



Harpur College of Arts and Sciences

New School of the Arts Initiative

DRAFT Competitive Positioning Analysis



RED CACTUS
MARKETING

Contents

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Background

- Harpur College of Arts and Sciences at Binghamton University has proposed the establishment of a new School of the Arts to provide a more durable and distinct form for the arts organized under the administrative structure of Harpur College.
- It will include Art & Design, Art History, Cinema, Music, and Theater and offer arts-intensive academic and professional degrees (e.g., BMUS, BFA, MFA, MM) a BA in each of the five departments while serving as a platform for cross-arts collaboration, to develop new degree programs in art practice, performance, and research, and to engage in community and public outreach.
- Establishing a new School of the Arts will make Binghamton University a destination of choice for high-caliber students; providing a unique, interdisciplinary, and academically rigorous arts experience for students, some of whom may be planning to pursue studies in another academic field in addition to an arts-intensive curriculum.
- A new School of the Arts will help Harpur College to recruit and retain strong arts faculty, attract prominent visiting scholars and artists, and seek funding for investment in facilities, equipment, and performance spaces across all the constituent programs. It will also help in engaging prominent alumni and donors with careers and interest in the arts.
- On a practical level, the new School of the Arts will help to maximize the visibility of current arts programming offered by the university and allow Harpur to remain true to its historical mission of providing students with an education that is both deep and broad.

Research Objectives

- The goal of this research was to conduct a competitive positioning analysis to help define the new School of the Arts value proposition and build a relevant and compelling brand positioning framework that will distinguish the new School in a highly competitive higher education marketplace.
- It is important to note that the new School of the Arts will be competing with other forward-thinking, well-respected **schools and colleges** that teach students to think creatively across disciplines and provide them with the instruction and resources they need to pursue their passion and fulfill their artistic potential.
- These institutions offer world-class faculty, cutting edge facilities, internship opportunities, study abroad, and career counseling services to help launch successful careers.
- Some institutions emphasize innovation, entrepreneurial thinking, activism and civic engagement as ways to distinguish the unique experiences that they offer. At the same time, they spotlight distinguished alumni and point to their location as an ideal place to immerse themselves in the arts.
- This report dives into this competitive landscape to identify best practices as well as “white space” within which the new School of the Arts can thrive; building on the Binghamton University “Public Ivy” brand while appealing to key audiences in ways that are *important, authentic, and distinctive*.

Research Methodology

An Integrated Process

Focus Groups and Interviews

With key constituents to understand Binghamton University/Harpur College's key strengths and attributes as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with establishing of a new School of the Arts.



Data and Document Review

Including relevant DOE and IPEDs data to provide context and perspective; reviewing Binghamton University's enrollment, selectivity, national ranking, tuition and graduation rates relative to key competitors and aspirational peers. Appropriate U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics data is also included.

Competitor/Peer Analysis

Assessing the websites and available marketing materials for five key competitors and three aspirational peers in order to evaluate their apparent brand position, key attributes, core messages, and the impact that their overall efforts are having in the marketplace.



Focus Groups & Interviews



“I think the last thing the world needs is another stodgy art school... I'll go even further – stodgy, pretentious art school that's the last thing that we need right now. We need people who can do stuff.” – Alum

Engaging Key Constituents

- As a first step to understanding the opportunities and challenges associated with establishing a new School of the Arts, Red Cactus conducted focus groups and in-depth interviews with key constituents.
- A moderator's guide (see Appendix 1) was developed to explore key questions related to the future positioning of the new School of the Arts. For example:
 - What makes Harpur College/Binghamton University special?
 - What words would you use to describe Harpur College/Binghamton University?
 - How valuable is an arts education in today's world?
 - How do you think establishing a new School of the Arts and might benefit students, faculty, and the college as a whole?
 - What are some of the opportunities and challenges we may face?
 - What do you believe the new School of the Arts should be known for?
- This qualitative research helped us to understand the value of establishing a new School of the Arts while identifying competitive strengths and key differentiators that should be incorporated into the future brand positioning of the new School of the Arts.

Engaging Key Constituents

Five focus groups and in-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted May 12 – 17, 2022.

Date/Time	Audience	Participants
May 12, 2022 11:30 am	Admissions Team	Don Loewen (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Enrollment Management) Krista Medionte-Phillips (Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management)
May 12, 2022 1:30 pm	Art Chairs/Reps and Director Search Committee	Tomo Nishikawa (Chair, Cinema) Pam Smart (Chair, Art & Design/Art History) Diane Butler (Director, University Art Museum) Dan Davis (Music) Monteith McCollum (Cinema)
May 13, 2022 11:00 am	Art Chairs/Reps and Director Search Committee	Gokhan Ersan (representing Art & Design) Paul Schleuse (Chair, Music) Barb Wolfe (Chair, Theatre) Colin Lyons (Art & Design) Lee Perlman (Harpur Alumnus '80) Leah Joggerst (Director for Harpur College Constituent Relations and Advancement)
May 17, 2022 12:30 pm	Alumni Engaged in the Arts	Kelsey A. Watts '20 Kelsey is currently pursuing her Master of Music in Opera. She received her Bachelor degrees in chemistry and music.
May 17, 2022 4:00 pm	Alumni Engaged in the Arts	Bruce David Klein '84 Atlas Media, President & Executive Producer Harpur 1984, BA Psychology

Words to Describe Binghamton/Harpur College

“Freedom, I think is a really important word here. And I think for students who want to be able to explore the arts, knowing that they'll be supported and have the freedom to be able to do that is a really strong message.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“I think of it more like we're training flexible artists who can be flexible in this century and the next, rather than ones who actually aren't professional at all, but love art.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“Home. Yes, I was psychology, but theater was home. That's where I made my friends. That's where I socially connected.” – Alum

“One place where you can come out without enormous debt and an arts degree.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“More affordable and in terms of faculty, I think the coaches here are awesome. A lot of them also work at Juilliard throughout the week, they come back and forth, which is so funny.” – Alum

Vibrant
Freedom
Flexibility
Home
Open
Lively
Remarkable
Excellence
Diversity
Exploration
Experimentation
Collaborative
Transformative
Interdisciplinary
Interconnectivity
Intertwined
Affordable
Opportunity
Possibility
Non-pretentious
Public Ivy
Hidden Gem

Describing Students

“Almost all of them are incredibly humble and very talented at the same time. So that's why I've really enjoyed working with them.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“Scrappy. The kids who go there are not privileged. They work their asses off. They are very focused on success.”
– Alum

“Our students are high achievers; they are academically successful.” – Admissions

“I taught at San Francisco Art Institute, it's more like art schools, and the students, they didn't care much about the grade. But here at Binghamton, they really want to get the grades.” – Art Chair/Rep/Committee

“Our students are not terribly cool. And they're not terribly savvy. And that actually makes them a pleasure to teach and to work with. I know my students work very hard and they skew nerdy, they skew friendly.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

Scrappy
Hard-working
High Achievers
Focused
Grounded
Not-Privileged
Hungry
Smart
Nerdy
Friendly
Intelligent
Curious
Diverse
Humble
Talented
Brilliant
Impressive
Multidimensional
Real

Key Strengths and Opportunities – In Their Words

“From the recruitment standpoint, I think it will be easier to recruit for a School of Arts than just saying it's a major in Harper. I think it's a differentiator and it also shows a level of commitment from the university as well.” – Admissions

“Bundling things into a package makes it all stronger and potentially more attractive together. Yes, there will be new initiatives, but there's something to be said for a presentation under the School of the Arts bundle. That brings another level of attractiveness.” – Art Chair/Rep/Committee

“We want this new School of Arts to be more like a platform for the staff, students and faculty to take risks, experiment and also collaborate.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“The School of the Arts is an opportunity to actually shake up the curriculum a bit. – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

Key Strengths and Opportunities – In Their Words

“Our students have double majors in widely divergent areas. It's encouraged and we hope with the School of the Arts that be embraced.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“There's lots of opportunities to mix and match for lack of a better term with different majors and minors. So, it's all about exploration and we encourage that.” –
Admissions

“You aren't learning just to think in a particular discipline. And especially if you can combine skills that are developed in sciences or engineering or something like that, with a creative discipline. I think that can only help that person in the future, not only in the workplace, but to be a productive human being.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“Being a double major and having that other thing that's a real deep set of knowledge is important, not just for having a safe backup option, but actually making your art practice better.” – Art Chair/Rep/Committee

Key Strengths and Opportunities – In Their Words

“Last month there was this collaboration with the University Art Museum, but also our creative writing program. And a collaboration within music between composers and performers. They all made two separate performances back-to-back that was all new work. That was writers, composers, and performers putting stuff together making new work. It’s an example of something that I feel we can do really well. And it also sets us apart from, for example, a conservatory. – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“For a lot of our students, their families can't really get their head around sending their kids to a conservatory style school, hedging things a little with having the academic, maybe more pre-professional program. I think this is incredibly important. – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“I hope that the New School of the Arts will bring the different disciplines of art together a little bit more. Because my experience as a vocal performer in the classical section is that we don't collaborate with musical theater at all. We don't collaborate with the visual arts at all. So, I'm hoping that maybe that'll kick start that relationship. – Alum

Challenges to Overcome – In Their Words

“The students who are successful out in the world are not proud of having come from Binghamton enough to put Binghamton's name in their bio. And I don't know why this is the case exactly. You hear on TV interviews and stuff. Oh, this one went to Ithaca College. They went to Carnegie Mellon. They always tell you where they went. We have students who graduated two years ago who are who are doing Broadway tours now. No Binghamton in their in their bio. So, I can point to all kinds of alumni that are very successful, but they're not proud. When we're successful and shift the image of things they may choose to then say that that's what they did.” –
Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“When you have Binghamton University on your resume, it's not really known in the world of music. That's not to say you shouldn't go to Binghamton because it doesn't have a big name. It's just that it does help to have like a big-name school on your resume.” – Alum

“When it has a name like Binghamton School for the Arts, it might fit into a playbill much more appropriately than Binghamton University.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

Challenges to Overcome – In Their Words

“I think for an outsider, there is this sense that our promotional materials – our websites, our front windows – don't do great service to both the level and the depth of work that's happening. We're kind of the inverse of a lot of places where there's a lot of window dressing and not much in the store. And we have a ton in the store. And it's quite frustrating to many of us who are busy stocking those shelves, that our window dressing is so poor, frankly.” – Arts Chair/Rep/Committee

“The fact that it is a hidden gem, and normally hidden gem is a positive. And of course, it's good to be a gem of any type. But I would say that the it's a little too much hidden and not enough gem and I think it has an issue outside of New York area. People don't know it and I think that's purely a marketing issue.” – Alum

“It's traditionally been a kind of a grind school for pre-med, pre-law, pre-engineering...It's been not as good in the arts, and I think it's a chance to step up...What would distinguish us is taking the idea of the hard working, scrappy, non-privileged and injecting that into an art school. To me says we're gonna do art, we're gonna do it really, really well. But we're gonna do it in a way that's grounded in what's really happening in the world, in a way that you can get a job.” – Alum

Focus Group and Interview Summary

- Currently, Binghamton University and Harpur College are not well-known for the arts but establishing a new School of the Arts will go a long way in better “packaging” the school to future students, parents, employers as well as the arts community.
- Collaboration across disciplines and opportunities to double major will enable the new School of the Arts to attract high achieving students who may have broad interests and who seek an environment where they can explore their passions with “freedom” and “flexibility,” and with the support and encouragement of “world-class faculty” and “coaches” invested in their success.
- The new School of the Arts brand has an opportunity to build on the prestige of Binghamton University and its impressive rankings (i.e., #1 Top Public College in New York, #2 Best Public Schools in the Northeast for Student Outcomes, etc.) but it will need to “break free” from its reputation as primarily STEM focused to not only attract the best students and faculty but also to raise awareness and create buzz in the arts world.
- Developing strong marketing materials and a dynamic website will be key in illustrating the multidimensional, immersive arts experience Harpur plans to offer – one that breaks boundaries and leads to strong outcomes for alumni – alumni who will be proud to put Binghamton University School of the Arts (or whatever name is chosen) on their resume.
- We will elaborate on these findings, as well as other insights, later in this report when we review the competitive landscape.

Data and Document Review



Our Competitive Landscape

To better understand the competitive landscape, Red Cactus reviewed relevant data for five key competitors (as identified by Harpur College). The table that follows (based on U.S. Department of Education data) illustrates Binghamton's strong academic position relative to key competitors:

- Binghamton University is the highest ranking in-state public university in the competitive set.
- Binghamton University has the highest retention rate of all competitors and the lowest admission rate of all in-state public universities in the competitive set.
- Binghamton University has the highest average SAT and highest SAT 25th Percentile of all colleges/universities reviewed. Our students are academically strong.
- Binghamton University offers affordable tuition across the board with only SUNY Potsdam offering a better average net price.
- Binghamton's 4- year graduation rate is the highest of all competitors.
- Binghamton University graduates have a significantly higher average earned 10 years after graduation compared to other SUNY schools in the competitive set.



Our Competitive Landscape

	Binghamton University (SUNY)	Alfred University	Rutgers University-New Brunswick	SUNY at Purchase College	SUNY College at Potsdam	Syracuse University
Public/Private	Public	Private	Public	Public	Public	Private
Size/Setting	Four-year, large, highly residential	Four-year, small, highly residential	Four-year, large, primarily residential	Four-year, medium, highly residential	Four-year, medium, highly residential	Four-year, large, highly residential
National Ranking	163	501-600	136	501-600	501-600	117
What are the Students Like?						
# Undergraduate and Graduate Students	17,768	2,302	50,254	4,234	3,521	22,803
Retention Rate	92%	73%	93%	81%	75%	90%
Getting In and Staying In						
Admission Rate	40%	63%	60%	65%	64%	50%
Average SAT	1376	1102	1303	1175	-	1284
SAT 25th Percentile	1310	970	1190	1060	-	1180
How much does this all cost?						
In-state tuition and fees	\$9,808	\$29,188	\$14,974	\$8,698	\$8,462	\$51,853
Out-of-state tuition and fees	\$26,648	\$29,188	\$31,282	\$18,478	\$18,242	\$51,853
Graduation and Beyond						
4 Year Graduation Rate	72%	44%	61%	54%	39%	71%
Avg. \$'s Earned 10 Years After Graduation	\$68,100	\$47,300	\$68,100	\$41,300	\$41,300	\$69,200

Our Competitive Landscape

Year	UnitID	Institution Name	CIP Title	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctor's degree - Research/Scholarship	Doctor's degree - Professional Practice
2018	188641	Alfred University	Visual and Performing Arts	74	16		
2019				77	18		
2020				66	17		
Change 2018-2020				-4	1		
2018	196079	Binghamton University	Visual and Performing Arts	103	15	1	
2019				103	11	4	
2020				116	8	3	
Change 2018-2020				7	-4	1	
2018	186380	Rutgers University-New Brunswick	Visual and Performing Arts	212	68	10	23
2019				238	68	10	20
2020				251	69	13	15
Change 2018-2020				20	1	2	-4
2018	196219	SUNY at Purchase College	Visual and Performing Arts	450	40		
2019				422	33		
2020				444	51		
Change 2018-2020				-3	6		
2018	196200	SUNY College at Potsdam	Visual and Performing Arts	108	5		
2019				104	1		
2020				91	1		
Change 2018-2020				-9	-2		
2018	196413	Syracuse University	Visual and Performing Arts	325	105		
2019				332	80		
2020				315	69		
Change 2018-2020				-5	-18		

Within the competitive set, SUNY at Purchase College and Syracuse University graduate the greatest number of students in the in the Visual and Performing Arts CIP (IPEDS), followed by Rutgers University. Interestingly, Binghamton University and Rutgers University both show a growth trend in conferred Bachelor's degrees over a 3-year period.

Aspirational Peers

Red Cactus also reviewed relevant data for three aspirational peers (as identified by Harpur College), illustrating that on an institutional level, Binghamton University is outperformed only by Carnegie Mellon University:

- Binghamton University comes second only to Carnegie Mellon University on national rankings, admission rates, SAT numbers, 4-year graduation rates and average earned 10 years after graduation.
- Binghamton University's tuition is among the lowest with only the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee slightly lower.

When establishing the new College of the Arts, Binghamton University can build upon some impressive institutional rankings (among both competitors and aspirational peers) to attract high-caliber students; offering a high value education that leads to excellent graduate outcomes.



Aspirational Peers

	Binghamton University (SUNY)	Carnegie Mellon University	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Virginia Commonwealth University
Public/Private	Public	Private	Public	Public
Size/Setting	Four-year, large, highly residential	Four-year, large, highly residential	Four-year, large, primarily nonresidential	Four-year, large, primarily nonresidential
National Ranking	163	21	>600	356
What are the Students Like?				
# Undergraduate and Graduate Students	17,768	14,029	27,012	30,697
Retention Rate	92%	97%	73%	85%
Getting In and Staying In				
Admission Rate	40%	17%	74%	86%
Average SAT	1376	1507	1120	1172
SAT 25th Percentile	1310	1450		1070
How much does this all cost?				
In-state tuition and fees	\$9,808	\$55,465	\$9,588	\$14,493
Out-of-state tuition and fees	\$26,648	\$55,465	\$20,867	\$35,834
Graduation and Beyond				
4 Year Graduation Rate	72%	75%	18%	44%
Avg. \$'s Earned 10 Years After Graduation	\$68,100	\$103,000	\$48,200	\$49,700

Total Market – 2019-2020, NY & NJ

Visual and Performing Arts	Total
Degrees total	
All Institutions (126)	17,521
Binghamton University	127
Bachelor's degree	
All Institutions (126)	12,866
Binghamton University	116
Master's degree	
All Institutions (126)	3,041
Binghamton University	8

- In 2019-2020, visual and performing arts was the 10th most popular major nationwide with 155,377 degrees awarded. This is a difference of 21,454 over the prior year, a growth of 13.8%.
- This creates good prospects for future growth.

