

DRAFT

Report of the Working Group
The Future of the Arts at Williams

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Abstract/summary:

The creative arts have grown substantially at the college over the last forty years, and are very active today. In recent years, 60% of Williams students had taken at least one class by the time of graduation in the creative arts. The arts remain less visible, however, than other areas of our curriculum. In addition, the arts have undergone profound transformations since the creation of our existing arts departments and majors, and the college has not yet fully acknowledged this: first, traditional distinctions between making and understanding are rapidly dissolving in contemporary art and humanistic work. Creative art is increasingly understood to be a form of inquiry and a mode of knowledge production, and not merely a means of self-expression or a source of pleasant diversion. Second, there have been fundamental changes in who teaches and studies the creative arts, and what they want to make. Increasingly, creative work is being taught outside of the traditional arts departments, in units ranging from Africana and Latino/a studies to environmental studies and computer science. And more and more faculty and students wish to engage in media or practices, from gaming and documentary to rap or activism, which are not supported in existing arts majors or curricula.

Going forward, we recommend that the college address six different things for the arts to thrive:

- 1) the college should communicate the value of the creative arts as an essential part of a liberal arts education.
- 2) the college should develop administrative and curricular structures that will support the growth of interdisciplinary, multi-media, and new-media engagements in the arts. The college's existing Science Executive Committee is one possible model of administration for the arts. The contract major could also be made a much more productive mechanism for interdisciplinary study.
- 3) the college should recognize the distinction between extra-curricular student-initiated participation in the arts and co-curricular, faculty/staff-involved education, and support co-curricular arts education far better than it does today.
- 4) the college should streamline and coordinate scheduling and communications in the arts, so that events are better coordinated, publicized, and supported across departments, and more imaginative long-term programming made possible.
- 5) the college can increase its utilization of the extraordinary arts resources of Berkshire County, by taking a leadership role in engaging with local arts organizations, and supporting more students of the arts at Williams during the summer, for research, internships, and academic work.
- 6) the college should address the space needs of new media and the interdisciplinary arts, and ideally should try to house new spaces for the arts in a single, dedicated facility.

Vision/goals:

Current State: The Williams curriculum offers a large and varied selection of courses in the arts, both its history and its making, concentrated in five departments. These courses are taught by committed, talented scholars and practitioners with a range of fields of expertise and practices, enabling our students to become deeply immersed in the history of cultural production as well as its contemporary practices. When the arts were first incorporated into the curriculum, history and criticism were the focus. Over the last two generations, the making of art (which we refer to here as the creative arts) has entered our curriculum and steadily increased. Today, sixty percent of Williams students take a course in the creative arts by the time they graduate. Even more engage in forms of creative work in classes not traditionally understood as such; for example, students performing a scene from a novel during the meeting of a literature course, or students creating new three-dimensional forms in a computer science course. Our arts institutions on campus, such as the '62 Center, the Bernhard Music Center, and WCMA with its extraordinary collection and dedicated object-teaching space, make Williams a uniquely generative and welcoming institution of higher education for the arts. One can find the arts being studied and practiced outside the classroom as well, in both co-curricular settings such as faculty-directed student music, theater, and dance productions, and in the less formal but vibrant extra-curricular spaces of a student literary magazine, a campus band, or a student-produced banquet based on Marinetti's 1932 Futurist cookbook, brought forth in collaboration with dining services, the theater department, and a food historian.

At the same time, the arts feel conspicuously marginal to the college's self-understanding, and even in its organization of its academic schedule, which at times relegates much arts practice to the post-4:00, extra-curricular time of the day. That is particularly the case with the creative arts, which have long operated in the shadow of the historical and theoretical study of art, literature, and music, and which are, partly for that reason, the primary focus of our inquiry. Literary history or criticism and art history have been and remain among the most heavily enrolled subjects in the humanities. Studio art, creative writing, musical composition, theater, and dance have, each in its own way, lacked the support or resources to maximize their impact at Williams. Perhaps most significantly, the college's cultural of independent and autonomous departments is increasingly at odds with the creative arts, which are defined today by multi-disciplinary, multi-media, and interdisciplinary practices. Within the curriculum, the value of creative expression is reflected neither in our current requirements nor in our broader articulation of the value of a liberal arts education. While we require students to learn methods of quantitative analysis, for example, we do not require students to engage in the forms of cognition and inquiry opened up by the arts, which gives the impression that they are secondary in a liberal arts education. Given the declining national enrollments in the arts and humanities and broad focus upon STEM learning, it is all the more vital that Williams communicate the value of the arts in a liberal education as a mode of inquiry and knowledge-production, as well as the beauty of human expression in the arts.

For many years, across American higher education, the creative arts have attempted to establish themselves as independent equals of theoretical and historical study. The result has been the creation of many freestanding departments and programs of studio art, creative writing, and so forth. Much of the most interesting work in the humanities and arts in the current moment, however, has been about dissolving traditional distinctions between making and understanding. To reconceive making as itself a form of inquiry, to think of the arts as a site not just for self-expression, but also for problem solving, knowledge production, the development of distinct modes of perception and apprehension, is not just to make "more of the arts" here: it is to re-center and affirm the arts within the college's mission and its liberal arts curriculum, to clarify why creative making is something we believe every student should know upon graduation. Our ongoing separation of the making of art from its study and from other areas of the curriculum diverges from our understanding of the deep interrelation of experimental and theoretical work in fields such as the sciences. This point was emphasized in Princeton University's proposal for the Lewis Center for the arts: "to separate the doing of art from the

criticism or study of art is increasingly akin to separating experimental and theoretical science.” The habits of mind and imagination encouraged by the arts, which break apart the shell of routine thought and necessitate open-ended forms of inquiry and problem solving, are central to the educated citizenry we hope to produce at Williams.

The Path Forward: A full reimagining of the arts across the college would make the most of the extraordinary interdisciplinary and collaborative opportunities latent or already present at Williams, and ensure that they are most fully activated by and available to the broader college community and surrounding areas. We propose a multi-year initiative that would spur us to think of the arts at Williams in more purposeful relation to, and as an opportunity to collaborate with, not only other academic divisions of our college, but also the broader ecosystem of arts institutions in our area. The goal should be nothing less than the goal identified by Harvard’s 2008 task force on the arts: “to make the arts an integral part of the cognitive life of the university.” Re-centering the mission of the arts at Williams would help us attract some of the best and most talented students in the country, who aspire to an education that encourages and supports them in the pursuit of artistic study and practice and, at the same time, is fully integrated into the rest of their education. More, we feel Williams can do more to introduce students to the value of the arts in a liberal education from First Days on. With a fully realized arts initiative that encompasses faculty, curriculum, and the physical spaces of the college, we can become a leading liberal arts college destination for the arts.

An initiative of such scope would require the participation of many more members of the Williams community than the eight members of this working group. But over the course of extensive discussions with many college community members, we have developed a two-fold strategy, which we believe would advance the initiatives we are recommending. First, there is a need for an administrative structure to facilitate the collaboration across existing arts departments as well as collaboration between the arts and other faculty and units at the college. We believe that the arts would benefit from something similar to the college’s existing Science Executive Committee. Second, in addressing the current needs at the college for new spaces in the arts to facilitate the teaching of multi-media and interdisciplinary arts activities, the college should seriously consider consolidating those new spaces into a single, integrated center for the arts at Williams. A center for the arts, with art-making classrooms, performance facilities, student-oriented making spaces, and arts-faculty offices, would be a visible and concrete sign of the college’s commitment to the arts. With thoughtful programming and adequate support staff, a center for the arts could generate extraordinary opportunities new interdisciplinary modes of knowledge-production in the arts, would do much to help Williams lead the arts in higher education into the next decade and beyond.

Description and appraisal:

We have organized our analysis and appraisal of the arts at Williams into six topics (a seventh is included in strategies), but it is important to keep in mind that they all inform each other. Difficult as it was, we have also tried to include in this section of the report only description and analysis, leaving our vision for the future for the subsequent section on strategies.

