MIT Leader-to-Leader 2012 Report

Arts at MIT

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Arts at MIT 2012

Project Scope and Process

The Arts at MIT was assigned to our Leader to Leader (L2L) Class of 2012 team in the Spring of 2012.

Our original charge from Pam Delphenich, our Sponsor, was as follows:

**Project Objective(s)**
“This project will make recommendations about which models of advocacy, collaboration, governance, and funding will most successfully advance visibility and support for the arts, by focusing both on organizational structures and on new models of flexible collaboration and decentralized leadership.

**Major Deliverables**
- Data about how peer institutions have organized, implemented, and funded arts initiatives
- Comparative analysis with MIT’s structure and approach, assessed in light of the Institute’s distinctive focus on creative work at the intersections of art, science and technology
- Framework for assessing the advantages and disadvantages of various models in light of MIT’s culture
- Recommendations to support MIT’s arts initiatives, in light of obstacles and opportunities for success

Our team read the white paper, “Arts at MIT” and we spent time with our sponsor to understand the charge and scope of the assignment. One of our first meetings was with the Arts Council where we obtained valuable input on the breadth and depth of arts activities at MIT. As part of our research we spent a fascinating hour with the MIT Arts Scholars, a student arts group led by Sam Magee, Coordinator of Student Arts Programs in the Office of the Arts. Our Executive sponsors, Leila and Philip, helped direct us to people at MIT and externally who we interviewed to help us understand the arts landscape and challenges. We checked in regularly with Pam, Leila and Phil and they validated our findings and helped us do course corrections where appropriate. We are extremely grateful to Pam, Leila and Phil for their openness, enthusiasm, support and encouragement.

We interviewed the following people:
State of the Arts at MIT

Organization

The arts are an important part of MIT—from the high level of musical aptitude among a significant portion of incoming freshmen, to the visual arts housed in museums and distributed across the campus, to notable faculty and visiting artists. The importance of arts at MIT is clearly demonstrated by the requirement that students take a significant portion of classes in core curriculum humanities, arts and social sciences fields.

Other indications of the esteem placed on the arts at MIT include the recent receipt of a $1.5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support a new initiative at the intersection of art, science and technology and the Festival of Art + Science + Technology (FAST) that was held during the winter and spring of 2011 in celebration of MIT’s 150th birthday. Despite the artistic thread that runs through MIT, there is a sense that the arts are not considered core to the student and community experience. And, externally, the arts are typically not associated with the MIT “brand”.

Organizationally, the arts at MIT are overseen by Associate Provost Philip Khoury. Within that structure is the Office of the Arts, led by Executive Director of Arts Initiatives Leila Kinney. Among the various activities sponsored by the Office of the Arts are visiting artists residencies, the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, and multiple student programs involving the arts. There are also numerous student led art groups that are
under the auspices of the Dean for Student Life, which illustrate the decentralized nature of MIT’s arts initiatives. The Office of the Arts convenes the Council for the Arts at MIT, a group of 100 supporters appointed by MIT’s president for three-year terms.

The List Visual Arts Center and MIT Museum are also under the auspices of the Associate Provost. The List is internationally known for cutting edge exhibits and for sponsoring public outreach and education programs. The Museum is nationally known and houses the world’s largest collection of holograms. In addition to the List and the Museum, there are nine other exhibition spaces.

From an academic standpoint, MIT has a School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (SHASS) and a School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P). SHASS is known for excellent teaching and for offering performance opportunities for students of all aptitudes. SHASS has a small number of Ph.D. programs that are recognized for teaching and research excellence and two small master’s degree programs – the Program in Comparative Media Studies and the Graduate Program in Science Writing. Because of curriculum requirements, undergraduates spend a significant portion of time taking SHASS classes.

SA+P is consistently top rated, offering a wide range of courses. SA+P has pioneered the creation of art on a civic scale and the use of steam, lasers, plasma sculptures, inflatables and holography as tools of expression. MIT’s initial course in architecture proposed in 1865 was the first of its kind in the United States.

Music is an integral part of MIT. Music appreciation was one of the first two humanities courses taught at MIT and the MIT Tech Orchestra was founded in 1884. Composing with Computers routinely exceeds capacity by 100%. According to Leila Kinney, 79% of undergraduates have advanced aptitudes in music and last academic year, 1,500 students were involved in music classes. MIT’s music faculty is well known and deeply involved in the Boston and international music communities. There are four composers, one of which has won a Pulitzer Prize. The Emerson Program at MIT assists students to get a “conservatory level” music education and some actually attend the New England Conservatory for graduate school.

