



THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

For

Business Years 2006 through 2008

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Americas Oldest Continuing Artists Organization – A Brief History

On November 20, 1860, six "Bohemian" artists from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, George F. Bensell and his brother, Edmund B. Bensell, Edward J. McIlhenny, Henry C. Bispham, John L. Gihon, and Robert Wylie met at 125 South 11th Street to form a "sketching club". They sought illustration and design opportunities not available at the Academy. Within months, other talented artists were added to the membership, including Stephen J. Ferris, a celebrated etcher and Thomas Moran, the great landscape artist.

The Sketch Club responded to the educational needs of the arts community in the early 1870's when the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was awaiting completion of its new building and was without instructional facilities. Under the auspices of the Club, life drawing classes were conducted with Thomas Eakins as instructor. Lectures on anatomy were also delivered. When the Academy opened its new building in 1876, Eakins, an honorary member of the Club, volunteered to take over its life classes, undoubtedly utilizing his teaching experiences gained at the Sketch Club. By 1894 the Sketch Club had 400 active members, including many instructors at the Academy. Thomas P. Anshutz, who succeeded Eakins at the Academy, was President of the Club from 1910 until his untimely death in 1912. When World War I forced the world famous illustrator and etcher Joseph Pennell to leave Europe, he returned to Philadelphia and served as President of the Club in 1921.

As the years passed, the roll call of distinguished artists, past and present, continued to grow. Today this list includes names as widely known as illustrators A.B. Frost, N.C. Wyeth, Howard Chandler Christy, Henry Pitz, and Lyle Justis; cartoonists Hugh Hutton and Peter Boyle; painters Walter Baum, Edward Redfield, Maxfield Parrish, Hugh Breckenridge, Fred Wagner, Carl Weber, and Daniel Garber; etchers Benton Spruance, Stephen Parrish, and Robert Shaw; watercolorists Frank English, John Dull, Ranulph Bye, Domenic DiStefano, Sam Maitin and Vincent Ceglia; and sculptors Charles Grafly, R. Tait McKenzie, Howard Roberts, Ronald Spicer, and Alexander Calder.

Almost from its start, the Sketch Club has had a history of successful exhibitions, beginning with its first Small Oils Show, a competition which has been held every year since 1865. Small Oils medalists themselves constitute a minor overview of who's who in Philadelphia painting. The list includes many women, such as Paulette van Roekens, Alice Kent Stoddard, Dorothy van Loan, Jean Watson, Rita Wolpe Barnett, and Betty Bowes, as well as such distinguished men as John Folinsbee and Franklin Watkins. Since that first show, the Club's exhibitions have grown to embrace all the visual arts, including prints, sculpture, and photography.

The present clubhouse, converted from three separate buildings built between 1822 and 1828, faces Camac Street. Its main areas are a large, skylighted gallery which stretches across the entire top floor, and meeting and activity rooms at street level, complete with mantled fireplaces. The upper walls of the library hold 44 portraits of early members

painted by Thomas Anshutz while he was Dean of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The library opens onto a terraced garden and fish pond. At the lower level is a rathskeller, etching room, and kitchen. The rathskeller features a carved wooden mantel dating from the nineteenth century and wooden chairs carved by the members themselves. Scattered throughout the club, in fact, are wooden ship models, stained glass windows, pottery, antique iron work, and art objects made or donated over the last 100 years or more. Members, who now include both men and women, soon adopt one room or other of the club as their favorite spot to talk shop or relax, but the gallery is the focal point for all exhibitions, lectures, and studio workshops.

Strategic Planning – *The Process*

The process of developing a meaningful three year Strategic Plan for the Philadelphia Sketch Club (PSC) began in February of 2005 with the assembling of a “core” team under the direction of the Executive Director, Diane Podolsky, and President Alan Klawans. Prior to this time the Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia had been approached by the Executive Director for possible strategic planning assistance. Resulting from that request, the Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia identified a member of its Business Volunteers for the Arts program. This volunteer, Mr. Sam Spurlock, was interviewed and accepted as a working member of the planning team, as a facilitator and guide from the planning process perspective only. The “core” Strategic Planning Team members (Team) included:

Alan Klawans, Donald Meyer, Catherine “Kitt” Mitchell, William C. Patterson, Sheldon Strober, Sam Olshin, Marta Bartolozzi, Bob Jackson, Cyndy Drue, Mike DiGiacomo, Greg Lewis, John Benigno, and Diane Podolsky.