1) *The importance of the arts within the curriculum of Williams College*: there are presently five departments that regularly offer courses in the creative or applied arts (art, dance, English, music, theater). Between 2013-2020, total enrollments per semester in the creative arts ranged from 363-524; the percentage of the on-campus student body taking courses in creative arts over that period ranged from 16-21%. In terms of gender, roughly two-fifths of students in those courses are male, and three-fifths female. In the last four years, the percentage of graduating seniors who had taken at least one course in the creative arts was 60%. While enrollments in the arts tumbled at the beginning of the great recession, in recent years, numbers of registrations have been increasing. At Williams, four of the five arts departments make it possible to major in creative art, dance being the one exception.

Were we to add in courses taken in the history of the arts in the art department, English, or music, total enrollment figures would be even greater. 80% of all Williams students graduate having taken at least one course in English (history, criticism, or creative writing). Over the last seven years, between 94 and 97% of graduating seniors had taken one or more courses with the primary prefixes ARTH, ARTS, DANC, ENGL, MUS, or THEA. But our investigation, from the beginning, has focused on the creative arts. One reason is that there has been, historically, a marginalization of creative work in favor of theory and history, within academia in general as well as our college. In the case of the art, music, and English departments at Williams, the historical study of those subjects long preceded curricula in the creation of art, and still remains larger in terms of tenure-track FTE and students than studio art, creative writing, or music composition. It is only in the relatively more recent history of the college (from the '80s on) that it has even been possible to major in the creative arts. In our outreach, we learned that some faculty worry that the value of studying the past is increasingly being lost at Williams, as the focus of the curriculum on the present grows. Courses in the history and criticism of art and English, however, still generate significant enrollments; those operations are not in particular danger.

An even more important reason for focusing on the creative arts is that there is a growing recognition, throughout academia, that the creative arts concretize a valuable mode of inquiry: namely, a process placing high value on identifying hitherto “unproblematic” problems in need of solution, entailing an infinite number of possible solutions to a problem, requiring trial and error and overcoming failure, necessitating the use of real materials as well as our hands and bodies, in addition to machines, and finally entailing the subjective assessment of results. All of those are special to the creative arts, yet highly valuable for students regardless of major or career path. In the strategic plan for the arts initiative at Brown University, for example, it was noted that “commercial and non-profit sectors recognize the vital role of the arts in both innovation and social impact.” The importance of this aspect of the creative arts was brought out in our discussions with faculty in computer science in particular, four of whom we interviewed, and all of whom underscored the difficulties they encounter in assigning students problems in programming that did not have unitary solutions or entail objective assessment. The creative arts have much to teach faculty as well as students about how to utilize creativity effectively.

The creative arts have also attracted significant interest from a diverse student body and faculty. The curricula in the creative arts at Williams began with a focus on art making traditions that originated in Europe and primarily reflected white experience. Increasingly, creative work is being taught outside of the traditional arts departments, in units as diverse as Africana studies, Latino/a studies, environmental studies, and computer science. More and more faculty and students also wish to engage in new areas of creative making that are not fully supported in existing arts majors/curricula, ranging from gaming and documentary video to hip hop and

activism. Today the creative arts exhibit significant diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, and the arts departments are working to diversify their course offerings. Take for example the art department. Since 2002, the art-history wing of the department has diversified both its curriculum and faculty. Art history has added tenure-track faculty in the fields of Latinx art and cinema, African art and architecture, the encounter between European artists/explorers and the southern Pacific island cultures, Latin-American art, and the art and architecture of South Asia. The last five full-time appointments in art history not only effected the greatest single expansion and diversification of the art-history curriculum beyond the European and American tradition, but also diversified the makeup of our faculty, for four out of the five faculty are from groups under-represented in the college faculty. On the basis of teaching FTE, 40% of the art-history wing of the faculty today is from under-represented groups. In studio art today, 3 of the 7.5 FTE in studio art constitute faculty of color. Turning to the students in the art department, while there has been a modest diversification of the students who take courses in art history (from 87% white in 1986-87 to 65% in 2013-14), and major in AH (from 73% white in 2005 to 55% white in 2014), the enrollments in studio art have become significantly more diverse: from 2005-2015, students of color were a majority of the majors in five out of the ten years. Among all students taking studio art classes (majors and non-majors), over the same period, between 33% and 50% were students of color. Similar diversification of faculty and subject areas has taken place in recent years in the music department. The department's offerings had largely centered around classical music and jazz, with additional offerings in certain non-Western styles, such as Zimbabwean drumming. In recent years, new Artist Associates have created lessons, ensembles, and courses in popular songwriting (2012), Hindustani classical music (2014), Chinese instruments (2014), and music in media.

At Williams today, courses in art production, such as studio art, acting, and creative writing, are routinely vastly over-enrolled. Between 2013-2020, 40-142 students were dropped from courses in the creative arts each semester. Overenrollment is especially problematic in photography, video, creative writing, and acting (during that period, photography enrolled 54 and cut 142 students, video enrolled 59 and cut 37, poetry writing enrolled 174 and cut 54, fiction writing enrolled 206 and dropped 252, acting enrolled 332 and cut 564). There are overenrollments in music courses such as film music and music lessons, and dance classes such as dance and diaspora. Particularly at the introductory level, the insufficiency of the number of available places relative to the students interested in enrolling in those courses means that large numbers of students are dropped, never able to undertake the forms of inquiry, expression, and problem-solving the arts can cultivate. Such students might take this as a discouragement and internalize a notion that the arts at Williams are only for those already skilled in these practices.

Even as large numbers of Williams students major in the arts (103 students, or 20% of each graduating class, majored in art, English, music, or theater on average between 2016-2019), still more take a significant number of courses in the arts without majoring in them and have little sense of how to envision the cross-fertilization of these classes with their major interests. Others find themselves searching to organize their interests in ways not codified within our majors and concentrations. While we have a significant number of faculty who teach courses in performance, for example, those courses are scattered across a number of different disciplines. How to make those threads of inquiry legible as a coherent intellectual and curricular project, without necessitating the creation of new concentrations or departments, is vital to our future as an institution that sustains the most exciting developments in arts scholarship.

2) *Interdisciplinarity, multi-media, and new media in the arts at Williams*: the arts departments were founded long ago, when the arts generally were characterized by disciplinary distinctness and autonomy. While such specialization enables our students to achieve high levels of creative achievement, often producing works of music, poetry, theater, dance, and visual arts of extraordinary accomplishment and vitality, it appears increasingly at odds with many practices of art today, which are defined as much by interdisciplinary cross-fertilization and collaboration as by disciplinary autonomy. The "siloing" characteristic of creative arts at Williams is also at odds with the increasing occurrence of open-ended inquiry modeled upon the arts taking place in

disciplines traditionally understood as far afield from the arts, such as writing code in a computer science class, the experimental work of lab sciences, or reproducing an alchemical experiment for a class on early modern history.

In our listening sessions, one of the most frequently noted aspects of the arts at Williams is the relative difficulty facing students who wish to engage in concentrated or organized study of contemporary multi-media or interdisciplinary artistic practices. It is not possible for students to major in performance studies, media studies, narrative filmmaking, environmental design, computer-aided design, game design, multi-media work, or architectural design, to mention a few examples. There are classes on all virtually of those subjects in the Williams College course catalog, but no organized courses of study such as a concentration or major. Faculty too can suffer from the invisibility of these threads, missing opportunities for collaboration and curricular innovation with both students and colleagues. We have been struck by the number of unrealized opportunities for cross-curricular innovation and faculty collaboration occasioned by the arts. The arts offer our faculty and students unique opportunities for collaboration not only across disciplines, but also across our divisions.

Within the many contemporary interdisciplinary practices in art, several are of particular concern to large numbers of faculty and students:

Film and media studies: at Williams, courses on film, television, video, digital and social media are regularly offered by the art, English, comparative literature, music, and anthropology-sociology departments, as well as American studies and other programs. A list of courses in film and media is maintained at <https://catalog.williams.edu/fmst/>. The courses include the history, theory, and criticism of film and media as well as the creation of film or video. Courses on film or filmmaking, however, exist within departments and programs that are primarily concerned with other media, forms of expression, or subject matter. Outside of studio art there are very few faculty-members trained primarily in film. No major or concentration focuses on film or media studies.

