



The Five Year
Program for
The Arts in Binghamton, NY

prepared by

Kari A. Ward

CIC2020
Leadership Institute
Spring 2008

Binghamton, NY

The 'All You Can Eat Buffet' for the Starving Artist

As a life-long resident, and student of art in Greater Binghamton, I have been exposed to the very best qualities the area has to offer. Such qualities go unnoticed by certain sectors of the local population in which the economy relies: namely college population. Binghamton University's (BU) student group Catalysts for Intellectual Capital 2020 (CIC2020) has a goal to retain 20% of graduates to this area by the year 2020. For the Spring 2008 CIC2020 Leadership Institute (CIC2020-LI), we were introduced to 'The Confluence Project' of Binghamton, NY. The idea of the 'confluence' was a direct relation to how CIC2020-LI discovers different ways to bring the City of Binghamton and BU together, forming a single entity. Within the Leadership Institute, I am a member of the Downtown and Main Street Revitalization Group. Coming from an artistic background, I am interested in how the combined efforts of the local art community and Binghamton University's Art Department can be instrumental, if not vital, to the revitalization of the local economy.

Why is this effort for the arts different?

Art appreciation and practice within a community is not a new idea, but constructively figuring out a way to capitalize on such an 'industry' is still a young concept. Given the fact that Binghamton University's Art Department (BUAD) does not have a graduate program, the newly graduated students of this program are often without the knowledge of how to apply their newly polished skills in the professional world.

Through many interviews with local community members and university officials, I have determined that there is a rich support system for the expansion of the BUAD. This support system serves as a guide for the various ways that undergraduate and newly graduated students could be using the City of Binghamton as their stepping stone in building their professional artistic career. Given the encouragement, I began forming the five-year program for the BUAD and the local art community.

Should I really do this?

I anticipated that the community support for students to become more involved was present, it was just a matter of finding out who these community members are, and more importantly, determining whether there is a student demand?

Thinking back to my entering of BUAD, it is inspiring to see how far it has come. In this past year, the Science 3 Pod on campus was equipped with a state of the art Mac computer lab for the Graphic Design, Cinema, and Music Departments. Just recently, the undergraduate Student Art Show, which took place in the University Art Gallery from April 10-May 10, was said by numerous faculty members to be the best collection of student work they had seen in years. Seeing that the BUAD was on its way up, I was

curious as to what students thought of its progress and how they would respond to a hypothetical future for the BUAD. This semester I conducted an informal questionnaire to some students from the art department that I knew had very different views on the BUAD and the City of Binghamton itself. The questions sparked long discussions about their concerns for the department and for themselves as artists.

The questions were:

- *Why did you choose Binghamton University's Art Department?*
- *What are your plans after graduating from BU?*
- *Would you consider staying in the Binghamton area if you had a secured position within your concentration of art?*

The overall response surfaced many emotions reflecting their experience at BUAD. Many of them chose the Bachelor of Arts: Studio Art program at BU because of the small, yet reputable faculty the program employs. Plus, The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) program the department offers was also an appealing factor. They all agreed that Binghamton is an affordable and convenient place to reside in. In fact, the low cost of living and tuition was sometimes the key factor in choosing Binghamton. The last question pertaining to staying in Binghamton after graduation had a response that was split into two groups: those who said 'yes' and those who said 'maybe someday'. The 'yes' group of students were very appreciative of what they have learned from being at BU and have no doubt about the potential this area has to offer. The idea that they are here at a the 'ground floor' phase is exciting as well. The 'yes' group was more interested in residing in a community that is working towards the 'quality of an area as opposed to the quantity' -as Richard Florida, author of Cities and the Creative Class would say. The 'maybe' group had aspirations of experiencing the more corporate end of the job spectrum as opposed to self-employment after graduation. It was obvious at this point that the first step for my project was changing the way students enter, study, and graduate from the BUAD.

John Vestal, Chairman of the Art and Theater Department at Binghamton University, who helped bring about some of the recent improvements within the BUAD, is looking nowhere but forward. While my project is simply a starting point, Vestal was welcoming the idea of new recruitment methods and expansion of the art department.