The MIT Media Lab, established in 1985, focuses on inventing new technologies that expand expressive horizons and sensory capabilities and that have had a significant impact on many art forms, particularly computer aided design and graphics.

MIT has a robust arts related website that is comparable to the Harvard, Stanford and Yale websites. Similar to those schools, MIT has links to its mission statement, various arts-related reports and the current arts related news. Other similarities MIT has with other schools is a calendar of events, information about available grants, and links to the MIT museum and arts-related centers. Unique to MIT is a link to information about tickets to local external venues such as the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute for Contemporary Art. Unlike Harvard and Stanford, MIT’s website does not include information about supporting the arts through philanthropy or a link to make a donation.
Benchmarking

Through several telephone calls and an on-site visit to Stanford, the L2L team benchmarked the arts at Yale, Harvard, Stanford and the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). All of the schools benchmarked had a broad range of programs and activities with internal and external focus and supported at the highest levels of leadership. In contrast, arts at MIT has not been at the top of priorities and, although very much present at MIT, is primarily internally focused. Below is a summary of our benchmarking findings.

Harvard

Harvard claims the largest university arts program in the world and arts at Harvard are vibrant, varied and decentralized. In 2007, President Faust commissioned a task force of faculty and administrators who were charged with determining the proper place for the arts at Harvard. Among other recommendations being implemented, the arts at Harvard are evolving toward greater connectivity and a deeper connection to the university mission. Even though there has not yet been a big investment in staff, structure or buildings, there has been a shift in culture and the focus on the arts has helped the university to increase collaboration. The new Harvard University Committee on the Arts includes key faculty across the university. There are more signature moments, including large-scale presentations and public art displays.

A large part of the student body is involved in the arts. Of 6,500 undergraduate students, about 3,000 are involved in some type of art making. Student involvement ranges from majoring in visual arts or music to participation in student led dance, concerts or theatrical productions. There are an estimated 800 student dancers, 1,000 student musicians and 800 drama/theatrical production people on campus. There are over 500 concerts performed per year, seven orchestras, eight choirs and a large number of a capella groups.

Harvard has a 90 person Office for the Arts (OFA) that sponsors a Guest Artist Program and provides direct support to students and to productions. The OFA also sponsors major arts festivals and makes available to the community various professional arts leaders. The OFA’s annual operating budget is $5 million, a small portion of which is from donors.

Arts will be a signature component of Harvard’s upcoming capital campaign. Although Harvard has a list of alumni donors, they are cautious about asking for donations on a regular basis in light of post 2008 economic fragility. The campaign is currently in the quiet phase after which there will be more outreach to potential arts donors.

Harvard’s arts-related website has several links including to the 2008 task force report, to the various arts-related schools and to information about donating. Similar to Stanford and Yale, Harvard’s site includes a calendar of events. Unique to Harvard are links to categories, such as architecture, dance, film, music and theater, with each area containing...
relevant information about that particular area including academic information and events. Unlike Stanford and Yale, Harvard does not include arts-related news items.

Stanford

Stanford’s approach to the arts is “curricular, everything interdisciplinary,” according to Roberta Katz, Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning in the President’s Office. Stanford has a broad range of offerings including Rodin, modern industrial art (“MIT art”), classical art as well as modern music and ballet. Stanford has created an arts culture on campus, bringing in the Palo Alto communities who have access to celebrities at Stanford (for example, Yo Yo Ma is scheduled to perform the inaugural concert in the Bing Center next spring) without having to drive into the city.

At Stanford, the arts are public (the Stanford map includes public art) and very much a part of Stanford’s strategic initiatives. Stanford is creating an interdisciplinary honors program in the arts and they have created a continuing studies program for the local community. Stanford offers several arts-related undergraduate courses such as Art in the Digital Economy and Creative Expressions. In symphony, 40% of the students are engineers. Stanford’s places support for the arts as a high priority for fund raising activities and designated two faculty leaders to be the champions for the campaign, which is now concluded.

Stanford’s robust arts- focused website serves as a virtual center for the arts. It includes a calendar of events, press about events such as faculty arts-related awards and performances reviews and information about grants for both students and faculty. Stanford offers several types of grants for individual performances, funding for groups to attend events and support for research on arts-related subjects. On the website, arts activities are also divided up by academic department, student groups and by arts organizations not affiliated with academics. There are special links for students and faculty and staff and each webpage has a link to information about how to donate to the arts or volunteer. Through the site, students, faculty and staff can sign up to receive emails containing information about upcoming arts-related events and opportunities.

