

A young person with dark hair is shown in profile, playing a cello. The image is heavily stylized with a color palette of deep purples, blues, and magentas. A bright, out-of-focus light source in the upper left corner creates a strong lens flare and illuminates the scene. The person's face is partially in shadow, and their hands are positioned on the cello's neck and body. The overall mood is artistic and contemplative.

Strategic Priorities Roadmap: 2024–2025

CaLARTS

**CalArts is a multidisciplinary
community of artists.**

**Our ongoing educational
endeavor is grounded in
openness, experimentation,
critical engagement, and
creative freedom.**

**Through artistic practice,
we transform ourselves,
each other, and the world.**

Strategic Priorities Roadmap: 2024–2025

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:
SHAPING CALARTS' FUTURE



INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the CalArts community articulated a collective vision for our future in a long-term institutional plan, “Shaping CalArts’ Future.” This plan—our [Strategic Framework](#)—calls on all CalArtians to cultivate greater sustainability, diversity, inclusivity, and forward thinking in our community of artists. At its heart, the Framework serves as a guide to positioning CalArts’ operational practice and culture as a proactive, community-driven endeavor that will build on the Institute’s formidable legacy while continuing to experiment, innovate, and challenge convention—as we have throughout our history.

The Strategic Framework was rolled out in the 2021–2022 academic year, and each year since we have compiled our planned work for the year in an annual [Strategic Priorities Roadmap](#). This report, produced early each fall semester, serves as an outline of the collective work we plan to focus on in a given year, helping each community member better understand the pace of progress toward our shared priorities, and making those priorities—which are developed over the previous months with input from each of CalArts’ shared-governance bodies—available in one place. Creating and publically publishing this document directly supports Goals 7 and 3 of the Framework, which call for clearer operational processes and improved transparency, respectively. It is our goal to distribute this publication each year in advance of the Institute-wide Fall Town Hall, led by the Institute Council.

Progress is measured twice a year (in late fall and in the spring) and compiled for the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees to review. This progress is also shared with our community throughout the year in reports and forums such as the Fall and Spring Town Halls and various shared-governance council and committee meetings.

Beginning in the fall of 2025, as a “bookend” to the Roadmap you are reading today, a planned Year in Review report will provide our CalArts community and friends with an annual report on our priority initiatives, enrollment, fundraising, and other items of interest such as faculty news and milestones.

THE YEAR AHEAD

This year’s Roadmap articulates the strategic priorities for the 2024–2025 academic year specific to furthering our institutional mission and the goals within our Strategic Framework. Each iteration of the Roadmap builds upon the previous editions, incorporating learnings and feedback from the CalArts community. Last year, we reimagined and reformatted the publication to align with organizational and tracking practices defined by the Board and common in higher education. Ten areas of focus, or impact, were chosen by the Executive Committee of the Board, each specific to a key area where the community is putting the Strategic Framework into practice. This year’s report retains these same 10 areas of impact, while clearly defining the institutional division charged with leading the work and holding the primary responsibility for each action. We’ve also noted additional areas of impact that each goal or action affects, recognizing the interconnected nature of our work—all of which is ultimately focused on our students.

While the key goals and actions comprising this year's plan are many—43 to be specific—there are two interrelated and overarching priorities that infuse each of them: cultivating a community of care, and improving student retention.

Cultivating a community of care

It's no secret that our society has become more polarized, more uneasy, more uncertain, and, perhaps as a result, less forgiving and sympathetic in recent years. This is in part due to the lingering effects of the pandemic, but also to the anxious state of the world. We are exposed, through digital media, to a relentless stream of content that puts every crisis around the globe in the palm of our hand—and can seem to elevate even ordinary problems to crisis level. This is the time we live in. That does not mean, though, that we must tolerate unforgiving or unkind behavior within our campus community. As artists, we seek by definition to disrupt the status quo, to challenge certain norms, to envision the world we desire to see—and to help others do the same. This is enshrined in our mission when it states: "Through artistic practice, we transform ourselves, each other, and the world."

Similarly, it is through our daily practice of living and working as a community that we have the ability to transform our culture and to establish norms of sympathetic understanding and mutual respect, while at the same time consistently offering one another kindness, support, and honesty. We can find ways to put others above self without sacrificing our own self-balance in the process. This is achievable through the way we interact in our classrooms, studios, halls, performance venues, and offices and through adopting clear communication, user-centered processes, and sustainable practices—which you will find threaded throughout the goals and actions detailed in this report.