As part of the initial planning activities some time was spent in identifying and discussing how the organization wants to / does differentiate itself from other like-organizations. Through this useful thinking and discussion, some of the things the PSC represents / offers that are different than others include:

- A nurturing environment for artists
- A “think tank” opportunity for the exchange of ideas
- A venue for social and artistic interchange with others
- An independent / non-judgmental arena for examining artistic effort
- Open participation without membership or other fixed commitment

Further preparatory work then proceeded in the somewhat opposite direction in considering what might be perceived as missing if the organization did not exist. Some things that would be missed in the absence of the PSC include:

- Flexible, non-committed access to work space and facilities
- An inviting, historically and artistically important work venue that includes a diversity of working artists, media, skill levels, and experiences
- “Juried” and “non-juried” opportunities to exhibit and be viewed

- Access to important historical collections and archives (diverse art work, books, and documents)
- Opportunity for mentoring and social interaction from/with a diverse community of committed artists

Next, the Team reflected on and identified some of the key, current challenges. This allowed the Team to consider what is perceived as important at that moment, as well as offering an opportunity to consider the alignment between *perceived importance*, versus what *may be important* from a strategic direction-level perspective. Some of the PSC’s challenges identified at the beginning of the planning process included (in no particular priority):

- Funding for:
 - Sustained staff
 - Facility renovation / enhancement (to meet code, A/C, etc.) and ongoing maintenance
 - Facility expansion
- Membership growth to:
 - Maintain diversity
 - Sustain organizational vitality and longevity
 - Provide revenue and endowment potential
- Space for:
 - Expanded artistic programs e.g., printing, carving, etc.
 - Enhanced show / exhibit capacity
- Stewardship of collections:
 - Scope
 - Capability / knowledge
 - Capacity, etc.
- Financial management to:
 - Ensure maintenance of non-profit status
 - Enhance grant and other funding eligibility and success
- Organizational direction and governance through:
 - Strategic planning (work in progress – this project)
 - Budget planning
 - Operating guidelines and procedures (greater consistency while maintaining flexibility)

The final framework perspective that was identified was a view of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) aspects surrounding the PSC that a meaningful Strategic Plan would need to encompass. Clearly the final plan needed to embrace and utilize the organizations strengths, while improving or eliminating the weaknesses and threats, in ways that optimized the realization of its opportunities. In summary, the following SWOT components were identified for the PSC:

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
Offerings Support / Volunteers Membership Relationships	Space / Facilities Funding Participation

<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
Leverage Relationships Membership (Diversity & Number) Expanded Funding Sources	Space / Facilities Funding Flexibility - Ability to Change Growth – Scope and/or Rate

This became then the overall framework and background upon which the work in developing, and the Strategic Plan itself was based, and upon which it was designed to embrace and incorporate.

The Strategic Plan outlined in the remainder of this document represents work the PSC “core” Team from February 2005 through October 2005. The period covered by the Plan is three (3) business years, including 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Strategic Plan – The Mission

A significant amount of consideration and discussion revolved around considering the then current “Mission Statement”, and in revising it to be reflective of the outlined framework and background. The purpose of the Mission Statement is to define the fundamental reason(s) the Philadelphia Sketch Club exists as an organization. That Mission for the PSC is defined as:

The mission of the Philadelphia Sketch Club is to support and nurture working visual artists, the appreciation of the visual arts, visual arts education, and the historical value of the visual arts to the community.

Strategic Plan – The Vision

The Vision Statement is closely linked to the Mission in that its purpose is to define how the organization will look when the Mission is fully realized. That Vision defines the PSC as being:

A financially sound, appropriately staffed, nationally respected visual arts organization that attracts a large and diverse group of artists, students, patrons and educators of all levels for participation in its varied programs of membership, art workshops, exhibitions, art research, lectures, discussions, and support.

Strategic Plan – The Goals and Objectives

These Mission and Vision statements then become the guiding components of the PSC. To be realized within the plan period, a defined strategic framework is used in order that focused work during the plan period (3 business years) can be defined and completed. Toward that end then, appropriate Goals and Objectives were defined to guide the work and focus of the organization throughout the Strategic Plan period as it works to realize its defined Mission and Vision.

Within this planning context, Goals are defined as those things which will be addressed during the plan period in support of the Mission and Vision. Within each Goal then, Objectives are defined as those things which will be done, again during the plan period, in order that the defined Goals will be realized. To be useful, Objectives are defined in ways that are measurable and attainable, even if a “stretch” may be required.

For the strategic plan period of 2006-08, the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives for the PSC are:

Goal # 1

“Increase net assets (revenue and other support less expenses) to cover staff, program growth, operating improvements, facility enhancements and inflation”.