Yale

Arts are considered core to Yale’s mission. Barbara Shailor, Deputy Provost for Arts, thought that the fact that an entire past Board meeting was devoted to the Arts is strong evidence of the value placed on the arts. Yale has four arts schools and two museums. A Committee that consists of deans, directors and others defines the arts at Yale and plans the utilization of space. Yale has many off- campus partnerships and over 100 student led arts related groups. Like MIT and Harvard, the arts at Yale are decentralized and a new associate dean is focusing on bringing a sense of organization to the various activities taking place.
A significant part of Yale’s development activities focus on the arts and the arts are consistently a part of Yale’s capital campaigns. Yale received $100 million for a music school that is internationally competitive. The Center for British Arts is almost entirely funded by a Mellon Foundation endowment. Yale spends about $200,000 per year on student sponsored projects chosen by application.

Yale’s arts schools have consistently been ranked first and faculty are encouraged to leverage that excellence by incorporating arts into non-arts classes. An example of this is a class where medical students study art to learn to better observe patients. An example of cross-disciplinary integration was when faculty from art, science and history collaborated on finding ways to stop the deterioration of some ancient Egyptian limestone.

Yale’s arts-related website is less robust than Stanford’s. Similar to Stanford, Yale’s website features news on such topics as grants and performances and includes a featured news story. Also similar to Stanford, Yale’s website includes a calendar with Yale having an interactive feature that allows users to view events by day, week or month and links to details of the events. Yale has links to the arts-related academic departments on the first page of the site.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute- EMPAC

The Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—is where the arts, sciences, and technology interact with and influence each other by using the same facilities, technologies, and by breathing the same air.

EMPAC is primarily a research center, dedicated to building bridges between our human senses, to modes of perception and experience, to creating meaning in a physical environment, and to the intangible world of digital technology.

The center operates nationally and internationally, attracting creative individuals from around the world and sending new artworks and innovative ideas onto the global stage. EMPAC’s building is a showcase work of architecture -- a unique technological facility with unrivaled art and science presentation and production capabilities.
Recommendations

Recognizing the importance of excellence in arts to attracting top applicants, peer institutions, i.e., Harvard, Yale, RPI, and Stanford have launched sustainable arts initiatives and campaigns. Our recommendations are outlined below. While some of these may have been tried in the past at MIT we have decided to still include them. This is because they are consistent with what we learned by benchmarking other universities with successful initiatives. Also, MIT may be in a new state of readiness with new leadership and new initiatives.

1. Create a Lead Role with a Faculty Incumbent: CAST is an excellent start, but we recommend that the entire MIT arts initiatives have a faculty leader.
2. Create a Clear Vision Involving the Integration of Arts, Science, and Engineering
3. Reach Deeper Within and Beyond the Walls of MIT
   - Create open gallery space easily accessible to the public
   - Create an arts district on campus that reaches out to the community
   - Develop and implement an Arts weekend at MIT
   - Seek strategic partnerships
   - Create and implement an ongoing marketing campaign
   - Revamp and enhance our virtual presence
   - Collaborate with the MFA on a themed contest involving MIT and the Boston communities
4. Enlist Student Involvement
   - Launch a competition for students
   - Create an honors program in the arts
   - Find and fund new spaces for art practice and creation, for students, faculty, and staff
   - Engage students in creating a creative medium for telling our story
   - Create an Arts Innovation award
5. Engage Potential Donors
Recommendation #1: Create a Lead Role with a Faculty Incumbent

As leaders and learners in L2L we know the significance of leadership. With dedicated leadership, MIT will afford visibility, focus, and accountability for what is important. Having an appointed leader, or champion, for the arts at MIT, would send a message to our community about the importance of art and education. The appointee should be a faculty member from Engineering or Science (not Humanities) as this will bring attention to the commitment of integrating the arts with science and engineering. The emphasis of this recommendation is on the role of champion, more so than on a position. The role should be supported by the President and consistent with the current notion of “one MIT”. A faculty champion should be someone who is respected in the community, inside MIT and outside—to have the clout to build partnerships and cooperation. This is consistent with how Stanford approached their program.

The role could be rotated on some predetermined cycle, e.g. every two years. Whatever term length is decided, it should be long enough to allow the incumbent to realize significant contribution and successfully move the agenda forward in support of the common vision. However, the assignment cannot stop here. One first step would be for the faculty incumbent to convene an MIT-wide task force to build upon these recommendations and move momentum. S/he should have an open and recognized partnership with Leila and Philip. The leader for the arts would have the responsibility of creating and implementing strategies to support the short term launch and long term integration and sustainability of science + engineering + arts at MIT.

