The New College of the Arts: Forming a Collaborative Community at the College of the Arts at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA

Peter Huesemann-Odom
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THE NEW COLLEGE OF THE ARTS: FORMING A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY AT
THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY IN ATLANTA, GA

by

PETER HUESEMMANN-ODOM

Under the Direction of Michael White, M.Arch.

ABSTRACT

The Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design, the School of Music, and the School of Film, Media & Theatre form the College of the Arts at Georgia State University. These schools operate in separate campus areas. This lack of unified presence impedes collaborative and inspiring exchanges between communities. *The New College of the Arts* investigates forming a community that combines all the College of the Arts disciplines and highlights the College’s impact on the city of Atlanta, Georgia State University, and the arts. The components needed for a successful evolution are discovered through primary and secondary research, including stakeholder interviews, site visits, case studies, and a literature review. Considering all these components, I propose a solution as an ideal foundation for the College’s future.
INDEX WORDS: Collaboration, Community, Campus design, Educational facilities, Interior design, Campus architecture, Higher education, School of Art and Design, School of Music, School of Film, Media, and Theatre
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by

PETER HUESEMMANN-ODOM

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts
in the College of the Arts
Georgia State University
2024
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Office of Academic Assistance
College of the Arts
Georgia State University
May 2024
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband, who has been my unwavering source of inspiration and support throughout my academic journey. His steadfast encouragement, patience, and guidance have been indispensable in helping me overcome the obstacles and challenges I encountered along the way. I am forever grateful for his love and unwavering belief in me, and I aspire to make him proud with this achievement.

In addition, I would also like to express my gratitude to my best friend, Anabel, who provided me with daily check-ins, motivation, and inspiration throughout my academic journey. Her unwavering support from afar has been invaluable, and I am grateful for her friendship and encouragement.
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>A&amp;H</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>BH</td>
<td>Bauhaus</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMC</td>
<td>Black Mountain College</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCAD</td>
<td>Chelsea College of Art and Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENCIA</td>
<td>Center for Collaboration and Innovation in the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Creative Hub</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMII</td>
<td>Creative Media Industries Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>COTA</td>
<td>College of the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Design Cuboid</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Dahlberg Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMT</td>
<td>School of Film, Media, and Theatre</td>
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<td>GA</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<td>GSU</td>
<td>Georgia State University</td>
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<td>GT</td>
<td>Georgia Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>GW</td>
<td>Greenway</td>
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<td>HALC</td>
<td>Helen M. Aderhold Learning Center</td>
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<td>HB</td>
<td>Hurt Building</td>
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<td>HP</td>
<td>Hurt Park</td>
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<td>MC</td>
<td>Media Cuboid</td>
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<td>MUC</td>
<td>Music Cuboid</td>
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<td>NSCAD</td>
<td>Nova Scotia College of Art and Design</td>
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<td>RC</td>
<td>Rialto Center for the Arts</td>
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<td>RH</td>
<td>Florence Kopleff Recital Hall</td>
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<td>SH</td>
<td>Sparks Hall</td>
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<td>SoM</td>
<td>School of Music</td>
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<td>UAL</td>
<td>University of the Arts London</td>
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<td>UWB</td>
<td>United Way building</td>
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<td>WSAD</td>
<td>Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

I am an MFA candidate for Interior Design at the College of the Arts (COTA) at Georgia State University (GSU). And although I am part of this community, I feel isolated. I moved to the United States two years ago, leaving my family and friends in Germany to start a life with my American husband in Atlanta. Having lived and studied in countries like Brazil, Germany, and Sweden, I felt confident that success in my profession and a new circle of friends would quickly follow once I settled into my new environment.

For most of my adult life, I had met friends through school or work, but since I could not work during the application process for my Green Card, I explored other options, like advancing my education by earning another degree. With an undergraduate degree in business administration, extensive background in marketing and design, and several years of working experience, I concluded that a master’s degree program would benefit my career prospects and expose me to a local network of designers and peers with similar interests. Motivated and ambitious to expand my knowledge and network and attracted by its mission and diverse infrastructure, I started the interior design MFA program at GSU’s Atlanta campus in the Fall of 2021.

Three colleges form COTA: the Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design (WSAD), the School of Music (SoM), and the School of Film, Media & Theatre (FMT). By enrolling in the MFA program, I expected to be part of a large creative community that would form the

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1 Once a U.S. immigrant is married to an American, they must change their residency status by applying for a temporary work permit and green card. During this application process, their immigrant status changes to an “alien status,” which does not allow them to work or re-enter the country once they cross the border. I applied for my change of residency in July 2021, and while I received my work permit in April 2022 and my green card in November 2022, returning to school was my only option to stay occupied and develop my professional career. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Green Card Processes and Procedures, accessed October 19, 2023, https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures.
foundation of my local network. However, during my time as a student, I have only engaged with WSAD students because each of COTA’s schools operates in separate campus areas. Even connecting with other WSAD students proved to be difficult: I took two courses in other areas of art and design, but most of my time studying, working, and conducting research was spent in a private studio space surrounded by windowless cinderblock walls. I was excluded from other disciplines, potential collaborative moments, and unplanned encounters. Perhaps as a subconscious reaction to my surroundings, I included large windows, community spaces, and wayfinding solutions in all my design-related coursework. ARTISAN, a community space in the Hurt Building (HB), was one of many concepts I designed to foster creativity and promote collaboration at COTA. The created space invites students, faculty, and the surrounding communities to meet, connect, and collaborate while enjoying healthy food and local art.²

Our environment alters our brains positively and negatively and represents our culture, which initiated my research for this thesis.³ As an interior designer, I want to create environments that foster creativity and innovation, encourage social interaction, and feel human and authentic. Although examples of successful artists working in solitude exist, most artists require being surrounded by culture and part of a community.⁴ To avoid isolation and foster creativity, we must be conscious of our beliefs and values that shape the built environment, society, and culture.⁵

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² HB is a historic and privately owned property on the GSU campus, opposite Arts & Humanities—home of WSAD. Appendix B: ARTISAN Concept.


⁴ Fine, Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education, 163.

⁵ Anthony, Designing for Diversity, 14.
This thesis, *The New College of the Arts*, investigates forming a community that brings all communities of COTA together and highlights the College's impact on Atlanta, GSU, and the arts. The components needed for a successful evolution are discovered through historical, primary, and secondary research, including stakeholder interviews, site visits, case studies, and a literature review. Considering all these components, I propose a framework that promotes artists and their craft, fosters collaboration and innovation, and streamlines the infrastructure of COTA for an abundant and prosperous future.
2 BACKGROUND

Fueled by motivation to understand my environment and curiosity to discover the various reasons for my isolation, I divided my investigation into historical, primary, and secondary research. In my historical research, I inspected my surroundings, starting with Atlanta, paying particular attention to how the city’s history shaped its built environment. I followed a similar line of inquiry when looking into the history of GSU’s downtown campus and its buildings. I analyzed COTA’s structure and facilities for my primary research by gathering stakeholder interviews and conducting site visits. I combined these with personal observations and my experiences as a student (2021-2024). This research culminated in findings that provide an inventory of the current situation's evident challenges and valuable opportunities, which I used to identify the elements necessary for COTA’s future.

2.1 Atlanta, GA

As a significant communication and transportation hub, an international city with the world’s busiest airport, and a substantial financial center hosting the country's third-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies, Atlanta is a magnet for a progressive and diverse population. It has been a city of regional, national, and international importance since its early history.  

The end of the Western and Atlanta railroad lines marked the beginning of the city's history in 1837. Although the railroad lost its importance due to rising competition from airlines and interstate highways, the town has kept growing; in recent years, the city has experienced unprecedented growth. While Atlanta’s population stays consistent at around 500,000 people, the

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metro population has grown by nearly 40 percent, from 2.9 million to 4.1 million in the past decade.⁷

Even though Atlanta is relatively young compared to other American cities, it has a rich history with notable historical events. Embedded in the South, the city was the stage of protest activities by the Southern Christian Leadership, led by Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph David Abernathy, who started the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. This movement influenced the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 through nonviolent civil disobedience and organized voter registration drives. Affected by this act of resistance, a group of two hundred students led by Morehouse students Lonnie King and Julian Bond successfully requested a change of segregated public accommodations.⁸ Today, the city celebrates its revolutionary roots with several museums and monuments that validate the importance of a diverse population who can influence a better future for tomorrow.

Because of its strategic geographic location and railroad history, Atlanta was a prominent intersection for the highway system introduced with the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Connecting Georgia (GA) to the nation, the north-south transcontinental interstate highway system has been growing since its inception. Today, six interstate highways accommodate the demands of an expanding mobile society, some of which

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cut through the city’s landscape, effectively segregating neighborhoods from other parts of the town (fig. 2.1).  

![Image of Atlanta traffic with the skyline in the background]

Figure 2.1 Alex Reid and Kittiya Chaiyachati, *A Depiction of Atlanta Traffic with the Skyline in the Backdrop* (image), Georgia State University Blogs, accessed October 29, 2023, http://sites.gsu.edu/areid29/183-2/.

Little Five Points, Candler Park, Virginia Highlands, and Decatur are the most popular residential areas inside Atlanta's I-285 (Perimeter) highway. Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead attract entrepreneurs and corporations like Coca-Cola, Whole Foods, and Home Depot.  

Due to this high density of commerce, the demand for human resources is evident. More

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than 19 colleges and universities reside in Atlanta, making the metropolitan hub an excellent market for the trained workforce. The Georgia Institute of Technology (GT), Emory University, and GSU are the most prominent universities, with GSU being the city’s most significant in terms of enrollment. Located amid the downtown core, with a large and diverse student body, it shapes the landscape and culture of the city.\textsuperscript{11}

However, GSU was only one of many expanding forces in downtown Atlanta. A graduate of GT, architect and developer John Portman (1924-2017) is another influential protagonist in this area. In the early 1970s, he was an urban power broker and chairman of Central Atlanta Progress, one of the most essential city planning groups affecting the city’s skyline and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{12} Driven by the fear of civil unrest, the prioritization of automobile transportation, and the desire to control the human experience, Portman orchestrated the city's architecture for a quarter of a century, according to his vision of a “peaceful” urban environment. To create “new spaces” insulated from the turmoil of city life, Portman elevated people using his buildings above street level through a designed network of skyscrapers that connect with bridges only accessible by invitation (fig. 2.2).\textsuperscript{13}


These are just some significant developments that shaped the local society and built the environment of a city's core. Ultimately, Atlanta’s early history and Portman’s ideals manifest in what Atlanta is today: a collection of neighborhoods separated by interstates, neglected city
streets, and businesses thriving in lofty skyscrapers, wholly divorced from what’s happening on
the ground.

2.2 Georgia State University

Founded over 100 years ago, GSU started as the University System of Georgia Evening
School, operated by GT. It is now an urban research university, providing access to education for
students at all levels, from associate to doctoral degrees for more than 50,000 students from 150
countries and all US states. The university offers over 250 bachelor's degree programs and 150
graduate degree programs in 100 fields of study. The main campus stretches from Freedom
Parkway in the north to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in the south and Marietta Street in the west
to the Downtown Connector in the east. Capitol Avenue connects a second, smaller area to the
main campus, further south on the other side of I-20, I-75, and I-85, embedded in the Summerhill
neighborhood (fig. 2.3).
Due to its extraordinary growth in the number of students, physical facilities, and quality of education, GSU has become one of the nation's largest and most diverse universities, with one of its fastest-growing research portfolios. Leading the ranking among public universities in the
US for undergraduate teaching, GSU consists of 12 colleges, schools, and institutions. While downtown Atlanta is the main campus, the university expanded with five community colleges, located around I-285, connecting the communities of Clarkston, Decatur, Dunwoody, Newton, and Alpharetta to the heart of Atlanta.

After renting spaces and relocating four times, the university's administration constructed Sparks Hall (SH, fig. 2.4) as one of the first purposely built facilities in 1950. The building is named after GSU’s first president, Dr. George M. Sparks. During his presidency, additions like the Student Center (fig. 2.5), the library, and the Counseling Center showcased the university's presence downtown.

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15 University Library, “History: Brief History, Admin. Org.,” Special Collections and Archived: Georgia State University History, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://research.library.gsu.edu/GSUhistory; Georgia State University, About Georgia State University, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://www.gsu.edu/about/.

Figure 2.4 Georgia State University, *Sparks Hall from Municipal Auditorium* (image), 1960s, in Office of Public Information Records, University Archives, Special Collections and Archives (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University Library, 2023), G1984-30_0297.
Due to its growing importance in the educational landscape of GA, GSU gained its independence from GT in the 1930s. In 1957, Noah Langdale, Jr. followed Sparks as the second president. Under Langdale's leadership, additions like the General Classroom Building (1970/71, now Langdale Hall, fig. 2.6), the Urban Life Center (1974, fig. 2.7), and the Art and Music Building (1970, now Arts and Humanities (A&H, fig. 2.8), including the Florence Kopleff Recital Hall (RH), reflected the enlarged mission and expansion of academic programs in the 1970s.17

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17 M. Brian Blake, Georgia State University President, *President Georgia M. Spark 1928-1957*; University Library, “Building Timeline.”
Figure 2.6 Georgia State University, *Georgia State University's General Classroom Building* (image, cropped), 1970s, in University Archives, Special Collections and Archives (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University Library, 2023), G1984-26_076.
Figure 2.7 Georgia State University, *Urban Life Center* (image), 1974, in University Archives, Special Collections and Archives (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University Library, 2023), G1984-26_303.
After Langdale left office in 1987, the administration renovated, expanded, or acquired existing buildings from surrounding businesses, leaving a campus landscape shaped by Langdale’s over 30-year presidency. Dr. William M. Suttles followed, serving as the university’s third president for two years. Suttles introduced the Pullen Library (1988, now Library South, fig. 2.9) and an expanded University Center.
Figure 2.9 Georgia State University, *Georgia State University's "New Academic Tower"* (image), 1988, in University Archives, Special Collections and Archives (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University Library, 2023), G1984-26_144.
Over the next two years, three different presidents led the university: Dr. John Michael Palms as the fourth president, Dr. Sherman Day as appointed acting president, and Dr. Carl V. Patton as the sixth president of GSU. Patton extended the campus area by acquiring the Rialto Center of the Arts (RC, fig. 2.10) and building the Student Center (fig. 2.11), the Helen M. Aderhold Learning Center (HALC, fig. 2.12), and Freshman Hall (now Patton Hall, fig. 1.13), to name just a few of the significant contributions of his presidency from 1992-2008. During Patton’s presidency, the university became nationally recognized as an R1 research institution, the highest research activity level identified in the Carnegie Classification.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{18}\) Georgia State University, *About Georgia State University*.


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Figure 2.10 Rialto Center for the Arts, *Rialto Theater with the Streetcar* (image, cropped), 2023, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://rialto.gsu.edu/about/.
Figure 2.11 Student Center, *Student Center* (image, cropped), 2023, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://engagement.gsu.edu/student-center/hostanevent/.

During the seventh president’s tenure (Dr. Mark P. Becker), the campus grew even more with the addition of student housing facilities, the Parker H. Petit Science Center (fig. 2.14), and 175 Piedmont, a project that converted two former hotels into a dormitory, dining hall, nine acres of green space, and a parking deck (fig. 2.15).²⁰

Figure 2.14 Hao Xu, Ph.D., *Parker H. Petit Science Center (Opened in Summer 2010)* (image), 2010, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, http://sites.gsu.edu/hxu/pictures/.

Figure 2.15 Terry Singh, *Built Environment Description of Piedmont North* (image, cropped), 2016, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, http://sites.gsu.edu/tsingh7/2016/02/12/253/.
With a transformative gift from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, GSU opened the Creative Media Industries Institute (CMII, fig. 2.16) in a renovated former bank facility.  \footnote{Creative Media Industries Institute, \textit{A Transformative Gift}, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://cmii.gsu.edu/about/a-transformational-gift/}  

Becker also introduced GSU’s first strategic plan, which resulted in significant accomplishments between 2011-16 in student success, graduate and professional programs, an expanded research portfolio, city connections, and globalizing the university. \footnote{Strategic Plan, \textit{Previous Strategic Plan: Accomplishments}, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://strategic.gsu.edu/accomplishments/} In 2021, Dr. M. Brian Blake began serving as the eighth president of GSU. He is still in office today. His presidency has already seen the addition of the Convocation Center (fig. 2.17), a newly built 200,000-square-foot facility for commencement ceremonies, basketball games, and events; the complete renovation of Hurt Park (HP, fig. 2.18); and the opening of the Greenway (GW), a
signature green space that connects Langdale Hall, SH, Library North, A&H, and Student Center West (fig. 2.19). 23

Figure 2.17 Andrea Jones, <i>Convocation Center</i> (image), 2022, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://news.gsu.edu/2022/09/13/georgia-state-to-open-new-convocation-center/.

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23 Georgia State University, “History: Brief History, Admin. Org.”; Georgia State University, <i>About Georgia State University</i>. 
Shortly after Blakes's inauguration, the university published a ten-year strategic plan (2023-2033) to guide the institution collectively and further validate its regional, national, and international importance. This blueprint articulates a shared vision for the university's future, introducing four pillars:
Individual development, social transformation, and workforce preparedness are crucial for Blake's vision. To enhance the state's competitiveness and create a better environment for its citizens, the president wants to boost creative activities and strengthen its communities, realizing an economic and social impact on the state, the nation, and beyond.²⁴

As the blueprint's first and most extensive pillar, Identity, Placemaking, and Belonging summarizes the mission to create an inclusive, rewarding, and welcoming destination for all. A strong focus on brand identity and belonging aims to make an engaging sense of place, offering various opportunities and establishing new traditions. The second goal is fostering social engagement and physical, emotional, and social health of students, staff, and faculty by creating flexible spaces that are student-centric and multi-purpose. Leveraging the influential power of faculty, the third goal aspires to foster a workplace culture of community and belonging. Additional development opportunities, health benefits, and efficient onboarding processes shall attract new staff and faculty willing to engage with local and surrounding communities.²⁵

The university's impressive research and scholarship activities drive the second pillar of the strategic plan. A practical method to recruit and retain faculty and staff to accelerate research, scholarship, and creative activity, as well as reforming the infrastructure to achieve advanced

²⁴ Strategic Plan, View the Plan; Executive Summary, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://strategic.gsu.edu/2023-2033/executive-summary/.


• Identity, Placemaking, Belonging
• Innovative Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
• Student Success 2.0
• Beyond College to Career
productivity, is the first step of this pillar. Cross-cutting research is another milestone in fostering internal and external interdisciplinary collaboration. The goal is to raise the university’s profile in academia, Atlanta, and global society. To conclude this pillar, the president proposes an inclusive culture of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity that supports areas of the humanities, social and behavioral science, creative fields, and scholarship of teaching and learning.\textsuperscript{26}

Student Success 2.0, the third pillar of the strategic plan, pledges improvement in retention, graduation rates, and student success. One of the three goals is to form a flexible and interdisciplinary undergraduate curriculum to set up graduates for lifetime success. Furthermore, Blake envisions an infrastructure that motivates emerging scholars and faculty mentors to explore research, scholarship, and creative activities on campus. Becoming a national model of educational affordability and accessibility is the second goal, focusing on financial support and assistance before, during, and after graduation. The graduate student body concludes this pillar. Blake wants to enhance the engagement of high-achieving graduate students, expand the availability of high-demand degree programs, and adapt the tools and strategies that made the undergraduate program successful.\textsuperscript{27}

The fourth pillar of the blueprint is Beyond College to Career, in which Blake envisions students as engaged citizens, community leaders, innovators, and effective collaborators. "An enhanced infrastructure to facilitate collaboration between faculty, staff, and external partners will provide accessible postgraduate opportunities for our students," states the introduction of

\textsuperscript{26} Strategic Plan, \textit{Innovating Research, Scholarship \& Creative Activity}, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://strategic.gsu.edu/2023-2033/innovating-research-scholarship-and-creative-activity/.

\textsuperscript{27} Strategic Plan, \textit{Student Success 2.0}, Georgia State University, accessed October 28, 2023, https://strategic.gsu.edu/2023-2033/student-success-2-0/. 
this last pillar. Also divided into three subcategories, the goals in this pillar include the desire to expose students to relevant technologies, to encourage students to apply for local, regional, and international internships, and to motivate experimental learning. In addition, the university aims to strengthen its relationship with alums to stimulate a lifelong partnership with the university's community.  

Community, inclusion and diversity, transformation, integrity, excellence, and strategic innovation form the university's values and mirror crucial elements of the strategic plan and the mission statement, which hold this public institution accountable for achieving its goals. After its official publication this spring, each unit will be responsible for formulating and promoting its strategic goals and adapting its infrastructure to align with the institution's strategic plan immediately. With its cultural production, diverse degree program, and central location on campus, COTA becomes pivotal in setting this strategic plan up for success.

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3 PRIMARY RESEARCH

3.1 The College of the Arts

In 2016, all of GSU’s artistic disciplines (WSAD, FMT, SoM) were brought together to form COTA. Offering a variety of undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and dual degree programs in art, design, music, film, theatre, and more, the College unites a dynamic arts scene and a popular movie and music industry. COTA’s enrollment consists of more than 2,800 students taught by 150 faculty members and part-time instructors. The college generates seven bachelor’s, seven master’s, four doctoral, three dual degree programs, one artistic certificate program, and one non-degree teacher licensure program. Sixteen facilities and venues create an educational environment for creativity and artistic production. Although all three schools, plus CMII (shared with the College of Arts and Sciences) and RC, are one institutional unit, they are geographically scattered all over GSU’s campus.

The college’s administrative office is at 35 Broad Street NW, on the west side of campus, close to Woodruff Park. This location provides offices and conference rooms for the administration, faculty, and staff, as well as one classroom. Dr. Wade Weast, the first dean of COTA, is currently on leave and away from campus for most of the 2023-24 academic year while fulfilling an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellowship. This mentorship program

30 College of the Arts, About, Georgia State University, accessed October 29, 2023, https://thearts.gsu.edu/college-of-the-arts/about/.

31 Appendix A.1: Fact Sheet College of the Arts.


33 College of the Arts, “Facilities & Venues.”
prepares faculty, staff, and administrators for senior college and university leadership positions. During Dr. Weast’s absence, Dr. Chester Phillips, director of SoM, functions as the interim dean. Dr. Phillips’s office as director of SoM is in the Hass-Howell Building, so he switches between locations depending on the position he is executing. After the departure last spring of COTA’s first associate dean, Dr. Maria Gindhart, art historian Dr. Susan Richmond has stepped into the role of interim associate dean. Previously, Dr. Richmond was an associate professor in art history and associate director at WSAD. Dr. Phillips was a member of the university’s strategic planning committee, serving as a voice for COTA while formulating the new strategic plan and its four pillars.

WSAD is named after its benefactor, Ernest G. Welch. Welch graduated from GSU with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography in 1999, when he was in his late 80s. Welch became a generous donor to the school in 2003, and the school honored his legacy by adopting his name. His photographic work is preserved and accessible through GSU’s Special Collections & Archives. Tenured associate professor Michael White was the director of WSAD from 2012-2018 and returned to this role after the departure of the previous director (Joe Peragine) in 2022. Prof. White joined GSU in 2002 after working as a successful and nationally recognized architect and interior designer for many years. His office is in WSAD’s main building, A&H,

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35 College of the Arts, “Interim Dean Chester Phillips, Dean Wade Weast.”

36 Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design, About, Georgia State University, accessed November 5, 2023, https://artdesign.gsu.edu/about/.

on the corner of Peachtree Center Avenue NE and Gilmer Street SE. With administrative offices, classrooms, studio spaces, and several gallery spaces, A&H is a notable center for art and design on the GSU campus. WSAD has two other outposts on campus: the Sculpture Studio, situated along the east perimeter of the campus, nearly half a mile down Edgewood Avenue from A&H, and the Cage Space, an outdoor gallery at Edgewood Avenue NE and Piedmont Avenue NE.38

Dr. Ethan Tussey is the current director of the School of FMT. Unlike Dr. Phillips and Prof. White, who both fall on the creative/performing side of the COTA spectrum, Dr. Tussey is on the scholarly/studies side. He holds a Ph.D. in media studies and investigates and writes about the relationship between the entertainment industry and the digitally empowered public. Along with an administrative support team and the rest of the FMT faculty, his office is on the 10th floor of 25 Park Place. This building, the former SunTrust tower, borders Woodruff Park and is adjacent to CMII.39 A media post-production suite and the production equipment checkout are also on this floor. The primary production studio (2,500 sq. ft. with 17 ft. ceiling) is on the other side of Woodruff Park, in the 1 Park Place building.40 While these spaces are focused on film and media, additional spaces are located further east, adjacent to HP, in the historic Dahlberg Hall (DH). Here, a 200-seat theatre with a workshop area backstage, dressing rooms, a textile-


40 School of Film, Media & Theatre, Facilities, Georgia State University, accessed October 29, 2023, https://fmt.gsu.edu/facilities/; Appendix A.3: Fact Sheet School of Film, Media, and Theatre.
focused studio, one classroom/conference room, and a prop storage area summarize the theatre department.\footnote{Appendix A.3: Fact Sheet School of Film, Media and Theatre.}

SoM resides mainly within two buildings towards the north perimeter of campus. Most of SoM’s administrative offices are in the Haas-Howell building; SoM’s other main building, the Standard, houses practice spaces and studios.\footnote{College of the Arts, “Facilities & Venues;” Appendix A.4: Fact Sheet School of Music.} The school has access to two state-of-the-art rehearsal halls for choral and instrumental ensembles in HALC.\footnote{Appendix A.4: Fact Sheet School of Music.} The school also occupies an instrument room and additional storage spaces in this facility. Dr. Phillips has been the director of SoM for the past two years, managing the administrative team and faculty. He also conducts and oversees the wind orchestra and GSU’s marching band.\footnote{College of the Arts, “Chester Phillips,” Directory, Georgia State University, accessed October 29, 2023, https://thearts.gsu.edu/profile/chester-b-phillips/.} RC has been part of SoM since 2022, but it operates as an independent business unit under the leadership of Lee Foster. In 2019, Foster took over the responsibilities of the 833-seat performing arts venue, guiding the strategic direction for all aspects of the theatre, including programming the Rialto Series and managing outside clients who rent the historic venue for events.\footnote{College of the Arts, “Lee Foster,” Directory, Georgia State University, accessed October 29, 2023, https://thearts.gsu.edu/profile/lee-foster/.} Another performance facility associated with SoM is RH, which has a 400-seat hall for chamber and solo performances. “A media center that incorporates a technological classroom for computer music instruction” completes the facility family of SoM.\footnote{Appendix A.4: Fact Sheet School of Music.}
Compared to other units in the framework of GSU, COTA is one of the university’s smaller colleges. While its primary mission focuses on inspiring and empowering students and faculty, the College's vision statement reads: “The College of the Arts will be the model for 21st-century arts education and practice, making the arts visible, vital, and innovative.”\textsuperscript{47} The collaboration with Atlanta arts organizations, businesses, and festivals; exhibitions at local galleries, museums, and alternative art spaces; over 300 concerts, recitals, lectures, and theatre productions; as well as access to GA’s growing film industry from both sides of the camera, are just some of the highlights promoted on the institution’s website.\textsuperscript{48}

3.2 Challenges and Opportunities of the Current Situation

My historical research on Atlanta and GSU, the primary study of COTA, and personal observations during my time at GSU inform this upcoming section, which summarizes the challenges and opportunities of the college’s current setup.