Total Market – 2019-2020, NY & NJ

NY/NJ Institutions conferring Visual and Performance Arts degrees

183789	Berkeley College-Woodland Park	190567	CUNY City College	195003	Rochester Institute of Technology
183822	Bloomfield College	190594	CUNY Hunter College	195030	University of Rochester
183910	Caldwell University	190637	CUNY Lehman College	195128	Russell Sage College
183974	Centenary University	190655	CUNY NYC College of Tech	195164	St Bonaventure University
184348	Drew University	190664	CUNY Queens College	195216	St Lawrence University
184603	Fairleigh Dickinson University-Metropolitan Campus	190691	CUNY York College	195234	The College of Saint Rose
184612	Felician University	190725	Daemen College	195243	St. Thomas Aquinas College
184694	Fairleigh Dickinson University-Florham Campus	190983	Elmira College	195474	Siena College
184773	Georgian Court University	191126	Fashion Institute of Technology	195526	Skidmore College
184782	Rowan University	191205	Five Towns College	195544	St. Joseph's College-New York
185129	New Jersey City University	191241	Fordham University	195809	St. John's University-New York
185262	Kean University	191515	Hamilton College	196006	SUNY College of Technology at Alfred
185572	Monmouth University	191533	Hartwick College	196015	SUNY College of Technology at Canton
185590	Montclair State University	191630	Hobart William Smith Colleges	196033	SUNY College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill
185828	New Jersey Institute of Technology	191649	Hofstra University	196042	Farmingdale State College
186131	Princeton University	191676	Houghton College	196060	SUNY at Albany
186201	Ramapo College of New Jersey	191931	Iona College	196079	Binghamton University
186283	Rider University	191968	Ithaca College	196088	University at Buffalo
186371	Rutgers University-Camden	192110	The Juilliard School	196097	Stony Brook University
186380	Rutgers University-New Brunswick	192192	Keuka College	196121	SUNY Brockport
186399	Rutgers University-Newark	192271	LIM College	196130	SUNY Buffalo State
186432	Saint Peter's University	192323	Le Moyne College	196149	SUNY Cortland
186584	Seton Hall University	192448	Long Island University	196158	SUNY at Fredonia
186618	Saint Elizabeth University	192703	Manhattan College	196167	SUNY College at Geneseo
186867	Stevens Institute of Technology	192712	Manhattan School of Music	196176	State University of New York at New Paltz
186876	Stockton University	192749	Manhattanville College	196185	SUNY Oneonta
187134	The College of New Jersey	192819	Marist College	196194	SUNY College at Oswego
187444	William Paterson University of New Jersey	192864	Marymount Manhattan College	196200	SUNY College at Potsdam
188429	Adelphi University	193016	Mercy College	196219	SUNY at Purchase College
188641	Alfred University	193292	Molloy College	196237	SUNY College at Old Westbury
188854	American Musical and Dramatic Academy	193399	College of Mount Saint Vincent	196246	SUNY College at Plattsburgh
189088	Bard College	193584	Nazareth College	196264	SUNY Empire State College
189097	Barnard College	193654	The New School	196413	Syracuse University
189705	Canisius College	193900	New York University	196680	Excelsior College
189848	Cazenovia College	193973	Niagara University	196866	Union College
190099	Colgate University	194091	New York Institute of Technology	197133	Vassar College
190150	Columbia University in the City of New York	194116	NY School of Interior Design	197142	Villa Maria College
190372	Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art	194161	Nyack College	197151	School of Visual Arts
190415	Cornell University	194310	Pace University	197197	Wagner College
190512	CUNY Bernard M Baruch College	194578	Pratt Institute-Main	197230	Wells College
190549	CUNY Brooklyn College	194824	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	197285	The College of Westchester
190558	College of Staten Island CUNY	194958	Roberts Wesleyan College	197708	Yeshiva University

Arts for the Real World

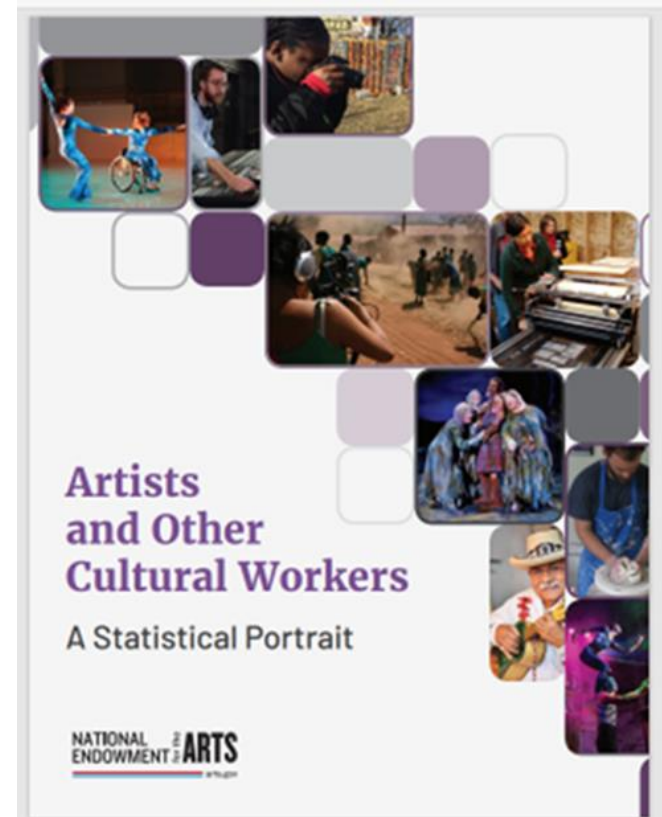
- From boardrooms to some of the meteoric startups of today, arts graduates can be found thriving. Coca-Cola and GAP have hired artists to consult on their innovation and branding challenges. Walt Disney Company CEO Michael Eisner holds a degree in theatre. Steve Eells, founder of \$20 billion burrito chain Chipotle, studied art history.
- In a recent [Q&A About Performing and Visual Arts Colleges and Universities](#), Kavin Buck discusses the misconceptions of what a degree in the performing and visual arts entails. He states that one the biggest obstacles for a student who is interested in studying the arts in college is the parental or societal belief that a degree in art is not helpful in today's marketplace. Fortunately for the students earning degrees in the arts, just the opposite is true. According to to Buck:

“We are at a crossroads where technology intersects with culture and marketing that has been the basis for what is known as the creative economy. Over the last decade the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has forecasted the increasing need for artists and designers, in today's job force, where rapid changes is the norm and where art and technology are integrated the need for creative thinkers and collaborative problem solvers will continue to grow.”

- This is reinforced by The National Endowment for the Arts which released a report in 2019 describing the arts ecosystem in the United States, entitled [Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait](#) incorporating data from six federal sources.

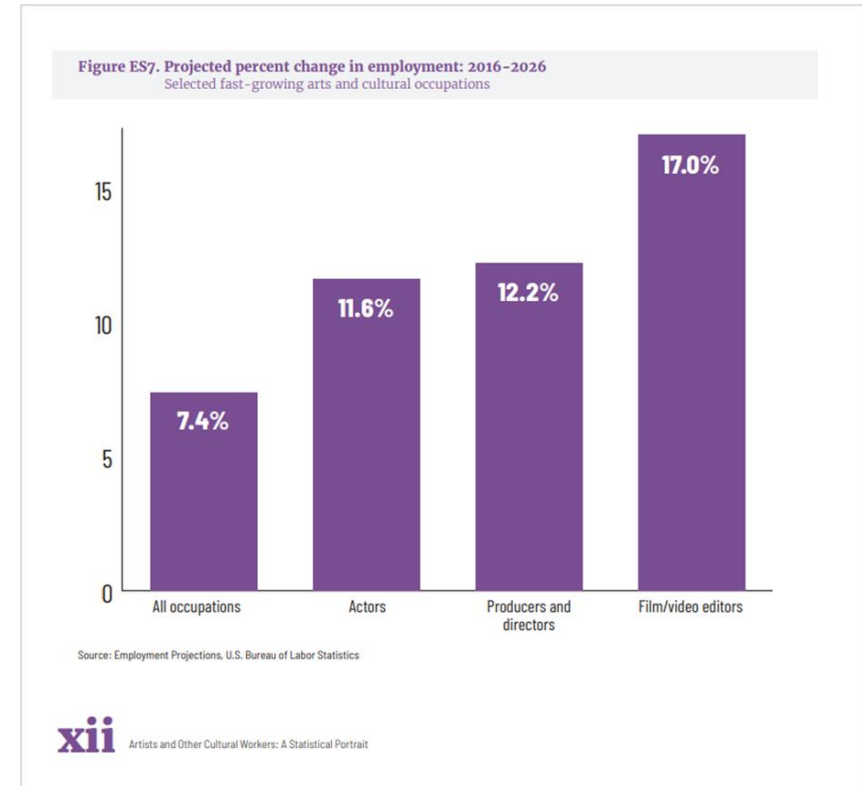
Artists and Other Cultural Workers

- [Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait](#) examines employment trends, demographic characteristics, earnings, and other attributes of those working in the arts and cultural sector.
- Faster-than-average growth in employment is predicted for set and exhibit designers, actors, producers and directors, and film and video editors.
- Between 2016 and 2026, annual job openings will have averaged 7,400 for actors and 14,100 for producers and directors.
- Employment growth in these occupations stems from strong demand for new movies and television shows.



Artists and Other Cultural Workers

- Employment of film/video editors, for example, is projected to grow at a 17 percent clip. A contributing factor is the number of shows increasingly produced by Internet-only sources and streaming services.
- While it is beyond the scope of this data and document review to provide academic program recommendations for the new School of the Arts, considering these areas of growth may provide opportunities to align both focus and resources with future market demand.



Competitor & Peer Assessment



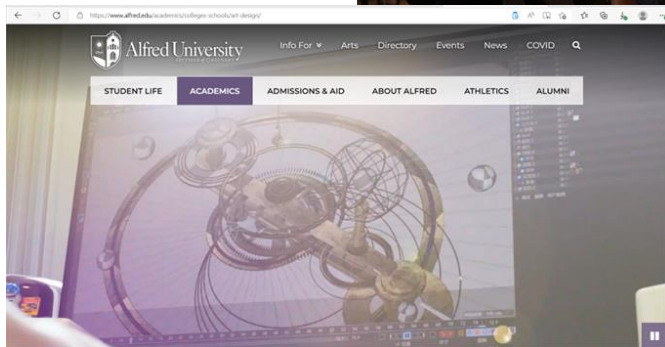
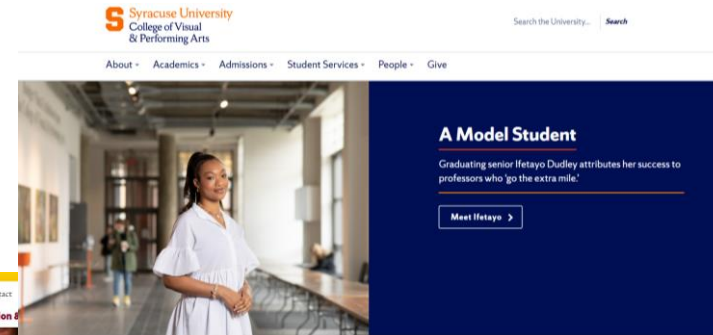
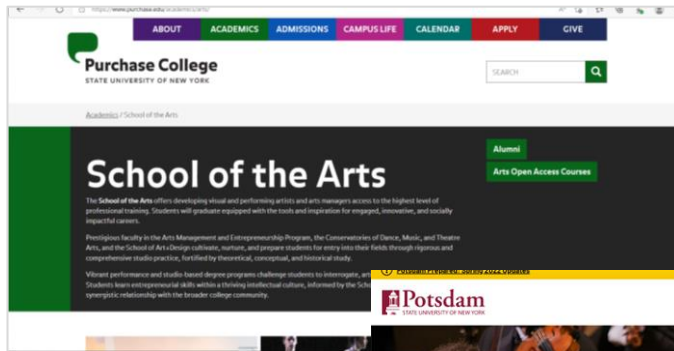
Questions Prospective Students Have

- Students interested in visual and performing arts assess their options based on several key questions:
 - Is the school/program respected in my field of study?
 - Are the instructors known in their fields?
 - Will I be mentored and supported?
 - Will I fit in and feel welcomed?
 - What type of facilities and equipment does the school have in my area of interest?
 - Is there adequate studio/practice space?
 - Are there ample performance/exhibition opportunities?
 - What is the arts community in my field like both on and off campus?
 - What are the internship opportunities? Can I study abroad?
 - What can I do with my degree? What are the career opportunities in my field?

- With these questions in mind, we reviewed the websites and available marketing materials for 5 key competitors and 3 aspirational peers, to better understand the competitive landscape, identify “white space,” and gather best practices from a marketing and branding perspective.

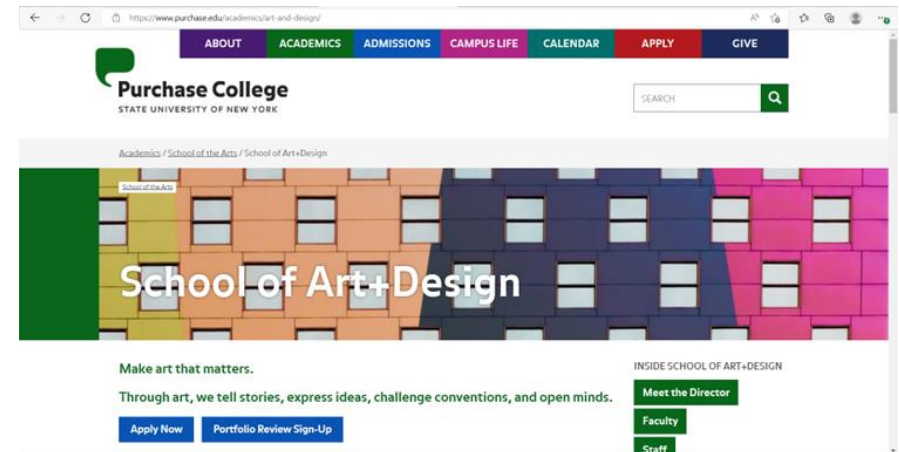
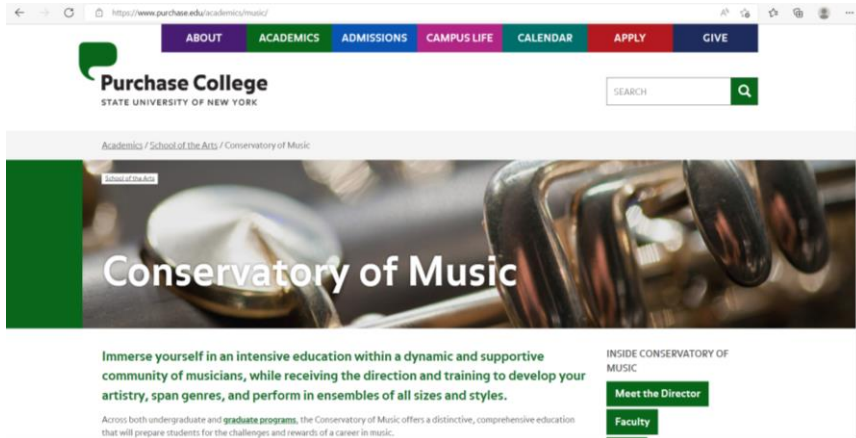
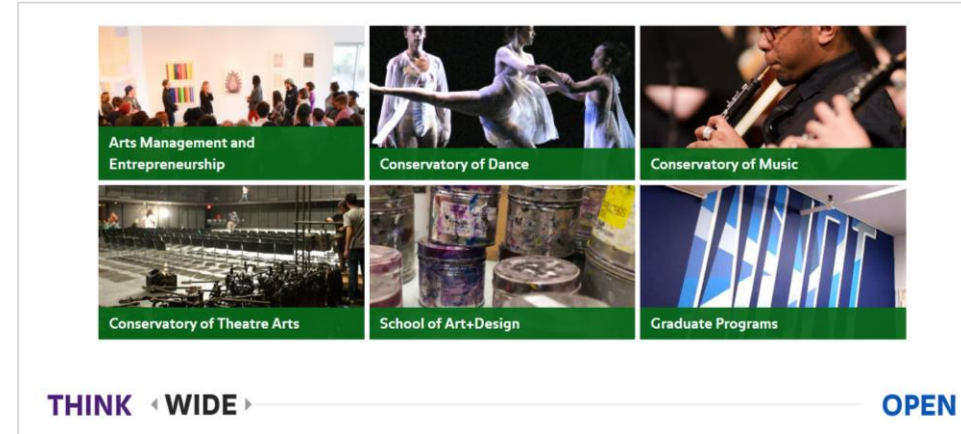
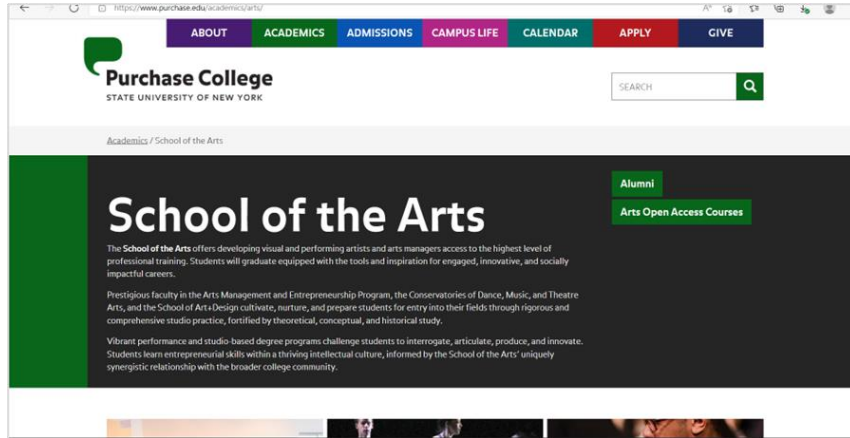
- This analysis will help the New School of the Arts develop a unique value proposition that aligns with the strengths of Binghamton/Harper College as well as the needs of prospective students and other target audiences.

