



THE NAPA GROUP
Strategy, Leadership & Organizational Consulting

CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS: “ACADEMIC PATHWAYS” PLANNING PROJECT

FINAL REPORT, Revised

Presented by The Napa Group and
Prepared by the Steering Committee for:

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RJ Valentino, President
February 4, 2014

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California College of the Arts “Academic Pathways” Planning Project Final Report

The Napa Group is pleased to present to the California College of the Arts this report, developed by the project Steering Committee and facilitated by The Napa Group. It represents dedicated efforts of the Steering Committee and the College faculty, staff and students through a series of engagements in October, November and December 2013 and focused on the academic possibilities for CCA. Serving as a preamble to academic planning and the College’s next strategic plan, it captures the community’s sentiments on curriculum, technology in learning and education and the Bay Area geography as a defining position for CCA.

We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to Melanie Corn for her commitment to and leadership of the project. We’d also like to acknowledge and thank the Steering Committee for their guidance, advocacy for the values of the College and for sharing their expertise, institutional knowledge, perspectives and insights on the future of arts, design and architecture education. In addition, to Melanie Corn, the Steering Committee members are: Juvenal Acosta, Associate Professor of Writing & Literature and Director, Humanities and Sciences; Kim Anno, Professor of Painting and Vice President of the Faculty Senate; Chris Bliss, Vice President of Communications; Mara Hancock, CIO and Vice President of Educational Technology; Jason Johnson, Assistant Professor and Former Chair of the (Collegewide Faculty) Curriculum Committee; Aaron McKenzie, Center for Art and Public Life Program Manager for Design and Strategy, CCA Alum (ID); Ted Purves, Associate Professor and Chair of Graduate Fine Arts; Mitchell Schwarzer, Professor of Visual Studies, President of the Faculty Senate; Kristian Simsarian, Associate Professor and Chair of Interaction Design; Allison Smith, Associate Professor and Chair of Sculpture; and Jennifer Stein, Vice President of Operations.

We’d like to also thank the faculty, staff and students who shared their time, talent and innovative perspectives in the focus groups and to the CCA community for their participation in the electronic surveys. The combined efforts of all these groups and individuals not only broadened and enriched the themes, but also ensured a project that was inclusive and participatory.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with CCA and to have been part of this project. We’re confident that you’ll find the results directional and inspirational as you chart the exciting future of the College.

RJ Valentino
President

February 4, 2014

Part One: Overview and Proposed Academic Themes

I. Overview

“Our programs cultivate graduates who will produce theoretically engaged, real-world work. We believe that our students are world makers.” California College of the Arts

As the California College of the Arts reaches the midpoint of its 2010-2015 “Dream Big” strategic plan and begins to contemplate the next era of strategic planning, the executive leadership determined that developing an academic strategic vision for the College is central to preparing for the next comprehensive planning exercise. CCA retained The Napa Group to facilitate an inclusive and objective process that would consider the significant growth of enrollment and geographic footprint during the last eight years and engage the College community in a series of activities to define key academic directives.

The data-informed project came at an important inflection point in the College’s history – a time of key decisions around location, growth, competition, sustainability and dynamic change in higher education, including opportunities and challenges specific to arts institutions. Like all arts institutions, CCA is experiencing issues faced by other colleges and universities of all sizes: fluctuating enrollments, rising costs and student debt, lack of diversified revenue sources, competition for differentiated brands, changing demographics and evolving expectations for career preparation. Continuing to fulfill the commitments of its 2010-2015 Dream Big Strategic Plan and focus its academic priorities, CCA is in the company of other arts institutions exploring or adopting a broad variety of innovative practices to build on their strengths, enhance reputation and visibility and ensure financial sustainability and growth.

These trends include:

- Flexible, personalized education options
- Interdisciplinary education that blurs borders
- Desire for social impact that connects art and design to civic service and social justice
- Diversity initiatives in pedagogy and practice
- Expectations for ecologically responsible, sustainable design
- Partnerships and relationships that diversify programs and revenue sources
- Increasingly international student profiles
- Substantial new thinking about how to define and contribute the creative leadership necessary for the betterment of society

Led by a Steering Committee convened by Provost Melanie Corn and consisting of faculty and staff, the project included a series of engagement activities – interviews, focus groups and surveys – with CCA faculty, administrators, staff and students to explore, define and frame the academic direction for the path forward. The three areas of focus for this project are:

(1) academic strategies, pedagogies and priorities that frame CCA's next academic plan; (2) technology (such as hybrid learning and teaching), the impact of technology in arts curricula and partnership opportunities to expand student experiential learning; and (3) leveraging the College's position in the Bay Area for maximum presence, contributions and impact.

