

# designing the future

strategic directions  
for the next decade



## a remarkable vision |

Cornish sprang from the remarkable vision of Nellie Cornish, a woman determined to cultivate the arts in Seattle when it was scarcely more than a frontier town. Since its founding over ninety years ago, Cornish has evolved from a community arts school to a highly respected college of the visual and performing arts. Today, the College is widely recognized for the quality education it provides to aspiring artists and for its outstanding contributions to the cultural life of the region and beyond.

### Design for the Future

The new Strategic Plan, adopted by the Board of Trustees in March 2006, establishes our vision for the next decade. Through this plan, Cornish is building on a tradition of innovation, renewing its role as a leader in the education of visual and performing artists and as a focal point for public presentation and artistic dialogue.

The goals outlined in the Plan address academic excellence, faculty enrichment, student support, the enhancement of learning environments, judicious use of advanced technologies and revitalized community connections. They are designed to provide an educational experience and environment that inspires, stimulates and nurtures our students so they can fulfill their potential as artists. That purpose is behind every proposed strategic initiative and will guide our decision-making for the next ten years.

We are committed to becoming nationally recognized as a premier college of the visual and performing arts and the obvious choice for emerging artists. An enhanced curriculum, faculty renewal, increased scholarship funding and the completion of the new urban campus are key to a future in which Cornish can thrive and continue to influence developing artists and the cultural community for many years to come.

### The Mission

The mission of Cornish College of the Arts is to provide students aspiring to become practicing artists with an educational program of the highest possible quality, in an environment that nurtures creativity and intellectual curiosity, while preparing them to contribute to society as artists, citizens, and innovators.



# achieving excellence |

## Cultivating Knowledge and Practice

Artists make a difference in the world by helping to create a future that will inspire and foster creative solutions and positive change. In order to become those artists, we believe our students must be educated and prepared to live and work in a diverse world. Cornish reinforces this vision through its commitment to a rigorous and balanced arts education that encourages experimentation and innovation while providing a solid grounding in technique and craft.

## Inspiring New Directions

The arts are becoming increasingly multidisciplinary and collaborative, with some of the most dynamic work involving a rich interchange of ideas, specialties and media. Cornish must be on that forefront by establishing the necessary infrastructure for such interaction and by developing opportunities for cross-disciplinary artistic collaborations and inter-media design and production.

Curriculum development is crucial to this mission, and our strategic initiatives include current program reviews and improvements, as well as a number of innovations we plan to undertake. We will build on the strengths of our current degree programs in Art, Dance, Design, Music, Theater and Performance Production as we consider the development of new curriculum, new degree programs, and the addition of community education programs.

## Key Initiatives

- Develop new curriculum, degree programs and community education programs
- Revise general learning outcomes for all programs, strengthening liberal studies foundation, emphasizing cultural diversity and global relevance
- Establish an Integrated Teaching and Learning Center
- Enhance effectiveness of Library through increased acquisitions and staffing
  - Increase funding for sabbaticals, professional development, visiting artists and endowed faculty positions

## Deepening Learning

Our students must be broadly educated artists with strong critical thinking and communication skills. In order to successfully handle the challenges that life inevitably presents, they need to be knowledgeable about the world in which we live and work, as well as capable of communicating effectively in a variety of settings and circumstances.

We will examine and revise our general learning outcomes for all programs and strengthen our liberal studies foundation with a special emphasis on cultural diversity and global relevance.

We will establish an integrated Teaching and Learning Center. The Center will provide resources for students in the areas of information literacy, writing, quantitative reasoning, second language development, and learning disabilities as well as professional development resources for faculty.

The Library supports and enhances the college curriculum, plays an integral role in academic life at Cornish College of the Arts and does so in a manner that promotes information literacy and encourages lifelong learning. To fulfill its role as essential resource for students and faculty, the library will require a substantial increase in acquisitions and staffing.

These initiatives are vital to the development of both faculty and students. Implementing these initiatives will supply the backbone for learning at Cornish and will be among the most important contributions we can make to the future success of our students.

## Supporting and Celebrating Teaching

The student-focused approach to teaching and learning is a hallmark of the educational environment at Cornish. Small class sizes, nurturing faculty/student relationships, and attention to the development of the individual voice have made Cornish a college where artists are born and not manufactured.

We are committed to this tradition and will provide the support necessary to attract and retain faculty who are educators and artists of the highest caliber. Increased funding for sabbaticals and professional development, visiting artists and endowed faculty positions are essential to the enhancement of our dynamic educational environment and the positioning of Cornish as a nationally recognized institution.