In 2011-2012, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) studied under-represented areas of the curriculum, and identified film and media studies as one in need of attention. In its annual report, the CEP noted that Amherst, Swarthmore, Pomona, Carleton, Grinnell, Wesleyan, and Wellesley all offer majors in film and/or media studies. Among liberal arts colleges, Williams is atypical in having no program that focuses specifically on film or media. At the same time, the CEP conducted a survey of second-, third-, and fourth-year students, around the question of what courses or subjects outside their majors would they like to take but cannot. At the top of the list in terms of frequency of response were linguistics, Asian-American studies, more studio-art course for non-majors, and film and media studies. Not long after the CEP issued its report, a serious attempt was made to organize an introductory course on film. This was a truly interdisciplinary effort, by five faculty representing five different departments/programs (art, computer science, English, Latina/o studies, philosophy). But the resulting course was not sustainable, because only one of the departments was willing to give a full course credit to a faculty member for participating in it. This is a problem that faces other faculty who wish to engage in collaborative teaching in the interdisciplinary arts. In addition, some participants concluded that the fields of film and media studies are of such complexity and maturity that they really ought to be taught by faculty with comprehensive training in them. In the last year, the art department has hired two people to teach film full time (one in experimental film, the other, documentary), and the art department's new photographer is also a professional videographer. It is possible that they may provide leadership in this subject area in the future.

Performance studies: in 2017-2018, the Curricular Planning Committee (CPC) examined performance studies (PS) at the college. In their report, the group noted that there is a significant number of faculty trained in PS at Williams today, in departments/programs as varied as WGSS, Africana studies, dance, and others. Faculty incorporate PS into various courses. Vivian Huang offers a basic introduction to the subject, but not every year. Sarah Olsen reported that she offers a course that comes pretty close to being an introduction to PS, "Performing Greece," although it is atypical for the field in bringing PS to bear on an historical period not the present. Several years ago, the Oakley Center sponsored a reading group in PS, which the participants found to be

valuable in creating and sustaining a network of faculty with common interests in PS. All of those faculty, however, are already fully committed to providing courses for one or more existing departments or programs. The CPC concluded that, without making new faculty appointments, it would not be feasible for the college to staff a concentration or major in PS. At the present time, the only way to major in PS is as a contract major.

Environmental studies: Environmental studies (ENVI) has undergone a significant shift in its faculty interests. When the program was founded fifty years ago, its affiliated faculty had appointments in other departments, primarily the sciences (e.g., Hank Art in Biology), or were non-tenure-track appointments with expertise in policy (Sarah Gardner). In the last decade, three faculty have been hired directly into ENVI and, significantly, all three are humanists. ENVI faculty report that there are numerous students who would like to engage in environmentally informed creative writing, environmentally engaged art-making, and sustainable design. There are significant possibilities for collaboration between ENVI and existing arts departments.

Curating across the curriculum: numerous faculty-members reported to us that an increasingly important mode of knowledge creation in their teaching and co-curricular work is the curation of artistic materials. Curation—the selection, juxtaposition, framing, and captioning of visual and other artistic materials—poses a serious intellectual challenge to the old dichotomy between theoretical/history studies and artistic creation, for curation sits in between those two activities and borrows from both. At its most academic, curation (e.g., the recent exhibition, Axis Mundo, at WCMA) entails as much research as any art historical scholarship, but in its most popular forms (e.g., Instagram), curation reaches vastly larger audiences than traditional scholarship and even most creative-arts practices. Between the Clark, MassMoCA, and WCMA, there is a large amount of traditional raw material for curating (i.e., physical works of art), and a large number of opportunities for curation for faculty, students, and visiting artists or curators. This is an area of our curriculum poised to grow.

Impediments to making and studying art from interdisciplinary perspectives: in the absence of majors or concentrations in fields such as film studies, multi-media arts, museum studies, or performance studies, it is difficult for students to engage those fields in systematic or in-depth ways. The difficulties range from the simple problem of finding or identifying relevant courses within our curriculum, since the course catalog is not easy to search across departments/programs, to the more difficult problem of recruiting faculty from more than one department/program to supervise a multi-media thesis. For example, writing a film script, shooting it, and composing its musical sound track, as a senior thesis, benefits from input from faculty in art, English, and music. Faculty are obligated to supervise theses within their own departments before they can take on the additional work of advising a major in another department, and there is no established practice within the arts departments for compensation of faculty (e.g., release time) for work outside the home department. This concern about lack of compensation for taking on independent studies and contract majors was frequently mentioned by the faculty we spoke to. At Williams, individual departments set their own rules on how much credit a faculty-member gets for co-teaching a course or for taking on senior theses or independent studies. Departments write their rules to benefit their own majors and programs, and compete with each other for majors, rather than creating incentives to support interdisciplinary student learning. As a result, our existing departments, majors, and rules implicitly send the message that interdisciplinary or multi-media practices are not as important as traditional practices within the arts.

The situation in the arts well illustrates the limitations of the college's current model of the contract major. In theory, the contract major should be an ideal solution to the problem of how to study artistic techniques or perspectives not supported by existing majors. In practice, however, the contract major at Williams is under-utilized. The reasons for that are not hard to identify: the rules governing the contract major are so onerous that only the highest-achieving, hardest-working students at the college will persevere. A particular impediment to the productive use of this major within the arts is the rule prohibiting contract majors that consist of minor modifications to an existing major. In our experience, what a student interested in multi-media arts sometimes needs is to supplement his/her/their major in music, studio art, or creative

writing with several courses in, say, film-making, creative writing, or musical composition—in other words, minor modifications to existing majors is just what is needed.

Virtually every faculty member consulted by our working group acknowledged that the solution to the problem of the invisibility of fields such as film studies is not the creation of more departments or programs at the college. To do so would not only require additional faculty to staff a new unit but, more importantly, continue to atomize or balkanize the arts, which would perpetuate the difficulties we currently face in trying to educate students who wish to study art across existing departments. The wide-spread agreement around the principle of no new departments or programs is a potential turning point in the history of the creative arts at Williams. In our conversations, we encountered faculty in all the relevant fields who were interested in identifying ways of working from *within* existing departments and programs to support and increase interdisciplinarity in the arts at Williams.

3) *extra-curricular and co-curricular arts at Williams*: Williams students create art in a wide variety of contexts and settings. Some of this work is required by regular courses, most often in the “arts departments” (studio art, dance, music, theater, and the creative writing courses in English). Some of the art-making occurs in specifically extra-curricular settings, in student groups such as Cap and Bells, Ritmo Latino, and the many a cappella music groups on campus. Still more of the work occurs in a middle ground of what can be termed co-curricular activity.

Extra-curricular art-making at Williams is vibrant and involves a wide range of students. In this sphere, students decide what kind of work they want to produce and how much time they want to invest, and generate performances, concerts, and other events essentially on their own, with minimal or no faculty or staff guidance. Of course, many of the students who become leaders in this arena have taken classes in various art-making disciplines, and thus the learning from curricular pursuits informs the extra-curricular activity. Nonetheless, a key aspect of the extra-curricular work is that it is fundamentally student-driven.

Co-curricular activity is more varied in nature and more difficult to define, principally because it takes many different forms across (and even within) various departments. Broadly speaking, this term describes student art-making that takes place with faculty and professional staff deeply involved as directors, conductors, coaches, and mentors, yet not as part of the required work of regular courses. This is a different order of business from the purely extra-curricular, and one that is directly tied to pedagogical programs in all of the performing arts. Faculty regularly conduct such artistic business (directing and designing plays, choreographing dance, conducting concerts, etc.) as a specific and clearly articulated part of their jobs. Some departments, including theater and music, require co-curricular activity as part of their majors, in addition to nine or ten courses. For example, music majors must take two semesters of instruction in voice or instrument, and participate in one or more ensembles for four terms. Much of the co-curricular art-making, as might be expected, involves more sophisticated, serious, and time-consuming student work than most purely extra-curricular activity. Examples of this work include performances by the Berkshire Symphony, and major theater and dance performances on the stages of the '62 Center.

A significant number of students involve themselves in some form of extra- or co-curricular art making during their time at Williams. There are currently 76 students in dance ensembles. In 2018-2019, 344 students participated in non-credited musical ensembles, and 367 took half-credit music classes as a fifth course. In the past calendar year, 120 students participated in theater department co-curricular productions, and approximately 100 students in Cap and Bells. Indeed, one of the noteworthy features of the arts at Williams is that many more students may participate in co-curricular activities than in actual course work within a department. Theater and music have modest numbers of majors compared to a department like Economics, yet they touch the lives of more students than most departments at Williams; one quarter of all Williams students participate in co-curricular musical activities.