As a result of these activities and input from the CCA community, the Steering Committee developed the following academic themes to guide the planning process as it moves forward.

II. "From Aspirational to Operational" – Proposed Academic Themes

Academic pathways (themes) for CCA proposed by the Steering Committee (January 21, 2014)

California College of the Arts is the hub of the **San Francisco Bay's creative culture** – a vibrant global leader for **risk and experimentation, social justice, and technological innovation and critique**. CCA inspires and helps implement the Bay Area's creative mix and continuous leading-edge contributions through academic priorities built on **hybridity and interdisciplinarity**. Through this academic platform, supported by **external education and collaborative communities**, CCA students and graduates acquire the tools to become the next generation of creative professionals who will shape the creative economy and the creativity of our communities, in the Bay Area and wherever they take their talents to live and work around the globe.

Seven proposed academic themes for CCA

1. **San Francisco Bay Area** – CCA sees its Bay Area location as an academic metaphor for a climate of innovation, a school willing to challenge existing models, transdisciplinarity, flexibility and freedom. There are many metaphors here to build on, from the Gold Rush and pioneering to utopian and avant garde. This ethos and emphasis should be applied across all programs and the outcomes we expect.
2. **Risk and Experimentation** – CCA embodies a culture of experimentation, risk-taking and challenging the status quo, both within the curriculum and outside in co-curricular and external activities. The Bay Area *and* the College are places where one is empowered to push against boundaries and norms of both the art world and society. We value excellence and rigor and view experimentation as a process toward these ends. We encourage risk-taking, for example, to create a culture in which it is safe to express unsafe and untested ideas and in which the dichotomy between art and design can be unraveled.
3. **Social justice** – Since its founding in the Arts & Crafts movement, CCA has recognized that the arts are deeply connected to society. Art, design and architecture can be both the lens

and the vehicle for social and environmental justice. The College is committed to developing the next generation of creative problem solvers who are involved with social issues and sustainability and who want to make art that matters. We understand that entrepreneurialism and a strong preparation for the creative economy can complement rather than antagonize ethical commitments. Thus, our students will have unique skills to build their worlds, which means a dialogue between the value of artistic labor, that which we make, economics and social values.

4. **Technological Innovation and Critique** – CCA acknowledges that technology is embedded across the entire lifecycle of creative change-making from ideation to construction to sharing; the College takes particular pride in its ability to provide a platform to critique technology vis-à-vis an ethical framework that considers all the ramifications of technology. Across all programs, students will learn digital literacy but will not graduate without a critical apparatus around that. All students and graduates will have a contemporary array of tools and techniques to contribute their creativity, and the school will strive to bring the Bay Area’s hallmark technological innovation into the classroom. It is vital that all faculty, staff and students are responsible for understanding the digital tools and being fluent in the digital culture in which we live.
5. **Hybridity and Interdisciplinarity** – CCA shall remain a school that values its disciplinary depths and strengths in the fine arts, craft, design and architecture fields. However, all CCA programs and disciplines are enhanced by the interdisciplinary nature of CCA and its campus. The College should foster hybridity within our academic community as a value that exists within critical contemporary culture and the creative economy. By building on the centuries-long continuum from tradition to innovation, we can develop more harmonious integration of the expertise of each on a constant basis throughout the curriculum. We should strengthen opportunities for faculty and students to make multidisciplinary collaboration or hybrid practices more central to their work as organizing principles for labs, studios, projects and curriculum.
6. **External Education** – A highlight of the CCA academic experience will be to embed, strengthen and require external learning opportunities to broaden and reinforce learning. These include ENGAGE classes, internships, study abroad, the creation of incubators and other entrepreneurial activities. We understand that learning takes place both in and out of the classroom; we feel that building external opportunities into the curriculum is vital to understanding the “Bay Area-ness” of a CCA education, growing as a global citizen and developing one’s values and professional skills. Every student will have experienced some part of the curriculum outside the College – with no exceptions.
7. **Collaborative Communities** – CCA educates collaborative creative change-makers who can navigate in a tech-driven society and marketplace. We recognize that few creative leaders work alone, and collaboration is more central than ever as a key skill for social change,

culture creation and economic success. The College also recognizes that faculty members are on their own learning journeys and need support in their own professional and pedagogical development. Successful achievement of 21st century learning outcomes requires a faculty willing to engage in a dynamic, evolving pedagogy that often situates faculty and student simultaneously as co-learners and co-leaders. There is a need to create a space to foster this learning community (with both interdisciplinary breadth and disciplinary depth). In this regard, we also embrace the principle that students can and should lead by example and learn to be leaders, teachers and active citizens and create their own opportunities both curricularly and co-curricularly.

