UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

UApresents TRANSFORMATIONAL PLANNING
A PROJECT IN PROCESS
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Overview

While the University as a whole reviews itself as part of the transformation process, UApresents has initiated actions that have served to broaden and strengthen programs through collaboration and initiatives which have served to deepen relationships with university departments while strengthening its financial picture. As stated in our strategic plan Mission, Vision and Values, UApresents is committed to be fully integrated into the fabric of the campus. Much collaboration is already in place and our goal is to continue to seek out further initiatives.

The mission of UApresents is to provide world class performances and programs for the cultural and educational enrichment of the University campus and the communities of southern Arizona. As a premier presenter in the western United States this is provided though diverse programming that educates and entertains the community while providing a superior audience experience in classical, dance, world stage, jazz and blues performances. The direct engagement of the community is a key feature of UApresents in that it exemplifies the broad commitment of the university to its land grant heritage and outreach mission in the arts.

The transformation of UApresents to a more campus integrated unit providing programming designed to serve the cultural and arts needs of the community began in 2006 with a significant change in direction. As a part of the redirection UApresents reviewed its program offerings and eliminated presentation of large Broadway shows that
in previous years generated substantial financial losses while reducing its programming to approximately 35 events per year. With this, core staffing was reduced from 25 FTE in 2004 to its present level of 17 FTE today. In addition UApresents was administratively realigned to report to the Office of the Provost while reforming it’s mission to more fully and broadly integrate with academic programs across the university and expand outreach to K-12 students. In this role UApresents serves to oversee, schedule, and staff the functions of Centennial Hall, a significant university resource, for the benefit of the university community as a whole.

Arts presentation programs rely heavily on donor contributions from the community. To support this effort, the UApresents advisory board, a very active group of community members, serves as an essential resource in all aspects of promoting community engagement and fundraising. For the current year, 20% of the UApresents operating budget is derived from state funds sources in support of its outreach and educational functions while 18% is provided through charitable donations and the balance through ticket sales and services. This places our funding profile slightly above the average of other major university presenters in donor support and slightly below in university support.

**Organization and Alignment**

Over the last year UApresents has collaborated with units across the university in expanding the breadth and depth of its program offerings and delivery. In recent discussions with College of Fine Arts leadership, we have explored the advantages and disadvantages of a closer alignment with that college. While there are academic advantages that may be gained by engaging students more directly, there remain fundamental differences between the academic mission of a college and the requirements of an outreach and performance program. If realignment were to be undertaken, it would require that UApresents remain a defined operating unit and that the academic programs of Fine Arts be protected from possible financial deficits which can occur in ticket sales or donor support in economic downturns.

Centennial Hall is the major performance and presentation venue of the university seating approximately 2,400 but as a 75-year-old structure last renovated in 1985 it is in need of significant upgrading for which SPEED funding has been identified. Recognizing the scheduling problems related to large student classes (1,000 plus), as the feasibility study for the hall proceeds, a goal will be to determine opportunities for design flexibility to enable its use as a lecture hall & performance space.

**Summary of Campus Collaborations and Initiatives**

UA presents collaborates with a number of campus units in linking programming and cost savings with those of the university departments while continuing to serve its primary mission of providing a rich blend of cultural and arts presentations to the broader community. These collaborations can be found throughout the university.
College of Fine Arts (CFA)

- CFA sells tickets using the UApresent’s Tessitura database system saving the College the significant cost of purchasing and maintaining its own system. Apportioned cost approximately $27,000.
- UApresent supports the annual School of Art student competition for the cover of the UApresent brochure and supporting materials.
- School of Dance performances are included in and sold as part of UApresent’s brochure and season. Those ticket sales count toward UApresent subscriptions while enjoying the School of Dance benefits from economies of scale.
- UApresent and CFA share equipment saving thousands of dollars in equipment rental costs each year.
- UApresent and the School of Dance and the School of Music share performance space. This season, for instance, UApresent will present *Interpreti Veneziani* in Crowder Hall. In exchange, UApresent is providing space at Centennial Hall for School of Music events including Marching Band Camp in August and All State in April.

Education Programs

- Touring artists on UApresent provide numerous master classes, workshops and lectures to UA performing arts students and students of many other disciplines usually at no charge, or underwritten by the UApresent budget.
- UApresent supports an average of 12,000 area students each year to attend our School Matinee programs with a discounted ticket price of just $6.
- In partnership with the UA Office of Early Academic Outreach and Sunnyside Unified School District, UApresent has implemented a new program, “Changing the Culture of College through the Arts” to extend our outreach and engagement with the community.
- UApresent is working with the Honors College to target college bound students and their families and integrate UApresent’s performances into recruitment efforts.

Targeted Enhancements to the Education Program

- Provide Arts Education students the opportunity to develop curriculums for K-12 classrooms.
- Work with the UA College of Education, CFA and educators and counselors in the community to develop a summer program that focuses on leadership, social issues, and communication for youth.
- Work with the UA College of Education, CFA and educators in the community to develop teacher in services and a summer professional development program to meet Arizona state standards in many subjects.

Arizona Public Media

- Comprehensive co-promotional programs for various artists including David Sedaris last season, Ira Glass this season, Prairie Home Companion 2009/2010 season.
- UApresent continues discussions with Arizona Public Media development staff about possible joint fundraising efforts.
Student Support

- UApresent is committed to student employment providing financial support for students. Each fiscal year more than $140,000 is paid in student wages through employment as back stage technicians, ushers, ticket sellers and in the artists’ relations area.
- UApresent creates opportunities for students to experience personal interaction with world-class performers to provide professional career guidance and to enhance their technical skills.
- UApresent production and management staff at Centennial Hall advise, produce and support University events including new student orientations, winter & spring commencement ceremonies, ASUA programs, College of Science lecture series and the Future Farmers of America annual conferences with College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
- To ensure broad access and cultural enrichment to the campus community, UApresent underwrites student, faculty and staff event tickets at just $10. In the 2007-2008 season 7,295 UA student tickets were sold by absorbing costs of approximately $57,000.

Future Directions for Business Office and IT Functions

As part of the transformation process UApresent is investigating the opportunities for centralizing within the University parts of its Information Technology (IT) and business office and technical labor functions while recognizing the unique business aspects of the department. Key areas for potential savings are in:

- The centralization of server, PC management and IT security while maintaining the IT functions involving the Tessitura database and website application which are the backbone of sales, seating and donor support.
- The centralization of human resource, payroll and purchasing functions with UApresent Business staff continuing to manage the artist contracts, Tessitura related business administration, budgeting and financial reporting.
- Development of web based sales and seat selection to reduce personnel costs.
- Exploring synergies and labor saving opportunities between UApresent and Fine Arts departments creating a labor pool center of student and on-call stagehand positions to work in the three campus theatres to generate cost savings and reduce administrative processing.

Summary

UApresent has begun to substantively improve and transform its operations over the last 2 years to more effectively bridge its program offerings between outreach to the community and integration in key areas with campus academic programs. Critical to the long term vitality of the program is the importance of increasing sales and margins, continued development of a strong donor base, the implementation of an arts fee, and a level of state funding which supports both outreach and campus initiatives. The
renovation and modernization of Centennial Hall as a visible University icon will also serve a key role in assuring the future success of UApresents programs and increase ticket sales necessary to cover a greater share of the operational costs in the future.