performance experience for people who are currently UMS ticket buyers

K-12 Programs

- Goal 4. Become a regional leader in infusing more arts and arts-integrated resources directly into K-12 classrooms
- Goal 5. Shift the K-12 engagement focus so that by 2020, 65% of participants in UMS K-12 programs will qualify as underserved



Goal 6. Amplify our role in offering sophisticated live arts experiences for young audiences beyond the traditional School Day Performance format

University Partnerships

Goal 7. Formalize, enhance, and expand arts integrative experiences across campus

Internal Capacity

Goal 8. Develop ECE departmental capacity

Goal 9. Increase financial resources dedicated to Education & Community Engagement

The two final goals acknowledge the reality that the current resources embodied within the Education and Community Engagement department are insufficient to support the pursuit of those that precede them. The bold sense of purpose that infuses this plan in its entirety, and that specifically is manifest in these final two statements, is intended to transmit the seriousness of our ambition to the Board of Directors.

If UMS believes in this work – if education and community engagement, as some Board members stated, is both how we as an organization live into our mission and how we cultivate new audiences – then we are collectively called to address the opportunities defined in these pages. Without a doubt, new resources and fearless leadership will be required. Fortunately, these are assets that UMS is well-positioned to leverage. The first step is to rise and accept the challenge that our stakeholders, both internal and external, have issued.

In closing, it must be mentioned that the contents of this plan were developed and refined in close collaboration with the UMS Board Committee for Education and Community Engagement, whose dedication to the process was matched only by the UMS professionals both within the ECE department and across the organizational leadership structure (i.e., the M-Team), who worked tirelessly to iterate this plan into reality.

Together, with pride and anticipation, we present the following for consideration by the UMS Board of Directors on January 24, 2017.

Stakeholder engagement

We are grateful for the generosity of the many external stakeholders who informed the contents of this strategic plan. Members of the UMS Board of Directors' Education and Community Engagement (ECE) Committee played a particularly active – and crucially valuable – role both in championing the strategic planning process, and in developing, shaping, and refining the results. We thank the following key Board contributors for their considerable investment of time and energy:

- Rachel Bendit, Secretary of the UMS Board
- Janet Callaway
- Mark Clague, Chair of the ECE Committee
- Monique Deschaine
- Donald L. Morelock
- Timothy Johnson
- Agnes Moy-Sarns
- Sarah Nicoli, Vice Chair of the UMS Board
- William Shell, Chair of UMS Ambassadors
- Gail Ferguson Stout
- Karen Jones Stutz

In addition, the following individuals and organizations have engaged in joint programming with UMS over the years, and agreed to participate in one-on-one phone interviews with Bridgeport Consulting to reflect on their experiences and offer constructive critique to guide the work ahead. We are indebted to the following people for their thoughtful contributions to this planning process:

- Wadad Abed, philanthropist, strategic marketing consultant, and active member of the Arab-American community in Southeast Michigan
- Afa Dworkin, Executive Director of Sphinx Organization
- Martina Guzman, journalist and active member of Latinx community in Southwest Detroit
- Tzywen Gong, educator and active member of the local Taiwanese community
- Elizabeth James, Program Associate, University of Michigan (UM) Department of Afroamerican and African Studies
- Linh Nyugen, Associate Director, UM Multiethnic Student Affairs (MESA)
- Marysia Ostafin, Manager, UM International Institute
- Lori Roddy, Executive Director of the Neutral Zone

- Marcus White, Founder and Creative Director of Marcus White/White Werx Performance Company

A cadre of local and national thought leaders in the arts education and community engagement field also generously shared advice and observations during benchmarking conversations with volunteers from the UMS Board of Directors:

- Roya Amirsoleymani, Community Engagement Manager, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art
- Jenna Bacolor, Ann Arbor Public Schools Community Recreation & Education
- Deb Brzoska, Kennedy Center Teaching Artist and educational consultant
- Suzanne Callahan, founder of FortheArts.org; consultant to arts groups in funding acquisition, planning, and evaluation
- Kenneth Foster, Director of Arts Leadership Program at University of Southern California; previous Executive Director at the Yerba Center for the Arts and presenter at both Penn State and University of Arizona
- Baraka Sele, independent producer and consultant in areas of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Aaron Shackelford, Director of Engagement at Carolina Performing Arts, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Barbara Shepherd, Director, National Partnerships at the Kennedy Center
- Ruth Slavin, Deputy Director for Education at University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA)