These academic themes, resulting from Steering Committee deliberations and informed by the constituent engagement activities, provide the intellectual and applied framework for academic planning and the College's next strategic plan.

Part Two: Project Process, Activities and Data

I. Project Governance and Process

The four-month project, from September 2013 to January 2014, was led by a Steering Committee of faculty and staff, convened by Provost Melanie Corn and facilitated by The Napa Group. In addition to Provost Corn, Steering Committee members were: Juvenal Acosta, Associate Professor of Writing & Literature and Director, Humanities and Sciences; Kim Anno, Professor of Painting and Vice President of the Faculty Senate; Chris Bliss, Vice President of Communications; Mara Hancock, CIO and Vice President of Educational Technology; Jason Johnson, Assistant Professor and Former Chair of the (Collegewide Faculty) Curriculum Committee; Aaron McKenzie, Center for Art and Public Life Program Manager for Design and Strategy, CCA Alum (ID); Ted Purves, Associate Professor and Chair of Graduate Fine Arts; Mitchell Schwarzer, Professor of Visual Studies, President of the Faculty Senate; Kristian Simsarian, Associate Professor and Chair of Interaction Design; Allison Smith, Associate Professor and Chair of Sculpture; and Jennifer Stein, Vice President of Operations.

The Steering Committee reviewed best practices and trends reports by The Napa Group (covering private higher education in general as well as specified arts institutions and other institutions that model innovative academic approaches and delivery systems), developed directional areas and topics to be considered, framed the questions for constituent engagement activities and developed the proposed academic themes.

II. Summary Findings and Highlights of Constituent Engagement Activities

The interviews, focus groups and surveys engaged the community around the three project themes:

- A. **Academic** strategies, pedagogies and priorities that frame CCA's next academic plan
- B. **Technology** (such as hybrid learning and teaching), the impact of technology in arts curricula and partnership opportunities to expand student experiential learning
- C. Leveraging the College's position in the **Bay Area** for maximum presence, contributions and impact

Following are the high-level takeaways from the listening sessions, focus groups and the surveys. The first section addresses areas of academic strategies, pedagogies and priorities, followed by technology and leveraging the geographic location. These high level takeaways are further delineated in the data provided in the Appendices.

ACADEMIC STRATEGIES, PEDAGOGIES AND PRIORITIES (HIGH-LEVEL TAKEAWAYS)

1. **Faculty and staff surveyed agree on the top 3 areas of academic differentiation for CCA:**
 - Location in the San Francisco Bay Area, an enviable location among arts institutions
 - Connections between tradition and innovation
 - Tradition of social justice and community engagement
2. **The top 3 areas of potential academic enhancement to attract new students and partners, according to faculty and staff surveyed, are:**
 - Class and studio technologies
 - Collaborations with other organizations (e.g., nonprofits, arts, community, civic, government)
 - Interdisciplinary experiences
3. **Students value the “small and personal feeling,” small classes with individual attention, specialized programs with strong reputations and faculty who are working in jobs and careers that students wish to pursue.**
4. **Online degree and non-degree programs are “Not Important” to nearly two-thirds of faculty and nearly half of staff surveyed.**