Atlanta’s potential to manifest its national and international importance is evident. Due to its central location and connected infrastructure to other states and countries, it has become an attractive and fast-growing destination and a lucrative resource for national and international businesses. But its pivotal role in American history, fast growth, and diverse population created challenges still evident in how we experience the city as a society.

Seen as a positive driver to attract students from longer distances and invite visitors from other neighborhoods to campus, the network of Interstates cutting through the urban setting negatively influences the overall campus experience. Yet identity, placemaking, and belonging are critical drivers for GSU’s strategic plan. Therefore, it is crucial to revisit and analyze the

\textsuperscript{47} College of the Arts, \textit{About}, Georgia State University, accessed October 29, 2023, https://thearts.gsu.edu/college-of-the-arts/about/.

\textsuperscript{48} Appendix A.1: Fact Sheet College of the Arts.
The highway system cuts off adjacent areas and neighborhoods, limits the university’s spatial expansion, and makes it difficult to use alternative transportation methods like biking or walking between home and class.

Initially introduced as a solution for transportation issues, the Interstate supported political views to enforce the segregation of communities, initiated by the race riot in 1906.49 The city has been trying to figure out a potential solution to revitalize and reconnect the downtown area for several years but has yet to succeed. Highways and traffic density were the first characteristics I learned about Atlanta. Having been here for two years, I see that the network of separated neighborhood pockets that can only be reached by car is a more prominent feature of this city. The Stitch is a civic-driven project that proposes to “bridge” the Downtown Connector formed by the intersection of interstates. This project will offer a pedestrian-friendly space by capping the Interstate between Midtown and Downtown, revitalizing a ring of half-empty or abandoned buildings and parking lots, and reconnecting neighborhoods in the city’s heart to spur new opportunities for sustainability, safety, and unity.50 Ultimately, this project has the potential to positively affect the campus experience and increase GSU’s attractiveness as an urban university. Other projects like the Midtown Connector, South Downtown, or the already-


established Beltline manifest Atlantans’ desire to grow closer together again and prioritize alternate mobility solutions, a desire to which I can relate.\textsuperscript{51}

The public transportation network MARTA is another significant driver that supports a stronger connection to surrounding communities. While the infrastructure of MARTA is limited, public transportation can be an affordable alternative to commuting to campus by car.\textsuperscript{52} Three major MARTA stations service GSU: Five Points, Peachtree Center, and Georgia State University. Unfortunately, all three stations are on the campus’s perimeter and are not prominent enough to provide comfortable and convenient access. Instead, many campus buildings connect to adjacent parking garages, which promotes driving rather than taking public transportation. The university reinforces the emphasis on cars as the primary mode of transportation by charging less for monthly parking passes than a monthly MARTA pass.\textsuperscript{53} As a European, conscious about the environment and aware of the many social encounters one can have while commuting to work or school, I label this approach outdated, environmentally unfriendly, and socially aloof. I lived in Midtown during the first two years of this program and did not own a car. Besides using MARTA or ridesharing, biking to campus was the only reasonable alternative. Unfortunately, the fear of getting into an accident dominated each ride because I had to ride in the middle of the road wherever bike lanes were unavailable and where parked vehicles blocked bike lanes.


\textsuperscript{53} Parking & Transportation, \textit{Marta Breeze Card Program}, Georgia State University, accessed January 29, 2024, https://parking.gsu.edu/transportation/alternative-transportation/.
Atlanta drivers are also not bike-friendly, and I found my right-of-way overruled many times by people in cars.

The same prioritization is evident when examining the built environment, which is mainly influenced by the ideals of one architect and developer: John Portman. Segregated from urban life, Portman created “terrariums for humanity” that connect with sky bridges, leaving the streets deserted and isolating those who could not afford automobiles. In Portman’s defense, the goal wasn’t to abandon the roads but to create a safe environment for those who commute via car from the suburbs. This curated environment attracted businesses to downtown and brought visitors to explore the city on an elevated and “safe” level but neglected the development of a naturally and organically evolving city center that could now assist GSU in fostering a collaborative and social environment. I remember my first exploration outside the campus perimeter, searching unsuccessfully for retail activity, restaurants, and coffee shops that might provide a small bite and social life. Once I entered one of the commercial buildings designed by Portman, I was in touch with social life but unsatisfied with the generic atmosphere I encountered since typically only business travelers or tourists mostly frequent these spaces.

Ignoring the adverse effects of Portman’s architecture on the city center, his work, on the other hand, attracts architectural enthusiasts to visit the city and explore cultural sites like museums, shops, and restaurants. Olympic Centennial Park, several museums like the World of Coca-Cola, and the Candler Hotel, all located downtown, are just some other sights attracting tourists from all over the world. The university can add value to the city center by increasing its cultural presence to students, surrounding communities, and visitors. That way, the GSU campus would become a desirable sight, just as other major campuses in the US are.

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54 Oney, “Portman’s Complaint.”
The same potential applies to all businesses located near campus. If the university—especially COTA—could engage with those local businesses even more, it would build a network of potential supporters, art collectors, and future employers and establish a powerhouse of art in Atlanta. RC, RH, and the gallery spaces in A&H are the only touchpoints for external visitors to engage with students’ cultural output.

RC has long been part of Atlanta’s circle of valued cultural venues. Since its addition to the GSU administration, it has struggled to find its position in the institutional landscape. It has been part of COTA since last year but runs like an individual business. It must sustain itself by bringing in enough money to cover payroll and renovations, while its ability to generate revenue is limited due to student productions that use the space.55 My interviews with the leadership of COTA confirmed the challenging relationship and desire to use RC for more teaching opportunities. 56 Apart from RC, the galleries (Welch Gallery) and theatre (RH) in A&H are additional outlets of cultural production accessible to everyone. However, the two gallery spaces feel tucked away, hidden behind Brutalist architecture, and not inviting for art supporters (fig. 3.1).

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55 Lee Foster, Director of the Rialto Center for the Arts in conversation with the author on October 27, 2024,

56 Appendix C.1: Interview with Dr. Chester Phillips; Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond.
Constructed during the social unrest of the 1970s, A&H was designed to limit public access and visibility. Besides the potential increase in visibility for artists, an open, intensely creative, and animated approach to the building could attract applicants and businesses to engage with the university and create an aspirational collaborative culture.

A museum could be another potential outlet to engage with the local community and showcase GSU’s cultural production by showcasing the work of graduated students. Larry Walker, the first director of WSAD and father to renowned artist Kara Walker, offered the university an extensive art collection, including significant African American artworks that
would be of great value for a university museum collection. So, it is surprising that GSU lacks a museum; as Dr. Richmond observed, every R1 university has a football team and a museum.\textsuperscript{57}

Branded crosswalks, building plaques, and blue flags indicate GSU’s educational facilities. However, it is tough to identify the campus's boundaries because the university consists of many repurposed buildings, like 25 and 55 Park Place. Surrounded by an architectural landscape of office buildings and infrastructure of cars, buses, and street cars, students and faculty must know their way around. Besides the geographical difficulty, it becomes challenging to identify members of the GSU community, making it even almost impossible to engage serendipitously with close members of your educational division. Part of the problem is the presence of Atlanta traffic, which forces pedestrians onto sidewalks or through connected buildings. Several building entries, floor levels, and elevators isolate individuals depending on their task and mission. SH and A&H are prime examples of multi-entry building layouts that do not offer a central lobby where students of the same discipline congregate. Both buildings are hard to navigate because there is no functional wayfinding system.

“My favorite detail...is that on the directory on the elevators of most of the art and sciences buildings, each department has a color, but then it just says ‘other,’ and our college is one of the other with janitorial service or something like that,” summarizes Dr. Tussey, about his experience with wayfinding and the designed separation by the institution.\textsuperscript{58} Although the units in COTA separated in 2016 from the College of Arts & Sciences, they still have to define their identity individually and as a whole.

\textsuperscript{57} Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond.

\textsuperscript{58} Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey.
Although SH is not part of COTA facilities, its prominent corner opposite the Student Center and adjacent to A&H could be an exciting anchor for establishing a center for the arts around HP. The building is not officially associated with a specific department, hosting offices like the Scholarship Resource Center, Supplemental Instruction, and the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. Part of the built environment since GSU’s early days and adjacent to A&H, this “in-between” building also offers various classrooms that provide flexibility for the university. Due to its age, it is past due for renovation, which would bring it up to modern-day education design standards. However, due to its location, historical value, and undefined identity, it could play a significant role in forming the identity for COTA and, ultimately, for GSU.

A&H is located directly next to SH, forming the north perimeter of GW. While SH has two entries from GW and a ground-level connection between GW and HP (Sparks Tunnel), the whole facade of A&H offers neither windows nor entries (fig. 19) to this same GW. Students and faculty of the Interior Design department are aware of this missed opportunity, proposing new layouts, like the 2018 project *Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design: Proposed Expansion to the Arts & Humanities Building*, as just one of many examples and solutions aligned with the universities mission.59

RH is the theatre in A&H. Through a separate entrance from the main entry points of that building, students, faculty, and visitors access the event lobby and performance space. At the same time, only the backstage area is accessible from A&H itself. “We use RH in A&H a lot for teaching. There is almost always a class or some instruction going on--even instruction that leads up to a performance, a dress rehearsal leading up to a performance. Opera is in there this whole week, setting up for this weekend. They are doing rehearsals every evening,” stated Dr. Phillips

59 Michael White, *Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design: Proposed Expansion to the Arts & Humanities Building* (pdf), personal collection, Georgia State University.
in our interview. Due to the separate main entrance, however, this bustling activity is invisible to everyone else in the A&H building.

In my fifth semester, I took one interdisciplinary class on the second floor of A&H, mainly occupied by the Photography department. This floor was an area I had yet to explore, so before our first class, I wandered around a bit and discovered the EXLAB at the end of the corridor. This space had windows and appeared to be a creative studio where students could work together or individually, using various tools and appliances, like sewing machines, 3D printers, and virtual reality devices. Excited about this resource, I started investigating what this space is all about. I found this on one of GSU’s websites:

The EXLAB maker space is a collaborative environment centered around experiential learning, creativity, and innovation. We are a community of individuals who share a passion for making. We welcome makers of all skill levels to come to learn something new and share their own stories of making. The EXLAB is community-driven and hosts a variety of student-led workshops based on the requests of GSU students.

Ultimately, the EXLAB is an exploratory space where students and people from outside of the community could come to design and collaborate. Why did I not know this place existed? There are no signs or other visible means of wayfinding that indicate such a collaborative environment on any floors of A&H. After doing some research, I found out that the EXLAB is part of the Instructional Innovation & Technology department led by Phil Ventimiglia, Vice President and Chief Innovation Officer, so it is neither part of WSAD nor COTA. Another more popular place for virtual reality is CMII. Although CMII is only accessible by appointment or by attending a class, it is the most recent attempt to include the latest technology for exploration on campus.

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60 Appendix C.1: Interview with Dr. Chester Phillips.

wondered why two locations on campus offered the same types of services. Each COTA school has a check-out facility that provides students with discipline-specific equipment. Wouldn’t it be more efficient to streamline these services into one center for equipment that brings together all available resources and, in the process, creates serendipitous encounters between students in the different disciplines?

The same idea applies to the studio spaces offered to faculty and graduate students. Some studios are located on the sixth floor of A&H, some are in the sculpture studio, and some are on the basement level of 25 Park Place. Of all these spaces, only a handful have access to daylight, while most are tucked away, surrounded by cinderblock walls. My first MFA studio was on the 9th floor of an office building (55 Park Place). During my second semester at GSU, my peers and I were moved to the basement of 25 Park Place. Although design and art students have studio spaces, we are isolated in our cubicles. There is no community space or exposure to outside culture that would activate this environment. The graduate curriculum brings art MFA students together for critiques, but there is no similar experience for design MFA students. Studios are essential for faculty and graduate students, regardless of location. These spaces offer flexibility, safety, and comfort: here, they can kick off their day, work between classes, or end the day with creative work.

University members may want to eat or grab coffee between creating, studying, or working before or after classes. While there are several choices of restaurants and cafés around campus, the university operates several food halls, providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the faculty, student body, and locals. Depending on how much time is spent on campus, discounted rates are available, which makes this resource an excellent opportunity to bring students together. Besides their generic and institutional design, these food halls are located further west on
campus, away from COTA, making them less accessible for the eastern units. The closest food outlets are the Chick-fil-A in the Student Center, a recently opened Saxby’s coffee shop, and Starbucks across the street from A&H in HB (currently closed for renovation), which are open during the semester but closed during the summer and winter breaks. Other options are the newly opened coffee shop in the library across GW or several downtown restaurants around Woodruff Park. There is no university-driven food court close to COTA, which means that most creatives bring their food from home and eat it in their studios, isolated from their community.62

The continuous growth of GSU’s student body allows this public institution to acquire additional buildings around downtown Atlanta. One of the most recent additions is the United Way building (UWB) opposite A&H next to the newly renovated HP (fig. 22).

Figure 3.2 Colliers International Atlanta, The 1960s Building Today, with Hurt Park Across the Street (image), accessed December 5, 2023, https://atlanta.curbed.com/2019/9/17/20870257/downtown-atlanta-united-way-building-office-market.

62 Appendix B: ARTISAN Concept.
This acquisition completes a set of buildings owned by the university on Gilmer Street, Edgewood Avenue NE, and Piedmont Avenue, surrounding HP: A&H, SH, DH, and UWB. While Piedmont Avenue is central to downtown infrastructure, pulsating as a primary thoroughfare to connect neighborhoods like Midtown and Summerhill, Gilmer Street and Edgewood Avenue NE show a lower traffic density. I plan to close Gilmer Street to traffic entirely to convert it into a pedestrian-only zone connecting GW through the Sparks Tunnel with HP. Traffic could be rerouted to attach UWB to the pedestrian-only zone, creating an extensive new campus area at the heart of GSU, potentially the hub for creativity as the new College of the Arts.  

What would a centralized COTA look like? How would it function? To answer these questions, we first need to understand the culture of COTA by examining crucial drivers of the college’s value system: the faculty. Students apply to a particular institution to work with the artists or scholars who teach there. It can be artists of a specific music style, prominent filmmakers, or researchers that attract students. While their creative work, instruction style, or following is most important for the student body, a faculty member must approach their success at an art institution differently. Even in the arts, the tenure track is the most desirable achievement. The key to getting tenure or promotion in art history, film studies, or musicology is to write books and articles, mainly as a sole author. This intense focus on individual performance is also evident in the arts. Instead of group exhibitions or collaborative exploration, solo exhibitions/performances advance artists on the tenure track. This becomes evident when researching the evaluation of faculty members at GSU.

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63 Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White.
With 40% teaching and 40% research, only 20% of a tenured/tenure-track faculty member’s time is dedicated to service work.64 “We still operate under an older model that privileges individual productivity,” confirms Prof. White.65 Dr. Tussey adds: “There is a built-in structure of individualism. My mentor once told me that academia is a profession that attracts introverts who want to be in their offices working on their projects. The university asks them to collaborate or govern themselves, which is precisely why they’re in the office because they don’t want to do that.”66 So, it is fair to ask: how much can the faculty drive the community if their primary focus is on their performance?67

Some faculty members engage with like-minded people inside and outside their departments to achieve collaborative projects that enhance the community spirit. Their education, background, and expertise form and influence the curriculum. However, among the COTA faculty, collaborative projects are still a minority of the total faculty output. “Jeremy Bolen (artist and assistant professor at WSAD) won junior faculty prizes for (his collaborative) research, which telegraphs that the academy is changing,” stated Prof. White.68 Recognition and an adapted evaluation process could encourage faculty members to collaborate interdisciplinary to foster innovation and manifest the arts as a crucial asset for an R1 institution.

During my interviews with Dr. Richmond, Dr. Tussey, Dr. Phillips, and Prof. White, I asked about their favorite places on campus. Some responded that they liked outdoor environments, especially those connected to social gatherings like the Student Center or GW.

64 Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond.
65 Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White.
66 Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey.
67 Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey.
68 Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White.
Depending on the task, they most likely reside in their offices or studios to pursue their research or creative practice. Scholars focus more on research and collaborating with their existing network built over time rather than engaging with the local community. However, others may want to collaborate more or establish a personal network early in their career that sets them up for future success. I remember when I started a new job: besides the excitement of the learning the new profession, I mostly enjoyed my work, when I could interact with my colleagues during and after work and collaborate to be successful as a team. While there will always be a variety of preferences, the goal must be questioning the current set-up and creating environments that offer both solitude and community.

The administration has recently moved the office of COTA to a historic building, the Bank of America building, further north downtown. The completely renovated 4th floor offers offices, meeting spaces, and one classroom, trying to accommodate the leadership of COTA. While I would expect a creative and inspiring office environment, the newly inhabited space still feels “generic” and “temporary.” During my interview with Dr. Richmond in her office, I examined the room she had been occupying for a couple of months. I experienced a room with white walls, generic furniture, and one art piece hanging on the wall that was made by an MFA program alumna, Kate Kosek. I learned that Dr. Richmond and Dr. Phillips use their office on the 4th floor when representing COTA in their “interim” role but have primary offices in a different campus building. While the relocation might be temporary, and I did not see all the spaces, I asked myself: if the college’s leadership is spatially distant and their inhabited space doesn’t “breathe” art, music, or culture, how can there be an overall creative, collaborative, and innovative environment at COTA? For me, COTA should represent all its units and make its

69 Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey.
creativity prominently visible to anyone who engages with the college. It becomes increasingly evident that COTA must act immediately to align its spatial strategy with GSU's strategic plan.

In my interviews with the directors of each unit, I learned that each unit rarely engages with the other. Although the directors meet twice monthly to discuss daily activities and challenges, they never had the chance to discuss a shared vision for COTA. A shared space where directors and faculty can casually mingle between classes and meetings would foster an exchange of competencies and experiences and reinforce the idea of community. “When I arrived 20 years ago, there used to be a discussion among faculty wanting a faculty space where they could have lunch. Students would not be allowed in that space. That recognition that we’re missing this space where we can all gather is a problem,” complains Prof. White. “A lounge would be fantastic,” agreed Dr. Richmond in our interview. She and Dr. Tussey believe that collaboration is going to happen organically. Such a space could create an environment where faculty could meet, exchange ideas, and be more visible to each other to create a community at the institution's core.

However, one of the main challenges to greater connectivity between the college units is that all three units of COTA operate in different parts of campus, and each college has distinct pedagogical needs. “We all deal with the same problem in each of our spaces. For the most part, our spaces are not designed with us in mind,” said Dr. Phillips. He believes a new, purpose-built performance center in Summerhill would solve the problem. This idea proposes a new structure for all the schools in COTA that would be more inviting to Atlanta residents,

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70 Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White; Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey.

71 Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White.

72 Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond; Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey.

73 Appendix C.1: Interview with Dr. Chester Phillips.
encouraging them to engage with student productions. Dr. Phillips favors the Summerhill location because it would afford easier access to parking than the downtown campus currently offers: “We already have a football stadium and convocation center to host events in that neighborhood. They are building a parking deck there as well. (...) I fantasized that spot would be an excellent location to build a Performing Arts Center.” His main argument is the area’s proximity to the highway and the easy parking situation, but he understands that this would not benefit the COTA community.\(^7\)

While I agree that a new performing arts center in Summerhill would increase the relevance of GSU as a university in Atlanta, it would scatter COTA’s schools even more, making it nearly impossible to create an organic community and revitalize the campus area for students, faculty, and external visitors. Prof. White and Dr. Richmond concur with my conclusion. Dr. Richmond argues,

\[\text{\begin{quote} I want to be in the heart of the campus because the rest of the students and the rest of the community want to stay within the campus. We want the whole university to come to the museum. We want other entities across the campus to go to our concerts and our artists’ talks...they are part of the culture that we offer at the university. If we’re physically too far away, people won’t come. \end{quote}}\]

Overall, all three directors of the COTA units, including Dr. Richmond, validate the university's challenges and opportunities. They voice the need for a solid and vital COTA community and believe that being spatially closer would enhance the college experience.

Further research on the university’s website indicated that the Center for Collaboration and Innovation in the Arts (CENCIA) follows the mission to foster collaboration between “artists of diverse disciplines and local, national, and international communities through accessible arts

\(^7\) Appendix C.1: Interview with Dr. Chester Phillips.

\(^7\) Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond.; Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White.
programming.” Two faculty members represent this organization: Nickitas Demos (professor and composition area coordinator at SoM) as the director of the Center and Kaylee Bramlett (PR & Marketing Coordinator at SoM) as an administrative coordinator. I question whether this center is still active or successful, with no upcoming events for this semester and an outdated website. As a student of COTA, I had never heard of this center, nor had anyone mentioned it during my research. The last active season was Spring 2022.

This chapter clarifies that the lack of community, the units' spatial separation and unique configuration, and the invisibility of the arts are pivotal factors that influence the importance and future of the arts for Atlanta and the GSU community. A structured campus layout that enhances visibility, fosters community, and nurtures creativity has the potential to support collaborative efforts and create a sustainable and prosperous environment for scholars, artists, and innovators. However, a new setup must align with the restructuring of faculty evaluation, an interdisciplinary curriculum, and an administration visible to the community that “breathes” creativity and engages in collaborative activity.

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4 SECONDARY RESEARCH

In my secondary research, I turned to the literature on art schools. I was interested in finding various sources that explore the dynamics of art colleges, whether they be historical or current examples or focused on single or multiple disciplines. I wanted to examine what an art school environment should look and feel like, what the infrastructure should be, and what elements I need to consider when defining an ideal future for COTA. Several sources described specific areas of an art institution, like studio spaces, galleries, or museums. While the opinions about the perfect scenario for art creation differ, all sources examined for this thesis confirmed that art is an essential part of our culture, positively affects the community, and should be at the core of our society. Most sources used traditional art disciplines like painting, sculpture, or photography to define an art school's environment. Finding sources describing film, media, theatre, or music school environments was challenging. While all of them are art disciplines, and here at GSU, they are united under the COTA umbrella, it is reasonable to say that the environment in which artists flourish the most is the same, no matter the discipline.

Furthermore, I researched interdisciplinary studies and collaboration as a driver for community building. I asked myself what collaboration is, who is involved in it, and what the product of collaboration is. In the end, I summarized my findings into three subcategories: the Attendance of an Art School, Collaboration, and the New Art School.

Attending an Art School defines the potential of the individuals and the community and explores an art institution's challenges and opportunities. In the next part of this chapter, I explore the idea of working, exchanging ideas, and being creative together to create something unique and unexpected. I examine the potential of this process and how it can be implemented in an art institution. The last part of this chapter, The New Art School, showcases the setup of an
ideal environment for an art school, sketches out the architectural influence by highlighting various areas of creativity in the institution, and finally summarizes a perfect foundation for COTA.

4.1 The Attendance of an Art School

As a site of cultural production, art schools become a magnet for all creatives, those who look for them, and with curators, dealers, and collectors involved, a stage for new talent. History shows that schools can create a moment in art history, like a particular style of painting (Yale School of Art). Art schools are more popular than ever and attract students worldwide.

"Art creates culture. Culture creates community. And community creates humanity," state Magsamen and Ross in their book Your Brain on Art. Art schools are sites of cultural production, not solely places of learning. They can transform a community, triggering different emotions depending on each cultural background. Art education facilitates the understanding of art in general and a better understanding of how to approach art objects. The university is responsible for engaging the local community to promote its work and educating the audience on

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78 Fine, Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education, 178.


80 Magsamen and Ross, Your Brain on Art: How the Art Transforms Us, 202.

81 Vidokle, “From Exhibition to School,” 193.

82 Magsamen and Ross, Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us, 223.

how to engage with it. Education will help the artist succeed by nurturing an audience that understands their art.\textsuperscript{84}

In their book \textit{How to Market the Arts: A Practical Approach for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century}, Anthony Rhine and Jay Pension describe the effects of attendance at an art school: “Education spurs learners to think of new ways of describing, defining, and understanding the world…Artists develop their art based on their education in society and its social reflections, and they tell stories based on their understanding of that social experience.”\textsuperscript{85} Everything around us is designed and informed by the arts. Each item is created by someone, informed by its function.\textsuperscript{86} Students of an art college are stakeholders in this creative process.

An art school’s attendance influences an artist’s present and future. It is the time in which an art institution aims to prepare its graduates for the art world.\textsuperscript{87} By fostering networks of expertise and connections, undergraduates establish a creative network, and graduate students deepen or extend theirs even further. It is the most undervalued asset a college can offer, leading to endless possibilities and a potentially successful career.\textsuperscript{88} American historian Nell Painter gives in her book \textit{Old in Art School: A Memoir of Starting Over} the insight that you can only be as successful as the network you built in an art school or after graduation.\textsuperscript{89} But education at an art school is not terminal; instead, it invites students to rethink their values and create the desire

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{84} Anthony Rhine and Jay Pension, \textit{How to Market the Arts: A Practical Approach for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century} (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022), 62.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Rhine and Pension, \textit{How to Market the Arts: A Practical Approach for the 21st Century}, 63.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Fine, \textit{Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education}, 2-13.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” in \textit{Art School (Prepositions for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century)}, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009), 173; Fine, \textit{Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education}, 195.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Nell Painter, \textit{Old in Art School: A Memoir of starting over} (Berkley, CA: Counterpoint, 2018), 205.
\end{itemize}
to challenge their practice constantly. The time at an art school serves as one stage in that process.  

During their education, artists explore different techniques, experiment outside their discipline, and experience a new point of view. Their attendance defines and adds meaning to the student’s body of work. They constantly exchange thoughts and ideas in a “safe space,” surrounded by like-minded people, observing the world outside. This exchange becomes visible in their body of work. Artists showcase what society wants to focus on by reimagining, revising, and reconnecting with a better tomorrow. This way, art has the potential to heal “broken” communities from within. While their attendance ignites the desire to explore and be curious continuously, they strengthen their presence, self-awareness, and influence on their communities by creating a deeper understanding of society.

Graduated artists (especially MFA graduates) tend to be more successful after being officially certified by an art institution. For example, painters, sculptors, or photographers enjoy

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92 Fine, Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education, 189.

93 Magsamen and Ross, Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us, 227.

94 Magsamen and Ross, Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us, 23; 219.

the privilege that galleries favor their work over non-graduates.\textsuperscript{96} Art schools must engage with the art world, using art trade shows and exhibitions to encourage interaction and engagement between students and the art world because curators constantly seek newness, adding uniqueness and exclusivity to their portfolios.\textsuperscript{97} Through a healthy exchange, students showcase their work and learn what the galleries seek, creating fruitful connections for a successful career.\textsuperscript{98} This connection and exposure to real-life scenarios is driven by the mindset of “college to career” and is crucial for any other art discipline.