In our many meetings with leaders and scholars at MIT we experienced energy, enthusiasm, and passion for the arts. We learned that there are various collaborations, committees and individuals that are trying to bring visibility to arts at MIT. Students have significant involvement and interest in the arts, particularly music. Having a leader to corral these collective energies, knowledge, and resources could bring powerful synergy to the effort at MIT. Having art dispersed throughout the campus gives general visibility; concentrated effort could add clout for broader and more deliberate implementation.

The arts program should be viewed as a sustainable, integrated part of the institute. We recommend MIT’s Arts initiative not be deemed a ‘project’ as this would connote it has a beginning and an end. MIT’s Arts program should become a thread in the fabric of our curriculum. Our faculty champion should be focused on this effort as a full-time role. This key role can ensure sustainability through coordinating resources, visibility, and integration. It is a best practice from our findings at Stanford. More importantly, having a faculty lead communicates the message that this is an academic role and elevates the importance of the art initiative to our core mission.
Specific Recommendation: You get what you reward. We are recommending MIT establish an award for distinction in arts education.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Award Program has created an award for distinction in arts education. We recommend MIT consider establishing a similar award (http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/kcaen/recognition/home.html)

Launched in 1999, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards Program recognizes schools that have done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their students. The state level awards provide an important opportunity to honor schools and the role they play in providing a creative learning environment for outstanding student achievement.

Recommendation #2: Create a Clear Vision Involving the Integration of Arts, Science, and Engineering

“Study the science of art. Study the art of science. Realize that everything connects to everything else.” (Artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci)

Without a vision we have no direction. With vision we create focus. Having a clear direction of where we are headed with our arts program provides input into marketing, donor engagement, and development of the program. It would allow us to communicate, hopefully in artful form, how we envision arts at MIT and its place in our curriculum, and the community. Our vision must be aligned with MIT’s mission.

The arts should be considered an essential component of an MIT education. The revised GIR is a major step towards establishing a foundational requirement in the arts for all undergraduates. “In study after study, arts participation and arts education have been associated with improved cognitive, social, and behavioral outcomes in individuals across the lifespan: in early childhood, in adolescence and young adulthood, and the later years. The studies include Neuroscience research showing strong connections between arts learning and improved cognitive development;...” [Endowment for the Arts: The Arts and Human Development].

The Arts Scholars were founded for students who have exceptional interest in art but do would like opportunities to develop outside the curriculum. We met with a group of 18 graduate and undergraduate members of the Arts Scholars. They emphasized, “...it is not about the product. It is about the process.” They value what creative visualization does for their learning process and their ability to learn to problem-solve, particularly among scientists and engineers. Art helps them to, “...find connections between complicated ideas and to visualize complex ideas.” The students felt strongly that you do not need money to validate the importance of arts. “Art is an investment because as you explore solutions to a problem you don’t know what else you will get out of the exploration. It is part of the point of
art as you will find other applications and solutions along the way. The artistic process helps you get better at innovation, to find ways to understand and apply to the rest of the world. Art is relevant, not different from science and it is the same kind of thinking for math. Especially music is like problem solving—complex cognition applied in the same way.”

“A connection of the language arts and science curricula which employs the creative potential and productivity of instructional technology will facilitate research, organization, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and development of efficient and informative communications in both disciplines.” (Rationale for Integrating Science and Language Arts Curriculum Areas, by Firewire SpecialOps http://www.docstoc.com/docs/23581329/Rationale-for-Integrating-Science-and-Language-Arts-Curriculum-Areas)

"By weaving the visual arts, music, dance, and drama into other content areas, interdisciplinary arts experiences have the potential to enhance student learning in authentic and meaningful ways. Longitudinal studies cite the development of critical thinking, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills as integral components of interdisciplinary arts experiences.” (Longley, 1999; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005, from Arts Education and the Whole Child)

Art breeds innovation and flexibility. It is becoming more, not less, relevant in the workforce. We are responsible as an educational institution serving the world to keep up with current and emerging innovative methodologies for educating the scientists, technologists, leaders, and engineers who could contribute to solutions for struggling issues. “Finally, the high-order critical thinking and creativity skills that have been linked to arts training are deemed increasingly vital to today’s workforce, the U.S. economy, and our nation’s overall competitiveness.” At the convening, Mary Wright, a program director with the Conference Board, asserted: “Creativity and innovation are going to increase in importance.” (Endowment for the Arts)

Arts at MIT will not stand on its own. Making art core to our mission is where we should begin. Its visibility will emanate and evolve from this. We are proposing a future state for the arts at MIT as a vision for which we can strive.

