



United States Institute for Theatre Technology

Organizational Assessment Final Report

Prepared By:

Helene Blieberg & Kerry McCarthy

McCarthy Arts Consulting

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I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While this document includes input from more than 1,100 individuals, the efforts of a few USITT members are worthy of special attention. The year-long assessment process involved rigorous thought, discussion and input from USITT's 21st Century Task Force. They should be commended for their commitment to the Institute and its future:

- Bill Byrnes, Director
- Lea Asbell-Swanger, Finance Committee and Director at Large
- Carol Carrigan, Administrative and Finance Manager
- Travis DeCastro, Treasurer
- Lawrence Hill, Past Treasurer
- Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, President
- Carl Lefko, President Elect and VP Programming
- Tom Young, Finance Committee Member.

They have our gratitude.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of the 2007-2008 fiscal year, USITT has engaged in a process to determine how to best position itself for the future as a dynamic, industry-inclusive, respected and relevant membership organization. In a series of discussions and exercises facilitated by McCarthy Arts Consulting (MAC) all aspects of the organization and its relationship to key stakeholders were scrutinized, from the culture of the Institute and its organizational structure to its relationships with members and non-members.

In the course of this work, USITT envisioned a future in which it equally serves as a bridge that solidly connects the realms of academia with the full-time practitioner community in the entertainment industry. MAC worked with USITT to create an organizational model that builds on strengths of USITT, retains the elements that distinguish it from peer organizations, and makes the structural adjustments necessary to meet its stated goals:

1. Take a leadership role nationally with other constituents in the entertainment industry;
2. Disseminate information through programs (e.g. conference, tours, exhibitions, symposia); and,
3. Become documentary body for history of design, technology, management

The resulting “Bridge Model” was presented to the Institute’s leadership over the course of a series of presentations in Syracuse in January 2008 and in Houston in March 2008. This final report prioritizes the actions recommended, adding a timeline and financial impact forecast to the organizational overview. In the detailed report that follows a number of key messages appear:

- Shift the role of the Board of Directors from operational to governance;
- Search for and retain a paid chief executive;
- Maintain and enhance the role of the volunteers;
- Speak clearly and consistently with one voice;
- Make maximum use of the strong network already in place;
- Institute these shifts in a timely manner; and
- Utilize a portion of your existing, well-managed finances to support these efforts.

These steps are intertwined and their strength—and success—will only be achieved if they are instituted together. Hiring a chief executive alone will not enable the Institute to achieve the kind of organizational change envisioned. Similarly, shifting the role of the board without making the comparable adjustments to staffing will have a similar lack of impact.

The full report provides a road map towards achieving the vision of serving as a bridge between academia and the entertainment industry, and includes the rationale for the recommended steps. A summary of recommendations from the Action Plan for the three essential constituent groups--the Board, the Staff and the Volunteers—follows.

THE WORK OF THE BOARD

The current board structure has served to manage much of the ongoing operation of the Institute, taking on more of a management role than is typically found in an organization with the maturity of USITT. In order to support the work of an enhanced staff and to engage each sitting Director, a shift from this operational role to more of a governance role is recommended. Every working board needs officers, an executive committee and a full complement of directors and, while adjustments are suggested to maximize each role, the responsibilities of all will begin to move towards strategy and big picture thinking, concentrating on the larger institutional issues and providing the necessary support for the work of the staff. The Board sets policy and strategy, provides wisdom and insight, has fiduciary responsibility and has the authority to hire and fire the staff leader. Day-to-day workings of the Institute are the responsibility of the staff.

Along with this shift, it is recommended that the Board embarks on a plan to diversify and round out its ranks. Constituent groups not currently represented with seats on the Board could be identified and sought out through the work of the Nomination/Governance Committee. Training for new board members and the revision of the board manual are keys to securing directors' continued engagement. Increasing the number of full board meetings to four, by combining face-to-face gatherings with virtual meetings, will also be significant, as will decreasing the number of executive committee meetings.

It is the Board that will work towards securing staff leadership and integrating a new chief executive position into the operation of the Institute. In addition to forming a Transition Committee to manage this aspect of the process, it is recommended that this committee provide overall oversight of the larger process of realizing USITT's potential as a bridge to all segments of the industry.

THE WORK OF THE STAFF

Once a chief executive is in place and the Board is turning its attention to governance matters, all other job functions should be reviewed to insure that the needs of the Institute are being adequately met. Such periodic reviews are desirable as USITT works to reach out to new constituents from across the entertainment spectrum. Increased marketing and communications needs, deepening service to the Regional Sections, and focusing on fundraising objectives are all examples of potentially expanded job responsibilities. Raising the external profile of the Institute will also require dedicated staff and volunteer time and should be strategically managed. Providing a consistent face to peer organizations and non-members will reap immediate benefits for the Institute and having those efforts strategically supported by the volunteer leadership will increase visibility for USITT across the entertainment sector.

Speaking with one voice will require the standardization and unification of design and message throughout the organization, with the staff managing the process. The increased exposure afforded by the celebration of USITT's 50th anniversary presents an ideal opportunity to reveal the integrated communications plan.

The staff can construct a proper development plan for operational and programmatic needs that integrates existing 50th anniversary campaigns and explores new sources of contributed income. With the input of the Board, this work will also position USITT as an organization more than worthy of external support to achieve its mission.

The work of the staff will include the development of a strategy to grow and expand the membership and to present an array of relevant offerings to sustain their on-going involvement as members. A number of strategies are recommended in this report, including engaging the Regional Sections for local outreach, offering incentives pegged to each group's interests, identifying partners to assist in this effort, and considering alternative models for membership categories.

THE WORK OF THE VOLUNTEERS

Harnessing the power of the volunteers and honoring their service to the Institute form the core of the recommendations in this section of the final report. Through a review and evaluation of the current volunteer activities, suggested as a staff-volunteer summit, clear definition of roles and responsibilities can be studied for best practices and a path to even more dynamic service. Communication between staff and volunteers, including plans for their coordinated role as USITT ambassadors at events and in publications, will insure the highest levels of action for those who generously and enthusiastically give of their time.

With staff support, a survey of the full membership to catalog their volunteer interests and availability is recommended. This information can be maintained in a database and matched up with the need for volunteers throughout the year. This will help insure that all calls for volunteer involvement are met and that those willing to become more involved have a mechanism for doing so.

While so many give so much to the Institute, formally recognizing their service beyond the current practices is suggested. Using the annual conference provides just one forum for recognition. Creating a volunteer mentorship program is another way to allow tenured volunteers to shine while engaging a new generation at the same time.

Ensuring that Commission activities further the strategic vision of the Institute is an additional vehicle for continued active volunteer engagement. This body performs a key function as the bridge between the academic and entertainment sectors; formalizing the ways in which they work fits into an overall volunteer initiative and circles back to recognizing the work of the volunteers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A three-year timeline is suggested in order to make the adjustments recommended towards realization of The Bridge organizational model. To accomplish this, financial adaptations such as releasing a small portion of funds from the reserve, trimming costs that no longer meet USITT's strategic vision, and seeking additional earned and contributed income sources are advised. With an eye towards identifying \$75,000 in program cuts from the budget in two of the three years and investing a net total of \$413,500 over three years (an amount less than the FY2006 surplus), USITT can comfortably realize the goals and objectives of this strategic plan. The Implementation Budget provides the details to activate the plan.

III. STRATEGIC GOALS OVERVIEW

USITT's Vision: To serve as a bridge between academia and the entertainment industry

Overview

USITT retained the services of McCarthy Arts Consulting (MAC) to examine the perceptions of the Institute from a range of internal and external perspectives—completely engaged volunteers, active members, lapsed members, vendors, desired members, outside colleagues—and to assist in charting a course for the future of the organization. After nearly a year of research, discussion and contemplation, a picture of the future has emerged that the leadership of USITT is committed to making a reality in order to ensure the vibrancy and viability of USITT well into its next 50 years.

USITT envisions a future in which it equally serves as a bridge that solidly connects the realms of academia with the full-time practitioner community in the entertainment industry. The USITT Board of Directors also identified three strategic goals which it could tackle in pursuit of this vision.

Goal #1: Take a leadership role nationally with other constituents in the entertainment industry

Goal #2: Disseminate information through programs (e.g. conference, tours, exhibitions, symposia)

Goal #3: Become documentary body for history of design, technology, management

USITT Board of Directors, October 2007

This plan provides a roadmap of actions towards achieving those strategic goals. For USITT to fully attain the first goal of taking a leadership role nationally, adjustments to the Institute's organizational structure are required. By making those adjustments, as outlined in this report, realization of the remaining two strategic goals is ensured.

USITT Today

USITT is a distinct organization that provides resources and services to a segment of the vast entertainment industry. It is a national/international membership organization that replaces a quarter of its members each year. It is a service organization whose primary resource is the annual conference and expo that attracts students and the professionals who seek them. It is a volunteer-run organization that relies on a concentration of extremely engaged individuals to manage key operational areas, supported by a vast army of additional volunteers and a staff of highly capable managers. It is also an organization that fosters an environment of collegiality, interaction and fun.

In terms of the segment of the industry being served, the largest concentration of members is those who spend the majority of their professional time in academic settings. They represent the range of technical areas, although perhaps not evenly. They are also spread across the country, linked by their membership to the Institute and, in some cases, to their Regional Section.

USITT offers many additional resources to its members through the website, publications, its role in creating standards for the industry, and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information. An active interest in maximizing these resources and their delivery methods is of great importance to the USITT of today.

Perceptions from the Field

The overall perception of USITT mirrors the energy of its members. It is widely seen as a great organization comprised of interesting and collegial people and as a good gathering place for many forms of exchange. The impression of USITT as a resource for technical theater remains, though that is now shared with other organizations.

As the research has indicated, there is an awareness of USITT that places it in an academic/student silo which, in and of itself, is a needed and large niche that is valued by all segments of the field. There is the additional perception that USITT has not maximized its role in serving this audience and, in turn, the larger professional audience. Many see a role for the Institute in filling gaps in information about the realities of the field for students and in brokering relationships between students and practitioners, academics and outside professionals, and practitioners and the technology they use in their work. Many see USITT as a natural link between and among different segments of the industry.

It is felt that USITT has lost some ground over the years, particularly in the area of standards and certification. Doing more in this area and helping sort through the technology maze in some fashion are seen as roles the Institute could assume.

USITT has become known for its annual conference and expo and the perception is that that is the core of its offerings. The conference/expo itself is understood as a gathering place for students and those interested in reaching them. While it is still viewed as a locus for new technological “toys,” that perception has softened in light of other methods of getting that information.

In terms of the volunteer leadership, the view among many members is that only a core group of veterans participates in the workings of the organization and that entry into that group is difficult. This is typical of volunteer organizations for the most part, where many do not pursue increased involvement themselves, but this takes on additional meaning in an organization whose culture is volunteer dependant.

Because of the absence of a single executive leader to carry the work of the volunteers outward, to lead a dynamic communications effort and to maintain consistency in operational goals across leadership term limits, the perception of the organization as a “player” in the field suffers.

Strategic Goals and Critical Issues

Throughout the course of the 21st Century Task Force’s and MAC’s work, a number of strategic goals for the future appeared. These all formed around the belief that an organization that further professionalizes its operations, completely seeks to engage and serve an expanded membership and has a clear vision of who it wants to be will be able to sustain itself well into the future, weathering the changes to the industry as it does so. That USITT embraces the Bridge concept of being the

connector between the academic and practitioner communities is seen as the way to cement its place in the field. While some in the Institute believe that USITT already serves as a bridge between the academic and entertainment communities, it is clear that the two anchorages to this bridge are not equally weighted, and work needs to be done to increase outreach and service to the entertainment industry. In order to better position itself for that role, work needs to be done on the organizational level that affects the most important resource of all: the people of USITT—staff, board and volunteers.