Creative institutions must also prepare students for better challenges in the art world, primarily focusing on economics, shopping, and business ethics.\textsuperscript{99} For good or worse, all graduates represent the art school, forming their reputation within the art world.\textsuperscript{100} Despite this elementary responsibility, the university is responsible for engaging the local community, not solely to promote its work but also to educate the audience on how to engage with it. Education, training, and awareness of society will ultimately help the artists succeed by enjoying the audience that understands the body of work.\textsuperscript{101} The university value system is driven by the


\textsuperscript{97} Ute Meta Bauer, “Under Pressure”, 221-226.


\textsuperscript{100} Fine, \textit{Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education}, 203.

institution and strongly shaped by a close relationship with local communities.\textsuperscript{102} Artists are connected to their environment by renting local studios and volunteering in local communities.\textsuperscript{103} They ideally flourish when they feel they are part of that community-- and, at large, of society.\textsuperscript{104}

However, the biggest challenge is not only a sustainable relationship with the art market but also the openness of an institution to challenge itself, adapt to the demand of the markets, and stay a relevant source for artists of interest.\textsuperscript{105} By focusing on a unique point of view, an art school can attract a desired faculty that can increase student enrollment. Still, the university must provide what new members seek by creating a welcoming, comfortable, and diverse environment. Universities often rely on their graduating student's success but don’t do enough to evolve themselves.\textsuperscript{106}

This desire to “adapt” can be different for each school. Other institutions believe that rejecting the outside world and the expectations of the art world is the only way to re-invent art and stay relevant for galleries, museums, and art collectors.\textsuperscript{107} Ultimately, it is about finding the right balance between the market forces and aspirations of the institution. A successful

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\textsuperscript{103} Fine, Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education, 168.

\textsuperscript{104} Fine, Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education, 165.

\textsuperscript{105} Bauer, “Under Pressure,” 226; Madoff, “Introduction,” x.


\textsuperscript{107} Esche, “Include me out (Helping Artists to undo the Art World),” 112.
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implementation can positively influence social behavior, foster collaboration and innovation, and elevate the program and graduates.\textsuperscript{108}

4.2 Collaboration

Instead of following traditional models of individualization and separation, intending to engage and flourish in one’s discipline, new art schools must engage in contemporary intellectual and physical production methods to be open and flexible for the future.\textsuperscript{109} Artists can thrive ideally in a diverse community rather than individually in a private space. By mixing different experts, artists, and faculty, perspectives can shift and create something new, influencing the students’ vision, aesthetics, and personality.\textsuperscript{110} While faculty’s commitments vary, students and visiting professors join this community temporarily for up to four years.\textsuperscript{111}

In his book \textit{Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work}, Michael P. Farrell observes and analyzes creative groups that worked together successfully from the first meeting to separation. He illustrates several examples where creative individuals, each at a turning point in their personal life or career, joined forces with others, sharing a common vision for their discipline. “A collaborative circle is a primary group consisting of peers who share

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{108} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 161-165; Fine, \textit{Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education}, 179; Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 160.
  \item \textsuperscript{109} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 162.
\end{itemize}
similar occupational goals and who, through long dialogues and collaboration, negotiate a common vision that guides their work”, says Farrell.112

Collaboration is the group creation of something done by manual labor, dialogs, or virtual interaction. It enhances the creative act through the intercourse of various points of view. Artists, writers, composers, scientists, social reformers, and other creative people confirm that working collaboratively is crucial to their discipline.113 By discussing various concepts, students find new ways to engage with art, allowing every community member to value their experience themselves.114 Collaborative team members can play an essential part in their creative lives and practice with a deep commitment to each other while sharing the same vision, creating a unique group energy that could not be generated individually.115 On the other hand, art schools must offer spaces for students to take time off and reflect to make their learning experience more meaningful.116 It is about creating the possibility for various scenarios to provide ideal conditions for everyone at any time.

4.3 The New Art School

Creating a new art school environment is an opportunity to set an example of how the institution and its community want to evolve.117 New art school concepts should focus on


interdisciplinary work with a foundation in scholarly research and literary writing.\textsuperscript{118} The goal should be to unify the various goals of different art disciplines while providing spaces that accommodate each medium and effortlessly adapt to shifts in art and technology.\textsuperscript{119}

Whether renovating a historic building, repurposing an acquired property or designing a new structure, a planning committee representing each user group can promote a democratic environment that strengthens the aspired goal of this art institution.\textsuperscript{120} As the central guide for teaching and learning, the curriculum shapes the institution's space planning process.\textsuperscript{121} Updated every few years, it guarantees an alignment with market trends and the institution's values.\textsuperscript{122} It significantly influences the students’ performance and enhances the overall experience.\textsuperscript{123}

“The art school building must possess the authority of the academy and yet appear perpetually avant-garde; it must stand for the ethos of the art school and for art itself; it must be infinitely adaptive, yet constant, both iconoclastic and iconic,” states Lucy Howarth in \textit{The London Art Schools: Reforming the Art World, 1960 to Now.}\textsuperscript{124}


\textsuperscript{121} Howarth, “VII. Building: The New Chelsea,” 104-105.

\textsuperscript{122} Pujol, “On the Ground (Practical Observations for Regenerating Art Education),” 5.


\textsuperscript{124} Howarth, “VII. Building: The New Chelsea,” 98.
Setting the stage for fostering the art of a community creates a visible identity that has meaning and connects its community members to a defined place. Questions like: What emotions do we want to feel once we enter a building? These considerations can ultimately drive design decisions that will impact the environment’s overall mood. A strong branding identity can further support this idea, making the unified logo visible at every touchpoint in the community area. An art school’s architecture should mirror the institution’s mission and values. The main building should represent the College of Arts as a core of the community. It is where collaborations will happen, resources will be available, and values will be transmitted.

The artist creates work in their studio; therefore, studios serve as an extension of the student’s home, a creative laboratory where they evolve their body of work through trial and error. In this environment, artists come alive through learning, discussing ideas with peers, making work, and reflecting upon it. The primary purpose of the studio is to offer an environment where students can process everything they learn and link their new knowledge to their body of art. Depending on the discipline, the interior design can significantly impact the artist's vision. Spaces should be flexible for any object-making and be suitable for any equipment with high ceilings and natural light. Pin boards offer adjustable attachment of

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125 Magsamen and Ross, *Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us*, 212.


artworks, and the latest technology provides an ideal display of every medium. “Studio” can also be a class in the curriculum, one of the main classes in a student’s schedule, where they accomplish most of their work. A “great space” connecting all the individual studios can build community and reinforce the institution’s vision. Most students enjoy working in communal spaces as an alternative to the studio space.

Teaching students in class is still the most effective way to impact student achievement. “Studio” or “Crit” is a class or location where the faculty comments on the weekly progress of the work. The critique occurs in the “great space” or “crit space.” It is an event in which everyone, including peers, listens to each other’s presentations and gives feedback about the progress. While input from the faculty can determine a student’s success, observing criticism of a peer’s work is a more enjoyable learning experience than receiving criticism on one’s own work.

Art educators serve as mentors, guiding students through the program of study, facilitating interdisciplinary exchange, and preparing them for the art world. The hired faculty

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133 Lawson, *The Design Student’s Journey: Understanding How Designers Think*, 55.


decides the scope and depth of a program based on their skills and competencies. It is crucial to hire a diverse faculty body to represent all minorities and celebrate their investment into the community and work as creatives. The advantage of including professionals and artists from all disciplines is the exposure to other successful careers in the industry. It is less about the content and more about the visibility and social interaction before, during, or after class. New concepts create an environment that invites interaction between professors and students in cafés, hallways, and school lounges.

A workshop can create a space for experimentation—no rules or expectations influence the final product. A central location on campus can be an environment that fosters creativity and makes the process of making art visible to the whole community. By following an interdisciplinary approach, the college uses the interaction of diverse disciplines to engage everyone in the community in the creative process. The college is making the arts visible internally for everyone to see and participate in.

Gallery spaces are essential for an art school. They present artworks of students and invite external artists to exhibit their work. The curated thesis exhibition of a graduate student’s work is usually showcased in one of those gallery spaces. This event can be a stepping stone for a successful career in the art world. Ideally, these take place in exhibition spaces that have an

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142 Baldessari and Craig-Martin, “Conversation,” 44.

143 Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 166.

144 Vidokle, “From School to Exhibition,” 194.

open floor plan for increased flexibility; the gallery can be reconfigured easily according to each artist’s needs. Large windows in a central location make the event visible from the outside and encourage engagement with outsiders.\textsuperscript{146} Exhibitions are temporary; schools are permanent. While the perimeters stay consistent in a school, there is no room for flexibility. Set up as changing environments, schools could imitate the idea of exhibitions as ever-changing spaces for creating innovative artworks.\textsuperscript{147}

Museums are essential cultural places that invite social interactions and outreach and create an environment for collecting, exhibiting, and conserving art and research, education, contemplation, introspection, and enlightenment.\textsuperscript{148} Many universities use museums to display their graduate’s body of work, inviting students to create, curate, and manage exhibitions during their attendance in the program.\textsuperscript{149} Most museums use white walls in their exhibition space. Rooms are large, creating a flexible environment for all kinds of displays. Suspended walls serve as temporary dividers, creating an ideal environment for group exhibitions. The outside and the inside of a museum's architecture must relate to each other, inviting visitors to explore the museum’s collection. In a museum, the art of architecture and the visual arts are in constant dialogue.\textsuperscript{150}

Another underestimated way of bringing communities together is the simple act of eating together. It creates a bond, establishing a deeply rooted community for the most unexpected.

\textsuperscript{146} Howarth, “VII. Building: The New Chelsea,” 101-104.

\textsuperscript{147} Vidokle, “From School to Exhibition,” 195.


\textsuperscript{149} Fine: Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture in MFA Education, 8.

Sources confirm that humas are cooperative, team-driven, and likely to bond with our peers when we eat.\textsuperscript{151} Hospitality units should be focal points that bring the community together.\textsuperscript{152} It is within a casual dining space where unexpected encounters can happen. At Goldsmith, all departments are adjacent to the bar and canteen, are adjacent, inviting students to create a community; everyone is visible and exposed, making it possible to be part of each other's daily lives.\textsuperscript{153}

During the course of their studies, students can create a network that builds the foundation for their future careers. After graduation or the end of a residency, alumni and visiting artists spread their ideas across several national and international communities, manifesting the university's values.\textsuperscript{154} Through engagement with society, artists create relevant work that expresses the inner needs of man and humanity in its time.\textsuperscript{155} That way, the institution can sculpt the next generation of cultural production and support democracy.\textsuperscript{156}

This meeting place doesn’t have to be exclusive to college community members. Besides theatres, gallery spaces, or libraries, this unit offers another platform for an exchange with local communities. Delfina Studios, an artist’s residency in London, opened a bookstore and café that catered to everyone interested in art and culture. Here, students meet and interact with the public, making it one of the liveliest spaces in all of London.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{151} Magsamen and Ross, \textit{Your Brain on Art: How the Arts transform us}, 217.
\textsuperscript{152} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 174.
\textsuperscript{153} Baldessari and Craig-Martin, “Conversation,” 43.
\textsuperscript{154} Groys, “Education by Infection,” 31.
\textsuperscript{155} Vidokle, “From Exhibition to School,” 191.
\textsuperscript{156} Pujol, “On the Ground (Practical Observations for Regenerating Art Education),” 3, 8.
\textsuperscript{157} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 165.
Embedding the architecture in the surroundings using local materials, considering weather patterns, and embracing political views creates a sense of place.\textsuperscript{158} By creating a dialogue between architectural elements and the surrounding environment, a constant flow connects the two worlds.\textsuperscript{159} A network of spaces supports this idea and encourages users to socialize and interact with their community inside the university and outside with the public. The goal should be to create flexible spaces that adapt effortlessly in their dimensions and function. The right balance of professional setups and rough, creative spaces forms an ideal environment for innovative creation.\textsuperscript{160} Natural light, materials, and shapes can support these intentions while initiating healthy benefits and creating a comfortable and pleasing environment.\textsuperscript{161} Mutable architecture can answer the programmatic complexity and uncertainty of future demands, offering various spatial concepts.\textsuperscript{162} The built environment must be purposeful, functional, and safe for each user group rather than designed to follow a particular aesthetic. It should create an environment where communities are encouraged to be diverse.\textsuperscript{163}

Overall, the art school environment must enhance creativity by being functional and providing impulses to be creative. This balance has the potential to repair cultural roots, create


\textsuperscript{159} Self, \textit{The Architecture of Art Museums: A Decade of Design: 2000-2010}, 50-51; 68.

\textsuperscript{160} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 165, 174-175.


\textsuperscript{162} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 172; Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 165.

\textsuperscript{163} Anthony, \textit{Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession}, 29.
new traditions, and satisfy people's desire to imagine a future for themselves and the community. ¹⁶⁴

This literature research validates GSU’s strategic plan and offers valuable insights into how the university could accelerate its implementation. By highlighting COTA and its cultural production, the university can strengthen the GSU community and forge new bonds with the city of Atlanta. Furthermore, COTA could help attract more students to GSU and position the university as a leading R1 institution in the area of creative production.

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¹⁶⁴ Magsamen and Ross, *Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us*, 212.
5 CASE STUDIES

5.1 Historic Case Studies

Most art schools offer a variety of disciplines to attract new students, whereas the more successful art schools follow a holistic approach, forming more diverse and art communities. Every art school is based on an idea that enhances the community and creates a network of artists around the world. The Bauhaus (BH) in Weimar and the Black Mountain College (BMC) in North Carolina are iconic historical examples that defined what art in academia could be, and pioneered the teaching of art at the college level. Neither school limited itself to a single discipline but explored different ways of teaching collaborative and interdisciplinary production, whether in art, music, film, media, or theatre. Each example illustrates a valuable strategy, including intentional spatial planning to accommodate the arts ideally. Both schools are ideal models for COTA’s evolution.

5.1.1 The Bauhaus

The history of BH school was consistently erased and rewritten. Initially founded in 1919 in Weimar, Germany, by German architect Walter Gropius (1883-1969), BH was formed in a crisis and showcased a different approach to education. The BH movement adopted modernist pedagogy, embracing the idea of interdisciplinary, mutuality, and the unity of all the disciplines.

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165 Mulholland, Re-imagining the Art School: Paragogy and Artistic Learning, 39-40.


arts.\textsuperscript{169} Students learned skills for their practice and the greater good.\textsuperscript{170} Politics and biography influenced the art, differentiating its craft-based curriculum from traditional models.\textsuperscript{171} “The curriculum commenced with a preliminary course that immersed the students, who came from a diverse range of social and educational backgrounds, in the study of materials, color theory, and formal relationships in preparation for more specialized studies,” explained independent scholar Alexandra Griffith Winton in her essay for the Met.\textsuperscript{172}

Although opinions now very about the BH’s relevance and influence on the foundation of art education, Gropius promoted a different idea of establishing and marketing the arts.\textsuperscript{173} In 1925, the institution moved into a newly designed building in Dessau, Germany. The architecture symbolized the school’s values and aesthetics, which inspired modern design.\textsuperscript{174} Steel-frame construction, glass curtain walls, and an asymmetrical, pinwheel plan deemphasized the idea of a classroom and created workshop areas between studio spaces that foster collaboration and experimentation (fig. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{169} Mulholland, \textit{Re-imagining the Art School: Pedagogy and Artistic Learning}, ix; Winton, \textit{The Bauhaus, 1919-1933} (essay).

\textsuperscript{170} Llewellyn, “1. Introduction: History and Contexts”, 17.


\textsuperscript{172} Winton, \textit{The Bauhaus, 1919-1933} (essay).

\textsuperscript{173} Koehler, “Chapter 1: The Bauhaus Manifesto Postwar to Postwar: From the Street to the Wall, to the Radio, to the Memoir,” 15; Llewellyn, “1. Introduction: History and Contexts,” 17, 165.

\textsuperscript{174} Howarth, “VII. Building: The New Chelsea,” 104.

Figure 5.1 Dr. Barbara Steiner, *Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius (1925-26) - Facade* (image, screenshot), Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, accessed January 7, 2024, https://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/architecture/bauhaus-building.html.
Figure 5.2 Dr. Barbara Steiner, *Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius (1925-26) - Bird's Eye View* (image, screenshot), Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, accessed January 7, 2024, https://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/architecture/bauhaus-building.html.
The building was easily adaptable for other purposes with its open floor plan and several community areas (fig. 5.4).\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{176} After its closure, the BH building becomes the training center for the Nazi Party officials. Madoff, “Project 2: Bauhaus Building, completed 1926, Walter Gropius, Dessau, Germany,” 69.
BH students designed and manufactured products under the slogan “art into industry.”

The BH GmbH publishes a “Katalog der Muster” to showcase their students’ designs and market them at trade shows. However, due to the high prices, the students’ work mainly sold within

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intellectual circles, creating a legacy of prestige.\textsuperscript{178} After Gropius resigned as director, Hannes Meyer (1889-1954) took over leadership for two years, followed by Mies van der Rohe, who relocated the school to Berlin, Germany. The school closed because of an increasingly right-wing government in 1933.\textsuperscript{179}

Gropius showcased that the spatial organization of an art institution reinforces its ideals and values, positively affects the learning experience, and efficiently supports the infrastructure. The spatial organization was well thought out and easy to understand. Classrooms, administration, and workshop areas were adjoining, and large windows, as a key architectural element, facilitated a constant exchange between faculty and students.

With the idea of introductory classes, BH democratized art disciplines and fostered collaborative circles among students. This network of creatives was so deeply connected that not even the institution's closure didn’t stop its influence worldwide. Although the Bauhaus school has existed for only two decades, it is a prime example of how every element of an art institution depends on each other. Furthermore, it proved that a college has the potential to become a brand or movement influencing cultures worldwide.

A spatial reconfiguration of COTA could mirror the same effects and foster a COTA community. All COTA units must be spatially closer to create a visible creative community that functions individually and collectively. Implementing large windows in the existing architecture further enhances this task and creates a vibrant, social, and interactive environment.

\textsuperscript{178} Schudlenfrei, “Chapter 2: The Irreproducibility of the Bauhaus Object,” 50-52.

\textsuperscript{179} Winton, \textit{The Bauhaus, 1919-1933} (essay).
5.1.2 Black Mountain College

John Andrew Rice, a brilliant and mercurial scholar, founded the school because of a controversy at Rollins College shortly after the closure of BH in Germany, the ongoing persecution of artists and intellectuals in Europe, and the Great Depression in the United States. Students and faculty who found their way to North Carolina experienced a fundamentally different college. BMC’s value system and curriculum were based on American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey’s principles of progressive education and promoted an informal and collaborative spirit.180

Figure 5.5 Western Regional Archives, Black Mountain College (image), accessed January 8, 2024, https://www.ourstate.com/learning-the-black-mountain-way/.

Led by Joseph Albers and his wife, Anni Albers, the college quickly became a magnet place for artists and writers, shaping art education in the US. As a former leading educator at BH, Albers continued the celebrated interdisciplinary approach to the arts, combining fine and decorative arts with craft, architecture, theater, and music. “Nearly every student in the country dreamed of becoming a part of an institution that encouraged a remarkably interdisciplinary environment with flexible academic schedules and experiences with different media,” wrote Andrey Velimirović for Widewalls magazine in 2017. Although led by Albers, the college was governed by its students and teachers.

Rice asked Walter Gropius to redesign the campus in 1939. Alfred Kocher took over as lead architect, including the existing structures in his design, after a lack of funds to realize plans designed by Walter Gropius in 1939 (fig. 5.6).

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182 Velimirović, “Black Mountain College – A Fascinating Chapter in the History of Education and the Arts.”

BMC followed the BH’s idea of isolation by basing the school in a rural environment, twenty minutes east of Asheville, North Carolina. Being in the countryside was considered good and wholesome, while the city was distracting, even corrupting.\textsuperscript{184} Because the college was removed from surrounding communities, students were asked to participate in farm work, construction projects, and kitchen duty, fostering a strong sense of community (fig. 5.7).

\textsuperscript{184} Charles Renfro, “Undesigning the New Art School,” 165.
After Josef and Anni Albers left the college in 1949, the remaining faculty could not agree on a united future, splitting the community into parts with rifts that grew over time. The institution closed in 1957 due to mounting debts and internal disputes.\(^\text{185}\)

BMC strongly influenced the work of well-known artists in North Carolina, cementing the school's legacy. Proud of their education, some of its students were part of American modern and contemporary art with significant impact.

\(^{185}\) Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, *Black Mountain College: A Brief Introduction* (article).
Driven by creative collaboration and set in a rural environment, this case study showcases that a strong commitment by the faculty, a close connection to nature, and a desire to create a collaborative and creative community with a clear vision can lead not only the students to success but also manifest the influence an art college can have on a student’s education.

While GSU is in an urban rather than a rural environment, it has access to nature with HP, Woodroof Park, and other green spaces. The goal is to connect and integrate those spaces into campus to create a natural urban campus with points of interest and community. Art can be a leading force to achieve this mission. The faculty's commitment above can only be implemented by following a solid point of view, which might be challenging to adapt as GSU is a public institution focused on democratizing arts education.

5.2 Contemporary Case Studies

Besides historic examples, I was interested in researching contemporary case studies mentioned in several of my resources. Two art colleges were frequently used as references: The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in Halifax, Canada, and the Chelsea College of Art (CCAD) in London, Great Britain. I intended to isolate the art institution and find out how a college that was only focused on creative fields was set up. I wanted to investigate their infrastructure, isolated from the other dynamics of an educational institution. While they did not offer the same range of disciplines as COTA, they gave valuable insights into an ideal setup at COTA.

5.2.1 The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

Part of the educational landscape since 1887, NSCAD was the oldest degree-granting art school in Canada. It was initially founded as the Victoria School of Art and Design to
commemorate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in Halifax, Canada. In 1967, studio courses were still based on traditional art ideas and did not reflect current trends and ideas, like the abstract art movement. Garry Neill Kennedy modernized the school’s structure by hiring new faculty and updating the curriculum. The college promoted these changes and signaled its growing national importance by changing its name to NSCAD. The college quickly became “an educational hotbed of activity in the latest modes of art creation.”

Kennedy believed a less structured environment would provide more flexibility and foster innovation, so the school’s new setup was based on creative encounters between students and artists rather than a strategic plan. In studio classes, visiting artists filled temporary instructor positions, introducing new ways of learning. The school boasted on its website that cutting-edge art stars from Europe and North America were attracted to lecturing, teaching, and collaborating with students and faculty. A gallery space showcased the college community where artists reside on campus, exposing all students to various international artists (fig. 5.8).

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188 Kennedy, “Preface: Chronology as Structure,” xv.


190 Kennedy, “Preface: Chronology as Structure,” xv-xiii.

A lithography workshop enabled the college to print limited editions of visiting artists’ signed prints. Students experienced the whole process of each project, making it a real-life experience, and the college gained additional recognition and revenue from print sales.192 Between 2002 and 2006, the school expanded its campus in Halifax by securing a block of heritage buildings downtown named Fountain Campus (fig. 5.9), acquiring The Academy

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Building (fig. 5.10), and constructing a third campus location under the name Port Campus at Halifax’s seawall (fig. 5.11, 5.12, 5.13).193

Figure 5.9 Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, *Fountain Campus* (image), accessed January 7, 2024, https://nscad.ca/visit-and-explore/campus-maps/.

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Figure 5.10 Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, *The Academy Campus* (image), accessed January 7, 2024, https://nscad.ca/visit-and-explore/campus-maps/.

Figure 5.11 Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, *Port Campus* (image), accessed January 7, 2024, https://nscad.ca/visit-and-explore/campus-maps/.
Figure 5.12 MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited, *NSCAD Port Campus*, Sketch (diagram, screenshot), accessed January 7, 2024, https://www.mlsarchitects.ca/nscadportcampus.
NSCAD is an art institution that stays relevant and attracts artists worldwide by promoting creativity and investing in its infrastructure. Weekly changing exhibitions introduce a variety of artistic disciplines to the student body. The Anna Leonowens Gallery is accessible to the college and local residents walking by the storefront façade. Like GSU, this campus needs to spread its identity over different architectural styles and locations in town. NSCAD offers flexible, light-flooded “playgrounds” for any creative practice, from historic buildings downtown to repurposed warehouse facilities at the port.

This case study illustrates how to repurpose existing structures successfully and maintain a close relationship with residents in an urban setting. The downtown campus honors the building’s historic façades of the buildings. It exposes cultural production through retail
storefronts. The port campus celebrates its location close to the water. Embedded into the city, the three different campus areas offer a diverse visual infrastructure for the creatives of tomorrow. GSU has the potential to establish a similar downtown setting by celebrating local architecture, focusing on the arts, and designing a vital and creative hub that will serves as the university’s front door. It becomes evident that COTA can help revitalize downtown and unite different communities, benefiting Atlanta, GSU, and the arts.

5.2.2 Chelsea College of Art & Design

The Chelsea College of Art & Design was originally the South-Western Polytechnic faculty founded in 1882 on Manresa Road and Chelsea Square in London, Great Britain. Focused on the commercial aspects of art, illustration, textiles, etching, lithography, and architecture, the school set itself apart and became popular during the Second Industrial Revolution. By merging with the Regent Street Polytechnic School of Art in 1964 and with the Hammersmith College of Art and Building in 1975, the school manifests its position between the London art schools. About ten years later, the college became part of the University of the Arts as CCAD. Today, the University of the Arts London (UAL) unites CCAD with five other colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, the London College of Communication, the London College of Fashion, and the Wimbledon College of Arts, and five institutes: The UAL Creative Computing Institute, the UAL Decolonizing Arts Institute, the UAL Fashion Textiles and Technology Institute, the AKO Storytelling Institute, and the UAL Pre-degree Studies.

194 Artist Biographies, British and Irish Artists of the 20th Century, Chelsea School of Art, Artists Biographies Ltd., accessed January 27, 2024, https://www.artbiogs.co.uk/2/schools/chelsea-school-art#:~:text=This%20school%20was%20originally%20a,artists%20on%20its%20teaching%20staff.

After several relocations in the urban landscape of London, the college resides today next to the Tate Britain at Millbank, one of London’s most celebrated contemporary art museums. CCA moved into an existing building structure and successfully adapted it for their use.\textsuperscript{196} A new master plan invites the local community to engage with college members in a center square as a meeting place, exhibition space, and community area (fig. 5.14).\textsuperscript{197}


Besides this central outdoor space, the college offers several other opportunities for social engagement. A canteen, café, and shop are among various common areas and resources for students and faculty to follow their creative passion. The college infrastructure includes four exhibition and project spaces, three on the ground floor and one on the first. The Chelsea Space,


as the main exhibition space, is a street-facing gallery that invites passersby to explore international and interdisciplinary exhibitions and workshops (fig. 5.15).

With the Triangle Space as a project and maker space led by students (fig. 5.16) and an additional gallery named the Cook House (fig. 5.17), artists showcase their work in different settings. The Chelsea Landing on the first floor completes the set of CCAD’s exhibition spaces (fig. 5.18).198

Figure 5.16 Noble, Kristy, *Triangle Space* (image), University of Arts London, accessed January 24, 2024, https://www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/chelsea-college-of-arts/student-life-at-chelsea/facilities.