Key Competitors



Key competitors included SUNY Purchase School of the Arts, SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music, Syracuse University College of Visual and Performing Arts, Alfred University School of Art and Design, and Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts.

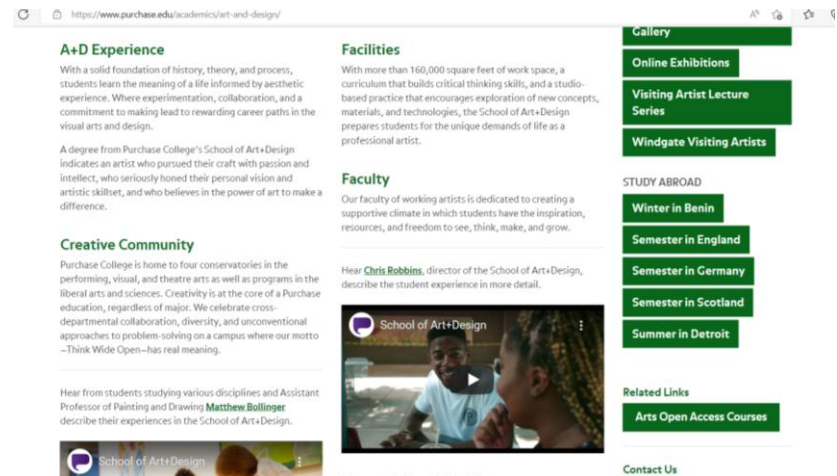
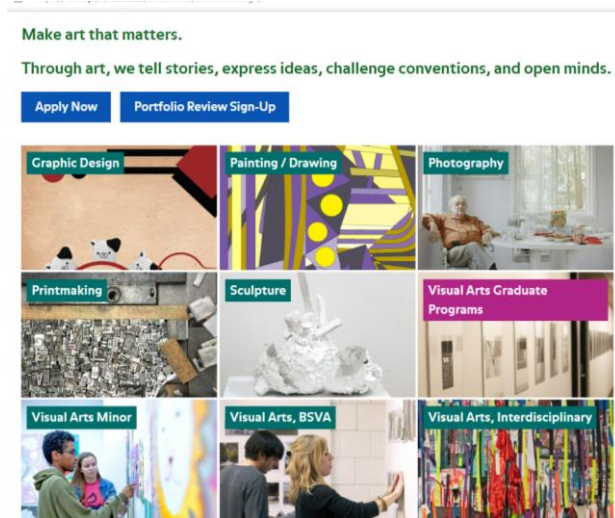
SUNY Purchase School of the Arts



<https://www.purchase.edu/academics/arts/>

Six different areas of study with tailored messages for each.

SUNY Purchase School of the Arts



- Engaging web content for each area of study promoting key strengths and distinctive attributes with a welcoming tone.
- For example, the School of Art + Design Director Chris Robbins' video describes the student experience in detail with warmth and enthusiasm.
- Web content highlights **Facilities** (more than 160,000 square feet of work space), **Creative Community** (home to four conservatories in the performing, visual, and theatre arts as well as programs in the liberal arts and sciences, **cross department collaboration**), **Faculty** (working artists, creating a supportive and inspiring environment, **Network New York City** – (located just 30 miles north of Manhattan) and **Proudly Public** (founded in 1967 as the **cultural gem** of the State University of New York system).

SUNY Purchase School of the Arts

School of Art+Design

Alumni



Tom Burckhardt '86



Ingrid Calame '87



Gregory Crewdson '85



Tom Cross '93



Barbara Glauber '84



Kris Graves '04

INSIDE SCHOOL OF ART+DESIGN

- Meet the Director
- Faculty
- Staff
- Alumni
- Facilities
- A+D Student Handbook
- Portfolio Review Sign-Up
- Request Information
- FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE
- Art+Design Foundations Program

Conservatory of Music

Alumni

Undergraduate Alumni

Name	Description
Luelien Abdo	Freelance violinist: Has performed with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Ballet, Brooklyn Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, and New York Virtuosi, and with such renowned artists as Ray Charles and Bon Jovi; artistic director and performer, New York City Ballet Musicians and Friends, a summer chamber music series in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
Cyille Aimée	Jazz vocalist: Winner of the Montreux Jazz

Graduate Alumni

Name	Description
Jay Azzolina	Jazz guitarist and composer: Has toured extensively and performed with Michael Urbaniak, Spyro Gyra (Grammy nomination), Herbie Mann, Chuck Mangione, John Parricci, Charles Bleszigi, Michael Franks, Donna Summer, The Manhattan Transfer, Carly Simon, and Rickie Lee Jones, among many others
Dan Castellani	Composer, sound designer, and audio engineer: see bio

INSIDE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

- Meet the Director
- Faculty
- Staff
- Music Courses
- Music Minor
- Alumni
- Facilities
- Request Information
- Connect with Music Alumni and Current Students

Conservatory of Theatre Arts

Wesley Snipes

Famed actor, film producer, martial artist, and author Wesley Trent Snipes attended Purchase's Conservatory of Theatre Arts in the early 1980s. Snipes is well known for prominent roles in such films as *Major League* (1989), *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *New Jack City* (1991), *White Men Can't Jump* (1992), *Demolition Man* (1993), and the Marvel Comics character *Blade* in the *Blade* film trilogy (1998–2004).



Graduation Year:
1984
Degree:
BFA
Major(s):
Acting

CONSERVATORY OF THEATRE ARTS

- Faculty
- Meet the Director
- Staff
- Alumni
- Facilities
- Performances
- Request Information

Listing alumni from A – Z with a description of accomplishments, performances, exhibits and awards illustrates impressive outcomes and spotlights successful graduates.

SUNY Purchase School of the Arts

Main Idea: Think Wide Open (SUNY Purchase tagline extended to the School of the Arts)

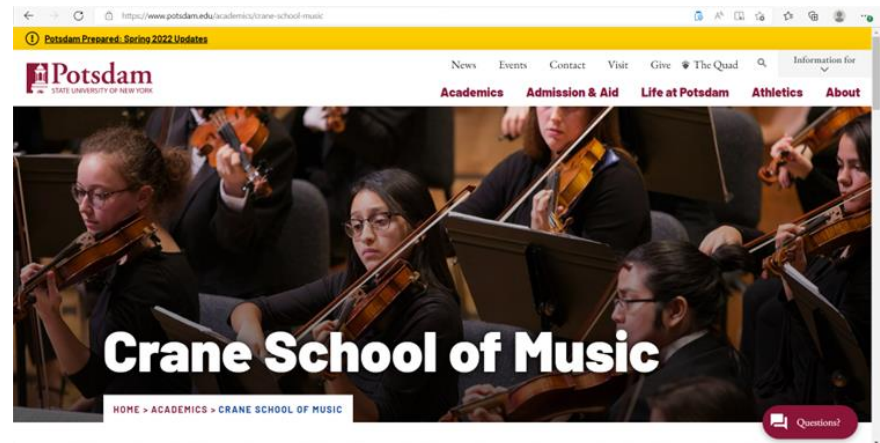
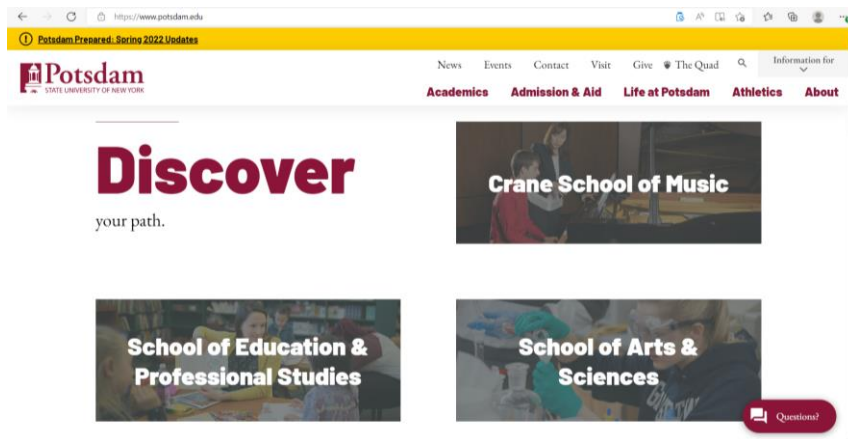
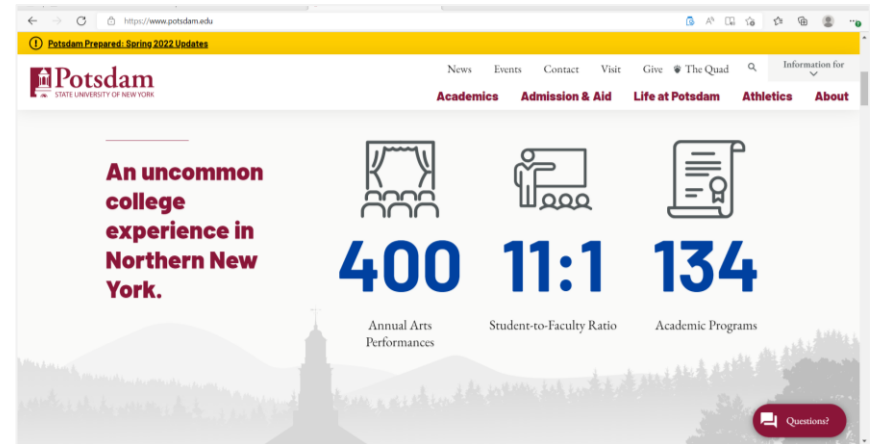
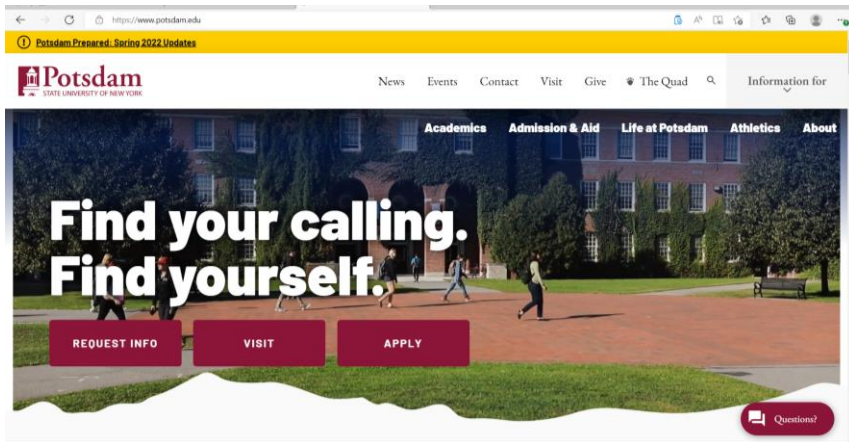
Key Messages:

- The School of the Arts offers developing visual and performing artists and arts managers access to **the highest level of professional training**. Students will **graduate equipped** with the tools and inspiration for engaged, innovative, and socially impactful careers.
- **Prestigious faculty** cultivate, nurture, and prepare students for entry into their fields through **rigorous and comprehensive** studio practice, fortified by theoretical, conceptual, and historical study.
- **Vibrant performance and studio-based degree programs** challenge students to interrogate, articulate, produce, and innovate. Students learn **entrepreneurial skills** within a thriving intellectual culture, informed by the School of the Arts' **uniquely synergistic relationship with the broader college community**.

Key Takeaway:

- While the overall messaging feels similar to other competitors, Purchase presents a welcoming tone and authentic use of storytelling and video from the student, faculty and administration perspective, making you want to be a part of this “vibrant community” and “magic place.”
- In terms of best practices, the new School of the Arts should create an engaging welcome video from the new director and develop successful alumni profiles that illustrate a variety of careers.

SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music



<https://www.potsdam.edu/academics/crane-school-music>

400 Annual Arts Performances

SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music



Chords of Success

For more than a decade **Shannon Boyle '20 & '22** has been mastering the harp at Crane, first in middle school and high school through the National String Project, then as an undergraduate student, and now while pursuing her master's degree in music performance. Through an outpouring of scholarships, she will be graduating in May without any debt as she looks ahead to the future as a musician and educator.

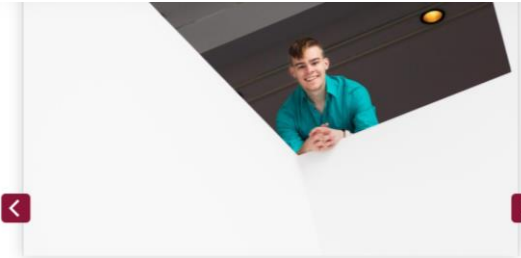
Questions?



Love and Music

As an alumnus of SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music, **Drew Coles '12**, has come full circle, and is now leading Crane's music business program as an assistant professor and program director. Learning on the experience he's acquired as a musician and entrepreneur through the Metropolitan Players—a highly successful wedding band business he launched with his wife Erin Coles '12—he is sharing his real-world with his students, and preparing them for successful music business careers.

Questions?



SUNY Potsdam's TikTok Sensation

A refuge from the grief of COVID-19 became a way to connect with millions of viewers for alumnus **Daniel Mertzlufft '15**. His viral TikTok videos struck a chord with many, including the Late Late Show's James Corden, who recently hosted him on the show and featured Mertzlufft's latest hit, "The Thanksgiving Musical," a tension-relieving romp through collective pandemic realities, holiday foibles, and even post-election drama.

Questions?

- Crane presenting a visually engaging slide show featuring profiles of students, faculty and alumni. Stories of unrivaled experiences, one-on-one mentorship, developing entrepreneurial skills, academic value and preparation for successful music careers.
- From harp performances to TikTok videos, Crane feels classic and contemporary at the same time.



From Zeppelin to Mozart

Introduced to music on his father's electric guitar, **Alex Mariano '21** played the songs of Led Zeppelin and Van Halen throughout his youth. Now he's pursuing a music performance degree at The Crane School of Music where he's been mastering the classical guitar under the guidance of Dr. Douglas Rubio.

SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music

The image shows two overlapping screenshots. The top screenshot is the SUNY Potsdam website's 'The Crane School of Music - Live in Concert' page. It features the university logo, navigation menus for News, Events, Contact, Visit, Give, and The Quad, and a main banner with the text 'The Crane School of Music - Live in Concert'. Below the banner, there are links for 'Crane Admissions' and 'About The Crane School of Music', and a prominent red button that says 'WATCH THE LIVESTREAM'. The bottom screenshot is a YouTube playlist page for 'The Crane School Live'. The playlist title is 'Encore Performance Series' and it contains 7 videos. The first video is 'Crane Encore Performance Series (1973): Music for Brass' (34:18), followed by 'Crane Encore Performance Series: Potsdam Brass' (6:56), 'Crane Encore Performance Series (2017): Percussion Ensemble' (7:32), 'Crane Encore Performance Series: 1968 - College Jazz Ensemble from Spring Festival' (38:12), 'Crane Encore Performance Series 2020: Symphony Orchestra, Schubert's Rosemunde Overture' (11:26), 'Crane Encore Performance Series (2018): Wind Ensemble; Steampunk Suite' (16:59), and 'Crane Encore Performance Series (2018): Symphonic Band' (9:51). The YouTube interface includes a search bar, navigation icons, and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button for the channel.

- Crane School of Music concerts and recitals stream live on YouTube and Facebook or can be watched later on your own time.

SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music

Main Idea (SUNY Potsdam): Find Your Calling. Find Yourself.

Main Idea (Crane School of Music): Listen. Create. Inspire.