Improving student retention

After taking a pandemic-related dip, our application and new-student enrollment numbers have grown, and we see no reason why they will not continue to be strong—there is considerable demand for the unique approach to arts education that CalArts stands for. Yet not every student who comes to CalArts completes a degree. In order to fully recover from the challenging years of the pandemic and build our enrollment to an optimal level, it is critical that we ensure our students receive the caliber of experience they expect when they join our community of artists. We routinely survey students' opinions, especially when they can't finish their degree in the allotted time or when they decide to go to other schools. We know from what they tell us that most of the top reasons they leave are things that are *entirely in our control* to change. In other words, these are things we are choosing to do—so we can also choose to do them differently.

One of the most immediate ways we can each contribute to this, no matter our role or position, relates directly to my previous point: It is to create a culture grounded in empathy, kindness, and mutual respect here on our own campus—to cultivate that community of care. This does not mean we stop challenging each other, or shy away from tough conversations, or step back from the rigor of interrogation and learning. Rather, it means that we respectfully challenge one another; that we thoughtfully and selflessly engage in tough conversations by knowing they are tough; and that, as we engage in learning, interrogation, and discourse, we pay attention and recognize when things are challenging for others, and offer our support. The thought that kindness somehow means not being challenged creates a false dichotomy—it oversimplifies the point. Intellectual and artistic integrity are fully compatible with mutual respect and sympathetic understanding. One could argue that you need these things in order to fully maintain such integrity, and to make collaborative learning possible.

Embedding these concepts in everything we do is essential to our teaching, learning, and work. Fully embracing them as truly central to our campus culture means that we must consciously choose to engage thoughtfully, that we expect the act of considering the needs of another to be our default, and that we practice sympathetic understanding (much like sympathetic vibrations), acting in harmony with one another. And it means that we must expect these same things from others, and respectfully remind each other when it doesn't happen. Our community deserves nothing less.



Ravi S. Rajan
President

The 2024–2025 strategic priorities that follow are organized by primary area of impact. The responsible division and the additional areas impacted are noted for each goal/action.

AREAS OF IMPACT

- I. Academic**
- II. Students**
- III. IDEA**
- IV. Alumni**
- V. Marketing and Communications**
- VI. Human Resources and Employment Practices**
- VII. Governance**
- VIII. New Revenue**
- IX. Finance**
- X. Facilities and Technology**

Strategic Priorities for 2024–2025

I. ACADEMIC

Summary of this year's priorities

The communities, industries, and disciplines within which our graduates live and work are rapidly changing. To support their evolving needs and ambitions, CalArts strives to develop and sustain a broad range of mission-centric academic program offerings. Aligning programs with market demand and growth opportunities, implementing strategic enrollment efforts and faculty-development strategies, and developing programmatic options to bolster student preparedness will be key to CalArts' ongoing academic influence and relevance.

The Institute will examine ways to encourage faculty flexibility and—as detailed in section III: IDEA (page 8)—to provide faculty with learning opportunities in cultural competency. Taken together, these steps will help us continue to maximize student success while fostering innovative curricular models, attracting and retaining diverse pools of talented students and faculty, and broadening our global impact. As a central part of these advancements, we will continue to improve our institutional progress in inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA).

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Continue curricular renovation and development

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: II. STUDENTS, V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, VIII. NEW REVENUE)

Academic leaders and faculty will collaborate on several curricular renovation and development projects that will be shepherded through academic and relevant Institute governance processes. These initiatives reflect our increased understanding of students' interests and needs, preparing them for their lives post-CalArts as well as attracting an expanded audience of new students. These projects include beginning revisions to the BFA Critical Studies curriculum; developing a common course schedule; launching the Arts Education minor/concentration and progress on developing Arts Education credentialing pathways; developing a proposal for an Environmental Practices minor/concentration; and carrying out a fundraising and implementation plan for a new BFA in Creative Computing degree program.