Figure 5.17 Housedcollective, *Cook House* (image), accessed January 24, 2024, https://housedcollective.wordpress.com/2015/02/13/introducing-housed-cookhouse-chelsea-college-of-arts/.
While the college offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs, it invites interested creatives to be part of the art community by providing various short courses introducing artmaking to interested creatives.\textsuperscript{199} This way, the college creates revenue streams during and outside the semester, populating the building in its off-season.\textsuperscript{200}

This case study introduces a central plaza that provides a gathering space for the college community, an exhibition space, and an interaction point with the residents of that area. Almost set up as a courtyard, it is visible from most rooms of the central building, offering constant social impulses for the students and faculty. This central space is one critical architectural element currently missing at COTA and GSU. GW, HP, or the courtyards of SH offer such a


gathering opportunity that invites students to connect with nature, the community, and the cultural production of COTA.

6 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

My research indicates that the spatial relationship between individual units significantly influences the social interactions between members of the whole community. Therefore, analyzing the infrastructure of GSU and other peer institutions that offer the same portfolio of degrees becomes crucial. The Georgia Board of Regents list the following institutions as GSU’s peers:

- University of Central Florida
- University of New Mexico – Main Campus
- Florida International University
- Wayne State University
- Stony Brook University
- Indiana University – Purdue University – Indianapolis
- University of Houston
- The University of Texas at Arlington
- University at Buffalo
- University of California – Riverside
- Temple University
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- University of Louisville
- The University of Texas at San Antonio
• University of Memphis\textsuperscript{201}

Depending on the available sources online, I selected six universities, researched their academic programs, and analyzed their infrastructure. In addition to those six case studies, I studied the Kennesaw State University in GA, which is mentioned as one aspirational competitor to GSU in my interview with Dr. Phillips.\textsuperscript{202}

In my analysis, I am especially interested in the following:

• How is the campus spatially set up?
• Where are creative disciplines located?
• What are points of interest, like food courts, libraries, shops, or outdoor plazas?
• Where are exhibition and performance spaces located?
• Where do members and guests of the university park?
• What is the relationship between the creative disciplines?
• Are peer institutions set up like GSU? Or can we learn from their campus layout?

After downloading the campus map, I color each section differently and extracted the colors separately to understand the infrastructure and dynamics of each campus layout. Here is an overview of all the colors used and their associated space:

• Dark grey: the university's central point (welcome center, oldest, most iconic building).
• Light grey: buildings associated with the university but unrelated to creative disciplines.

\textsuperscript{201} Office of Institutional Effectiveness, \textit{Peer Institutions}, Georgia State University, accessed January 24, 2024, https://oie.gsu.edu/our-services/oir/peer-institutions/.

\textsuperscript{202} Appendix C.1: Interview with Dr. Chester Phillips.
Blue: parking facilities, whether that be parking lots or garages.

Light green: outdoor spaces like parks or plazas (when indicated).

Dark green: outdoor sporting facilities like football or baseball fields.

Teal: community spaces of the university, like libraries, food courts, or shops.

Purple: administration of COTA (if applicable).

Pink: exhibition and performance spaces.

Yellow: SoM facilities (or comparable disciplines, departments).

Orange: FMT (or comparable disciplines, departments).

Red: WSAD (or comparable disciplines, departments).

6.1 Diagram of the College of the Arts

As mentioned in previous chapters, COTA units are spatially separated, and their infrastructure is decentralized, making it evident why students feel isolated and not part of a community. The analysis of the COTA campus in the central downtown area makes those dynamics visible and showcases how separated its units are (fig. 5.1).
Figure 6.1 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *Campus Diagram COTA* (image), October 29, 2023.

The diagram showcases several of the challenges previously discussed:

- Prioritization of automobiles
- Lack of parking close to RC
- Distance between COTA units and their internal parts
• COTA leadership offices detached from its units
• Art is invisible in the campus center
• Lack of university-operated hospitality units, like food courts, etc.

But the diagram also makes opportunities for COTAs’ future more evident:
• A possible network of COTA around HP
• Utilization of HP and SH courtyards as central green spaces and hubs for creativity
• Centralization of COTA
• Revitalization of SH and DH with parking garage connection
• Inclusion of UWB

### 6.2 Diagram of Peer Institutions

I used the same strategy for all peer institutions and highlighted their spatial strategy.\(^{203}\) The diagrams showcase a spatial strategy different from GSU’s. Although their campuses vary in size, parking is generally located outside the campus perimeter, making walking or public transportation the most prominent mode of transportation. The University of Houston and University of Memphis campuses stand out with exceptionally verdant campuses, where university members are exposed to nature almost everywhere they go. All other examples also include green areas, but they are more disconnected or spread out on the campus map. On the other hand, community areas like food courts, libraries, or community spaces are evenly distributed on all campuses, fostering a sense of community. All examples indicate that creative departments are spatially adjacent, leaving Virginia Commonwealth University as the only institution I studied that had a similar set up as COTA at GSU. Overall, theatre and exhibition spaces are either adjacent to the creative departments or in prominent locations on campus, close

\(^{203}\) Appendix D: Spatial Diagrams.
to a landmark or a green space, and in the vicinity of a parking lot, creating an ideal environment for public events.

This analysis is a very brief overview of how other peer institutions are set up and what their strategy in positioning the arts might be. I will have to visit each campus and request additional information to validate these statements further. The exact location of each department will have to be verified as some departments might be on higher floors rather than as adjacent as they appear on a map. However, the diagrams showcase that most case studies examined for this thesis position the arts and their outlets of cultural production differently than GSU. If GSU wants to consider these peer institutions as aspirational examples and views them as our competition, it becomes evident that COTA needs to be repositioned on GSU’s campus.

7 PROPOSED SOLUTION

Previous research indicates that a strategic spatial setup of COTA is essential for enhancing the formation of a united community and creating endless possibilities for unplanned encounters that foster connections for future collaborations. Based on the previous framework, research, and evidence, I propose the following design solution for a new creative hub for Atlanta, GSU, and the arts.

This chapter illustrates possible avenues following an approachable, sustainable, and holistic approach to create the ideal environment for COTA’s future. The goal is to create spaces that facilitate collaboration, community, and creativity and increase the visibility of the arts downtown.

7.1 Program

With the desire to create a home for any college member, artist, or scholar, the right mix of individual and community spaces must offer solitude or community for any creative
discipline. I examined all existing spaces in this chapter and highlighted potential portfolio additions.

### 7.1.1 Existing Spaces

A comparison of all existing spaces in each of the college's units showcased a common need for the same spaces. While the departments function in separate campus areas, I spaces that have similar (or identical) functions to create additional contact points between members and establish a more resourceful and efficient infrastructure. Here is an alphabetical list of spaces that already exist and spaces that are accessible university-wide:

- Classrooms
- Conference rooms
- Galleries
- Labs
- Offices
- RH
- Resources like printing rooms, equipment check-outs, storage, etc.
- Studios for graduate students and faculty
- Theatres
- Workshop area like EXLAB or CMII

### 7.1.2 Supplemental Spaces

A new spatial configuration of existing and supplemental spaces will enhance the efficiency and variety of creative venues and centralize community spaces to achieve the desired goal. The list of supplemental spaces is optional yet necessary to accelerate the success of this project:
- Central lobby
- Collaboration spaces
- Faculty spaces
- Food and beverage like student café, deli, or restaurant
- Hotel
- Housing for artists
- Museum
- Multi-purpose showcase
- Outdoor spaces
- Quiet rooms
- Retail store for selling produced artworks
- Student lounges
- Studios for undergraduate students
- Shop for art supplies

### 7.1.3 Bubble Diagram

A bubble diagram helps set priorities and identify beneficial relationships between all existing and supplemental spaces. Each bubble represents a space, and its color, size, and position on the chart indicate its indirect or direct connection to other spaces. This gives the designer and client a structured overview of the project.

The bubble diagram below is one possible approach to discuss the new spatial arrangement of COTA. A central plaza such as the Creative Hub (CH) with workshop areas fostering community and creativity while increasing the visibility of the arts and community members must be the core space of the new setup. All other spaces are colored and grouped by
function, and solid (direct) or dashed (indirect) connection lines indicate their relationship. CMII, the library (art collections in the main library), RC, and the hotel are separate entities with a healthy partnership with COTA but function independently from the college to encourage university-wide access.

Figure 7.1. Peter Huesemann-Odom, Bubble Diagram “The New College of the Arts” (image), April 04, 2024.
7.2 Schematic Design

While I investigated the functions and the relationships of all listed spaces in the program phase of the project, I developed a schematic design that "massages" all named environments into either existing or newly created architecture.

With a focus on the adaptive reuse of existing structures and a sense of place, the proposed design solution introduces a new center of the arts around HP. A&H is an already established center of the arts on campus, DH, SH is a historic anchor building on campus, the ground floor of T-Deck as a potential production facility for FMT, UWB on Edgewood as the latest acquisition of the university, form a triangle around HP that creates ideal conditions for each department of COTA. My idea is to design an area on campus that resonates with members of COTA while honoring the existing architecture and introducing a symbolic university center with the arts at its core. Guided by this idea, fueled with the desire to design a prominent connection between A&H and SH and create additional spaces that foster collaboration, I developed a cuboid structure for all necessary spaces. This concept is already visible in the schematic design diagram below, while I elaborate the design further in the following chapter (fig. 7.2).
7.3 Design

Informed by the established program and schematic design phase, I explain further design developments in this chapter. I am starting with the design concept, which is informing more
significant decisions about a new logo for the college and the exterior façade. Later in this chapter, I explore interior design concepts, focusing on all supplemental spaces. The goal is to portray what these spaces need to look and feel like to achieve our mission.

### 7.3.1 Design Concept

A triptych is a work of art consisting of three panels related to each other in theme, style, and color (fig. 7.3).

![Image of a triptych](https://www.thephotoargus.com/triptych-photography-examples-and-ideas/)


It requires careful planning and design to ensure the panels complement each other and form a cohesive whole. When shown together, all parts achieve their full potential and completion, while each part might also function independently. The same applies to the three COTA units. Currently spatially separated and invisible to each other, the triptych concept will

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unite all members in an efficiently organized matrix of spaces that increases individual and communal creativity, collaboration, and visibility for the arts.

### 7.3.2 Branding

The main idea is to follow the university's design guidelines as much as possible while creating a unique brand concept for COTA that unites all three departments.\(^{205}\) Aligned with the design concept, a three-part composition is the foundation of the community logo. In addition, a personalized color guides each logo, and a grid of cubes forms a unique wayfinding system to create a network of the arts on campus (fig. 7.4, 7.5).

\(^{205}\) Georgia State University, *Communications Toolkit* (blog), accessed April 01, 2024, https://commkit.gsu.edu/.
Figure 7.4 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *Branding Sketch “Wayfinding”* (sketch), March 20, 2024.
7.3.3 Exterior Concept

The idea is to marry existing architecture with timeless architectural elements that establish all COTA members’ sense of place and identity. While the existing buildings are slightly modified, I incorporate new cuboids to symbolize each school within COTA and its overall unity as a creative hub, to prominently reinforce the intersection of diverse artistic disciplines, indoor and outdoor, individuality and community, past and present.
A three-story glass cuboid invites community members and visitors to experience all artistic disciplines in CH. This entrance will contain the main lobby area, gallery spaces, a shop, and seating options and will connect A&H and SH. Above the main cuboid structure are graduate and collaboration spaces for FMT (Media Cuboid, MC). A two-story cuboid with a checkerboard facade of stone-framed floor-to-ceiling windows showcases different media types and disciplines. Above the MC is the Music Cuboid (MUC), a two-story glass facade behind a crosshatch timber structure symbolizing the blend of sounds of musical instruments in an orchestra. On top of all three cuboids is the Design Cuboid (DC), which hosts all art and design disciplines. This cuboid features a glass facade behind a checkerboard pattern of brick that represents the idea of clay being formed by the artist’s hand, and includes collaborative spaces on two floors. All cuboids have access to outdoor spaces, offering a variety of environments for members of COTA.
7.3.4 **Interior Concept**

In this section, I draft an overview of all supplemental spaces necessary to establish the desired project goals. I showcase highlights of exhibition spaces, performance venues, and studios that form an ideal environment for community or solitude.206

7.3.4.1 **Exhibition Spaces**

A museum in UWB will showcase the State of Georgia’s art collection, gifted and archived collections, and artworks from former COTA graduate students, faculty, and visiting artists. Visible from Peachtree Center and HP, these two floors will be open to all members of GSU and the public—as will all campus galleries. Artworks will be displayed indoors and outdoors surrounding the college buildings to promote the image of the art district on campus. Exhibition spaces with high ceilings, moveable walls, and floor-to-ceiling windows will grant ideal conditions for the museum and galleries to maximize the College’s impact on Atlanta, GSU, and the arts.

7.3.4.2 **Outdoor Spaces**

By eliminating the middle wing of SH, the Creative Courtyard establishes an artistic playground and display area for artworks in progress by departments like sculpture, ceramics, or film and media. Surrounded by classrooms and CH, it creates a center for creativity visible to everyone in the arts. Additional outdoor spaces are accessible from the graduate studios and collaboration spaces in DC, MC, and MUC. Various seating arrangements and open spaces provide even more room for artists to follow their passions.

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206 Appendix F: Exhibition Boards.
7.3.4.3 Performance Spaces

RH in A&H, mainly utilized by the SoM, and the DH theatre, operated by FMT, will be significantly updated to align them with current trends in the entertainment industry. Both venues will continue to operate as educational facilities that showcase student work and national and international artists. RC will create a program separate from the College to maintain a strong relationship with the local community as a historic venue for the arts. The "ballroom" of DH, with its large footprint, high ceilings, and prominent location towards the south-east of campus, is a multi-purpose event space that will host larger groups for assemblies, performances, and movie screenings. With a flexible setup of moving walls, seating, and the latest high-tech available on the market, this space will accommodate all college units for any college-wide event.

7.3.4.4 Collaboration Spaces

Multiple collaboration spaces on every floor, near studios and offices, will provide seating and technology environments to drive creativity and innovation. Focusing on functionality, timeless design, and natural materials, the College will promote a holistic environment that feels comfortable, welcoming, and resourceful. Workshop areas like the existing EXLAB in A&H will follow COTA’s new design aesthetic in order to ensure cohesive identity and community.

7.3.4.5 Studios

Each student will have an individual or community studio space or office to accomplish their work. Light-flooded, air-conditioned, and equipped with discipline-specific furniture and technology, these spaces will become the home base for every student. Undergraduate student studios will be in A&H, while the graduate student studios are in DC, MC, and MUC.
7.3.4.6 Shop

A shop with an assortment of supplies will primarily cater to COTA students. Located in CH, this shop will provide emerging artists with everything they need for their creative practices. Books, pencils, paints, printing materials, etc., will be displayed on large tables and wall fixtures. A separate retail store, accessible to the public, will sell art created by the students and faculty body. It will create an additional outlet for artists to earn money and will help them understand the market's demand.

7.3.4.7 Food & Beverage Spaces

Several food outlets will offer local, healthy food and drink options and will serve as casual meeting spots for artistic exchange. I envision a café is in SH, a Deli opens in DH, and a restaurant with table service in UWB. With a focus on community-building, various seating options provide comfort for any size group. The design will align with the new identity and promotes a timeless design that will make everyone feel welcome.

8 EXHIBITION

All MFA candidates of the WSAD graduate program showcase their thesis work in a one-week exhibition in one of the college's two gallery spaces in A&H. While artistic disciplines like painting or photography showcase their work, design students from graphic or interior design exhibit their research or proposed solutions three-dimensionally.

8.1 Exhibition Set-Up

My thesis exhibition, The New College of the Arts, invited the GSU community to experience COTA's future in the WSAD gallery space from April 8-12, 2024. The opening reception on April 11, 2024, celebrated all disciplines in a community gathering with drinks and snacks to further foster the exchange of artists in a creative environment. The goal was to
showcase my research and introduce the possible design solution in a structured and approachable way. I wanted to make this exhibition accessible for any community member by streamlining my research into something easy to understand and digest. The idea was to set up the space as a window display of the new COTA, allowing the audience to immerse themselves into the concept and believe that the "idea" is already reality.

The gallery’s glass façade showcased the new branding I designed, uniting all three units in one logo, highlighting the vision of the proposed solution, and validating COTA’s crucial role as a key driver critical to the prosperous future of GSU. The installed sub-headline "MFA THESIS EXHIBITION 2024 | INTERIOR DESIGN | THE NEW COLLEGE OF THE ARTS | PETER HUESEMMANN-ODOM | APRIL 08-12, 2024" gives the visitor further information about the framework of this exhibition (fig. 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Peter Hueemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Glass façade (image), April 08, 2024.
The rectangular exhibition space with two entries on the right and left side of the gallery glass facade was structured as follows: 24 numbered design boards explained the parameters of this thesis, documented my research, and introduced the new program, schematic design, and proposed design solution. Elevated on a circular, white three-inch platform in the center of the space, 3D-printed models represented the built environment of GSU’s campus and surrounding architecture on a 1:500 scale (fig. 8.2).

Figure 8.2 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Exhibition Set-Up (image), April 08, 2024.

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207 Appendix F: Exhibition Boards.
A ceiling-mounted projector illuminated the 73 white plastic models, bathing the surface of each building in colored light that varied depending on the building’s function or the departments contained with it. Visitors followed the looped video slideshow (5:03 minutes) on the model with a double-sided guide (placed on a white column at the left entry of the exhibition space for the visitor's convenience) that explained the sequence of diagrams (fig. 8.3, 8.4).

Figure 8.3 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Guide (pdf), April 07, 2024, 1.
Figure 8.4 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Guide* (pdf), April 07, 2024, 2.

A sun study around HP followed this sequence, presenting 24 hours in May as time laps (fig. 8.5).
A second ceiling-mounted projector presented rendered images of the proposed design solution in the form of a looped video, projected on the entire back wall of the exhibition space (3:10 minutes), serving as a testament to the power of design in fostering collaboration, creativity, and community (fig. 8.6).
One bench invited visitors to follow the diagram sequence on the model. A second bench provided comfort while watching the renderings projected on the wall (fig. 8.6). The reception on Thursday, April 11, 2024, invited members of the community, artists, and the public to explore the exhibition with refreshments and small bites (fig. 8.7).
Figure 8.7 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Reception Set Up (image), April 11, 2024.
Chip Moody, an MFA candidate for photography, showcased his thesis work in an adjacent gallery. We invited a diverse group of people to celebrate interdisciplinarity in art and to promote collaboration among COTA art and design students.

8.2 Response and next steps

Throughout the week, I welcomed a diverse group of visitors representing various college disciplines. Engaging in meaningful discussions with internal and external faculty members reinforced our commitment to building a solid and cohesive community. During my committee meeting, I had the opportunity to give tours of the gallery space to COTA directors Dr. Phillips, Dr. Tussey, Prof. White, and Dr. Richmond, all of whom provided positive feedback and expressed a desire to develop further the idea of a central hub for the arts.

Following these initial tours, I continued to spread the word with additional tours attended by faculty, students, and artists. Our efforts paid off when we were able to facilitate a guided tour with GSU Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer L. Jared Abramson and GSU Vice President of Facilities Management Ramesh Vakamudi. This marked the first time the administration visited an MFA thesis show in interior design. All were impressed and grateful for the hard work put into this thesis.

The next steps include meeting with GSU President M. Brian Blake to present my research and design solution, publish my findings online, and facilitate further discussions between GSU management and Atlanta city developers to establish a much-needed downtown center for the arts downtown.

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208 Prof. White in conversation with the author on April 10, 2024.
9 CONCLUSION

This thesis, *The New College of the Arts*, delves into factors contributing to isolation, lack of community, and limited collaboration at COTA. Through extensive historical, primary, and secondary research, it identifies the key components responsible for these issues. Moreover, it highlights the growing significance of Atlanta's metropolitan area, the crucial role of achieving the university's strategic objectives, and the distinctiveness of the college's academic programs. By exploring these areas, the thesis aims to provide recommendations and solutions to address the challenges faced by COTA and enhance its overall functioning.

Designing a university campus that aligns with its values and mission is paramount. It involves more than just the physical appearance but also the internal processes and procedures. In Chapter 3.2, Challenges and Opportunities of the Current Situation, the curriculum and faculty are critical in reflecting the university's mission and promoting collaboration on campus. While the environment can be designed to align with the strategic plan, the administration and faculty must ultimately execute it.

The concept is not only in line with the university's strategic plan but also reflects the trends and desires of Atlanta's society to learn from its past and prepare for a brighter future together. The positive reception of my thesis show and the continued conversations with the GSU administration initiated through the showcase validate my research and satisfy my goal of questioning the current setup and proposing a new spatial program for the arts at GSU.

Fortunately, the university's new leadership under President Blake and a team of interim directors is highly motivated. With President Blake's strong ties to Atlanta’s current mayor, Andre Dickens, now is an opportune time to discuss a strategic plan for purposeful, authentic, and inspiring spaces for the arts at GSU.
The New College of the Arts represents a significant step towards creating a campus environment that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, and creativity. This approach will enable students to reach their full potential and positively impact society. Overall, the new setup is inclusive and rewarding, propelling the university toward becoming a welcoming destination for students, faculty, and artists.

“The perfect art school building is a utopian idea because of too many stakeholders and a constant shift in art practices and needs,” states Lucy Howarth in The London Art Schools: Reforming the Art World, 1960 to Now. This thesis project explored various avenues that could shift the focus from the building itself to the importance of community. I argue that community is not a utopian concept but a crucial element to consider in any building project.

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A: College of the Arts Fact Sheets

10.1.1 Appendix A.1: Fact Sheet College of the Arts (pdf)

Figure 10.1 College of the Arts, Fact Sheet College of the Arts (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/tkh9ddepnzu23oundb34/24-CAS070123-COTA_Quick_Facts_Flier-FIN-1.pdf?rlkey=hm26871ayhasbvy12jht0bwxp&e=1&dl=0.
10.1.2 Appendix A.2: Fact Sheet Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design (pdf)

Ernest G. Welch School of ART & DESIGN

The Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design at Georgia State University is accredited and offers opportunities to shape culture through the practice and study of the arts. Our accomplished faculty train students for creative work and scholarship through a rigorous curriculum in fine arts, design, art history and art education. We offer an accessible and transformative education to one of nation’s most diverse student populations.

Situated in the cultural and educational heart of Atlanta, the Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design assumes a key role in the life of the metropolitan art community, and the school’s downtown location encourages connections with local art networks. This dynamic setting stimulates students and faculty to grow as artists and scholars, and provides them with innumerable opportunities for professional development. Our programs foster critical thinking and dynamic artistic production within an interdisciplinary environment.

NOTABLE ALUMNI

PAUL STEPHEN BENJAMIN
Rodgers Prize Winner

SONYA YONG JAMES
ArtsEd Award Winner

YANIQUE NORMAN

WASSAN AL-KHUDHARI

7 ARTADIA AWARDS

1 GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP

3 HUDGENS PRIZES

1 SOUTHERN PRIZE

In the last decade, more than 55 of Atlanta’s most prestigious arts grants and fellowships have been awarded to Georgia State’s community of artists.

51 Art & Design students, faculty and alumni have works in the permanent collection of the High Museum of Art.

Over the past two years, more than 150 group and solo exhibitions throughout Atlanta featured Georgia State students, faculty and alumni.

Figure 10.2 College of the Arts, Fact Sheet Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://thearts.gsu.edu/download/one-pager-school-of-art-design-fact-sheet/?wpdmdl=65459&masterkey=603eb401cdbda, 1.
### Degrees Offered

**Undergraduate**
- Bachelor of Arts in Art
  - Art History
  - Studio Art
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art
  - Drawing, Painting & Printmaking
  - Graphic Design
  - Interior Design
  - Photography
  - Three-Dimensional Studio
    - Ceramics
    - Sculpture
    - Textiles

**Graduate**
- Master of Arts in Art Education
- Master of Arts in Art History
- Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education
- Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art
  - Drawing & Painting
  - Graphic Design
  - Interior Design
  - Photography
  - Printmaking
  - Textiles
  - Ceramics
  - Sculpture

**Dual Degree**
- Art History, Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art and Master of Arts in Art History

### Facilities & Resources

The Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design offers discipline-specific and graduate studio space, which include a woodshop, metal shop, iron forge, 3D and laser cut printers, Adobe Creative Suite computer labs, wheel throwing and kilns, screen printing and litho presses, a darkroom, dye stations, looms, sewing machines, plotters and more, all with 24-hour access.

Students also have access to photography, software, and tech equipment rental through the Creative Media Center and the Visual Resource Center, which boasts the complete Siegwerk Lecture Archive and Artwork research access. In the Georgia State main library, the College has an art collection and a dedicated librarian.

The Welch School Galleries support the curriculum by curating regional, national and international art exhibitions throughout the year, while providing a venue for thesis senior shows. The gallery hosts presentations and panel discussions, providing students with personal access to professional artists and scholars. The school also has two, student-run galleries for staging critiques and student-curated exhibitions.

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Figure 10.3 College of the Arts, *Fact Sheet Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design* (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://thearts.gsu.edu/download/one-pager-school-of-art-design-factsheet/?wpdmdl=65459&masterkey=603eb401dbda, 2.
Figure 10.4 College of the Arts, Fact Sheet School of Film, Media, and Theatre (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://docs.google.com/viewer?hl=en&url=https://thearts.gsu.edu/download/one-pager-school-of-film-media-theater-fact-sheet?ind%3D161472952926%26filename%3DCOTA_FMT_OnePager.pdf%26wpdmdl%3D65461%26refresh%3D603eb7d6ee32161723030%26open%3D1, 1.
DEGREES OFFERED

**Undergraduate**
- Bachelor of Arts in Film & Media
- Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies - Acting
- Art Administration - Speech & Theatre

**Graduate**
- Master of Arts in Communication: Film, Video & Digital Imaging
- Moving Image Production
- Moving Image Studies

**Doctoral**
- Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies: Moving Image Studies

**Dual Degree**
- Film & Media (emphasis on film and video production): Bachelor of Arts in Film & Media and Master of Arts in Communication

FACILITIES & RESOURCES

**Production Studio**
The Media Production Studio space (2,500 sq. ft. with 17 ft. ceiling) is equipped with a lighting grid, a green screen cyclorama wall, and full audio/video connectivity.

**Media Post-Production Suite**
This suite is equipped with specialized acoustics, professional editing workstations with audio-video interface devices, video display, audio playback system, audio/video connectivity with other editing suites, theater, and production studio.

**Production Equipment Checkout**
This professional equipment rental facility is the home base for student and faculty production activities, and contains cameras, audio, lighting, and grip equipment.

**Classrooms 200 and 202**
These classrooms are used for combination of teaching and post-production activities, especially referring to post-production. Each classroom contains 15 iMac workstations with the latest audio and video post-production software.