Coming from a theater background, Vestal is very aware that the development of certain majors, such as Graphic Design, is crucial given the fact that designers are in high demand right now, and such a demand will only increase with time. (Interview, 3/5/08)

There are resources on campus for post-graduation employment through the Career Development Center (CDC) that serves all majors within BU. To be sure that I was not proposing a competitive idea to an already successful entity on campus, I met with Erin Jennings from the Career Development Center. Jennings remarks that there are countless seniors come in daily and say 'I don't know what I'm going to do after college, I don't want to work in the field I've been studying for the past four years...what now?' My proposed program would enhance the art students' experiences and results from attending BU, the CDC would still be the main resource for occupational guidance for the university. Through this interview I discovered another future relationship on campus that would welcome (and compliment) such expansion as proposed in my five-year program. (Interview, 3/17/08)

Is this being done anywhere else?

Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, GA (SCAD)

SCAD is a college of visual arts, building arts, and soon to be performing arts, that first held classes in 1979. (SCAD Facts) Owners Richard and Paula Rowan had a goal for students to “enliven downtown and put people back on the street again” (Marshall, Urban Renewal) The Rowans began their vision in an old train depot, located in the heart of downtown Savannah-the abandoned building of 150,000 sq. ft. was renovated for approximately \$1,000,000. (Marshall, 1995) That was the beginning of a school that would one day serve 8,966 students each year (SCAD Facts, 2007-2008). SCAD now occupies 40 buildings that have all been “adaptively reused” (Marshall, Urban Renewal) and Savannah is now leading municipality in the country for architectural historic preservation. The reason why I use this school as an example is due to its mission:

“Students from these separate majors will often work collaboratively on a project. All of SCAD’s departments...are oriented to sending students out to find jobs” (Marshall, New Urbanism).

SCAD not only educates students, but has also built various housing options for students throughout the citywide campus. Combining the education and housing facilities, “the school estimates its annual economic impact at \$300 million” (Marshall, 1995) That contribution amount was estimated based on a student body of roughly 2,500 students in 1995, which means that each student represents \$120,000 each year. Given a quick overview, it is apparent that a student body in a downtown area could be a sizeable contributing factor to economic revitalization. Savannah is very comparable in the sense that Binghamton has many beautiful buildings to which this theory of adaptive reuse can be applied. This is not the first time Savannah has been seen a model for Binghamton and Broome County’s economic development plans.

I turned to Terrance Kane, presently Director for State Relations at Binghamton University, who had traveled to Savannah while working as the Deputy County Executive for Broome County 1998-2005. When I presented my ideas for the BUAD, he immediately referred to SCAD. Given Kane’s background, I was curious as to how feasible a scaled project of SCAD would be for the Binghamton area. While Kane is not a practicing artist, he does understand that all successful municipalities have a flourishing arts and culture scene. He explained to me that an important factor to keep in mind is to focus on capitalizing on the arts. Many in the past have only thought about art appreciation and practice. Such projects are still operating but have a difficult time getting community support outside of the artists themselves. “This is not because it’s a bad idea” Kane explains, “but because the local art scene does not make money on simply selling paintings on the walls of a gallery, and people in this area don’t care to invest in art anyway-well, not enough to keep a business functioning”. (Interview, 2/21/08) Therefore, it was imperative that I explored the functional core of the current art community.

Who are these active artists in the community? What are they doing now?

Another aspect of this area that you learn within months of living here is that there is a problem of organization; everyone has their own agenda, hence the 50+

community organizations that rarely have any connection to each other. During the colloquia of the CIC2020-LI classes, I was fortunate to meet select community members that gave the impression of being active with their ideas as opposed to being good at just discussing them. I was then introduced to members of Binghamton Downtown Incorporated (BDI): that is soon to be a non-profit organization. BDI's sole mission is to revitalize the downtown area through implementing a Main Street Program.

A Main Street Program can be defined as a comprehensive plan that builds a neighborhoods' visual and business character to better serve the local community that is forever progressing-it continues to make changes and improvements for several years. BDI is a registered corporation with the National Trust for Historical Preservation, an organization that supports the national Main Street Program. BDI's newly named president, Sue Kirkland, had informed me that the group officially formed after the National Trust for Historical Preservation came to Binghamton to conduct a 'Downtown Assessment'. The connection between my efforts for the BUAD and BDI's program was instantaneous.

In my initial meeting with Kirkland, she was kind enough to go through some key points in the downtown assessment and how they match up with BDI's priorities. Kirkland's inspiration to join BDI comes from an extensive background in the local art community.