1. Staff: Hire a Chief Executive

Across the board, from the Commissioners and Regional Section leaders to focus group participants and external interviewees, an understanding of the positive impact a chief executive could make on USITT was clear. USITT has wrestled with this in the past, a fact that was also acknowledged by all. Under what we will refer to throughout as the “Bridge” model, the hiring of a chief executive is not done in a vacuum; it becomes a key component of an organizational repositioning that includes modifications of the roles of the board and of the staff.

A paid executive will:

- Insure that there is one person accountable to the board and the membership for the operation of USITT;
- Be the clearly identified point person for USITT to outside organizations and individuals;
- Be responsible for making sure USITT is everywhere it should be, when it should be;
- Lead a professional staff that is given opportunities for professional development, performance review and advancement in a structured manner;
- Work with the volunteers to reduce redundancies and assist in moving ideas and projects forward;
- Be a bridge between peer organizations and USITT, connecting as chief executive to chief executive; and
- Help put USITT on par with peer organizations and position it for the kind of growth it seeks—in membership, in influence and in scope.

A paid executive will not:

- Replace the work and roles of the Executive Committee or the Officers;
- Make unilateral decisions on behalf of the organization;
- Be the only person representing USITT; and
- Be the single answer to the organizational issues of USITT.

Qualifications of the Position

Calls for someone who “is one of us,” “not an MBA,” “one of the tribe” were heard repeatedly. Bringing on a paid executive who knows the industry, even more than knowing the organization, is a good idea. Several noted that while the current staff is quite competent and skill driven, all of their knowledge of the field has been gleaned in service to USITT. They are not fully knowledgeable of the industry-wide context in which they operate and make decisions. However, bringing someone on with that expertise but without any nonprofit management experience will seriously hamper that person’s—and USITT’s—success. Unless the candidates have a strictly academic background, without recent practical experience, that qualification should be easily met. Similarly, there was discussion regarding the appropriate title for the position. While there is resistance around the title

of “executive director,” it is important that the paid executive holds a title that is recognized by others at that level and by the industry. To do otherwise could negate that person’s ability to interact easily with others.

The Interim Step

According to USITT’s internal approval process, it may be months before a chief executive can be in place. In the interest of maintaining the momentum achieved in the past year, it may be advisable to retain the services of an interim executive director to work with the proposed Transition Committee and manage the search for a permanent executive. This person can be drawn from the ranks and/or from the field and should also have nonprofit management experience. Interim leaders are not candidates for the position; rather they assist in the transition (typically six to nine months), are neutral and unaffiliated, keep the operation moving and get it ready for its next executive leader. Interim leaders who determine that they want to serve as the permanent staff leader are often less successful in managing the specific transition objectives.

2. Board: Reconstitute the Board

The transformation of the Board takes three forms: 1) begin to shift the role of the current Board from operational to governance, 2) form a smaller, strategic board and 3) create a board structure that includes representation from all sectors. All address the stated need to broaden the reach of the Institute by creating a nimble, responsive board; bringing new voices to the table, and freeing the board of management responsibilities and enabling them to assume other needed roles.

Operations to Governance

By shifting the focus of the Board from operations to governance, board members become stewards of the organization, insuring that sound practices are followed, weighing in on those issues that affect the direction of the organization, and providing support to the staff in key areas like outreach, development and communications. The ongoing operation of the Institute is handled by the staff, with the Board receiving detailed updates on activities and areas where they can be of assistance. In this way, the Executive Committee discusses strategic issues and prepares for full board discussions; the officers oversee their respective areas, and board committees perform their duties.

With a governance board the Executive Committee can be constituted several ways. It can include officers and committee chairs, or officers only, for example. (Please note that programmatic committees on other boards are referred to as “Commissions” by USITT.) The objective is to determine those key committees (or groupings of committees with a single chair for this purpose) that will represent the big picture needs of the board while keeping the number manageable. Many models are available for consideration at resources such as BoardSource and Governance Matters, and by examining comparable organizations’ structures. See Appendices for contact information.

A smaller, strategic board will serve USITT well under the Bridge model organizational structure, which seeks to forcefully position USITT at the intersection of the academic and entertainment industries, and will also allow the organization to move nimbly and with greater responsiveness. This new board will be supported by one or more advisory boards.

Advisory Boards

Advisory Boards can serve to supplement the ranks and add wanted voices to the discussion. They function best when they have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. A number of suggested groupings were offered by the Task Force in the January 2008 meetings including an external advisory board and an honorific advisory board that targets segments from the industry. Still another model suggested was a fundraising advisory board, however, MAC strongly recommends against divorcing fundraising from the fiduciary responsibility of trusteeship. Again, many models are available for consideration. The key is to strategically expand USITT's resources and create a ladder of increasing involvement in the governance of the organization.

Board Representation

It is imperative that the USITT Board of Directors mirrors the membership and to that end, adjusts the composition of the board to represent all sectors; this is an immediate need. Vendors and students are two groups missing from the current board makeup, for example. Whether there are designated "student" and "vendor" board seats or whether the governance committee is always mindful of the proper board composition and factors that into the nominations process, the end result is the same. As the membership shifts, so too should board composition.

3. Volunteers: Insure the Role of Volunteers

USITT is already steps ahead of many nonprofit organizations in its steady volunteer leadership corps. Under the Bridge model, the role of the volunteers in the day-to-day operation of the organization shifts more to the staff. The role and value of the volunteers does not diminish; rather it also shifts towards providing needed thinking and representation in many key areas as well as building a continuing flow of volunteer members. In a structure that not only values the volunteers but that values the experience of those who have been serving longer, a series of activities and events will be put in place to evaluate volunteer objectives, set annual goals, track volunteers' skills and interests and use them where needed most, train newer volunteers and publicly honor their service. Through communication and action from the staff and the board to the commissioners, regional section leaders and their respective members, this important connection must be maintained and even enhanced.

Creating A Bridge

The bridge image is a useful one to apply throughout USITT. Not only is the organization positioning itself as the link between the academic and entertainment communities, it will also strengthen those connections between volunteers and staff, regional sections and the national organization, the executive committee and the board, the board and external advisory bodies, and between and among various segments of the industry represented by the members. The need for such a bridge is strong and multifaceted, as the research has indicated (see MAC's 1/4/08 report to the 21st Century Task Force). Providing a reality check for students entering the field and opportunities for practitioners to engage them, becoming the "go to" place for professionals and academics interested in understanding the myriad of available technological options, and offering a place for all to convene and exchange ideas are just some of the needs to be fully addressed as USITT creates a more intentional bridge that connects academia with the entertainment sector. The realization of each of the strategic goals will be met through the actions and activities of USITT and will go a long way towards attracting the new members USITT seeks.

In seeking to create a bridge to the entertainment industry the Institute has expressed a desire to engage a new market of individuals and institutions. As has been stated in a number of discussions throughout the year, current members already have feet in more than one world. Indeed, a segment of the membership works in multiple arenas. University professors labor on independent films during summer breaks, for example, but the number of commercial entertainment members remains small. The profile of an “entertainment industry” member is likely to include individuals, who are involved in, for example, the realization of Broadway shows, U.S. touring and international productions, concerts, Disney and Cirque du Soleil productions, and amusement/theme park productions. It might also include university guest lecturers and student mentors.

USITT seeks to fill its membership ranks with individuals in all stages of careers that crisscross between and among the ever-increasing segments of the industry. Applying the Bridge model concepts to its organizational structure, its program and service delivery, and its outreach and marketing will help make membership profiles more diverse. Ultimately, USITT will seek a balance with membership equally numbered among the commercial entertainment, nonprofit performing arts and education sectors.

Consequences of Action and Inaction

There is no doubt that USITT has created a solid organization with concrete offerings for a segment of the industry. Many have devoted a good part of their professional lives to the work of the Institute. Continuing along the existing path is certainly an option and some within the organization believe that to be an appropriate choice. Many more, however, feel that opportunities are being missed and that the Institute’s full potential has not yet been realized. That step alone is beginning to propel USITT in a direction that can help achieve its strategic goals, realize complete parity with peer organizations and, in fact, put USITT in a new position of leadership.

Benefits of Action

The consequences of adopting the Bridge model and following the implementation plan will

- Result in a stronger, intra-connected organization that employs good governance by its board;
- Build an organization that has a solid membership base with minimal retention issues;
- Be a sought-after professional association for practitioners across the industry, offering new networking and information sharing opportunities;
- Build on the foundation that exists and deliver needed programs and services the way members can best use them;
- Utilize clear, consistent communications and marketing strategies;
- Attract funders to a needed service organization, and revenues through new membership, vendor and ad sales; and,
- Have the operational support of a professional staff and directed volunteers.

All of this blends with the strong culture of USITT as expressed by so many, as a place for collegial gatherings, robust and enjoyable interactions and a spirit of openness. By laying a solid organizational foundation, experimentation and innovation can thrive. Without it, good ideas and intentions often have no clear path to follow and internal and external communications—including organizational image—can suffer.

Consequences of Inaction

What are the consequences of inaction at this stage? Simply put, the Institute will:

- Retain its somewhat clubby atmosphere;
- Change leaders, focus and direction every two years;
- Be unable to move new initiatives to “market” in reasonable timeframes;
- Continue to externally communicate a chorus of messages that are out of sync; and
- Be seen as important only to students by professionals in the field who are less and less likely to devote time and money to participate in Institute programs given so many other options.

In other words, the Institute runs the risk of becoming less relevant for an increasingly larger segment of the field.

Leadership

More specifically, unless the leadership framework changes, the Institute will be mired in a cumbersome and ever-changing volunteer leadership structure that hampers maximum interaction with peer organizations that could help USITT advance its mission and goals. Executive Directors of other organizations now have to build new relationships with USITT presidents every two years. They do not have a peer to meet with to discuss issues, exchange ideas or create initiatives. The staff has to adjust to each president’s agenda and, without knowledge of the entire field themselves, is limited in evaluating new ideas or requests in their proper context.

This is an instance where “because everyone else is doing it” IS the right thing to do (‘it’ meaning having a paid executive). The consequences of inaction in this regard will further separate USITT from its peers and will limit the impact of future actions like outreach, communication, partnership, and a more prominent seat at the table. As some of the commissioners said, the Institute would have continuity at the top, would be promoted to others at a high level and would gain an awareness that it doesn’t currently have.

Governance

On the board level, inaction will ensure an organization that cannot move nimbly in an external environment that thrives on quick and decisive action, and that board development will become stymied as newer members lack the time current board service demands. Healthy discussions will not be eliminated; there is ample space for that in the Board’s execution of its duties. The result of restructuring the board—in tandem with identifying a permanent staff executive—will be that the decision-making process is clear, new opportunities can be more easily realized, and there is a structure that invites newer members to move into leadership positions. Additionally, the paid executive will fail if the Board does not give him/her the freedom to do the job. If the Board maintains its current operational role then this executive will not succeed.

Membership

In terms of expanding the membership to embrace the full scope of the entertainment industry, unless changes are made in the way USITT delivers its programs, schedules its meetings and gatherings, communicates its offerings and bolsters its programs and services, members of the industry will see little reason to become engaged. With scant time and money for outside

professional activities, clear benefits of membership presented in a simple and efficient manner are essential to attract those who are outside the fold.

Singular External Message

USITT currently suffers from its inability to communicate externally with one cohesive message and voice. The Institute has not coordinated its external communications to peer organizations. The result is duplicated efforts and diminished standing in the field. This will likely continue without the coordinated message of an executive staff member who skillfully deploys volunteers to best use and ensures a consistent external message.