Key Messages:

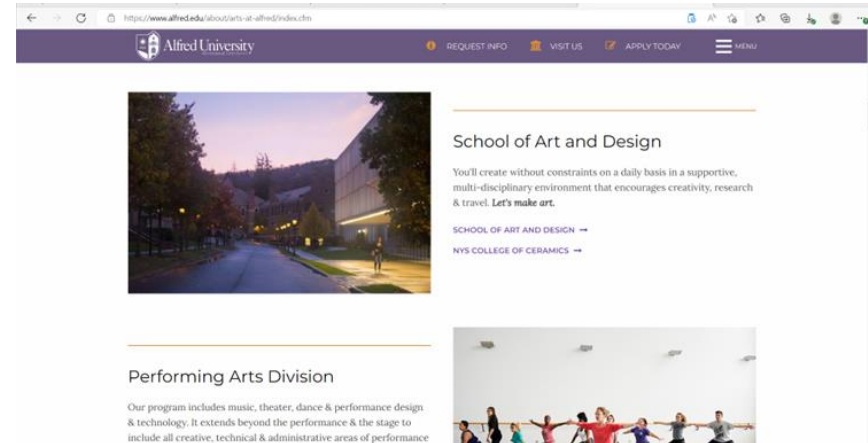
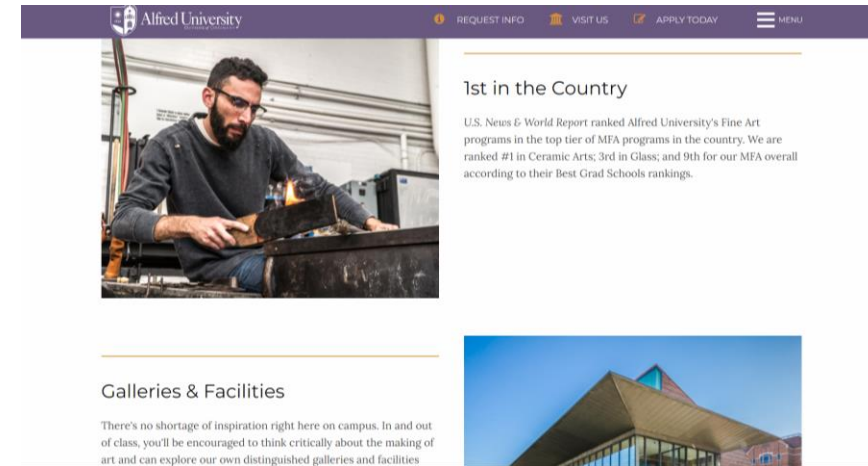
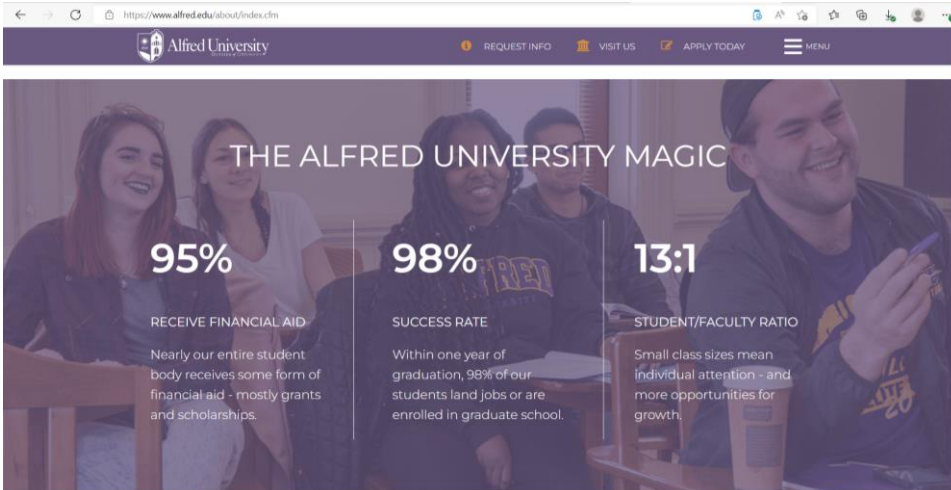
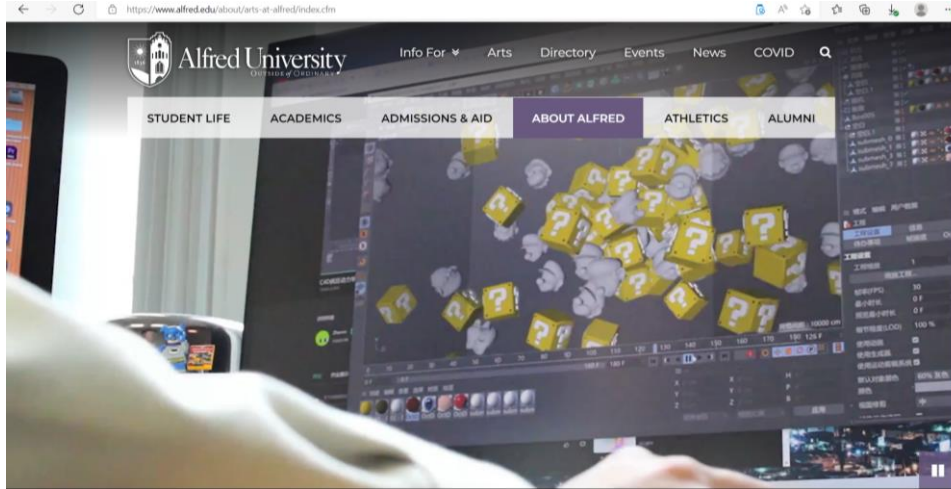
- Founded in 1886, SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music has a long legacy of **excellence in music education and performance**. Life at Crane includes an incredible array of **more than 300 recitals, lectures and concerts** presented by faculty, students and guests each year. The Crane School of Music is **SUNY's only All-Steinway institution and is one of only ten Yamaha Institution of Excellence programs nationally**.
- The Crane School of Music offers **rigorous** undergraduate and graduate programs with a **strong emphasis on performance and practice, in a tightknit atmosphere**. With a 7:1 student-to-faculty ratio, you'll **benefit from working closely with our distinguished faculty artists, teachers and scholars**.
- The broad Crane alumni network includes **sought-after** performing artists, award-winning educators, prolific composers, and executives in music business, non-profits and creative fields. Crane students also **benefit from SUNY Potsdam's vibrant arts environment**, with programs spanning music, theatre, dance, the fine arts and creative writing.
- Crane students regularly premiere new works, study with guest conductors and visiting artists, and perform in nationally televised concerts. But **performance opportunities aren't limited to Potsdam, N.Y.**—our symphony and chorus have performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, the traveling choir has performed in churches across Germany and Spain, and our Latin ensemble regularly plays in New York City and recently toured Cuba.

SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music

Main Takeaway:

- Crane presents great profiles focusing on attributes and key messages that are unique to Crane while aligning with experiences and outcomes that matter most.
- Live stream concerts and opportunities to enjoy past performances on YouTube adds to strong emphasis on performance and practice.
- Opportunities for students to perform across the country and internationally proves how Crane equips students with both the foundations and flexibility needed for the challenges of the 21st century.
- To compete, the new School of the Arts will need to build a high-impact learning experience for students where they can perform/exhibit locally, nationally and internationally.
- Investments in facilities and modern technology may also be required to attract the best students and faculty to new School of the Arts without “compromise.”
- It is also important to note that the Crane School of Music was founded in 1886 by Julia Etta Crane (1855-1923) as the Crane Institute of Music, and was one of the first institutions in the country to have programs dedicated to preparing specialists in teaching music in the public schools. The new School of the Arts may have naming opportunities that go beyond “Binghamton School of the Arts” that would bring awareness and prestige to the school as well as well as additional funding and resources.

Alfred University School of Art & Design



<https://www.alfred.edu/academics/colleges-schools/art-design/index.cfm>

A space to thrive.

Alfred University School of Art & Design



[REQUEST INFO](#)
[VISIT US](#)
[APPLY TODAY](#)
[MENU](#)

Travel Abroad

In conjunction with the Santa Reparata International School of Art, the Division of Drawing, Painting and Photography has recently begun to offer a semester abroad in Florence, Italy. There, the students are immersed in the rich artistic traditions of this unique city and can use its influence in the pursuit of their own interests as contemporary artists. Through Santa Reparata, the Division offers a complete selection of studio classes as well as classes on Italian language and art history.






[REQUEST INFO](#)
[VISIT US](#)
[APPLY TODAY](#)
[MENU](#)



Cross Disciplinary

Through a progression of course work, you'll explore topics integral to each field, with respect toward both traditional and experimental practices. These courses, chosen with close faculty advisement, allow investigations that span and expand the range of what is possible in both thought and process. While you may choose to concentrate wholly in one area of Painting, Drawing, or Photography, cross-disciplinary work is also encouraged and valued.

Some departments like “Art – Drawing, Painting and Photography” encourage cross disciplinary work and travel abroad.

Alfred University School of Art & Design

Main Idea: Outside of Ordinary. A Space to Thrive.

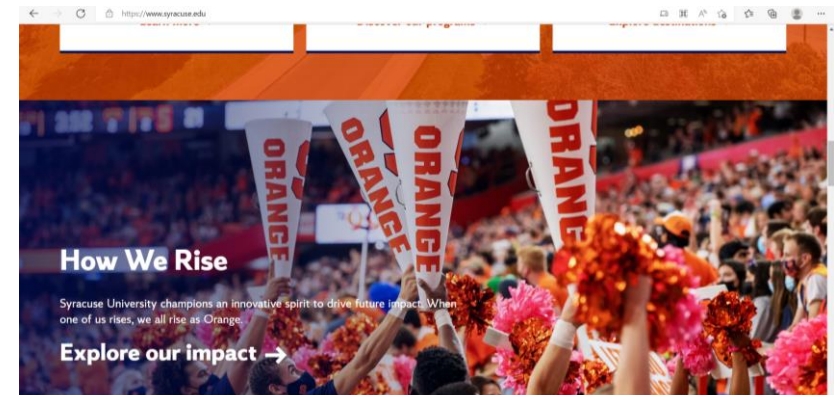
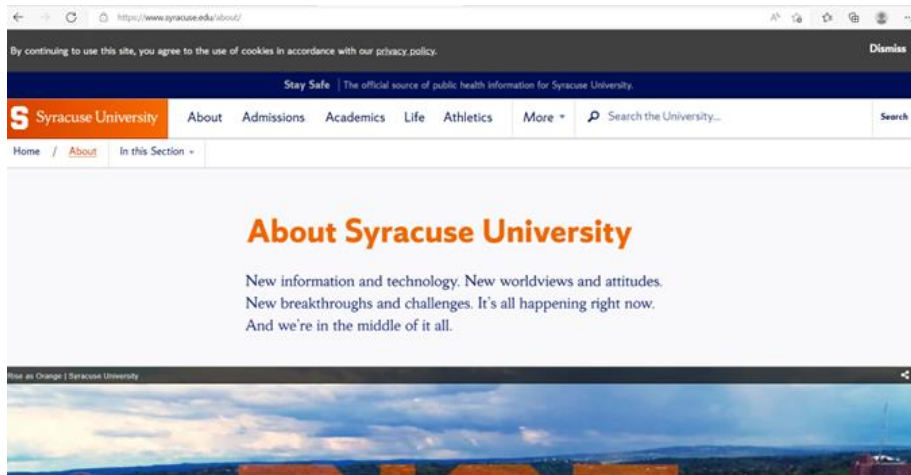
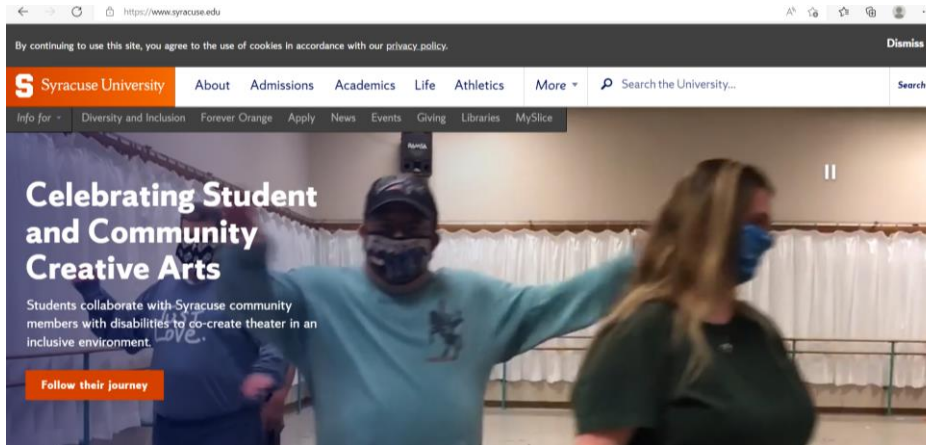
Key Messages:

- For true artists, there's nothing more empowering than being given the space to thrive.
- At Alfred, you'll **create without constraints** on a daily basis in a supportive, multi-disciplinary environment that encourages creativity and research. When our students aren't exploring our on-campus museums and galleries, they're illustrating, painting, sculpting or **producing work that is wholly original and intrinsically beautiful.**
- **A safe place to take creative risks.**
- #1 Ceramic Art program in the country. 4 + 1 students earn undergraduate degree and an MBA in just five years. 126,000 square feet of studio and classroom space including kiln rooms, photography studios, glaze studios and more.

Main Takeaway:

- While Alfred University of Art and Design stresses the importance of taking risks, the website does not feel as modern or as authentic as others in the competitive set.
- Aside from a nice introductory video on the website, the color palette and images of students sitting in the classroom make this school feel dated and less vibrant despite the independent thinking and creativity it promotes.
- However, Alfred does a great job of promoting their facilities and on-campus museums and galleries and consistently promoting “a space to thrive” message which stands out from other competitors. To compete, new School of the Arts will need to develop its key differentiator.

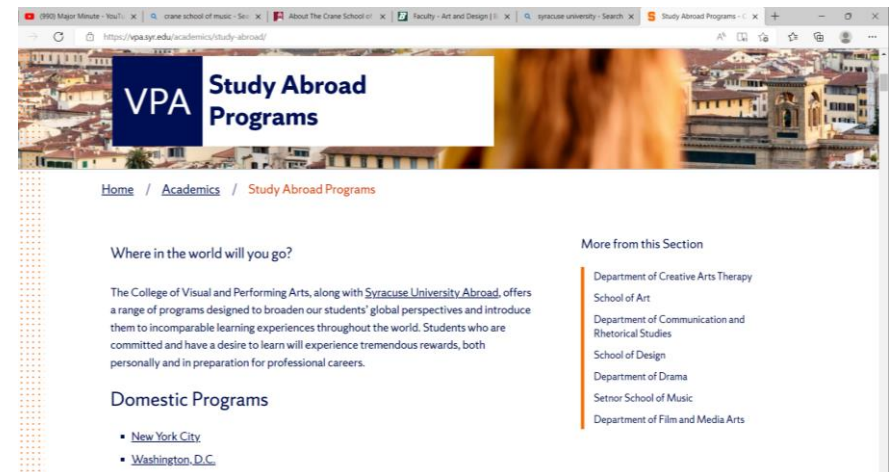
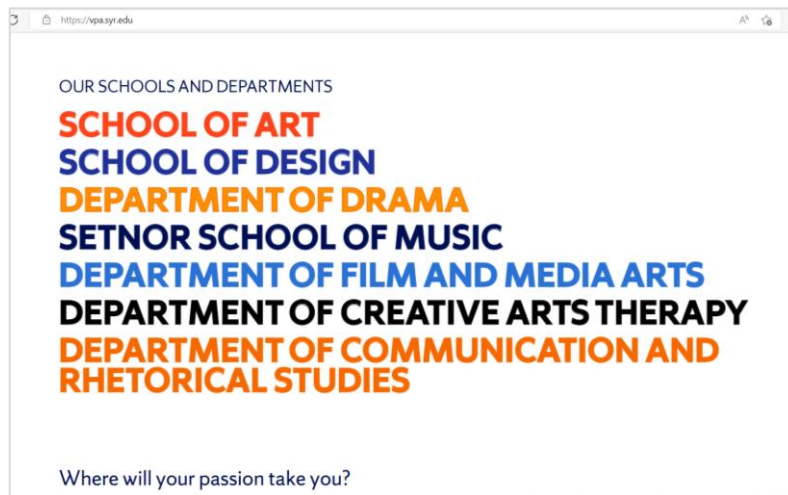
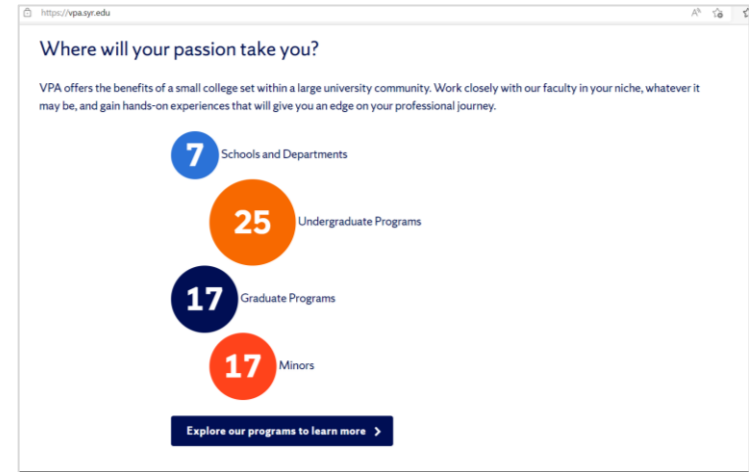
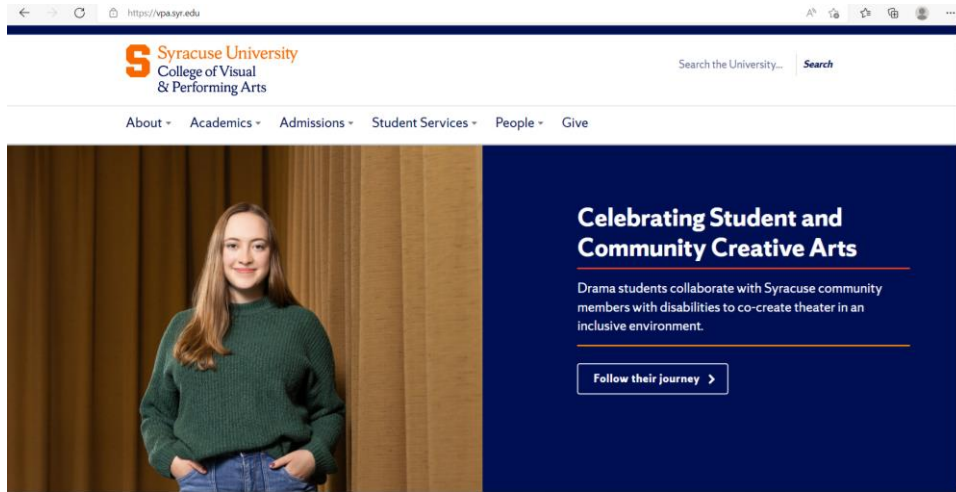
Syracuse University



<https://www.syracuse.edu/>

Celebrating Student and Community Creative Arts (on the main website)

Syracuse College of Visual & Performing Arts



<https://vpa.syr.edu/>

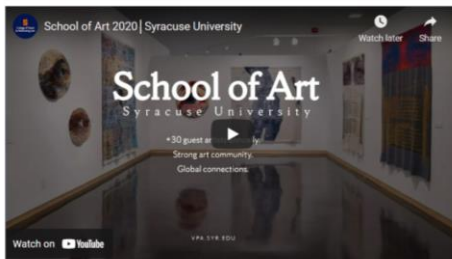
Where will your passion take you? Where in the world will you go?

