

Institutional Planning EAP Form 1.10

The Educational Approval Program (EAP) is a postsecondary education agency that employs a regulatory model focused not only on compliance, but also institutional effectiveness. To facilitate an environment in which schools seek to be effective organizations that improve over time, the EAP requires schools to submit evidence that appropriate planning has been conducted. Although similar to a strategic or business plan, this information will enable the EAP and school officials to engage in a dialogue over time about the effectiveness and future of the school.

Schools that already have some type of strategic or business plan (e.g., schools that have either a corporate or accreditation plan) must adapt these documents to the following requirements and focus on Wisconsin operations and students. **The EAP does not expect any school to divulge any sensitive, proprietary business information.** The information must address the five elements identified below and provide the information requested.

I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School:

Academy of Art University

II. PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. MISSION. *Describe your school's mission and vision, which identifies its purpose and its core values.*

Mission

Academy of Art University prepares aspiring professionals in the fields of design, communication and the arts by delivering excellent undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificate and portfolio development programs. To achieve its mission Academy of Art University:

- maintains an inclusive admissions policy for all persons who meet basic requirements for admission and instruction and who want to obtain higher learning in a wide spectrum of disciplines in art and design;
- teaches a disciplined approach to the study of art and design that encourages students to develop their own styles that blend their talents, technical skills and creative aspirations with professional knowledge;
- enlists a dedicated and very able full-time and part-time faculty of career artists, designers and scholars who are professionals and whose success as educators comes from their ability to teach students through the wisdom and skill they have amassed through years of experience and study; • operates in an urban context so that academic programs can draw upon and contribute to the cultural wealth of those communities that are served;

- provides a creative environment that is at once supportive and challenging and underpinned by excellent personalized teaching and support services that address the needs of students of diverse ages and backgrounds;
- offers an undergraduate general education program designed to stimulate development of critical thinking, and communications skills, and to encourage emerging artists to draw upon a variety of disciplines to look at issues from multiple perspectives and to cultivate the ability to function as educated global citizens;
- manages in an ethical and efficient manner and administers the finances in a prudent fashion; and
- fosters optimum quality in all aspects of programs and services.

Vision

To be the first choice for students seeking a world-class education in the arts and the first choice for those seeking to employ artists globally.

B. MARKET. *Discuss the nature of your school and the business in which it is engaged. Describe who your existing and/or potential customers are and what motivates them to enroll in your school. Explain how you let these customers know you are in business. Finally, identify who your competitors are and how you are different from them.*

Delivering an inspiring and highly-relevant learning experience is at the heart of what we do. We aspire to bring the industry's high level of expectations and drive toward innovation into our classrooms and associated learning opportunities. This experience is driven by the industry wisdom and years of experience represented by our instructors. Within an inclusive admissions environment, our instructors work to connect students who may not have had artistic learning opportunities in the past with the professional opportunities they are working to achieve in the future. We believe that everyone deserves an opportunity to pursue their dream of obtaining higher learning in art and design.

Our existing and potential customers in Wisconsin are recent high school graduates who wish to pursue an online AA, BA, BS, or BFA, those seeking an advanced degree, as well as working professionals, who enroll in our online programs for professional development and career advancement purposes. We do not have agents in Wisconsin. Our out-of-state customers find us when they conduct internet searches for online art and design programs. Information about our programs can be found on websites for education directories, publishers, educational degree information resources, professional associations, and social media.

Our main competitors in the area of online education include Full Sail University, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM, now ASU FIDM), and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Our competitive advantage is that we offer the greatest selection of degree programs that can be completed 100% online.