“By Year 2020 art is core to MIT’s educational mission; and in its many forms and impressions, it bridges far beyond the physical, virtual, and learning boundaries of the university.”

An Arts campaign is not only about fundraising but includes deepening and enriching the community experience for faculty, students, alumni, staff and others. Alumni will be interested in funding the learning; but the final product is more tangible; fortunately we believe we have alumni willing to fund products. Arts can be fundamentally aligned with opportunities for problem solving and innovation, in areas such as engineering.

As an example of an arts initiative that expresses the opportunities for learning as well as creating product, MIT designer Neri Oxman’s research shows how lifeless things in our
world such as clothing, walls, chairs can be alive. Oxman designs algorithms on her and building prototypes in an MIT basement with machinery that produces three-dimensional forms. Currently most of her pieces are housed in museums and not mass produced.

**Recommendation #3: Reach Deeper Within and Beyond the Walls of MIT**

Our vision should portray that MIT Arts reaches beyond our walls, especially to the Boston community. We have a culture that is generally internally focused. An “extended MIT arts influence” will benefit students, donors, and MIT. Proximity to Boston affords ample opportunity for visibility as a nearby community rich in theatre, art museums, art school, galleries, music, culture, employment, and political support. We should leverage this unusual and convenient opportunity.

Art can bring people together on common ground. Reaching out to the greater community brings art lovers, families, and many others onto campus. Consider the university setting where there are those who are considered more knowledgeable than others. This by default creates an imbalance in relationships and community. Making connections is key to creating an environment of willingness to give philanthropically to something to which one feels a connection. Not every event needs to be a gala, as this attracts a certain type of clientele and excludes others. FAST was a success because it was far reaching, compelling, and brilliant. It brought attention to the arts in our own, and in our neighbor’s backyards. We should have more “FASTs” in smaller and large scale. Imagine children’s (and their parents’) experiences and memories of art at MIT as they later select where they will apply. It de-mystifies and redefines MIT as a place for a diverse set of talented students.

There are many wealthy companies in the Cambridge and Boston landscape with which MIT could partner. The students we attract, educate and graduate are future corporate leaders who will support the sustainability of MIT’s new vision.

Developing and displaying art in its many forms will attract media attention. Media attention will provide “free marketing” for MIT’s reputation as a university affording well-rounded innovative education to a new era of students in the 21st century. RPI has successfully accomplished this with EMPAC.

MIT received a $1.5 million grant from Mellon and was successful in getting it publicized by the Associated Press, even though the grant amount was below the internal threshold normally used to determine distribution to external media markets. The amount shouldn’t matter as much as the publicity itself. By gaining this kind of exposure in the external community, it puts out a reminder that MIT is “on the map” for having a stake in the arts. At worst, it might provide encouragement to those interested in supporting MIT’s vision and mission comprising arts. At best it might attract contributors and applicants.

Art should have a presence, physically and virtually, at MIT. A physical space dedicated to art of all media would be symbolic of commitment and value. Stanford has a museum with a major collection and sound endowment. Harvard’s commitment reads: *“It is a time of great change and great promise for the Harvard Art Museum, and I am excited to be part of the*
team that will help realize the creation of a new central home for the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Sackler museums,” said Ortiz. “I also look forward to helping make the museums and their great collections even more accessible to a wider range of visitors, both at Harvard and beyond.”

As another example, The Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at RPI was cited by the New York Times as a “technological pleasure dome for the mind and senses... dedicated to the marriage of art and science as it has never been done before.” (http://www.arch.rpi.edu/school/empac/

Consider what draws crowds—the unusual, the innovative, the creative. On any day see the attention the Stata building and the hacker displays attract. If we “commissioned” our faculty and students to create knockout, highly visible projects that bring attention to how we solve problems in the world; or tell stories/teach through performing arts, this would be far more compelling than words or paper.

**Specific Recommendation:** Create open gallery space easily accessible to the public, yet manageable for MIT security, i.e., the first floor lobby in the Media lab. Make our works interactive. Autodesk’s corporate headquarters in downtown San Francisco has an open Gallery that regularly fills with tourists. Lego uses this space to display their building blocks, in the shaped a huge purple dragon that all visitors are encouraged to add a Lego onto the dragon. Walker Memorial, although modest in comparison to other campus Performing Arts Centers, affords a prime opportunity for launching visible physical commitment.