Syracuse College of Visual & Performing Arts

Where Our Recent Graduates Are Working

[Ann Inc \(Ann Taylor, LOFT, Lou & Grey\)](#)
[Boston Red Sox](#)
[Burt's Bees Baby - Ayablu Inc](#)
[Discovery Channel](#)
[Netflix](#)
[Dreamworks Animation](#)

We celebrate being a dynamic art school at a major research university.



The School of Art offers unique and exciting opportunities for students who are passionate about art in all of its diverse possibilities. We teach the next generation of artists—those who are adventurous, complex, precocious, innovative, noisy, reflective, curious, socially conscious, and dedicated to a life in the visual arts.

School of Art

Degree Programs

[Minors](#)
[Art Faculty and Staff](#)
[Studio Facilities](#)
[Career Development](#)
[Visiting Artists](#)
[Art Community](#)
[Contact](#)

Follow Us [f](#) [@](#)

More

- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Faculty Profile | Sam Van Aken, studio arts](#)
- [Student profile | Bridey McGlynn, studio arts](#)
- [Student profile | Isabel Souza, ceramic](#)

The School of Design is an inquisitive community of students and faculty that addresses firsthand the issues of the world around it.

We take pride in our professionally oriented programs, many of which have a long history at Syracuse University. We offer undergraduate degree programs in communications design, design studies, environmental and interior design, fashion design, and industrial and interaction design and graduate degree programs in design and museum studies. Concern for sustainable design practices, social issues, and excellence in professional practice forms the core of our programs.



School of Design

Degree Programs

[Minors](#)
[Design Faculty and Staff](#)
[Sue & Leon Genet Gallery](#)
[The Nancy Cantor Warehouse Facilities](#)
[Opportunities](#)
[Contact](#)
[Follow Us](#) [@](#)

More

- [First-Year Equipment and Resources](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Student Profile | A day in the life as a design student at Syracuse University](#)
- [Designing a website | A student designer's workflow](#)
- [Student Profile | Megan Forbes, communications design](#)

- Each department has its own introductory statement plus a video showing a variety of student projects and hands-on learning opportunities. The upbeat style feels exciting and inspiring.
- Nice listing of where current graduates are working speaks well to student outcomes.

Syracuse College of Visual & Performing Arts

Main Idea (Syracuse University): Where Gamechangers Rise (not extended to VPA)

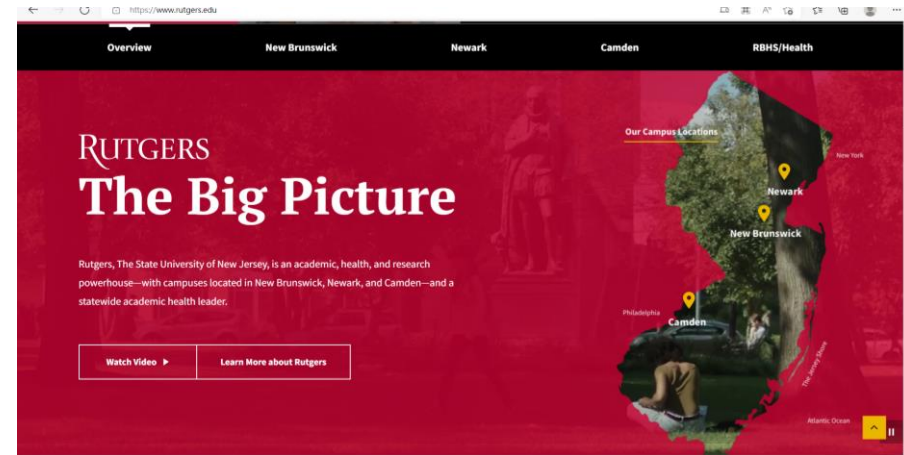
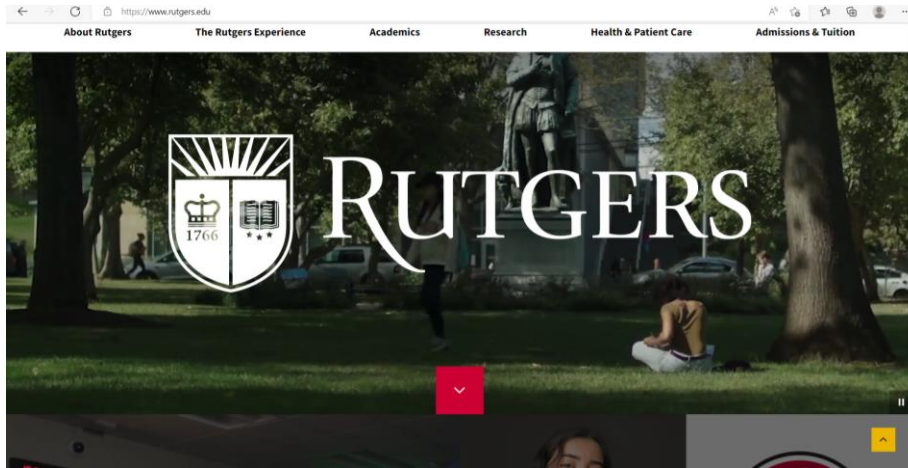
Key Messages:

- Where will your passion take you? Where in the world will you go?
- VPA offers the **benefits of a small college set within a large university community**. Work closely with our faculty in your niche, whatever it may be, and gain hands-on experiences that will **give you an edge** on your professional journey.
- Our degree programs span the disciplines of art, communication and rhetorical studies, creative arts therapy, design, drama, film and media arts, and music.
- The College of Visual and Performing Arts at Syracuse University is committed to the education of cultural leaders who will engage and inspire audiences through performance, visual art, design, scholarship, and commentary. We provide the tools for **self-discovery and risk-taking in an environment that thrives on critical thought and action**.
- The vision of the College of Visual and Performing Arts is founded upon the belief that art and scholarship can **affect change**.

Main Takeaway:

- A visually appealing website with strong messaging and nice use of video to illustrate hands-on experiences across eight schools and departments.
- The availability of study abroad programs to expand students' global perspective and prepare them for professional careers (through domestic programs, global programs, summer and short-term programs) is something the new School of Arts can also build upon.

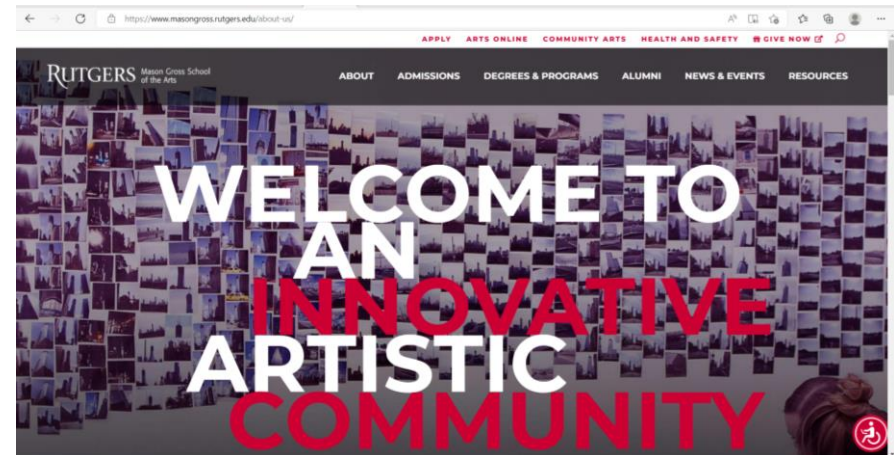
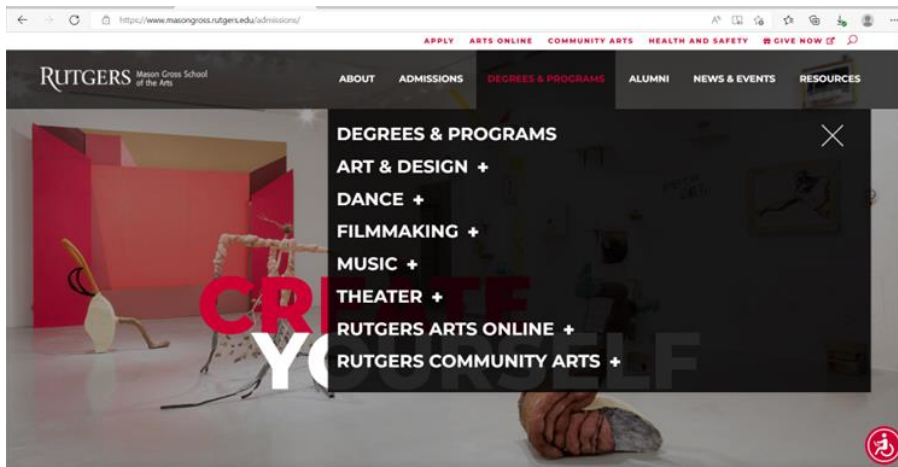
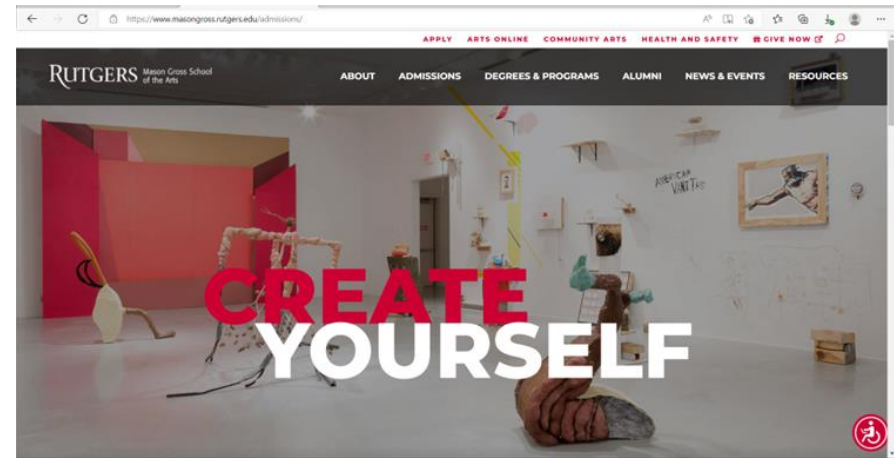
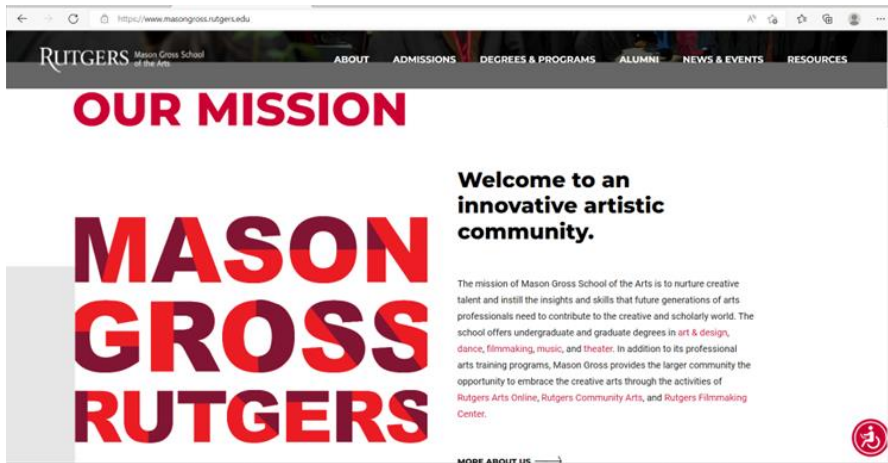
Rutgers University



<https://www.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers stands among America's highest rank, most diverse public research universities.
Discover Rutgers and discover yourself.

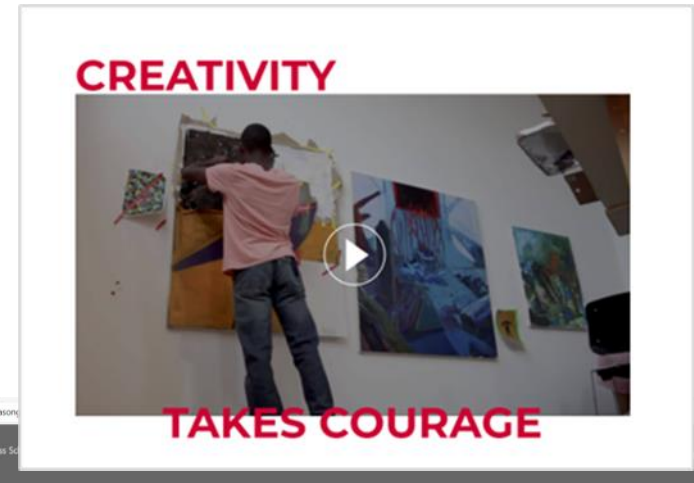
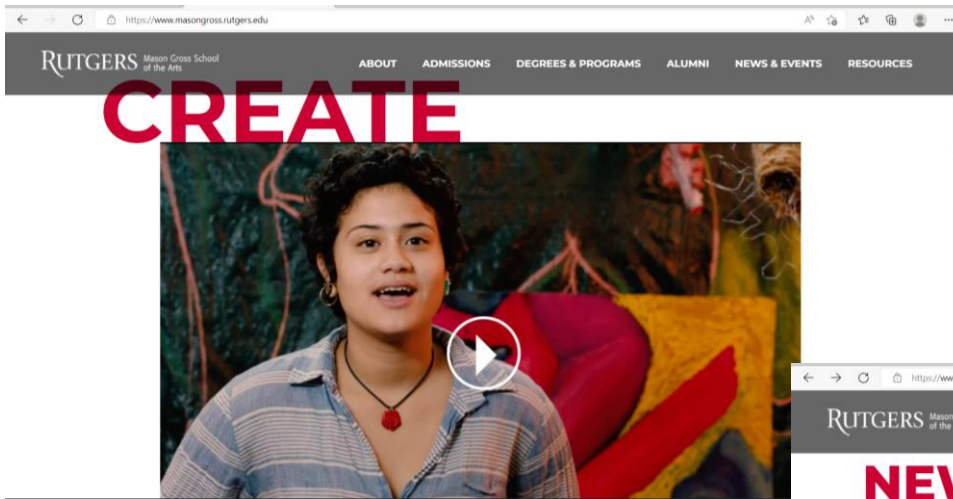
Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts



<https://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/> (separate website)

Create Yourself

Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts



- A bold presentation with a great use of video storytelling.
- Combining art with social justice and giving back to the community is a strong message throughout the website and works to distinguish Mason Gross from other options.

Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts

MEET OUR FACULTY



Alan McIntyre Smith, Filmmaking

Some of my favorite photographers worked for the WPA (Works Progress Administration, which featured a federal government-instituted cultural program that employed photographers to document the lives of the underclass, among others) during the Great Depression, like Dorothea Lange's humanist portrayals of refugee camps and Walker Evans's weathered landscapes. Edward Steichen was a towering figure at the turn-of-the-20th-century's Pictorialist photo movement who helped change the public's perception of photography as an art form rather than a mechanical process.



Valerie Ramshur, Theater

I take pictures everywhere of everything—the toy tossed in a garbage can, the odd mix of humanity in a public space, window displays, and the fish on ice at the supermarket, ornamentation on sides of buildings. There is an endless amount of inspiration in the ordinary; it is how we train our eyes to see and acknowledge it all, how we look deeper, and open ourselves to the countless ways in which to process all the stimuli coming in.



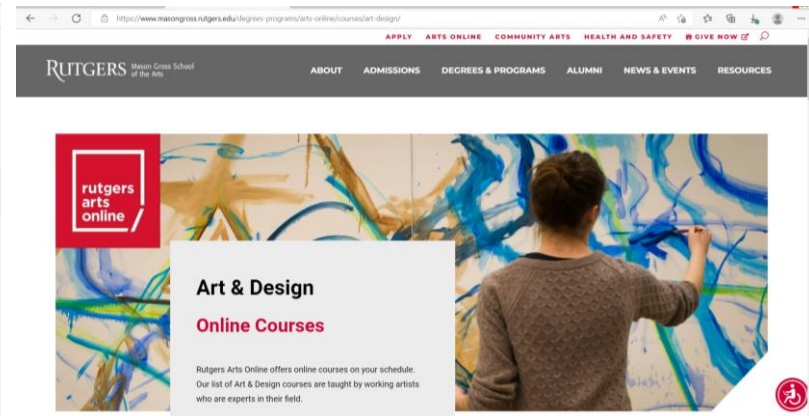
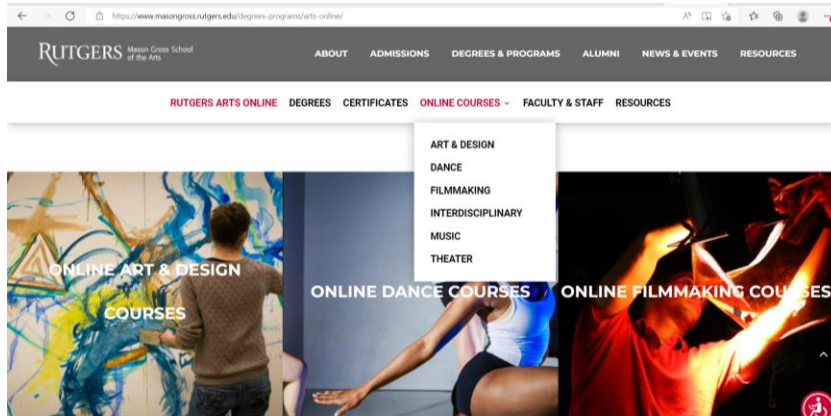
Didier William, Art & Design

My mom is a chef. She has a Haitian restaurant in Miramar, Florida, so I grew up surrounded by delicious Haitian food and Haitian cooking (which, if you know anything about it, is really spicy and colorful and flavorful with rich ingredients. Haitian food comprises an incredibly layered palette), and I often like to say that the way that I think about painting and art is very much the way that my mom thinks about cooking and food... My associations and relationships to color in the print shop have always been analogous to food. There's a beautiful synchronicity for me that exist between the alchemy of printmaking and the alchemy of cooking.

