Arts Day 2004: Outcomes from Arts Day 2003

During the plenary discussion at the first Arts Day on May 8, 2003, several ideas for improving the arts and culture environment at Penn were developed. In the intervening months, several units of the University have made progress in moving these ideas forward. Below is a summary of some of this progress.

1. Foster collaborations between the Film Studies program and the Bridge Cinema:
During the first year of the collaboration between Penn Cinema Studies and The Bridge, 2003-2004, a variety of projects have been initiated.

A. For the spring of 2004, Penn Cinema Studies is sponsoring bi-weekly 35mm screenings of films scheduled for two Penn undergraduate courses, Film 101 and Film 102. The re-organized student film group “Talking Film” is considering using this series as their first “Penn Film Series.” Ideally, all future screenings for the introductory courses in Cinema Studies will take place in The Bridge.

B. Several additional spring events are being funded by a gift from Shari Redstone, with additional support from Omar Blaik. They have been organized under the rubric of “Film Today,” and each will feature an introduction to a film, followed by a discussion, q & a, and a reception in the lounge of The Bridge. They include:

   a. “Hollywood, Race, and Film Today.” On February 18, The Bridge hosted the regional premier of producer Robert Cort’s Against the Ropes.
   b. “Film Studies Today.” Patricia White (Swarthmore), Timothy Murray (Cornell), and Timothy Corrigan (Penn) will present and discuss a recent film and the key issues it provokes for the academic study of film. A workshop for faculty and graduate students will follow the next day.
   c. “New Technology and Film Today.” Jon Avnet will introduce a rough cut of his digitally based film The World of Tomorrow.
   d. “Alternative Film Today.” One of the leading contemporary documentary filmmakers, Ross McElwee will introduce and discuss his recent critically acclaimed, Bright Leaves.
   e. “Philadelphia and Film Today.” Filmmaker Nathaniel Kahn and producer Susan Behr will introduced and discussed their film about Louis Kahn, My Architect, followed by a conversation with David Brownlee, History of Art and Timothy Corrigan, Cinema Studies.

C. The Philadelphia Film Festival will be in West Philadelphia, expanding the screens at The Bridge from the one screen used last year to two or three screens this year. Additional venues will be offered in the area, and Penn Cinema Studies is exploring ways of offering academic support for the festival.
2. Continue to improve Penn neighborhood as a destination of choice, and
3. Explore how the arts can produce more revenue for Penn: The Departments of Business Services and Facilities and Real Estate Services have developed a variety of programs and services designed to support the arts and culture initiative at Penn. These include:

Business Services:
- Underwriting and sponsorship of programs, such as Annenberg's holiday show with Philadanco in winter 2001.

- Discounted parking for A&C patrons (e.g., Annenberg); volunteers on an annual basis (Museum); and special events (e.g., Museum board meetings), as requested. These arrangements often call for foregoing revenue and extending operating hours and administrative services.

- Since 2000, financial investment in and marketing support for product development, e.g., Sumerian tablets from the Museum; scarves, ties, and notecards from the Arboretum, Museum, etc.

- Consultation with the University Museum staff and further formal recommendations to its Board of Overseers on improving the Museum store's revenues and profitability.

- Front cover coverage of A&C for the 2002-3 Penn telephone directory.

- Ongoing strategic advice to the A&C Council, e.g., July 2002 "Branding Arts and Culture at Penn".

- Inclusion of A&C in Destination Penn literature and hotel concierge and service desk information.

Future possibilities:
- Working on interactive web-driven or software-driven communications solutions to help reach multiple affiliated audiences (e.g. a Campus Express version 2), with the goal of enabling end-users to get updates, subscribe, possibly buy tickets, etc.

- Desire to create and work with market data to help the A&C community find new opportunities to maximize their visibilities and increase revenues. An example: as a member of the WXPN Policy Committee and Capital Campaign, DBS hosted a XPN event at the Morris Arboretum in late October. There were several attendees who "overlapped" in interest, and are potential subscribers to the station and to the Arboretum. There are other informational and operational overlaps which can be "exploited" by getting good market data, from verifiable sources such as the Philadelphia Inquirer and by conducting focus groups, etc.
4. Collaboration on programs for children, as part of urban outreach: In Penn’s efforts to improve relationships with the community, children are one of the most important audiences. What follows is a list of some – though by no means all -- of the programs for children sponsored by the Annenberg Center, the University Museum, Kelly Writers House, the Arthur Ross Gallery and the Center for Community Partnerships’ Community Arts Partnership.