Finances

If the Institute invests the financial resources to launch the Bridge model change will occur. The Institute has the means to do so without additional support by simply expending a portion of its accumulated surpluses of the past three years. As adjustments begin to be made some savings will be realized and earned income will increase. At the same time, the need for external funding through a development plan remains; it will go a long way towards positioning USITT as a professional service organization whose mission external entities want to support.

IV. Action Plan

Organizational Changes and Responsibilities of Key Constituent Groups

To realize its vision and provide a real link and connection between the realms of academia and the entertainment industry in all of its size and diversity, all constituents and programs need to work towards this common, unified, and strategic purpose. In the past, USITT has been a place where anyone could do anything. The result has been nearly 50 years of programs that have served the multiple interests and purposes of the membership. This diverse work has provided a network and a home to artisans not really served by other membership organizations. But the very diffuse activity has also resulted in a lack of understanding of the role of USITT in the field at large.

To move forward in a strategic way, its multiple constituents should walk in step towards a common purpose, and undertake programs that fulfill the larger vision for the organization. Resources can be marshaled and maximized. Every activity will build upon another, and can ultimately be collectively leveraged towards a common destination and goal—creating a direct link between the realms of academia and the entertainment sector at large, including nonprofit and for-profit performing arts and media entities of all budget sizes.

In many discussions with MAC, USITT's leadership identified strategic objectives whose success hinges on the engagement of three key constituent groups: the Board of Directors, the USITT staff, and the corps of volunteers. Together, these priority objectives will enable USITT to move beyond the obstacles of the past and become a stronger organization internally and to the external world.

1. Hire an Executive Director to be the paid executive leader of USITT and identified source for internal and external business matters.
2. Reconstitute the Board to shift from an operational role to more of a governance role, supporting the chief executive and staff.
3. Insure the role of the volunteers to retain their unique contribution to an enhanced USITT.

One group cannot succeed without the support and action of the other two. As the implementation timeline suggests, action steps taken to strengthen the Board through redefining the roles of the Executive Committee and Directors and to better balance representation from key constituents, for example, will enable a chief executive to have a clearer operational road map. Similarly, formalizing the role of the volunteers and giving them the tools to support their efforts will enable the staff to work and plan over the long term.

Through meetings with the Task Force, the Board, the Commissioners, the Regional Sections, and vendors at the Conference as well as through interviews with internal and external stakeholders, acceptance of the Bridge Model has become part of the USITT conversation. We now outline strategies for how USITT can reach AND serve these constituents in a more strategic way and action steps that provide a road map to follow.

[Please note that those objectives underlined and highlighted in red are what MAC considers to be of highest priority.]

1. The Work Of The Board

1.1 Shift from operational to governance role

USITT can continue to be an organization that is governed by volunteers who develop programs taught and led by volunteers. However, the time has come for the organization to be managed by professional staff. The Board can make the transition so that it fulfills a governance role rather than an operational one.

In many ways, USITT's Board today functions at a level that is typical for a nonprofit in the "start-up" stage of its life cycle (note that longevity is not a determining factor as to whether or not a nonprofit is in the "idea," "start-up," "growth," "maturity" or "decline" stage).¹ At the start-up stage, nonprofits have board members who fulfill the tasks that would otherwise be typically delegated to staff members. Board members roll up their sleeves and tackle day-to-day responsibilities such as accounting and marketing; they get things done, operationally. True, USITT has staff support for some of these functions, but ultimate authority for day-to-day decision making does not reside at the staff level and this has been problematic, not just internally but externally. Staff has no authority and the world outside of USITT does not know how to navigate a cumbersome structured organization with no continuity in leadership.

Our recommendation is that USITT actively pursues the "growth" mode of nonprofit development; this means that the Board begins to understand its governance role and embraces it. The immediate implications of such a decision are that the Board focuses its efforts on strategy and big picture thinking. It concentrates on the macro issues and leaves management in the hands of a staff that it supports, empowers and trusts. The Board continues to hold the ownership of the organization, but there is a strong interdependent relationship between the Board and staff. The Board sets policy and strategy and provides wisdom and insight. It has the authority to hire and fire the staff leader and retains fiduciary responsibility. The staff manages the day-to-day operations but continues to work with and be supported by a volunteer structure that extends beyond the role of the Board.

1.1.1 Provide training to facilitate understanding of appropriate governance role

1.1.1.1 Provide training at every board meeting

1.1.1.2 Revamp board manual and institute annual board orientation

Throughout this transition it is critical that Board members become trained to better understand their roles and ward against the pitfalls of either micro-management or under-involvement. Towards that end, experts in nonprofit board management and operations should attend meetings regularly to provide training on subjects such as nonprofit life cycles, strategic planning, the Board's role in fundraising, and other related topics that can further solidify the Board's governance role. Decisions on what type of training to be provided should be decided in tandem by the Board President and staff leader.

The Governance Committee, under which responsibility for nominations falls, will be created and charged with revitalizing the USITT board manual so that it provides a substantive orientation to the history of USITT and the roles and responsibilities of trusteeship. The first Board meeting of each

¹ To learn more, please read *Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-Based Wisdom For Nonprofit Capacity* written by Susan Kenny Stevens in 2001 and published by Stagewise Enterprises.

year should begin with an orientation for new members, and provide longer serving Board members with a refresher and training on how to be an effective board member who wholly understands its governance role.

1.1.3 Redefine role of the Executive Committee to empower staff and full Board

1.1.3.1 Reduce the number of Executive Committee ‘meetings’ annually

1.1.3.2 Reduce size of the Executive Committee

In many ways the Executive Committee has served as both the operational center of USITT and its board leadership. Going forward, its role should be diminished so that staff members are empowered to make decisions of their own. More importantly, the entire Board needs to fulfill its role as thoughtful steward of the organization and abandon what many interviewees referred to as a “rubber stamp” role. Towards that end, both the staff and the Board at large should assume some of the authority currently granted to the Executive Committee.

The most effective ways to do this are to reduce the number of committee meetings annually—the combined in-person and telephonic/virtual meetings, thereby allowing the Board itself to make more decisions, and to reduce the number of members on the committee.

The Executive Committee could be reformulated to include the incoming, outgoing and current presidents, secretary and treasurer. If USITT chooses to include committee chairs on the Executive Committee, an examination of the committee structure is suggested. The committees themselves can continue to exist as they are, but they may be grouped so that a single “chair” represents them on the Executive Committee. Current committees might be represented this way: Communications/Development, Programs/Conference/International, and Members/Sections/Commissions. Other committees to consider are Finance and Governance (which includes Nominations).

Final determinations about how to reduce the size of the committee to improve its effectiveness should be made following review and recommendation of the By-Laws committee. This is also an example of an ad hoc committee (as opposed to a standing committee): one that is formed for a specific purpose and is dissolved once the work is completed.

The role of the newly structured Executive Committee will be to make decisions between full Board meetings, help set the agenda for Board meetings, and to assign and report out on the work of other committees/commissions to advance the organization’s strategic agenda. Many executive committees convene a few weeks prior to board meetings to discuss key issues and how they might be presented to the board and to discuss the board meeting goals and agenda with the staff leader. Adhering to this schedule also allows the staff enough time to prepare for the full board meetings and act on those items that result from the executive committee meeting. Meeting in person or virtually four times annually, two to three weeks prior to full board meetings is recommended.

1.1.4 Increase the number of Board meetings to four times annually

By meeting more than twice a year, the full Board can move towards a more participatory role in the leadership of the organization. As USITT currently functions, Board members largely report out on activities that have transpired since the previous meeting. To engage the full Board, they need to participate more fully in the decision-making process. And to do that, it should meet more regularly and be granted increased authority. Some of these meetings may take place virtually. Please note

that as the Board assumes a greater governance role, its meetings can become more time efficient. Additionally, we recommend that all Board members begin to pay a greater portion of their own transportation and participation in USITT meetings. This is a practice that may be implemented in stages.

1.2 Explore professional employer organization opportunities

- 1.2.1 Determine if staff benefits and payroll should be contracted through third party agency**
- 1.2.2 Proceed accordingly on staff transition**

Many small-in-staff nonprofit organizations avail themselves of the services of professional employer organizations, affording them benefits and back office services usually associated with larger ones. The Board should further research the viability of imposing such a model on USITT to determine if it could retain added cost savings from insurance and benefit plans through a third party agency. Once numbers have been secured, proceed accordingly on benefit and payroll transition to a professional employer organization (see Appendices for contact information).

1.3 Secure staff leadership

The majority of stakeholders interviewed (both on the Board and in the industry at large) believe that USITT requires an Executive Director to get to the next level. Many spoke of the need to hire a staff leader who can provide the continuity and leadership required to be a recognized leader in the entertainment industry. Others noted that in order for this position to succeed, the Board will have to share the leadership of the organization with this individual and empower him/her to lead by granting the necessary authority. It will be critical that the Board retains the lessons of the past and truly allows the staff to succeed and grants him/her the power to lead the organization. The Board has to step back from its operational role and let the staff fulfill that function for them. The Executive Director will serve at the pleasure of the Board.

1.3.1 Confirm whether interim executive director/transition manager is appropriate.

Before hiring a full-time, on-site Executive Director, the Board should determine whether or not it requires a transition manager or interim executive. As described in the Overview, an interim manager is someone who can guide the organization through the necessary changes in by-laws, transform the board culture, run the administrative aspects of executive search in tandem with the proposed Transition Committee, and lay the groundwork for a new staff leader. While MAC typically recommends this approach, we believe that USITT may benefit by moving forward with a direct staff hire immediately. This could provide the staff with a smoother transition. In many ways USITT has benefited from an interim executive in the form of its current Administrative & Finance Manager who has played this role for several years. The realities of the timeline will guide your decision.

1.3.2 Hire an Executive Director

1.3.2.1 Finalize job description

1.3.2.2 Post ad

1.3.2.3 Network for candidates

1.3.2.4 Hire director

1.3.2.5 Evaluate position and person

The President should appoint a Transition Committee to finalize a job description, conduct a search, draft an annually renewable contract, and recommend a candidate for hire following approval of the full Board. [Note that it is recommended that this committee be appointed immediately and ultimately be accountable for this action plan's progress and implementation, see 1.5 below.]

Time and again, key constituents stated that the ideal candidate would have expertise/background in the theatre technology industry. The successful candidate can certainly come from within the current USITT membership, and preference will be given to someone with experience in nonprofit management over an MBA education (but the two are not mutually exclusive). It is critical that this executive serve as the external face of USITT and have expertise in external affairs, marketing or development. This individual will provide continuity internally as the Board leadership rotates. Externally, she/he will serve as the public face of USITT by writing articles in industry publications that tout USITT's assets, advocating for USITT's members in the industry, soliciting national foundations and corporations, and serving as a visible presence at major conferences and industry expos and events.

The Executive Director will serve at the pleasure of the Board and execute its decisions. The position will oversee all hiring and firing, manage the staff and workflow of USITT, and assume the operational responsibilities currently held by the volunteer leadership (e.g. negotiating contracts with conference sites). This staff member will continue to be tremendously supported by the volunteers who will be more strategically deployed in their assignments.

It is important to remember that USITT can only succeed in this transition towards professionalization by making two simultaneous changes: retaining a staff leader and transforming the Board's role into one of governance. If USITT hires an Executive Director but does not transform the way its Board operates, this organizational transformation will fail.

1.4 Revise by-laws to institutionalize change

1.4.1 Extend By-Laws Committee to include Transition Committee members

To ensure that the changes outlined in this action plan are institutionalized, the President should convene the By-Laws Committee and extend its membership to include representation from the Transition Committee, the group of individuals responsible for implementing and evaluating progress towards these strategic initiatives.