- Personal profiles of faculty make these “professional working artists and scholars” feel like someone you would want to know. The faculty roster includes members of the Met Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, as well as internationally recognized choreographers, Grammy-winning composers, award-winning filmmakers, visual artists, theater artists, and designers who maintain thriving careers outside the classroom.
- Importantly, faculty are also presented as devoted teachers, collaborating with young artists to prepare the next generation for careers in the arts and beyond.
- It is interesting to note that the School of Creative and Performing Arts was founded at Rutgers University at the request of Rutgers’ 17th president, Edward J. Bloustein. Theater actor, director, and playwright Jack Bettenbender served as first dean of the school.
- The school was renamed the Mason Gross School of the Arts in honor of Mason Welch Gross (1911–1977), beloved professor of philosophy, 16th president of Rutgers University, and staunch advocate of the arts in New Brunswick.



Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts



Why not preview
on online arts
class?

A screenshot of the Rutgers Arts Online Sample Course Request Form. The URL is https://rutgers.qualtrics.com/jur/forms/SV_321ev49GDC6c0dH. The form is titled 'RUTGERS Rutgers Arts Online Sample Course Request Form'. It contains the following fields: First Name, Last Name, City, Email, and a checkbox for 'Are you currently a Rutgers student?' with a 'Yes' option.



**ANYWHERE.
ANYTIME.
ONLINE.**

masongross.rutgers.edu/arts-online

Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts

Main Idea: Create Yourself

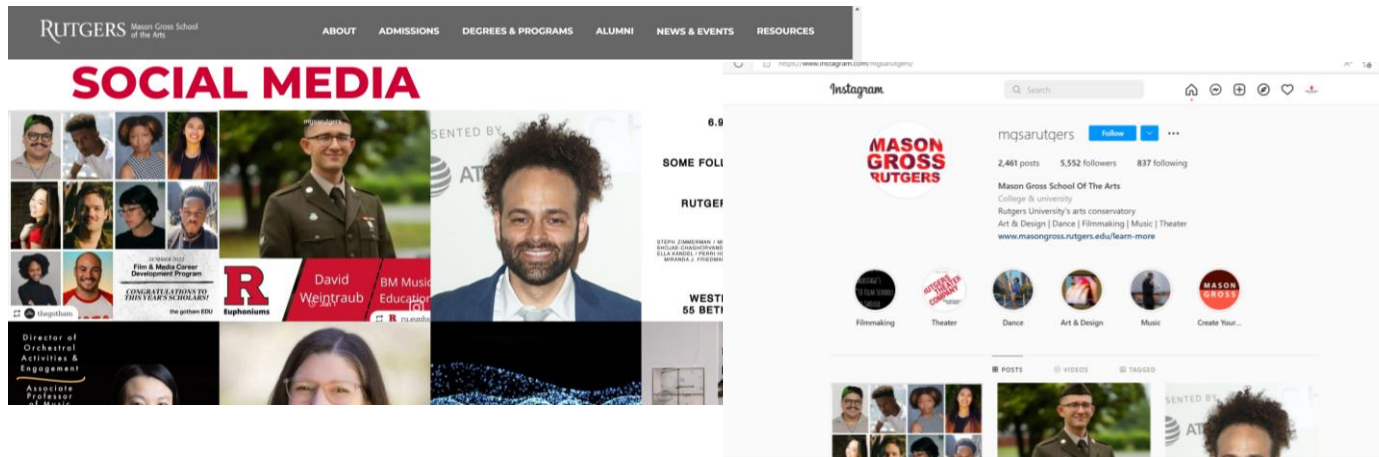
Key Messages:

- Welcome to an **innovative artistic community**
- A **vibrant community** of nearly 1,200 makers—dancers, filmmakers, musicians, theater artists, visual artists, and designers unafraid to get their hands dirty as they collaborate with our **renowned faculty of professional working artists**.
- Mason Gross graduates emerge not merely with a degree but, ideally, with a commitment to making **innovative and purposeful contributions** to the wider community—onstage, backstage, in a gallery, a classroom, a studio, and beyond.
- The goal: to cultivate thinking, thoughtful makers embracing art as an ever-changing field of possibility.
- A thriving arts conservatory housed within a nationally ranked research university. Here you will find exceptionally talented students, **prestigious professional faculty**, and a **location just 45 minutes outside of New York City**.
- The school offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in art & design, dance, filmmaking, music, and theater.
- In addition to its professional arts training programs, Mason Gross provides the larger community the opportunity to embrace the creative arts through the activities of Rutgers Arts Online, Rutgers Community Arts, and Rutgers Filmmaking Center.
- **Consistently one of the most selective schools at Rutgers**

Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts

Main Takeaway:

- A great tagline (“Create Yourself”) and a visually dynamic website with bold use of photography and video, positions Mason Gross School of the Arts above others.
- The site is separate from the Rutgers University main website which enables the design to break free from the institutional template design and present a more creative brand story.
- The presentation of social media on the website (with a link to Instagram) makes the site feel even more engaging.
- Mason Gross profiles their faculty in ways that showcases their accomplishments as professionals but also as mentors we would want to know and learn from – something the new School of the Arts could accomplish as well.



Virginia Commonwealth University

https://www.vcu.edu/about/vcu/

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

MYVCU REGISTER FOR CLASSES JOBS CURRENT STUDENTS FACULTY AND STAFF PARENTS AND FAMILIES ALUMNI PATIENTS COMMUNITY

ACADEMICS ADMISSIONS & AID LIFE AT VCU RESEARCH ARTS ATHLETICS ABOUT US

Our tenacity. Our love of the city. Our commitment to diversity and access.

These are the things that drive us and make us one of America's premier research universities. They are what set us apart from your average college. They are how we make it real.

https://www.vcu.edu/about/vcu/

1 Richmond
We are urban, and we love that Richmond is our home.

2 Research
The National Science Foundation ranks us among the top 100 U.S. schools.

3 1.3+ million hours
Our students perform over a million community service hours in a year.

4 25 in the top 50
U.S. News and World Report ranks 25 of our graduate programs in their top 50.

5 Diversity
It's one reason students say they choose VCU and U.S. News & World Report ranked VCU No. 5 in Campus Ethnic Diversity.

6 Health sciences
VCU is the only Virginia school to offer health professions, dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy.

https://www.vcu.edu/about/vcu/

ABOUT VCU

Mission and history >
Facts and rankings >

When you're a Ram, you know you are part of something big.

You're part of a culture that values hard work, stick-to-it-ness and even – dare we say it? – grit. You are part of a community that loves its city, serves its city and learns from its city. As a Ram, you also love a good Cinderella story – like the time VCU surprised the country and made it to the **NCAA Final Four**. These are the success stories that make you cheer, make you proud, make you **#RamProud**.

8 things that make us **#RamProud**

Richmond Research

Discovery and creativity go hand in hand.

We're ranked a **top 100 research university** by the National Science Foundation. And we're home to one of the **top-ranked public graduate arts schools**

What does that mean for you? Research and creativity are two of our greatest strengths, and they will be part of your VCU education, no matter what field you pursue.

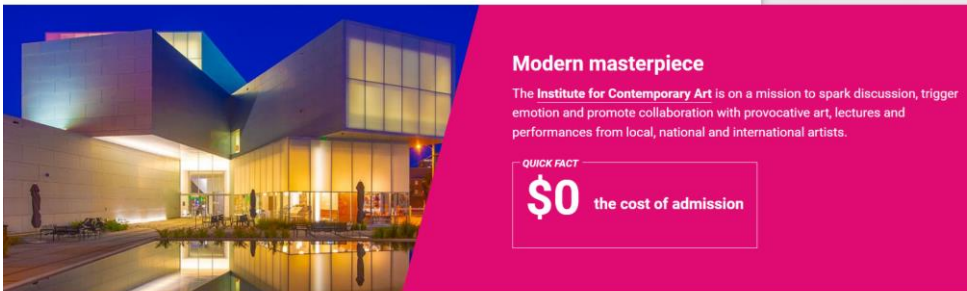
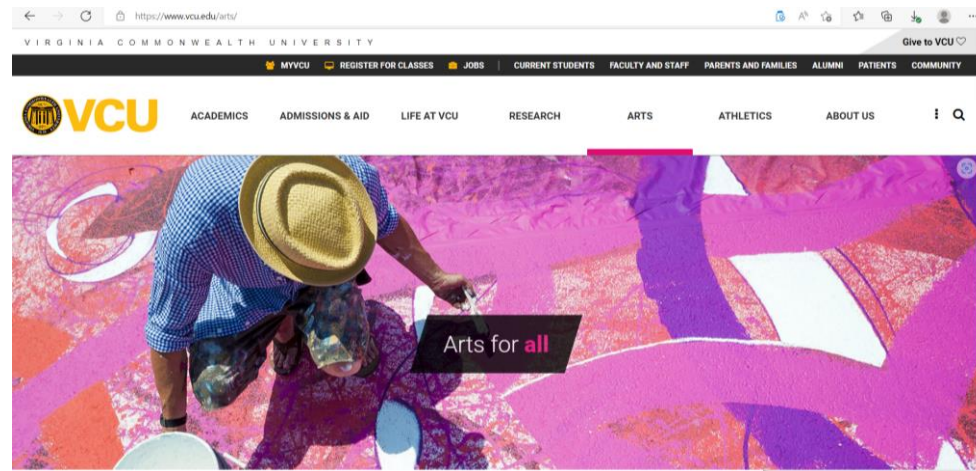
So bring us your **boldest ideas**, your most **unconventional ideas**, your **best ideas**. And we'll help make them real.



<https://www.vcu.edu/>

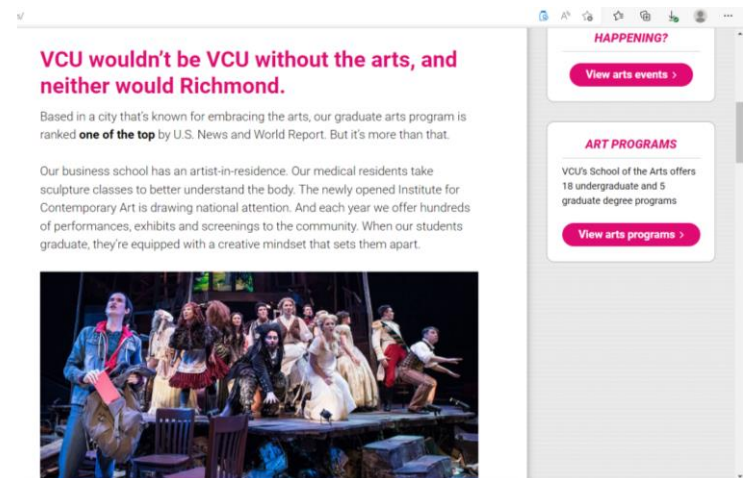
Discovery and creativity go hand in hand.

Virginia Commonwealth University – VCUArts



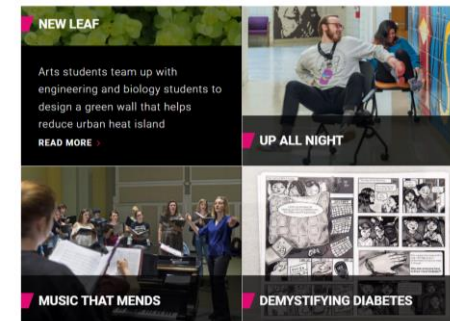
Just add arts

VCU is forever proving that magic happens when you infuse art and creativity into other disciplines.



Just add arts

VCU is forever proving that magic happens when you infuse art and creativity into other disciplines.



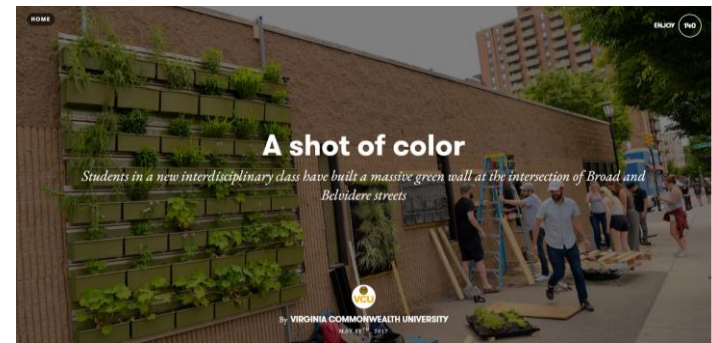
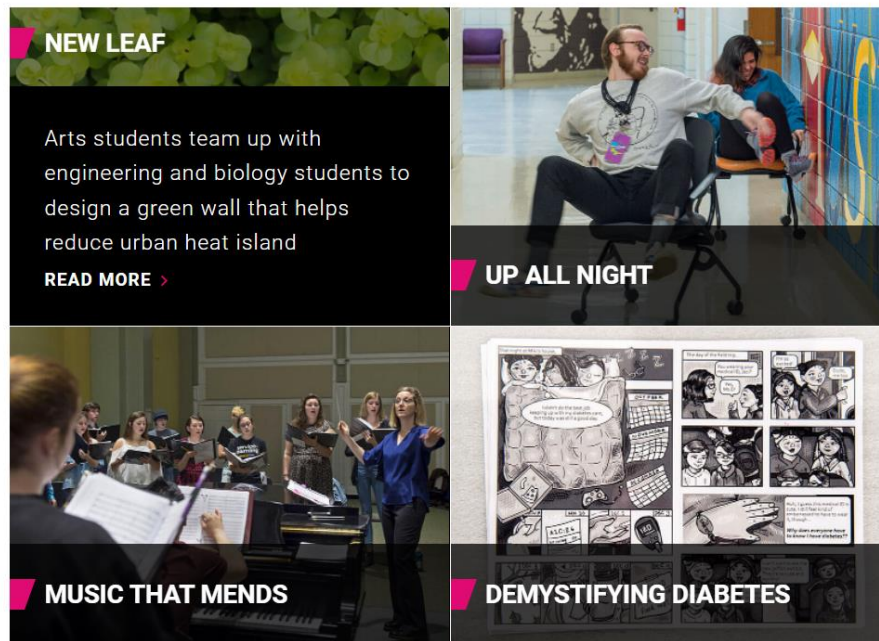
<https://www.vcu.edu/arts/>

Just add arts

Virginia Commonwealth University – VCUArts

Just add arts

VCU is forever proving that magic happens when you infuse art and creativity into other disciplines.



- Amazing stories of cross collaboration take center stage.
- VCUArts show us that “Magic happens when you infuse art and creativity into other disciplines” unlike any other competitor or aspirational peer.

Virginia Commonwealth University - VCUArts

Key Messages (VCU):

- Discovery and creativity go hand in hand.
- We're ranked a top 100 research university by the National Science Foundation. And we're home to one of the top-ranked public graduate arts schools.
- What does that mean for you? Research and creativity are two of our greatest strengths, and they will be part of your VCU education, no matter what field you pursue.
- So bring us your **boldest ideas**, your most **unconventional ideas**, your **best ideas**. And we'll help **make them real**.

Key Messages (VCA Arts):

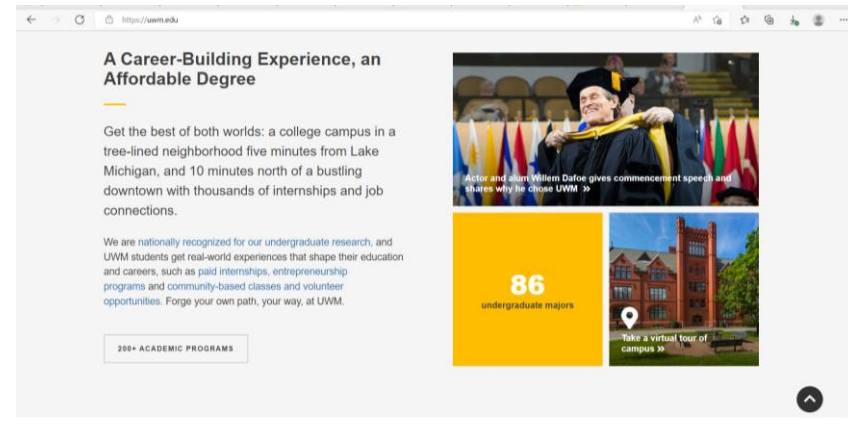
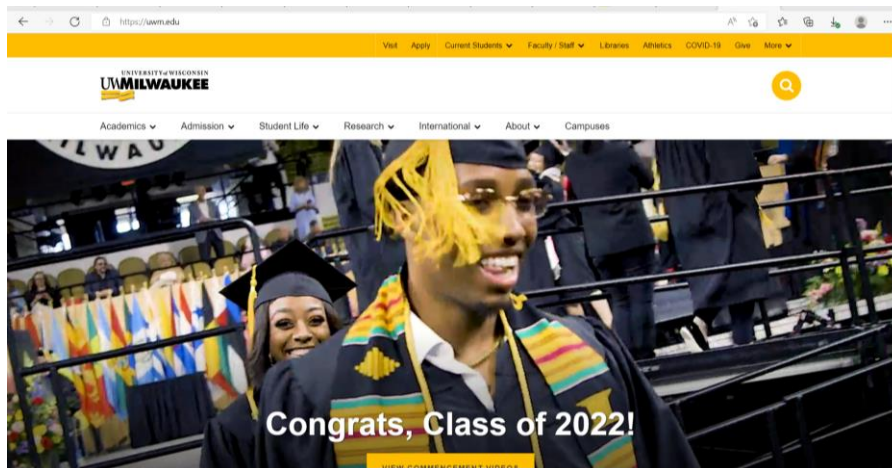
- "Just add arts"
- Magic happens when you infuse art and creativity into other disciplines.
- VCU wouldn't be VCU without the arts, and neither would Richmond.
- Based in a city that's known for embracing the arts, our graduate arts program is ranked one of the top by U.S. News and World Report. But it's more than that. Our business school has an artist-in-residence. Our medical residents take sculpture classes to better understand the body. The newly opened Institute for Contemporary Art is drawing national attention. And each year we offer hundreds of performances, exhibits and screenings to the community.
- VCUArts is a place of **limitless possibility**, where you can uncover your personal expression, turn your passion into a career, and learn how to become a globally engaged artist, designer, performer or scholar. **When our students graduate, they're equipped with a creative mindset that sets them apart.**

Virginia Commonwealth University - VCUArts

Key Takeaway:

- VCUArts sets the bar when it comes to presenting stories of cross collaboration not only within the arts but across the entire university.
- The arts appear to be truly integrated at the university level (and with the city of Richmond), in ways that make a positive impact and make us say “wow.”
- The “infusion of the arts” idea is something the new School of Arts should explore as it aligns well with the Binghamton mantra which embraces and supports double majors and exploration across the university.
- Visually, the VCUArts brand is bold and engaging with an extended color palette (pink/fuchsia) from the main university brand which makes it feel contemporary, vibrant and creative.
- The new School of the Arts should consider similar strategies in order to position itself successfully with key audiences and overcome limitations with the current Binghamton University brand and website.
- The “Just add arts” tagline/theme is *simple, memorable* and *distinctive* from all others. It says something special about UCUArts. The new School of the Arts should aim to develop a tagline/theme that performs equally well on these dimensions.