B. Design and implement a strategic enrollment plan

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, II. STUDENTS, III. IDEA, V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, VIII. NEW REVENUE, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

We will produce a multi-year enrollment plan for under-enrolled programs and develop new programs. To cultivate programs that are responsive to students' needs and ambitions, CalArts will establish an Enrollment Management workgroup. This group's work will facilitate cross-school collaboration and produce comprehensive analytics on program market demand tied to enrollment opportunities and net tuition revenue for individual schools and departments. Coordination among Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Marketing and Communications, and the Provost's Office will support operational improvements and program development.

Putting this plan into place will support the Institute's mission and assist future campus planning.

At the same time, a broader enrollment-management planning effort, now in its second year, will include targeted enrollment, recruitment, and retention strategies for all academic degree programs. This large-scale, IDEA-informed endeavor will incorporate a roadmap that reflects a comprehensive student lifecycle from matriculation to graduation, and will integrate analytics on retention, persistence, and program demand. Deans and program directors will have dynamic informational tools featuring net tuition revenue and head counts to inform this work.

C. Enhance faculty life

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: VI. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES, IX. FINANCE)

In our ongoing efforts to support our exceptional faculty, the provost is partnering with Human Resources, Finance and Administration, and a subcommittee of the Academic Council to develop an equitable-workload model for faculty. This model will provide clarification of expectations as well as flexibility for faculty to balance their lives as artists and scholars with our institutional commitment to teaching excellence. We will also continue our faculty-development efforts related to inclusive pedagogy under the leadership of our new assistant provost for faculty development.

We are also working on the second iteration of the Faculty Salary Advancement Plan (FSAP2), which is discussed in section VI. Human Resources and Employment Practices (page 11).

D. Foster student success pathways

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: II. STUDENTS, III. IDEA, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

The provost and the vice president of student affairs will provide direction to the Student Persistence and Graduation Committee to develop a data-informed retention plan that reflects a holistic and compassionate approach to student success. Related to this retention plan are revisions to policies and procedures that we have identified as obstacles in our students' pathways to graduation, such as our registration processes and our approach to awarding financial aid. This also includes the development of new policies and procedures to better serve a more diverse population of students, such as awarding credit for prior learning and professional experience. To strengthen students' sense of belonging, we are implementing the second iteration of our First Year Experience program.

II. STUDENTS

Summary of this year's priorities

CalArts is committed to maintaining an inclusive environment that fosters the academic, professional, and personal growth of each student. For 2024–2025, the Division of Student Affairs has articulated four clear goals to promote student success, well-being, and engagement. These goals will be achieved by developing and implementing a five-year strategic action plan to guide financial planning and prioritization of work. Additionally, regular engagement with the community through the Institute Council's Student Affairs Committee will help support an Institute-wide understanding of our student body, supporting sound decision-making that enhances student success.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Create a five-year action plan

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: STUDENT AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED:

I. ACADEMICS, III. IDEA, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

Student Affairs will collaborate with a diverse group of campus stakeholders—including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the Student Affairs Committee of the Institute Council—to develop a comprehensive and forward-thinking action plan for Student Affairs by May 2025. This plan will define the division's strategic priorities and goals for the next five years, guided by extensive engagement and feedback from the campus community. Stakeholders will be involved through surveys, focus groups, and town-hall meetings to ensure the plan aligns with their needs and aspirations. A detailed implementation roadmap will also be developed, outlining timelines, responsible parties, budget, and measurable outcomes. To ensure the plan's effectiveness, a framework for monitoring progress and evaluating initiatives will be created, allowing for adjustments as necessary to stay aligned with our strategic goals.

B. Evaluate and Enhance Student Support Services

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: STUDENT AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED:

I. ACADEMICS, III. IDEA)

In partnership with the IDEA Office and Academic Affairs, Student Affairs will develop a comprehensive State of the Student Report to gain deeper insights into the student body and their experiences. This report will draw from various data sources—including student assessments, admissions data, surveys, and focus groups—to provide a holistic view of the student experience. Student Affairs will analyze the data to identify trends, strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to student success and well-being. Based on these findings, we will design targeted initiatives, training, and learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment. The report will provide actionable recommendations for policies, programs, and practices to enhance student success and engagement, and to promote retention.

C. Develop a five-year divisional budget model

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: STUDENT AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED:

VIII. NEW REVENUE, IX. FINANCE)

Developing a robust multi-year divisional budget model that is keyed and tracked with the five-year action plan will ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the Division of Student Affairs. This model will include detailed financial planning in alignment with the Institute's [Strategic Framework](#), outline resource-allocation strategies, identify potential revenue-generating opportunities, implement cost-management strategies, and include the revenue and expenses coming from the services CalArts is providing to the Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA) as part of our new affiliation agreement.