I. Annenberg’s daytime school day Student Discovery Series (* = Dance Celebration events) is tied into their regular Penn Presents programming. All programs are presented at 10:30 am and teachers from local schools are invited to attend with their students:

- Preservation Hall Jazz Band
- Rick Miller's Machomer
- Ballet Boyz*
- Wadaiko Yamato
- Parsons Dance Company*
- Hubbard Street Dance Chicago*
- Sydney Dance Company*
- Habib Koité and Bamada
- Pascal Rioul Dance Theatre*
- Guthrie Theatre: *Othello
- Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal*
- Pilobolus*
- Wynton Marsalis

In addition, Annenberg typically also presents a number of children's shows booked exclusively for young audiences. This year these latter shows are all associated with the 26th Annual Showcase of Performing Arts for Young People, which they are hosting January 22-24, comprising roughly 18 performances. Beyond this, they also arrange a limited number of outreach programs into the schools, where artists' schedules permit.

Annenberg’s annual Philadelphia International Children's Festival is being expanded to seven days from the previous five-day norm. This year's 20th annual Festival will take place April 25 to May 2, comprising roughly 50 performances indoor and outside, plus an outdoor crafts fair.

Annenberg also hosts a series of local children's dance school recitals throughout the months of May and June, conducted by the local dance schools, typically each comprising multiple sold-out performances in the Zellerbach and occasionally Harold Prince Theatres.

The annual 6-week, c.250-child Philadelphia Recreation Department Performing Arts Summer Camp occupies most of Annenberg’s spaces Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 to 3:30, typically beginning in late June and ending in mid-August.
II. The University Museum has many school programs, both hosting schoolchildren at the Museum and with Museum staff going out to schools (the Museum on the Go program). They also host public programs: a summer camp, Saturday Children's workshops, exhibition openings and world culture family days with activities geared to kids and families. They also have the Pyramid Shop for children.

The Museum website provides an excellent entrance into their programs for children, including a “Just for Kids” page and a calendar for Kids and Family. Also, they have special webpages designed for teachers who want to utilize the Museum’s resources and collections.

III. Kelly Writers House sponsors numerous programs for local children, including the weekly “Write-On!”, where they meet with young Penn poets and fiction writers and try their hands at creative writing, and the "Saturday Reading Cooperative," in which second-grade Lea School participants read and write and have snacks with Penn writers.

IV. The Arthur Ross Gallery Elementary Education Program is two-hour interactive experience in which children from area schools come to the Gallery for a tour, story-telling/performance, and hands-on art making. For the past 10 years, the program has created an interdisciplinary programming that gives children historical context for the exhibitions, raises questions relevant to the students' lives, and stimulates their curiosity. Funded annually by small grants and gifts, the Gallery is committed to bringing its cultural resources, free of charge, to local public schools with limited art programs. The program is geared to 30-40 students at a time. Over the course of 1 to 2 weeks, two sessions are arranged on performance days, one before and one after lunch.

V. The Center for Community Partnerships, under the aegis of their Community Arts Partnership (CAP) program, funded by a grant from the William Penn Foundation, sponsors numerous programs for children as part of their program of Academically-Based Community Service courses, including:

- History 214/Urban Studies 078/ African-American Studies 078: Urban-University Community Relationships. This course involves an afterschool medical program at the Drew School, with a weekly Penn-student-facilitated arts day and the production of a literary magazine.
- Music 253: Performance in Africa. This course, taught by a Penn ethnomusicologist, involves a dance workshop on South African traditional dances.
- Education 619/Urban Studies 619: Critical Perspectives in Contemporary Urban Education. This course, which focuses on conditions for teaching and learning in public schools, current theories of pedagogy in urban education, and perspectives on urban reform efforts, involves an artist-in-residence program.
5. **Get better audience/utilization data, to determine how many students, faculty, staff, alumni, etc. currently use A&C venues:** Sharlene Sones, on the staff in Business Services, has outlined objectives to identify audience-target market demos through market research. She spoke with Wharton about getting some of their graduate students who could execute such a project (which would also serve to further engage Wharton with arts & culture). The project is on hold while Penn is developing the arts & culture website, since the site could be a valuable tool that can be used as a means to execute some research online. She intends to revisit this project in the summer and fall of 2004.

6. **Improve marketing to graduate and professional students as well as undergraduates:**
   To discuss how to market more effectively to graduate students, A&C venue marketing directors can work through the Graduate Student Center. The GSC already sponsors cultural activities for graduate students, such as an exhibition of paintings done by a graduate student in Fine Arts. The contact person at the GSC is the Director, Anita Mastroieni.

   To market more effectively to undergraduate students, A&C venue marketing directors can work through the Performing Arts Council, a student organization comprised of representatives from most of the performing arts groups on campus, including dance troupes, singing groups, and theater companies. Students involved in these activities are often very interested in attending performances and exhibits, as well as participating in them. Their e-mail is pac@dolphin.upenn.edu.

7. **Benchmark re: marketing against other institutions with A&C:** One of the most important ways other institutions have raised the visibility of arts and culture on their campuses is to create a central website promoting their programs in this area. Penn is in the process of creating such a site, which will include a section on academic programs as well as on the arts and culture venues themselves. A demonstration of the site will be available on Arts Day, and the full site is expected to be live at by the beginning of the next academic year.