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee



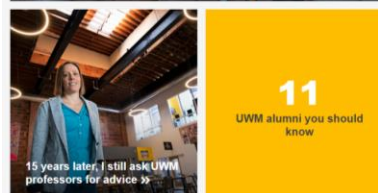
Your UWM Experience



UWM's Impact

As a top-tier research university, we support groundbreaking work that helps real people and real communities.

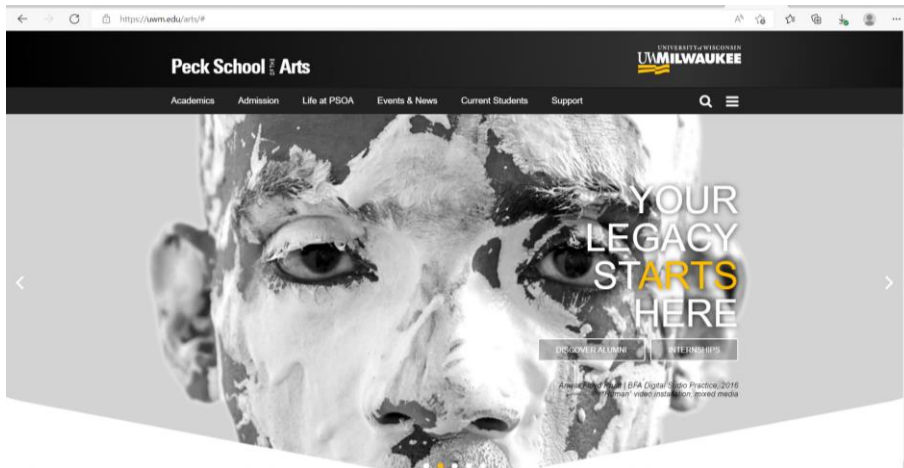
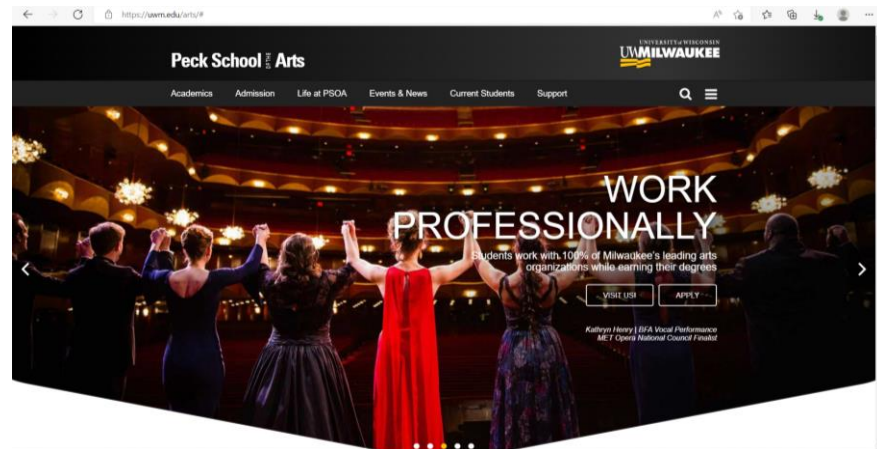
We provide scholarships so that students have fewer roadblocks to success, and we offer entrepreneurship programs to help students in all disciplines develop the creativity and know-how to advance their careers. And a degree from UWM connects you with more than 191,000 successful alumni. You'll find them in architecture firms, film studios, hospitals, classrooms, research labs, Fortune 500 companies and more.



<https://uwm.edu/>

A Career-Building Experience, An Affordable Degree

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee – Peck School



<https://uwm.edu/arts/>

Visually stunning. Strong messaging and calls to action.

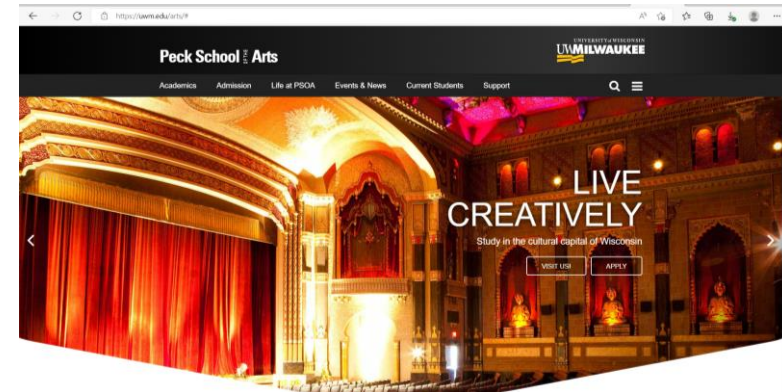
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee – Peck School

Key Messages:

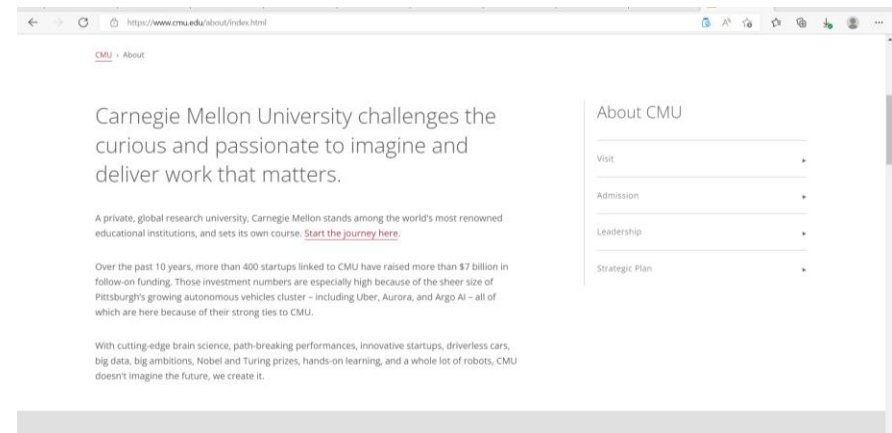
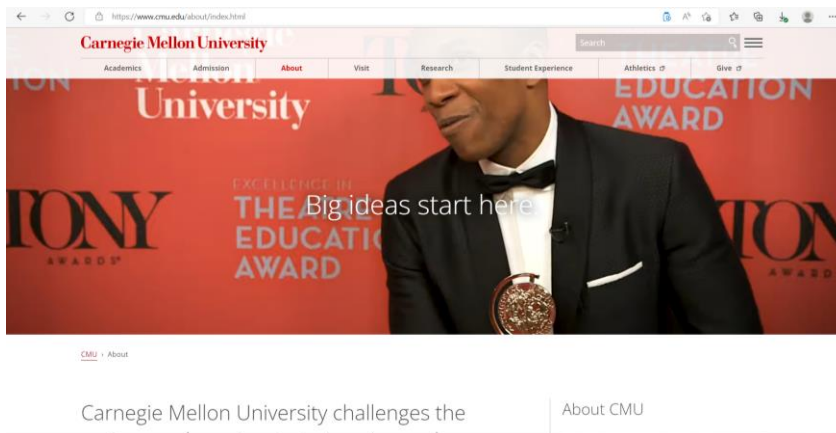
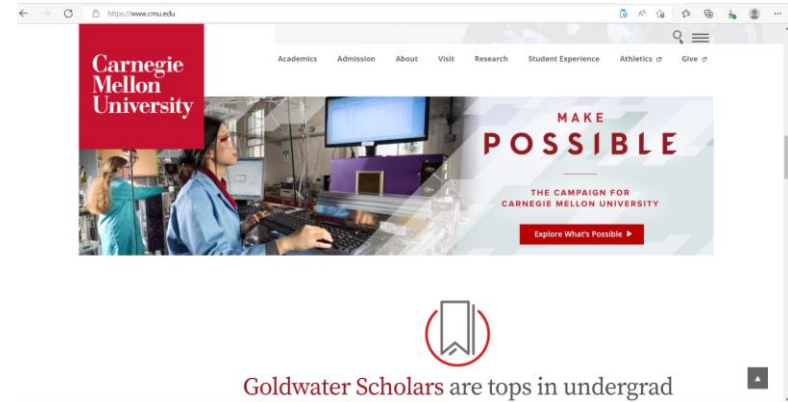
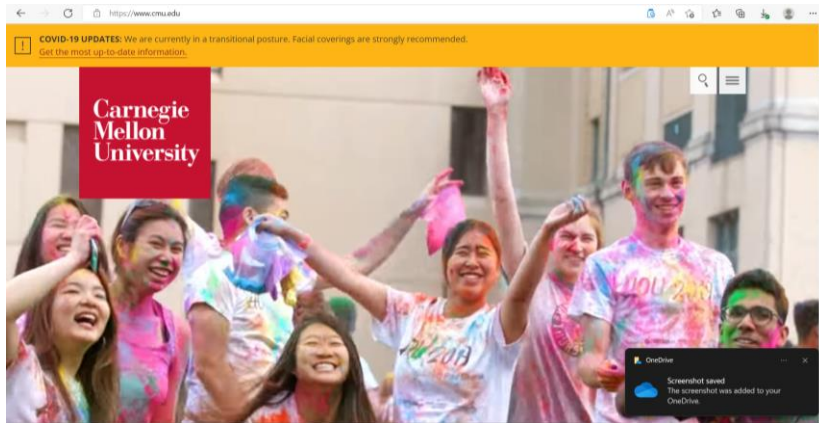
- **Sustainable Education**
Conservatory style training within a leading research university – all at a public school price
- **Your Legacy Starts Here**
- **Work Professionally**
Students work with 100% of Milwaukee's leading arts organizations while earning their degrees
- **Social Responsibility**
Find innovative and sustainable solutions to social challenges through art
- **Live Creatively**
Study in the cultural capital of Wisconsin

Key Takeaways:

- To be competitive, the new School of the Arts should invest in building a strong messaging platform (brand pillars) and web presence complimented with beautiful photography and compelling storytelling
- When presenting a one-of-a-kind arts educational experience, bolder is better.



Carnegie Mellon University



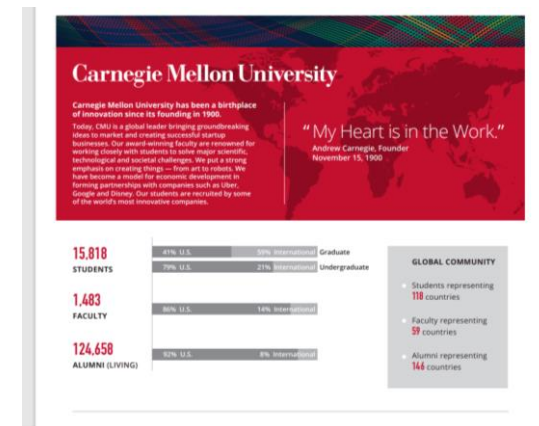
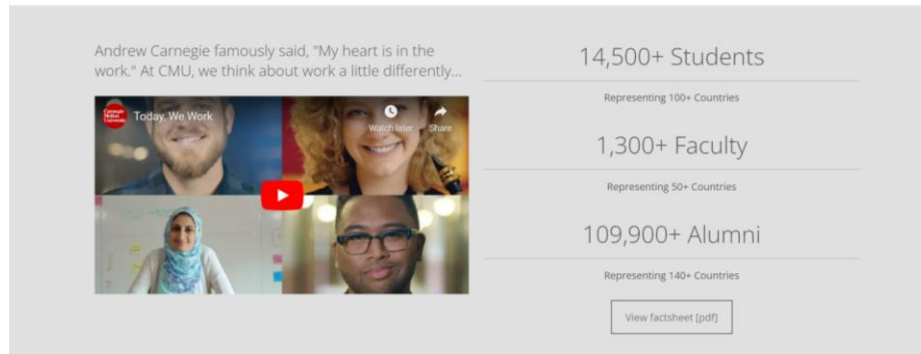
<https://www.cmu.edu/>

Big Ideas start here. Birthplace of innovation since its founding in 1900.

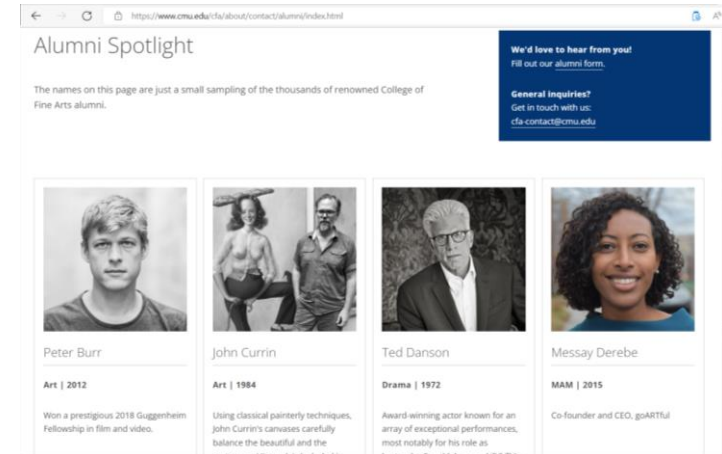
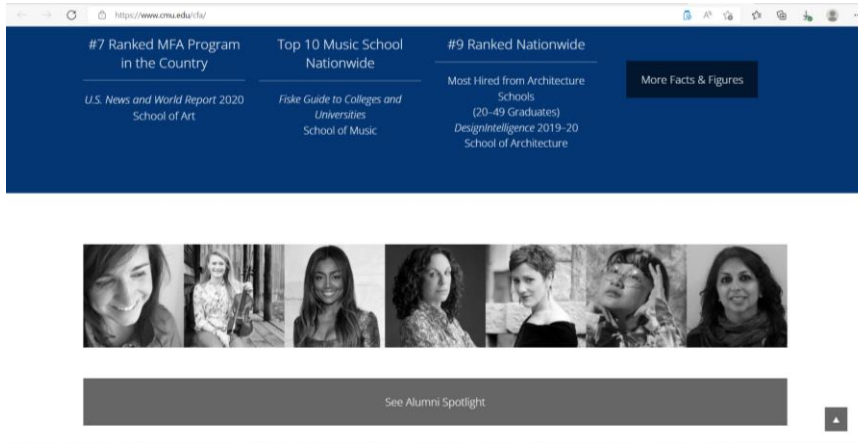
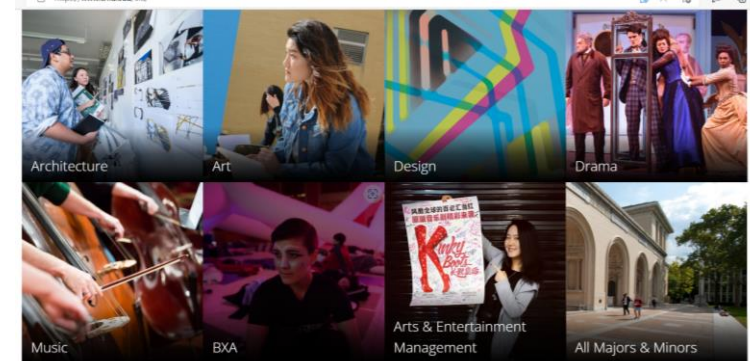
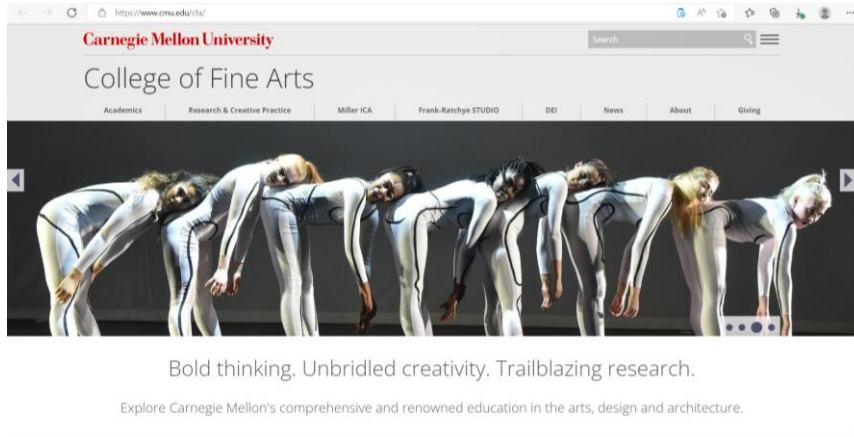
Carnegie Mellon University

Key Messages (Carnegie Mellon University):

- Big ideas start here.
- Carnegie Mellon University challenges the curious and passionate to imagine and deliver work that matters.
- A private, global research university, Carnegie Mellon stands among the world's most renowned educational institutions, and sets its own course. Start the journey here.
- With cutting-edge brain science, path-breaking performances, innovative startups, driverless cars, big data, big ambitions, Nobel and Turing prizes, hands-on learning, and a whole lot of robots, CMU doesn't imagine the future, we create it.
- Birthplace of innovation since its founding in 1900.