In general, we feel that the co-curricular artistic work at Williams is of a very high quality, supported fully by experienced and committed faculty and staff, and produces unique opportunities for collaboration between faculty and students in an active learning environment.

For some departments, pedagogical opportunities in this area equal or surpass anything that can be accomplished in normal classroom settings. Indeed, co-curricular education might be numbered among the most valuable opportunities afforded by a small-scale, residential educational experience.

The chief difficulty currently posed by co-curricular teaching is that it is not fully integrated into the college's current academic model. There are two specific problems: one is that students do not universally receive credit toward graduation for their co-curricular activities, even when those activities are required by their majors. Although some high-level artistic work does qualify for credit (senior thesis work, for example), most ensemble participation does not. This mismatch between serious artistic activity and academic credit is surely part of a yet-unfinished, century-long pathway of acknowledging the creative arts as legitimate scholarly pursuits. Yet it continues to have significant implications for the creative arts today. Take as an example a non-theater-major who has significant high-school acting experience. Such a student has no incentive to audition for a part within a department-sponsored, professionally directed production rather than, say, *Cap and Bells*. Were students able to receive academic credit for participating in the department's production, more would audition, they could be held (and perhaps would hold themselves) to higher standards of attendance, and the result would be a higher quality of cast and better play.

The second major challenge to co-curricular work is the scheduling of meeting/work times. Most co-curricular activity cannot happen without groups of students and faculty meeting together for sustained periods. For many of these activities, "class time" will never be enough (even two expanded "double" studio classes per week can pale in comparison to the time required for, say, large theater productions). Departments producing ensemble work struggle with the college's rules on division of the day all the time.

4) *coordination across the arts*: the arts departments and WCMA generate a very significant number of public events for the college community. Music alone generates over one hundred events per year open to the college community and the public. We have learned, however, that many believe that there are too many events in the arts at Williams, that they are poorly coordinated with each other and therefore often result in conflicts, that they are poorly advertised, and often poorly attended. In 2010, an ad-hoc committee proposed the creation of a new events and conference office at Williams: "at the present time, the process of planning, organizing, and executing an event...at Williams is very decentralized. Students, faculty, and staff members who wish to hold an event must deal with several offices and multiple contacts to make their way through the necessary steps...Virtually everyone involved with staging events at Williams believes the process could be more efficient and effective." Many of the recommendations in that report have been implemented, but the fundamental problem of coordinating across arts departments and organizations remains to be addressed.

Music and theater/dance are well resourced with spaces specifically designed for those media and staff to coordinate, schedule, and manage events. But arts programming does not occur just in the well-staffed areas of music and theater/dance; the literary arts currently have no such designated spaces, nor any dedicated administrative support, and have struggled over the years to secure adequate assistance and space for events. Jonathan Miller wrote:

I think this is a particularly relevant question for the literary arts at Williams. The difference between the level of organization and publicity devoted to the dramatic arts by the departments of Theatre and Dance, to musical performance by the Music department, and to the visual arts by WCMA, and the organization and publicity for literary events, which are organized by the English department but also by many other departments and individuals, on campus is striking. Yet the quality of poets and writers who write and speak on campus is superb. This seems like a missed opportunity for the College.

Lisa Conathan also noted that "as do many other groups on campus, we face the challenges of communicating and coordinating across a wide range of departments and administrative units.

Coordination is particularly relevant to exhibit planning, event sponsorship, and our concerted effort to communicate publicly about issues relating to Williams history...The Chapin Gallery space is a beautiful location for receptions and is underutilized...If there were some venue to facilitate more communication about arts initiatives, we would see greater synergy in our programming.” Both Lisa and Jonathan believe that the libraries could play a bigger role in arts events at the college than they currently do.

A central issue for the arts, then, is how to support programming and coordination of events in many departments and programs, which outside of music, theater, dance, and WCMA is primarily undertaken by often overtaxed faculty and department administrative staff. The problem becomes even more critical when more and more faculty from outside the five arts departments are hoping to organize events in the arts. The lack of resources as well as lack of coordination means that very little interdisciplinary programming happens here. In addition, students do a great deal of programming, which also frequently falls under the radar and/or competes with other events. Other institutions in the region produce really important events, but news of these often does not reach our students in time, or they encounter difficulty accessing such events. As one member of our working group noted, Williams has an entire program dedicated to getting students into our beautiful natural environment, but no real equivalent for improving access to arts experiences and resources in our community.

There are many factors contributing to the sense of free-for-all in our arts programming, but one thing that stands out is the lack of coordination between our departments. Even if the English and art departments had the spaces and staff-resources comparable to those of music, theater/dance, the '62 Center, and WCMA, it seems to us that many of the problems identified above would remain. The problem is tricky to solve, because existing booking, scheduling, and hosting operations of music, theater/dance, and WCMA are very effective. They exist, however, to serve their individual departments, and no others. Although music and theater/dance organize events that are roughly similar in terms of technical and space needs as well as size/nature of audience (and indeed sometimes use each other's spaces), they each have their own dedicated teams of staff to make the events come off. On the one hand, it would be counterproductive to dismantle such carefully designed and successful operations, but on the other it is unfortunate that the two operations are completely independent of each other, like ships passing in the night.

5) *space needs in the arts*: Many of the arts require special kinds of spaces in which to practice them—acoustically appropriate spaces for music, stages for theater, sprung floors for dance, reading rooms designed for spoken word, sculpture studios with table saws. At this point in time, with the exception of English (creative writing), the five arts departments are well equipped in terms of facilities for the art forms that have traditionally defined them. Bernhard Music Center, Spencer Studio Art Building, and the '62 Center for Theatre and dance are all less than forty years old, were state of the art at the time they were built, and continue to serve their departments well.

Interdisciplinary approaches to the arts, multi-media practices, and new media, however, are less well supported in terms of space needs. That is due in part to the relatively recent rise in importance of those practices but also in part to the tendency toward autonomy within the existing departmental culture of our college. Almost by definition, multi-media arts require systematic, structural cooperation across existing departments like English and art, or music and art, whereas in fact at Williams presently multi-media collaborations tend to occur only at the level of individual faculty relationships. Two individual faculty members do not have the authority to create a new arts space on the campus.

Within the arts, departmental autonomy is exacerbated by the very buildings that have enhanced our capabilities. Music, art, and English are in distinctly separate spaces on campus; theater and dance share a facility but are far from the rest of the arts; art history and studio art occupy buildings separate from each other; WCMA and art history currently share a building but may not share one in the future. The distances are not great in absolute terms, but they nevertheless significantly decrease the opportunities for interactions across the arts.

The needs of the interdisciplinary arts, multi-media practices, and new media take two forms. On the one hand, they often need particular kinds of spaces, with special equipment. If push comes to shove, those spaces could be located anywhere on campus. On the other hand, one of the clearest benefits of the dedicated buildings in the arts at Williams, reported by many faculty and students in music, studio art, theater, and dance, is concentrating arts activities in one place, so that students learn from each other, encounter their teachers regularly and often informally, and experience the creative work being taught in several different courses or techniques. The Spencer Studio Art Building is a model facility in this regard, for it is largely transparent on the inside, so that students see what is going on across the studio-art curriculum, and learn by studying the art created in other classes, all of which is exhibited on the walls and floors of the public spaces. What would help the interdisciplinary arts to thrive, then, would be appropriately designed/equipped spaces as well as one central location for as many of the spaces as possible.

Presently the college would benefit from several additional, specific arts spaces:

Creative writing: creative writing would benefit from a dedicated space for poetry and fiction readings, with good spoken-word acoustics (which are not the same as good acoustics for musical performance). The space should be flexible, so audiences from 25 to 75 will feel equally comfortable. Creative writing would also benefit from a creative writing reading room: a small space, with the current journals in poetry and fiction, where students can work or talk. Ideally, it would be next door to the dedicated poetry/fiction reading room. A two-room suite of spaces would have the valuable effect of giving creative writing a spatial identity on campus, which it, alone among the creative arts, lacks.