**Dalhberg Theatre**
Home of the student-run theatrical ensemble. The GSU Players, the theatre resides in the 120-year-old renovated building known as Dalhberg Hall. This 250-seat theatre is fully equipped with lighting, sound, projection, a green room and dressing room.

Figure 10.5 College of the Arts, *Fact Sheet School of Film, Media, and Theatre* (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://docs.google.com/viewer/viewer?url=https://thearts.gsu.edu/download/one-pager-school-of-film-media-theater-fact-sheet/?ind%3D161472295296%26filename%3DCOTA_FMT_OnePager.pdf%26wpdmdl%3D65461%26refresh%3D603eb7d6ee321614723030%26open%3D1, 2.
10.1.4 Appendix A.4: Fact Sheet School of Music (pdf)

Figure 10.6 College of the Arts, Fact Sheet School of Music (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://thearts.gsu.edu/download/one-pager-school-of-music-fact-sheet/?ind%3D1614723212307%26filename%3DCOTA_SOM_OnePager.pdf%26wpdmdl%3D65462%26refresh%3D603eb8d80c0291614723288%26open%3D1, 1.
Figure 10.7 College of the Arts, Fact Sheet School of Music (pdf), Georgia State University, accessed January 2, 2024, https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://thearts.gsu.edu/download/one-pager-school-of-music-fact-sheet/?id=3D1614723212307%26filename%3DCOTA_SOM_OnePager.pdf%26wpdmdl%3D65462%26refresh%3D603eb8d80c291614723288%26open%3D1, 2.
ARTISAN

MISSION

In aesthetics, clients approach designers to find the perfect design solution for their problems. In this year’s studio class, each student from interior and graphic design created furniture items, "top ten list" of the most broken things in the world.

MY TOP TEN LIST

1. POLLUTION
2. OVERWORK
3. SUGAR ADDICTION
4. POVERTY
5. FOOD INSECURITY
6. GENDER INEQUALITY
7. UNEMPLOYMENT
8. LOW SAVINGS
9. INADEQUATE EDUCATION
10. UNHEALTHY EATING

While most of these problems are commonly known, we discussed the bare menus and the alimentary chart. It was more difficult for the programme of people who have been denied access to food in San Francisco or the missing occurrence of character and style in neighborhoods surrounding us. After analyzing each problem, I created UNHEALTHY EDUCATION as the problem I would like to address.

As a German, I lived most of my life in Europe surrounded by vast and picturesque landscapes. In the United States, I grew up in a small town with small businesses and walked together with my local community’s specialties. Being an international student at Georgia State University (GSU) and having experienced student life on campus for one year now, I especially miss the exposure to diverse spaces focused on an inspirational experience with healthy food options.

There is no fixed space catered to the creative people of Atlanta, who enjoy the arts and a healthy lifestyle.

CASE STUDY

Located on the corner of our favorite destination, the University of Georgia (UGA), located in Athens, is one of the most historic institutions in the country. It is open to students and locals (see FIG. 1.1, 1.3). The University of Georgia is the University of Georgia, a public research university located in Athens, Georgia.

- Known for affordable healthy food and drinks, and a rooftop terrace with breathtaking views over the city's skyline.
- Functions as a multi-use space.
- Creates a third space for students and residents in the vicinity of campus.
- Integrates the community.

RESEARCH

My research included a literature review and several meetings with faculty members of GSU (incl. professors, administration, food services team members, etc., as well as an informal survey framing the proposed problem from their point of view.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Health into nutrition rather than healthcare
- Creates an inviting learning environment
- Be aware of the environment
- Sugar is a cause of hyperactivity and other behavioral disorders and learning problems
- Numbing machines are challenging

MEETING INSIGHTS

- There are attempts to GSU to peer towards sustainability and local production in the United States, Stream Green (community garden). (see FIG. 1.1, 1.3).
- The strategy of GSU to open a second restaurant (Own Food).
- Panther: Gving identifies the need to promote healthier food options, but there is no strategic development yet on how to approach this problem.
- If a food outlet would pop up in an external building (outside of GSU), it needs to be approved by Panther: Gving.
- Existing resembles sufficient number, and a potential student union could add some of the requirements of GSU to rent a new hospitality space.

SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

The informal survey was addressing 108 participants incl. undergraduate, graduate students, and professors of GSU. Forty-three participants answered in first due via Graicis (invitation via e-mail).

TIME ON CAMPUS

WHAT DO YOU EAT?

WHERE DO YOU EAT?

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR BREAK?

Figure 10.8 Peter Huesemann-Odom, ARTISAN Concept (pdf), May 26, 2023, 1.
ARTISAN

LET'S OPEN AN INSPIRING COMMUNITY SPACE DOWNTOWN FOR ATLANTA'S CREATIVE SCENE TO EAT, PERFORM AND CONNECT!

I propose a community space for creative people in Atlanta who are looking for an inspirational and collaborative environment. The space will feature workshops, performances, and exhibitions. It will also accommodate food stalls and events. Here, the patrons can exchange ideas, make new friends, and engage with the local creative community.

Figure 10.9 Peter Huesemann-Odom, ARTISAN Concept (pdf), May 26, 2023, 2.
Figure 10.10 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *ARTISAN Concept* (pdf), May 26, 2023, 3.
Figure 10.11 Peter Huesemann-Odom, ARTISAN Concept (pdf), May 26, 2023, 4.
Figure 10.12 Peter Huesemann-Odom, ARTISAN Concept (pdf), May 26, 2023, 5.
ARTISAN

: GALLERY

With various art disciplines offered at SDU, this venue can host exhibitions while still maintaining food & beverage service. A moveable wall system provides plenty of wall space depending on the format of the artwork displayed.

: EAT
: DRINK
: WORKSHOPS
: PERFORMANCES
: EXHIBITIONS
: CONFERENCES
: MEETINGS
: AND SO
: MUCH MORE...

Figure 10.13 Peter Huesemann-Odom, ARTISAN Concept (pdf), May 26, 2023, 6.
10.3 Appendix C: Interviews with Faculty of Georgia State University

10.3.1 Appendix C.1: Interview with Dr. Chester Phillips (transcript)

Interview of Dr. Phillips, Director of SoM and Interim Dean of COTA at GSU, by Peter Hüsemann-Odom, MFA candidate for interior design, on November 2, 2023, in the office of interim dean Dr. Phillips on the 4th floor of 35 Broad Street, home to COTA at GSU.

Huesemann-Odom: You have been the interim dean since Wade Weast left this summer to start his fellowship in July. Thank you for answering some of my questions.

Dr. Phillips: Of course, my pleasure. Wade Weast started his fellowship in July, and I became the interim dean of the COTA at GSU. I've also been SoM director for the last two years. This is in my third year now.

Huesemann-Odom: That is impressive. How's that going?

Dr. Phillips: You must ask the faculty and students, but to answer your question, I like the opportunity to work in leadership. I dreamed about this opportunity, and the projects I am involved in are fascinating. I like dreaming and pushing myself to rethink how we can do better. There are two levels of longing for me. There is the lottery dreaming, and then there is reality dreaming. How can we do a little better with something new? What is reasonable?

Huesemann-Odom: Well, it is setting goals and getting there step-by-step. I read you were part of the strategic plan with President Blake. It was exciting to share your opinion, discuss opportunities, and consider the university's future. Were you aware of your new position as interim dean during that time? When did you learn about this career opportunity?

Dr. Phillips: I learned about the new position at the end of the academic year, at which we had wrapped up most of the strategic planning. That committee worked from August of 2022 until the Spring of 2023. The strategic planning is published now, but with some broad goals and no measurable outcomes.
The goal is to work on each plan pillar as a committee and define outcomes as concrete goals. There is a committee for each pillar and a cross-cutting committee formed by the upper administration looking at all four committees. They ensure the committees are aligned and work within a reasonable scope.

For instance, as we think about new buildings, the university adds a new structure every two to three years on average. Most of them were constructed from $50 to $65 million. So, when I talk about being reasonable, we have a new building in the next ten years, so we must be in that same range. So, what can you build to support the Arts within that budget? Some of our needs are so special that one building may be unable to host the entire COTA. If it does, then it may be without certain things that we would need. Art needs gallery spaces, which may be less of a financial burden.

However, since the disciplines are so diverse, they have a lot of specialized studio-type spaces. The School of Film, Media, and Theatre (FMT) needs production spaces and specialized equipment. Music needs a concert hall, which is voluminous and has a lot of square feet. It will host all the acoustical equipment as well. Summing up, the price tag increases fast to a point where you must ask yourself: Is it reasonable to erect a building for COTA that houses everything? We would want to do it at a price tag that is achievable. I don't know. Maybe? You would know better.

Huesemann-Odom: Hm. One building would be that price tag, but it would be three times that much for combining all three colleges of COTA. Just putting it out there.

Ultimately, it becomes about how much value an investment in the Arts brings to the university and Atlanta. We should not all be in one building, but I want to explore if it makes sense to be closer together. I met with Wade Weast in his office at 55 Park Place. Since when has the administration of COTA been here on Broad Street?

Dr. Phillips: We've been in this building since last year.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. I documented that all three COTA colleges are in different campus areas, but do you think there is one COTA community?
Dr. Phillips: There is a community of SoM, but it could be more robust. We don't have to pass by each other or have a shared space accidentally. Faculty are predominantly in two different buildings on campus. Students take classes in about four or five separate buildings.

Huesemann-Odom: Are they also taking classes at 55 Park Place?

Chester: No, there are no classes in 55 Park Place anymore. Their main courses are hosted in the Standard Building, HALC, the Hass-Howell Building, and A&H.

Indeed, there would be more community and connection if everyone were in one building, right? We would still be on multiple floors within that building: One floor would predominantly host pianos, the following one voice students, and so on. But there could be one centralized space where everyone meets.

What is not happening is that music students accidentally run into art or film students. That is not happening because we're very geographically spread out. Classes don't overlap; they're in different spaces, so it limits the amount of collaboration through the community, right?

We do things with people that we know. Look at projects: it's often a personal connection with someone you met before. It becomes a professional connection, and one thing that could vitalize the arts on campus would be those personal connections that create professional relationships. So, it would be beneficial if we were centralized. That would be cool.

One example of architecture that promotes its community is Kansas State University, right up the street. They have the Bailey Center, a concert hall with additional classroom spaces. When you enter the lobby of the building, you can either turn one way to enter the theater or turn the other to visit an art gallery. It's all under the same roof. When the community enters the Bailey Center to attend an event, they can also stroll through the gallery to see the current exhibition.

We would have to decide our priorities: Is it a concert hall with a gallery space and black box theater, where you could do some film stuff? Creating one area that does it all would be $50 million. And then you don't achieve the teaching connection, but at least you could gain the performance and exhibition.
Are you thinking about your design decisions? Are you thinking of an additional cost of another $500,000 with every click? Do you know how much something costs when you're designing it?

Huesemann-Odom: Of course. I constantly ask myself that. For me, figuring out what the building or the environment wants to become is more important. I believe in revitalizing old buildings and giving them a new identity. We have many of them here downtown, so honoring and adapting their history to the new function is crucial.

There is this rumor or idea about a new construction for COTA.

Dr. Phillips: Yes.

Huesemann-Odom: What do you think about that?

Dr. Phillips: I don't want to say it is just a rumor. The president said it out loud in his public address for the launch of the strategic plan this fall, where he considered a Performing Arts Center in Summerhill. We already have a football stadium and convocation center to host events in that neighborhood. They are building a parking deck there as well. On the opposite side of the convocation center is an old hotel that, if it were ever purchased, would need to be demolished. I fantasized that spot would be an excellent location to build a Performing Arts Center. Like the Bailey Center I just described, where we can make a theater and a black box theater. Both could host film activities and live productions. That way, we could engage that part of the community in Summerhill with our theater and gallery. It would become a space that's involved with the day-to-day instruction.

I don't know. It would be challenging because it's a bus ride away from here, so there would have to be some consideration for the students. The next question we must ask ourselves is: How much instruction could we get there? Does it also make sense to bring academic life to the performance space? That is the big question.

Huesemann-Odom: Let's think about it. Would one community space benefit COTA, even if detached from GSU located in Summerhill? If we believe that art creates culture and
culture creates community, would we take such a vital part of that out of the heart of campus? I'm still determining how we will make a culture at GSU that way.

Dr. Phillips: Walking from A&H to that location would be interesting. It is a 12-minute walk, not even. If you were on the University of Illinois or Michigan campus, it would take more than 12 minutes from across campus. So, it is relatively close. It does go across an Interstate, though, which makes it feel disconnected. But there is some student housing in that area already. So, it is already part of the campus.

Part of me says: Maybe.

But the other part says: if we can get enough classes in that space, so it stays active, then it becomes a "good" maybe. Certain parts of art could be there, you know, including a sculpture studio and ceramics. We could get some music courses there as well. But then you will have to figure out scheduling. What does that do to students, having them bounce back and forth?

Huesemann-Odom: That idea is challenging.

You are currently interim dean. What are your goals while you are in office?

Dr. Phillips: We must do a couple of things as a college. One major topic is the definition of the relationship with RC, which became part of COTA last year. It has been a part of the Obituary Services for about the last 26 years. This relationship and its mission have yet to be clearly defined. That is going to be a big part of this year. What is its role as a part of the academic life?

Huesemann-Odom: It is a historic theater and has been part of the Atlanta community for a long time.

Dr. Phillips. Right. How much do you honor its history, and how do you utilize and activate that space for learning? Besides performances, only a few teaching sessions have taken place there. Much square footage is a great learning resource for the university.
Huesemann-Odom: I talked to Lee, who told me it runs like a business unit. I was discussing with her that we should promote that as an opportunity for students to understand the business background of a theatre. She mentioned that the idea would be complex but certainly something that can be explored. Ultimately, the faculty must drive this idea, and the administration must believe in it.

I am coming back to your goals. There's no strategic plan for the COTA now, correct? How much can you align your goals to this year's strategic plan?

Dr. Phillips: We could tread water for a year, but there may be more responsible things to do. We already know the plan's pillars, so any motion should align with those pillars. You're going to be able to tie that to some of the prescribed outcomes that are going to happen. Considering college to career, we want to see students engaged in professional learning while in their education. At the current rate, we would have to do something that engages more students in professional learning within RC. That way, we will be ahead of the game, right? If we make decisions aligning with those pillars, I am confident we will be heading in the right direction.

As mentioned earlier, the vision is comprehensive, so defining what this means for GSU and COTA is essential.

Huesemann-Odom: Change of topic. Where is your favorite spot on campus? Where do you like to go besides being in your office?

Dr. Phillips: My favorite spot. That is an interesting question. It's always lovely when you get up in a building. There's something beautiful about looking out over the city, which is unique about our campus. When you are in those spots, when you can be above the noise, so to speak, that's cool. I love those opportunities; they're unique, even if it's like the 4th floor of the Aderhold building. There is an outer patio around the building that rarely gets used, but sometimes, you know. I could sit on the deck and read a book for 30 minutes 5-6 times a year. You are amongst the tops of the trees, and you're above the noise. I love that.

Huesemann-Odom: Because of the view, the quietness, or the nature?
Dr. Phillips: All the above. It's a view, a vastness, and you are above the noise. You find some solitude there, which is excellent on our campus. If you're in the 25 Park Place building on the 10th floor and look out the elevator's windows, you're above the city. And suddenly, the things that seem chaotic seem much smaller. I love this neat place.

Huesemann-Odom: You probably need to teach in your current position. Where do you go when you want to engage with students?

Dr. Phillips: I don't currently teach any courses. I love to walk into the student lounge of SoM. There are always students I say hi to and connect with. That is the most accessible place to catch a group of students. But I just like walking around campus, especially in the parks in front of 25 Park Place or front of A&H. I like those spaces.

Huesemann-Odom: Or is GW lovely?

Dr. Phillips: Correct. It has been a significant change to campus life.

Huesemann-Odom: Is it two and a half years or three years now?

Dr. Phillips: When you first arrived, they're probably still building it. I mean, without that green space, this campus was oppressive.

Huesemann-Odom: Why do you like it?

Dr. Phillips: Because you can see students. Before, it was a concrete courtyard between Kell Hall and the Library. It was built in tiers, so it wasn't even flat. It was challenging to navigate, but you could engage with students there. Overall, it seemed cold, however. The grass and the openness of the created space are phenomenal.

The idea is to engage outside A&H and SH to HP and continue into GW through the Sparks tunnel. GSU wants to activate that tunnel with lighting or murals.
Huesemann-Odom: We explored different designs for that tunnel in one of our grad studios. Where do you engage with other faculty?

Dr. Phillips: I catch the faculty either at their concerts or events. I see them on their natural flow through the 5th floor of SoM. But I have less of that since I must switch between offices in my additional role as interim dean.

Huesemann-Odom: That's probably challenging.

Dr. Phillips: It is. I'll stop there for an hour, catch up with everybody, and make sure everything's good. Then I came over here because I am wearing two hats this year. I'm not teaching, but I'm wearing two hats. There's Michael, who teaches and directs, which is another story, right? When I realize I haven't seen this faculty, I'll drop into a class or office and say hi.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. What are the significant challenges of the SoM?

Dr. Phillips: The environment is the biggest challenge. All spaces are in renovated 100-year-old office buildings. Besides two rehearsal facilities in Aderhold, none of those spaces were designed with musical acoustics in mind. Most of them have flat parallel walls, which could be better for acoustics because of the reflection of sound. They usually have low ceilings, and it's deafening. It would be offensive if you took a decimal reader into those spaces. So, the acoustic environment is challenging for SoM.

The width of hallways is another challenge for our school. They are too narrow when holding instruments in two-way traffic.

We teach in an environment that wasn't designed with that in mind. It's something we could have done better. Narrow halls, low ceilings, and small spaces that could be more acoustically conceived sum up some of our challenges.

Those are different from those in your area. Indeed, you've got to have large spaces filled with more specialized equipment.

We all deal with the same problem in each of our spaces. For the most part, our spaces are not designed with us in mind.
Think about A&H. Some spaces were designed as labs, not for the arts.

Huesemann-Odom: I researched the history of the built environment of the university. A&H was originally the Art and Music building.

Dr. Phillips: We have outgrown it. SoM left in 1996 or 1997 to come over to this side of campus, allowing the art to expand and become more significant. We grew to Aderhold around 2001, so they included two dedicated spaces for us. Those two spaces are on the 4th floor of the Aderhold building, and they are two extensive ensemble rehearsals for an orchestra or a band. It is not the best space I've ever been in, but they're sufficient. The basic architecture is exemplary, and they were designed with that intent. The walls are not parallel, and very high ceilings and acoustical tapestries are retractable around the sides to the curb sound. So, there was thought behind those two spaces. That's good.

We use the RC in A&H a lot for teaching. There is almost always a class or some instruction going on— even instruction that leads up to a performance, a dress rehearsal leading up to a performance. Opera is in there this whole week, setting up for this weekend. They are doing rehearsals every evening.

Huesemann-Odom: That is interesting because I never see anything happening there. But you don't see it because of its several entrances. Once they are inside, you don't see what's happening from the outside. It is fascinating to know these communities are coming together in one building but never seeing each other. That is probably the same experience for faculty.

Dr. Phillips: I often wonder… Is there a way for us to engage and rethink the configuration of the first floor of that building? What if the admin offices on the first floor were all gallery spaces, and what if the offices moved upstairs? Is that even possible? Are the ceilings high enough to host a gallery space? I don't know. Could we open the walls to increase visibility and showcase the art? Down that whole hallway behind RC… As I said in the beginning, The lobby of Kopleff could be our Bailey Center. You would have to leave the building and go around to enter the gallery. But what if the whole bottom floor were to become gallery spaces? Would that be better? I don't know. Of course, you'd be giving up a lot of office space. And then
the question is: Where will you take it from upstairs? Then, you need teaching space to be somewhere else. Does that help with engagement and activation? I don't know.

Huesemann-Odom: Well, those questions I'm going to explore, right?

Dr. Phillips: If the idea is to make more gallery space here, does that engage it more? Have you seen the downstairs of this building?

Huesemann-Odom: Yes.

Dr. Phillips: Even the front of the building?

Huesemann-Odom: When it was a bank, yes.

Dr. Phillips: Before you leave, I want to show you.

Huesemann-Odom: I've been in the bank, yes.

Dr. Phillips: OK. So, GSU owns the whole building.

Huesemann-Odom: Is the bank still there?

Dr. Phillips: There is still a bank, but it has very little activity. I look at that beautiful space and think it would be an excellent multi-use performance hall. Some of that space could be a gallery. It could be cool, but I wonder if the university will break the lease with them and give it to us. Renovating it would be financially intense because it would cost millions of dollars. And then you would have to ask yourself: would it be better just to put those millions into a new building somewhere else?

This is not a great building, right? But if it ends up being $20 million cheaper to do something here and try to get the college into this whole building, to be under one roof. We would have to move the gallery and RH downstairs. Would that be better? There's no parking
right here. So, that would be a challenge from an activation standpoint. There's no parking here. How would you ever engage external audiences here?

Huesemann-Odom: Where do you park?

Dr. Phillips: I park in a different parking deck and walk here. It's five blocks away. The closest real GSU deck to here is probably T-deck. And for an audience, that's not an immediate parking solution. It's not very pragmatic for engagement.

This is one of the reasons why Summerhill is so intriguing—from an external engagement standpoint, displaying our art by putting on a production for theater or music. People can get there quickly from the Interstate. There's a parking deck across the street. You wouldn't even have to build a parking deck because there is one being built right now where people could park, walk across the street, and come into your theater. We wouldn't have to give up any of our real estate for parking. For that reason, I am in favor of that solution.

It takes work to activate our campus. It is hard to go to RC, honestly. There are parking decks, but there's something about driving downtown that people would prefer to avoid. But Summerhill is just right off the Interstate, literally. Boom, you're in it. That would feel so different.

Huesemann-Odom: So, you would prefer a future of COTA outside of downtown?

Dr. Phillips: From an activation standpoint, yes. From a presentation standpoint, yes.

Huesemann-Odom: Parking is something in my designs that is not interesting. I use bike public transportation and prefer walking over using the car. It's interesting to see what the society likes. How can you engage with them?

Dr. Phillips: Well, many people other than students that we want to attend our events have to drive here, right? So, if they must see the performance or come to the gallery, we must ask ourselves, what is their experience?
Huesemann-Odom: Of course.

Dr. Phillips: And that is crucial to engaging the community.

Huesemann-Odom: I would like to finish by talking more about SoM. You said earlier that the environment is very challenging for SoM. Do you need help attracting new students? Is that also something that students voice while they are attending classes? Ultimately, the graduated students are cheerleaders of the university.

Dr. Phillips: My perception is, and I don't have the research data to support this… I think the facilities are a negative factor in the recruitment process. When we're trying to get somebody to come here, they visit UGA, Kennesaw, or Columbus State, the three most significant in the State that we would ever compete with…. From an in-state standpoint, most of our students are in-state undergraduates, so our facilities are by far the least attractive. All three competitors have buildings that have been built in the last 20 years. Ours have been during the previous 100 years. So, I think from a recruitment standpoint.

On campus, they are part of a strong community. Engagement with their peers is so meaningful. They need to be more proud of their environment. And when they leave, they're constantly reminded of that initial impression. Oh well, I love Tommy Dorsey, but what Columbus State has to offer is far better.

There is a negative impression on both sides and less when they're here.

Huesemann-Odom: Is that the same for the faculty?

Dr. Phillips: They usually care less about the facilities when they're being recruited to come here because they mostly want a job and then get here and don't like extensive facilities.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. Some faculty members have belonged to GSU for quite some time now. How long are you here?

Dr. Phillips: Like 13 or 15 years.
Huesemann-Odom: You have been here a long time.

Dr. Phillips: We have several faculties with 20-plus years in SoM.

Huesemann-Odom: I need help finding something online about the founding year of SoM.

Dr. Phillips: Funny that you said that. It would have certainly been in the beginning. I was talking to Nedda Ahmed in the library about this. We were talking about starting to do some research on it. You would have to go back and look at catalogs and see when the first music classes were offered and when the first degree was offered. The degree will be a good starting point. My great-uncle got his music education degree from George State in 1964.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Phillips: I was present there, and SoM was accredited by the National Association of SoM in 1964, so we've had an accreditation for over 50 years. Oh, that is what we should celebrate this year. Yeah, this is our 50th year of being accredited. I'll get a birthday cake for the school. Happy birthday. We've been certified for 50 years.

Huesemann-Odom: I just sent Nedda an e-mail asking about the history. She was telling me about that strategy.

Dr. Phillips: There is no official statement. That's a project on its own. I want to work on that for my education to speak more intelligently about the school and its origin.

We know when the FMT was founded. It was based with COTA but was part of the School of Communications in the College of Arts and Sciences long before. It offered the current degrees, except for a new one. So, their origin story is a little different.

Huesemann-Odom: Ethan said the school is quite popular, with 70 grad students.
Dr. Phillips: SoM has the most grad students in the college. We typically have around 80 or more in total graduate enrollment, not including the Ph.D. students in COTA College of Education Human Development; we also teach those. So, you can add another 12 students for both schools. I don't think art has so many. FMT has less than 70, but we could look at their doctoral and MFA students. So, maybe they're getting close to that.

WSAD typically only takes the number of students that they can fund to be a master's student. It is just a group of 10 every year. It's relaxing. It's usually between 30 and 34 a year, maximum.

Huesemann-Odom: Well, this was very insightful. I don't want to take too much of your time.

Dr. Phillips: Please share with me what you finished with.

Huesemann-Odom. Of course.
10.3.2 Appendix C.2: Interview with Dr. Susan Richmond (transcript)

Interview of Dr. Richmond, Associate Dean of COTA at GSU, by Peter Hüsemann-Odom, MFA candidate for interior design, on October 31, 2023, in the office of associate dean Dr. Richmond on the 4th floor of 35 Broad Street, home to the COTA at GSU.

Huesemann-Odom: I think we've seen each other before, correct?

Dr. Richmond: Yes, that is correct.

Huesemann-Odom: Remind me again, since when have you been in this position?

Dr. Richmond: Since July of this year. I am an associate professor of Art History and was the assistant director of WSAD for five years. And in July, I stepped into this position as interim associate dean of COTA.

Huesemann-Odom: Is that because Wade Weast is not on campus right now?

Dr. Richmond: Did you ever meet Maria Genthard?

Huesemann-Odom: No.

Dr. Richmond: She was the associate dean of the college. She has been in that position since the college was founded, and she has left to take another position at Marshall University, which is in West Virginia. She went in June.

Huesemann-Odom: What does interim mean for you? Because I am still trying to figure out the difference. Does it mean that you are in this position because the university is looking for someone else, or does it mean that you are on probate? Or are you figuring out if this is the correct position for you?
Dr. Richmond: It could be all of those. It could be a combination. It was not my choice to have interim on the title, but it made sense with Dr. Wade Weast being gone for a year and not knowing what he would do when he returned. In this position, you work at the pleasure of the Dean. The Dean is the one who makes the final decision on who the associate team will be.

Huesemann-Odom: Got it. OK.