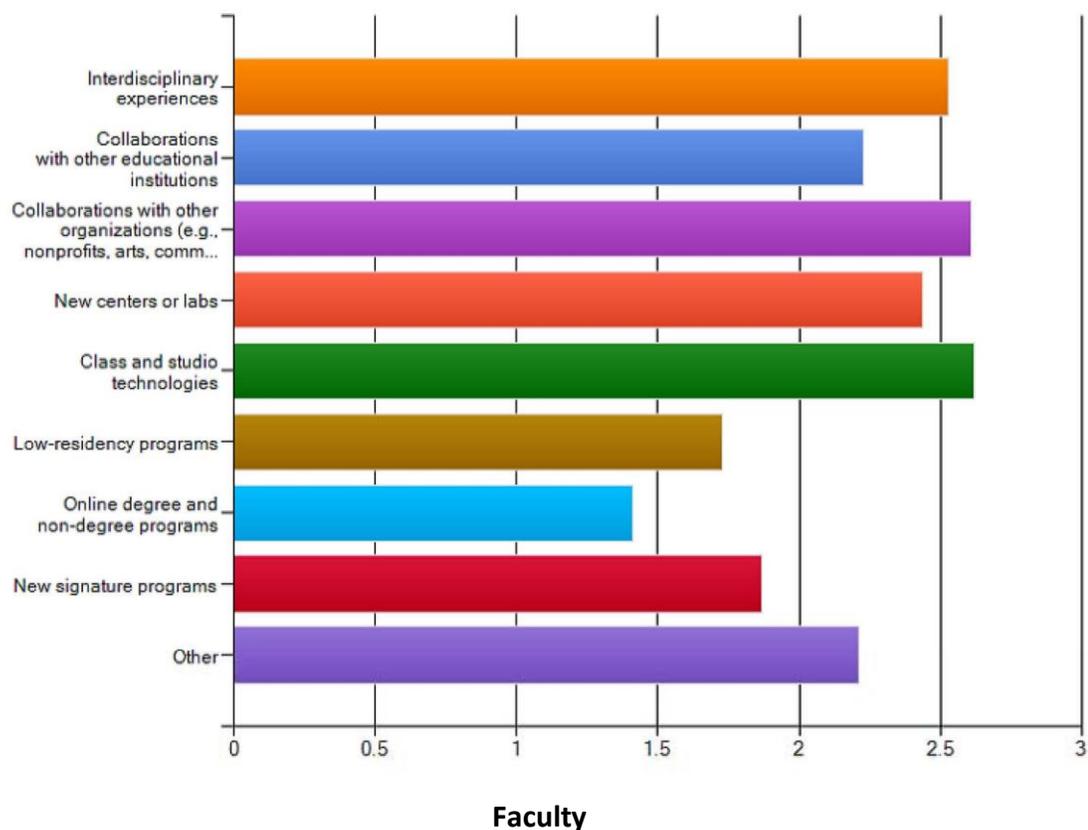
NOTE: This seems to indicate some misalignment around strategic opportunities regarding the value of pursuing online programs and programs for non-traditional students and provides an opportunity for further dialogue.

5. **Faculty and staff desire more resources devoted to improve current program quality, facilities and equipment rather than in developing new programs, according to focus group discussions.** The rapid growth of the past few years has stretched investments in existing services, support and equipment across the campus.
6. **Faculty and staff as a whole do not support the development of new programs without the appropriate investment in the infrastructure to enable them to be successful and sustainable.** Of particular note are student and faculty services and support for the international enrollment strategies. This is reported to impact the quality of the educational experience for both faculty and students and the retention rates for international students.
7. **It’s reported that “interdisciplinarity” is used frequently to describe pedagogies, but that the vision is not clear and mechanics to execute it are not institutionalized,** e.g., common space for cross-campus interactions and compensation systems that reinforce collaborations, to mention a few.