Film: somewhere on our campus, faculty would like to be able to screen films in all currently-taught formats: 16 mm, 35 mm, VHS, blu-ray, and digital cinema package (DCP). Intensive film screenings are required in courses on film in art history, studio art, English, comparative literature, and other units. Currently, English screens films for its Hollywood cinema class at Images, but only when the commercial schedule allows. In addition to being able to address the format needs of a wider variety of faculty than is currently possible in any existing college space, a new screening facility would provide a spatial home on campus for film studies.

Electronic music and video: the music department would benefit from an additional electronic music studio. Interest in electronic music is growing, and music needs are starting to outstrip current capacity. In addition, music students today increasingly require good video-editing capabilities to incorporate both music and video in their creative work. At the same time, the studio art program needs a video editing facility that, unlike the current facility, has good acoustics and electronic music capabilities. The ideal space would be optimized for both sound and image work. We believe that one studio could be created to accommodate the needs of both music and art, and that the sharing of the space by students in the two different programs could be synergistic.

Performance space: many faculty members, in many departments and programs, tell us that the college would benefit from one or more spaces in which to teach performance or in which those techniques can be employed. The ideal spaces would accommodate rehearsals as well as performances, have a sprung floor and walls that could be painted, good musical acoustics, moveable lighting, moveable partitions, etc. In Spencer, there is a shooting studio with some of those features, but its concrete floor prevents its use for dance and other forms of bodily performance. This could become a heavily used facility, for in addition to faculty working in performance studies, there are nearly three dozen officially recognized student arts groups at Williams, almost all of which require space for rehearsals or performances. Catherine May, president of Ephoria, wrote to us that “we have found it especially challenging to ensure that our group has proper space and equipment to rehearse.” That is due in part to “quiet hours” in the

residential spaces that have pianos, and lack of access to music-department rehearsal spaces with pianos. Taran Dugel, member of Student Leadership Roundtable, and president of the Williams Musicians Alliance, wrote that the most significant obstacle to his group was “the lack of a designated space on campus where student musicians NOT formally affiliated with the music department can rehearse and jam.” In addition, during the summer, the Williamstown Theater Festival would like an additional rehearsal space on campus. Such a space would also have the benefit of providing performance studies with a spatial identity on campus.

Maker space: many faculty members and students, including the members of the strategic planning group on learning outside the classroom, report that students need a space for making art independent of the studio art curriculum. Ideally, a maker space would not be “owned” by the art department or any other department, and would not require enrollment in any class for its use, but be open to all interested students. Such a space should be equipped for the widest possible variety of arts practices, from the traditional to experimental, in many media. For example, Lisa Conathan argues strongly for the importance of acquiring a printing press at Williams. She called our attention to Dartmouth’s printing press, which is in constant use by many departments and programs. A press would facilitate all kinds of book arts at Williams. In addition, the library reports that it might be effective to transfer some of the capabilities from the library’s existing, more technically oriented maker space to a new, more arts-focused maker space, such as three-dimensional printing or one with weaving looms. Both studio art and art history have an interest in increased 3-d printing. The library officers and many others emphasize that a maker space is only useful if it is possible for students to get at least rudimentary instruction in how to work with relevant materials, equipment, or techniques. At the moment, the library’s maker space is primarily used by students who already know how to use the equipment and what they want to do with it, which limits the pool of students who use it. Some combination of paid professional technical staff and student TAs or monitors will be required if a maker space is going to be successful.

Exhibition space: numerous faculty members and students, from various departments, have highlighted the importance of having one or two exhibition spaces that can be programmed and curated by faculty or staff outside of the art department or WCMA, and by students. In addition, the annual senior student show is an important part of the studio-art curriculum. If WCMA is not able to host the show in the future, then the art department will need to have some exhibition space each year for two weeks at the end of spring term.

Tutorial classrooms for the making of art and performance: studio art currently lacks adequate classroom space to teach tutorials (the importance of which, at the college and within the studio curriculum, has grown since the design of Spencer). In the studio curriculum, a tutorial has particular space needs: each student needs a small amount of space in which to develop projects over the course of a semester; a tutorial allows students to work in a variety of media, and therefore the teaching space needs to be flexible in terms of usage. The studio wing currently offers up to three tutorials per term. In addition, an increasing number of courses at the introductory level incorporate multiple media, and therefore the traditional 100-level classrooms in Spencer (the drawing classrooms) do not always work. Therefore, studio art would like to see several multi-purpose classrooms that would accommodate hands-on making of art. The classrooms should be equipped in order to accommodate a range of practices from digital design to drawing or painting or ceramics (so adequately wired for computer use as well as adequately ventilated and supplied with proper sinks). In size, the classrooms should range from small to large. They should be properly insulated acoustically, so that they can be useful for the making of sound art as well as visual art.

6) interactions with other arts organizations in our area and utilization of the summer: Berkshire County and the surrounding region is home to a very large number of arts organizations of high quality. The college interacts with those organizations in a variety of

ways. Physically most intimate is the relationship with the Williamstown Theatre Festival (WTF), which literally occupies the '62 Center each summer. MassMoCA regularly provides one or two opportunities for academic-year internships to Williams graduate students, and a number of summer internships to undergraduates. All Williams students are members of MoCA, pay no admission fee, and receive discounts on tickets. The Clark is intensively utilized by art history for the teaching of conferences in ARTH 101 and 102, by some studio faculty to teach painting, and of course by the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art, which is housed at the Clark. The Clark also regularly hosts concerts by students and faculty from the music department. Paula Consolini told us that Barrington Stage Company (BSC) has been a valuable teaching and learning partner for the Center for Learning in Action (CLIA), providing community development and social psychology research opportunities for our students in addition to many opportunities to learn through attendance at BSC performances, talkbacks, and conferences. The dance department has a long-standing, multi-faceted relationship with Jacob's Pillow.

In our listening sessions, two impediments to the college's relationships with outside organizations were repeatedly mentioned. One is a lack of communication between the college and those organizations. At a meeting between our strategic planning group and six local theater companies and museums, their directors emphasized that we would all benefit from meeting regularly, once or twice per year. We learned, for example, that they have more summer internships than any of us at the college knew about. The directors also expressed frustration at the strict rules prohibiting arts organizations from contacting students via email about up-coming events; MassMoCA is allowed to send only two emails per year to our students, even though the students are all members and members usually receive weekly or bi-monthly email newsletters. Smaller arts organizations, like WAM Theatre (an activist arts group in Lenox), are in need of spaces for rehearsals and performances, and would happily travel to Williams to facilitate an event. There is also relatively little long-range planning between Williams and other arts groups around common themes, which might lead to heightened publicity and attendance for all concerned, and for joint-venture projects such as artists in residence.

The other impediment to more intensive utilization of arts organizations in our area is the calendar. Many of them (WTF, Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow, etc.) are primarily active during the summer, when relatively few arts students are on campus. Most Williams students never have the opportunity to experience the extraordinary arts experiences afforded by organizations of international stature like Tanglewood, because they are not on campus during the summer arts season. In our discussions, we repeatedly heard that there are in fact many students on campus during the summer. The summer science programs host 200 students each summer, and the Davis Center tells us that there are approximately 400 undergraduates in total on campus each summer. We notice two things: first, the number of students in the arts at Williams in the summer is a fraction of the number of students involved in summer science (arts students in town during the summer mostly work at WCMA, the Clark, or MoCA, as interns or in paid positions, or are involved in the theater department's own summer program). Second, there is not a lot of evidence that the students who are on campus during the summer are actively participating in the arts organizations in our area. Our conversations with senior staff at WTF suggest that there is no systematic or concerted effort being made to encourage attendance by Williams students—or at least, no one in the organization could tell us whether significant numbers of students attended plays. We got a sense (we admit it may be wrong) that relatively few students know about or participate in local cultural events even of the magnitude of Fresh Grass or Solid Sound.

Strategies:

1) *the importance of the arts within the curriculum at Williams*: we recommend moving the arts from its siloed position in our curriculum and course schedule. In part, this is a matter of recognizing and highlighting the embedding of the arts in every aspect of the curriculum and across the divisions. In part, it is a matter of re-envisioning our curriculum and its requirements to further and deepen commitments to creative work.