Objectives for Goal #1:

- 1.1 Review current and potential revenue sources and develop annual action plans, by 2/28 of 2006, 2007, and 2008, that will increase net operating revenue by \$15,000, \$20,000, and \$20,000 respectively. These action plans will address, but are not limited to, increased revenue from membership, patrons/friends, foundations, corporate sponsors, individuals, existing programs and fund raising events. This review will include potential revenue amounts, risks, key success factors, resources required and impacts to other areas and programs.
- 1.2 For each key project identified in this strategic plan that requires non-operating funds (e.g., building, A/C, etc.), identify the sources for these funds and the proposed action plans to raise the funds by 09/30/06.
- 1.3 Review each operating expense category and develop proposals and action plans that will reduce operating expenses by \$1,000 per year in 2006, and \$2,000 per year for 2007 and 2008 by 08/30/06.
- 1.4 Revise the organization’s financial management and reporting system to provide consolidated, more meaningful and timely reporting to aid in decision making and safeguarding the organization’s assets by 5/31/06.
- 1.5 Develop plan for establishing a reserve fund or endowment fund that will help to stabilize finances by 05/31/07.
- 1.6 Develop and implement a budgeting process for the organization that provides detailed projections for each program, department or account category that will be completed by 12/31/06.

Goal # 2

“Optimize existing programs and the organization’s visibility”.

Objectives for Goal #2:

- 2.1 Reinstigate Bylaws requirement for standing committees for major programs and require committees to present optimization plans to Board by 6/1/06.
- 2.2 Establish by 9/30/06 a strategic plan for the 150th anniversary in 2010.
- 2.3 Establish by 12/31/07 a plan for one high-recognition event.
- 2.4 Establish by 1/1/07 a plan to utilize new and existing programs to promote, in a “salon” type venue, the generation of artistic ideas by members and participants

through social exchange, presentations, conversations and demonstrations aimed at all facets of the visual art and its artistic process.

- 2.5 Develop a plan by 06/30/06 for members to create new outreach programs for youth.

Goal #3

“Optimize utilization of existing space to increase value and flexibility”.

Objectives for Goal #3

- 3.1 Develop plan for funding and installing new HVAC (Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning) system by 9/30/06.
- 3.2 Conduct room by room review of space utilization by 9/30/06 with representatives of major programs and develop plans for better space utilization keeping in mind Club traditions and the historic status of our structure.

Goal #4

“Increase the organization’s depth and capability and utilize the membership as a resource”.

Objectives for Goal #4

- 4.1 Develop and maintain list of skill sets and interests within membership by 09/30/06.
- 4.2 Establish by 2/28/07 mechanisms for internal volunteers / volunteering so a progression of activity can be seen within membership (i.e. interest to involvement to leadership).

Goal # 5

“Optimize membership recognizing existing space and planned funding and resources”.

Objectives for Goal #5

- 5.1 Based on funding needs and organizational/space restrictions, develop membership goals and limits by 10/31/07.
- 5.2 Develop plan to identify and pursue for PSC membership specific individuals or types of individuals who will strengthen the PSC through reputation, diversity and artistic/organizational skill by 10/31/07. See also “Action Items Appendix” for suggested action steps / topics.

Strategic Plan – Administration / Management

The PSC Board is ultimately accountable and responsible for the development, monitoring, maintenance, and completion of the Strategic Plan. In fulfilling this role relative to the Strategic Plan, the Board shall appoint a Strategic Plan Administrator (SPA) or Strategic Plan Manager (SPM). The SPA / SPM will function as an “assist” to the Board and to the Executive Director in monitoring and managing the overall execution of the Strategic Plan.

The SPA / SPM role is principally one of leadership and management. As such, an SPA / SPM will generally need to have the following basic skills and abilities:

- Planning and detail oriented
- Good leadership skills
- Strong facilitation skills
- Ability to establish and maintain credibility within a volunteer, arts organization
- Ability to present to groups
- Ability to prepare clear concise documentation and reports

The SPA / SPM and will generally perform the following functions:

1. Monitor each open (work in progress) Objective (Project) within the Plan on a monthly basis;
2. Provide, as appropriate, guidance and advice to project owners on optimizing each Project
3. Attend the monthly / periodic PSC Board meetings to report on aspects of each open Project as:
 - Provide an overview of the current state of the Strategic Plan including highlighting new Projects planned to start in the coming month, and updating the Strategic Plan Time Line, as appropriate;
 - Actions planned for the month
 - Actions completed during the month
 - Actions planned for the coming month
 - Projected completion date
 - Issues/Concerns which affect and/or jeopardize the Project
 - Items for escalation to, or additional support requested of the Board

The Board may elect to utilize multiple SPAs / SPMs with different Goals/Objectives within the plan assigned to different SPAs / SPMs.