The Committee will address new roles for the Board to encourage a move towards a governance role (including board composition, committee structure, number of meetings, etc.) and incorporate the potential impact of the retention of an Executive Director. Final recommendations will be made to the Board for discussion, revision and approval.

1.4.2 Revise the President's length of service

1.4.2.1 Extend the term of the President to 3 years

1.4.2.2 Shorten the commitment of the President Elect and Immediate Past President to one year each

The single term of the Presidency requires a five-year time commitment: one year as President Elect and two years each as President and Immediate Past President. This system has provided an easy transition of leadership but has not mitigated the fact that the strategic emphasis and direction of USITT changes every two years and ultimately provides little time for the President to realize his/her own goals.

To provide further continuity of vision and leadership, the President's term should be extended by one year, giving him/her three years to effectively lead the organization. At the same time, their time commitment to the organization will not be extended. Thus, we recommend that they serve for only one year as President Elect, three years as President, and one year as Immediate Past President. This will mean that there are no President Elect and no Immediate past President positions on the Board for two of every five years.

1.4.3 Identify sector-based positions for Board nomination process

USITT seeks to serve a broad spectrum of the entertainment industry, however that diversity is not reflected in the current configuration of the Board. True, there are representatives from different segments of the industry (e.g. costumers, lighting designers, etc.), but by and large the bulk of the directors are full-time employees within the academic sector. While some have footholds in the entertainment industry, the number of board members who are full-time professionals in the entertainment industry are few. Further, there is limited diversity in terms of the size of production budgets the Board members manage.

If USITT is to truly serve the entertainment sector then it must be wholly represented in the leadership of the organization. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board redress its nominating process to ensure that the full spectrum of the industry it seeks to serve is mirrored among its ranks. The By-Laws and Governance/Nominating Committees should jointly define those fields to be represented and create a nominating process that will ensure proper qualifications and participation in the leadership structure, such as through assigned seats from college, university, public, private, educators, students, entrepreneurs, entertainment professionals, and nonprofit performing arts designers and technicians.

Further, the Board composition would include vendors, entertainment professionals, educators, students, young professionals, Expo exhibitors, Regional Sections, representation by discipline, and the Executive Director.

To implement this effort may require a radical transformation of the nominating process as it currently exists with complete revision implemented in stages to ensure that qualified candidates are available.

1.4.4 Formalize reciprocal liaisons to strategic partners

USITT currently has appointed representatives to ATHE, KC/ACTF, OISTAT and the ESTA Certification Council. To ensure that USITT is better known in the industry and seen as a “go to” organization, it needs to identify the full roster of strategic partners with whom it should be associated (e.g. National Performing Arts Convention, Theatre Communications Group, etc.). It can then identify liaisons from within its membership who both have authority within USITT and can formally convey information back and forth between organizations and ensure that USITT has a seat at the table when issues and policies that affect the field arise. USITT has used this to great effect in creating industry standards, and it should now apply this same strategy to improve its presence in the industry at large. Please note that this relationship should be reciprocal and USITT can expect that its external partners would have a seat at the USITT table on related issues.

1.4.5 Determine if other issues should be addressed

As USITT reviews the aforementioned changes to its Board structure and culture, other issues are likely to arise and should be addressed. Other items for discussion and that have arisen in the course of this organizational assessment include:

- Moving towards a smaller board structure.
- Creating external advisory or honorific boards to ensure participation from important segments of the industry not currently represented in the board structure.
- Allowing for non-member participation at the Board level and in committee structures to engage new segments of the industry.
- Integrating fundraising responsibilities into the roles and responsibilities of trusteeship.

1.4.6 Board approves changes

The full Board should consent to and approve these changes to its structure and role.

1.5 Annually evaluate progress towards becoming "the bridge"

To ensure that USITT makes concrete steps towards achieving its vision of creating a bridge between the academic and entertainment industries, it should regularly evaluate progress towards that goal. A newly appointed Transition Committee would be charged with monitoring and evaluating progress annually. The committee can create mechanisms (and provide training for evaluation and assessment) whereby other committees of the Institute set annual program goals that further USITT’s vision. Committees would then report their progress towards meeting these goals at year’s end. The Board will ultimately use this information to set and modify strategic direction each year as necessary given the changes in the external environment and other relevant factors.

1.6 Determine and implement name change if necessary

While there was widespread agreement that USITT should not change its name in the near future, the term “theatre” may no longer be appropriate to include in the name, if the Institute is successful in bridging to the entertainment industry. Ultimately, any name should be easily understood by the public at large and communicate the purpose of the organization as clearly and simply as “Backstage” magazine communicates its purpose. The current acronym may suffice, but any name change should be test marketed outside of USITT’s inner circle.

1.7 Assess whether or not Syracuse location continues to be appropriate

Given that the current lease does not expire until 2012, USITT will remain in Syracuse for at least that length of time. In the interim, the staff ought to increase its presence and circulation at centers of the industry (e.g. New York, Las Vegas, Los Angeles) and build a wider reputation for the Institute. Moving out of New York City has diminished awareness of USITT in the industry and thus it is recommended that staff redouble its efforts to boost its profile in the field. This will require a larger travel budget for the staff leader.

Additionally, USITT should make the most of its current location and should reach out to Syracuse University, which is receiving national media attention for the development of its cultural corridor. This local connection to the academic community could be more vigorously fostered.

2. The Work Of The Staff

2.1 Evaluate all staff and job functions to ensure in alignment

Once an Executive Director job profile has been drafted and a candidate is in place, then all other job functions should be reviewed. The Executive Director will be charged with assuring that all staff and their job functions are in alignment, that there is no duplication of services, that efficiencies are realized in terms of personnel and cost outlay to independent contractors, and that the necessary positions and people are in place to realize USITT's vision of creating a bridge between the academic and entertainment sectors. The Executive Director will work in close partnership with the Administrative & Finance Manager on this task but ultimate authority for decision making will rest with the chief executive.

2.2 Raise the external profile of the organization

Time and again throughout the assessment period, constituents noted that USITT needed to raise its profile in the industry. The Institute does good work but is under-recognized for its efforts. To be seen as an industry leader, USITT needs to do a better job of constantly communicating who it is and what it does to the industry at large. Towards that end it should develop a multi-pronged strategy to build awareness of the Institute that includes consistent branding in all of its materials (e.g. branding TD&T as a USITT publication on its front cover), creating a reliable and active presence by visible USITT players, and leveraging the 50th anniversary to create and roll out a new marketing strategy.

2.2.1 Create unified design standards to assure maximized branding

It is recommended that USITT create unified design standards and templates for all of its publications and related materials that reflect the image of a serious and sophisticated organization. Steps are already being taken towards this end, but it is important to remember that a new logo is only the beginning of creating a regular and cohesive message. Unified design standards should be applied not just to the letterhead but to the website and all publications and materials, including TD&T. Consistency in font, layout, and message will help audiences outside of USITT better understand who it is and what it does.

Finally, as an organization that represents the very best in entertainment design, it should create a visual identity that resounds with excellence in design.

2.2.2 Provide a consistent face to represent USITT in the industry

- 2.2.2.1 Executive Director travels regularly and participates at peer conferences and meetings**
- 2.2.2.2 Ensure branded USITT presence at other conferences via volunteers**
- 2.2.2.3 Ensure branded USITT presence in other publications via volunteers**
- 2.2.2.4 Sponsor other conferences and industry events**
- 2.2.2.5 Brand exhibitors' association with USITT at other conferences**
- 2.2.2.6 Executive Director seeks out strategic alliances to ensure USITT "at the table"**
- 2.2.2.7 Executive Director creates bridge to Syracuse University for programmatic collaboration**

Given the Institute's commitment to stay in Syracuse and its lack of visibility and presence in centers of the industry, it ought to make a concerted effort to provide a consistent face at industry events. The Executive Director will travel regularly to represent the Institute at peer conferences and meetings and ensure that USITT is present in publications industry wide. Volunteers may be deployed to represent USITT, however, it will be critical to disclose the primacy of their USITT affiliation without fail. Simply having a USITT member write an article is not enough; the connection between USITT and the author, for example, must be overt and explicit.

USITT will take a page from the books of its competitors to further ensure a visible presence industry wide by sponsoring events and programs at other conferences. By "paying to play," USITT will become an even more valued peer.

The Institute should encourage its Stage Expo vendors to promote their membership and affiliation with USITT at competing conferences and events. The Executive Director should travel to other conferences with these posters or placards in hand and place them in member vendor booths.

Without fail the Executive Director will outreach to peer organizations to build strategic alliances and deepen collaborative relationships. By aggressively reaching out to these other entities, the staff leader will participate in field-wide discussions and ensure that USITT's members and their perspectives are voiced. It will be critical for the Executive Director to regularly communicate with USITT-appointed liaisons to other service organizations to ensure constancy in message.

USITT can fortify its vision as a bridge between the academic and entertainment sectors at the most local level through programmatic partnerships with Syracuse University and other local professionals at home. Such collaborations might allow USITT to incubate new programs.

2.2.3 Retain marketing agency to promote 50th celebration

2.2.3.1 Issue RFP for agency to assist with 50th and create new templates

2.2.3.2 Interview and retain counsel

2.2.3.3 Devise, implement and evaluate marketing plan

2.2.3.4 Implement marketing plan

2.2.3.5 Evaluate marketing plan

2.2.3.6 Create new templates, marketing plan for USITT going forward

2.2.3.7 Recommend strategic staffing hires to build on momentum of 50th

2.2.3.8 Hire and retain marketing staff to fulfill strategic purpose

The 50th anniversary of USITT is the time to celebrate a half-century of tremendous accomplishments and to announce intentions to truly serve the depth and breadth of the entertainment industry while maximizing educational connections. It is also the moment at which to aggressively promote USITT within the industry.

The services of an outside agency can devise a new strategy, one that builds upon the Institute's current assets and takes current marketing and promotions to the next level.

Given that raising the profile of the Institute is a core objective, USITT is in the process of issuing an RFP to identify an agency with deep experience working in the theatrical and entertainment industries and with knowledge and contacts among USITT's peer service organizations as well as in the media.

The 50th marks an opportunity to secure editorial coverage in industry-wide publications, but the Institute should temper its expectations in terms of the type of coverage it might receive. An anniversary in and of itself is not “newsworthy.” Outside professional expertise, however, can initiate new relationships and contacts upon which the staff can build as it seeks to secure increasing coverage of the Institute in industry publications going forward. The agency can also provide professional development for current marketing staff so that they can continue to grow in their current positions.

Following design and implementation of the 50th anniversary marketing plan all parties should evaluate the success and determine how USITT can modify its activities going forward to secure increasing coverage, extend the field’s understanding and appreciation of USITT, and grow membership. This will also lead to the development of an annually renewable marketing plan - one that expands the Institute’s current marketing plan to include a much broader focus, reach and audience. No marketing plan is complete without a look at internal communications and this review should also yield methodologies and tools for communication between and among USITT’s internal audiences as well as marketing to those audiences for specific purposes.

New templates for communication and promotion will be developed for implementation going forward for use by staff. Additionally, a review of the capacity of the current Institute and its staff by the marketing firm may lead to additional staff hires or the continuation of outsourced assistance to further amplify USITT’s voice in the field.