8. **Take better advantage of large regional alumni network:** Bob Alig, Assistant Vice President in charge of Alumni Relations, is eager to work with the arts and culture venues to market their events to the large regional alumni network. He recommends that arts and culture venues promote their activities in the Red & Blue Online, an electronic newsletter that goes every month to nearly 90,000 alumni. Even those who don’t live in this area (and therefore cannot easily attend the events themselves) will become more aware of the artistic and cultural resources available at Penn. To see the most recent issue of the Red & Blue Online, go to: http://www.alumni.upenn.edu

   Bob has also offered to showcase arts and culture within the programming that is created each year for Homecoming and Alumni Weekend. Venues interested in collaborating with Alumni Relations in promoting their activities during these events should contact Bob directly.
9. **Emphasize A&C better to prospective students even before they apply, to draw a more artistically oriented student body:** Lee Stetson, the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, has been working with the Music Department to pilot an effort to raise visibility of Penn’s music programs among prospective students. He has appointed a liaison on his staff who has, among other things, organized musical performances by students during Penn Previews and included information about music performance opportunities in promotional materials. Music was also a topic highlighted when the admissions staff went through their annual training this past summer.

10. **Involve Board members in recruitment of prospective students interested in the arts and cultural activities:** Board members who are Penn alumni can become involved in helping to recruit new students by working with the Secondary Schools Committee, an organization sponsored by the Undergraduate Admissions Office. Members of the SSC actively recruit students for Penn, conduct interviews with prospective students, represent Penn at college fairs, and sometimes serve as informal liaisons to secondary schools. Volunteers who would like to help identify academically and artistically gifted young people and introduce them to the University may sign up with the Undergraduate Admissions Office and are mailed orientation materials and contact information for local SSC chairs. All interested Board members can contact Doris Cochran-Fikes to participate in the SSC’s activities.

11. **Integrate practice and study better; overcome Penn culture and intellectual barriers between practitioners and scholars in the arts and culture areas:** In conjunction with the University’s strategic plan, the College has identified as a priority the expansion of undergraduate research. The integration of practice and study in the arts and culture area is an ideal way to further this end, since Penn’s arts and cultures institutions are places where student can participate in hands-on learning as the ground of the undergraduate research experience. The College will develop a set of “apprenticeship” opportunities for students in conjunction with the A&C venues. The first of these initiatives is underway at the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, where students study as “apprentices” to master writers. Similar relationships could be defined with the curators of the ICA, Arthur Ross, and the Museum, the editors of the Penn Press, or the artistic directors of Penn Presents. Venues interested in having student apprentices could designate a contact person who would coordinate the supervision and act as liaison with the relevant School(s) or department(s).

12. **Set A&C as a priority area for the College, using A&C venues as labs for students interested in studying these things:** Penn’s extraordinary resources in the arts and culture offer a laboratory for both course work and student research. The museum collections may provide hands-on experience for students to learn curatorial skills; alternatively, they can be the basis of independent research projects or writing courses. Similarly, the performance venues offer opportunities for student to study and write about performance, in conjunction with their course work.

The A&C venues have provided a list of recent and proposed collaborative efforts with the College. These efforts include, but are not limited to, the following:
a. Curatorial seminars in the Art History Department held in conjunction with the ICA and the Arthur Ross Gallery.

b. Anthropology courses that employ Museum curators and the collections, including Bob Schuyler’s field work courses in southern New Jersey and Clark Erickson’s courses that involve the digitizing of rare objects from the collections.

c. The proposed collaboration between the ICA, the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, and the Kelly Writers House that will create a year-long writing seminar for students to learn to write about contemporary art and art performance and produce a magazine featuring their work.

d. “Brave Testimony,” a sequence of readings by African-American poets that is a collaboration between Kelly Writers House and the Center for Africana Studies.

e. Undergraduate research sponsored by the Penn Humanities Forum (culminating in a undergraduate research conference).

f. Apprenticeships for undergraduate students at arts and culture venues, so they can connect what they learn in the classroom with the actual practice of the arts.

13. Encourage faculty and staff to bring their own personal expressive lives to campus, to enrich their own experience and that of students at Penn: Examples of such programs already in place include:
   • Kelly Writers House has sponsored programs in which faculty members perform readings of their own works, whether scholarly or creative.
   • Wharton has sponsored an annual exhibition of artworks creating by Wharton faculty and staff.
   • The Burrison Gallery in the Faculty Club often exhibits works by people affiliated with the University.

14. Use A&C venues to hold classes in areas not related to their subject area, to expose students who would not otherwise go there to what they have to offer: According to Registrar Ron Sanders, any venue that has classroom space may list that space in the Central Classroom Pool, and classes can be assigned to be held there. Venues interested in having classes held within their facilities can contact Ron for more information on how to get a classroom listed in the central pool.