D. Establish a set of shared Student Affairs services for Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: STUDENT AFFAIRS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED:

I. ACADEMICS, III. IDEA)

Student Affairs will establish work practices based upon the shared-services agreement with CalArts' new affiliate, VCFA, to enhance student-success initiatives and increase revenue. This collaboration will offer resources, expertise, and best practices, improving efficiency and reducing duplication. The agreement will support collaborations and joint initiatives, such as co-hosted events, while identifying opportunities for shared revenue through grants and fundraising.

III. IDEA

Summary of this year's priorities

Through our commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA), CalArts strives to foster a dynamic and welcoming atmosphere that enhances our reputation for thought leadership in the arts. These actions—as well as many others that center IDEA—are guided by our previously published five-year [IDEA Action Plan](#). Together, they support our commitment to a diverse and equitable environment in the workplace, classrooms, studios, and beyond. Note that many additional IDEA-related initiatives appear under other sections of this document.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Provide robust faculty development in inclusive pedagogy and cultural competency

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: IDEA OFFICE. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS)

With a new assistant provost for faculty development in place, the IDEA Office is equipped with the leadership it needs to support faculty workshops and learning opportunities that advance CalArts' values.

B. Embed opportunities for cultural competency

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: IDEA OFFICE. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS)

To support institutional IDEA goals, CalArts will incorporate cultural-competency learning opportunities in all métier programs and in the Critical Studies curriculum.

C. Hire the first vice president of IDEA (year 2 of 2)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: IDEA OFFICE. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: VI. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES)

Work toward this goal, which started last year, will continue. Before the end of 2023–2024, we initiated the search process for a new, donor-funded senior IDEA leader by retaining an executive search firm to lead this process, and assembled a search advisory committee of faculty, staff, students, and leadership. Given the importance of this role, and the interconnectedness with so many divisions of the Institute, the search advisory committee recommended that we start this year by conducting listening sessions, focus groups, interviews, and other coordinated efforts to bring community input together in a focused way before preparing a position prospectus and working to identify the ideal candidate. This new role will be charged chiefly with creating the central coordination of IDEA work, in fulfillment of the goals identified by our accrediting body, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), during our most recent re-accreditation. We must

report on our progress on this to WASC during the spring of 2025, and our aim is to have a new leader identified by the end of the 2024–2025 academic year.

IV. ALUMNI

Summary of this year's priorities

CalArts strives to serve and support its alumni with professional, personal, and artistic programming, resources, dialogue, and access. We encourage all alumni to invent, incubate, experiment, and share their work with us and with one another. Steps to strengthen and celebrate a creative, collaborative, and diverse alumni community support current and future student success and broaden the reach of the Institute domestically and internationally.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Restructure Alumni Engagement into Marketing and Communications

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, VIII. NEW REVENUE)

CalArts Alumni Engagement will become part of the Marketing and Communication division, facilitating seamless and holistic communications and engagement with students that continues throughout their lifetimes. This restructuring will achieve efficiencies in staff resources and improve consistency of branding and messaging across audiences. Alumni Engagement staff will benefit from interaction with members of the Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA) alumni and communications team, which also reports to CalArts' vice president for Marketing and Communications.

V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Summary of this year's priorities

With its portfolio recently expanded to include Alumni Engagement—as well as supporting the marketing, communications, and alumni engagement functions of VCFA—CalArts' Marketing and Communications division is well positioned to continue improving internal and external communication structures, processes, and tools. Tasked with broadening awareness and reach of the Institute, the division seeks to tell the compelling stories of CalArtians and ensure a consistent, mission-centric brand identity. The actions outlined here will continue to establish a strong foundation for strategic communications that support expanding enrollment, philanthropy, and visibility.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Develop a five-year marketing and communications action plan

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS; ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, IV. ALUMNI, VIII. NEW REVENUE)

In partnership with the newly formed Marketing and Communications Committee within CalArts' shared-governance structure, divisional leadership will write an action plan—similar to those currently in place for Academics and IDEA—with the goal of enhancing CalArts' visibility, appeal, and influence. This is to be published by the end of fiscal year 2025.