A few years ago, Kirkland was owner and director of 'The Perry Gallery', which occupied the 3rd floor of the Perry building located on the corner of Court Street and Chenango Street in Downtown Binghamton. Her facility consisted of a beautiful gallery space with a perimeter of upscale studio space for artists to rent. Kirkland is still an advocate for establishing as much gallery and studio space possible in the downtown area.

When I asked Kirkland, "What is Downtown Binghamton Inc.'s first priority?" she replied "Well, I don't believe you could focus on just one aspect of the downtown landscape. While I do believe all signage could use some updating, I do think that we can put it a little further down the list, but I have heard of requests for way-finding signage throughout downtown... We can hope that new businesses coming in will come to our organization for advice on signage, façade design, and curb appeal in the future. One of the first problems I see as a pedestrian in the area is how appalling some of the architecture has become. The ghost of urbanism from the 1960's is still present on so many beautiful structures this city has to offer". Kirkland believes that someone who is seeing our downtown area for the first time will remember the empty spaces just as much as the quality businesses established. It seems as though a façade restoration project will be at the top of Downtown Binghamton Inc.'s agenda. (Interview, 3/5/08)

The following are a few suggestions from the Downtown Assessment document:

- Increase the diversity/mix of retail businesses
- Increase dining options (currently lacking in 'white table cloth' dining)
- Many buildings need façade improvements or slip covering removal
- Install way finding signage (especially for the in-place art and entertainment sectors)
- Increase connection between waterfront development and downtown businesses.

(Downtown Assessment, 2006)

Kirkland showed extreme interest in tying BUAD development with the efforts of BDI. She suggested that I attend the National Main Street Conference in Philadelphia,

PA (hosted by the National Trust for Historical Preservation) to get a better understanding of what implementing a 'Main Street Program' means and how it could relate to my project. I went to the conference this spring, attended a number of seminars, and learned that Philadelphia was a perfect example of a successful municipality due to a Main Street Program. Of course, Philadelphia is not comparable to Binghamton-Instead I tried to think of Binghamton as a consolidated version of a such a place containing many of the same qualities: Institutions of higher education, art galleries, performing arts, all levels of government, wireless technology for the downtown area, and a public art collection.

In choosing which seminars to attend at the conference, I focused on Sign Ordinances, Artistic Entrepreneurship, and Fundraising.

Sign Ordinances: The lectures at this session illustrated how important it is to not only have creative signage to begin with, but how to maintain, ensuring that it always represents your business well and conveys a positive message to new customers and walk-by traffic. One aspect the speakers of this seminar focused on was how the sign ordinance in a municipality was to be focused on quality as opposed to content. For example, there cannot be an ordinance that would prohibit an adult bookstore from having a sign as large a children's toy store sign. I attended this seminar mainly because the sign ordinance in Binghamton is rather confusing and is not easily obtained for business owners or even just curious parties to view. (Day)

Artistic Entrepreneurship: While Binghamton still has progress to make on its art and culture scene; it is often forgotten how much we do have in the area.

These are some venues that are vital to Greater Binghamton's arts and culture community:

Binghamton University's Anderson Center, The Forum, The Veterans Memorial Arena, Magic City Music Hall, Cider Mill Playhouse, Tri-Cities Opera Roberson Museum of Art and Sciences, and First Friday Art Walks.

The following are requirements necessary for a successful Arts district:

Opera, Symphony, Ballet, Theatre, Museums, Galleries, Design Businesses, and Small/Large Concert Venues. (Bell, Cavada)

Once again, the solution is one of organization; it is imperative to combine these wonderful forces to increase pride in our community.

Fundraising: This was simply an occasion for successful Main Street Program fundraisers to share their triumphs and turmoil dealing with various populations and budgets. One of the biggest success stories was of the town Luray, VA with a population of 4,800 people and raised over \$36,000. The community relationship and cooperation these organizations have is remarkable. The events mentioned would not have been successful if it weren't for the generous donations and contributions from local businesses. Many of these cities have a rich student population-much like Binghamton. Not only have these other Main Street programs managed to raise sufficient funds for their cause, but one such program, Warrenton, VA, saw a 20% increase in new residence

in the past few years due to such success with the Main Street efforts. Art, particularly community murals and sculptures, has been a large contributing factor in these success stories. Art is a large part of the landscape for these municipalities and the events within them, proving to be an inspiration for out-of-town visitors.
(Bumbaugh, Gable, Meyer, Stewart)

To conclude my research from this present semester (Spring 2008), I have created a proposed course of action for the BUAD to be effective immediately. This program is accompanied by mock designs on the following pages.

