

**Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts**

**UC Davis**

**Critical Issues Strategic Plan**

**October 2014**

## Executive Summary

### Programming:

- Establish boundary-bending **Visions** brand of programs
- Create space for artists to **workshop** in exchange for residency and engagement work
- Build **artist residencies** in all major disciplines that reach into regional, educational and campus venues.
- Explore a model for **speakers'** series that optimizes both sales and profile.
- Establish **summer "Just Added's"**.
- Pursue programming related to UC Davis being a **Hispanic Serving Institution**.
- Present a West Coast, U.S. or world **premiere** of one major production at least once every two seasons.

### Audience Engagement and Experience:

- Create multi-faceted "park once" unique **Gateway District experiences**
- Differentiate the **patron experience** based on differences in the events being presented.
- Provide **real-time information** during performances through supertitles and/or the Visions "digital set."
- Regularly **stream** Visions and other programs on campus and for the general public.
- Continue the **"Two Minutes With"** series of engagement videos, for those shows most "needing explanation."
- Create great **before and after** events audience experiences, including the creation of a full-scale restaurant.
- Become the most **accessible** PAC in the region for public, bicycle and automobile transportation.

### Arts Education:

- Create **"Summer Fest" west**, in partnership with Curtis, an educational program for young people and adults.
- Design a **comprehensive, multi-grade arts education program** utilizing all available MC resources.
- **Adopt-a-District** to participate in the comprehensive program.

### Campus Connections:

- Create periodic **"Harvest" festivals** built upon food and wine science, natural and arts assets.
- Explore a bi-annual Davis **"Biennale"**, in partnership with other campus arts, to **bring** together cutting edge work.
- Increase **student utilization** of the MC (Jackson Hall and VST).
- Develop strategies for **regular student input** into various aspects of MC operation.
- Increase presence and visibility of the arts in student and parent **tours and orientation**.
- Build an **administrative partnership** with the Shrem that creates cost-effective joint systems.
- Produce a **Festival** with a UC Davis school or department every season.
- Create a program for **alumni** engagement with the MC and UC Davis, both in Davis and other locations.
- Design program to increase **faculty and staff** participation, with special emphasis on the Sacramento campus.
- Tie together unique **programming themes at the Mondavi Center, Shrem Museum and Recital Hall**.
- Develop substantial collaborations with the World Food Center.
- Collaborate with all Gateway District partners to build **electronic signage**.
- Work with Student Services to integrate MC and other arts facilities into plans to acclimate **20/20 students**.
- Comprehensive approach to become part of **every student's life**, through multiple mechanisms.

#### Regional Arts:

- Expand MC connected presentations at the **Crocker** Museum.
- Play active role in Sacramento's plans for the Kings **Arena** and a possible **Sac Pac**.
- Collaborate with **regional arts groups** to develop an initiative to increase arts coverage.
- Increase attendance from all **surrounding counties** from foothills to Fairfield.
- Build as strong a partnership with **KVIE** as with CPR to build brand, coverage and exposure.

#### Financial Infrastructure:

- Institute a **patron loyalty initiative**, to create long-term, sustainable audiences and revenue.
- **Enhance budget** through streamlining activities, restructuring program and ticket and fee strategies.
- Make ticket, parking and merchandise purchasing more **convenient**.
- Maximize **mobile technologies** for purchasing and for communication (group texts and alerts).
- Activate a cost-effective **group sales** effort.
- Increase **annual fund growth in** major gifts, licensed seats and with new initiatives in "annual fund" (<\$1500).
- Work with University Development on an action plan for **corporate** sponsorships.
- Work with University Development to identify new **foundation** prospects.
- Overhaul approach to **merchandise and concessions** to increase annual net income by \$100k.
- Create an operating budget with a six-figure **contingency fund** in addition to budgeted operating expenses.
- Create a staff team to analyze and identify potential **new sources of earned revenue**.
- Build a model for securing and supporting a **\$2M annual fund**.
- Design and Test a **capital campaign** to address venue needs, program endowment, the Artistic Ventures Fund and overall endowment support.

#### Venue:

- Secure the most **urgent capital needs** through short-term fundraising.
- Increase **restoration fee** to keep up with needed maintenance.

#### Human Resources:

- Explore how the MC can support and optimize **Friends activities** in the venue such as tours and gift shop.
- Increase engagement of **Advisory Board** with strategic directions of the MC, including via the Planning Committee.
- Convene a staff work group to create a **staff enrichment plan**, using SWOT's findings as a starting point.

## **Mondavi Center Critical Issues Strategic Plan: Opportunities for Success in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Mondavi Center has come out of its first decade with a strong sense of purpose, an excellent national and international profile, a strong experienced and effective staff, deep volunteer resources and an Advisory Board that stands behind what we do. At the same time, while we have stewarded our resources well, there is more ground to cover to create a fully sustainable operation. In this context, and following the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season in 2012/13, we undertook a planning process to identify where our attention should be focused during this, our second decade.

