



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF ARTS

Fine Arts Centre for School of Music and School of Art and Designculturally uplifting the people

Opportunity Paper

October 2012

This paper presents a vision for a School of Music and School of Art and Design located in the heart of Edmonton. As part of a larger joint initiative, it would be a place where University programming and community outreach align perfectly with the Government of Alberta's vision of "a prosperous province in which all citizens are enjoying an enviable quality of life in vibrant communities". It would revitalize the downtown, reinvigorate our music and art and design programs, and bring a renaissance to our community - contributing to the goal, as set out by the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee, of recognizing Edmonton "...as a city of arts by the year 2040". The benefit to stakeholders – City of Edmonton, Government of Alberta, University of Alberta and community partners – is tremendous.

Project Introduction

The City of Edmonton has a long, diverse, and rich cultural history, due in large part to the excellence of the Fine Arts programs at the University of Alberta. For almost seventy years, graduates have become engrained in our cultural community and continue to propagate art, design and music to the next generation. Gifted faculty members not only provide an excellent education to our students, but by becoming part of the community, enrich the lives of our citizens.

There is an opportunity to develop a fine arts centre where University programming and community outreach align perfectly with the Government of Alberta's vision of "a prosperous province in which all citizens are enjoying an enviable quality of life in vibrant communities" (Government of Alberta's report of the Premier's Council for Economic Strategy, p. 106).

And quality of life is a prime factor for economic prosperity; businesses locate where the arts are abundant, and where there is plenty of opportunity for employees and their families to participate and appreciate the arts. Resource and business development drives our economy. Music, Art, and Drama are part of our cultural fabric, and an integral reason to relocate, invest, and contribute to the City of Edmonton and Province of Alberta.

Edmonton is a vibrant cultural hub, where creativity flourishes, and the contribution of the Departments of Music and Art and Design is extensive. However, there is no longer sufficient, quality space on the North Campus of the University of Alberta to maintain high levels of teaching and learning, research productivity and creative activity. Programs cannot be expanded to meet demand at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Rapidly advancing innovations in teaching and research are more difficult to accommodate. In addition, several buildings are quite old or have been retrofitted and are subject to periodic infrastructure failure including utility breakdown and flooding. The current condition of being dispersed among various buildings is an obstacle to communications, impedes student engagement opportunities, discourages synergies, and makes providing support to programs difficult.

A fine arts centre in the heart of Edmonton would be a place where learning and life come together. It would revitalize the downtown, reinvigorate our music and art and design programs and help bring a renaissance to our community. It would be more than just a centre – it's a place to grow creativity, nurture young artists, and foster interdisciplinarity and community connections.

Current Situation

Programs

The programs offered in Music and Art and Design are varied and extensive, and provide students with the opportunity to develop their creativity and be prepared for the rapidly changing world they will enter. An MFA is now being considered the new MBA, since creativity and imagination are so important to moving forward in our economy and society, and a fine arts centre with sufficient, innovative, and quality space would help students develop their sense of creativity and innovation.

Combined, the departments of Art and Design and Music teach and mentor more than 1100 students, and service over 7700 course registrations to full time Fine Arts students and those from other departments or Faculties who take courses to fulfill their degree requirements. A highly qualified core

of teaching staff, including 39 tenure track professors, 39 contract instructors, and 26 administrative and technical staff deliver programs that are in high demand by both undergraduate and graduate students, locally and internationally.

The department of Music currently offers four undergraduate degrees - Bachelor of Music (BMus), Combined Bachelor of Music/Bachelor of Education (BMus/BEd), Bachelor of Arts Honors, Bachelor of Arts (BA) with a major or minor in Music. In addition, a Certificate in Sound Arts began in 2012. Graduate degrees include a Master in Music, Master of Arts, Doctor of Music, and PhD. The Art and Design department offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Bachelor of Design (BDES), Bachelor of Arts (BA), and Bachelor of Arts Honors. In addition, there are graduate programs in all three divisions; the MFA with specializations in Drawing and Intermedia, Painting, Printmaking or Sculpture; the Master of Design with specialization in Industrial Design or Visual Communication Design; and the MA in HADVC (History of Art, Design & Visual Culture).