# environments for learning and life



Creating an environment that inspires learning and nurtures creativity depends not only on the outstanding quality of our faculty and the unlimited artistic potential of our students, but also on the physical setting in which they learn and create.

Through the first nine decades of Cornish's life, our students and faculty worked and learned in facilities that demanded exceptional resourcefulness. As Cornish grew, the campus became increasingly fragmented. The existing facilities were not adequate to support the remarkable work being accomplished within them, and became a challenge to attracting and retaining promising students and outstanding faculty.

## The New Campus

Creating a new, expanded campus that stimulates creativity and learning, supports the education of emerging artists, and provides a focal point for arts experiences for the larger community requires attractive, functional, state-of-the-art facilities. In 2003, we took the first major steps toward realizing this vision. The relocation of five of the seven academic departments to the new campus has been invigorating and inspiring to our students and faculty, and has contributed to the revitalization of the neighborhood. The remaining move of the Music and Dance departments and completion of other essential components of the campus are critical priorities of this Plan.

Learning at Cornish occurs not only in the classrooms, but also in the studios, black box theaters, practice rooms, and lounges. We are implementing plans to expand these learning environments. A new Sculpture Studio and expansion of the Cornish Gallery will provide much needed learning and exhibit space for students, faculty and alumni. More classrooms, black boxes, and studio and practice rooms as well as cost-effective, appropriate housing, are part of the plan for campus renewal and expansion.

## Key Initiatives

- Complete campus consolidation
- New facilities for Music and Dance departments
- Create new Sculpture Studio and expand Cornish Gallery
- Add classrooms, black boxes, studio and practice rooms
- Develop student housing
  - Strategic incorporation of technology into curriculum
  - Create multi-disciplinary classroom/performance space

## An Ideal Environment for Student Living

Housing, health and wellness programs, and co-curricular and student life programs all require well-designed and suitable environments. We want our students to thrive intellectually, creatively and in spirit and are committed to providing the best living and learning environments possible as they grow and develop as artists, citizens and innovators.

## Technology and Arts Education

New digital tools and methods are constantly revolutionizing the arts. Technology has radically altered the fields of design and production in both the performing and visual arts. In order to stay current, remain competitive in the educational market, and meet contemporary industry standards, Cornish will assess various technological innovations and incorporate them into the curriculum in a strategic and cost-effective manner.

We envision a new multi-faceted classroom/performance space that will incorporate state-of-the-art technology to facilitate innovative collaboration between faculty and students in all disciplines.

# cornish and the community

Nellie Cornish was a central figure in the development of the arts in Seattle. Since its founding in 1914, Cornish has played an important role in the education of artists and in bringing art to the larger community. Generations of Seattleites – children, youth, and adults – have attended classes, performances, and exhibitions at the College. One example of this is our Prep Dance program, which has played a significant role in the lives of thousands of young people over the years.

## A Focal Point for the Arts

Our impact extends far beyond the classrooms, studios and performance spaces on campus. Our influence as a college is apparent throughout Seattle, whether in the rich mélange of performing arts venues throughout the city, in the many galleries that feature the work of faculty, students and alumni, or in the design studios shaping the commerce and cultural face of the future. Faculty, students and alumni bring their creativity, innovation and intellectual rigor not only to their artistic endeavors but also to their participation in every sector of the community: education, government, the non-profit sector, and the world of business.

As the College has grown, our community connections and partnerships have expanded tremendously. We have collaborated with nearly every theater in Seattle; student, faculty and alumni work is exhibited in numerous venues throughout the community; design students have created stunning plans for neighborhood identity projects; music students frequently perform in local venues; and performance production students have designed sets, costumes, sound and lighting for all sorts of performances.

## Key Initiatives

- Explore new methods of community collaboration
- Expand Summer Programs for Teens
- Extend partnerships with local arts organizations
- Strengthen alumni programs
- Develop opportunities for lifelong learning

## Collaboration and Innovation

Cornish is working with agencies, the public, and institutional partners from the non-profit, public and private sectors to create outcomes that benefit our community in diverse ways. Exploring ways in which we can better serve the community will ultimately serve Cornish by grounding our reputation as a vitally relevant civic institution, and one that contributes to the well-being and development of the local region and its citizens.

## Lifelong Learning

We will enhance our connections throughout the community by expanding our Summer Programs for Teens, extending our partnerships with local arts organizations, strengthening alumni programs, and developing opportunities for lifelong learning.

## a plan for the future

It is an exhilarating time to be at Cornish. There is a spirit of renewal and excitement at the College, providing the momentum for our new Strategic Plan. The Plan is built upon and honors the trustees, faculty, staff and students who preceded us, and it ensures a vibrant future for the next generation of artists who will enrich our community for decades to come.