Dr. Richmond: With Wade being gone for a year and the uncertainty of what will happen when he returns. So, this title was the easiest solution, with Dr. Chester Phillips being interim for a year.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you enjoy being in that role?

Dr. Richmond: There are things about it that I like. There's still a lot of things I'm trying to figure out. There was no transition time. Thankfully, Maria Genthardt left me a lot of files which has been very helpful to go back and see what she was responsible for and when she had to do certain things. She's a colleague; she was also an art historian. So, I've known her for many years, and I can call her if there's an issue. An essential part of this role is faculty affairs, which I like. It is about mentoring at the college level, which I did at the WSAD, and this is just a bigger version.

Huesemann-Odom: You were doing it for the WSAD, and now you're doing it for COTA?

Dr. Richmond: Exactly. I have a colleague from SoM who is a non-tenure track faculty advocate. The two of us worked together, and while she focuses primarily on the nontenure track, I focus on the tenure track faculty.

Huesemann-Odom: Can you explain the mentoring part to me?
Dr. Richmond: Some colleges will pair new faculty with older faculty, but we've yet to do that in this college. We’re contacting specific faculty groups by asking them about their needs. Or we did a workshop helping faculty to establish a mentoring network instead of a one-on-one mentorship. The idea is to try to identify people who can meet specific needs in your careers and then pair them or even group them. Ultimately, it is about coaching faculty to determine who can be beneficial for their career.

A scenario could be that I am about to publish a book and find the proper faculty to talk to who have experience already and are available to meet for a coffee to answer questions. It is not about finding a mentor but more about accessing information and expertise in your network.

Huesemann-Odom: So it's more you knowing where they're good at and pairing them with faculty with similar goals?

Dr. Richmond: Kind of. I would become an advocate because I know more people in the city and could recommend a special connection. Or somebody in school music who's going through the same thing would you like to come together and talk about that? So, that is what we are doing?

Huesemann-Odom: Is that something that you are passionate about, or is that something that has always been in the position of the associate dean?

Dr. Richmond: It's a part of the associate dean.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Richmond: It was a part of the associate director's position. At WSAD, I was responsible for student issues and complaints. The flip side is faculty who may be having issues in the classroom. I found that sometimes, they would talk to me about other topics.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. The mentoring program is one part of your position. Is there anything else you are passionate about or would like to accomplish?
Dr. Richmond: I'm learning that this position has little executive power because I work at the pleasure of the Dean. Everything must go through the Dean, so there's only a little autonomy, but I serve on many committees across the university. There are research committees, committees on graduate students, committees on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and we're not allowed to use that term anymore, so we call it culture and community. I sit on committees around strategic course scheduling, ensuring the college offers enough courses, particularly for undergraduates. I need to be more involved with budgets regarding what the Dean shares with me. I guess my point is I'm still trying to figure out where I can make a difference. Still, a lot of it is seeing what other colleges are doing in terms of best practices that other entities across the university are doing and then thinking about whether that would benefit them for our college. Could I implement that? What would that look like?

Huesemann-Odom: Is there one example that you were thinking about?

Dr. Richmond: Often, we mirror what the College of Arts and Sciences does. We were part of the College of Arts and Sciences before. We broke away in 2016.

Huesemann-Odom: That is interesting. So, the split just happened recently. I was trying to figure out the history of COTA regarding responsibilities and directors. I stumbled upon 2016, but I couldn't believe that.

Dr. Richmond: Wade has been the Dean since it was created, and Maria Genthardt has been the associate Dean since it was made.

Huesemann-Odom: Wade was the first director of COTA?

Dr. Richmond: Exactly.

Huesemann-Odom: Interesting. In every conversation, I find out something new.

Dr. Richmond: Yes. Recently, RC also became part of COTA.
Huesemann-Odom: I talked to Lee Foster already.

Dr. Richmond: That is wonderful. Yeah, that has been a recent development, which carries a financial component for COTA with RC that didn't happen in the past.

Huesemann-Odom: I got the sense while talking to Lee Foster that the university is still trying to figure out how to implement RC. There are different approaches and different ideas of what the united future will be.

Dr. Richmond: Yes, growing pains. RC’s mission must be rewritten to align with the university. Right now, I don't think it has a mission that reflects the university's mission. Its mission is much more forward-facing to the Atlanta community.

Huesemann-Odom: Since it is a different business model, I understand that aligning them with each other can be challenging. OK, you said that you look at the College of Arts and Science for best practices, which means there's also an associate dean.

Dr. Richmond: They have a much larger structure. They're the most prominent college in the university, with at least three associate deans. They're more specialized. They have an associate dean of faculty affairs, an associate dean of research, and an assistant dean of academic affairs. They have one more, but you can google their structure when you look them up. We have a single associate dean position because we're much smaller than them. I do all of that in smaller chunks.

Huesemann-Odom: Well, in the end, you also have three units, right? Four with RC. And CMII?

Dr. Richmond: I need help understanding the CMII relationship with the college. We share this unit with the College of Art and Sciences. That is the complication in explaining the relationship.
Huesemann-Odom: I heard from some people that it is part of COTA, but I also saw that it is not part of COTA exclusively. It feels like a satellite unit.

Dr. Richmond: As far as I'm concerned, I deal with many faculty affairs like policy manuals, promotion manuals, and workload. These are tedious updates that usually must happen several times a year. CMII and RC are not mentioned in those. So, it's just the three schools regarding faculty governance and stuff.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. To sum this up, did you set up three colleges for success?

Dr. Richmond: Yes. So, the faculty knows what the expectations are and what the policies are.

Huesemann-Odom: That is great. I love that there are processes.

Dr. Richmond: So that's been always ongoing. What does faculty scholarship in creative output look like? What counts? What is valued? And that's going to be a little different from school to school.

Huesemann-Odom: Does this also include the evaluation of faculty?

Dr. Richmond: Evaluation of faculty, how they conduct themselves in the classroom. How they interact with students. I mean, it's everything.

Huesemann-Odom: It could be challenging to evaluate a teacher or professor when you are away from class with them. How does that work?

Dr. Richmond: Yes, I don't know if it's been explained to you, but the workload of each faculty position gets broken down by percentages. If you're in a tenure track position, your percentage typically is 40% teaching, 40% research or creative, and 20% service.
Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Richmond: If you translate that into a forty-hour week job, the expectation is that one day a week, eight to ten hours, are service. Some professors have a more significant teaching load and no research or creative expectations. Others might have 100% innovative research. Craig Drennan got the Guggenheim grant, so his contract that year said 100% research and creative output and no service.

Huesemann-Odom: What is 20% service, for example?

Dr. Richmond: It's everything from administering. For example, some committees oversee the gallery. We have an executive committee and the school who advise the director about issues coming down the pike. Some committees review what courses are being offered. I mean, it's everything. Some of it's just very detail-oriented. Are spending less money, etc. Some committees are bigger-picture. Michael White created a committee yesterday because we have been offered a collection of art by a former school director, Larry Walker. He was a director long before I got here. He wants to gift a substantial art collection to us. Now, we need a space to show and store it in and have available facilities. Michael, who is fantastic at thinking about space, could list ten places around the city where that would work. But once again, it is part of a committee to figure out where this museum could be. We are talking about a significant investment, so the university must be convinced that the investment is worthwhile.

Huesemann-Odom: I don't understand why we don't have a museum already.

Dr. Richmond: I don't either. The first charge is to look at other R1 institutions and look at their mission of the museum. Look at their collecting practices to get a better sense of the scope. We're uniquely positioned with this opportunity to show a collection that Larry Walker wants to give to us. It contains predominantly African American artists, including his famous daughter, Kara Walker. It would make sense to host this collection in Downtown Atlanta. It would be a teaching resource and truly make us an R1. I joked yesterday that every R1 has a football team and every R1 has a museum.
Huesemann-Odom: This is also something I am exploring in my thesis.

Dr. Richmond: There's this big dream that, at some point, all the schools of COTA would be housed in the same building. I am still determining where that would be, and my concern is that it would end up moving us too far away from the core of campus.

It's also not great that we're separated across ten buildings. It would be great if we could break that down to maybe three. There's been talk about securing a building in Summerhill, which would house all of us, but it feels too far away from the downtown.

Huesemann-Odom: So, you would prefer a central location Downtown?

Dr. Richmond: I want us to be in the heart of the campus because the rest of the students and the rest of the community want to stay within the campus. We want the whole university to come to the museum. We want other entities across the campus to go to our concerts and our artist's talks that they are part of the culture that we offer at the university. If we're physically too far away, people won't come. And I'm sure you know the situation with people who don't have housing. Poverty-stricken areas surround the university campus. Even just walking up to the COTA offices. It's a different feel. You're in the heart of the campus, and concerns exist around that. I'd like to see us stay somehow close to HP and A&H. I’d like to see us being the hub for creativity. I want us to be a part of it. I don't want us to be disconnected.

Huesemann-Odom: When I googled COTA, I was directed to 55 Park Place. And then, you told me to come here. So, where is COTA?

Dr. Richmond: Is that the title of your thesis? Where is COTA?

Huesemann-Odom: It is a question that I had. I've been at GSU since 2021 and needed to find out where COTA was. I'm part of COTA, but where is it located? So, here we are. I have to start a research project to find answers.

Dr. Richmond: That disconnection is felt by all the students, all staff, and all the faculty.
Huesemann-Odom: So, does Google still need to be updated?

Dr. Richmond: Correct.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you know why COTA moved here?

Dr. Richmond: Yes. The floor on 55 Park Place was temporary because the university is slowly renovating each building floor. They just gave us a floor to occupy until they decided it was time to renovate it. There needs to be a plan for us to move back.

Huesemann-Odom: Here is just an administration.

Dr. Richmond: Yes, and the acting program has a classroom on the 8th floor, but every time it rains, it leaks. Then they use our conference room.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. GSU has a strategic plan until 2033. Is there a strategic plan for COTA?

Dr. Richmond: No, because the university just created its new strategic plan. COTA just started the process to align its plan with the university’s. I was looking forward to participating in this planning, but I am not sure if we will do it this year, to be honest. It might have to wait until Wade comes back. I don't know. Afterward, each school will create its plan.

Huesemann-Odom: But there has been a strategic plan in 2016, right?

Dr. Richmond: Not really. That has been a criticism of the administration.

Huesemann-Odom: What about RC? Was this addition planned, or did it just happen by accident?
Dr. Richmond: I need to find out the decision-making behind it. I imagine it was intended to be a part of the college all along, but I wonder why it took so long for it to happen. I'm sure it's financial. I don't know.

Huesemann-Odom: Speaking of the theater, RC. In total, there are three theater units in COTA, correct?

Dr. Richmond: Correct. SoM also uses DH and RH. I've never seen a performance in DH, though.

Huesemann-Odom: And the movie theatre in the student center?

Dr. Richmond: Did you see that listed?

Huesemann-Odom: Ethan mentioned it to me. The problem is that events are not visible or don't get advertised enough. I don't see anything happening anywhere.

Dr. Richmond: We have that digital display in front of the Welch galleries next to the elevator. That would be a great place to promote all those events. I am curious to know how else we would encourage them. I've asked about an Outlook calendar. I wondered if I could tap into an Outlook calendar, but people complained that it was too crowded and they couldn't even see their appointments anymore.

Huesemann-Odom: Is there an overall COTA calendar?

Dr. Richmond. There is a printed version, like a poster or brochure, that will list significant events. Honestly, I haven’t seen that this year. I don’t know where it is.

Huesemann-Odom: Do we know who's responsible for it?

Dr. Richmond: It would be PR.
Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Richmond: Tony Mangle is our equivalent to Jac Kuntz at WSAD. I asked Dr. Phillips once if there was a calendar at SoM I could look at. He laughed and said, well, we have, on average, three events a day. You won't be able to see anything else because we plug your calendar with the event. So, it's more complicated.

Huesemann-Odom: Interestingly, four people are doing PR at COTA.

Dr. Richmond: They generate a lot. They’ve determined that people don't look at posters. They don't even want a physical piece of paper. So, everything gets promoted on social media.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you have a favorite space on campus?

Dr. Richmond: When I was at WSAD, I rarely left the building.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Richmond: I mean, we just spent all day there. Now that I'm here, I spent most of my day in this office. I eat out more up here because it's more convenient.

Huesemann-Odom: You didn't do that there? Did you want to?

Dr. Richmond (laughing): Probably not. I don’t know. I wouldn't say I like to go there, but I might eat Chick-fil-A once a year. The Starbucks line is always too long. I'll walk in there and go and walk back out. I used to park on a deck near Grady Hospital, the S-Deck. I liked that step up to A&H, especially around lunchtime, because I wanted to see the activity around the student center. I enjoyed that. Now, I park over in the G-deck, so I walk by all the unhoused people, which is not the same vibe.

Huesemann-Odom: This whole area here is so different.
Dr. Richmond: I missed that. I wouldn’t necessarily say I would participate in the activity at the student center, but I'd like to see it. I felt a sense of community from that.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you think there is a COTA community?

Dr. Richmond: Wouldn’t that be great? I mean, the School of Law has a beautiful building. Have you ever been there?

Huesemann-Odom: It's my favorite spot.

Dr. Richmond: OK. My first time in that building was about two weeks ago when I met a professor there. It was an excellent space for students, faculty, and staff to sit. The other place I thought of is the School of Business, which is their main space. I am still determining exactly where it is, but they also have a lovely floor. It is quiet; they have a little coffee place, seating areas, and conference rooms. It is open. You know how our building is completely locked down all the time. So, it is a different approach. Once you get through the gate at the law building, it's also open.

Huesemann-Odom: Like a safe environment. Which has a different feel than CMII, right?

Dr. Richmond: I wouldn't say I like that building. It's weird; it could be more intuitive. Where's the elevator again? How do I get where I need to go?

Huesemann-Odom: Michael was asking what is actually behind this vast screen.

Dr. Richmond: We don't know. It's funny. I was thinking about this this morning. The art history faculty do not come and use their offices. And the studio people don't. It makes more sense because the studio faculty wants to work in a studio space for the most part. Their offices here need that. However, the art history faculty has their offices on the 4th floor. It gets loud because the students are probably coming or leaving the classroom. It’s not a great place to sit and try to do your research or write. What would it be like to have offices that are more
conducive to coming in? I guess my point is that we don't see each other, even between the same department, because everyone has their own office. Even if they don't use their office, they go somewhere else. And in their office, they are invisible.

Huesemann-Odom: Well, the Arts & Humanity building is a challenging architecture. Ultimately, we are talking about two things: The need for a better wayfinding system and the need to feel connected to a larger community.

Dr. Richmond: I agree, and I think other departments can do that. A lot of the departments in 25 Park Place can have offices that are not surrounded by busy classrooms. They are still accessible to students; all have conference rooms to hold seminars. So there are educational spaces and great city views with large windows. Now, the offices on the 4th floor in A&H are different, without any windows.

Huesemann-Odom: I also remember being one of those officers. They were all like shoe boxes.

Dr. Richmond: Yeah.

Huesemann-Odom: It's interesting that you are at your job but must see your colleagues. How did that change for you being here? Is that the same? You must make an appointment with me, correct?

Dr. Richmond: personality-wise, I'm not the kind of person who would schedule meetings with other faculty. If I see you in the hallway, I'm happy to talk, genuinely. Someone other than me will schedule lunch and coffee meetings. That might prove your point that the organic community is more convenient for someone like me.

Huesemann-Odom: How do we change that in the meantime?
Dr. Richmond: Lara and I want to do coffee hours up here, open to everyone in COTA or target specific faculty. I imagine we will encounter the same issues: people won't come because of their schedule, being too busy, or something else. How do you make it informal, like bringing your laptop? We could open the space and offer coffee and snacks. People could come in, say hi to somebody, ask questions, talk about a movie, sit and answer emails on your laptop…

Huesemann-Odom: Like a faculty meeting lounge? A

Dr. Richmond: It would be great if we could install that permanently, but that's a multi-purpose room. A lounge would be fantastic. Years and years ago, the university was exploring the possibility of a faculty cafeteria that would be dedicated only to faculty.

Huesemann-Odom: Michael said the same. It would be great to have a space like that.

Dr. Richmond: Right. He suggested that he move out of his office and into my old office, the corner office. Then, we would offer the faculty a larger kitchenette with tables where people could sit.

Huesemann-Odom: Sounds like a great idea. How important is collaboration for COTA?

Dr. Richmond: It's going to happen organically or intuitively. The university and college discuss collaboration possibilities, but you must have two or more people with shared interests. You can't force collaboration. It’s got to come out of something. The studio art faculty collaborated with musicians and filmmakers to produce exciting work. As an art historian, I don't necessarily translate into cooperating with the music historian or film historian. I have collaborated with Jesse Jones; we've been working on something together. That just evolved out of a casual conversation.

Huesemann-Odom: And how important is cross-collaboration with other colleges in the university?
Dr. Richmond: There have been minimal attempts. My predecessor in this position was trying to develop an art history class geared toward nursing students. Other universities have done that with medical students about close looking and using the arts to create close-looking skills. We don't have a medical school here, so nursing school was the default, but I don't think anything developed out of that. It becomes more difficult to support those collaborations unless significant grant money is backing it. It's hard to find grants that pair an interior designer with another discipline. There are people where it makes complete sense. There are a million possibilities.

Huesemann-Odom: Especially when you include the arts. There are possibilities for innovation.

Dr. Richmond: There was a Zambian on campus a month ago. She's a creative individual sponsored by the Center for Africana Studies, women and gender studies, the Business School, and the lead program, as far as I know. Nobody in COTA knew she was here. I only knew because of my affiliation with women's studies. I went to hear her talk and experienced a fantastic woman. I was utterly mesmerized by her presentation about creative arts and music initiatives that she's helped develop in Zambia. After that, someone got up and asked: what is the value of the arts, or what's the purpose of the arts? She looked around and said, this would be here with the art. The exit sign someone designed the exit sign. All the products around you are products of the arts and creative individuals, and to think of it as just this thing that's sequestered away in a museum or that somebody else does is to miss how our lives are informed completely.

Huesemann-Odom: I will use this in the thesis because it's so good.

Dr. Richmond: I can send you a link afterward. A fascinating person. And that reminds me how I need to go to more events because I always come away like, wow, that was great, or even it's like, wow, wow, that wasn't that good. It's stimulating.

Huesemann-Odom: Wow, this was very insightful. Thank you so much for your time.
10.3.3 Appendix C.3: Interview with Michael White (transcript)

Interview of Prof. White, Director of WSAD at GSU, by Peter Hüseemann-Odom, MFA candidate for interior design, on October 26, 2023, in the office of Prof. White on the 1st floor of A&H on GSU campus.

Huesemann-Odom: Let us go through my questions, and maybe afterward, we can tag on a discussion about spatial planning as a reflection of our culture. How do the users influence the result by using it as intended or not? And especially in interior design, how do you create an environment that fosters collaboration? How can you ensure that your design is used as intended?

Prof. White: I wanted you to illustrate all the possible solutions for bringing COTA units spatially closer together. How the administration thinks about possible solutions might differ from how we feel. It would be interesting to illustrate what a possible future would look like.

Huesemann-Odom: Are you in favor of bringing all units of COTA units closer together?

Prof. White: Well, if we go back to you. Let's think about these ideas: what breeds creativity? What spawns creativity? Then, often, it is the unexpected—the idea of cross-pollination between, you know, unintended participants. I never see neuroscientists or anything in my field, but if I happen to be having lunch with some colleagues and there are some neuroscientists at our table with some ideas. There's something relevant there that I have never thought about. There's an opportunity for that type of engagement.

Peter: You mean we should live in an environment that fosters unplanned encounters?

Prof. White: However, it was unplanned. Yes, that kind of thing that you don't expect. You're not designing a space for neuroscientists or biologists to come together; you're planning a space where people engage. We do not want to define those things; we create possibilities.
Huesemann-Odom: It is one thing to design these spaces, but another to live in them. The university must act as a role model for others to follow. The university needs to be more firmly committed to its strategic plan. Dr. Tussey mentioned in our interview that FMT has been thriving since the beginning, has no problems attracting new students, and is happy with the current circumstances. Atlanta is an excellent destination for film. Are you saying this applies to WSAD? Or do we need those spaces to be more successful and attractive to new students?

Prof. White: Well, we have a different cachet than FMT. Now, FMT is shining brightly.

Huesemann-Odom: They're huge, with almost 70 grad students. I didn't know they existed. I have been on campus for 2 1/2 years and have never seen anyone from FMT. And now, I'm sitting here in this office building, and you're telling me that there are almost 2,000 FMT students around me? They are invisible to me.

Prof. White: That's right. And that is also one of the reasons why Dr. Weast Wade wants a singular college—a single location where all of us are together.

Peter: Is Dr. Wade Weast pushing the idea of coming together?

Prof. White: Wade is not a fan of a distributed college. I don't want to leave this building, and I don't want to leave this quadrant. I like being in the center of things. Dr. Weast has excellent experience relocating whole units to its campus and has had great success. I have been to those places and find them remote and need to be more engaging. UGA is the best example, the nearest example of that. Have you been to that campus?

Huesemann-Odom: No, not yet. I've reached out to Catherine Trugman, as she is the interior design faculty member there.

Prof. White: UGA has exceptional facilities. They are state-of-the-art. There's space they need help with. I visited Joe Peragine in his new position as dean, and while he showed me
around campus, he went through a door saying: oh, I've never been in here. That would never be the case here.

    Huesemann-Odom: Here, you would open a door, and suddenly, you're in a different school with 2,000 students.

    Prof. White: Yeah. But no one other than students who are in the arts or have an event at that school ever go there. Whereas here, we have people passing by, at least passing by, if not walking through,

    Huesemann-Odom: Well, FMT is almost a singular medium, whereas, in WSAD, you have various people working with different mediums.

    Prof. White: So, interestingly, film teaches many of their classes in this building (A&H) on the 4th floor. And you may have walked through some of their classes because they use regular activities as the background.

    Huesemann-Odom: Ethan told me about regular film activities on campus, but I have yet to notice them.

    Prof. White: But they have been around—many of their Ph.D. students, most of whom are grad students. And you probably only see a few because they all teach three classes yearly. So, they're teaching and researching.

    Huesemann-Odom: Ethan also said that you two see each other twice a month, every two weeks, which speaks for some exchange and a sense of collaboration. Does that apply to the SoM as well?

    Prof. White: So, when I suggested to you that Chester, Ethan, and I would meet with you collectively, it would have been the first time the three of us ever came together to talk about a shared vision for COTA. We've never had that discussion. We meet twice a month but with
different topics on the agenda, more daily things that we need to address now. We don't have
time to discuss a strategy and mission for COTA.

Huesemann-Odom: The university has a mission with a strategic plan until 2033 that has
just been released. Is there one for COTA or WSAD?

Prof. White: 14 years ago, COTA wrote a mission statement to answer the question: what
are we trying to do here?

Huesemann-Odom: So, you were already there during that time? How long are you here
now?

Prof. White: I've been here 22 years. So, what I remember from that conversation among
our faculty was an argument over using "instruction" and "training."

Huesemann-Odom: Because it doesn't go well with artists?

Prof. White: I would not have lost much sleep about either of them. I get that intent.

Huesemann-Odom: Because they are interchangeable? I mean, there are. You can use a
different word and then…

Prof. White: But among this faculty, those were fighting words. That was very interesting
for me, as a practitioner, to hear that. We considered becoming a COTA then, but something was
still being determined. But when we did move from Arts and Sciences to the new College.
COTA wrote a mission statement and a 5-year strategic plan.

Huesemann-Odom: When was that?

Prof. White: I became chair in 2012. We were still part of the College of Arts and
Sciences in 2014. In 2019, it was time to write a new plan because the university was embarking
on a new strategic project. Wade communicated the message: Let's wait and see where the university is going, and we will align our plan with the university's. So, if Wade were here, I suspect he might be calling for it to get started.

Huesemann-Odom: So, now Chester is head of COTA.

Prof. White: Chester has only been in that position for a year and has not taken that on.

Huesemann-Odom: In my meeting with Ethan, we talked a lot about time. You are a school director with the primary goal of keeping the show going. Your main goal is not to teach, which is different for all the faculty, especially talking about their evaluation. With 90% of individual work like teaching and research, only 10% of your assessment is social time, in which you would focus on collaborative work and making connections on campus. That is interesting.

Prof. White: It is.

Huesemann-Odom: So that brings me back to the argument that we can change the environment, but what needs to change is the administration/the system we study and work in for this to succeed. Is that true?

Prof. White: You know a little bit about American educational structures. I suspect they're different from what you experienced in Europe. But here, we still operate under an older model that privileges individual productivity. If I'm the sole author of the paper, like it's published, that is way more valuable than me being a co-author. Being the first author to be recognized is the most important thing for several authors. These are old ways of thinking. Today, you would be hard-pressed in art education, for example, to be the sole author of anything. Almost everything must be in collaboration with somebody else. So, there are multiple authors, and so there are moments now where someone might say: well, this faculty member isn't the sole author of anything. No one in that industry is the sole author or anything. So, it is a misplaced criticism. But that's an evolution. That's changing.
Fifteen years ago, most of the WSAD faculty would have been thinking that way. Still, new faculty we recently hired, like Jeremy Bolen, Jill Frank, and even Jared Richardson, are all about collaboration and seeking out other people. And not just other artists; they seek out faculty in other industries outside the cause of the arts. In photography, Jeremy Bolen works with mostly scientists and environmental scientists. He is very much interested in collaboration.

Huesemann-Odom: But that is individually driven.

Prof. White: Yes, it's individually driven, but Jeremy has won junior faculty prices for his research, which telegraphs that the academy's changing. It's celebrating these things that might have been marginal ten years ago.

Huesemann-Odom: But is that just because of personal motivation?

Prof. White: No, it's because we're saying those things. Even though some of our policies and documentation have yet to be caught up, I am convinced they will.

Huesemann-Odom: Is that one of your goals?

Prof. White: Indeed. And it's not singular to me. So it's interesting. I come from a background where everybody works on a team. There's no such thing as a solo architect. There's a team. There's a team of people who make things happen. Here, I've always bristled at the expectation that I should be the sole producer of whatever I produce. I have never done that in my entire career. At the same time, Ethan is a scholar and has consistently produced singularly. He doesn't necessarily have a drive to see those things. Although film, media, and theatre are very collaborative fields. However, he writes books and papers and is very focused as an individual faculty member.

Huesemann-Odom: You are right. He had his four or five books on this table and confirmed that he wanted to be surrounded by books he had written.
Prof. White: That's a traditional scholar. That makes sense. This means he may or may not be as driven by this collaborative notion as I am. But that is OK.

Huesemann-Odom: In my field, everything is collaborative. You can't just do anything by yourself. So, it's a new perspective talking to him.

Prof. White: So, we all exist as part of the community and what we're trying to satisfy here, but you know, as designers, we can fulfill all those things. It's not either or.

Huesemann-Odom: It's creating possibilities and that you see what happens.

Prof. White: That's right.

Huesemann-Odom: We can't control it.

Prof. White: So, you know his group over there is very interesting. A new MFA program in film just started with incredible demand. Over 15 years ago, we had a joint MFA, which lasted only two years.