C. MANAGEMENT. *Describe your management team and how it functions to lead, administer and position the school. If your school has advisory boards, describe how the school uses them for program and school improvement.*

Stephens Institute DBA Academy of Art University (the Academy) is a California corporation led by Dr. Elisa Stephens, who has served in the position since 1992. President Stephens is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the institution and is supported in governance and administration by an executive leadership team of qualified, dedicated staff charged with assuring the continuity and stability of the Academy's educational, artistic, administrative, and financial structures. The Executive Cabinet of direct reports to the President, members of which represent each key operational area for the institution, has delegated decision-making authority from the President.

The Board of Directors is the decision-making body on matters of educational, financial, and administrative policy. The Chairman of the Board, assures the integrity and fulfillment of the Board's processes and facilitates the relationship between the President and the Board as specified in the bylaws. The Board approves and oversees the implementation of the mission, assures high performing leadership and the financial well-being of the institution, oversees the improvement of academic quality and student learning, and supports institutional planning and organizational learning. The Board's decisions are informed by the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, which includes both faculty and student participation, as well as the WSCUC Steering Committee.

Chief Academic Officer (CAO), is responsible for all academic, educational support, and student life programs. The CAO role is supported by a team of vice presidents and the directors of each academic department. Information derived from student satisfaction surveys, student clubs, town hall meetings as well as the Academic Steering Committee, Online Education Steering Committee, Curriculum Leadership Teams, and Department Action Teams are reviewed and considered for decisions regarding academic and co-curricular programs.

The Vice President of Online Education Services oversees all academic online content development and delivery systems. She is responsible for online staffing, resource management, quality assurance, and improvement to online systems and services. The Vice President of Online Education Services reports to the President.

The Chief of Staff directs strategy for a variety of critical functions including Talent Management, Crisis Management, Facility Management and Legal, Risk and Compliance Management (LGRC). Serving on behalf of the President, this role is the Facilitator for all executive cabinet meetings and assigned sub-committees throughout the University. The Chief of Staff also steers the University's financial goals and directs vendor relations pertaining to external counsel and insurance and liability. Most importantly, the Chief of Staff nurtures and exemplifies a culture of inclusion, operational excellence and efficiency, integrity, compassion, innovation, teamwork and a desire to achieve the mission of Academy of Art University.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the University's Accounting, Finance (Purchasing, A/R and A/P), Payroll, Financial Aid and Systems and Technology functions. The CFO has full financial responsibility for the organization as well as management of lender relationships. This

is a hands-on financial management position providing critical support and leadership to Academy of Art University and the Board of Director

D. SWOT ANALYSIS. *Identify your school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Based on the results of this SWOT analysis, provide the following:*

- *3 to 5 goals for strengths/weaknesses and how they will be addressed by your school.*
- *3 to 5 goals for opportunities/threats and how they will be addressed by your school.*

The goals should have specific objectives, defined results, a timeline for completion and metrics (some type of evaluation or measurement) by which the institution can evaluate/measure their success. In developing its goals, the school may wish to refer to the Elements of Effective Institutions graphic that is included on the back page of this form.

In spring 2022, President Stephens launched Academy of Art University's new Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027. The culmination of engagement campus-wide with students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Board of Directors, the plan provides a roadmap for the Academy to continue to achieve its mission and deliver educational excellence over the next five years.

The Strategic Planning Committee will monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan and will share progress updates with the Academy Community after its annual review of the plan each fall semester. You can view the plan (abridged version) [here](#).

Four Focus Areas and their associated Critical Success Factors provide the foundation and framework to implement and track execution of the Strategic Plan 2022–2027. The focus areas highlight the components required to deliver the optimal learning experience to ensure student success.