**Specific Recommendation:** Create an arts district on campus that reaches out to the community. Think: a sustainable variation of FAST to capture its momentum. Beyond this we could create public space in Kendall Square for showcasing product creation. It could attract visitors beyond the MIT community to participate.

**Specific Recommendation:** Develop and implement an Arts Weekend at MIT. We recommend the creation of an interactive component by which the public could participate in creating or contributing to art works. This recommendation is to launch the program and continue building it over time; with a commitment of 5 years to gain traction. During Arts Weekend we could have an Open Studio, similar to local Boston-area communities. We could create an inventory (if one does not exist) of all areas that are doing art and ask each to contribute a nominal amount, e.g., $100 to support the logistics Arts Weekends. Artists could be given the opportunity to sell their work or charge attendance at performances.

**Specific Recommendation:** Seek strategic partnerships. MIT should increase its presence on various boards, ensuring that a proactive member fills positions on key boards and advisory committees in the external arts community. We would then be in a better position to showcase our arts initiatives to these outside councils and boards.
**Specific Recommendation: Create and implement an ongoing marketing campaign.**
It will be critical to educate the community and prospective applicants about how art is core to the MIT brand, increasing understanding that arts are part of the mission of MIT. There are numerous channels from which to launch our statement of vision, mission, and actions. These include local and national art institutes and organizations; MIT’s capital campaign; recruitment and admissions materials and local transportation such as shuttles. We could also find creative options such as inserting an Arts at MIT information card into campaign mailings. RPI and Stanford have made public commitments to the integration of art+ technology+ engineering. MIT should make the connection between Research and the Arts and tell the world, For example, we could insert an Arts at MIT information card into all campaign mailings.

**Specific Recommendation: Revamp and enhance our virtual presence.** We propose the creation of a prominent display of donated artwork, with incentives to donate, on the MIT alumni website. We should make it easy for art enthusiasts to contribute.

**Specific Recommendation: Collaborate with the MFA on a themed contest involving MIT and the Boston communities.** This would engage the institute in the artistic culture and perpetuate our involvement and visibility. It would foster MIT partnerships and alignment with established art reputations, as well.

![Examples from FAST, as implemented for MIT 150...](image)

**Recommendation #4: Enlist Student Involvement**
Given additional opportunities to express their creativity and fun nature (as they do with hacking) students are likely to participate in arts-related events—especially if they involve competition. The following are a few of the suggestions that we heard to increase student engagement.

Our learners should be encouraged to “…embrace complexity, tolerate uncertainty, and manage tension. Habits of mind like these require an interdisciplinary culture of inquiry that fosters integrative thinking, nurtures collaboration, accepts alternative perspectives,
and merges various methodologies.” (Focus on Arts: Arts education aids students in all areas of study, By Kim Alan Wheatley, Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga)

Specific Recommendation: Launch a competition for MIT students to create an application for visitors to access a map of MIT art locations on their mobile devices. We understand that List and IS&T are putting the public art map on the mobile MIT application, and the recommended student application could add additional information and include suggested “art walks” of MIT’s displays of all available media. Students could tap into their creativity with ideas such as a walking treasure hunt of where to find each piece/forum on the tour. A hard copy map could also be available for those who prefer it.

Specific Recommendation: Create an honors program in the arts to raise funds to award students who create practical and innovative ideas involving the arts. We should consider creating and funding a visiting/distinguished artist program. We should consider developing scholarship/ awards to students in the names of prominent alumni for graduate arts programs. We could provide more grant money for Arts projects using a competitive application process.

The performing arts are a major convening area for our students. We should leverage this passion to grow our arts with student involvement and attraction of candidates.

Specific Recommendation: Find and fund new spaces for art practice and creation, for students, faculty, and staff. See previous notes on public arts spaces and the use of Walker Memorial. It is not the purpose of this report to recommend art for art sake. Still, art does not always have to be about task, problem, or purpose. Its side benefits can include an escape from the serious during harried times and busy workplaces. It can help center and balance us while we enjoy learning in dedicated creative space as students and staff.

Discovery of ourselves and others through art can also be innovative.

Specific Recommendation: Engage students in creating a creative medium for telling our story, without words, of the Arts and MIT’s history. MIT has its story as does any institution. Though, do we tell it a way people will remember it and build it forward? Art is a friendly way to tell the world about us, potentially with interesting and impactful messages and images.