In looking ahead, we asked ourselves where are the opportunities to build on our strengths or to take advantage of a changing climate around us? How can we build a more sustainable financial infrastructure? How can we transform our impact on our campus and community? How can our presentations continue to provoke, stimulate and enlighten? In answering these questions we have identified a set of critical issues, where our actions can move us closer to our aspirations.

The strategies in this draft flow out of work done by the Advisory Board Planning Work Group (Randy Reynoso and Tony Stone, co-chairs) and the MC staff Operating Committee (OpComm). Through that work, our strategic opportunities and issues resolved themselves around four major themes:

1. The Mondavi Center's unique approach to programming, audience engagement and arts education;
2. The Mondavi Center's connections to UC Davis' vision and campus life;
3. The Mondavi Center's relationship with the public and region;
4. Mondavi Center internal operations, financial infrastructure and human resources.

Where appropriate we have included a vision for the area under discussion and/or some background context. We believe that in addressing the strategic areas in this plan, we will strengthen our programs and our finances, and enrich our connection to our patrons, the region and the University.

## **1. Strategic Opportunity: A Unique Approach to Programming, Audience Engagement and Arts Education**

*Vision: The Mondavi Center has an artistic program like none other in our region and state; to ensure that audiences engage with that program, the MC provides unique, easy to access tools giving audience members multiple ways into even the most unusual arts experience. In addition, the MC is a source of comprehensive arts education programs for youth.*

**Context: Programming:** In our second decade, we can advance the uniqueness of our artistic program by building on strengths developed in the first decade: boundary crossing work; deep and broad artist residencies; artistic collaborations with University departments; and a programming philosophy that shies away from a false “high/low” “classical/popular” divide.<sup>1</sup> In addition, moving ahead, our Gateway District will give us new opportunities for interdisciplinary programs.

### Innovate:

- Establish “**Visions**”, a set of boundary-bending programs in a unique “digital set” that surrounds audiences with all the information they need to engage.
- Create a space for artists to **workshop new works** in exchange for residency and engagement work.

### Enhance:

- Build **artist residencies** in all major disciplines reaching into regional, educational and campus venues.
- Explore a model for **speakers’** series that optimizes both sales and profile.
- Establish **summer “Just Added’s”**, including the possibility of some in a larger, outdoor venue.
- Pursue programming related to UC Davis’ becoming a **Hispanic Supporting Institution**.

### Aspire:

- Present a West Coast, U.S. or world **premiere** of one major production at least once every two seasons.

**Context: Audience Engagement and Experience:** As a University-based presenter, we showcase programs and works which “require explanation”, either because they are new or unusual, emanate from an unfamiliar culture, or break out of the mold of traditional presentation. Our audience and potential audience members should have ready access to a varied set of tools which provide context and lower the barriers to engaging with such programs, as well to other more traditional offerings. Our audiences also should have enriched experiences, not only during but before, after and around events.

### Innovate:

- Create multi-faceted “park once” unique **Gateway District experiences**, inside, outside and around the Vanderhoef Quad.

### Enhance:

- Differentiate the patron experience based on differences in the events being presented, possible elements to include:
  - Allowing food and drink into the hall
  - Allowing use of phones and cameras

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<sup>1</sup> To quote the Duke: “if it sounds good, it is good.”

- Look of the hall and front of house personnel
- Provide **real-time information** during performances to increase audience engagement, through supertitles and/or the Visions “digital set.”
- Regularly **stream** Visions and other programs on campus and for the general public.
- Continue the “**Two Minutes With**” series of engagement videos, for those shows most “needing explanation.”

Aspire:

- Create audience experiences that are as great **before and after** events, as the events themselves, including the creation of a full-scale restaurant on site.
- Become the most **accessible** PAC in the region for public, bicycle and automobile transportation.

**Context: Arts Education:** The Mondavi Center (and UC Davis Presents before it) has been a leader in providing educational opportunities for students from around the region. Our next challenge is to identify ways to deepen the impact of these programs on today’s students, who otherwise have little exposure to the arts.

Innovate:

- Create “**Summer Fest**” **west**, in partnership with Curtis, an educational program for young people and adults.

Enhance:

- Design a **comprehensive, multi-grade arts education program** utilizing all available MC resources (e.g. School Matinees, residencies, Friends docent talks, Young Artists Competition, student technical observations, etc.), around a specific theme or genre.

Aspire:

- **Adopt-a-District** to participate in the comprehensive program, with impact measured via UC Davis School of Education.