The department of Music gives over 180 concerts, lectures and master classes each year, including the Kilburn concert (featuring world renowned performing artists), MACH Concert series featuring highly talented faculty members, Winspear Concert Series (for large student ensembles), Monday's at Noon series, and various faculty and student recitals, ensemble recitals, and chamber music recitals. Outreach into the community includes the summer music academy, Hear's to your Health Concert series, partnerships with the Wirth Institute, Strauss foundation and West African Music program. Faculty members are very integrated into the community either belonging to or as a board member of the Edmonton Chamber Music Society, Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association, and the Royal Canadian College of Organists, just to name a few.

The department of Art and Design, whose main exhibition space is FAB Gallery, presents 29 student, faculty and visiting professor exhibitions each year. The Printmaking program is a centre of excellence, with major collaborations with artists in Japan and Germany. Faculty members and graduates have been intimately involved in the founding and ongoing support of SNAP gallery in Edmonton. Visual artists, both faculty and graduate students, have displayed and curated shows at the Art Gallery of Alberta. Design studies focuses on improving the human condition in everyday life. Students and faculty members are involved in life-improving research, which is broadly interdisciplinary, with research focusing on designing community infrastructure in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, medical design, and interactive digital interfaces. Faculty and students collaborate extensively with engineers and doctors on campus and in the community including collaborative ventures such as the Smart Condo project with the Steadward Centre and with the Misericordia Hospital creating patient treatment systems using 3D imagery among others.

Impact of Growth on Facilities

The Fine Arts Building was opened in 1973 to address space needs of the fine arts departments. Since then there has been tremendous student growth on campus, including within the departments of Art and Design and Music. From 1973 to 2010, the number of Art and Design and Music courses taken by students increased 51%, and the number of graduate students increased by 240% (32 in 1973 and 109 in 2010). The number of Faculty members decreased by 11%, while the number of contract instructors and temporary staff increased by 126%. However, there has been only a 5% increase in assignable space, and the high rate of growth coupled with lack of space has put a strain on all aspects of the departments.

Over the past forty years the departments consistently maintained a standard of excellence however, the strain has taken a toll. Substandard facilities for practice, teaching, performance and research have limited growth and the ability to attract some of the best faculty and students. Seminar and storage rooms, along with student common rooms, have been converted to make-shift offices and studio spaces. Faculty and graduate research space is minimal and there is an increased pressure on performance and rehearsal space as changes in curriculum across North America demand that most academic degrees include a practical/performance component.

There is significant variance in the functionality of the space in the buildings occupied by Music and Art and Design. **Many were not originally designed and constructed for fine arts purposes.** For example, a road running underneath the HUB Mall was converted to design studios; the old power plant, originally built in 1918, houses several design studios, and finally an old ammunition warehouse houses the industrial design unit. Quite often the space lacks natural light and can be subject to frequent issues such as leaks and ventilation problems. Many spaces experience sound bleed between classrooms and studios. Finally, being dispersed among nine different buildings creates challenges for achieving synergies, effective communications, student engagement, and for delivering student and administrative support services.

Environmental Scan

In the 2008 Unit Review for the Department of Music, the external reviewers noted “For many years now, the Department has had to compromise its functioning in terms of both teaching and performance due to a lack of sufficient and adequate space at every level – from performance halls and classrooms to practice rooms, faculty offices and social spaces. Even for the spaces that do exist in the Fine Arts Building, physical problems abound, ranging from poor acoustics, lack of humidity control and poor (or non-existent) technological amenities. With the rapid growth of the program of the past years, the situation has become critical, not to say even dire”.

Competition across Canada, and internationally, for recruiting and retaining the best faculty and students is very much influenced by space resources – both in terms of availability and quality. With new construction projects developing state of the art facilities on campuses across Canada, in order to continue attracting the best and brightest students and faculty, it is imperative to have equally excellent facilities in Edmonton. The following examples reflect this commitment to the fine arts.