In our discussions, we have heard from many people that the college's current distribution requirements tell our students virtually nothing about what we believe they should experience or master before graduation. Indeed, it is widely noted that, from an intellectual-historical point of view, separating philosophy and history from the humanities, and lumping them into the social sciences, is counterfactual. The best that can be said about the distribution requirements is that they prevent students from taking 32 courses exclusively in the sciences, or solely in economics, or entirely in English. They "encourage breadth," but only in a negative fashion. The quantitative studies requirement and writing requirements are different, in that they communicate in a positive way the value of being able express oneself in writing or to reason quantitatively. We believe that the basic activities entailed by the creative arts—defining a problem from scratch, facing a multitude of possible solutions, engaging in trial and error, overcoming failure, encountering subjective assessments—are like the basic activities of quantitative reasoning and communication through writing; they are modes of experiencing and creating knowledge about the world. The creative arts are not just another subject area or body of content, like Greek lyric poetry. Our college needs to communicate the fundamental cognitive value of the creative arts better than it does.

While our committee has considered the advantages of a new creative-arts or "making" requirement, parallel to our current quantitative requirement, and like the general ed requirement in the arts created at Harvard, we are not convinced that another requirement is the most practical or productive way to invigorate our students' engagement with the arts. One concern is that it would require more faculty resources in the arts. Assuming for the moment that 60% of all Williams students will continue to take at least one creative arts course before graduation, it would be necessary for the college to increase the number of registrations in creative-arts courses by 200 per year. Some of them could be generated by designating some courses from outside of the five arts departments as "creative arts" courses. But it would probably be necessary to add approximately 10 courses of 20 students each, or more if the enrollment caps were lower, or 2.5-3 FTE. In addition to the cost of staffing a "making" requirement, there would be the burden of determining which courses would count toward the requirement (although we believe that making that determination would not be as difficult as determining which courses qualify, for example, for the current DPE requirement).

Instead of creating a new requirement, we might make it much easier for students and faculty alike to identify opportunities for creative activity within our curriculum. For example, a new "artistic practice" (ARTP) course designation, inclusive of courses in the sciences and social sciences that make creative inquiry and expression central. Similarly, courses with sub-specialities that cross disciplines and barriers between making and scholarship might have sub-course "tags" or designations, such as a suite of courses in performance studies, in addition to our existing list of courses in film and media studies in the college's online catalog. The arts departments could work with the registrar to tag common topics or creative processes that are addressed in particular courses, so that students could easily find arts courses with, for example, an environmental component or curatorial activity.

We should also reconceive mechanisms to encourage collaborations among faculty and students, especially between those working in "non-creative" disciplines and those working in areas traditionally understood as creative. A computer scientist and a visual artist, for example, might develop a course in the aesthetics of artificial intelligence, combining lab and studio time. The support and encouragement of such undertakings might take the form of competitive, well-funded fellowships for new interdisciplinary courses or teaching release. A newly reimagined Lawrence, or in the meantime, the Oakley Center, might serve as the site for a funded

interdisciplinary faculty seminar dedicated to the development of this course in one semester, with the course being taught in the next. It could also be the site for training for faculty in how to use a printing press, how to teach basic podcasting, etc.

2) *Supporting interdisciplinarity, multi-media, and new media*: The challenges facing interdisciplinary study of the arts at Williams seem to us to be primarily structural and organizational. There is no lack of interest on the part of faculty or students in new media, multi-media, or interdisciplinary engagement. In addition, a number of courses on those subjects are already in our catalog, with the potential for additional offerings. What is lacking is visibility, organization, and incentive.

The fundamental structural feature missing at our college, we believe, is a means of ensuring that the arts departments work with each other and with interested faculty from other departments/programs. The goal of working across departmental/program lines should be to develop more stand-alone interdisciplinary course offerings, collaborative teaching across units, increased advising of students from outside home departments, multi-departmental senior theses, and fair compensation of faculty for engaging in interdisciplinary teaching. We need to attend to the serious artistic interests of all students at our college, whether or not they are majoring in our own individual departments. We believe that an “executive committee” of arts departments, WCMA, and related faculty (called the Arts Action Committee, or AAC for short), modelled after the Science Executive Committee, is the kind of administrative structure our college needs in the arts. It seems possible that such an administrative structure might allow the college to develop interdisciplinary arts curricula without dismantling traditional departments or creating new ones.

There are other ways of addressing the structural deficiencies. A number of faculty believe that existing departments and programs, on their own, could create additional “tracks” through their majors or concentrations, which would allow for students to fulfill a major in one department/program by taking certain courses in other units or divisions of the college. An excellent example of what we have in mind is the existing track through the American studies major entitled “Arts in Context.” It is important for departments and programs to do this so long as the contract major continues to forbid students to pursue contract majors that are minor variations on existing majors. Proliferating new tracks through existing majors, however, will not by itself address all of the problems identified in our investigation. The fundamental problem is the tendency at Williams for departments and programs to look primarily to their own interests, to compete with each other for student registrations, majors, and FTE, and to engage with other units only so far as those units provide something useful, rather than to engage in genuine collaboration. What is needed is an organizational mechanism to help the college change its culture, so that interdisciplinarity comes to occupy positive space, so to speak, rather exist in the negative space between departments and programs.

No track through the major, however flexible its requirements, can accommodate the range of possible meaningful combinations of courses in the arts today, or anticipate the combinations that a student of tomorrow might desire. Truly “outside the box” courses of study will always be possible only through the contract major. It is a measure of how resistant to interdisciplinarity our college is, in terms of its academic model and rules, that the contract major has such a wan and anemic presence here. We strongly believe that the college is seriously in need of an expanded and streamlined contract major. Contract majors in interdisciplinary arts areas would be much improved if the arts departments could take more responsibility as a group for vetting, approving, and supervising them. We believe that an AAC or similar coordinating body could provide exactly the kind of oversight needed for contract majors in the arts. It would also be helpful to students if the arts departments created and maintained successful templates for contract majors in particularly popular areas (e.g., performance studies), along with lists of faculty members who could advise fields of interest outside of existing departments. It is essential for the arts and related departments to discuss with each other means of compensating faculty equitably for participating in interdisciplinary teaching and cross-departmental advising, independent studies, and thesis work.

Turning to a different matter, it might be good for all of the arts, for the stature and visibility of the arts at Williams, and not just dance, if dance were allowed to offer a major—if, that is, the department decides collectively that it wishes to do so. Several faculty-members believe that a major would make dance more attractive to some potential applicants to the college. Sandra Burton writes: “Offering a major that is designed to sustain the diversity of students dancing at Williams and that deepens our practice of community engagement and collaboration with partners in Berkshire County such as Jacob's Pillow, MASS MoCA, and area schools is essential to our mission.”

Finally, curation: this should not be merely the prerogative of professional curators, but a form of creative activity in which Williams students should be able to take courses. Every year, there should be one or more courses in curating. The provost's office could discuss with WCMA ways of increasing the recognition for museum staff contributions to curation in the curriculum, and means of encouraging even more. The college ought to have at least one additional space on campus where students can curate exhibitions, performances, concerts, etc. This is an important subject area even for studio art students to encounter, for they need to learn how to be “entrepreneurs” of their own work.

3) *extra-curricular and co-curricular arts at Williams*: we recognize the importance of independent student art-making in truly extra-curricular settings. There is clear value in students engaging in artistic exploration specifically without an experienced mentor in the room. We believe that opportunities for this type of work should continue to be encouraged, and we strongly believe that programming for any new multi-disciplinary arts space should incorporate extra-curricular activity.

We are primarily concerned, however, to see the college adjust its academic model so that co-curricular academic activity comes to be seen as core curricular work, and not extra-curricular. A big step in that direction would be to give real academic credit (not the current half-credits that do not count toward the required 32 credits for graduation) for co-curricular activities like performing in ensembles or plays.

There are many different ways for the college to do this, from awarding partial credit (0.5 or even 0.25 course credit) for a limited number of co-curricular activities in the creative arts, to a full-fledged credit-hour system, as used at many other colleges and universities. In 2010, a detailed proposal for a credit-hour system was submitted to the CEP:

A credit-hour system would allow us to enhance equity and flexibility in the Williams curriculum. Applied to student workloads, extra credit could be given for courses that demand significantly more time, encouraging the study of laboratory sciences and languages while broadening participation in tutorials. By permitting less-than-regular-credit courses, it would allow us to account properly for music lessons, for a variety of ensemble participation in the arts, and for impromptu additions to existing courses. It might also be used to facilitate team teaching, permit students under stress to take a lighter load, allow seniors to miss fewer classes when interviewing in their Fall semester, enhance the educational role of Winter Study, and give credit for course-related work in the summer.

