

School of Fine Arts Strategic Action Plan 2026-2027

Goal 1

Recruit, retain, and graduate a more academically prepared and diverse student body.

With its longstanding commitment to academic and artistic excellence as a foundation, the School of Fine Arts (SoFA) will increasingly define itself by the unique advantage it offers students in preparing them for accomplished careers and future leadership.

Objective 1

Increase overall SoFA enrollments and continue to attract quality students.

Strategies

1. Combine forces among SoFA faculty and departments in developing new, collaborative recruiting strategies and events.
2. Continue enhancing and developing on-campus clinics/festivals/lectures that attract and engage prospective students, teachers, and parents.
3. Increase and standardize occasions for student travel, including regional/national tours, showcase events in major cities, major competitions and conferences, and study-abroad programs.
4. Utilize present SoFA students to greater degree in promoting programs and advantages of a Northern education.

Actions/Measures

- implementing new live streaming platform
- planning and implementing a new “NSU Music Major for a Day” event
- implementing and documenting new social media strategy, and tasking specific faculty as responsible for each academic unit
- streamlining a more inclusive and collaborative scholarship application process
- identifying specific faculty to lead recruitment communications and scheduling
- supporting strategic visitations at state/regional high schools

- interfacing with Admissions Office to generate targeted and consistent messaging; utilizing Slate CRM platform
- adopting continual updating of existing on-campus workshops and clinics
- launching new initiatives: NSU Honors Orchestra, High School Art Mural Day
- improving unified and coordinated promotion of all SoFA units – coordinated among faculty undertaking recruiting trips

Objective 2

Prepare students for success as professional educators, artists, performers, and scholars.

Strategies

1. Create additional opportunities for students to gain exposure to professional experiences that complement classroom and studio instruction, including traditional and innovative faculty/student collaborations and guest artist appearances.
2. Explore increased occasions for collaborative and interdisciplinary programming, thus showing students how the arts can interact in dynamic and powerful ways.
3. Continue building and supporting a vital community of international students, recognizing the artistic impact these individuals bring to the school, university, and region.
4. Implement a coordinated School of Fine Arts Wellness Program for all SoFA students, to include connections to local and regional wellness/medical resources.

Actions/Measures

- cultivating and directing increased funding to procure guest lectures, residencies, and professional visual/performing artist appearances
- using annual SoFA calendar planning meeting as a platform to spur discussions of interdisciplinary event planning
- increasing cooperation with NSU Office of International Programs
- documenting numbers and activities of international students pursuing SoFA classes as majors and non-majors
- implementing SoFA health/wellness plan with NSU Counseling Center and Director of Counseling

Goal 2

Strengthen educational offerings and create more impactful curricular opportunities.

Taking advantage of the rich resources on our campus and in the region, the SoFA will form meaningful partnerships with other NSU academic units, as well as external organizations, identifying new areas of inquiry for students and faculty.

Objective 1

Remain current and in good standing with national and state accreditation agencies.

Strategies

1. Initiating planning for NASM reaffirmation process – visitation 2029-30.
2. Initiating planning for NASAD reaffirmation process – visitation 2030-31.

Actions/Measures

- updating art departmental student handbook
- updating music departmental student handbook
- working with Office of Institutional Effectiveness and School of Fine Arts assessment coordinator to update recent revisions of art unit program assessment
- working with Office of Institutional Effectiveness and School of Fine Arts assessment coordinator to update recent revisions of music unit program assessment
- implementing and tracking curricular revisions for BFA, including new art education specialization
- implementing and tracking curricular revisions for BA in music, including new emphasis in arts technology and planned emphasis in music business

Objective 2

Create new academic pathways to meet 21st-Century workforce needs.

Strategies

1. Explore additional graduate/online degree programs, in order to leverage NSU's position as a state leader in the field of professional education.
2. Identify and propose new professional-level degree programs, in an effort to remain current with industry standards and expectations.

3. Identify and propose new minors and certificates, in an effort to give students opportunities to emphasize a more robust course of study within their designated major.
4. Explore opportunities for new interdisciplinary partnerships.

Actions/Measures

- implementing a new hybrid online graduate degree in art education: Master of Science in Education, art education
- proposing new accelerated master's program and for an add-on certificate in art education
- implementing new specializations in art education, digital media, and studio art within a single BFA degree
- implementing a new collaborative and interdisciplinary emphasis within the existing BA in Music degree: Bachelor of Arts in Music, emphasis in Arts Technology
- exploring a new collaborative and interdisciplinary emphasis within the existing BA in Music degree – involving a partnership with the School of Business

Goal 3

Increase base of financial resources to strengthen programmatic excellence.

Leveraging its status as a respected center for the arts, the SoFA will work with the NSU Foundation and NSU administration to grow base of financial support for identified needs.