Huesemann-Odom: Why did it fall apart?

Prof. White: It fell apart because of faculty conflict, confronting two approaches to producing them. It was very narrative and conceptual from the artist's side. At the time, the communications department held the film, and from their side, it was convenient and production oriented. How do we get from just producing this thing? There needed to be more interest in the narrative. The joint effort was supposed to bridge that right, but the faculty, many of whom are still here, just fought more than they collaborated because of their different approaches.

Huesemann-Odom: It becomes about making compromises in the end.
Prof. White: Yeah, and it didn't survive. Interestingly, the graduates from that program have been very successful.

Huesemann-Odom: Because of this collaborative formation?

Prof. White: Exactly. It's fascinating. As a university, we still consider that group of graduates a success story, but we didn't continue with the program. Film is doing its own MFA now; we have ours, and we're exploring possible collaborations, but it's different from a joint degree.

Huesemann-Odom: So, if we were spatially closer together, you think it would be even more successful?

Prof. White: Yeah.

Huesemann-Odom: Why?

Prof. White: Because you run into people! You see possibilities! It's just that whole "water cooler" thing.

Huesemann-Odom: What is the "water cooler" thing?

Prof. White: When you talk about office design, people meet at the water cooler rather than writing an e-mail because you're visible.

Huesemann-Odom: Interestingly, we talk about this because it's just like a different context, but I was sharing my observations with Ethan, saying: I didn't even know about all these movie screenings and events because I don't see anything advertised. There's no chance for me to run into students of other disciplines. He replied and asked me if I checked the calendar. I said I didn't have time to check the calendar. I have my calendar with a very tight schedule. But when I
am commuting from A to B, that's the moment where you grab my attention. He agreed with that, but he mentioned posters on campus. But that doesn't mean that more people were coming.

Prof. White: Yeah, I am not sure I have seen those.

Huesemann-Odom: I think part of the problem is the location of the movie theatre in the student center. It's located at the end of a corridor…

Prof. White: Oh, is that where the screening happens?

Huesemann-Odom: It could be an attractive place to go. When thinking about the movies, it should feel like an event.

Prof. White: Have you been to that movie theatre?

Huesemann-Odom: I walked by on my orientation day but saved it as a place where I want to avoid watching a movie.

Prof. White: It needs to have suitable seating. Everybody is in theatre seats on the same level, and the ceiling height might be 8 feet.

Huesemann-Odom: So, I may check it out.

Prof. White: I've been once but was so uncomfortable that I left early. It was also the middle of the day, and I felt I shouldn't be here.

Huesemann-Odom: If we change the environment to be more comfortable and visually appealing? There is no appreciation for the environment because it is not designed for what we need.

Prof. White: Clearly.
Huesemann-Odom: Coming back to this building. I just had an experience this week when taking the stairs. I felt like walking through a garbage can because it was extremely filthy.

Prof. White: Particularly today. Have you seen it?

Huesemann-Odom: I saw it on Tuesday and think it still needs to change. So, why should I stay longer on campus if the university doesn't care about the infrastructure and the buildings and doesn't maintain them or put effort into the visual appearance? Why should I care? Why should I appreciate it?

Prof. White: But they do seem to care for some of them?

Huesemann-Odom: For which?

Prof. White: For example, the student center is clean all the time. It was cleaned multiple times daily, as is the welcome center, where the president's and Provost's offices and the admissions are. It's where potential students come with their parents. Those spaces are pristine and attractive, designed for a purpose they serve very well. I think Aderhold is maintained and cleaned even though one might take issue with its design.

So, it's interesting that you bring this up. There is a privileging of newer buildings and maintaining them. The rest of us have older facilities, but we're not explicitly built for GSU for some other purpose.

Huesemann-Odom: Well, this building was built as an art building.

Prof. White: Arts and Science.

Huesemann-Odom: That would explain all the rooms without windows.

Prof. White: Right, rooms without windows and a sink in every office. I mean, that can be true of any inventory of old buildings that are not maintained. We've struggled with this
building, mainly keeping it clean, for the reasons you're talking about. If it's dirty, no one will
clean up after themselves, and it just gets dirtier.

I remember the first year I was chair of WSAD. The first thing I did in terms of trying to
have an impact. I hired the cleaning crew from GSU. We had to pay them overtime to come on a
Saturday. The first half of the day was surplus who are movers. I pointed at chairs, old sofas, and
things in the hallway. It's almost getting to that point now again. At the time, it was like getting it
out of here. We did spend $2000 to have this. The crews came in with the truck since they had
just gotten it out of there, which was a fantastic transformation. Then it was cleaned, and
suddenly, it felt like we had a new building. Well, over the years and through COVID, we've
fallen back, and you look outside my office up there, there's a chair with one arm and no back,
and I wonder where this came from and why it is still here. And it sits outside my office up there.
Students sit on it.

Huesemann-Odom: Because there are no other places to sit.

Prof. White: So, you begin not looking.

Huesemann-Odom: It's like moving to a new apartment. You are motivated for the first
couple of months, and then suddenly, you keep accepting things because it becomes a
commodity.

Prof. White: Anyway, that's one of the failures of our building. But I am hopeful. It can
be better with a dedicated focus.

Huesemann-Odom: We agree that if art facilities' architecture and interior design were
intentional and catered to their function, they could attract new students like other buildings on
campus.

Prof. White: Look at CMII. That's a gorgeous building with incredible technology, and it
attracts industry. You will only attract them or keep them here if you have something they can
use. That is an older building, which is newer in GSU’s inventory. Therefore, it's maintained. The law school is the same thing, well maintained.

Huesemann-Odom: I like the law school building. I go there and wish we would have something like this here for the arts.

Prof. White: Exactly. But it seems to be the curse of Atlanta. It wants to tear down everything and then build something new. It is almost like If it has a few decades on it, then it's lost its appeal—very odd.

Huesemann-Odom: Maybe the architecture was not good in the first place, and that's why it didn't survive? Maybe it needed to be designed to be more sustainable. It was designed to quickly serve a purpose and then last for, let's say, five or six years…

Prof. White: I would not want to agree with that. Look at Ponce City Market or Krog Street. Those buildings have been built for years.

Huesemann-Odom: But it's also a different architecture.

Prof. White: I think there are different buildings. There's a building that I thought would only survive or be successful: 100 Auburn. It is where the president's office is. That building has historical significance with its corner location at Auburn Ave and Courtland. It's a modern building with marble and glass, 3-4 stories tall, and it was an insurance company's headquarters, the most prominent African American-owned business in America for a while. Very successful. They sold that building to GSU. As an architect, I'd been there to bid on that project, and I remember going into that building, which was very corporate and dated. The building was built in the late 60s and early 70s. After its renovation, I think it is a better building for GSU than for Atlanta Life. Frankie Ware was part of the design team that converted it to GSU. And I go over there now, and it's hard to remember what it used to be because it feels so very appropriate for its current use. So, certain buildings can migrate or evolve even to a better position.
Huesemann-Odom: There is a certain appeal to this architecture, and you can celebrate that, but there is also a chance to change it and amend it so it works better.

Prof. White: Right.

Huesemann-Odom: The same is true with SH, which has no identity.

Prof. White: But the bones are here. Same for this building (A&H). They offer us some things that we are yearning for. Natural life: that's the thing that appeals to me most about SH. The fact that it has these potential interior courtyards that give us light. Sure, they could be a better build-up, but that was there. I see that it's salvageable. Have you seen the first-floor space under the library?

Huesemann-Odom: Yes, I have seen the renovation.

Prof. White: There used to be a parking deck, and now it's attractive. For the first time you are walking under that damn bridge, it feels like there's some human occupation. And I am thinking: Go, finally, something down. We'll see how it plays out.

Huesemann-Odom: Students are going to use it. It looks very institutional and functional, but it could be more appealing.

Prof. White: Once there's life there, that is going to change.

Huesemann-Odom: The most significant achievement is the placement of windows.

Prof. White: I'm thinking there will finally be some light under that bridge at nighttime. Finally, there is some movement and activity that is visible. I'm pleased to see those things.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you have a favorite spot here on campus or a favorite location where you go outside your office?
Prof. White: Really?

Huesemann-Odom: Do you go to your car and back? Or is there a place where you like to stay?

Prof. White: There is not a space here at GSU. But when I was at GT, there was one place. It wasn't a defined space but a passage green with trees and a bench. Everything you expected to be correct, in terms of just getting outside, but there was nothing to look at, which I liked about it.

Huesemann-Odom: There was no visual stimulation; it was just peace. You don't have that here?

Prof. White: No. I've sought out spaces like that. There's one that comes close. Do you know the space close to the Chick-fil-A? There is a small corner with a small green space. There is also some swing or something. I would seek out that space that needs more traffic. So, it would be a smaller pocket. That's what I like. I'd never gone to HP in my 22 years on campus.

Huesemann-Odom: Even after the renovation?

Prof. White: I walk through it more often now than it did before. And I never stopped. And you are making me think about that now.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you take your lunch break here or go outside?

Prof. White: I usually don't eat lunch because I lack time. Secondly, if I'm eating lunch, it's often with someone, and we generally go to a restaurant. But that sounds like a structural problem, not a space problem.

Huesemann-Odom: Let's re-think how unplanned encounters happen. They usually occur in the hallway or the elevator, where we meet a couple of times outside the classroom.
Unexpected encounters can happen on your break or when you are off work, walking from one classroom to the next. So, where do people go if they're not in the classroom?

Prof. White: It is interesting. When I arrived 20 years ago, there used to be a discussion among faculty wanting a faculty space where they could have lunch. Students would not be allowed in that space. That recognition that we're missing this space where we can all gather is a problem. The university assumes we have accepted the fact and would see each other at events. But in the end, that is not the same as meeting each other in a casual environment where people don't have an agenda. There's no space for that to occur. The university wants HP to be that environment for us, but that will take time. At GT, small spaces of the central green space offer these encounter opportunities.

Huesemann-Odom: Ethan surveyed his faculty, asking what the university would have to do to engage them in attending more events. Most of the faculty named lack of time as one of the main reasons. Another reason was the desire for additional incentives. So, my task will be to create environments that don't need an incentive or are less tied up in a schedule. I need to create casual environments that foster connections and visibility.

Prof. White: Have you noted the food trucks on Gilmer Street every Thursday?

Huesemann-Odom: I believe this was originally a proposal by one of Dr. Dawn Haynie's studio classes.

Prof. White: Well, the plan is to close Gilmer Street and have those food trucks arrive weekly. But I forgot about it. One of my criticisms of the university, the school, and the college is that we must refrain from adopting or adhering to a structured set of weekly, monthly, and quarterly events. Even in the school, I have said that we will have a more successful speaker series if we can communicate when that happens and that it happens regularly. For example, every second Thursday of every month, there's a significant speaker here, and it will be hosted in Kopleff. It's going to be provocative. In my college experience, we had many designers speak at our university. No one would have missed it. But you could plan around it. You knew it was
going to happen. And I need help with this. Unfortunately, there was a significant pushback here at GSU. So, it is not just the school; it is a culture of faculty from the state that has a natural resistance against those events.

Huesemann-Odom: Can you explain why?

Prof. White: I am not a social psychologist. I couldn't tell you. It's odd because this university's roots differ significantly from most traditional universities. We were at night school. And so when we started, there was never a drive to have a singular experience with a shared sense of who we were. It has been 120 years. So, we can't blame that.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. How much do you work with the other directors of the school? There is some exchange, but you don't see each other, right? You see each other every two weeks, but that's it.

Prof. White: That's it.

Huesemann-Odom: Where do you go when you want to engage with students outside the classroom?

Prof. White: I don't know of a place. That is hard.

Huesemann-Odom: In your opinion, is there an art and design community?

Prof. White: There is no design community. There's no place for that to happen. SoM has a student lounge where students hang out between classes. But it's only accessible to students at that school. Is there a meeting place for art and design students? If there is, it's to meet and move on to wherever they go.
Huesemann-Odom: Exactly. I need to remember where I would want to meet someone. We could meet over on the rooftop terrace of the law building, but not here in this building. There needs to be a place to meet.

Prof. White: The most distinguishing thing about this building is the elevators, where people meet. But there needs to be an attraction to stay. Now, I'm getting so depressed about my life and where I live. It's so sad.

Huesemann-Odom: It is. When discussing this thesis, I asked myself How much I engage with the GSU community. I have a family and two jobs, so I only come to campus to attend classes. But that would have been different if I had been exposed to a creative environment, to a community surrounded by interesting architecture. So, when students and faculty are not exposed to a curated, well-designed space, they start looking for somewhere else. People keep saying that GSU is a commuter college, but I'm afraid I must disagree. I live 10 minutes from here, so GSU is part of my town and neighborhood. So, I am not commuting to college.

Prof. White: You can call GSU a commuter college because you have no reason to stay.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Prof. White: But when you go to campus and have reasons to stay all day because you are experiencing something or can add value to your day, that campus becomes a destination. We are relying on the city of Atlanta to fill that gap. That can only be between the hours of nine and five.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you think all art students should have a studio? Could that be beneficial because everyone would have a place to rest and go to?

Prof. White: Yes, that is part of it. But it is the accessibility to those places. Nobody knows that grad students have studios. Only some know that even faculty have studios. So that goes back to Wade's idea to have a singular building built purposefully, and then we can provide that type of visibility. That is his point. We haven't had many discussions about this because we
disagree. My contention has always been visibility to who if we're out there. Let's say they will tear down SH and build a new building as COTA; that could work because we are in the center. But I am still trying to decide whether to create a new building to solve the problem.

Huesemann-Odom: Is it essential for you that the arts be in the campus center?

Prof. White: Yes, they must be part of the mix. And I still want to prioritize the arts. I see the value of the arts to the community. Two days ago, I saw things happening at HP. It was a BBQ done by the student, which excites me. It is fascinating that the city allows the university to appropriate that space as its green space. And because of its location, it feels like a university space managed by the town. President Blake and the current government worked together. He has attended many events to establish a good relationship with the city. Now, they are finally discussing the shutdown of Gilmer Street. There is some willingness in the town, which is good. But back to your thesis – it all ties back to one of the pillars of the university's strategic plan: placemaking. How do we act on that?

Huesemann-Odom: The building should represent the identity of the school. The community creates a visual identity through the architecture. Interestingly, all grads experience the same challenges, trying to reconnect with nature. You've been drawing things. What is that about?

Prof. White: I was trying to think about the new green space. I find that space interesting because it doesn't feel designed. It feels like a left-over space, the backstreet of something. I am still deciding whether I like it or don't like it. Some of the moves feel temporary and are the start of something else that will happen. Therefore, I will wait to commit to it.

Huesemann-Odom: Ethan said he likes to walk through the green spaces because seeing all the students makes him feel connected to the university. But then he added that he doesn't think that event is necessary for his profession.
Prof. White: I showed videos of that space to a former student. He could not believe how the space transformed after leaving three years ago. I love that space. Part of it is the absence of it in the past. Suddenly, you start seeing students. They sit on blankets in the sun, which you would have never seen before. I don't want to be UGA or George Tech, but I want us to be an urban campus with a humane attitude about the space and how we use it. Somehow, we have yet to embrace that.

Huesemann-Odom: Is there a university that does that very well?

Prof. White: GT is an urban university. I studied there; I worked there. It is an accessible campus to walk to, and you spend at least half your day taking advantage of everything offered.

Huesemann-Odom: So, is it a campus environment that you would spend more time in?

White: Yes. The singular space that made that happen was GW. I would walk to that green space to see event posters and grab a sandwich. I'd go to that space and be confronted with exploring other spaces, inviting me to do those mundane things, but it informed my experience there beyond anything I've ever seen here.

Huesemann-Odom: I was reading that the ideal campus encourages you to walk everywhere and bike everywhere, without any traffic. Do you think that applies to GT?

Prof. White: There might be something to that. It could be the urban adjacency.

Huesemann-Odom: I feel like they created an island in Atlanta.

Prof. White: That's right, but I parked my car on the perimeter, walked in, and never returned until I went home. On Campus, everything feels animated. Have we not talked about GT as a model for this thesis?

Huesemann-Odom: No.
Prof. White: How funny?

Huesemann-Odom: Yes. UGA, GA, and Emory are the ones that intrigue me.

Prof. White: Have you been to Emory?

Huesemann-Odom: No.

Prof. White: Emory is almost like UGA, but everybody at Emory leaves the campus after class.

Huesemann-Odom: Although the faculty lives around campus.

Prof. White: They do, and they have lots of students who live right there on campus and the periphery, but nothing happens on campus. In Emory Village, where the roundabout is, they need help keeping their businesses open. So, where are the students going? I don't know. I look at that plan, and this is like any other traditional university, but this one could have been better regarding its social success.

Prof. White: You know, GA’s green space used to have a building in the middle of it, and they took it down. GA might be an attractive layout to look at in terms of placemaking and urban adjacency.

Huesemann-Odom: Who's doing that at GSU?

Prof. White: Four people at the university are in the know about what will happen here at GSU. Last week, I sent her an e-mail requesting access to UWB.

Huesemann-Odom: So, talking about the facilities of COTA. Ethan also mentioned CMII as a successful addition. But I would like to question that. We limit those encounters when discussing unplanned encounters and being confronted with safety access points, as seen at
CMII. When accessing the building, I am immediately confronted with questions about where I want to go and what I want to do.

Prof. White: I never thought about that. But you are right. I never see anyone in there.

Huesemann-Odom: Well, this was very insightful. Thank you so much for your time.
10.3.4 Appendix C.4: Interview with Dr. Ethan Tussey (transcript)

Interview of Dr. Tussey, Director of the School of FMT at GSU, by Peter Hüseemann-Odom, MFA candidate for interior design, on October 26, 2023, in the office of Dr. Tussey on the 10th floor of 25 Park Place, home to FMT at GSU.

Huesemann-Odom: I saw on GSU website that you recently became interim director of the school. I believe it was July. How did that happen?

Dr. Tussey: The previous director stepped down, so my colleagues said you should be the next director, and I said no.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Tussey: But then they replied: who else will be? So said, I'll be it for a little while, but I've since been trying to find a way not to do this permanently.

Huesemann-Odom: So, you want to wait to do it permanently?

Dr. Tussey: God, no.

Huesemann-Odom: Why?

Dr. Tussey: I think everybody who wants to be a professor has yet to have the goal of being an administrator at some point.

Huesemann-Odom: So, you feel more disconnected from the classroom?

Dr. Tussey: I don't teach at all.

Huesemann-Odom: You don't teach at all?
Dr. Tussey: Depending on our course rotation. There's a class we say we offer that if I don't teach it, no one will be able to teach it, so I'm going to do that.

Huesemann-Odom: So, it's more like an emergency instructor.

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, uncompensated emergency teacher.

Huesemann-Odom: So, if you teach, it is uncompensated?

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, but I get compensated for my job, not teaching.

Huesemann-Odom: Got it. So, you must make sure that everything runs smoothly.

Dr. Tussey: I often compare it to being like a busy hotel's help desk. All right, today's problem is this.

Huesemann-Odom: Actually, there's a name for it in hospitality.

Dr. Tussey: I went to school for a very long time to get pretty good at what I do, and I don't get to do any of that, so that sucks.

Huesemann-Odom: I saw that you went to California, so how did you end up in Atlanta?

Dr. Tussey: When I was doing my Ph.D. I was working with a professor, one of the people on my committee. And I started to specialize in some of the work that she was doing. I've had an interest and ability there, and she had one of her best friends and colleagues at GSU then. There was a job opening when I was finishing my dissertation. She recommended that I should apply for that position. With the heat of the job market in mind, you take what you can get, and I was thrilled to find something in the city. I knew nothing about the program other than one colleague was there, that it was available, and that I had a decent shot given my interest. I guarantee I was not the first choice, but that was it.
Huesemann-Odom: And that was when exactly?

Dr. Tussey: 2012.

Huesemann-Odom: Wow, and in 2018, you were promoted.

Dr. Tussey. Exactly. And my book came out.

Huesemann-Odom: Yeah, I saw that you published a lot already. Is that what you most enjoy about your role? The research?

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, I want a giant stack of books I wrote from the library. I have four up there but I aim to have a more giant pile. I could be surrounded, so you can't find me digging into whatever I'm working on; that's what I want to do. You know, you're in conversation with people in the field, helping shape those ideas and being a resource to the community when they have questions. We just did the speaker series about the strike and my work in the media industry.

Huesemann-Odom: I understand.

Dr. Tussey: That is what I want to do—that and teaching.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you still have time to do this in your current role?

Dr. Tussey: In the first year, not. This last year, I've been able to pick and choose. We have a new colleague who does similar work, so we've been working together a little more time and doing some co-writing.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. I had to google FMT because it's not visible.

Dr. Tussey: No, not at all.
Huesemann-Odom: I was surprised entering this floor exposed to a completely different world.

Dr. Tussey: My favorite detail about that is that on the directory on the elevators of most of the art and sciences buildings, each department has a color, but then it just says “other,” and our college is one of the others with janitorial service or something like.

Huesemann-Odom: That is interesting. You said you don't intend to be in this role longer, but do you have goals for this position?

Dr. Tussey: I'm not a vision guy. I'm much more driven by facts. And how do I make that happen for them? Meeting with the faculty and asking them where they see themselves in their career. What would help them? Trying to find areas of overlap. You wanted to do this, so we are interested in a similar thing; maybe we will theme our speakers around that, so that'll help you. I use the end-of-year and semester meetings to discuss where you are and what I can do to help. The day-to-day is mainly just keeping things.

Huesemann-Odom: I assume you have a team that supports you?

Dr. Tussey: When I took over, I needed more staff. Everyone had just left. I learned all the roles in that first month while trying to hire the right staff. Now, we have more of a team that supports me a lot. But still, everything comes to me: is this right?

Huesemann-Odom: It's great to have someone to come to and double-check if you're on the right path. So, you are a social connector somehow. You said that you were not keen on being in this position.

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, no.

Huesemann-Odom: So, I assume you have many cheerleaders in this institution?
Dr. Tussey: Yeah, my colleagues remain very supportive. I've been grad director for four or five years, so there was proof of concept there that I had been doing administrative work.

Huesemann-Odom: How many grads are there?

Dr. Tussey: 40 or more than that. I don't need to know the exact number; you got me curious. I am going to look it up.

Huesemann-Odom: So your program is top-rated?

Dr. Tussey: We have 70 grad students right now.

Huesemann-Odom: That is great. I didn't know that it was so big.

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, we're big. Major undergraduates were like 1300 students, and then the graduates on various levels of progress were about 80, and they're prolific, too. What I would like to say about our graduate students is that over the last decade, over three quarters have ended up in academia, and half of that group are in tenure-track jobs. So, we attract graduate students who are different from other places, and then they write a very different dissertation or make a different film, which helps them.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you also work with other film schools?

Dr. Tussey: We are very friendly with many film programs and have collaborated with them. For example, when we've had national conferences here in Atlanta, we worked with them to put that together. My very first advisor in academia is now at Emory, so we sometimes work together. We have these close ties with everybody. We have a specific relationship with Georgia Film Academy. Our students can make films down at the set, and then there's interest in our students. So, I receive phone calls asking if they can support any student’s projects, and we make that available for them. We're early in the days for the MFA's. So, they're not really at the point where they're jumping on these opportunities. There's some question if they ever will because
most want to make more experimental, personal films, which don't necessarily need much funding.

Huesemann-Odom: A film is usually a collaborative project. How is that incorporated into your curriculum?

Dr. Tussey: We try to plan a cohort model where you start with a group that will work on your film, and you will work on their film. Everyone has their signature film, which is their concept and execution, but the rest of the cohort contributes to that and plays a role in your project. And if it is not that, it is some of the other grads or professionals if you can afford it. We have a theater program where you can tap into the actor’s pool. So, the filmmakers pull from the school’s resources to make their stuff and are particular about what they want on their crew.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. Change the topic. Do you have a favorite place on campus?

Dr. Tussey: The fastest MARTA stop is Five Points, but I always get off at GSU because I like walking by the library through that new GW. I have been here for over ten years, and I think they opened that space three years ago. That was the first time I felt on a university campus. So, I always make it a point of walking through there, and I particularly like walking through there when everybody's out there. Before, you would only see the students in their classrooms or the library, where everybody was.

Huesemann-Odom: So, would you agree that seeing this activity enhances your experience at the university?

Dr. Tussey: I don't need that, but I like it. It feels nice to walk through that open space with student activity.

Huesemann-Odom: That’s fair.
Dr. Tussey: Coming into my office, working out my stuff, or working with my colleagues satisfies me. That is what I want to do.

Huesemann-Odom: How much do you see your students?

Dr. Tussey: I see them a lot because I like to help. I would be shocked if the doors were not knocked while sitting here. I see them a lot here in my office. I see students a lot, but only our students. And then obviously when I teach.

Huesemann-Odom: So, you say you see students from your school but not from any other?

Dr. Tussey: Rarely. Sometimes, I peek into one of the galleries or see new graduate students during the mixer.

Huesemann-Odom: I have never been to the mixer. The main problem is that I get an email the afternoon of the mixer: tonight is the mixer. But by that time, I usually have made plans already.

Dr. Tussey: We put it on our calendar.

Huesemann-Odom: The school just published its strategic plan. Is there a separate strategic plan for your college?

Dr. Tussey: We worked on some strategic planning over the last couple of years, but we never put together a finalized document and advertised it. It's an internal working document. We did this for self-reflection. We are going through the academic program review, and it is an excellent time to reflect on where we are, where we want to be, etc., after our first five years. Part of that is a strategic plan. Based on our conversations, we will have a written document after the evaluation.
Huesemann-Odom: Are you trying to align your goals with the university?

Dr. Tussey: As a director, I am looking at it constantly. If you want to get anything done, it is essential to demonstrate how these goals align with the overall mission. Leadership spends much time working on these guiding principles, so it makes sense to work with them. And often, they are so amorphous as to contain anything that it becomes easy. We're all here for the same reasons, so your specific goals within the school can easily align with the universities. It is about educating, creating knowledge, and helping the community. It's not like I study them or try to break them down.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. What do you think are the biggest challenges for your school?

Dr. Tussey: I may be guessing your project, so that I will go broad. When I first arrived, I was told that you are on the downtown campus with many commuters, a campus with a commuter history, so nobody sticks around. Downtowns across the country are not vibrant places, right? People live in their communities and look for excellent places to eat and places to go, which explains why nobody's making a point of being downtown. Additionally, the university incentive structure for faculty is built around individual achievement, right?

I'm sure somebody has broken this down for you, but as faculty, you get promoted in tenure, particularly in those first five years on your professional creative work for your research. That’s like 60% of how evaluated. The other 30% is teaching, and 10% is service. So, 90% of how you were assessed is about what you do individually and in terms of your accomplishments. And all of that requires you to do a lot: write a book, do research, advise students, update your classes, and consistently demonstrate that. All of that is a full-time job, and we're constantly being asked to materialize it in our evaluation materials, so it feels like you're already doing a lot.