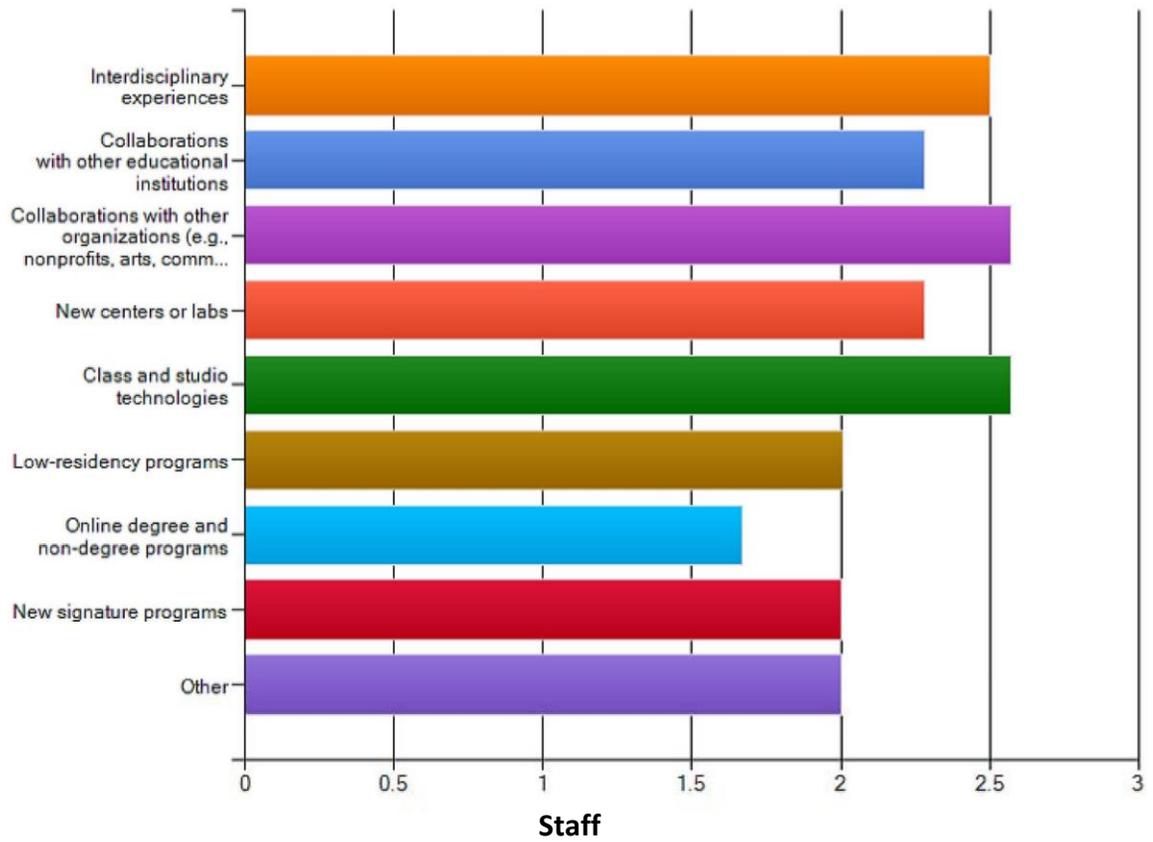
8. **Disruptive, unresolved tension exists between “crafts+arts” and “design+innovation” that is experienced regularly across the community, including by students, in terms of academic priorities and resources and facility and equipment investments.**

9. **A tentative brand and institutional strategy to advance the brand – the essence of the CCA story.** From Steering Committee conversations to the focus groups and interviews, a consistent theme centered around the need for clarity of the CCA brand of the future that embraces the dichotomy (crafts+arts *plus* design+innovation), the Bay Area location and other CCA values (such as diversity) in a compelling way.

Where should CCA enhance or expand its academic portfolio to attract new students and partners? [Rank the following as Not Important, Somewhat Important, Very Important]