Graphic Design Wayfinding Group Installation, 2023.
Photo by Rafael Hernandez.

B. Restructure the Marketing and Communications division to include both Alumni Engagement and VCFA staff

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: IV. ALUMNI, VIII. NEW REVENUE)

Including Alumni Engagement within the scope of Marketing and Communications, and integrating communications functions more fully with Advancement, divisional leadership will establish new strategies and workflows that encourage collaboration and consistent quality of communication, and will work to ensure staff and management have a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities and priorities. Multiple existing staff will newly report into the division and be integrated into this work.

C. Create and implement a new online brand site

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

Following the launch of CalArts' new primary website in the fall of 2024, we will expand on this work to establish clear brand guidelines and resources to support faculty, staff, and students. In 2025, Marketing and Communications will launch brand.calarts.edu with an editorial style guide, visual identity guide, and branded templates. A comprehensive communications strategy and toolkit will enable the campus community to adopt these tools across multiple platforms and audiences.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Summary of this year's priorities

CalArts recognizes the importance of establishing a dynamic, supportive, and inclusive work environment that celebrates and rewards the contributions of all its employees—faculty and staff alike—fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Human Resources' enhanced focus on performance management and evaluation systems (customized for staff and faculty) will help cultivate this culture of excellence and promote improved communication tactics that foster collaboration and the transparent exchange of information.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Continue implementation of the new Human Resource Information System (year 2 of 3)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: HUMAN RESOURCES. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: III. IDEA, IX. FINANCE, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

The first two phases of introducing Paycom, our new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), took place in fiscal year 2024. Phase I included system set-up and payroll; Phase II involved benefits, recruiting, and onboarding (currently in progress). Phase III will introduce the training and educational modules for employees who supervise others to foster employee development and support consistent and equitable performance management. The performance management module will also be implemented for the next performance-evaluation cycle.

B. Complete the second Faculty Salary Advancement Plan (FSAP2) (year 2 of 2)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: HUMAN RESOURCES. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, IX. FINANCE)

This second revision of the plan, FSAP2, is the periodic update to the step-based salary-advancement plan for regular and technical faculty. The current plan's details are being reviewed by the Academic Council and leadership together, with the goal of updating to keep pace with market patterns and to acknowledge and reward the contributions and dedication of CalArts faculty. It is our goal to complete the FSAP2 by the end of the 2024–2025 academic year, allowing any changes to begin the following year. This continues our promise to adhere to an ongoing cycle of such plans for all employees—faculty, staff, and leadership.

C. Establish the Human Resources and Employee Affairs Committee

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: HUMAN RESOURCES. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: VII. GOVERNANCE)

This new committee, approved in 2024 by the Institute Council as part of CalArts' shared-governance structure, will support employee participation in the creation and evaluation of employee matters such as benefits, leadership training, and other employee-facing services. It will be led by the interim vice president of Human Resources and the chief of staff to the president.

D. Introduce plans for violence and injury prevention

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: HUMAN RESOURCES. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: III. IDEA, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

The Institute's new Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, completed and placed on the Paycom platform in the summer of 2024, will be rolled out across the community in fiscal year 2025. The introduction will include a process for faculty, staff members, and students to review the plan and sign acknowledgments of receipt. The plan will be highlighted regularly, with confirmation signatures to be tracked annually. The Institute will also introduce its new Injury Illness Prevention Plan, which will be completed in 2024. Long-term evaluation of this plan's successful implementation will include accessibility and completion data.

VII. GOVERNANCE

Summary of this year's priorities

CalArts is dedicated to strengthening its governance practices by promoting participation in the brainstorming, analysis, and consideration process before a decision is made. This process includes following best practices in participatory management, as well as higher education, and provides the Board of Trustees and positional leaders with educational and engagement opportunities.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Adopt a nested model to record board policies and processes (year 2 of 4)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: PRESIDENT'S OFFICE)

Drawing on best practices in higher education, CalArts' Board of Trustees will develop, document, and refine key practices and policies for its routine operations. Steps will include benchmarking governance practices amongst those of our institutional peers; developing succession planning for corporate officers of the Board; creating an evaluation rubric for trustee renewals; and drafting and updating policies, including those for conflicts of interest and gift acceptance.