Specific Recommendation: Create an Arts Innovation award. MIT students like to solve problems. We recommend creating an Arts Innovation Award relating to solving real community problems, locally or broadly. The benefits would several fold as students and MIT would gain greater notoriety for contribution. Students with faculty guidance would learn problem-solving and practical application of the creative process to world issues. MIT would enhance its mission by graduating students who have demonstrated ability to apply what they learned on real-world problems.
Recommendation #5: Engage Potential Donors

“We build too many walls and not enough bridges.” (Scientist and philosopher Isaac Newton) Our learners should be encouraged to “… embrace complexity, tolerate uncertainty, and manage tension. Habits of mind like these require an interdisciplinary culture of inquiry that fosters integrative thinking, nurtures collaboration, accepts alternative perspectives, and merges various methodologies.” (Focus on Arts: Arts education aids students in all areas of study, By Kim Alan Wheelety, Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga)

Funding should be the input, not the output. Engaging potential donors should not be first about seeking their donation. We recommend focusing on community building around the arts. We would leverage this to build momentum continually; and allow this to lead to philanthropic giving.

There are alumni who appreciate the arts. We should identify and engage our publicly recognized alumni with demonstrated passion for the arts. Let’s invite them to MIT to find out what they would like to see here. What would they be willing to support? What would perpetuate their connection to art at MIT? What scholastic artistic achievements would they be willing to support in their names?

Summary and Conclusions

Any of the recommendations above can be stand-alone implementations. Each affords a combination of short and long-term programs. While there could be some short-term wins, we strongly recommend a focus for long-term sustainability. Integrating the arts into our mission and our curricula will afford a leap forward for MIT. A common vision can serve as the glue that could bring cohesion to the scattered bits of art throughout the MIT landscape. Reaching outward is a prime opportunity. Our arts should be a source of pride for what they offer the world in the form of problem solving, innovation solutions and products, and our ability to replicate.

There is still much we can teach and contribute beyond our current curricula. How can we claim to be innovative if we are unwilling to take such a small risk that has potential for great promise and contribution? By making the arts core to MIT’s educational mission, the arts can bridge far beyond the physical, virtual, and learning boundaries of the university.

We are in a unique time in MIT’s history to leverage new leadership, new direction, and renewed effort to prompt increased visibility of arts at MIT. We close with this formal call to next action of visibility -– for our sponsors to bring these recommendations, without hesitation, to a place of review, endorsement and implementation at MIT’s highest level of leadership by January 31, 2013.
Appendix A. Arts at MIT Leadership Learnings

Our project was focused on creating a strategic organizational change to raise the visibility of the Arts@MIT, within the context of the upcoming capital campaign. Three leadership tools have been most important for us to apply to be successful in managing this project and creating a set of strategic recommendations. The three tools are:

**Four Capabilities Leadership Framework**

a. Sensemaking  
b. Relating  
c. Inventing  
d. Visioning

**Three Lenses/Perspectives on Organizations**

e. Cultural  
f. Political  
g. Strategic

**Conducting a Gap Analysis to Create Recommendations**

**Sensemaking and the Three Lenses**

Reflecting on our project journey, we were most challenged by Sensemaking throughout the experience. Our project was incredibly complex – as complex as MIT – and even now at its completion we could probably still have done more in order to fully understand the complexity of our challenge.

To begin, we needed to do our own internal sensemaking as a team. We needed to learn about each other quickly, to determine what level of knowledge and interest in the Arts we each were bringing to the project, and to understand how deep our knowledge of MIT is as individuals and as a whole. As we drew further into this process, our understanding of each other’s skills deepened and our understanding of our biases about the importance of the Arts to the educational experience and community at MIT emerged.

We quickly realized that our collective knowledge of the Arts at MIT was quite minimal; it was an area of the MIT experience, culture, and educational promise of which we had little knowledge. As a result, our sensemaking took many twists and turns throughout the length of the project as we reviewed the ARTS at MIT White Paper (presented to Faculty February 26, 2011), reached across campus to talk with influential colleagues, and conducted external benchmarking at Yale, Harvard, Stanford and RPI. Through this journey, we’ve been delighted to learn about the history and importance of the Arts at MIT, the philosophy of the Arts here, the location of the public art on campus, and to begin to identify the
internal leaders of the Arts; and from that understanding determine who on campus could be helpful to us in completing our project.

Overlaying this Sensemaking was the need to understand the different organizational perspectives we encountered across campus. Of the three lenses, early on the Cultural Lens was most important to keep in mind in our sensemaking efforts. There is such a distinct culture at MIT that whatever we were learning, or even how we chose to conduct our meetings, needed to be within the context of MIT’s culture in order to be helpful. One of our most important learnings was that MIT’s culture of relationships, influence, and autonomy has created a coalition of partnerships that drives the Arts at MIT on campus.