- 1) Institutional Effectiveness
- 2) Students and Faculty
- 3) Organization and Facilities
- 4) Finance and Regulatory Compliance

The Critical Success Factors for each Focus Area drive the Academy toward continuous innovation in academic programs and student services supported by advances in technology and improvements in facilities. Measurable objectives are developed for each Critical Success Factor with ownership taken by appropriate staff for execution and monitoring of achievement. Progress on implementing the plan will be reviewed at executive cabinet and key faculty and staff committee meetings and as part of the regular President's Report to the Board of Directors. The plan will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Planning Committee. The four Focus Areas also reflect the Core Commitments of the Academy's accreditor, WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

- Student Learning and Success
- Quality and Improvement
- Institutional Integrity, Sustainability and Accountability

Each Focus Area, Critical Success Factor, and the associated objectives play a role in achieving our vision “To be the first choice for students seeking a world-class education in the arts and the first choice for those seeking to employ artists globally.” The following strengths/weaknesses goals and opportunities/threats goals are from our 2022 - 2027 strategic plan.

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) completed its first annual review of the Academy’s Strategic Plan 2022-2027 in April 2023, and the Board of Directors approved recommended updates to the Plan at their May 2023 meeting. Updates were made to the Plan in June and included the removal of goals and objectives that have been completed in the areas of Curriculum, Facilities and Talent Management. In addition, new goals and objectives were added in the areas of Faculty, Student Experience and Technology, among others.

At the July 10, 2023, Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting, the members reviewed a compilation of strategies achieved between Spring 2022 and Spring 2023 for each Critical Success Factor. The SPC then asked the Area Leads to choose a selection of these strategies to share with the Academy Community. This Strategies Progress Report was used to update the items below:

Strength/Weakness Goal #1	Update		
<p>Student Experience: Deliver innovative student-centered learning experiences and support services that enhance student satisfaction fostering engagement, academic success, career readiness, health, wellness and fitness</p>	1. Create an environment with opportunities to increase students’ interaction with industry	To be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 2022	
	2. Deliver support services and experiences that meet student needs and improve retention		
	3. Continue to develop intramural and NCAA Division II athletic programs and expand opportunities for student engagement and participation that foster teamwork and development of competitive skills, grace under pressure and student wellness and fitness		
<p>2023 Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructured the Student Success Committee to include more “on the ground” student-facing stakeholders. The Committee evaluates the impact of current student success initiatives and recommends new student initiatives. • Acquired HappyFox, a Customer Resources Management (CRM) tool that allows Online Help Desk technicians to provide a high level of support. HappyFox features an external facing knowledge base to illustrate troubleshooting for common issues and solutions, making support more accessible. • Updated and revised Launchpad (Online Orientation) to better prepare students for success in their classes in the Learning Management System (LMS)/Brightspace classes. 			

Strength/Weakness Goals #2	Update
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Facilities and Technology: Manage and expand facilities and equipment to meet student needs	1. Revise the projections and budgeting for computer and related acquisitions to be more flexible and less tied to specific devices	To be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 2022
	2. Introduce more equipment and technology standardization across the University	
	3. Continue to embed security best practices into every new technology choice and continue to harden existing systems as opportunities arise	

2023 Updates

- rLAB now has some redundancy in the Teradici and LeoStream server architecture. Documented and put in place more defined processes to address downtime/break fix communication regarding rLAB.
- Added additional monitoring and alerting for lab systems, and automated patching for many operating systems and common applications.
- Completed transition from the Academy's legacy LMS to Brightspace (LMS, Faculty Widget, Learner Usage ADS, Dates Management, Checkin Widget) and provided training for all users on the new online learning environment.
- Implemented new tools to support the online learning environment, including Campus M, Kaltura, Simple Syllabus, Stellic, Evaluation Kit, WebCheckout, and Slideroom

Strength/Weakness Goals #3	Update	
Accreditation: Maintain institutional and programmatic accreditations; achieve new accreditations as needed	1. Maintain accreditation with the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)	To be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 2022
	2. Maintain accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)	
	3. Maintain programmatic accreditation where applicable	

2023 Updates

- Received eight-year grant of reaccreditation for the Master of Architecture Program from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).