2.3 Fundraise for new initiatives

- 2.3.1 Internally define project-based fundraising opportunities (e.g. capacity building, 50th, regional programs)**
- 2.3.2 Determine if external counsel is required, based upon Executive Director hire**
- 2.3.3 Issue RFP and retain external counsel, if necessary**
- 2.3.4 Counsel analyzes all fundraising opportunities**
- 2.3.5 Craft comprehensive fundraising plan integrating conference marketing opportunities**
- 2.3.6 Develop 'boiler plate' language for use in fundraising solicitations**
- 2.3.7 Determine if strategic staff hire is needed to cultivate, solicit, report to donors**
- 2.3.8 Hire if necessary**
- 2.3.9 Implement fundraising plan**
- 2.3.10 Evaluate success, revise implementation as necessary**

USITT has had success with the limited fundraising campaigns undertaken to date and has demonstrated that its members are willing to contribute at higher levels. It should work to place all fundraising efforts within a broader development plan that can guide members along a ladder of giving that deepens involvement and progresses from member to patron to planned giver and solicitor of friends and colleagues.

In addition to member giving, the Institute should begin to explore cultivating and soliciting foundation and government grant donors. There is tremendous potential in this area given that peer organizations are generating more than twice as much income in this arena as USITT.

As a first step, the staff should define all project-based fundraising opportunities. Grants may be solicited to support capacity building (including the hire of an Executive Director, implementation of this Action Plan, and broad marketing initiatives), comprehensive 50th anniversary celebration

(including all related publications, programs, and exhibitions), regionally focused programs (e.g. a series of workshops in the Twin Cities area), and so forth. It is important to remember that funders are typically most interested in supporting projects that align with their own strategic goals and objectives. Therefore, a foundation based in Minneapolis that only serves regional theater companies should only be solicited for funds to support programs in that geographic area and for that constituency.²

The Central New York Community Foundation and John Ben Snow Memorial Trust may both support requests by USITT to retain a staff leader. Annual program support can be regularly solicited from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council for the Arts. The leading theatre community funders (please visit the list of funders at www.tcg.org to see who is already committed to supporting membership organizations serving the industry) may also underwrite 50th anniversary programming. If USITT's international programming includes work with Asian or Eastern European experts, then funds might be secured from the Asian Cultural Council and Trust for Mutual Understanding, respectively.

There are many other sources for funds, but they should not be pursued until the Institute understands what programs it has to offer funders and its capacity to not just cultivate and solicit donors but also to fulfill grant compliance and reporting requirements.

The Executive Director may be able to fulfill this important fundraising role, and she/he will determine if outside fundraising counsel is necessary. If so, an RFP will be issued to seek and secure fundraising counsel (registered in New York State by the Office of Charities) to review all opportunities for contributed income and devise a responsive development plan that integrates membership, individual donor opportunities, and corporate giving (including the annual conference, Stage Expo, and publication advertising). Because it is standard nonprofit practice for 100% of all board members to give financially, annually, USITT may want to consider exploring this option; in doing so it should remember that financial participation counts more than the size of the donation (translation: no gift is too small). By developing a centralized strategy, the Institute can ensure that it is asking all of its donors and sponsors to give on a regular basis, is not asking too much, and is working to steadily increase the size of their donations annually.

As part of this development planning process, standard “boiler plate” language will be developed to assist the Institute in its donor solicitations. By developing stock proposals and letters of inquiry for each of its major programming streams, staff will be able to move quickly in the pursuit of new institutional donors (e.g. foundations, corporations, government).

With these tools in place, the staff can then determine if additional human resources are necessary to implement the plan.

As with any activity of the Institute, the program's effort should be evaluated annually and plans revised to recognize and accommodate lessons learned and changes in the external environment.

2.4 Re-bridge to Regional Sections

The Regional Sections are an asset not fully integrated into the Institute. Given that more than half of USITT members do not participate in a Regional Section, the memberships of these local

² Please read Karen Brooks Hopkins & Carolyn Stolper Friedman's *Successful Fundraising for Arts and Cultural Organizations*, second edition, published by Oryx, 1997.

affiliates have the potential to reinvigorate National. The Institute currently provides some funds and program support to the Regionals, and that effort should be leveraged for the programming, branding, marketing, membership and leadership potential.

2.4.1 Increase USITT staff support to the Regional Sections

2.4.1.1 Staff travels to sections to promote USITT's resources and identify leadership from local entertainment professionals

2.4.1.2 Staff facilitates section-to-section communication and sharing of best practices

To fully realize this potential will require additional staff support, which may be obtained with the hire of a Regional Sections Manager or a re-allocation of the responsibilities of the current Membership & Advertising Sales Manager to ensure increased attention to this division. Staff should travel regularly to the Regional Sections to build stronger connections to the National office. In the course of this work, it should see increased access to and use of USITT resources and lead to the cross-fertilization of programming. Staff can get a better sense of the scope of local entertainment professionals, particularly those that work wholly outside of the academic setting, and begin to identify stronger connections to the entertainment industry through these local grassroots networks. Ultimately, this can lead to the identification of new trustees for the Institute and ensure a broader representation of the industry at the Board level. This will also ensure maximum awareness of USITT and increase participation levels and membership rolls.

Increased staff travel and participation in the work of the Regional Sections will enhance communication between the affiliates and allow for the sharing of best practices on all matters such as membership recruitment, website development, or program development and promotion.

2.4.2 Create efficiencies between Regional Sections and National

2.4.2.1 Brand all Regional Section activities as USITT activities

2.4.2.2 National hosts Regional websites; provides templates, protocols

2.4.2.3 Explore conference registration software applications for Regional

2.4.2.4 Integrate Regional Sections into National database

2.4.2.5 Facilitates group purchases/discounts

2.4.2.6 Provide annual training on how to run a Regional Section Chapter

USITT can further brand its activities by providing Regional Sections with templates for its own external communications and USITT logos, etc. While this work is already being done to a certain extent, many affiliate members are not aware of this opportunity. Increased staffing, communication and interaction with National, will ensure a consistency in branding. It can also lead to increased technology efficiencies. As National redevelops its website, it can host affiliate sites, and provide website templates and protocols. Access to National's conference registration software for those Regional Sections that produce substantial convenings may also increase efficiencies. And synergies may be realized by integrating the affiliates into National's database. National also may be able to secure discounts on products through group purchase and licensing of software applications, for example. Finally, it is recommended that leaders of Regional Sections be convened and trained annually to ensure that they fully understand the resources USITT provides and have access to best practices from their peers.

2.4.3 Consider joint USITT/Regional Section membership

USITT should consider a joint membership that either automatically enrolls members in a Regional Section or vice versa. This will ensure that National can cultivate and develop its own membership through a grassroots network. One way to achieve this may be to build the membership fees (Regional and National) into annual conference registration.

2.5 Diversify and grow membership

- 2.5.1 Launch campaign to attract new sectors (set benchmarks, evaluate progress)**
- 2.5.2 Use Regional Sections for local outreach; host programs/events to attract members in missing or soft categories**
- 2.5.3 Offer incentives for joining pegged to each group's interests**
- 2.5.4 Use key influencers to entice new membership categories through articles, attendance at outside conferences**
- 2.5.5 Identify partners/alliances to grow membership**
- 2.5.6 Consider alternative model for membership classes/categories**

USITT envisions itself as an organization that serves the entertainment sector, however, it is largely perceived as (and surveys conducted as part of this assessment confirmed) an organization that primarily serves the academic community. The transformation of this perception can take place if USITT increases its membership ranks (and service to) full-time professionals in the entertainment industry.

It is recommended that USITT diversify and grow its members so that it reflects the diversity in the field not just by discipline (e.g. costumer, lighting design, architect, etc.) but by employment as well. This will require targeted campaigns to attract membership from new sectors (e.g. CGI, regional theaters), and all recruitment strategies should be prioritized by industry segment, with benchmarks determined for success and evaluation to monitor progress and reset goals. A strategy should be in place for retention through meaningful programs with targeted appeal. Campaigns can build upon local outreach through the Regional Sections and offer incentives that speak to industry segment interest. Where there are gaps in the membership, USITT can identify alliances and partnerships with key connectors/influencers in those arenas to develop joint programs, discounts/incentives, and offerings that may further facilitate recruitment efforts.

For example, USITT might determine to focus the first two years of implementation on recruitment and programs from those working in regional theatre. Towards that end, it could rent mailing lists (print and electronic) from regional theatre service organizations for membership solicitation. At the same time, the Membership team (board and staff members) could work with the Regional Sections and the Conference and Publications Committee to identify and offer programs of interest for regional theatre employees and contractors both at the national and regional levels. By highlighting these programs in membership recruitment materials, USITT will increase the rate of return on its solicitation strategy, and at the same time it will begin to strategically utilize its regional networks nationwide. It will be important for USITT to focus selectively and strategically in its outreach and increase membership retention by ensuring that the intellectual content is in place to retain new members' interest in public programs and publications. This effort will also begin to build synergies internally and maximize USITT's impact across all of its program divisions. After two years, staff can evaluate its progress; if it attracted and retained new members from this market segment, then efforts can move to another segment, assuring that there will be programs in place to

maintain participation and dues. The outreach will be strategic if it is targeted and retains its focus on making USITT more of a bridge-like entity.

New categories of membership may be developed to further service these missing sectors. It is important to note that more intensive membership services may be required to sustain the interest and investment of the entertainment industry (e.g. reference librarian/information manager who disseminates information one on one and via advisory services as done by the American Association of Museums technical assistance program).

2.6 Invest in and evaluate staff regularly

2.6.1 Insist upon professional development

2.6.2 Evaluate staff members, positions, responsibilities to ensure fulfilling organizational vision

As an organization that values professional development for its field, it should insist upon professional development for its own staff. Funds should be allocated to provide staff members with regular skill development and increase their knowledge of the field. Staff might attend ESTA, LDI and other “competitive” conferences and meet with their peers to share information and access resources. Management staff should participate in workshops and classes available through Syracuse University; marketing staff can benefit by attending the National Arts Marketing Conference and other related events; and new fundraising staff can attend Fundraising Day in New York and benefit from membership in the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The nonprofit sector regularly offers professional development opportunities to individuals and organizations through the services of such entities as the Council of Community Services of New York State and the Support Center for Nonprofit Management. Public workshops and customized trainings are available.

The organizational structure should be annually reviewed to ensure that all necessary functions are being fulfilled to allow the Institute to truly become a bridge between the academic and entertainment sectors.

Staff members ought to be regularly evaluated to ensure that their job responsibilities remain relevant to their positions, that they are accountable for the tasks assigned, that growth potential and opportunity is communicated, and that they are fulfilling the strategic purpose and vision for the Institute.

3. The Work of the Volunteers

Many organizations consider themselves fortunate if they can rely on a small group of dedicated volunteers for discreet projects. USITT's strength has historically come from an overwhelmingly vast volunteer corps that generously lends its time and talents to a wide range of areas within the organization. While the Institute in its present form cannot achieve its goals without the volunteers, reliance on them comes at a price, as the research has shown. Inconsistency in work, unevenness in response time and overlapping of duties all stem from the natural tug of other obligations.

This action plan seeks to retain the best of the volunteers' contribution and to minimize those elements that prevent the Institute from fully moving forward as a leading industry membership organization with broader reach and a bigger voice.

3.1 Retain and honor volunteers' centrality to the organization

3.1.1 Enable veteran volunteers to train new volunteers stepping into key roles

3.1.2 Honor volunteers at annual conference

Working with the staff and Board, the volunteers' role and responsibilities will be even more clearly defined and supported. They already have a seat at the governance table and will be formally recognized by the Institute at the annual conference. A training program will be created so that new volunteers can capture the institutional memory of their veteran counterparts.