On top of that, you're asked to do service assignments that they're never trained to do. You're constantly asked to do those kinds of things as well. So, there is a built-in structure of individualism. My mentor once told me that academia is a profession that attracts introverts who want to be in their offices working on their projects, and this tasks them to collaborate or self-govern themselves, which is precisely why they're in the office because they don't want to do that. So, you have a cultural self-selection of people who like their work but prefer collaborating
with specific people in their field. I am very tight with people I've met at conferences and published with, and they're the ones who review my book. The book defines whether I can keep my job. That network puts together a conference, and I can go with them to do it, so there's a way in which there's collaboration in academia, but it's very rarely within your school.

Huesemann-Odom: It's usually like the network that you already established.

Dr. Tussey: Right. The network that got you the job in the first place and then kept you in the job as you go forward. The final piece of it is turnover retention. You must keep the faculty to establish any momentum for a culture so that people stick around. Once they get through the scary tenure process and can exhale, they might invest more in the place. We have been a school since 2017. We have made 17 hires and lost 15 faculty members, so we need more momentum. Whenever somebody gets tenure, the university doesn't match the salary or doesn't make a retention offer that keeps them around. You lose all that institutional knowledge, all that investment, and connections you've developed over that time. So, how will I work on this when they are all gone? Those have been significant obstacles to any sustained cultural investment and cross-collaboration. Those are the three main things for me.

Huesemann-Odom: Understood. How can the built environment change that?

Dr. Tussey: When I took this role, one of the major tasks I wanted to tackle was making this feel more like a community. I've instituted several things to try and make that happen. For us, it has not been an issue of being unable to personalize the space. For us, it's been making the investment worthwhile. I've asked for two hours monthly, one for mentoring, where you work with somebody in the school and meet for a coffee to discuss a subject I put together. I gave them a menu and said pick one of these subjects, meet with your colleagues for an hour, and talk to them. So that they understand where you're coming from, find out what they need, especially for junior faculty, and figure that out. That's one. The other one is workshops to try. These are two things that I have done. Then, I send out two emails monthly. One is a calendar that shows everything that's going on in the school with highlights of things we should attend together. The other is a mid-month memo or update to people on what's happening. Those have been very well
received because they're minimal asks with just two hours, and they provide a lot more information. So, I think that helps.

We did a survey and asked the faculty: would it make it more likely for you to attend more events? Because the two hours do not account for every one of the events. So, of all the factors that keep you from attending events, what is the determining, the most important to least important, in terms of what would make you more likely to participate in school events? The number one by far is more free time. So half of them answered: if I had more time, I would attend more events. The second one was cash incentives for going to an event. If something were connected to pay, I would go to many more things. Another one was: If it was part of your annual review, would you attend more events? Most answered that that wouldn’t do it for them.

Closer connections to your coworkers: 15% said that was their number 1, 21% said it is their #2, and 31% said it was their number three. They know each other. I hang out with multiple faculty that we hit off personally outside of work, and I think it isn't easy to manufacture camaraderie. Or what I always say it's like to say: you can't force fun; fun happens spontaneously. Anyway. This one interested me: are our transportation issues why you don't attend events? That was only the 5th most important thing to people. So, it's not bad. It's just time: time and incentive.

Huesemann-Odom: That is so interesting.

Dr. Tussey: The university put much effort into incentivizing collaboration. They did something a few years ago, asking you to co-teach a class with support regarding your workload and funding. They did that. They've done several events to get together. Well, to take advantage of that co-teaching idea, for example, I would need to find somebody now, plan for a year from now, and put together that class, and I may not know that person well enough to say, that's worth doing, or I do, and I'm already friends with that person.

Huesemann-Odom: Or that person leaves.

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, or that person leaves.
Huesemann-Odom: OK, interesting. Do you think that students have a community?

Dr. Tussey: It depends on the cohorts. Suppose the chemistry of the cohort is complicated to predict when you're putting together when we're accepting. Then they show up, and then they're like the engine for the next three years; they’re like taking care of everyone. I don't know. There's no predictable outcome. This will work so that we can replicate this every time. We have a significant cohort right now. They organize weekly film or biweekly film screenings, and the graduate students get together to accommodate the new graduate students. They help them find a place to live and all that stuff. They spend much time together and are good at that. But that's not always how it's been. Again, the sort of unique chemistry that that group hit it off. For this one that just came in.

Huesemann-Odom: Do you all have the same experience with the core that went through COVID?

Dr. Tussey: They did a pretty good job. It was much easier when they came back, and they could be in classes together, but we did some stuff to try and facilitate that. We would do reading groups together and question, and answer sessions to try and replicate some of the input calls would give.

Huesemann-Odom: Describe your working relationship with faculty outside of FMT.

Dr. Tussey: Michael White and I are in meetings every two weeks together. There's much collaboration there. I know Stanford from Nedda’s house. So, we know each other well from that. So, my work is not dependent on that collaboration, but as the director, I do a lot of socializing and networking. I do a lot more setups.

Huesemann-Odom: How about the faculty of FMT? Do they collaborate?

Dr. Tussey: Yeah, but again, those collaborations must happen organically. Alessandra has been running her research collective around blackness and aesthetics for ten years now,
proving that collaborative spirit. She has found folks who are interested in that. She's done an excellent job building that.

Huesemann-Odom: Cool. Could art and design, music and film work together on a project?

Dr. Tussey: For sure. The question needs to be: who would be dedicated to doing it? Who would be responsible for it? Who is going to teach the cross-listed? You would need a faculty member who says that is my area, and I'm going to do it, collaborating on the curriculum to make sure that it fits. I can see the learning outcomes we want in our school and the projects we need, mainly in the theater space. We just made a joint appointment with music or something to create sets for your productions and the opera production. So that's a person that's working in both of those spaces. We're always looking. We always reach out to the other schools when we're looking for guest artists, like for a play or something. We need somebody who can do lighting design or something like that. But it all goes back to the fact that we need a faculty member who commits and says this is worth my time and fits my research agenda.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. There seems to be some collaboration between the schools, but it still needs to be visible. We don’t have a central lobby where we can come together.

Dr. Tussey: Visibility is our first strategic goal from our academic program review, increasing the school's visibility. We recently added a PR person to our team, whose job is to promote our achievements and draw traffic to our events. The volume of celebrating and announcing has increased over the last few years. So, here is my response about the visibility: how attentive are you to the college calendar? Is that something that you're checking all the time?

Huesemann-Odom: I need to check that constantly, but I am embracing every opportunity in my daily schedule where I do not have to engage with a computer or phone. So, I am not sure how this applies to visibility. I discuss a visual connection between the colleges and the communities when referencing visibility. Do you agree that this visibility would be beneficial for the communities?
Dr. Tussey: I'm wondering what that looks like. From a film perspective, students are filming on campus all the time. You probably notice people running around with cameras. Over by the student center is the Cinefest, a movie theater with a sign on the door that says Cinefest. They display posters for their movies that are coming up, including ones that are happening right now, like right in the walkway. Have you gone in and seen a movie while walking by?

Huesemann-Odom: No, I have not.

Dr. Tussey: So, that is my point. I don't know how to make that serendipitous moment via film. I could say “now showing” or something like that. Or we could see somebody filming something, or you could say there's a talk today and put out those posters which we do all over the place, but I don't have to get you to steer into it in that serendipitous way without those connections. Indeed, having our building with the whole college would probably help in terms of running into everybody at the shared coffee shop or the elevator bank. And maybe that would get to your point about physicality and coincidence. We're 100% for that, but I think your overall calculation has a problem, which is reflected in our survey, saying that time is the central issue. I could invest in that, but I should probably invest in this because it's more valuable to me. And I'm not necessarily going to spend my leisure hours at work.

Huesemann-Odom: What could be a potential solution?

Dr. Tussey: I've been thinking about this for ten years and trying to program this structurally to try and affect it. So far, the faculty has come back by saying they like it. It feels more communal but is a small ask for two hours a month. It's about constant sort of communication and making a lot of things available and advertised. One of my favorite stats lately when we're going through academic program reviews is that faculty members complain that their colleagues don't understand or appreciate what they do. So, I suggested that everyone pick one lesson they teach this semester to invite any faculty member available to see them teach. What better way to see you in your chosen field of expertise?

(Student knocks at the door and comes into the room) Dr. Tussey: I'll be out in a little bit.
Dr. Tussey: I said, sign up, tell us when you want people to stop by. Only three faculty members promoted their classes because it is a group of introverts. So, how are we going to understand what it is that you do that is brilliant? How will your colleagues understand it if you don't even invite them into your classroom? They should understand it. I have one question: what is your responsibility in promoting your work? I had the faculty members say that it is not my responsibility. My responsibility is to do the work; people should appreciate and admire me.

Huesemann-Odom: But, overall, I feel you believe in collaboration.

Dr. Tussey. Yes, 100%. I would start a new project by having lunch with faculty members and discussing it. And then I am co-writing something with somebody. Three of our faculty members put together this amplified thing for racial violence atrocities. So, there is this spirit within the school where these affinity groups come together and say: let's get support for this. That's encouraging. I take your point that it only happens a little at the college level.

Huesemann-Odom: Where do you go for lunch then?

Dr. Tussey: With my faculty?

Huesemann-Odom: Yeah.

Dr. Tussey: Nowadays, we'll probably go to, like, Sensational Subs or Gusto.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.

Dr. Tussey: But in the old days, we lived in the same part of town so that we would meet there.

Huesemann-Odom: OK. Is a stronger connection between the colleges beneficial?
Dr. Tussey: At the administrative level, it is highly beneficial because if you argue that something benefits college, it's much more likely to be funded or supported. Whether or not how often that is worked is an open question. So, it's strengthening numbers when it comes to limited resources.

Huesemann-Odom: How do you attract students to the program?

Dr. Tussey: We’re doing great in attracting students to the program, mainly because of the tax incentive in town and the visibility of Atlanta as a major media producer. So students say: I want to study film because that's like a legit pathway to a career in the city. We benefit significantly from that. On the graduate level, the faculty pulls in graduate students for the most part: faculty and region. You can say, " Do you want to live in a major city less expensive than other cities and study at a world-class level? We belong to other institutions; we publish in all the right spots, and the faculty you work with is the faculty you notice at significant conferences.

Huesemann-Odom: The infrastructure is good, and you are set up for success?

Dr. Tussey: We do fine on those, but there's so much interest in filmmaking right now that we're doing great regarding applications. On the study side, if we could keep the faculty, it would be one of the best situations.

Huesemann-Odom: What are the main reasons why they left?

Dr. Tussey: Money and the politics of the state. These are the two major scary things—the shifts in faculty evaluation and the attack on teacher tenure. Cultural fit is another reason. Some people want to be outside the American South. Those are big things. The urban campus might be another reason, but they're doing so well here that they're getting poached by top-tier institutions.

Huesemann-Odom: How do you ensure you can keep your current faculty team?
Dr. Tussey: Fighting for compensation, ensuring their work is celebrated, and trying to accommodate them the best way possible.

Huesemann-Odom: OK.
10.4 Appendix D: Spatial Diagrams

10.4.1 Appendix D.1: Campus Diagram Wayne State University (cropped)

Figure 10.14 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *Campus Diagram Wayne State University* (image, cropped), January 26, 2024.
10.4.2 Appendix D.2: Campus Diagram University of Houston

Figure 10.15 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *Campus Diagram University* of Houston (image), January 26, 2024.
10.4.3 Appendix D.3: Campus Diagram University of California – Riverside

Figure 10.16 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *Campus Diagram University of California – Riverside* (image), January 28, 2024.
10.4.4 Appendix D.4: Campus Diagram Virginia Commonwealth University

Figure 10.17 Peter Huesemann-Odom, Campus Diagram Virginia Commonwealth University (image), January 27, 2024.
Figure 10.18 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *Campus Diagram University of Memphis* (image, cropped), January 26, 2024.
10.4.6 Appendix D.6: Campus Diagram Kennesaw State University

Figure 10.19 Peter Huesemann-Odom, Campus Diagram Kennesaw State University (image, cropped), January 26, 2024.
10.5 Appendix E: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

10.5.1 Appendix E.1: Fountain Campus Map

10.5.2 Appendix E.2: Academy Campus Map

10.5.3 Appendix E.3: Port Campus Map

10.6 Appendix F: MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts”

10.6.1 Appendix F.1: MFA Thesis Exhibition Boards

INTRO

THE PROJECT.

The Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design, the School of Music, and the School of Film, Media & Theatre form the College of the Arts at Georgia State University. These schools operate in separate campus areas. This lack of unified presence impedes collaborative and inspiring exchanges between communities. This thesis, The New College of the Arts, investigates forming a community that combines all the College of the Arts disciplines and highlights the College’s impact on the city of Atlanta, Georgia State University, and the arts.

The components needed for a successful evolution are discovered through primary and secondary research, including stakeholder interviews, site visits, case studies, and a literature review. Considering all these components, I propose a solution that serves as an ideal foundation for the College’s future.

Figure 10.31 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 01 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
INTRO

THE DESIGNER.

Peter Huesemann-Odom is a highly competent creative professional who successfully develops, leads, and implements complex design projects to create unique interior experiences. With a Bachelor of Arts degree that has brought him international work experiences in Europe, South America, and the USA, he is a mobile and highly creative leader with a dynamic background. Peter plays key strategic and operational roles in large-scale projects such as introducing design guidelines, opening new stores, or smaller projects like seasonal showroom displays and shop-window installations. His many years of experience in the fashion and service industries has enabled him to supervise and lead projects strategically from planning to implementation. His problem-solving abilities and confident approach to new challenges impress his peers and clients simultaneously.

He graduates in 2024 with an MFA in Interior Design from Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA, intent to marry his experiences and vision to become a commercial and residential interior design leader.

Moving to the United States in 2021 manifested his international relevance and strengthened his relationships with American clients. Ignited by the additional skills in the interior design profession and motivated to diversify constantly, he collaborates with local designers to further extend his competencies and network. During his career, he manifested his desire to create resolved and purposeful, organic and authentic, genuine and mature, inclusive and exclusive design that matters. While he is learning to “master” interior design, he continues to consult, educate, and inspire design aesthetics worldwide.

MFA THESIS EXHIBITION | INTERIOR DESIGN | THE NEW COLLEGE OF THE ARTS | PETER HÜSEMMANN-ODOM | APRIL 08-12, 2024

Figure 10.32 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 02 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
THE CLIENT.

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Founded over 100 years ago, Georgia State University (GSU) started as the University System of Georgia Evening School, operated by the Georgia Institute of Technology. It is now an urban research university, providing associate-to-graduate degrees for more than 50,000 students from 150 countries and all U.S. states. Due to its extraordinary growth in the number of students, physical facilities, and quality of education, GSU has become one of the nation’s largest and most diverse universities, with one of its fastest-growing research portfolios.

In 2016, all of GSU’s artistic disciplines: Art & Design, Film, Media, and Theatre, and Music, were brought together to form the College of the Arts. Offering a variety of undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and dual degree programs, the College unites a dynamic arts scene and a popular movie and music industry.

The College of the Arts instructors. The College generates seven bachelor’s, seven master’s, four doctoral, three dual degree programs, one artistic certificate program, and one non-degree teacher licensure program.

THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Sixteen facilities and venues create an educational environment for creativity and artistic production. Art & Design disciplines like graphic design and interior design, ceramics, photography, and many more are hosted in the Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design. The School of Film, Media, and Theatre represents all media disciplines, while all musical disciplines are offered in the School of Music.

Although all three schools, plus CMII (shared with the College of Arts and Sciences) and Rialto Center for the Arts, are one institutional unit, they are geographically scattered all over GSU’s campus.

MFA THESIS EXHIBITION | INTERIOR DESIGN | THE NEW COLLEGE OF THE ARTS | PETER HUESEMANN-ROMAN | APRIL 08-12, 2024

Figure 10.33 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 03 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
INTRO

THE EXHIBITION.

This thesis exhibition, The New College of the Arts, showcases a concept that combines all the College of the Arts disciplines and highlights the College’s impact on the city of Atlanta, Georgia State University, and the arts. Models, diagrams, and visualizations celebrate a successful evolution and ideal foundation for the College’s future.

Figure 10.34 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 04 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
The university published a ten-year strategic plan (2023-2033) to guide the institution collectively and further validate its regional, national, and international importance. This blueprint articulates a shared vision for the university’s future, introducing four pillars:

1. **IDENTITY**
2. **PLACEMAKING**
3. **BELONGING**

4. **INNOVATIVE RESEARCH**
5. **SCHOLARSHIP**
6. **CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

7. **STUDENT SUCCESS 2.0**

8. **BEYOND COLLEGE TO CAREER**

Figure 10.35 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 05* (pdf), April 07, 2024.
RESEARCH

POINT OF VIEWS.

Stakeholder interviews documented points of view about the possible relocation of individual units to one unified presence on campus.

“We all deal with the same problem in each of our spaces. For the most part, our spaces are not designed with us in mind.”

Dr. Chester Phillips, Director of the School of Music since 2021, Interim Dean of the College of the Arts since 2023.

“I want to be in the heart of the campus because the rest of the students and the rest of the community want to stay within the campus... We want other entities across the campus to go to our concerts and our artists' talks... they are part of the culture that we offer at the university. If we're physically too far away, people won't come.”

Dr. Susan Richmond, Interim Associate Dean of the College of the Arts since 2023.

“I like walking by the library through that new green space. I have been here for over ten years, and I think they opened that space three years ago. That was the first time I felt on a university campus. So, I always make it a point of walking through there, and I particularly like walking through there when everybody's out there. Before, you would only see the students in their classrooms or the library, where everybody was.”

Dr. Ethan Tussey, Interim Director for the School of Film, Media, and Theatre since 2023.

“You can call Georgia State University a commuter college because you have no reason to stay. But when you go to campus and have reasons to stay all day because you are experiencing something or can add value to your day, that campus becomes a destination. We are relying on the city of Atlanta to fill that gap.”

Michael White, M.Arch. Director for the Ernest E. Welch School of Art & Design from 2012 until 2018, and Interim Director since 2023.
RESEARCH

CASE STUDIES.

Historical and contemporary case studies built the foundation of possible schematic design concepts to enhance community, creativity, and collaboration.

BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Driven by creative collaboration and set in a rural environment, this case study showcases that a strong commitment by the faculty, a close connection to nature, and a desire to create a collaborative and creative community with a clear vision can lead not only the students to success but also manifest the influence an art college can have on a student’s education.

BAUHAUS

Founder of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, showed that the spatial organization of an art institution can reinforce its ideals and values, positively affect the learning experience, and support the infrastructure efficiently. The spatial organization is well thought out and easy to understand. Classrooms, administration, and workshop areas are assembled, and large windows, as a key architectural element, facilitate a constant exchange between faculty and students.

CHELSEA COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

This case study introduces a central plaza that provides a gathering space for the college community, an exhibition space, and an interaction point with the residents of that area. Almost set up as a courtyard, it is visible from most rooms of the central building, offering constant social impulses for the students and faculty.
LITERATURE.

THE ART SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT MUST ENHANCE CREATIVITY BY BEING FUNCTIONAL AND PROVIDING IMPULSES TO BE CREATIVE. THIS BALANCE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO REPAIR CULTURAL ROOTS, CREATE NEW TRADITIONS, AND SATISFY PEOPLE’S DESIRE TO IMAGINE A FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES AND THE COMMUNITY.

Due to its central location and connected infrastructure to other states and countries, it has become an attractive and fast-growing destination and a lucrative resource for national and international businesses. But its pivotal role in American history, fast growth, and diverse population created challenges still evident in how we experience the city as a society.

HIGHWAY SYSTEM
JOHN PORTMAN ARCHITECTURE
PRIORITIZING INDIVIDUAL OVER
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
LACK OF “SAFE” BIKE LANE
THE ARTS ARE INVISIBLE
LACK OF SOCIAL LIFE DOWNTOWN
ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL BUSINESSES
BUILDINGS ARE NOT DESIGNED
FOR AN ART INSTITUTION
MISSING IDENTITY
DECENTRALIZED STRUCTURE
DOWNTOWN CAMPUS
LACK OF CENTRALIZED SPACES

Figure 10.39 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 09 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
SPACES.

The goal is to create spaces that facilitate collaboration, community, and creativity and increase the visibility of the Arts downtown. With the desire to create a home for any college member, artist, or scholar, the right mix of individual and community spaces must be made that offer solitude or company for any creative discipline. A new spatial configuration of existing and supplemental spaces will enhance the efficiency and variety of creative venues and centralize community spaces to achieve the desired goal. The list of supplemental spaces is optional yet necessary to accelerate the success of this project.

CLASSROOMS
CONFERENCES ROOMS
CREATIVE MEDIA CENTER
GALLERIES
LABS
OFFICES
RECITAL HALL
RESOURCES
STUDIOS FOR GRADS & FACULTY
THEATRE
WORKSHOP AREA

FACULTY SPACES
FOOD & BEVERAGE
CENTRAL LOBBY
COLLABORATION SPACES
HOTEL
MUSEUM
MULTI-PURPOSE SHOWCASE
OUTDOOR SPACES
QUIET ROOMS
RETAIL STORE
STUDENT LOUNGES
STUDIOS FOR UNDERGRADS
SHOP FOR ART SUPPLIES

Figure 10.40 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 10 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
Figure 10.41 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 11* (pdf), April 07, 2024.
Figure 10.42 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 12 (pdf)*, April 07, 2024.
SCHEMATIC DESIGN

ART & DESIGN.

Figure 10.43 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 13 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
Figure 10.44 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 14* (pdf), April 07, 2024.
Figure 10.45 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 15* (pdf), April 07, 2024.
Figure 10.46 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 16 (pdf)*, April 07, 2024.
DESIGN CONCEPT.

A TRIPTYCH is a work of art consisting of three panels related to each other in theme, style, and color. It requires careful planning and design to ensure the panels complement each other and form a cohesive whole. All parts’ full potential and completion are achieved when shown together, while each part might function independently. The same applies to all three units of the College of the Arts. Currently spatially separated and invisible to each other, the triptych concept will unite all members in an efficiently organized matrix of spaces that increases individual and communal creativity, collaboration, and visibility for the Arts.


KEY DRIVERS

COLLABORATION
COMMUNITY
CREATIVITY
FUNCTIONALITY
INNOVATION
SENSE OF PLACE
SUSTAINABILITY
VISIBILITY

Figure 10.47 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 17 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
CONCEPT IMAGERY.

Figure 10.48 Peter Huesemann-Odom, *MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 18 (pdf)*, April 07, 2024.
BRANDING.

The main idea is to follow the design guidelines of the university as much as possible yet create a unique brand concept for the College of the Arts that unites all three. Aligned with the design concept, a three-part composition is the foundation of the community logo, and each logo symbolizes unity. In addition, a personalized color is guiding each logo, and a grid of cubes forms a unique wayfinding system to create a network of the Arts on campus.

Figure 10.49 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 19 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
DESIGN

EXTERIOR CONCEPT.

The idea is to marry existing architecture with timeless architectural elements that establish a sense of place and identity for all College of the Arts members. While the existing architecture is only slightly modified, new cuboids are traversing to symbolize each College and its unity as a creative hub, to prominently enforce the intersection of diverse artistic disciplines, indoor and outdoor; individuality, and community, past and present.

A two-story cuboid with a glass facade behind a checkerboard pattern of brick represents artisan art and design.

A two-story cuboid with a glass facade behind a crosshatch timber structure symbolizes the blending sounds of musical instruments in an orchestra.

A three-story glass cuboid invites community members and visitors and prominently showcases all artistic disciplines as the new home for the College of the Arts.

Figure 10.50 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 20 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
A museum in 100 Edgewood will showcase the art collection from the State of Georgia, gifted and archived collections, and artworks from previous graduate students at the College of the Arts. On two floors, visible from Peachtree Center and Hurt Park, will be open to all members of the University and the public. The same applies to all galleries on campus. Artworks will be displayed indoors and outdoors surrounding the college buildings to promote the community of the art district on campus. Exhibition spaces with high ceilings, moveable walls, and floor-to-ceiling windows will grant ideal conditions for the museum and galleries to impact the College’s impact on Atlanta, the Arts, and the University.

By eliminating the middle wing of Sparks Hall, the Creative Courtyard establishes an artistic playground and display area for artworks in progress by departments like sculpture, ceramics, or film and media. Surrounded by classrooms and the Creative Hub, it creates a center for creativity visible to everyone in the arts. Additional outdoor spaces are accessible from the graduate studios and collaboration spaces in the Design, Media, and Music Cuboids. Various seating arrangements and open spaces provide even more room for artists to follow their passions.

Figure 10.51 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 21 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
DESIGN

INTERIOR CONCEPT.

Florence Kopple Recital Hall in the Arts and Humanities building, mainly utilized by the School of Music, and the Dahlberg Theatre, operated by the School of Film, Media, and Theatre, will get significant updates to align them with current trends in the entertainment industry. Both venues continue to operate as educational facilities that showcase student work and national and international artists. The Koltz Center for the Arts is creating a program separate from the College to maintain a strong relationship with the local community as a historic venue for the Arts.

The “ballroom” of Dahlberg Hall, with its large footprint, high ceilings, and prominent location towards the south-east of campus, is a multi-purpose event space that can host larger groups for assemblies, performances, and movie screenings. With a flexible set-up of moving walls, seating, and the latest high-tech available on the market, this space will accommodate all units of the College for any possible event.

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Figure 10.52 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 22 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
INTERIOR CONCEPT.

Several collaboration spaces on every floor of the artist studios and offices provide various seating and technology environments to drive creativity and innovation. Focusing on functionality, timeless design, and natural materials, the College establishes a holistic environment that feels comfortable, welcoming, and resourceful. Workshop areas like the existing EsLAB in the Arts & Humanities building follow the design aesthetic of the new look and feel of the College to promote its identity and community.

COLLABORATION SPACES

Each student has an individual or community studio space or office to follow their artistic passion. Light-filled, air-conditioned, and equipped with discipline-typical furniture and technology, these spaces have become the home base for every student. Undergraduate student studios are in the Arts and Humanities building, while the graduate student studios are in the Design, Media, and Music Cuboid.

STUDIOS

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Figure 10.53 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 23 (pdf), April 07, 2024.
DESIGN

INTERIOR CONCEPT.

A shop with an art assortment primarily catered to art students is in the Creative Hub, providing artists with everything they need for their artistic practices. Literature, pencils, substrates, printing materials, etc., are displayed on large tables and wall fixtures. A separate retail store accessible to the public sells art created by the student and faculty body. It creates an additional outlet for artists to earn money and understand the market’s demand.

SHOP

Several food outlets offer local, healthy food and drink options and serve as a casual meeting spot for an artistic exchange. A café in Sparks Hall, a Deli opens in Dahlberg Hall, and a restaurant offers table service at 100 Edgewood. With the focus on community, various seating options provide comfort for any group size. The design aligns with the new identity and promotes a timeless design where most everyone feels welcome.

DELI

CAFÉ

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Figure 10.54 Peter Huesemann-Odom, MFA Thesis Exhibition “The New College of the Arts” Board 24 (pdf), April 07, 2024.