Northeastern University
College of Arts, Media and Design

Strategic Plan 2011-2015

Spring 2011
Introduction and Overview

The recently established Northeastern University College of Arts, Media and Design embarked on a strategic planning process to better position itself as a new paradigm in the emerging and interdisciplinary fields of arts, media and design. The college’s mission, distinctions, strategies, key priorities and measures all focus upon using both Northeastern’s and the college’s strengths in experiential partnerships and collaborative learning to prepare its students to be critical thinkers and socially engaged citizens.

MISSION

The Northeastern University College of Arts, Media and Design is a new paradigm of education, research and creativity in disciplines that drive the global knowledge economy. Through experiential partnerships and collaborative learning, we prepare our students to be critical thinkers and socially engaged citizens.

We fulfill this mission through our focus on educational programs, the research, scholarship and creativity of our faculty and our service to internal and external stakeholders. We see ourselves as a community of students, faculty and staff with a shared commitment to developing tomorrow’s leaders and global citizens. Our educational programs prepare our students for professional and scholarly opportunities, lifelong social engagement and career success. Similarly, our research, scholarship and creative activity merges traditional modes of scholarship and creative enterprise to foster and reward critical reflection and engaged problem solving. The leadership that our faculty, students and alumni provide is deeply rooted in CAMD’s core values of collaboration, engagement, openness, inquisitiveness, agility and integrity.

As the College of Arts, Media and Design looks ahead to the next five years, our focus is on strengthening core areas of our work and building on that foundation to achieve key goals related to our mission. This strategic plan provides an overview of the college’s distinctions and the priority strategies in place to further our goals for our educational programs, our research, scholarship and creativity, the people across our organization, our external relations, and the internal structures and processes we use to achieve these goals. To this end, the plan is organized around these five core areas of the college. Detailed action steps support these distinctions and the strategies behind them, as do measures we will use to track our progress toward implementation.

These distinctions and strategies build our capacities in core areas of the college’s work, and in particular allow us to collectively focus on six broad priorities:
• **Undergraduate Education:** The educational experience we provide to our undergraduate students is our utmost priority, and our strategies approach this from a variety of perspectives. Our focus is to create a supportive and collaborative undergraduate educational environment where students are challenged through intellectual, creative and practical experiences to become critical thinkers and socially engaged citizens. This is accomplished by ensuring that curricula are not only flexible, innovative and continually evolving, but also effectively assessed on a regular basis. We recognize our academic programs are based on our ability to continue to attract and develop a diverse faculty composed of critically engaged scholars and practitioners whose research and creative work provide a foundation for the intellectual life of the college and to support these faculty with internal and external partnerships across the arts industry, the creative disciplines and the public sphere.

• **Graduate Education:** Our goal is to ensure that our graduate programs and curricula are flexible, innovative and continually evolving. We will take advantage of existing academic strengths to develop new degree programs (MA and PhD) and non-degree programs (continuing education, post professional) in a variety of innovative formats. As with our undergraduate programs, our goals are supported by our ability attract diverse faculty and support these faculty with internal and external partnerships across the arts, media and design landscape.

• **Organizational Structure of the College:** We will redefine the organizational structure of the college to introduce the necessary changes for building effective and efficient operations. We recognize the need to provide meaningful information, technology and technical support and management tools to enable the college’s leadership and faculty to manage their responsibilities in an effective manner.

• **Identity of the College:** Our success is contingent on establishing our identity as a new paradigm of education, research and creativity in disciplines that drive the global knowledge economy. This will be enhanced through providing an intellectual exploration of the college’s potential synergies among its different fields, by publicly presenting its work and achievements, and by facilitating and promoting the exchange of ideas and best practices across all domains to position the college as a leading voice in contemporary cultural dialogue.

• **Infrastructure/Resources:** We recognize that the college requires a coherent and functional infrastructure and supporting resources that provide a variety of venues and by securing renewed facilities for the college’s academic programs, its students and
faculty. We will expand our personal and financial resources to support our mission and infrastructure.

- **Viability:** Our success requires new and innovative sources of revenue as we move towards a hybrid management model in which self-sufficiency will increase. We will work with the university’s advancement office to cultivate relationships with alumni, donors, potential donors, corporations and foundations to fund high-priority projects that have been identified and that leverage our identity as a new paradigm of education, research and creativity in disciplines that drive the global knowledge economy.

**Distinctions and Strategies**

Five core areas of our work are at the heart of this plan and drive the pursuit of our key priorities: the people who are the heart of our college, our research, scholarship and creativity, our educational programs, the external relations we pursue to connect with our stakeholders, and the internal structures and processes in place to manage the College of Arts, Media and Design. In each of these areas we define what makes us distinctive, built partly on our current strengths and partly on the capabilities we need for the future. The strategies summarized in each of the following five areas serve to bring those distinctions to fruition.