Additionally, three close partners of UMS engaged in one-on-one interviews with Bridgeport Consulting to probe more specific areas of interest relative to this strategic plan:

- Robin Bailey, Fine Arts Coordinator for the Ann Arbor Public Schools
- Aaron Dworkin, Dean of the UM School of Music, Theater, and Dance
- Marjorie Horton, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, UM College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA)

A group of approximately ten local K-12 teachers participated in a focus group in November to share feedback about UMS's offerings with regard to professional development and School Day Performances. Similarly, the UM Faculty Insight Group devoted a regularly-planned session to sharing similar feedback with regard to the arts-integrative work that the ECE department leads and supports across campus.



Finally, supplementary data were reviewed from both the pre-existing Intrinsic Impact Survey, which captures feedback from participants in UMS community engagement programs, and a survey that was launched as part of this process and generated over 200 responses. Survey respondents were segmented among: current/previous UMS Board members and volunteers; UM faculty; community groups and UM units involved in joint programming efforts; and K-12 teachers and administrators. Full survey syntheses are not included in this document for sake of brevity; however, the themes that arose within each are ably reflected in the Salient Findings appendix.

The robust stakeholder engagement process gives us confidence that this plan reflects not only our own aspirations, but also the expectations of our partners, supporters, and participants.

Vision for Education and Community Engagement

The vision for Education and Community Engagement (ECE) reflects several overarching themes that arose again and again, threading through the entirety of the stakeholder engagement – both internal and external – that informed this plan’s development. This vision is written in present tense, with the intention of illustrating the vivid and compelling future reality toward which this plan strives. We acknowledge that while many of the goals and strategies herein are specific to ECE programs, they have impact beyond the ECE program and affect the organization as a whole. ECE can act as a leader and proving ground in exploring innovative programmatic and strategic goals that then radiate out through the entire organization (particularly in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion). Yet, the success of this plan relies on an integrated, collaborative approach that engages the staff and resources of Programming, Development, Marketing, and IT, as well as the UMS Board and other volunteers and stakeholders.

The UMS Education & Community Engagement program makes the performing arts accessible to everyone, and helps individuals make relevant, inspiring, and transformational connections between the performing arts and life. We advance toward this overarching vision in the following ways:

First, **community development and social justice** provide core animating ethics of the ECE department’s work. Specifically through our community engagement efforts, UMS leads public, civil discourse around challenging social topics. We use the power of art to bring people together across difference, and we are willing to lean into the discomfort that will sometimes accompany this deliberate approach to presenting complex, socially-engaged artistic work. Especially in this time of marked social division, we intend to deepen our diversity work, moving beyond representation into meaningful dialogue and advocacy. The performing arts are a valuable asset in furthering action around diversity, equity, and inclusion both on campus and in the community.

This plan suggests that we begin to focus our efforts in this space by collaborating with two minority communities that have historical roots particular to southeast Michigan and historical relationships with UMS. This focus is a bold choice that will likely provoke questions about who may be left out when some are selected in. Those questions are legitimate, and will be welcomed. We believe that this focus is necessary and healthy for the organization, and can be done in a transparent and respectful way that does not diminish any current or potential partners. We remain mindful of the many, and intersecting, ways that diversity of identity and



affinity— racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, and otherwise — shows up in society, and we are vigilant about demonstrating respect for all. As this three-year plan draws to a close, we will evaluate the results of our efforts, and determine the areas in which to focus our next efforts.

We also recognize that **increasing permeability and accessibility** of the arts is a key component of our work. Community-delivered programs — primarily serving adults — successfully demystify the arts experience and reinforce its value, and increase the visibility of UMS, which in turn amplifies the community’s curiosity and appreciation for the arts, and also builds our base of performance audiences and organizational supporters. Regarding youth, UMS seeks to build and strengthen a culture of arts in K-12 schools, both by expanding access to our beloved School Day Performances (especially for underserved students), and by bringing artists and performances directly into the classroom. The latter will be helpful in providing access to those for whom transportation to our venues poses a significant barrier.