B. Provide educational opportunities to the Board

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: PRESIDENT'S OFFICE)

Through orientation, engagement, and mentoring, the Institute will help prepare Board members for their fiduciary responsibilities. Actions will include creating enhancements to trustee orientation, a mentorship program for new trustees, an evergreen trustee handbook, and other educational support.

C. Bolster trustee engagement

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: PRESIDENT'S OFFICE)

To promote trustees' involvement in the Institute and the community of artists that constitutes it, the Office of Governance and Board Relations will regularly publish a list featuring events that trustees may wish to attend, develop cross-campus engagement opportunities for trustees, and create a comprehensive Board-assessment process.

D. Enhance institutional understanding of participatory decision-making through shared governance (year 2 of 3)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: PRESIDENT'S OFFICE)

Last year, the Institute Council approved several sector-specific committees to promote Institute-wide participatory decision-making. These committees are designed to foster transparent decision-making processes and ensure faculty, staff, and students have meaningful input on key institutional topics. This year, these established committees will begin meeting to serve as central forums for communication, transparency, and collaboration across the Institute. Looking ahead, the Institute Council identified the need to source the labor required to support the Institute's shared governance through the creation of a central governance office, staffed by a dedicated full-time employee, as well as a central digital repository of information and documents. This office would integrate the management of all governance bodies, including the Board of Trustees and its committees, as well as the shared-governance bodies and their committees. Planning for such a central resource will begin this year. Hiring staff must be deferred to future years in light of the current budget situation.

VIII. NEW REVENUE

Summary of this year's priorities

One of the goals outlined in CalArts' [Strategic Framework](#) is to increase non-tuition revenue sources in order to reduce reliance on tuition, thus creating greater financial accessibility to degree programs. This includes actions designed to increase earned and donated revenue from a variety of sources.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Support the enrollment growth of the Vermont College of Fine Arts

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT)

Under CalArts' new affiliation with VCFA, end-of-year revenue produced by VCFA will be remitted annually to CalArts. Given that 97% of VCFA's revenue is from tuition, increasing enrollment in VCFA's programs creates an additional source of revenue for CalArts. This year will be the first in our efforts to help bolster VCFA's

enrollment through strategic oversight of the college's enrollment processes, ultimately increasing revenue to CalArts.

B. Create strategies for increased donated revenue-related goals

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ADVANCEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, II. STUDENTS, III. IDEA, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

To help meet increased donated-revenue-related benchmarks, the Institute will develop and put in place new strategies and processes. Specific goals include a \$5.2-million target for the annual fund; a new major-donor list with detailed objectives and strategies; and the beginnings of a long-term vision document that will incorporate critical and aspirational needs such as capital improvements, endowed professorships, a REDCAT operating endowment, support for visiting artists, scholarship growth, and IDEA initiatives.

Related priorities include soliciting new donors for three initiatives—Technology and the Arts, Location-based Immersive Entertainment, and Mindfulness—and working with a current donor to expand CalArts' presence across Los Angeles by increasing activity at the Reef in Downtown Los Angeles and by helping resurrect the Blue Whale in Little Tokyo as a multi-disciplinary performance hub. New processes such as creating historical revenue reports that support future revenue goals; creating year-round engagement opportunities for supporters; and systematically evaluating existing areas of need will be started. These assessments will inform solicitation plans specific to current needs, such as scholarships for the Arts Posse Scholars and ongoing funding to support IDEA initiatives.

C. Complete implementation of Salesforce CRM and related integration

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ADVANCEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY)

To support the Advancement division's engagement efforts, the Institute will finish the incorporation of Salesforce's customer-relationship management (CRM) platform and integrate Advancement applications, processes, and data with other CalArts systems, especially financial systems. Further, the Institute will improve award management for scholarships and financial aid, as well as other endowed and donor-directed student awards and aid programs.

D. Evaluate and build Advancement's organizational framework

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ADVANCEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, VI. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES)

With a fresh organizational structure in Advancement, the Institute will strengthen the division's leadership approach and the execution of its priorities. Key steps will include making critical hires for current vacancies—including an operational vice president, an events director, and specialists handling the annual fund, major giving, and planned giving—as well as executing an overall team reorganization.