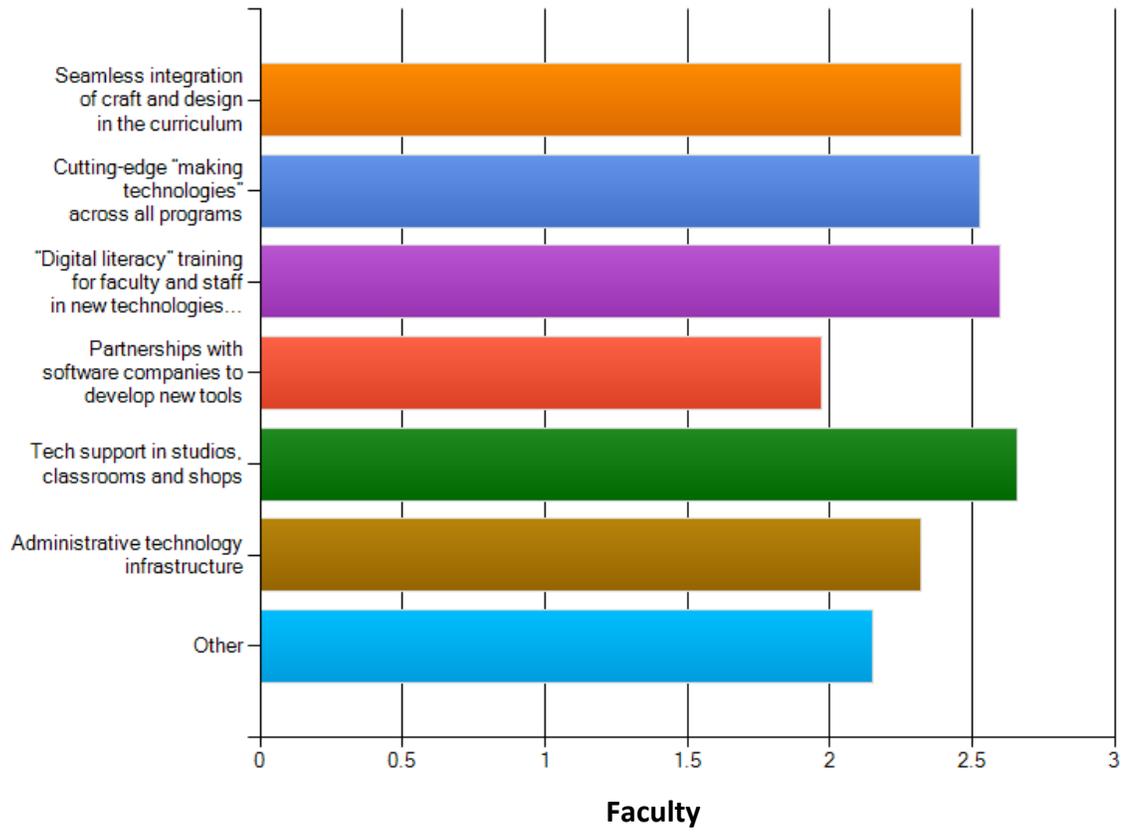
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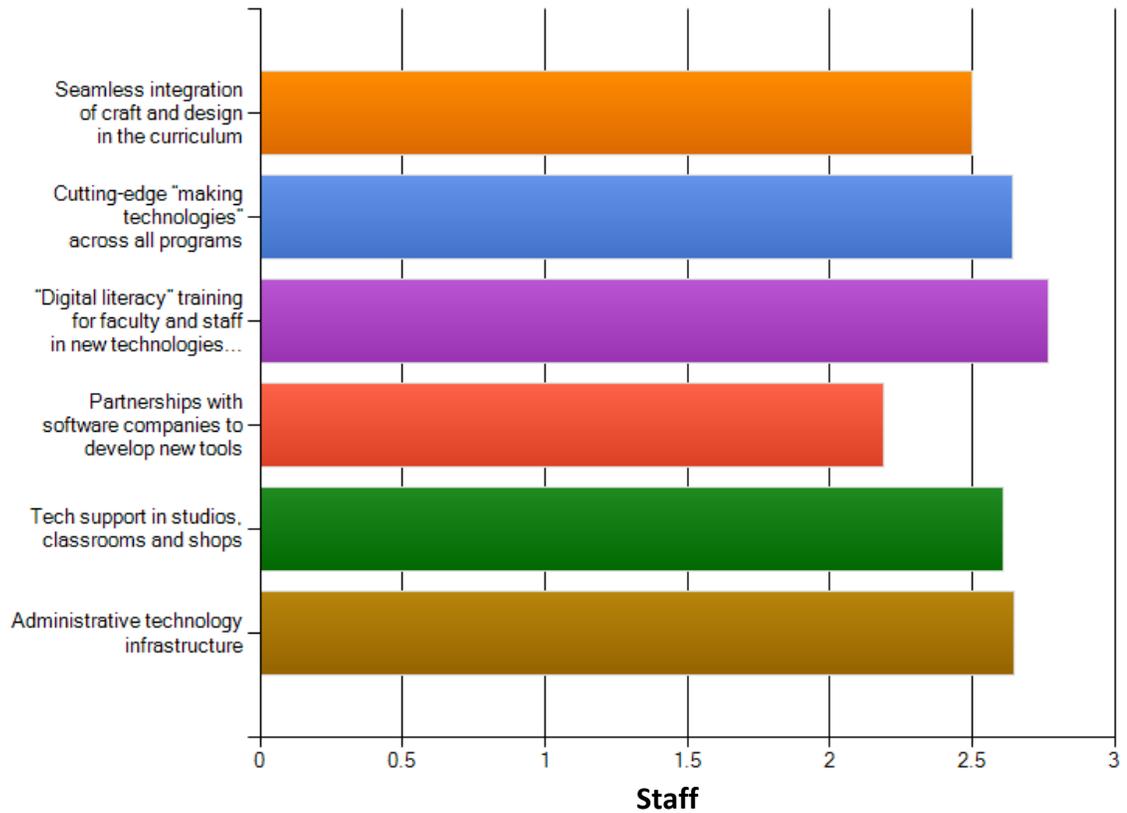
TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CURRICULUM AND PARTNERSHIPS (HIGH-LEVEL TAKEAWAYS)