- The Engineering, Computer Science and Visual Arts Integrated Complex at Concordia University (Montreal) opened in 2005 and is home to state of the art studios, cutting-edge digital technologies, an art gallery, black box theatre, and art history amphitheatres.
- In 2010 Simon Fraser University School for the Contemporary Arts relocated to new facilities within the redeveloped Woodward’s complex in downtown Vancouver, established as the Goldcorp Centre for the Arts.
- Opened April, 2012, the Art Research Technology (ART) lab is a multidisciplinary art and technology centre, for both the School of Art and the Marcel A Desautels Faculty of Music. Located at the University of Winnipeg, the 60,000 sq. ft. ARTlab includes a gallery, sound stage, space for workshops, digital labs and a lecture theatre. Also located at the University, opening in 2013 will be a 500 seat auditorium and new teaching and rehearsal spaces for the Faculty of Music.
- A new building for the Mount Royal University Conservatory will be the focus point of the Lincoln Park campus in Calgary, Alberta. Set to open in 2013 the project includes a 700 seat concert hall, ensemble, teaching and recording studios, classrooms and a music library.

- Set to open in early 2014, the Isabel Bader Centre for Performing Arts at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario includes a 560 seat concert hall, 150 seat “black box” theatre, an art gallery and new teaching and rehearsal space.
- As part of a new Academic and Cultural Arts Centre for downtown St. Catharines, the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts at Brock University includes a concert hall of 800 seats and a recital hall for 280. It is scheduled to open Fall 2014.
- Announced in 2009, the University of Saskatchewan’s Clarion project will bring together the fine arts departments under one roof with a 300 seat proscenium theatre, a 350 seat recital hall, state of the art digital research centre and specialized purpose-built space.

A new facility strengthens the fabric of Edmonton by attracting and then keeping the very best students and faculty who go into the community and share their knowledge and experience. This knowledge and experience contributes to a vibrant arts community, which then helps attract more excellent students and faculty, and attracts the very best employees to Edmonton and Alberta. Attracting excellent employees is good for the economy, and makes Edmonton a world class city.

General Opportunities

Given the opportunities available for a flourishing fine arts program at the University and the major problems with our present facilities, we propose developing a fine arts centre to house the academic programming, research, and community outreach of the departments of Music and Art and Design, renamed to become the School of Music and the School of Art and Design.

A University fine arts centre located in the heart of Edmonton provides an opportunity to:

- showcase programs to a broader community and become a solid partner of the arts downtown initiative;
- develop quality space required to fulfill the academic vision of the University;
- contribute to the longer term cultural vision of the City of Edmonton and of the Province of Alberta.
- create backfilling opportunities on north campus to meet the needs of other academic programs within the Faculty of Arts, the Students Union, and other central units.

There is considerable demand for both Music and Fine Arts practice degrees (BMus, BFA, BDes), and new facilities would certainly further increase demand for many of the programs. Currently the acceptance rate within the Bachelor of Music program is 58% and with additional resources we could attract more excellent students to the University of Alberta. At this time Art and Design can only accept 23% of applicants. A fine arts centre would allow Music and Art and Design to increase both undergraduate and graduate enrollment, were we to receive increased funding to do so, ensuring a balance between quantity of students and quality of programming.

In thinking about space for the fine arts programs it is worth keeping in mind that a classroom is often a rehearsal hall, painting studio, or control booth; that a laboratory is often a welding shop, performance stage, design studio or catwalk. The following list is a high level review of outstanding needs:

- Performance space to include 700-800 seat **music hall**; suitable for large ensembles – a space that addresses a gap in the City of Edmonton for an acoustically good performance venue of this size; 200 seat recital hall for solo, small ensemble and contemporary acoustic

- Classrooms, workshops and studios including a virtual learning centre.
- Intimate, open gallery for sound/media installations, display of collections from folkways Alive! and Centre for Ethnomusicology, and other **interactive exhibits**
- **Gallery space** for exposition of student/faculty artwork/research
- **Interdisciplinary research** and design studios between other departments and Faculties heighten the need for non-traditional performance venues like a **multi-media “black box”** studio; multifunctional space for **acoustic and electroacoustic performance**; and fieldwork labs
- Combined lobby-atrium with bistro or café, performance area for informal noon and rush hour concerts/lectures and student/public common space
- Community gathering space and administrative offices
- **Improved accessibility** for persons with disabilities;

