School of Fine Arts
Faculty and Staff Retreat

Dean’s Updates
August 25, 2021
**SFA Snapshot**

**Four academic departments**
- 650 undergrads at Storrs/100 at Stamford
- 110 graduate students
  - Art & Art History
  - Digital Media & Design
  - Dramatic Arts
  - Music

**Three Institutes/Interdisciplinary Programs**
- Greenhouse Studios (UConn Libraries/CLAS/SFA)
- Krenicki Arts and Engineering Institute (SFA/SoE)
- Arts Leadership & Cultural Management (grad program)

**Seven exhibiting and performing-arts venues**
- Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry
- Benton Museum of Art
- Connecticut Repertory Theatre
- Contemporary Art Galleries
- Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts
- von der Mehden Recital Hall
- von Schlippe Gallery (Avery Point)
Covid impact

- SFA faculty and staff pulled together to address an unprecedented challenge:
  - Both virtual and on-site programming at exhibiting and performing arts venues
  - Adapting to health & safety challenges in on-site teaching environments
  - Innovating for successful remote teaching in the arts
Human Rights/SFA Collaboration

- Three joint hires between SFA and Human Rights Institute:
  - Theatre Studies
  - Art History (also part of the University-wide anti-racism cluster hire)
  - Film & Video
- We will have the most comprehensive arts component of any university’s human rights program
- Creates possibilities for unique curriculum and programming
Arts Leadership & Cultural Management program at the Wadsworth Atheneum

• Our dedicated space was opened for ALCM faculty and graduate student use in Spring 2021
• Enhances opportunities for partnership with arts institutions in Hartford and the state
• Expression of our land grant mission in SFA – to support the state’s cultural life by engaging its arts institution
• Research projects and internships
Krenicki Arts and Engineering Institute

- Co-directors appointed
  - Ed Weingart, SFA
  - Jorge Paricio Garcia, SoE

- Space renovation – former Dean’s Offices in Art Building

- Industrial Design and Entertainment Engineering Minors open for enrollment

- KI faculty have received two NASA grants for 2021-22
Research productivity - symposia

- “Joni Mitchell’s Blue at Fifty” (Music)
- “Puppetry’s Racial Reckoning” (Puppet Arts/Dramatic Arts and Ballard)
- “Amplifying Black Voices in Hollywood” (DMD/Jorgensen)
Research productivity - grants

- MELLON FOUNDATION – Greenhouse Studios, Sourcery app
- LUCE FOUNDATION – Benton Museum, collaborative exhibition with American Museum of Natural History
- NASA – Krenicki Arts and Engineering Institute, Mars design projects
- NEH – Digital Media & Design and History Dept, Digital Public History Minor
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- DEI Task Force
  - listening sessions for SFA students, faculty, staff facilitated with cultural centers
  - surveys on SFA climate for faculty, staff, students
- Diversity roundtable with alumni and Frank Tuitt
  - Professional development as a diversity issue
- New diversity hiring guidelines implemented that increased diversity in candidate pools and improved outcomes
- Curricular reforms
  - Music history intro redesigned, DMD course “Toward Equity”
- New Anti-Racism Research Fund
Alumni engagement, development

- Founded Recent Alumni Council (RAC)
  - Four members, one from each department
  - Will grow to twelve
  - Alumni programming, career networking
- Offered multiple virtual events for UConn Alumni
- Highlights of philanthropy
  - Barri Marks Career Readiness Fund ($100K endowment)
  - Marsden Family Scholarship ($100K endowment) for underrepresented students
  - Gift in progress to support a new Human Rights Film Festival ($65K/year for three years)
Challenges and Opportunities for 2021-22

• Restore undergraduate admissions processes disrupted by pandemic
  • ~10% decline in freshman admits in 2020, 2021
  • Engaging diverse prospective students – Stamford auditions, magnet schools
  • Covid limitations – need to increase video resources, virtual engagement

• Strategic planning
  • Will be concluded in 2021-22
  • Includes strategic plan for DEI initiatives
  • Nomenclature issues to be resolved

• Increase grant-writing in the School
  • Mitigate impact of rescissions
  • Enable ambitious teaching, research, community engagement
  • Hiring a dedicated grant writer for the School

• Foster the HRI/SFA collaboration
  • Develop curriculum and programming

• Signature Programming for 2021-22
  • “Year of Sendak” – calendar year 2022, year of thematic programming includes exhibitions and performances
  • Human Rights Film Festival, Fall 2022
  • SFA 60th Anniversary – “60 for 60” a celebration of our distinguished alumni