**2. Strategic Opportunity: Campus Connections**

*Vision: UC Davis is at an exciting moment in its more than 100 years of history. It has joined the elite ranks of world-wide research universities. It is building on long-time strengths, in areas like food and sustainability, to create an international reputation for excellence. The Mondavi Center plays a central role in that worldwide reputation. We have rich partnerships with academic departments and other campus organizations. We play an important part in helping the campus to welcome increasing numbers of international scholars and students, as well as in welcoming back alumni. We play a central role in the lives of UC Davis students, faculty and staff.*

Innovate:

- Create periodic “**Harvest**” **festivals** built upon UC Davis’ unique confluence of food and wine science, natural and arts assets.
- Explore the concept of a bi-annual Davis “**Biennale**”, jointly produced with the Music Department and other campus units, which would bring together cutting edge work in the visual and performing arts from Northern California and elsewhere.

Enhance:

- Develop strategies to **increase student utilization** of the Mondavi Center, including efforts to find campus funding to support use of Jackson Hall by student groups who have been using Freeborn Hall; and identifying a “bare bones” approach for students to use the VST for smaller scale work.
- Develop concrete strategies and processes, both formal and informal, for **regular student input** in areas such as programming and residencies, in order to increase student’s awareness and engagement with the Mondavi Center and the Mondavi Center’s impact on student life. Resources in this process might include student employees, members of the A&L committee, Aggie Arts alumni, etc.
- Work with campus leadership to increase the presence and visibility of the major arts facilities and programs (Mondavi Center, Shrem, and Recital Hall) within new and prospective student and parent **tours and orientation**.
- Build an **administrative partnership** with the Shrem that creates cost-effective joint systems.
- Produce a **Festival** with a UC Davis school or department every season.
- Design a program for **alumni** engagement with the MC and UC Davis, in conjunction with members of the MC Advisory Board Planning Committee, and in consultation with University Development and Alumni Relations. (This might include not only events on campus, but also could use our connections to the larger network of Presenters and Venues to help the University connect to UCD alums in other cities, with MC staff serving as ambassadors.)
- Design a program, in conjunction with members of the Advisory Board Planning Committee, to increase Sacramento Campus **faculty and staff** participation at the Mondavi Center

Aspire:

- Tie together **programming themes at the Mondavi Center, Shrem Museum and Recital Hall** that make UC Davis a unique arts destination.
- Develop substantial collaborations with the **World Food Center**, possibly including distinguished speakers and events at the proposed third campus.
- Collaborate with all Gateway District partners to build **electronic signage** that keeps visitors abreast of happenings.
- Work with UC Davis Student Services to integrate the MC and other campus arts facilities into plans to acclimate **20/20 students** into campus life, including programs aimed at specific international populations.
- Create a comprehensive approach for becoming part of **every student’s life**, a source of life/study balance and cultural literacy, through mechanisms including Curriculum Connections; “first time is free” vouchers; student staff-based advisory group; study sessions; student “curators” and a dedicated MC course.

**3. Strategic Opportunity: Our Public and Our Region**

*Vision: Even as the arts and entertainment sector grows in our region, we remain well known for our unique quality and setting. We are seen as a central partner in strengthening the regional arts community.*

Enhance:

- Expand MC presentations at the **Crocker** Museum.
- Play an active role in Sacramento’s plans for arts programming and promotion at the Kings **Arena** and in developing a possible **Sac Pac**.

Aspire:

- Collaborate with **regional arts groups** to develop an initiative to increase arts coverage.

- Increase attendance from all **surrounding counties** from foothills to Fairfield.
- Build as strong a partnership with **KVIE** as with CPR to build brand, coverage and exposure.

#### 4. **Strategic Opportunity: MC internal operations, financial infrastructure and human resources**

*Vision: We have a “new normal” approach to our resources which is sustainable financially, with the budget gap closed and revenues growing to keep up with required expense increases. Financial resources are sufficient to invest in mission-critical areas of our program, as well as in the upkeep and enhancement of our venue. We steward and support the development of our talented staff and cadre of volunteers.*

##### Innovate:

- Institute a **patron loyalty initiative**, increasing the MC’s capacity to utilize patron data and relationships to create long-term, sustainable audiences and revenue.

##### Enhance:

- Enhance budget through pro-active **financial planning** by:
  - **Streamlining** activities to match staffing;
  - Restructuring **programming** to improve net;
  - Comprehensive **ticket and fee** strategies, including dynamic pricing, fee increases and structure.
- Make ticket, parking and merchandise purchasing more **convenient**, possibly through ATM-style kiosks for will call and remote purchases.
- Maximize **mobile technologies** for purchasing and for communication (group texts and alerts).
- Activate a cost-effective **group sales** effort.
- Increase **annual fund growth from individuals** in each third of the giving pyramid:
  - Top Third: Stewardship by Special Gifts officer and Major Gifts committee to increase \$10k+ gifts, supported by insights from TRG patron analysis;
  - Middle Third: Enhanced strategies by new Annual Fund Coordinator to sellout licensed seats.
  - Bottom Third: Work with both TRG and UC Davis Development consultants to create a program similar to telemarketing in ticket sales.
- Work with University Development to create an action plan to increase the number and scale of **corporate** sponsorships.
- Work with University Development to identify new **foundation** prospects worth \$25k plus with a goal of two applications per quarter.
- Overhaul approach to **merchandise and concessions** to increase annual net income by \$100k.