E. Coordinate processes for public relations and fundraising

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISIONS: ADVANCEMENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS)

Advancement and Marketing and Communications will work together to create template proposals for each area of need and linked public-relations plans for fundraising initiatives. Efforts will include coordination on writing and graphic design needs, such as those for invitations, proposal templates, and annual-fund

solicitations. This coordination will be made possible by moving design and writing staff roles (both filled and vacant) from Advancement to central Marketing and Communications, thereby consolidating this work.

IX. FINANCE

Summary of this year's priorities

CalArts is focused on making its finance processes compliant, efficient, user-friendly, and supportive of Institute values. Actions supporting this focus will include a thorough review of practices in financial aid, an evaluation of accounting needs, and improving access to vendors that align with Institute priorities. These efforts underscore CalArts' commitment to strategic financial planning, operational efficiency, sustainability, and an exceptional educational experience.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Conduct a comprehensive audit of financial-aid-related efforts

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: II. STUDENTS, IX. FINANCE)

A thorough assessment of strategies, programs, and policies related to financial aid will help the Institute refine its aid practices. Planned actions include cost-benefit analyses, reviews of recent court and federal actions that may bear on aid practices, and consideration of key-market economic indicators. Further evaluations will include Institute scholarship programs and key endowed and high-profile commitments. Need- and merit-based awarding practices for undergraduate and graduate programs will be revised. New opportunities for a strategic discounting model will undergo review.

B. Run first year of shared-services for the Vermont College of Fine Arts

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: VIII. NEW REVENUE)

The Institute will use this first year of its affiliation with VCFA to pilot providing contracted services to VCFA for the fees negotiated as part of the initial affiliation agreement. Work includes ensuring that the fees negotiated are sufficient and continuing to identify services that CalArts can provide to VCFA with the goal of expanding its enrollment, thus increasing net revenue, which returns to CalArts at the end of each fiscal year.

C. Formalize policies to create institutional expenditure norms

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: VII. GOVERNANCE)

The Division of Finance and Administration will work with the senior leadership team (deans and vice presidents) to draft policies and practices to establish a codified set of institutional expenditure norms. Drafts of these policies will be evaluated by the Institute Budget Committee (IBC) in the fall of 2024 before being recommended to the Institute Council, and ultimately to the president for adoption.



Abbi Page, MFA 25, reads at the MFA Creative Writing Showcase at REDCAT, May 9, 2024. Photo by Angel Oraggi.

D. Evaluate accounting practices and systems

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION)

To explore a prospective modernization of accounting systems, the Institute will conduct a thorough review of the current practices. Additionally, exploring the use of the travel and expense-reimbursement module in the Paycom system will determine whether use of this module, which is free to the Institute, could create operational efficiencies.

X. FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Summary of this year's priorities

CalArts is dedicated to aligning its facilities and technology with current needs, and making improvements that will meet the Institute's future requirements. Across the community, these upgrades hinge on careful planning that balances financial realities with timely necessities and the need to support sustainable long-term innovation, creative growth, and institutional excellence. Work in the near term includes high-level facilities assessments, residential upgrades, and a more streamlined approach to information technology overall.

Key 2024–2025 goals and actions

A. Continue the facility master-planning process (year 3 of many)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT)

In the fall of 2024, the Institute will commence the final phase toward the formation of a new facilities master-planning process. This phase will take about three years, and will involve deep stakeholder involvement. Specific steps will include the creation of a steering group of trustees and leaders, creating a committee of internal stakeholders that will serve through the multi-year process, gathering further facilities-specific data and space-utilization data, interviews and stakeholder surveys, and the completion of requests for proposals to submit to at least three architectural firms.

B. Assemble data for a space use assessment (year 3 of many)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS)

As part of its facilities master planning process, the Institute is gathering facilities-specific data to develop an overall space-use assessment. An updated room inventory and a usage matrix including all schools and departments was completed in July 2024. By September 2024, vendor JTC Architects is expected to complete suitability ratings for each room and space on campus. Additional analysis will center on tracking trends in the Institute's space utilization and documenting them for review. Trends such as schedules of use, purpose of use, volume of use, and changes in these things over time will be examined. These analyses will be utilized in phase five of the master-planning process.