The proposal was not acted upon by the CEP due to constraints of time. Since then, there has been a growing recognition that our one-size-fits-all unit of academic credit, together with our “four-or-you're-out” course-load, is not working for an increasing number of students. More students carry a three-course load for one or more semesters, and we now have an annual winter-study course worth one WS plus one regular semester credit. It seems to us that the time is ripe to revisit our academic model. Obviously, even small changes in the ways we award academic credit would have the potential to open Pandora's Box. The sciences might very well wish to see labs awarded partial credit (though we wish to emphasize that labs are linked to particular graded classes and required of the students in them; students get a full academic credit for the course, just not extra credit for the additional time spent in lab. Individual theater productions or

musical or dance ensembles are not regularly linked to graded classes, so students currently receive no academic credit for them). Still, we strongly believe that the college needs to broaden the number of arts (and other) activities that count for academic credit.

One of the most common complaints by and about Williams students is that they are stretched thin by their various commitments to multiple activities. Granting academic credit for serious artistic activity would allow students to pursue certain passions or interests without essentially taking an overload.

The second major challenge to co-curricular work is scheduling. As noted above, co-curricular activities draw students from many different departments and divisions of the college, with many different kinds of commitments, and require them to work together for several hours five or six days per week. Ensembles are impossible to rehearse if the members cannot meet at the same time. Long ago, when the rules governing division of the day were even stricter than they are now, ensembles and dramatic productions could schedule evening rehearsals throughout the week without conflict. Now, with Monday and Wednesday evenings open to regular courses, it is much more difficult to schedule group work. At a time when many of us believe that face-to-face encounters between students, faculty, and staff, and collaborative work in groups, is essential to sustaining a real sense of community, impediments to collective activities in the arts are growing. It seems fair to say that the heated discussions at general faculty meetings have revealed a striking apathy, if not antipathy, on the part of the faculty as a whole, for the special needs of the creative arts. We suggest that this strategic planning process is a moment to look at all issues of the academic calendar, including class meeting times, so as to facilitate bringing co-curricular activities more squarely into the academic fold.

4) *coordination across the arts*: the college would benefit from an organizational structure that will help the arts coordinate events across departments, support contract majors, sponsor interdisciplinary residencies and lecture/event series, program and oversee shared arts spaces, and interact with area arts organizations. Exactly what form such a structure should take remains to be determined.

From the outset of our weekly meetings, the participants of the future of the arts task force recognized the value of our coming together regularly as a group to discuss ideas, collaborations, resources (human, spatial, and monetary), and to build bridges. For the last few years, the chairs of the performing and visual arts departments have been meeting several times per semester under the rubric of the Arts Council. The Arts Action Committee that we envision would combine the directives of the existing Arts Council as well as those of the current task force. Like the longstanding Science Executive Committee (SEC), which is one model of what we envision, the new AAC need not necessarily be composed solely of department chairs, but could have tenured, non-tenured, and staff representation from art (studio), Chapin/Special Collections, creative writing, dance, film, music, performance studies, theater, and WCMA. This group should be chaired by an individual faculty or staff member, who should be supported by one or two staff. As the curricular, programming, and spatial needs of the arts shift over time, this group could develop in size and mission, perhaps even incorporating student representatives. We are not alone in believing that an inter-departmental executive committee is necessary for the arts to succeed going forward: in its 2016 plan for the arts, Brown University proposed to create an arts executive committee comprised of the chairs/directors of the eight arts departments/programs and a faculty chair. In its proposal for the Lewis Art Center, Princeton also argued for the creation of an administrative umbrella for the arts distinct from the university's long-standing Council on the Humanities.

We imagine that the first directive of such a committee would be to create a master calendar and an online interface (perhaps a reworked version of the current Arts at Williams webpage, <https://arts.williams.edu/about/>) to broadcast to the College community, the region, and the world the plethora of art events that are already happening here. The committee could also attempt to address the fact that we are programming on very different timelines. The next set of directives of the committee might be to come to a shared understanding of the kinds of co- and interdisciplinary collaborations needed, and of the necessary resources of space, persons, and

funds to support those initiatives; and how might the individual units work together to provide greater curricular opportunities. Those opportunities could range from student summer internships with area arts organizations, or an intensive, experiential, interdisciplinary full-credit J-term course with an applied component of a reading or exhibition or performance (which could take place in January, June or July), to revamped procedures for contract majors, fellowships for artists like the Clark's RAP fellowship program in art history, pre-doctoral teaching fellowships, or two-year "Artists in Residence," "Artist Associates," or "Professors of Practice."

5) *space and facilities optimization*: earlier we noted a variety of specific spaces for specific arts activities that would help the arts to move forward at the college. It is equally important for the college to think creatively about how interdisciplinary, multi-media, and new-media spaces might be created within close proximity of each other, so as to facilitate cross-fertilization between media and practices.

In thinking about this second point, this working group has in mind one possible scenario in which many of the space needs we have identified might be met in one facility. If the college museum is relocated to a new location on the campus, then the future of Lawrence Hall will need to be addressed. The building cannot remain "as is," because it is very energy inefficient. It also cannot be demolished, because the rotunda and octagon are arguably the most important architectural feature, historically speaking, at the college, and the Moore addition is among the few other architecturally important college buildings. In addition, Lawrence would have to remain the home of the art history program, because there is no other building on campus with four free classrooms, twelve empty offices, and space for a Visual Resources Center. In the absence of the museum, however, Lawrence would have enough square footage to make an excellent center for the arts at Williams. In our discussions of the desirability of a center for the arts, we did not lose sight of the fact that the college already has several centers for individual arts (Bernhard, '62 Center, WCMA). It would be vital for the success of the arts going forward for any programming of Lawrence to be done in concert with faculty and staff from those facilities. While it will be important to pay attention to the risks of duplication of resources or specialized spaces, it will also be important to preserve and create interdisciplinary or multi-purpose spaces in more than one building on campus.

We envision a center for the arts that would address multiple needs at one time:

—It would support the aim and work of an Arts Action Committee to unite the existing arts departments, by providing the committee's home, common space for artists in residence in all media, teaching spaces for the interdisciplinary arts, and space for major public events in the arts from literary readings to dance and musical performances to art exhibitions.

—It would help solve a long-standing problem in the arts, by integrating the art history faculty with other faculty in the arts (and perhaps other disciplines), because Lawrence has the capacity to accommodate twice the number of current faculty offices. In planning exercises in 2016 with the architecture firm of Steven Holl, it was determined that, if the museum vacated Lawrence, it would be possible to replace the existing four classrooms in the building (L1, L2, L3, L231), the existing 13 faculty offices, and the existing Visual Resources Center (VRC), add and additional 8-13 offices, and also accommodate new arts spaces described in the first half of this report. Developing Lawrence as a center for the arts has the potential to significantly enhance the work and experience of art history at Williams, in addition to advancing the creative arts, and to support the vital connection between the theory/history and practice of art.

As Marc Gotlieb emphasized, if the museum vacates Lawrence Hall, it is vital that the building remain a living intellectual space. Adding more faculty offices by itself will not achieve that goal. Of primary concern should be mobilizing faculty and student use of the building, during the day and at night. We believe that reconceptualizing the building as a center for the arts has the potential to accomplish that goal, by allowing faculty and students from different

departments, programs, media, and practices to see each other's work in progress, as in a kind of incubator.

Denise Buell made the important point that creating new centers of authority and agency within the faculty and curriculum is difficult at Williams. New departments or programs are only rarely created. If, however, one builds a physical center for the arts, and pays particular attention to accommodating interdisciplinary arts activities within the new space, that physical center will become a permanent part of the college's academic structure. It will be as if one created a large new program, but without the limitations entailed by an autonomous academic unit.