3.2 Strengthen strategic focus of volunteer efforts

3.2.1 Review volunteer corps to determine strengths, weaknesses, overlap

3.2.2 Hold staff-volunteer summit to define new roles & operating procedures

3.2.3 Assign appropriate staff to lead and support volunteers

3.2.4 Establish clear communication mechanisms between volunteers/staff

3.2.4.1 Design/implement annual volunteer job descriptions

3.2.4.2 Design/implement annual evaluation of volunteers so used strategically

3.2.5 Deploy volunteers to "officially" represent USITT at other events, publications

3.2.5.1 Use database to centralize volunteer availability to be matched with all opportunities

The strategic focus of the volunteers' efforts will be strengthened further through an initial review to determine and capture strengths, weaknesses and overlap in more than the current anecdotal manner. An initial, and possibly annual, volunteer-staff summit following the hiring of a chief executive would foster the dialogue to establish operating procedures going forward. This will facilitate the allocation of appropriate staff support for all volunteer work.

Interaction between volunteers and staff will be enhanced through clear communication mechanisms developed by the staff and presented to the volunteers for comment. This may include the creation of volunteer "job descriptions" and annual evaluations of volunteer efforts to be used strategically going forward. Formalizing the role and relationship in this way naturally elevates the work to an even higher level than is currently in place. The opportunity to take time to assess the effort and plan for the future reinforces the dynamic.

While the paid chief executive will function as the continuous point person and face of USITT, no single individual can or should be the only representative of an organization. Deploying the volunteer corps to officially represent the Institute, engage with colleagues at other organizations' events, fill seats on industry bodies and to provide a USITT with a presence through interviews and bylined articles in external key publications, for example, will reinforce the strength and breadth of the Institute's ranks while clearly displaying the knowledge and commitment of the volunteers. This is an ongoing role that is played, to some extent, by everyone who is a member; it will be heightened and defined for the volunteer leadership.

To aid in always having skilled volunteers available to meet these and other needs requiring volunteer support, we recommend that the Institute survey the membership to capture their interests and availability to serve in all of the ways needed and then use its dynamic database to centralize and manage the deployment of volunteers as needed. This tool will greatly assist the staff when seeking volunteers and will cut down on outreach on a case-by-case basis. It will also aid in the creation of volunteer mentors and provide another avenue for increased involvement among newer members. Additionally, this service becomes a membership benefit and marketing tool for recruitment.

3.3 Ensure that commission activities further the strategic vision

- 3.3.1 Commissions set strategic goals for each fiscal year to further strategic vision**
- 3.3.2 Conduct activities that further institutional direction**
- 3.3.3 Report out on progress towards goals**
- 3.3.4 Progress towards goals feeds into volunteer evaluation and honors process**

A key role of the volunteer commissions is to further the strategic vision of the Institute—to be the bridge between academia and the entertainment industries. Thus, all will work to ensure that this remains in focus. To aid in this function, the Commissions will gather and set objectives that fulfill the Institute's strategic goals and vision for each fiscal year. They will work with staff to insure that the necessary support will be there and that the outcomes are achievable. In terms of executing the goals, the Commissions will create and manage activities that further the institutional direction, both for the Institute as a whole and for their specific part of the sector. When setting the year's goals, time will also be spent crafting the appropriate way that progress should be reported to the Institute and its members. These results will, in turn, feed into the volunteer evaluation and honor/recognition processes. Please note that to proceed with this activity may require an assessment of Article VII, Sections 2 and 3 of the By-Laws.

For example, the Architecture Commission, realizing that USITT's primary goal is to take a leadership role nationally, would determine to expand its continuing education program to provide professional certification credits with the American Institute of Architects and disseminate discrete local programs via the Regional Sections. By doing so, it will raise awareness of USITT in local communities, continue to bolster USITT as a leader in theatre design and architecture, and attract local architects to participate in programs which may ultimately result in increased membership rolls. The Architecture Commission would attach benchmarks to this effort and could report out annually on its progress towards meeting this outcome.

3.4 Volunteer structure

Some modification to the current volunteer structure will aid in retaining the best of their efforts, while minimizing the challenges faced by such a model. As the Board and staff structures begin to shift, the impact on the volunteer framework will adjust accordingly. For example, an examination of the board committee structure may result in fewer, broader reaching committees with key representation on the board and executive committee. The development of advisory councils could enhance volunteer roles and bring new members to the table. Clear, defined staff support could help streamline the lines of communication. A centralized volunteer database, keyed to volunteer opportunities could allow for increased involvement in a strategic way. And one of the outcomes of the initial summit could be the creation of communication mechanisms that work for all. This will also address issues of accountability and responsibility.

Programmatic Implications

As previously discussed, ultimately USITT's programs will be determined as staff and volunteers (especially Commissioners) work to identify activities that take concrete steps towards realizing USITT's vision of serving as a bridge that connects academia with the entertainment sector and fulfills the Institute's primary goals of taking a leadership role in the field, disseminating information, and becoming a documentary body for the history of the field.

While this report has focused primarily on the macro organizational development issues, we will touch upon how USITT might further reinforce its new role as the bridge, programmatically speaking. The table below draws out some of the members' ideas that emerged during the 2008 conference in Houston. Obviously not every idea can be implemented immediately. It will be up to the constituents of USITT (board, staff and volunteers) to prioritize its resources and determine which of these activities can have the biggest bang for the smallest buck, given human and financial resource limitations.

Suggestions From Members	
Conference	<p>Consider creating a committee that proactively outreaches to the entertainment sector to ensure a vibrant presence across Conference platforms.</p> <p>Move to more theatre/entertainment centric locations (e.g. Orlando, Branson, Las Vegas, Chicago).</p> <p>Place vendors, key constituents at the Conference/Stage Expo on the Board of the Institute to ensure that they have a voice in organizational leadership.</p> <p>Develop certification specific programming to be delivered at the conference (e.g. provide continuing education credits through the AiA for architects who participate in USITT's green theatre public programs).</p> <p>Identify key themes in the field, and link a central idea from conference to conference so that the issue can be monitored and addressed year to year.</p>

Stage Expo	<p>Better promote to non-members that are local to region to further diversify content on the floor.</p> <p>Ensure the needs of the vendors and representatives from the entertainment sector are fulfilled through annual surveys. Make improvements accordingly.</p>
Exhibits	<p>Plan an exhibition that presents a comprehensive view of entertainment design and feature the work of industry leaders. Use as a means to connect to the theatre, television and film workers who should be, but aren't USITT members.</p> <p>Identify potential touring venues (e.g. NY Public Library for the Performing Arts) and approach them about collaborating on the development of exhibitions of the field. By sharing development of content and costs, USITT can benefit from the creation of a tourable exhibition, the procurement of venues in advance of the exhibition's development, and extend the reach of its content and further share the history of the field.</p>
Publications	<p>To assure that USITT documents the history of the field, it should update and complete its own institutional history which serves as a record of achievement of the last 50 years of American theatre technology, design, etc.</p> <p>Identify new monograph series editors and publish two monographs annually that document the history of the field and celebrate the work of leaders in the entertainment sector.</p> <p>Publish articles from conference sessions in allied organizational journals (e.g. American Institute of Architects, INFOCOMM), and allow allied publishers to issue stories in TD&T to ensure a meaningful partnership and further share information.</p>
Certifications and Standards	<p>Continue and expand providing continuing education credits through USITT programs to allied organizations to further diversify membership and connect to broader sector.</p> <p>Create training modules to prepare members and non-members (at a higher cost) for existing certification exams</p>
Awards	<p>Use awards to draw 'star' talent to the Conference regardless of membership status.</p> <p>Target more strategically industry professionals that are deserving of recognition beyond lifetime achievement.</p> <p>Offer fewer awards and thereby make them more prestigious.</p>
Research	<p>Identify prospects and seek and solicit funds to create a publicly accessible database of collections of theatrical design that is unduplicated by other performing arts repositories in the field. Collaborate with field leaders in information dissemination (e.g. museums and libraries) to ensure the need for the product and that it is developed so as to have as long a life as possible Alternately, sponsor a USITT archive maintained at a nationally accessible performing arts library.</p>

Website	<p>Create a searchable database of products and services that will increase access to vendors and provide more meaningful benefit to corporate supporters.</p> <p>Create a clearinghouse of resources and industry practices, including podcasts on safety training.</p> <p>Create reciprocal links to other organizations in the field on the website.</p> <p>Regularly evaluate success/failure of online advertising through surveys.</p>
Professional Development	<p>Develop and implement programs with ESTA Foundation to deliver at both organizations' conferences and at regional locations.</p> <p>Devise mentoring opportunities for non-students with Stage Expo vendors.</p> <p>Explore reciprocal membership benefits with other national organizations.</p> <p>Offer webinars.</p>
Job Placement	<p>Facilitate way for vendors and commercial representatives to recruit talent.</p> <p>Create an internship for management students at Syracuse University in the USITT office.</p> <p>Increase the pool of interviewers to diminish competition with SETC and others.</p>
Networking	<p>Remember that students do not have business cards. If USITT wants them to retain a critical role, then it should facilitate contact information exchange in other ways.</p> <p>Commit to Board representation at national meetings of other organizations.</p> <p>Establish USITT Award to be presented at LDI annually.</p> <p>Use Facebook as a means to further facilitate discussion and share pictures and ideas among members and as a means to recruit new members through increased visibility.</p>

Please see the Appendices for a chart provided in MAC's memo to the Board of 2/4/08 that defines how the Bridge model might be realized.

Financial Implications

To fully realize all of this activity in a three-year window will necessitate the procurement of new earned and contributed income streams, trimming some costs that no longer further USITT's strategic vision, and deploying a small portion of USITT's accumulate wealth towards implementation. The Institute can comfortably move forward with a revised organizational model and sustain it in the years to come given the tremendous income potential in outlying years.

Because of USITT's brush with red ink in the past, the leadership of the Institute should be commended for implementing rigorous financial measures to ensure fiscal stability. USITT erased its debt years ago, and continues to build its nest egg annually. According to IRS 990 tax filings USITT has posted the following annual surpluses:

FY2004	\$178,260	FY2006	\$420,607
FY2005	\$56,932	FY2007	\$153,779

More than \$800,000 has accumulated in the last four years simply from over budgeting and under spending. On the one hand, this is a remarkable accomplishment for an organization with a small track record in fundraising. Annual surpluses have served as an effective strategy in which to build an investment portfolio. On the other, significant annual surplus represents a continuation and underinvestment in human resources and programs. According to the MAC report of 1/4/08, we demonstrated that compared to its peers, USITT was under investing in human resources anywhere from \$100,000 to \$300,000 annually. This lack of professional staff support has been a contributing factor in USITT's loss of stature in the field.

MAC recommends that USITT apply the same thoughtfulness and care it has to building its financial portfolio to its own operational capacity. By increasing investments in human resources and strategic programs, USITT can more forcefully and deliberately fulfill its public service goals.

It is important to note that while nonprofit organizations are not in the business of losing money, neither are they expected to earn significant profits. When a nonprofit regularly posts significant surpluses year in and year out, it raises questions with prospective donors. Is the nonprofit under investing in its resources? Why provide grant monies to an organization that clearly does not need support? Are the needs of the constituency being met fully? Or, is the need for services provided limited and therefore additional funds unnecessary?

In this plan, it is recommended that USITT sustain the recommended growth by creating a development/fundraising office that will seek out and secure increased contributed income. While we are budgeting modest gains during the three-year period, we believe (based upon the analysis of contributed income levels at peer organizations again in the MAC report of 1/4/08), that USITT can sustain this growth. By FY 2011, we project new income of \$100,000 from fundraising efforts, but we would expect to see this comfortably triple by FY2012. However, USITT will have to demonstrate a readiness to invest in its future by allocating a small portion of its assets. It will also need to move forward with budgets that do not project annual surpluses. USITT might explore zero-based budgeting, in which every year's budget is built from the ground up, project by project, and the previous year's costs are not taken into consideration. Prospective donors (particularly foundation, corporate and government funders) will want to insure that USITT leverages its financial capital for the public good as per its nonprofit status.