Additionally, as the project progressed, we realized that applying the Political Lens was becoming more important to our ability to understand our project and create a set of realistic recommendations. We learned that there were many leaders of the Arts at MIT and that they emerged from many places. All of these individuals aren’t designated “Arts at MIT Leaders” but they are the people leading the initiative from within their scope of designated area of responsibility. With the decentralized nature of Arts@ MIT, people in arts-related functions are often not positioned prominently within MIT’s formal organizational structure, yet they have important leadership roles.

The Strategic Lens moved into importance as we began to formulate our recommendations. As we progressed, and with guidance of our sponsors, we were able to identify recommendations that could be categorized for the short- and long-term.

Relating
One of the advantages, and most positive aspects, of our project has been the opportunity to meet many people across MIT who have such a passion for the Arts. This project has opened our eyes to new dimensions of MIT – one that is creatively enthusiastic about the arts and the arts’ role within the Institute. As we progressed in our project our own relationships continued to deepen as well. Some teams experience moments of dissonance and move into a “storming” stage. We did not, due to an intentional effort on our parts to remain respectful of each other’s thoughts, ideas, work styles and outside priorities.

Inventing
Inventing for us took shape in two distinct ways:

1. Inventing how we would together as a team
2. Creating ideas for how the Arts at MIT could move forward (see recommendations)

Our team inventing process was full of open communication and sharing. We shared our L2L goals with each other honestly, including why we had created these goals and how we were doing in achieving them. We shared our daily work challenges and leaned on each other for support during difficult moments. And we shared a strong sense of purpose and similar sense of, humor about the project, our L2L experience and our daily work. By
approaching our work in this way we learned how to better communicate with each other and to effectively create a set of recommendations (and a GREAT poster) for the project.

Visioning
We had a lot of fun creating a compelling picture of the future for the Arts at MIT. We used several visual tools and lots of conversation to create our vision. We conducted a gap analysis as part of this (more on this below) as well. As one of our team members shared,

“My learning is to remain diligent in viewing things upside down, challenging convention---and doing so by taking risks. Current and aspiring leaders should view decisions thru 21st century eyes ... We are members of this cadre and could/should encourage challenges to our own thinking to shake us out of our own way and foster openness to innovation, new ideas that MIT has yet to experience. We are behind other institutions in many ways, and moving further behind... We can start with a profound Arts program that will go beyond what others have imagined, by putting vision into words and eventually into practice. Our team can leave a legacy of ideas for arts beyond the ordinary. Anything else is...not leader-like.”

Conducting a Gap Analysis to Create our Recommendations:
After gathering input from across MIT and from peer organizations, we began the process of identifying potential gaps in organizational and leadership structure and offerings. Once we identified these gaps, we prioritized potential solutions using the three lenses on organizations. Understanding the gap and visioning a solution were not sufficient to create recommendations. It was important to think about the recommendations within the context of MIT as an organization. Even so, we made one recommendation – identify a faculty champion for the Arts – which we knew might have political implications. We determined to move ahead in making that recommendation as our gap analysis showed this to be the single most important best practice at our peer schools that had enabled them to further their Arts initiatives measurably.
Appendix B. Arts at MIT Poster

L2L Arts@MIT

Our project is focused on creating strategic change to raise the visibility of the arts at MIT within the context of the upcoming capital campaign.

Findings...

Benchmarking

> "...a society of arts, a museum of arts, and a school of industrial science." (Founding Act)
> Art is integral to MIT, and diffused through and across the curriculum and campus life... but not considered to belong to the MIT experience.
> Benchmark schools hold art to be important but tend to formalize and centralize it in formal departments.
> Students: "Engineers who are able to practice visual literacy are better at design-be able to articulate their design visually—compelling communication."

Recommendations

1. Identify a faculty champion to take a formal leadership role for the Arts at MIT.
2. Create and communicate a clear vision involving integration of MIT Arts, Science, and Engineering.
3. Reach deeper within and beyond MIT.
4. Increase student involvement.
5. Engage potential donors now.

Team Leadership

Sensemaking was necessary within our team, across MIT, and within the MIT arts community.

The Three Lenses provided context:

Cultural Lens: to understand what was being shared within, internally, and why
Political Lens: for project clarity and creation of realistic recommendations
Strategic Lens: supported draft recommendation creation

Gap Analysis was used to analyze our internal and external findings, and to create our final recommendations.