6) *interactions with other arts organizations in our area and utilization of the summer*: in considering the vitality and range of arts programming that takes place in the summer in the Berkshires—from the Theater Festival to MassMoCA's summer programming to Jacob's Pillow—we want to imagine new ways for students to engage with, and learn from, our broader arts landscape. The most modest vision of this would be to institute a robust range of Williams-funded internships and fellowships that placed students within those sites, along the lines of the summer research that keeps many science students on campus for the summer. The most ambitious vision would be to offer a Summer Term, as alternative to a Winter Study term, with a range of courses that engage students in experiential education in the arts. Or to utilize our arts facilities for an undergraduate summer institute for the arts, open to applicants from Williams and other schools in all the arts fields we represent. The summer offers an exciting, unique, and mostly untapped resource for our arts students, one we feel it is crucial to make the most of Williams's singular situation amidst this nationally-recognized arts corridor.

7) *the future of the arts and sustainability*: It's a frequently shared sentiment among students who are sensitive to the climate change issue—what is the purpose of studying something, especially something to do with materials, when they cannot truly conceive of their future on this planet the way previous generations could? Since society's material habits have brought us here, envisioning the future of art and the teaching of art must entail new ways of thinking about the old questions of how we make, what we make, where we make it, and what happens to the literal stuff involved in each step. It may be that we should be farming and growing gardens instead of installing plants in an urban art gallery for metaphorical purposes. The arts at Williams could become pioneers in this process of artistic self-reflection around sustainability.

Such a rethinking should include a periodic reassessment of what new methods and materials should be folded into the curriculum, and, equally importantly, what should be discarded no matter how previously central to art making (toxic materials, or landfill-bound practices). It could include greater attention paid to and support for indigenous ways of making and working with fiber, paper, wood, clay, stone, sound, body, and so on, because indigenous practices are often inherently more sustainable—more sensitive to local raw materials, seasonal making, and the relationship between culture and object. We should also challenge our assumptions about the role of technology in art, so that we can move beyond the assumption that art futures will necessarily be digital or aided by fossil-fuel-inspired industries. Finally, we could consider how better to involve craftspeople to teach our students (and faculty) how to work with what we have, deeply, towards objects that have a peaceful longevity.

Appendix 1: Working group charge and questions:

Members:

Rob Baker-White (Theatre)
Horace Ballard (Art History/WCMA)
Sandra Burton (Dance)
Jessica Fisher (English)
Guy Hedreen (Art History, and chair of the working group)
Gage McWeeny (English, Oakley Center)
Pallavi Sen (Studio Art)
Zachary Wadsworth (Music)

Charge:

What is the future of the arts at Williams and in liberal arts education more broadly? The arts at Williams began at a time characterized by departmental and disciplinary autonomy and a marked lack of diversity along almost any dimension. Today, innovation in the arts often entails interdisciplinarity and centers the voices and experiences of those who have traditionally been excluded from canons and critical discourse. The arts develop distinct modes of perception and understanding, and are a means of inquiry and self-expression, problem solving and knowledge production, as well as a foundation for cross cultural exploration and social change.

What would it take to make Williams a leading liberal arts college for the arts? Strategic planning presents an opportunity to take stock of the arts in a comprehensive way. Such an exercise seems especially well timed given the new museum building project, which will allow us to think collectively about the relationship of the museum to the college and to reimagine the future of Lawrence Hall as a dedicated center for the arts.

The group should consider the following questions:

—What will teaching in the arts look like in the future, and how might teaching across Williams be animated by a more intentional engagement with the arts? What kinds of new administrative and curricular structures—programs, staff, or concentrations—will best serve learning in the arts? How can we support the many faculty and students who already engage in artistic practices outside the arts departments?

—How can the arts help us to reimagine our academic model? Master classes, musical ensembles, dance companies, theatrical productions, exhibitions of art, poetry readings are all essential co-curricular components of an education in the creative arts but fit poorly into existing structures. How can we better support co-curricular activities in the arts, and narrow the gap between the core curriculum and extra-curricular activities in the arts at Williams?

—How might the dispersed sites of artistic practice across the campus be made more institutionally visible as a single arts eco-system, and the arts become more central to the college? How might the arts departments best coordinate, publicize, and support events and increase the opportunities to experience the arts? What sort of administrative communications structures would best support the arts at Williams?

—What kinds of spaces and resources are necessary to students for a richer exploration of the arts? All of the arts require specially equipped spaces in which to teach and perform. At the same time, growing interest in interdisciplinarity means that our teaching and performance spaces need to accommodate multiple practices simultaneously.

—What are opportunities to strengthen our connections to organizations within a western Massachusetts arts corridor? How can we pool and amplify the energies of the Clark, MassMoCA, and the many summer arts organizations of international stature?

Appendix 2: Methods and outreach:

Regular meetings of the future of the arts working group: Mondays 4:00-5:30 throughout the semester, except for fall break, Griffin 5

Outreach:

September 23: Arts Council

September 23: Williams in the World

October 7: faculty outside of arts departments, 4-5, Griffin 5

October 9: Art department meeting, 4:45-5:30 PM, Griffin 5

October 15: Strategic Planning Day

October 21: Jeff Israel from CPC to our regular meeting, 4:00-4:30

October 23: Theater department meeting, 9:00 AM, seminar room, '62 center

October 23: Curricular Planning Committee, 4:00-5:30

October 28: faculty outside of arts departments, 4-5, Griffin 5

October 28: Dinner, Mezze, with area arts (CAI, MassMoCA, WAM, BSC, WTF, JPDC)

October 29: Music department meeting, 2:35 PM

October 31: First Three, 12-1, Faculty Club, lower level

November 4: Meeting of all strategic planning groups, 12:00-3:45

November 4: Student learning/Learning outside the classroom, 4-5:30, Griffin 5

November 20: Dance department meeting, 9:00-10:30, second floor, Greylock

November 20: Science Executive Committee, 4:15

December 9: President's administrative group, Williams Inn, 1:00 PM

December 11: WCMA staff meeting, 9:45-10:15, L1

December 11: English department meeting, 4:45 PM

The chair of the working group also met one-on-one with Dukes Love, Michelle Apotsos, Herb Kessler, Zach Wadsworth, Sandra Burton, Gage McWeeny, Rob Baker-White, Pallavi Sen, Jessica Fischer, Horace Ballard, Shawn Rosenheim, Damian Boutillon, John Kleiner, Amy Holzappel, Christopher Nugent, Ondine Chavoya, Jeff Jones, Jim Shepard, Jim Kolesar, Vivian Huang, Eric Cochrane, Lisa Conathan, Laura Martin, Iris Howley, Marc Gotlieb, Holly Edwards, Carrie Greene, Sarah Olsen, Mandy Greenfield, Amy McKenna, Christopher Bolton, Jonathan Morgan-Leaman, Alex Bevilacqua

We consulted the strategic plans for the arts prepared by Harvard University, Brown University, and Princeton University.

We thank Courtney Wade, James Cart, and Sulgi Lim for data on enrollments, majors, and admissions.

Appendix 3: Operational ideas:

The Committee arrived at the below set of recommendations, with which we are all in agreement:

—To re-center and affirm the arts within the college’s mission and its liberal arts curriculum with a more forthright articulation of our pedagogical commitments in the college’s curriculum requirements, as well as in alumni materials and First Days planning.

—To re-envision our curriculum to enable our students to push on traditional distinctions between making and understanding. This would entail new ways of recognizing substantial creative inquiry done in sciences and social sciences, as well as a re-envisioning of divisional requirements so as to encourage interdisciplinary study and creation in the arts, including work that, on the model of the sciences, entails both creative practices and forms of theoretical inquiry.

—The creation of a new Arts Action Committee to enable long-range planning for the arts, to coordinate the various sites of arts programming, and to advance curricular development across the campus.

—The creation of 4-5 long- and short-term visiting artist positions through a Society of Fellows in the Arts program, in order to refresh our practices and support emergent as well as established artists in our curriculum.

—The creation of new internal incentives to encourage collaboration among faculty & students in the arts, especially those working across or between “creative” disciplines and fields less traditionally understood as such.

—The creation of a “Summer Study” term, on the model of Winter Study. This would enable students to pursue summer creative work and research, with some doing so in Williams-funded fellowships at some of our Berkshire arts institutions, such as MassMoCA or Jacob’s Pillow.

—The renovation and reimagining of Lawrence as a Center for the Arts with arts-making facilities, performance and making spaces, classrooms, and offices, as well as administrative staff to support the programming ambitions of such a new center.