The mutually beneficial partnership between UMS and the University of Michigan has never been stronger or more meaningful — not least because of the incredible capacity for extending arts integration across campus made possible through continued funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Our vision for this work is for University students who might not otherwise experience the performing arts to find their way to UMS through course requirements, and to be transformed personally and academically as a result. We imagine young artists-in-training working directly with professional artists, gaining valuable skills and building their professional networks. We envision the University’s world-class faculty accessing UMS not only as a personal outlet, but as a valuable academic resource — and, in turn, for UMS to equip faculty to include the performing arts in their courses in a meaningful (and contagiously inspiring) way. Again, accessibility and experimentation play significant roles in our work on campus.

In addition to themes of community development and accessibility, stakeholders expressed appetite for **bold programmatic experimentation**. In this spirit, we propose incrementally to experiment with the possibility of moving beyond the school as our sole nexus for engaging with young arts enthusiasts, and experiment with offering sophisticated performances to youth and parents directly. Overall, the aspirational vision for UMS’s work in this domain is that all children — not just public school students, and regardless their personal circumstances — are active participants in UMS programs, experiencing the joy and pleasure of the live performing arts and deepening their capacity for intercultural understanding, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration in the process.

Finally, **sustainability** is a key concern. We anticipate our education and community engagement efforts will result in a more knowledgeable, curious, appreciative, empathetic community, which could only be positive for UMS’s long-term sustainability. All the same, however, we would be remiss in not acknowledging that increased internal capacity is an urgent prerequisite for achieving all of the above. Our vision for the Education and Community Engagement (ECE) department, therefore, revolves around a diverse staff of highly competent, creative professionals who focus on strategic aims and relationships. We are comfortable with uncertainty, able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, and model collaboration and flexibility. Our work is supported through a dedicated funding stream that provides sufficient reassurance of sustainability to enable continued, calculated risk-taking and the ability to take the long view.

Goals and strategies

Community Engagement

Goal 1: Reinvigorate UMS as a hub for dialogue and action around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion by deliberately placing ourselves at the center of conversations about the most pressing social issues of our time

Strategies:

- 1.1 Reactivate and establish new strategic partnerships within the Arab/Arab-American and Black/African-American communities, both building on the foundation of our historic relationships, and honoring the importance of these demographic groups in Southeast Michigan
- 1.2 Engage in structured meetings with a focused and concise group of key organizational and/or individual partners to define what the relationship with these two communities could look like over the next three years
- 1.3 Engage with artists who animate the concerns of these communities, whether onstage or off
- 1.4 Maintain a thoughtful and proactive “good neighbor” stance, signaling continued openness to the possibility of entering into partnerships with others, while remaining disciplined in our focus on these two particular communities
- 1.5 Activate a “Diversity Cabinet” of leaders who might serve as a sounding board and hold us accountable for excellence in this work
- 1.6 Create a professional development path for staff to build skills around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as the ability to facilitate conversations around these issues (e.g., anti-racism training, facilitation training)

Goal 2: Refocus the deployment of adult learning programs to create true “front door” experiences that intentionally broaden access to people who are not currently UMS ticket buyers

Strategies:

- 2.1 Experiment with shifting programs like Night School into established community-based distribution channels (such as Ann Arbor and Washtenaw Rec & Ed) given the success experienced with You Can Dance at the Ann Arbor Y

Goal 3: Use venues in innovative and surprising ways to deepen the performance experience for people who are UMS ticket buyers

Strategies:

- 3.1 Work closely with Programming and Marketing to create “companion” lobby experiences around Renegade performances that are participatory, social, unexpected, and educational (continuing the work being done for the Wallace grant)
- 3.2 Scale back existing ancillary programming as necessary (e.g., post-show Q&A, pre-show talks, lecture series) to allow greater focus on venue-based innovation

K-12 Program

Goal 4: Become a regional leader in infusing more arts and arts-integrated resources directly into K-12 classrooms

Strategies:

- 4.1 Eliminate public workshops and public professional learning communities for teachers; focus on occasional cultural immersions and in-school residencies
- 4.2 Commit significant resources to training and deploying a robust community of Michigan-based teaching artists who can deliver arts-integrated experiences in schools on behalf of UMS
- 4.3 In response to the significant barrier that transportation can pose, design a technology-based, interactive in-class performance experience for students who

are unable to travel to our venues (e.g., livestreaming or similar technology, digital experiences delivered directly to youth rather than teachers)

Goal 5: Shift the K-12 engagement focus, so, that by 2020, 65% of participants in UMS K-12 school programs will qualify as underserved (as defined below)

Strategies:

- 5.1 Prioritize participation by schools who meet one or more of the following criteria (placing them in the “underserved category”): (1) 50% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch; (2) the school has no full-time arts or music teacher; (3) the classroom primarily serves students with disabilities or special needs; (4) the school is a first-time participant in UMS programs
- 5.2 Over the next 3 years, build upon the UM Credit Union (UMCU) Arts Adventure program to quadruple (to \$20,000 in annual subsidies) the amount of transportation and ticket subsidies UMS can provide to underserved schools
- 5.3 Begin building relationships with community-based organizations (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA) to extend UMS offerings to diverse young audiences outside of school-based environments

Goal 6: Amplify our role in offering sophisticated live arts experiences for young audiences, in complement with the traditional School Day Performance format

Strategies:

- 6.1 Program an annual theater for young audiences (TYA) performance (especially one that reflects contemporary topics and engages contemporary art forms, such as hip-hop and spoken word) into the K-12 program
- 6.2 Establish a parent-child program that extends and deepens the “kids club” concept beyond ticketing to include supports such as digital pre- and post-performance interactive modules and/or family-friendly social events before a main-stage UMS performance

University Partnerships

Goal 7: Formalize, enhance, and expand arts integrative experiences across campus

Strategies:

- 7.1 Establish relationships with repeating courses across campus to increase planning/preparatory time for faculty and improve sustainability
- 7.2 Codify the Engaging Performance course and other elements of the Mellon project through a formal letter of agreement with the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance (SMTD)
- 7.3 Expand unit-specific relationships beyond LSA and SMTD to include the Ross School of Business, College of Engineering, and School of Social Work
- 7.4 Create a more comprehensive set of contextual resources (e.g., best practice guides; case studies), especially with regard to demonstrating the value of arts-integrated teaching for the tenure file
- 7.5 Revisit the structure of the Faculty Insight Group: expand membership, in part through rotational terms, and articulate expectations of participation
- 7.6 Transition from the Faculty Institute toward a faculty fellowship model
- 7.7 Position UMS programs as an important asset to UM's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan
- 7.8 Increase research residencies to more than one per year, providing more time with artists in the classroom
- 7.9 Secure funding for 21st century artist internships that enable students from SMTD to access paid summer internships with a company UMS presents

- 7.10 Host a faculty preview of the main-stage program, paired with a social event open to a wide range of faculty members

Internal Capacity

Goal 8: Develop ECE departmental capacity

Strategies:

- 8.1 Develop administrative support such that routine administrative/transactional tasks can be reassigned from program staff, freeing up necessary capacity
- 8.2 Make better use of external/contractual resources such as writers, teaching artists, and marketing support for specific programs/initiatives
- 8.3 Strategically engage volunteers and interns in the work of ECE
- 8.4 Reinforce and make more intentional the permeability between Programming and ECE in parallel with reconfiguring the Community Programs Manager position
- 8.5 Animate the relationship between UMS and University of Michigan researchers to explore the potential for research partnerships or other joint project, in the interest of relieving administrative burden from faculty and UMS staff, to improve our own practice, and to contribute to the field

Goal 9: Increase financial resources dedicated to Education & Community Engagement

Strategies:

- 9.1 Pursue targeted gifts from foundations and individual donors who are focused on and passionate about education and community engagement in addition to the arts-specific support UMS already seeks
- 9.2 Secure funding sufficient to provide ongoing support for programs that are currently grant-funded (e.g., Mellon activities, 21st Century Artist Internships)
- 9.3 Create an “ECE Venture Fund” to allow for programmatic experimentation



- 9.4 Pursue a transformative gift on the order of \$2M to generate sustaining, dedicated revenue for ECE