Course of Actions for Binghamton University Art Department

2008- Methods for increasing student body within department.

1. Website Redevelopment
2. E-recruiting to bump up enrollment in the program, new print materials for recruitment.
3. Implement crossover classes. Examples:
 - Graphic designers take printmaking and marketing to better understand their industry.
 - Painters and sculptors can take a theatre scenery/set design class.
4. Encouraging more art minors would also help connect non-art majors to the BUAD.

2009- Implement community based classes-

- This could be an honors association within the department/OCC internships for Juniors and Seniors. See Examples below. This phase is seen as a method for identifying certain neighborhoods as 'art districts'. These new classes also introduce new professions that can be taken on by art majors.

1. Urban Sculpture - studying Louise Nevelson sculpture at City Hall. Creating a system of urban sculptures to better distinguish the 'art districts' in the area.
2. Historic Preservation- An internship program through the Art History department can partner with community members who are advocates for Historic Preservation-developing restoration plans for some architecture downtown.
3. Community Murals- A class in public murals for a select location each semester will also enhance this new artistic community in the area that is growing by the minute.

2010-Offering a series of classes working with Binghamton Downtown Inc.

-BDI has projected that by this year, implementation of the Main Street Program can begin and funding will be available for such action.

1. A juried group of students will be key players in creating a new visual image for the downtown area. (Boulevard Banner designs, 'Way Finding' signage, Lighting design etc.)
3. Designating a cooperative studio space in the downtown area.
4. Hypothetically speaking, I would be working towards opening an art supply store near this cooperative studio space.

2011-Beginning renovations to for the cooperative studio expansion

-While the studio space is growing along with the student demand, I will partner with a developer to create housing for this new-tightly knit- community of art students.

2012-Binghamton University designates the new building for the Studio Art Department.



BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

STUDIO ART DEPARTMENT

Home Majors Faculty Galleries Internships Portfolio Center

News

Check out photos from the Spring 2008 Bookmaking Workshop with Chris Bahr!



Welcome!

The studio art curriculum provides experiences for the liberal arts student who wishes to explore studio practices as an elective or in two degree programs for any of the following majors/concentrations: **Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Filmmaking, Graphic Design**

Bachelor of Arts: a 10-course, 40-credit hour program
Bachelor of Fine Arts: 12 1/2-course, 71-credit hour program

The studio program is supported by a generous endowment. The Fine Arts Center in Rossby Hall and Art Studios provide the studio program. It is financed by events and activities in the Rossby Studio Art Gallery, which presents an ongoing series of exhibitions including visiting artists, alumni artists, BFA student solo shows, lectures and seminars.

All majors/minors must declare a concentration and choose an appropriate advisor from among the faculty.

The Art Co-Op

The Art Co-Op is a student-operated art supply store on campus. Prices are at once, when it is cheaper than any other supplier in the Binghamton area. Volunteers are recruited from art classes who devote a minimum of one hour per week to the shop. A 10% discount is applied for working one hour and 15% discount for working 2 or more hours. Remember the Co-Op is only open if you volunteer! Volunteers can sign up to work at the Co-Op itself, by calling +74731.

hours are Monday thru Friday, 9am - 4pm, depending on number of volunteers (there is a weekly up to date schedule on the co-op's door)

Contact Us
Telephone: 607.777.4221
Address: Fine Arts Building # 236 2nd floor of the Fine Arts Building, by the offices.

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DOWNTOWN
BINGHAMTON

A WALK OF ART



Artist: **First Lastname**
BU Art Department

 **Coughlin &
Gerhart LLP**
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS

Works Cited

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National Main Streets Conference March 30-April 2, 2008 “Enriching Main Street Through Entrepreneurship and Diversity: Philadelphia, PA.

-Seminars attended in chronological order on April 1, 2008

- “Gala-zilla: Making Your Big Fund-raising Event a Monster Success” Speakers: Eddie Bumbaugh, Amy Gable, Kyle Meyer, Catherine Stewart.
- “Understanding and Managing Your Downtown’s Graphic Identity” Speaker: Scott Day.
- “Creating Artistic Entrepreneurship Opportunities” Speakers: Wendy Bell and Les Cavada.

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About the college: SCAD Facts-Savannah College of art and Design Website Copyright 2007 Savannah, GA <http://www.scad.edu/about/college/facts.cfm>

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