Opportunity/Threat Goal #1	Update	
Enrollment Growth: Attract and enroll students; effectively manage growth	1. Market and recruit effectively to attract prospective students who can successfully complete our programs	To be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 2022
	2. Achieve annual enrollment goals	
	3. Effectively engage academic directors and faculty in showcasing programs and innovations	

2023 Updates

- Developed and Implemented Admissions and Marketing Plans, in alignment with the Strategic Plan 2022-2027.
- Created a new position of Executive Director of Enrollment, to ensure appropriate course offerings for continuing student enrollment.

- Added new and replaced existing Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) agencies with partners that have more expertise

Opportunity/Threat Goal #2	Update	
Business Practices: Implement processes to deliver world-class programs and student services	1. Streamline business processes to deliver better services	To be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 2022
	2. Improve communication among staff, instructors and students	
	3. Continue to refine and optimize organizational structure	
2023 Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a tracking system for progress on strategies that advance the strategic plan and align strategies with approved budgetary allocations. • Established the School of Brand Communications bringing ADV, COM, GR, and IXD departments under one curricular umbrella to deliver more contemporary and relevant programs. 		

Opportunity/Threat Goal #3	Update	
Faculty: Recruit and retain a faculty of industry professionals by providing the opportunity, training, and tools for them to thrive as educators in the Academy community	1. Engage faculty in the larger campus community and institutional decision-making processes through formal and informal participation opportunities (especially curriculum development)	To be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 2022
	2. Provide relevant and adaptive instructional support services to faculty	
	3. Ensure a process for review of the compensation structure for all faculty	
2023 Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Academic Steering Committee (ASC) formalized a faculty committee feedback loop, with the development of meeting templates, changes to committee leadership/liaisons, yearly open ASC Meetings, Onsite Plus class (OS+) Focus Groups and resulting training materials and resources. • Created a tutorials page in Brightspace for Brightspace navigation and best practices of teaching. 		

During the summer 2023 semester, the Strategic Planning Committee was working on an update to the Academy Community highlighting some of the accomplishments documented in the Strategies Tracking Spreadsheet for spring 2022 through spring 2023.

D. FUTURE VISION. Describe your school 5 years from now. What will it look like and how will it be positioned in the marketplace?

Since receiving initial accreditation from WSCUC in 2007, the Academy has embraced the peer review process. The WSCUC Standards and CFRs inform and shape how the institution operates and challenge AAU to deliver on continuous improvement in line with its mission: “to prepare aspiring professionals in the fields of design, communications and the arts by delivering excellent undergraduate and graduate degree, certificate and portfolio development programs”.

The distinctive for artists by artists approach will continue to allow industry professionals to share their passion with the next generation of artists through a thoughtfully developed curriculum structured to take students from novice to emerging creative professional over the course of their degree programs. It is this combination of implementation of pedagogical best practice and shared passion between burgeoning and experienced artists, envisioned by the founder and articulated in the mission and institutional learning outcomes that will drive the quality of AAU students’ portfolios.

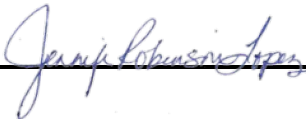
The Academy will continue to make investments to improve the educational experience for students and faculty. The transition to a new Brightspace LMS in 2022 will allow for addressing more of the core competencies consistently in the majors. Courses went live in Brightspace this summer (2022).

As AAU moves towards a more systematic institutional assessment process through our Institutional Assessment Task Force, faculty can look forward to mapping the core competencies to our Institutional Learning Outcomes to further define core competency achievement at AAU and to ensure all programs are effectively delivering the universal skills necessary for success.

We do not have specific goals for enrolling Wisconsin-resident students in our online programs but do hope to be the first choice for students seeking a world-class education in the arts and the first choice for those seeking to employ artists globally.

III. SUBMISSION

I hereby certify that the information contained on this form and any attachments to the form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Authorized School Official: _____


Authorized School Official: Jennifer Robinson-Lopez, EVP, Financial Aid and Compliance

Date: August 21, 2023