V. GOAL: Identity and Reach
Create a clear identity and vision for MECA. State this identity consistently in printed materials and via the website. Identify our current reach and broaden MECA’s network geographically outside the Greater Portland area. Deepen relationships with all constituencies in order to improve the College’s financial position and desirability. Improve the local community’s understanding of MECA’s student profile and its financial impact on Portland.

VI. GOAL: Working Environment
MECA will foster and support a positive working environment where employees can do their best work as they provide an exceptional educational experience. The College will follow best practices in human resource management.

Strategy
1. Expand the geographic range and increase the economic capacity of MECA.
2. Engage and empower alumni, faculty, staff, students, and trustees to create a national and international network to support each other and the College.
3. Conduct peer institutional messaging assessment.
4. Improve the local community’s understanding of MECA.
5. Position Mission, Vision, and Core Values as central to our brand.
6. Introduce a new institutional visual identity system across all media.
7. Leverage core selling points.

STRATEGIES
1. Define and communicate expectations for institutional excellence and high professional standards that are measured annually.
2. Implement effective, collaborative institutional planning and efficient work systems.

MECA will educate artists for life.

Approved by the Board of Trustees April 15, 2015

April 28, 2015
STRATEGY STATEMENT

To grow our student body to 500, supported by an endowment of $20,000,000, and to strengthen and diversify our learning community through a commitment to institutional excellence, sustainability, affordability, and creativity, ensuring that each student can learn how to be a working artist for life and make communities better. Our endeavor will be guided by the philosophy that we are all educators and made possible by 21st century best practices in teaching, learning, human resources, environmental responsibility, and operations.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PLAN

Achieve greater institutional excellence, affordability, and financial sustainability in a rapidly changing educational environment.

SCOPE

All activities will reflect the core mission of the institution and be consistent with MECA's educational philosophy. Success of the MECA strategic plan will be measured against the goals of developing a revised and sustainable business model, raising the resources to meet the near-term and long-range needs of the College and growing enrollment across all degree programs to 500 students.

ADVANTAGES

EDUCATION

- Distinctive faculty-driven educational philosophy linking studio, agency, place, community, and ethics
- Collaborative and interdisciplinary educational program integrating visual arts and the liberal arts
- Individualized educational experience and strong mentoring program
- High access to experienced and dedicated faculty and staff with global professional networks, who are invested in the success of every student
- Innovative Artists at Work program supporting personal and professional goals for a creative career from the day students enter through life after MECA
- Public engagement curriculum embedded in studio BFA program
- Culture of critique, building resilience, and demanding student improvement and growth personally, professionally, and artistically

FACILITIES

- Modernized, spacious, vertical campus in a renovated landmark downtown building enhancing community and interdisciplinary collaboration
- 24/7 access to studios and up-to-date facilities
- Generous access for all juniors and seniors
- Variety of student living options in nearby residence halls

COMMUNITY: MECA AND BEYOND

- Strong community partnerships with a diverse range of artists, organizations and businesses, encouraged by MECA and facilitated by the College's location in the heart of Portland's vibrant arts district
- Maine's largest and oldest organization dedicated solely to art studies, founded in 1882, with deep connections to the long history of artists inspired to live and create art in Maine
- Active leader in recognizing, exhibiting, and publicly celebrating excellence in the arts
- Supportive and friendly community provided by students, faculty, and staff
- Accessible, engaged, and active alumni community provides opportunities for students

I. GOAL: Educational Excellence

MECA will enhance its academic curriculum by leveraging its current strengths and creating and sustaining a culture that supports academic excellence. MECA will evaluate its curricular and co-curricular programs regularly, relying on systematic, meaningful assessment, reflection, and critical feedback, by external reviewers as well as by faculty and staff. MECA will pursue external and internal collaborations that enhance the student experience. Throughout this process MECA will be flexible and nimble enough to respond to national and global trends in a rapidly changing educational and technological environment and will encourage experimentation in program design and creation and in means of delivery.

II. GOAL: Financial Sustainability

MECA will develop its business model to ensure adequate resources to support student success, limit student debt, provide appropriate compensation and support for employees, maintain the physical plant, meet current capital needs, and invest in the future of the College. This work will include implementing operational efficiencies, building operating reserves, increasing depreciation funding, identifying opportunities for diversifying revenues, and creating a long-term development plan to increase the College’s endowment with funding goals dedicated to specific areas defined by the business model.

III. GOAL: Enrollment: Recruitment and Retention

MECA will grow carefully to at least 500 students combined in all degree programs. This will be achieved by promoting MECA's distinct advantages and by supplying selective financial recruiting incentives. With more applications, MECA will increase selectivity and strengthen the student profile. Retention will continually improve, with a graduation rate of 60 percent as the first benchmark.

IV. GOAL: Diversity

The College will increase the compositional diversity of its students, faculty, staff, and board. MECA will cultivate a learning environment that prepares its students to thrive in a diverse and global community.

STRATEGIES

1. Strengthen initiatives that promote pedagogical innovation, teaching excellence, and original creative activity and research among faculty.
2. Articulate, define, and build on what is unique and distinctive about Maine College of Art.
3. Develop new academic programs (or expand) in order to provide more choice for students in all programs.
4. Create new academic pathways that will provide more ways for students to obtain their degree.
5. Pursue external and internal collaborations and initiatives that are in the strategic interest of the College.
6. Agree on, define, and measure competencies and outcomes in an ongoing and consistent manner.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop financial modeling that shows full allocation of cost and short and long-term implications of various revenue and expenditure assumptions.
2. Make affordability a priority by continuous effort to drive down costs as well as by resource development and by finding ways to reduce the debt load of future students.
3. Create a master facilities plan for the entire campus that ensures high quality instructional spaces, improves the aesthetic experience, including the public presentation of Porteous, and is sympathetic to environmental responsibilities and deferred maintenance.
4. Prepare for and conduct a fundraising initiative to increase the endowment to $20M and complete the renovation of Porteous Lower Level, Facade, and Lobby.
5. Create a business plan that offers the best path for sustainability and educational quality.
6. Starting with current emergency plan, create a comprehensive risk management plan and process.

STRATEGIES

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

1. Improve outreach to prospective students and teachers for the BFA, MFA, and MAT.
2. Improve marketing and enhance course offerings for Continuing Studies.
3. Expand recruitment footprint regionally, nationally, and internationally, to include focus on diversity.
4. Develop strategies specifically for recruiting veterans, transfers, and non-traditional students.
5. Continue to develop reputation.
6. Continue dialogue with academic program directors, faculty, and the admissions team regarding program interest and student success.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

1. Update retention plan and execute at a higher level.
2. Develop and implement Assessment Plan: curriculum, student learning, and program evaluation.

STRATEGIES

1. Create Diversity Statement.
2. Develop diversity initiatives and assign responsibility.
3. Provide diversity training and education to all employees.
4. Establish an assessment and program evaluation process for diversity initiatives.