Incorporated into the new buildings will be facilities for groundbreaking research such as:

- Centre for Ethnomusicology
Continue with a mandate to document musical and cultural traditions locally and internationally. The collection includes diverse instruments and more than 4000 titles in audio/video recordings. The Centre helps users understand how people use music to connect, express, and create community and identity.
- folkwaysAlive!
This partnership between the University of Alberta and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings in Washington DC provides a home for over two thousand Folkways Records donated to the University by company founder, Moses Asch. Building on this valuable collection, folkwaysAlive! houses a digital archive, provides research opportunities, and presents public performances that relate to and enhance the Folkways philosophy and traditions.
- Virtual Learning Centre for Music
- Envisioned to allow professors to provide masterclass or lectures by video feeds to outlying areas (local, national, international) and through video bring world-class master artists/academics to University students and community.
- Fine Arts (Printmaking) Centre of Excellence
Since 1994, this centre will continue to build on its stellar record of excellence. Breakthrough research in digital print interfaces places University of Alberta printmakers at the forefront of the discipline. The MFA Printmaking graduate program is recognized as one of the best in the world.
- Centre for Northern Design Studies
Working collaboratively with First Nation and rural communities, this centre will help envision sustainable and holistic design solutions that facilitate social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing as well as cultural continuity in the circumpolar north. Building upon ten years of research, establishment of this centre will enable continuation of these critical community engagements.

Strategic Alignment/Stakeholder Benefits

1) University of Alberta

It is likely that most Edmontonians encounter the University through their interaction with our fine arts professors, students, and programs than with any other part of the University. They attend plays, concerts and visit galleries where our creative artists are performing or contributing in significant ways to the production. As noted in University of Alberta's Comprehensive Institutional Plan 2012, "There is little question that the depth and breadth of U of A's...fine arts excellence continues to be a key driver of the artistic and cultural reputation of Edmonton and Alberta" (p. 59).

Development of a fine arts centre housing a School of Music and a School of Art and Design strongly supports the following Access Strategies from the University of Alberta's 2012 Comprehensive Institutional Plan.

Access Theme I: Quality

Access Goal 1: Attract and retain outstanding students

Access Goal 2: Provide foundational support structures for students to create a nurturing environment that allows for positive student experience and engagement

Access Theme II: Learning Environment

Access Goal 6: Ensure a high level of teaching quality

Access Goal 7: Ensure the development and maintenance of quality formal and informal learning spaces.

Access Goal 8: Enhance the digital environment and online presence of our institution

Access Theme III: Student Experience and Engagement

Access Goal 11: Provide enhanced experiential learning opportunities

Access Goal 12: Enhance extra-curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities

Access Theme IV: Innovative Programming

Access Goal 16: Continue development of additional innovative programming to meet the needs of learners and the community

Access Goal 17: Increase access to current high demand programs

Access Theme V: Connections and Collaborations

Access Goal 21: Increase interdisciplinary, collaborative program and initiative development in order to offer students innovative and relevant educational opportunities

Access Goal 22: Maximize program innovation at the Campus Alberta level in order to create exciting learning opportunities and program efficiencies

Research Theme II: Diversified Excellence and Impact

Research Goal 2: Ensure the talented researchers, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and visiting faculty have the resources and opportunities they need to have an impact in their fields

Research Theme III: Internationalization

Research Goal 6: Establish a broad base of meaningful international engagements for global citizenship, education, and outreach

2) **City of Edmonton and Community**

The **Fine Arts departments at the University of Alberta strongly contribute** to the arts

- by educating **students who go into the community** to work, teach, research and **cultivate more culture,**
- by attracting and retaining **outstanding faculty** members **that teach students,** in addition to **contributing to our communities,** and
- by staff, students, faculty and our community groups **promoting Edmonton** and Alberta, as they **share their Music and Art, research and experiences,** with other Canadian cities and ventures internationally.