- 1. Faculty, staff and students are united in a consensus that technology improvements and investments are vital to keeping pace with academic quality and producing students who are versatile in new technologies in their careers, professions and art.** However, there is consistent concern that CCA is not only falling behind in keeping pace with technology development, especially in digital fabrication, but that available equipment is stretched far beyond capacity as student enrollment increases.
- 2. This being said, there is not alignment between the faculty and the administration on the College's online learning strategies, as the focus groups and surveys show.**
- 3. Faculty and staff surveyed defined the priority technology investments as:**
 - “Digital literacy” training for faculty and staff in new technologies to enhance instruction, skills and collaboration in teaching and learning
 - Tech support in studios, classrooms and shops
 - Cutting-edge “making technologies” across all programs – supported by seamless integration of craft and design across the curriculum, hybrid labs and flexible spaces
 - Administrative technology infrastructure was also of particular importance to staff.
- 4. Both faculty and students reported that some faculty lack up-to-date or even adequate technology skills compared to their students, yet do not have internal resources or formalized support systems to develop these skills.**
- 5. There is strong support for the development of a comprehensive technology strategy and infrastructure plan that is resourced and identifies clear priorities linked to a roadmap (milestones) for development and investment.** The quality and age of technology tools are reported as inconsistent across the curriculum by faculty, staff and students, creating feelings of inequity, lower priorities and uneven career-readiness for students.
- 6. There is an opportunity for the College to develop a common language and understanding for technology as it is used differently in discussions and across the two campuses.**

What technology investments are needed to ensure a state-of-the-art experience? [Rank the following as Not Important, Somewhat Important or Very Important]



What technology investments are needed to ensure a state-of-the-art experience? [Rank the following as Not Important, Somewhat Important or Very Important]



LEVERAGING CCA IN THE BAY AREA FOR MAXIMUM VISIBILITY AND IMPACT (HIGH-LEVEL TAKEAWAYS)

1. **There is not a shared view internally about CCA's Bay Area presence and opportunities for purposeful and strategic visibility and impact.** Both the faculty and staff surveys showed a wide range of opinions distributed across options for "Very Important" and "Somewhat Important" as reflected in the tables below. This is an example of a topic that should be probed more extensively with the community as academic planning proceeds.

For example, when combining these two categories, faculty put highest priority on:

- Connections with international alumni
- Professors of Practice from a variety of industries
- Social entrepreneurship incubators for students
- Creative leadership for complex social, civic and environmental issues

More than half the faculty who answered the question also responded that "classes onsite in tech companies and community organizations" were "Somewhat Important."

More than half of staff said that “Professors of Practice from a variety of industries,” “Social entrepreneurship incubators for students” and “Creative leadership for complex social, civic and environmental issues” are “Very Important.” But nearly half also favored “Footprint in the city of San Francisco’s Innovation Corridor.”

Table – Question 6:

Faculty Survey					
Q6: What relationships should CCA further develop to strengthen its Bay Area presence? [Rank as Not Important, Somewhat Important, Very Important]					
Answer Options	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Connections with international alumni	9	97	65	2.33	171
Professors of Practice from a variety of industries	17	80	74	2.33	171
Social entrepreneurship incubators for students	23	77	71	2.28	171
Classes onsite in tech companies and community organizations	39	90	40	2.01	169
Dual degrees with other educational institutions	57	84	29	1.84	170
Footprint in the City of San Francisco’s Innovation Corridor	39	71	60	2.12	170
Creative leadership for complex social, civic and environmental issues	12	55	105	2.54	172
Other [please specify]					13
<i>answered question</i>					174
<i>skipped question</i>					2

Table – Question 6:

Staff Survey					
Q6: What relationships should CCA further develop to strengthen its Bay Area presence? [Rank as Not Important, Somewhat Important, Very Important]					
Answer Options	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Connections with international alumni	9	69	31	2.20	109
Professors of Practice from a variety of industries	5	40	65	2.55	110
Social entrepreneurship incubators for students	6	45	55	2.46	106
Classes onsite in tech companies and community organizations	17	52	39	2.20	108
Dual degrees with other educational institutions	34	57	18	1.85	109
Footprint in the City of San Francisco’s Innovation Corridor	14	45	50	2.33	109
Creative leadership for complex social, civic and environmental issues	6	38	63	2.53	107
Other	8	2	7	1.94	17
Other [please specify]					9
answered question					110
skipped question					0

2. **In a similar vein, focus groups participants recognized the possibility of new partnerships to benefit students and CCA’s contributions to the Bay Area, but there was no alignment on the best options.** In addition, the predisposition for new partnerships is more positive among the San Francisco campus community than in the Oakland community.