C. Provide shared-services support for Vermont College of Fine Arts (year 1 of 2)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: IV. ALUMNI, VI. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES, IX. FINANCE)

Under our affiliation agreement, CalArts will begin to support VCFA's information-technology-system needs. Specific efforts include a single-sign-on project that

enables VCFA users to connect securely to key services such as payroll and administrative systems, a migration of VCFA's PowerCampus Student Information System data into a node of the Colleague system used by CalArts by September 2025, and the integration of VCFA financial and alumni data needs into CalArts' systems. Longer-term steps will include the development of ongoing technology support services to be contracted by VCFA, such as enterprise applications and a help desk.

D. Upgrade facilities infrastructure of student residences (year 2 of many)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: II. STUDENTS)

CalArts will make key upgrades to the Ahmanson and Chouinard residence halls, including to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Improvements in 2024 are to include the replacement of sewer lines, HVAC systems, more than 150 lavatory sinks, and 55 toilets and shower drains in Chouinard, and energy efficient LED lighting, remodeled ceiling tiles, medicine cabinets, and mirrors in Ahmanson. Recently completed upgrades include exercise amenities inside and outside Chouinard Hall. Additional improvements in the works for Ahmanson include new waste and supply plumbing lines, shower pans, and kitchenette upgrades.

E. Create new art-making and social common spaces for student use (year 2 of many)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, II. STUDENTS)

This collaborative initiative among Student Affairs, the Provost's Office, and Facilities Development and Management will identify campus spaces that could be used to improve the student experience. As some administrative offices relocate to Vista Village, resulting vacant spaces will be prioritized and reimaged for student-facing use.

F. Refurbish and modernize all elevators in the main building (year 1 of 2)

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: II. STUDENTS, III. IDEA)

Supported by the generosity of a donor, the Institute will scope, plan, and begin the refurbishment and mechanical modernization of all three elevators in its main building. Bids for the work have been reviewed, and Facilities Development and Management will select a vendor in the fall of 2024 to move forward with construction in phases to ensure accessibility throughout the process. Work will be scoped to prioritize improved safety, IDEA principles, and environmental sustainability.

G. Increase use of Learning Management System (LMS) through faculty engagement

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS)

The Institute will develop and implement a course-design template in the Canvas LMS, and begin work with one of the six CalArts schools as a pilot. In August 2024, the Institute conducted an initial Canvas Fellows intensive training program for system users, with applications and interest exceeding capacity.

H. Reinforce physical data infrastructure

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: I. ACADEMICS, II. STUDENTS, IX. FINANCE)

To address the community's data capacity and needs, the Institute will develop a refresh cycle for servers and network equipment, with a focus on long-term budgeting and reducing annual replacement costs. Upgrades will include at least a quarter of the Institute's network infrastructure in fiscal year 2025, an amount that balances urgent upgrades with budget constraints. Further, the Institute will identify best practices and options for long-term data needs and begin constructing a data-management system for planned completion in fiscal year 2026.

I. Improve information-technology operational excellence and prepare for consolidation

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED:

I. ACADEMICS)

The Institute's information-technology personnel will carry out a variety of big-picture improvements, including those to extend the life of the Colleague enterprise resource-planning system until fiscal year 2029 or 2030. Improved automation in the system will provide quicker responses to community needs. At the same time, IT specialists will work toward consolidation and standardization of digital operations and purchasing across the Institute. They will collaborate with at least three deans to identify initial prospects for improved IT support.

J. Finish and implement an update to the emergency operations plan

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT. ADDITIONAL IMPACT AREAS SUPPORTED: V. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, IX. FINANCE)

In January 2024, the Institute completed an update of its [emergency operations plan](#). This update, which includes a policy for disaster recovery and preparedness, is now available to the CalArts community, and will be supported with related training modules and tutorials in the fall of 2024.

K. Develop multi-year data and integrations infrastructure plan to improve information-driven decision-making

(RESPONSIBLE DIVISION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

The Information Technology division and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will undertake significant architectural work on improving data access and usage at the Institute. In a cross-divisional effort, we will achieve a consistent definition for data, determine usage of various data fields across the Institute, and identify needs of key stakeholders. These efforts will improve efficiency of operations and increase competitive intelligence.



CaLARTS

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ROADMAP
2024–2025

Cover: Christopher Eiesland-Birch, BFA 24, performs at the
Experimental Pop Showcase at the Troubadour, April 16, 2024.
Photo by Rafael Hernandez.
Back cover: Zoe Liu, Photography and Media MFA 24.
Photo by Rafael Hernandez.