1 **People**

*CAMD is a community of students, faculty, staff and administrators with a shared commitment to developing tomorrow’s leaders and global citizens. This mission is undertaken in a collegial and supportive climate in which positive, cooperative interactions are encouraged, critical and informed risk thinking are valued, and a variety of perspectives and approaches are respected.*

To accomplish this we must:

- Attract and develop a faculty composed of critically engaged scholars and practitioners whose research and creative work provide a foundation for intellectual and artistic discovery and elevates the stature of the college.
- Create a supportive and collaborative environment where students are challenged through intellectual, creative and practical experiences to become responsible leaders in a global community.
- Build a culture of inclusion, openness and trust that rewards risk taking and innovation.
- Provide a variety of venues and opportunities for the community to facilitate and promote the exchange of ideas best practices across all domains.
2 Research, Scholarship and Creativity

*CAMD merges traditional modes of scholarship and creative enterprise to foster and reward critical reflection and engaged problem solving in a changing world.*

These goals necessitate that we:

- Pursue internal and external partnerships across the arts industries, the creative disciplines and public sphere.
- Encourage and reward individual scholarship as well as collaborative research that takes advantage of the unique collection of disciplines with CAMD.
- Establish recognized standards of academic value for diverse forms of creative practice for use in establishing promotion and tenure guidelines for CAMD.
- Enhance the public discourse at the intersection of the creative arts, scholarship and civic life.
- Take advantage of strengths in these areas to develop new degree and non-degree programs.
- Develop and maintain facilities for research and creative work in CAMD.

3 Education Programs

*In an urban learning environment CAMD prepares students for professional and scholarly opportunities, lifelong social engagement, and career success. The college uses emerging technologies and a flexible curriculum to enhance traditional disciplinary study. CAMD embraces the symbiotic relationship between theory and practice and sustains the premiere cooperative learning program in the nation.*

To this end, we will:

- Ensure that our curriculum is flexible, innovative, continually evolving and structured to generate revenue to support undergraduate and graduate tuition scholarships and assistantships. Establish state of the art facilities that embrace and employ emerging technologies.
- Expand and improve relationships with co-op employers, colleagues within and outside of CAMD, related city and community partners, and professional partners throughout the world.
- Assess and improve training and preparation for students who are applying for co-op positions and entering the job search.
- Expand our people resources (staff) in quantity and quality such that they assist us with implementation of our stated goals.
- Efficiently, effectively and continually evaluate and assess our progress on all of these strategic fronts.
4 External Relations

*CAMD will cultivate a professionally oriented, practical focus that forms the basis for mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships with our stakeholders.*

To foster these connections we will:

- Leverage existing relationships and build new relationships to share our knowledge and expertise and enrich our students’ educational experiences.
- Reach out to colleges similar to CAMD domestically and internationally to pursue mutually beneficial partnerships and synergies.
- Work with the admissions office to increase quality and diversity of applicants as well increase yield.
- Work with the advancement office to cultivate relationships with alumni, donors, potential donors, corporations and foundations to fund high priority projects that have been identified.
- Facilitate a close working relationship between the college’s and the university’s communications offices — driven by the overall marketing and communications strategy for the university — to connect faculty experts with the news media and to reach out to other external constituencies.

5 Internal Structures and Processes

*CAMD develops and provides administrative, financial and technological tools and procedures to build the foundation from which the college can excel and flourish.*

This capability will be fully realized as we:

- Assess the current state of facilities to identify the structural needs of CAMD and to develop a plan to meet the physical, spatial and technological requirements of the college.
- Provide timely and meaningful data and tools to faculty, staff and management so they can effectively manage their responsibilities.
- Establish a budget process that facilitates timely and effective decision-making.
- Re-evaluate the organizational structure of the college to determine if changes are necessary for building effective and efficient operations.
- Act as ambassadors for the admissions office to increase the quality and diversity of applicants and yield.
- Develop a culture of “customer service” that promotes the highest level of collaboration, cooperation and communication.
Each of these strategies is built on a detailed implementation plan with actions steps, timelines, clearly identified accountabilities, and measures by which we will track progress toward implementation.

**Measures of Success**

In addition to the detailed measures linked to the strategies, we will track our success toward implementing this plan through eight broad measures of success:

- Quality of applicants and matriculates
- Accomplishments of our faculty and graduates
- High standing in rankings or alternative measures of quality and prestige
- Retention of students and tenured faculty
- Impact on the culture of Boston
- Increasing endowments
- Increasing industry and foundation partnerships
- Viewed as a leading educational model

**Values**

We recognize that the values within our college community underpin its ability to successfully achieve its mission. Through our strategic planning process we identified six critical values that define our community.

- **Collaboration:** We form interdisciplinary teams across the college, institutions and to bring a broad range of knowledge and experience to research and intellectual inquiry.
- **Engagement:** Our educational and civic mission encourages interactions with the world through local and global learning experiences and creative initiatives
- **Openness:** We believe that transparency, accountability and truthfulness are integral to the ethical foundation of the college.
- **Inquisitiveness:** We value curiosity about the world as it is and as it yet to be. We frame our research and creative work by redefining problems and seeking innovative outcomes.
- **Agility:** We foster the capacity to react quickly to new circumstances and critically examine opportunities presented by rapid technological and social changes.
- **Integrity:** We are a socially engaged community with shared values that seeks to advance ethical responsibility among our students and faculty.
**Conclusion**

This strategic plan represents a blueprint for the future of our college and how we will educate students to prepare them to be critical thinkers and socially engaged citizens. As we strive to fulfill our mission we do so through our values, experiential partnerships and collaborative learning. Our desire and expectation is that the College of Arts, Media and Design will be a new paradigm for education and research in disciplines that drive the global knowledge economy.