3. **Students seek more ways to take advantage of the Bay Area for their academic pursuits, to gain more hands-on experience with practitioners, apply their learning to tackle community issues for social purpose and collaborate with students in other institutions on “real-world” projects for career preparation and social entrepreneurship.**

4. **The Steering Committee identified “diversity” as a central theme of Bay Area presence. That said, it was viewed from multiple lenses that emphasized the value of diversity and inclusion in the CCA legacy and the enrichment afforded the CCA community through diverse lifestyles, cultures, etc.** This area is worthy of considerable follow-up and ongoing discussion as it is marketed as an integral part of the College’s history, culture, future and brand. *(See comment under the international strategy.)*

5. **If growth in international recruitment continues as a key strategy, it's suggested that expanded efforts be made to better integrate international students into the CCA network; it's commonly viewed that the objective is to "Westernize" international students rather than to create a truly inter-cultural campus.** Underperformance in the English as Second Language (ESL) support service impacts are widespread, according to focus group discussions – including insufficient support for faculty facing an influx of international students in their classrooms, academic and social support for international students and poor retention of international students.

6. **While "unification" was not a formal topic of this project, the topic surfaced frequently.** Comments included the distinct benefits of two campuses; concerns about design dominating future planning; and the value of consolidation for brand, academic synergy, efficiencies, an enhanced student experience, a more potent Bay Area presence and partnerships. Of particular note is the high level of expressed resistance by faculty to selling the Oakland campus; this is quite separate from the perceived directive from the Board to unify on the San Francisco campus. This topic has been discussed within the community for some time without clear direction from leadership regarding a decision timeline. With certain external activities occurring that are known in the community, this topic not only raises angst among the faculty and students, but creates some distrust around the administration's intentions and communications about the issue.

Part Three: Next Steps in Academic Planning

Based on the data from the constituent engagement activities and their own leadership positions in the institution, the Steering Committee has defined seven themes that should drive academic planning. By engaging the community around these issues, CCA has set the expectation that the dialogue will continue through a formal academic planning process with the CCA community to define specific programs, priorities, focus and next steps. This continuity will be vital to leveraging the College's investment in the academic theming process, to sustaining momentum and to furthering trust and credibility with the College community.

The following activities are recommended:

1. If orchestrated, planned and communicated well, academic planning can become an "event" that further coalesces and builds community within CCA. To move this forward, we suggest highlighting the partnership between senior leadership and the faculty in working together to drive the academic direction of the College, an activity critical to the College's future. We recommend that the President and Provost (1) meet with the Steering Committee to formally celebrate the project outcomes and acknowledge the work of the committee; (2) engage in dialogue around the data and the analyses; enhance the momentum developed during the project by framing the next steps and affirming the unique and distinctive thematic directions; assess strategies and areas that are not aligned, e.g., expansion of external partnerships and growth of new programs and online and non-degree programs, and begin to align on these areas; and (3) develop a plan for sharing the report and information with the faculty, staff, students and the Board through communications vehicles that are circular and encourage dialogue.
2. To support this, as was recommended in the Steering Committee process, establish an intranet or blog to post the report, survey and focus group reports and opportunities for comment. Commit the resources to ensure that the blog is fresh and responsive; use it as a means to continue providing follow-up about the academic planning process.
3. Schedule town halls for ongoing discussion with the community on selected topics, e.g., diversity, technology, location, unification, program and infrastructure investment; share strategies, express points of view and garner input from the community on these critical issues.
4. Charge small solution teams (task forces) to begin to resolve issues and align solutions around the topics/strategies critical to the College's future success, e.g., international support services, fixing the ESL issue, developing a truly intercultural campus; developing the infrastructure to support interdisciplinary programs; developing the College's technology plan; others as determined critical to supporting the College's next

academic and strategic plans. If these infrastructure and support areas are addressed in parallel to planning, the next plan's performance trajectories can be accelerated. Align and integrate these groups with others that may be formed around the *Dream Big* implementation blueprint.

5. Develop and announce the academic planning project plan, champions and timelines, publish the materials for review and discussion internally and set a timetable for developing the new academic plan.
6. Review internal communications resources, strategies and impact. It's reported that most of the communications investment is geared to external markets; it's our suggestion that a formalized internal communications program would significantly enhance engagement, morale and momentum moving forward.
7. Provide an enterprise roadmap that is visually creative to share with the College community that outlines how these activities integrate with other projects that are currently underway or anticipated, e.g., the strategic plan, marketing and branding activities, master planning and development of the new technology plan.
8. Engage the Board in strategic and generative conversations on selected topics and issues related to the next strategic plan and to your future business and financial models; garner input and expertise and support for the academic pathways and the planning project and other areas that may require additional funding and Board advocacy. Use these discussions to discover Board member interest and affinity and link with development and fundraising strategies.