Objective 1

Increase the success of securing external funding

Strategies

1. Grow scholarship and graduate assistantship resources to ensure the SoFA continues to attract the most talented and motivated students.
2. Increase the amount of discretionary funding available for faculty development, programmatic initiatives, donor cultivation, and recruiting events.
3. Identify and secure grant opportunities to fund specific advances in degree programs, equipment needs, and outreach activities.

Actions/Measures

- managing and tracking the distribution of new Sanford Dean's Scholarship pool of unrestricted scholarship funding (\$400,000 over eight years)
- working with NSU Foundation to increase the number of endowed music scholarships available to our students, as well as non-endowed discretionary scholarship support for art and theatre units
- growing and monitoring private funds from the Friends of the Arts/NSU membership group (\$660,000 FY 17-26)
- creating new revenue stream of scholarship money for non-music major participation in NSU Marching Wolves
- increasing the number and variety of donor events/connections, in consultation with NSU Foundation and NSU Office of Marketing and Communications
- identifying and proposing new grant opportunities through NSU Office of Grants and Sponsored Research

Objective 2

Provide students and faculty with advanced teaching, research, and performance experiences

Strategies

1. Identify and prioritize ongoing equipment and facility improvements through proper approval channels and transparent faculty input.
2. Link facility upgrades and needs to potential advances in curricula and pedagogy.
3. Identify potential for future major gifts to the SoFA, matching specific donor interests to existing opportunities within the school.
4. Engage in substantive and organized planning sessions by department/unit.

Actions/Measures

- creating list of specific needs with NSU Foundation and upper administration (e.g. significant sound system upgrade for JFAC Jewett Theater; lighting improvements for JFAC Art Gallery; schedule of periodic computer replacement for art digital labs; dedicated student gallery; outdoor sculpture/ceramics pavilion)

Goal 4

Develop additional outreach initiatives and partnerships.

Recognizing that collaborations strengthen the community and create new opportunities for students and faculty, the SoFA will develop mutually beneficial relationships with a wide range of local, state, regional, and national partners.

Objective 1

Broaden the impact on the region's K-12 population.

Strategies

1. Sustain and expand the menu of SoFA summer offerings that encourage participation from a wider demographic.
2. Sustain existing initiatives and develop new opportunities to collaborate with K-12 students and the organizations that support them, realizing the pedagogical benefits gained from interacting with younger students in the visual and performing arts.
3. Continue to support and sustain the state's arts educators in powerful and meaningful ways.

Actions/Measures

- tracking enrollments for annual institutes, festivals, and summer camps
- linking on-campus clinics to All-State preparation
- redefining and rebranding existing clinics and camps

Objective 2

Broaden the collaborative potential with alumni.

Strategies

1. Build a vibrant alumni engagement program, to include both in-person and web-based efforts.
2. Recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of alumni.
3. Plan and implement special events that utilize and welcome alumni.

Actions/Measures

- tracking and promoting alumni accomplishments through SoFA monthly e-newsletter
- planning annual SoFA alumni reunions and related activities with NSU Foundation
- working with NSU Foundation to implement annual Distinguished Alumni Ceremony

Objective 3

Broaden the depth of outreach initiatives.

Strategies

1. Pursue relationships and regularly occurring collaborations with local, regional, and state arts and business organizations, leveraging the significant benefits of engaging with various entities beyond the reach of campus.

Actions/Measures

- pursuing active partnership with South Dakota Public Broadcasting, resulting in new publicity collaborations
- leveraging individual and group activities with South Dakota Arts Council

Goal 5

Implement coordinated marketing, branding, and publicity strategy.

Recognizing that the SoFA brand should reflect the faculty's uniquely collaborative vision, the SoFA will promote the strengths and opportunities of a Northern arts experience through a variety of means and strategies.

Objective 1

Broaden the School of Fine Arts programmatic brand.

Strategies

1. Update the SoFA logo and visual identity to reflect a more interactive and holistic arts experience.

2. Work with NSU Marketing and Communications Office to generate increased awareness and visibility of programming.

3. Utilize new media and venues to enhance the visibility of the SoFA and its programs, and to communicate with new audiences within the community.
4. Conceive of programming and promotion strategies that attract a wider and targeted audience, including children, adults, and families.
5. Coordinate and combine event planning among the SoFA academic units.

Actions/Measures

- continuing livestreaming capability for all SoFA concerts and recitals, through the Department of Music Facebook site
- implementing new “vvenue” online ticketing purchase and marketing platform
- updating SoFA website with “25 Live” calendar access and links to event descriptions, images, and box office information
- tracking database of SoFA monthly e-newsletter contact list

Objective 2

Increase professionalism in facility management

Strategies

1. Maximize and improve patron experience at all SoFA events.
2. Continue to update SoFA website, making it increasingly accessible, navigable, and comprehensive.

Actions/Measures

- reorganizing student work study duties to include stage management, house management, and usher responsibilities
- setting up new system of performance and production reporting for all SoFA-sponsored and outside events, under supervision of Production Manager/Theater Manager