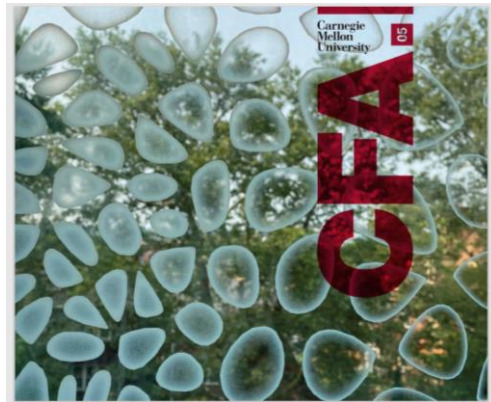
Carnegie Mellon College of Fine Arts



<https://www.cmu.edu/cfa/>

Bold thinking. Unbridled creativity. Trailblazing research.
Supported by impressive rankings and renowned alumni profiles.

Carnegie Mellon College of Fine Arts



A beautiful print magazine tells the story or research and creative practice:

<https://www.cmu.edu/cfa/cfa-magazine/issues/2021/assets/documents/cfamagazine-05-2021.pdf>

Carnegie Mellon College of Fine Arts

Key Messages (College of Fine Arts):

- Bold thinking. Unbridled creativity. Trailblazing research.
- Explore Carnegie Mellon's comprehensive and renowned education in the arts, design and architecture.
- We encourage critical inquiry and creative production, melding CMU with society and culture.
- At the College of Fine Arts, **we cultivate a community of nationally and internationally recognized artists and professionals** within our five schools (Architecture, Art, Design, Drama and Music), our associated programs (BXA Intercollege Degree Programs and Arts & Entertainment Management), the Miller Institute for Contemporary Art and the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry.
- **Inspiring Transformational Leadership**
 - **We enhance and integrate the excellence and distinction of our five schools with the strengths of our university**, establishing our position of international leadership. Students are prepared to engage successfully with local and international communities, and are empowered to transform their professions through critical inquiry and creative production.
- **Enhancing Society with Art Education**
 - We are internationally renowned for our **unique multidisciplinary capabilities and distinctive pedagogical approaches**, for our success and influence of our students and alumni, for our visionary leadership in the development and transformation of the professions and for our vital role in melding the exceptional capabilities of our great university with society and culture.

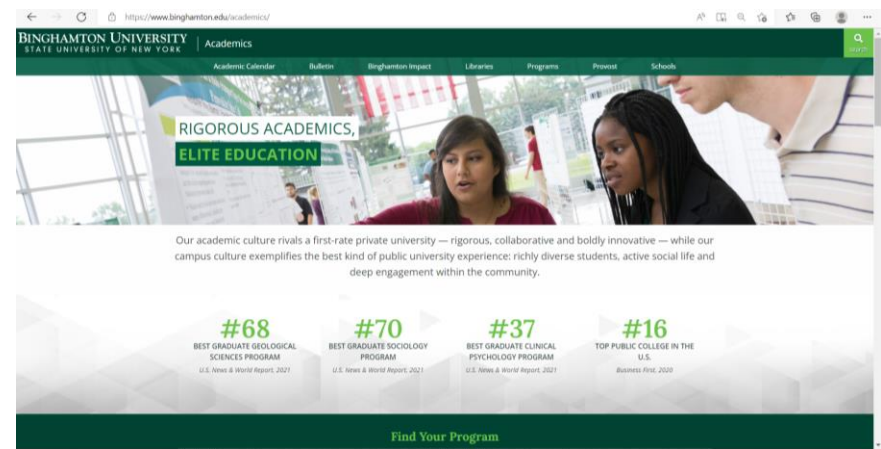
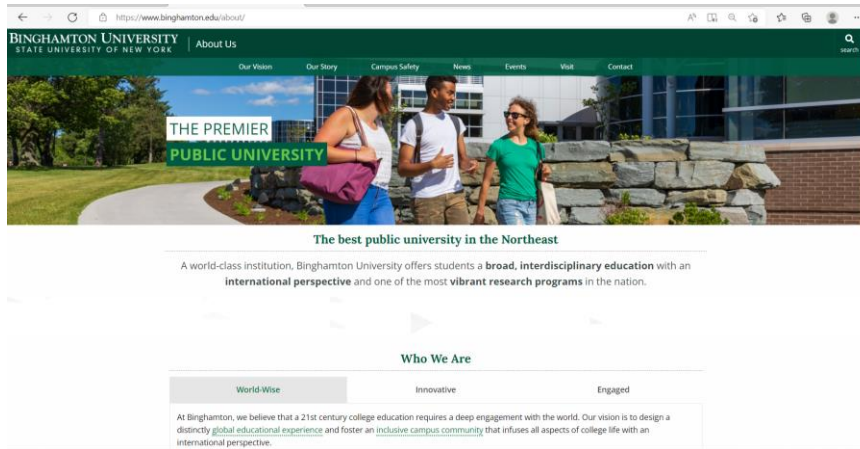
Carnegie Mellon College of Fine Arts

Main Takeaway:

- Building on Carnegie Mellon brand, the College of Fine Arts positions itself as a place of distinction and excellence.
- This coupled with impressive rankings and “renowned College of Arts alumni” would no doubt inspire students to put this college at the top of their list.
- It’s main theme “Bold thinking. Unbridled creativity. Trailblazing research.” while a little long for a tagline, captures well what it means to study the arts at Carnegie Mellon.
- The new School of the Arts should work creatively and strategically to craft a brand promise and tagline that captures what it means to study the arts at Binghamton University; building on the university’s prestige and strong reputation while aligning with the needs of today’s modern workforce.
- To be effective, the brand promise and tagline should be tested with key audiences to ensure that it *important, authentic and distinctive*.

Binghamton University

There is some strong institutional messaging from which the new School of the Arts can build a unique identity. How can these be extended to the new School of the Arts?



The Premier Public University. The best public university in the Northeast.

A **world-class institution**, Binghamton University offers students a broad, interdisciplinary education with an international perspective and one of the most vibrant research programs in the nation.

World-Wise. Innovative. Engaged.

Deep engagement with the world.. Inclusive community. International perspective. Global education experience

Harpur College of Arts and Sciences

The screenshot shows the website for Harpur College of Arts and Sciences. The navigation bar includes links for About, Departments, Undergraduate, Graduate, 4+1 Degrees, Faculty Research, Alumni, Resources, and Giving. Below the navigation bar are four categories: Undergraduate Degrees, Graduate Degrees, 4+1 Degrees, and Pre-Professional Degrees. The main content area features a large green banner for a 'CAMPUS TOUR' video. The video title is 'Harpur College of Arts and Sciences' and the text reads: 'Students share how Binghamton University's Harpur College of Arts and Sciences gives them opportunities to pursue their passions and fulfill their dreams. *"From breadth through depth to perspective."*' Below the video is a button that says 'EXPLORE HARPUR COLLEGE DEPARTMENTS'. Below this banner is a section titled 'THE LIBERAL ARTS IMPACT'. Further down is another video series titled 'Can they do it?' with the text: 'Binghamton students take on the challenge to tell you about their major in less than a minute.' Below this video is a button that says 'MORE MAJOR MINUTE VIDEOS'. At the bottom of the screenshot is a section titled 'The Binghamton Impact'.

Harpur College also has some strong messaging that is relevant to students and other target audiences.

Opportunities to pursue their passions and fulfill their dreams.

"From Breadth through Depth to Perspective"

You get the best of both worlds.

Rigorous training and individualized attention.

In less than a minute video series helps to tell the story.

Building on the Success of Our Alumni

Harpur College alumni are making an impact, nationally and around the world. From entertainment executives to Broadway performers to documentary film makes to opera singers with 200,000 followers on the social-media... and so much more.

Harpur College can promote these accomplishments to communicate the value of an arts degree and help propel the new School of the Arts forward.



Building on the Success of Our Alumni

As DreamWorks Animation president, Margie Cohn '78 is among the most powerful entertainment executives today.

Prior to her career at DreamWorks, Cohn spent more than 20 years at Nickelodeon, in various development and production roles, becoming President of Content Development. She was named in 2019 to the Power 100 list in The Hollywood Reporter's "Women in Entertainment" issue.

"I found teachers who inspired me and taught me fundamentals about an approach to work and its place in one's life that I still draw upon today." – Margie Cohn '78



Marjorie S. Cohn (BA Fine Arts and English, 1978)

Building on the Success of Our Alumni

Rotem Rozental, Ph.D, is the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Center of Photography. Between 2016-2022, she served as Chief Curator at American Jewish University, where she was also Assistant Dean of the Whizin Center for Continuing Education and Senior Director of Arts and Creative Programming.

Her upcoming book, *Pre-State Photographic Archives and the Zionist Movement* is in press with Routledge Publishers. Rotem teaches seminars about photo-theory at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research, and contributes regularly to magazines, journals and exhibition catalogues including *Artforum.com*, *Photographies*, *Jewish Currents*, *Tables* and *Forward*, among other outlets.

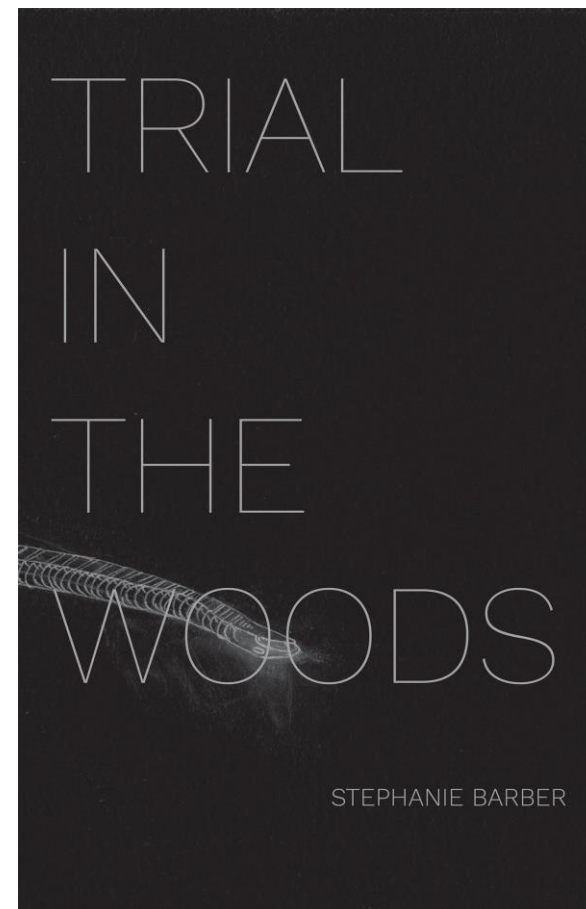


Rotem Rozental (PhD Art History, 2019)

Building on the Success of Our Alumni

Stephanie Barber is a writer and artist who has created a body of work in a variety of media. Barber's films and videos have screened nationally and internationally in solo and group shows at the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Tate Modern, London; The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Paris Cinematheque; Walker Art Center, MN; MOCA Los Angeles; Wexner Center for Art, OH, among other galleries, museums and festivals.

Barber is currently a resident artist at The Mt. Royal MFA for Interdisciplinary Art at MICA in Baltimore, MD and a teaching artist for The Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College and Image Text Ithaca.



Stephanie Barber (BA Cinema, 1991)

Building on the Success of Our Alumni

After graduating from Harpur College in 2015, Ricky Feng Nan received the Master of Musical Arts degree at Yale, and has earned widespread fame in his native China, with more than 200,000 followers on the social-media platform Weibo.

“All my friends were doing accounting, economy, finance; even liberal arts were considered impractical in terms of investment and return,” he reflected. “But I looked around and I saw friends who chose a major they weren’t really passionate about, and I realized I can’t waste my life doing something that I don’t love.” – Ricky Feng Nan ‘15



Ricky Feng Nan (BA Music, 2015)

Building on the Success of Our Alumni

NJ Agwuna '12 is an up-and-coming Broadway Director, who completed an MFA at Columbia University.

The Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF) has selected director NJ Agwuna to receive the 2022 Barbara Whitman Award. Established by the namesake theatrical producer in 2021, the award recognizes a female, trans, or non-binary early-career director whose work has demonstrated unique vision and extraordinary storytelling. The award comes with an unrestricted \$10,000 cash prize.



NJ Agwuna (BA Theater and Cinema, 2012)

Conclusion & Next Steps



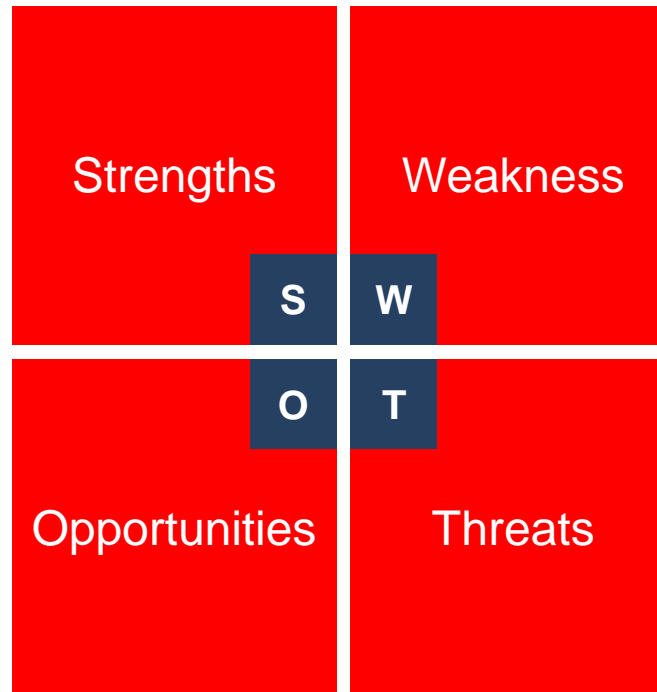
New School of the Arts – SWOT Analysis

01. Strengths

Binghamton's strong academic reputation, global perspective, world-class faculty, double major opportunities, affordable tuition, and internal support for the new School of the Arts.

03. Opportunities

Create a one-of-a-kind School of the Arts where students are exposed to multiple disciplines and double major opportunities, state-of-the-art facilities, internships/ exhibits/performances/study abroad that connect graduates with real in-demand job opportunities.



02. Weakness

Currently not well known for the arts, lack luster marketing/recruitment materials and website relative to key competitors. Location is not a draw for the arts.

04. Threats

Strong competition on a regional and national level and media discourse that questions the value of an Arts degree coupled with a shrinking pool of high school graduates in New York state.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Establishing a new School of the Arts will provide Harpur College with a more durable and distinct structure for the arts while asserting its enduring commitment to supporting robust, vibrant and cohesive arts programs.
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews revealed overwhelming support for the new School of the Arts and the value of bringing the arts seamlessly together in a way that is more cohesive and marketable to prospective students and other target audiences.
- The new School of the Arts will be housed within Binghamton University, the highest nationally ranked university of all other public universities in the state – the new school can build on the message of prestige and excellence while infusing the marketing and branding strategy with the value of cross collaboration that prepares graduates for a real-world application of the arts.
- The opportunity for students to double major is a distinguishing attribute of the college that will appeal to students and parents alike. For spring 2022 graduates, for example, 17% had more than one major ranging from Accounting and Cinema to Music and Biological Science to Graphic Design and Economics. This is a unique differentiator that could be promoted in ways that distinguish the new School of Arts and position our graduates as engaged citizens that are well prepared for a dynamic workforce.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- A recent survey by Ellucian, entitled “[Course Correction: Helping Students Find and Follow a Path to Success](#)” found that college students, especially those in Generation Z, struggle to pick a major, which increases the time and cost associated with obtaining a degree. Many incoming students (51%) are not confident in their career path and almost two-thirds of students feel overwhelmed by the process of selecting a major.
- Promoting the fact that students can double major (across disciplines) may position the new School of the Arts more favorably to students and parents who find it difficult to commit to an arts major (or any major for that matter) while amplifying something that is distinctive and valuable.
- Integrating career education into the curriculum, connecting students with career networks, and ensuring access to internships, will be important so students graduate with an impressive resume and variety of career options.
- The new School of the Arts should promote/expand study abroad as well as opportunities to perform and exhibit abroad (or away, in another city). Since the new school will not be located in a city known for the arts, these opportunities will be important to enhance the learning experience while building a resume that positions our students and graduates as “world-wise” and ready for a variety of careers, including those in the arts and the non-profit sector as well as a variety of other industries.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- The new School of the Arts has an opportunity to be confident and bold with its messaging and brand positioning – this is the only option if it is to stand out from key competitors, attract high-caliber students and faculty, and maximize its visibility within the arts world.
- A brand positioning framework, including the school's brand promise and key messages, should be crafted and tested with key audiences to ensure that it speaks to multiple audiences in ways that inspire them to join our community and make them proud to be a part of this new school.
- The brand will need to be experienced across all communication touchpoints including the school's web presence which should explore breaking free from the current design template and monochrome green color (within reason). A bolder design and secondary color palette should be considered.
- Although the visual identity is important, it will only be one representation of the school. The brand will need to be conveyed through everything that our stakeholders see, hear, and experience when they interact with the new School of the Arts.
- The real art of branding the school is in the promise keeping. How will the new School of the Arts deliver a remarkable (and distinctive) educational experience in the arts? How will the new School of the Arts prepare graduates to thrive in a creative economy? How will the new School of the Arts appeal to donors and the greater arts community?

THANK YOU



RED CACTUS
MARKETING

Beatrice Szalas | Principal and Chief Collaborator | beatrice@redcactusmarketing.com | 512-913-7712