Through a downtown campus, a fine arts centre housing a School of Music and a School of Art and Design would contribute even more to Edmonton's vital community. And a development of this kind is envisioned *Edmonton Arts 2040: Prosperity with Creativity*, recommendations by the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee. A fine arts centre with a School of Music and a School of Art and Design would serve the City of Edmonton by providing quality, functional spaces that could be used to attract other cultural performers from around Canada and the world, and provide shared space for community partners including the Wirth Institute, Enterprise String Quartet, ESO, Pro Coro Canada, Alberta Baroque Ensemble, the Opera Nuova to name just a few. In addition, this centre would allow us to develop new programs, for example, a new Centre for Northern Design, summer fine arts programs for children, interactive media and gaming design, and upgrading skills for Edmonton and Alberta music and fine arts teachers.

3) **Government of Alberta**

A fine arts centre located in the heart of downtown Edmonton helps achieve the goals of the Department of Culture, as noted in the Culture and Community Services Business Plan 2012-15.

Goal One: Alberta has a sustainable, vibrant arts community that inspires creativity and innovation and is essential to how we live, work and learn.

Goal Two: Alberta, with the support of a strong nonprofit/voluntary sector, has resilient, inclusive and engaged communities

A fine arts centre, through the teaching, learning, creative activities and community outreach housed within, nurtures and also supports the four goals of the *Spirit of Alberta* document:

- A) Ensure Albertans, throughout the province, have access to a wide range of cultural experiences and opportunities
- B) Enhance community capacity to support and promote cultural activity
- C) Encourage excellence in the work of Alberta's cultural professionals and organizations
- D) Foster growth, sustainability and investment in Alberta's cultural industries

The **Fine Arts at the University of Alberta strongly contribute** to the desired outcomes of *The Spirit of Alberta* that include: creating an Alberta that offers a high quality of life and is recognized nationally and internationally as innovative, competitive and able to attract visitors and retain new residents; Albertans have a greater awareness and appreciation for culture and its benefits to society and the economy, and ensuring culture in Alberta is vibrant, growing, and strong; and finally, that our artists and creators are recognized as leaders in Canada.

Recommendations

The City of Edmonton and Government of Alberta support for arts programming and cultural opportunity is evident. As noted in *the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee* summary of recommendations, "The City of Edmonton endorse, in principle, a landmark performing arts centre (PAC) downtown, and designate land for such a development in the city core." Furthermore, the Province of Alberta's cultural policy states "...our government acknowledges that culture is vital to the individual, social and economic well-being of this province and we are committed to continuing to support and promote culture in Alberta's second century". Finally, in a recent interview Premier Alison Redford noted that "Edmonton is our capital city. We want to make sure that in terms of even the renewal of the downtown core, that we're continuing to develop those really important cultural and architectural projects that are going to allow Edmonton to be a cultural highlight" (Edmonton Journal, David Staples, April 19, 2012).

With a Fine Arts Centre in the downtown core of Edmonton there is an opportunity to

- ensure excellence in quality of education and research in the Fine Arts at the University of Alberta,
- continue to strongly support the cultural goals of the City of Edmonton and Government of Alberta, and to
- free-up existing space for repurposing of North campus

Therefore, the Faculty of Arts encourages the City of Edmonton to support this initiative for a vision of the University of Alberta's School of Music and School of Art and Design, as a cornerstone for a downtown performing arts centre.

Program Area

The chart below depicts estimation of future assignable square metres for the Fine Arts Centre.

School of Music	(m²)
Performance hall (700 seats) and Recital Hall (200 seats)	2200
Ensemble, choral, instrumental rehearsal space	750
Back of House/Technical	750
Front of House student/public common area	2500
Studios, offices and collaboration spaces	3800
Interdisciplinary research space, library and listening area	2400
Sub Total	12 400
School of Art and Design	(m²)
Studio and support space for instruction and research	6000
Inter and multi-disciplinary research and design studios	1800
Gallery and support space	2000
Classroom, lecture and seminar space	600
Multipurpose spaces for community/student engagement	600
Offices and studios for academic service and administration	1600
Sub Total	12 600
TOTAL for University of Alberta Fine Arts Centre(m²)	25 000

Initial Capital Costs

The information below reflects the preliminary estimated costs for this project (to be completed by Facilities and Operations).