In addition to expending a small portion of USITT's accumulated surpluses to realize this plan, it will also need to generate some cost savings from the current operational budget going forward. These may be acquired through a systematic review of all program expenditures to ascertain whether or not that program is fulfilling a strategic purpose for the Institute. Every program that USITT produces may be of merit, but if a case cannot be made for how that activity is furthering USITT's mission and strategic vision then it may no longer be necessary. Each activity of the Institute should take a step towards creating a bridge between the academic and entertainment industries, and, it should fulfill one of the strategic goals set by the Board during this assessment process. If the activity does not further USITT's strategic vision, then it is extraneous and not necessary. As

USITT increases its expenditures to ensure that it fulfills its strategic vision, it will have to make cuts in other areas to accommodate this growth.

MAC recommends that USITT identify \$75,000 in program cuts in the FY2009 budget (for implementation and reduction in FY2010) and maintain them to ensure that all activities of the Institute fulfill its strategic, not political, purpose.

In sum, to realize the goals and objectives of this strategic plan will require a net investment of \$413,750 across three years, FY2009 – FY 2011. This will result in a growth of USITT's operational budget from \$1.6 million to \$1.9 million in a short period of time and will secure USITT's position in the industry.

The only thing USITT truly needs to achieve this vision is the will to make it so.

V. Conclusion/USITT Tomorrow

The USITT of today is a valued locus for many within the field and we have often heard members question why its treasures are not better known. As noted in this report, the Action Plan stems from your desire to answer that question and share the best of USITT with the largest audience possible. You will be building on a solid foundation to infect others with your collegial spirit, to gather in groups of varying sizes and support each others work, to grow regional and national networks of committed individuals across the field, and to serve as one of the industry's central hubs. In fact, the USITT of tomorrow will assume its rightful place as an industry resource and pacesetter, with a finger on the pulse of industry activities and trends, and with the respect and collaboration of its many peer organizations.

The Action Plan includes numerous opportunities towards realizing this fortified and vibrant organization but it is only the first step in the implementation process. By remaining as focused on implementing the major sections as you have been in creating the plan itself, your goals will be realized. While the Institute operates under the present structure, including the short term of its president, actions may drift or get pushed aside for day-to-day matters. If you speedily work hard and put the plan into motion, the USITT of tomorrow that you have envisioned can be celebrated at your 50th anniversary gathering. You will have many cheering you on.

VI. Appendices

- Implementation Timeline
- Implementation Budget
- Methodology
 - o List Of Interviewees
 - o Prior Reports
- Executive Director Job Descriptions
- The Bridge Model Chart
- Resource Guide

USITT Strategic Initiatives Action Plan		Oct 2008			Jan. 2009					July 2009					Jan. 2010					July 2010					Jan. 2011					July 2011 Dec 2011										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
VISION: Be the Bridge between Academia and Entertainment																																								
Key priorities coded in red																																								
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES																																								
Action plan presented to Board for discussion, revision, approval																																								
Transition Committee formed to assume responsibility for plan implementation/evaluation																																								
Funds allocated to begin implementation, as outlined below																																								
1 THE WORK OF THE BOARD																																								
1.1 Shift from operational to governance role																																								
1.1.1 Provide training to facilitate understanding of appropriate governance role																																								
1.1.1.1 Provide training at every Board meeting																																								
1.1.1.2 Revamp board manual and institute annual board orientation																																								
1.1.3 Redefine role of the Executive Committee to empower staff & full Board																																								
1.1.3.1 Reduce the number of Executive Committee meetings annually																																								
1.1.3.2 Reduce size of the Executive Committee																																								
1.1.4 Increase Board meetings to 4 x annually																																								
1.2 Explore professional employer operational opportunities																																								
1.2.1 Determine if benefits should be contracted through 3rd party agency																																								
1.2.2 Proceed accordingly on staff transition																																								
1.3 Secure staff leadership																																								
1.3.1 Confirm whether interim executive director/transition manager appropriate																																								
1.3.2 Hire an executive director																																								
1.3.2.1 Finalize job description																																								
1.3.2.2 Post ad																																								
1.3.2.3 Network for candidates																																								
1.3.2.4 Hire director																																								
1.3.2.5 Evaluate position & person																																								
1.4 Revise by-laws to institutionalize change																																								
1.4.1 Extend By-Laws committee to include Transition Committee members																																								
1.4.2 Revise the President's length of service																																								
1.4.2.1 Extend the term of the President to 3 years																																								
1.4.2.2 Shorten President Elect & Immediate Past President to 1 year terms																																								
1.4.3 Identify sector based positions for Board nomination process																																								
1.4.4 Formalize reciprocal liaisons to strategic partners																																								
1.4.5 Determine if other issues should be addressed																																								
1.4.6 Board approves changes																																								
1.5 Annually evaluate progress towards becoming "the bridge"																																								
1.6 Determine and implement name change if necessary																																								
1.7 Assess whether or not Syracuse location continues to be appropriate																																								

	Oct 2008			Jan. 2009					July 2009					Jan. 2010					July 2010					Jan. 2011					July 2011					Dec 2011					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
2 THE WORK OF THE STAFF																																							
Staff is accountable for these activities but can deploy volunteers as necessary																																							
2.1 Evaluate all staff and job functions to ensure in alignment																																							
2.2 Raise the external profile of the organization																																							
2.2.1 Create unified design standards to assure maximized branding																																							
2.2.2 Provide a consistent face to represent USITT in the industry																																							
2.2.2.1 Ex.Dir. travels and participates at peer conferences & meetings																																							
2.2.2.2 Ensure USITT branded presence at other conferences via volunteers																																							
2.2.2.3 Ensure USITT branded presence in other publications via volunteers																																							
2.2.2.4 Sponsor other conferences and industry events																																							
2.2.2.5 Brand exhibitors' association with USITT at other conferences																																							
2.2.2.6 Ex.Dir. seeks out strategic alliances to ensure USITT "at the table"																																							
2.2.2.7 Ex.Dir. bridges to Syracuse Univ. for programmatic collaboration																																							
2.2.3 Retain marketing agency to promote 50th celebration																																							
2.2.3.1 Issue RFP for agency to assist w/50th & create new templates																																							
2.2.3.2 Interview and retain counsel																																							
2.2.3.3 Devise marketing plan																																							
2.2.3.4 Implement marketing plan																																							
2.2.3.5 Evaluate marketing plan																																							
2.2.3.6 Create new templates, marketing plan for USITT going forward																																							
2.2.3.7 Recommend strategic staffing hires to build momentum of 50th																																							
2.2.3.8 Hire and retain marketing staff to fulfill strategic purpose																																							
2.3 Fundraise for new initiatives																																							
2.3.1 Internally define project based fundraising opportunities (e.g. capacity building, 50th, regional programs)																																							
2.3.2 Determine if external counsel required, based upon Ex Dir hire																																							
2.3.3 Issue RFP and retain external counsel, if necessary																																							
2.3.4 Counsel analyzes all fundraising opportunities																																							
2.3.5 Craft fundraising plan integrating conference marketing opportunities																																							
2.3.6 Develop 'boiler plate' language for use in fundraising solicitations																																							
2.3.7 Determine if strategic staff hire needed to cultivate, solicit, report to donors																																							
2.3.8 Hire if necessary																																							
2.3.9 Implement fundraising plan																																							
2.3.10 Evaluate success, revise implementation as necessary																																							

	Oct 2008			Jan. 2009					July 2009					Jan. 2010					July 2010					Jan. 2011					July 2011		Dec 2011								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
2 THE WORK OF THE STAFF (con't.)																																							
2.4 Rebridge to Regional Sections																																							
2.4.1 Increase USITT staff support to the Regional Sections																																							
2.4.1.1 Staff travels to sections to promote USITT's resources and identify leadership from local entertainment professionals																																							
2.4.1.2 Facilitates section-to-section communication, sharring best practices																																							
2.4.2 Create efficiencies between Regionals and National																																							
2.4.2.1 Brand all Regional Section activities as USITT activities																																							
2.4.2.2 National hosts Regional websites;provides templates, protocols																																							
2.4.2.3 Explore conference registration software applications for Regionals																																							
2.4.2.4 Integrate Regional Sections into national database																																							
2.4.2.5 Facilitates group purchases/discounts																																							
2.4.2.6 Provide annual training on how to run a Regional Section Chapter																																							
2.4.3 Consider joint USITT/Regional Section membership																																							
2.5 Diversify and grow membership																																							
2.5.1 Launch campaign to attract new sectors (set benchmarks, evaluate progress)																																							
2.5.2 Use Regional Sections for local outreach; host programs/events to attract members in missing or soft categories																																							
2.5.3 Offer incentives for joining pegged to each group's interests																																							
2.5.4 Use key influencers to entice new membership categories through articles, attendance at outside conferences																																							
2.5.5 Identify partners/alliances to grow membership																																							
2.5.6 Consider alternative model for membership classes/categories																																							
2.6 Invest in and evaluate staff regularly																																							
2.6.1 Insist upon professional development																																							
2.6.2 Evaluate staff, positions, responsibilities - ensure fulfilling org. vision																																							

	Oct 2008			Jan. 2009					July 2009					Jan. 2010					July 2010					Jan. 2011					July 2011		Dec 2011								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
3 THE WORK OF THE VOLUNTEERS																																							
3.1 Retain and honor volunteers' centrality to the organization																																							
3.1.1 Enable veteran volunteers to train new volunteers stepping into key roles																																							
3.1.2 Honor volunteers at annual conference																																							
3.2 Strengthen strategic focus of volunteer effort																																							
3.2.1 Review volunteer corps to determine strengths, weaknesses, overlap																																							
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3.3.2 Conduct activities that further institutional direction																																							
3.3.3 Report out on progress towards goals																																							
3.3.4 Progress towards goals feeds into volunteer evaluation and honors process																																							
3.4 Review volunteer structure inc. committees, staff roles																																							

USITT Strategic Initiatives Action Plan

VISION: Be the Bridge between Academia and Entertainment

	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	TOTAL	
EXPENSES					
1.1.1.1	Provide training	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 12,500
1.1.1.2	Revamp board manual and institute annual board orientation	\$ 250			\$ 250
1.1.4	Increase Board meetings to increase governance role*	\$ (2,500)	\$ (5,000)	\$ (7,500)	\$ (15,000)
1.2	Explore professional employer operational model			Potential Savings	\$ -
1.3.2.2	Post ad	\$ 2,500			\$ 2,500
1.3.2.4	Hire director	\$ 25,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 105,000	\$ 230,000
2.2.1	Retain designer to create unified design standards and templates		\$ 25,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 40,000
2.2.2.1	Ex.Dir. travels regularly and participates at peer conferences & meetings	\$ 5,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 29,000
2.2.2.4	Sponsor other conferences and industry events			\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000
2.2.2.7	Ex.Dir. creates bridge to Syracuse University for programmatic collaboration		\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,000
2.2.3.3	Devise marketing plan	\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000
2.2.3.4	Implement marketing plan		\$ 40,000		\$ 40,000
2.2.3.8	Hire and retain marketing staff to fulfill strategic purpose			\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000
2.3.5	Craft comprehensive fundraising plan integrating conference marketing opportunities		\$ 15,000		\$ 15,000
2.3.6	Develop 'boiler plate' language for use in fundraising solicitations		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500
2.3.9	Implement fundraising plan		\$ 60,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 130,000
2.4.1	Increase USITT staff support to the Regional Sections		\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 60,000
2.4.1.1	Staff travels to sections to promote USITT's resources and identify		\$ 3,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 9,000
2.4.2.1	Brand all Regional Section activities as USITT activities		\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,000
2.4.2	Create efficiencies between Regionals and national			Savings for Regionals/Diminished Grant Expe	\$ -
2.5.1	Launch campaign to attract new sectors (set benchmarks, evaluate progress)			\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
2.5.2	Use Regional Sections for local outreach; host programs/events		\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 15,000
2.6.1	Insist upon professional development		\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000
3.1.2	Honor volunteers at annual conference		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
3.2.2	Hold staff-volunteer summit to define new roles & operating procedures		\$ 3,500		\$ 3,500
3.2.5	Deploy volunteers to "officially" represent USITT at other events, publications		\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000
	Achieve savings from current budget base by assuring programmatic expenditures fulfill strategic purpose		\$ (75,000)	\$ (75,000)	\$ (150,000)
OTHER					
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 52,750	\$ 232,000	\$ 296,500	\$ 581,250
INCOME					
2.3.4	Analyze all fundraising opportunities			\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
2.3.9	Implement fundraising plan		\$ 30,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 130,000
2.4.3	Consider joint USITT/Regional Section membership			Potential Income	\$ -
2.5.1	Launch campaign to attract new sectors (set benchmarks, evaluate progress)			\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
2.5.3	Offer incentives for joining pegged to each group's interests			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
2.5.4	Use key influencers to entice new membership categories			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
2.5.5	Identify partners/alliances to grow membership			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
TOTAL INCOME		\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ 137,500	\$ 167,500