##### Aspire:

- Create an operating budget with a six-figure **contingency fund** in addition to budgeted operating expenses.
- Create a staff team to analyze and identify potential **new sources of earned revenue**.
- Build a model for securing and supporting a **\$2M annual fund**.
- Design and test the shape and scale of a **capital campaign, to launch in 15/16 to address two main centers of our vision:**
  - The Venue:
    - Enhancing the venue as an all-day destination through improvements (e.g. gift shop, restaurant)
    - Keeping the venue state-of-the-art through upgrades and replacements

- Building a reserve fund for ongoing maintenance
- The Program:
  - Finish \$1M **Artistic Ventures Fund**.
  - Build an endowment that produces income that replaces the AVF in support of great ensembles, audience access, intimate experimentation and artists in residence.
- Overall, secure planned and other **endowment** gifts with a goal of producing at least 10% of annual budget income.

**Context: the Venue:**

Though the MC facility has fared well through its first decade, a top priority includes capital improvement and replacement costs for the performance building, both because of aging equipment and systems, and because it is critical that the Mondavi Center’s theatrical capabilities and patron amenities are consistently excellent. Needs generally fall into three categories: aging and/or failing building systems and patron amenities; theatrical equipment that is nearing the end of its useful life, either due to wear or obsolescence; and possible major additions such as a coat room, café, more video screens in patron areas, rehearsal facility or restaurant. In our vision, the MC remains a state-of-the art facility serving both artists and audiences with ease and grace.

Enhance:

- Secure the most important capital needs through **short-term fundraising**.
- Increase **restoration fee** as needed to keep up with needed maintenance.

**Context: Human Resources:**

The MC is rich in human resources, both volunteer and staff. We have exceptionally strong and dedicated volunteer groups, including the Friends of Mondavi Center – a loyal and devoted volunteer association – and the MC Advisory Board, whose members bring us their talent, connections, commitment and dedication to the purposes and programs of the Mondavi Center. Volunteer ushers also represent a significant human resource. It is of critical importance that we strongly engage these talented volunteer cohorts.

Our staff continually demonstrates a can-do attitude in support of our mission and our patrons, and has remained effective and creative even as we have streamlined our operation. Our vision is to provide a supportive environment for staff development, emphasizing cross-functional cooperation, strong communication and engagement with the artistic product.

Enhance:

- Actively explore how the Mondavi Center can support and optimize **Friends of MC activities** in the venue such as tours and gift shop.
- Increase the **active engagement of the Advisory Board** with the strategic directions of the MC, including via the new Planning Committee.
- Convene a staff work group to create a **staff engagement plan**, using SWOT’s findings as a starting point.

## APPENDIX: Mondavi Center Mission, Vision, Values

### **The Mission of the Mondavi Center, UC Davis:**

*To present a rich program of diverse artists and thinkers in public performance and as the basis for education and engagement programs on our campus and in our region; and to steward and sustain a state-of-the-art venue for artists and audiences.*

### **A Vision for the Mondavi Center:**

*The Mondavi Center, with its great beauty and world renowned acoustics, is a performing arts mecca, where people come from near and far to connect with diverse artists and speakers, and for a unique total experience, around the Vanderhoef Quad, where they can taste locally sourced food and wine in our restaurant; browse our shop featuring merchandise from the MC and its Gateway District neighbors; visit the Welcome Center's high tech portal to UC Davis; and engage with nature and the visual arts at the Arboretum and the Shrem Art Museum just a few steps away.*

### **Background Materials:**

We have created several additional statements about mission and values which help provide more detailed guidance internally as we work to support mission and move toward vision:

#### ***We have summarized our mission-critical work as ACE:***

**Arts:** To enrich the arts in our region and nation.

**Campus:** To support faculty teaching and research, staff work/life balance and a rich student life at UC Davis.

**Engagement:** To engage audiences, educate youth and develop teacher capacity.

#### ***Core Values: the Arts***

*We showcase and support:*

- Leading and emerging artists
- Artists who operate outside of commercial channels
- New and unusual work
- Classical music, opera, jazz and modern dance
- Speakers and thinkers from a spectrum of disciplines and views
- Work that crosses boundaries of cultures and genres
- Performances that break down traditional formats and formalities

#### ***Core Values: the Audience (FACE)***

*We:*

- Facilitate an excellent experience
- Anticipate Needs
- Create Solutions
- Embrace Opportunities to listen and learn