	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	TOTAL
Annual net increase	\$ 52,750	\$ 202,000	\$ 159,000	\$ 413,750

Total net investment required over three year period \$ 413,750

	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007
Three-year accumulated surpluses FY05-FY07	\$ 56,932	\$ 420,607	\$ 153,779

If USITT invests less than 2 years of past surpluses into operations over the 3 year period, it can grow the expense budget from \$1.6 to \$1.9 By FY2012, fundraising should generate an additional \$200K in income (above FY2011 projections), making growth sustainable.

* represents increased meeting room/catering costs and savings incurred by decreasing Board member travel reimbursement

Methodology

Information and research for this report was gathered by:

- Electronic survey of USITT members and lapsed members which generated participation from 1,134 respondents;
- Systematic review of six comparable organizations; and
- Series of interviews, meetings, and focus groups enumerated below.

List of Interviewees

Individual Interviews

June 20, 2007

William J. Byrnes, 21st Century Task Force Director

June 27, 2007

Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, President

July 17, 2007

Carol B. Carrigan, Administrative & Finance Manager
Lawrence J. Hill, Treasurer
Carl H. Lefko, President Elect, VP for Programming
Barbara E.R. Lucas, Public Relations & Marketing Manager
Monica L. Merritt, Membership & Conference Registration Coordinator
Michelle L. Smith, Membership & Advertising Sales Manager
John S. Uthoff, Past President

July 18, 2007

Bobbi Owen, VP for Communications

October 12, 2007

Alexandra Bonds, Vice President, International Activities
David Roger, Editor, TD&T
Deborah Hazlett, Art Director, TD&T
Mark Shanda, Board member
Leon Brauner, Past VP Commissions
Rick Stephens, Archivist, past VP Commissions,
Bruce Brockman, Past President
Ann Archbold, Lighting Commission
Helen Willard, Stage Expo Sales Manager
Rich Dunham, Past Lighting Commissioner

December 10, 2007

Sherry Wagner-Henry, Director at Large

December 19, 2007

Patricia MacKay, Fellow and former publisher

February 22, 2008

Ed Sandler, The Broadway League

March 10, 2008

Andrea Snyder, President, Dance/USA

March 19, 2008

Miles Dudgeon, Wybron
Ed Fitzgerald, Clear-Com
Laura Hoepker, ETC
Monty McWilliams, Apollo Design Technology
Reid Neslage, H & H Specialties
Ron Probst, Wenger

May 15, 2008

Lori Rubinstein, ESTA

May 16, 2008

Barbara Cohen Stratyner, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Task Force Convening Participants

July 18, 2007

Lea Asbell-Swanger, Director at Large
William J. Byrnes, 21st Century Task Force Director
Carol B. Carrigan, Administrative & Finance Manager
Lawrence J. Hill, Treasurer
Carl H. Lefko, President Elect & VP for Programming
Bobbi Owen, VP for Communications
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, President
John S. Uthoff, Past President
Kim E. Williamson, VP for Commissions

October 12, 2007

Lea Asbell-Swanger, Director at Large
William J. Byrnes, 21st Century Task Force Director
Carol B. Carrigan, Administrative & Finance Manager
Travis DeCastro, Treasurer
Lawrence J. Hill, Treasurer
Carl H. Lefko, President Elect & VP for Programming
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, President
Tom Young, Finance Committee

January 11, 2008

Lea Asbell-Swanger, Director at Large
William J. Byrnes, 21st Century Task Force Director
Carol B. Carrigan, Administrative & Finance Manager
Travis DeCastro, Treasurer
Lawrence J. Hill, Treasurer
Carl H. Lefko, President Elect & VP for Programming
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, President
Tom Young, Finance Committee

March 18, 2008

Joe Aldridge, VP for Conferences
Lea Asbell-Swanger, Director at Large
Alexandra Bonds, VP for International Activities
William J. Byrnes, 21st Century Task Force Director
Carol B. Carrigan, Administrative & Finance Manager
Daniel Denhart, VP for Special Operations
Patricia Dennis, Secretary
Lawrence J. Hill, Treasurer
Carl H. Lefko, President Elect & VP for Programming
Holly Monsos, VP for Members, Sections & Chapters
Bobbi Owen, VP for Communications
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, President
John S. Uthoff, Past President
Kim E. Williamson, VP for Commissions

Board of Directors Convening Participants

October 12, 2007

Joe Aldridge
Ann Archbold
Lea Asbell-Swanger
Ashley Austin
Bill Browning
William J. Byrnes
Carol B. Carrigan
Nadine Charlsen

Dan Culhane
Travis DeCastro
Dan Denhart
Rich Dunham
Deborah Hazlett
Lawrence J. Hill
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell
Tim Kelly

David Krajec
Carl H. Lefko
Barbara E. R. Lucas
Michael Mehler
Holly Monsos
Bobbi Owen
Brian Reed

David Rodger
Donna Ruzika
Mark Shanda
John S. Uthoff
Helen Willard
Craig Wolf
Stephanie Young

March 18, 2008

Joe Aldridge
Ann Archbold
Lea Asbell-Swanger
Alexandra Bonds
William J. Byrnes
Carol B. Carrigan
Travis DeCastro
Dan Denhart
Patricia Dennis
Rich Dunham
Deborah Hazlett
Mary Heilman
Lawrence J. Hill
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell
Tim Kelly

Carl H. Lefko
Barbara E. R. Lucas
Andi Lyons
Michael Mehler
Holly Monsos
Bobbi Owen
Brian Reed
David Rodger
Donna Ruzika
Carolyn Satter
Michelle Smith
John S. Uthoff
Sherry Wagner-Henry
Helen Willard
Kim E. Williamson

USITT Focus Groups and Group Discussions

October 11, 2007

Officers

Joe Aldridge, VP for Conferences
Daniel Denhart, VP for Special Operations
Holly Monsos, VP for Membership, Sections, Chapters
Travis DeCastro, Treasurer

March 18, 2008

Staff

Ashley Austin, Administrative Assistant
Tracy L. Davis, Bookkeeper
Barbara E.R. Lucas, Public Relations & Marketing Manager
Monica L. Merritt, Membership & Conference Registration Coordinator
Michelle L. Smith, Membership & Advertising Sales Manager

March 19, 2008

Commissioners

Kim E. Williamson, VP for
Commissions

Joel Ebarb
Buddy Combs
Jonathan Darling
Dave Glowacki
Roy Harline
Mary Heilman
Raymond Kent
William Kenyon
Bill Liotta
Karen Maness

Mary Montalvo
Sarah Myers
Nathanael Otto
Kerri Packard
Anthony Phelps
John Prokos
Carolyn Satter
Fritz Schwentker
Stirling Shelton
Kristina Tollefson
Dave Tosti-Lane

March 19, 2008
Regional Sections

Holly Monsos, VP for Membership,
Sections, Chapters

Christina Barrigan
Leon Brauner
Jimmie Byrd
Pat Dennis
Dennis Dorn
Kacey Fisher
Chip Haas
Chuck Hatcher
Martha Marking
Mary Montalvo
Jean Montgomery
Bill Price

P. Gibson Ralph
Brian Reed
Donna Ruzika
Michelle L. Smith (staff)
Alan Stalmah
Rick Stephens
Jim Streeter
Crystal Tiala
Bill Wallace
Patrick Wallace
David Wheeler
Randy Whitcomb

Industry Focus Groups

New York City
December 3, 2007

Chris Buckley, Owners rep/theater consultant
Linda Burson, Director and professor
Martha Coigney, early member and retired president, International Theater Institute
Beverly Emmons, Lighting Designer
David Diamond, former GM USITT, career coaching for artists
Gary Fails, President, City Theatrical
David Jensen, Production Director, New Victory Theatre
John McKernon, Lighting Designer
David Rosenberg, President, I. Weiss
Steve Rust, Director of Technical Services, Sachs Morgan Studio, Theatre Design
Specialists
Maggie Raywood, New York University faculty and Costume Shop Director
Jerad Schomer, Draftsman, I. Weiss

Minneapolis

December 10, 2007

Ben Chadwick, Actor & Technical Volunteer Coordinator, Theatre in the Round

Martin Gwinup, Professor of sound/video production, University of Minnesota

Brooke Horejsi, Asst. Company Manager, Vee Corporation

Pearl Rea, Production Manager, Walker Arts Center

Steve Rohde, Vee Corporation

Niles Sayre, Owner/President, Stage Technology Inc.

Sherry Wagner-Henry, Managing Director, University Theatre, University of Minnesota

Bill Wallace, Chair, Theatre and Communication Studies, Hamline University

Prior Reports

- ❖ Report to USITT 21st Century Task Force on Organizational Assessment and Research Results, January 4, 2008
- ❖ Report to USITT Board of Directors Summarizing the January 11 Task Force Meeting, February 4, 2008

Resource Guide

Executive Director Job Description Sample

USITT

As discussed by the 21st Century Task Force in January, an Executive Director will have the following responsibilities:

- Be a continuity person;
- Work with the board;
- Be the public/external face of the organization;
- Be mindful of the allocation of his/her time, ex. being involved with the conference;
- Hire contractors and decide on conference sites—would take the load off one VP;
- Play a marketing/PR role;
- Be responsible for the execution of decisions of the board;
- Assume management for the organization;
- Be responsible for development efforts.

As the Transition Committee develops a new job description, it will want to review job profiles already in place.

BoardSource

Chief Executive Job Descriptions are also available from BoardSource:

<http://www.boardsource.org/Bookstore.asp?Type=epolicy&gclid=CI-R9tbRt5MCFQWVFQod5117CQ>

The “Bridge” Model	
Description	Serving students, faculty and administrators and creating a bridge from the academic environment to the inclusive realm of practitioners (non-profit, for-profit, arts & entertainment).
Mission	<p>Was: To actively promote the advancement of the knowledge and skills of its members.</p> <p>Recently became: To actively promote the advancement of the knowledge and skills of those involved in the design, management, and technical areas of the performing arts and entertainment industry.</p> <p>Consider a broader focus on the industry: To advance the field by creating a bridge that fosters dialogue between the academic setting and the performing arts and entertainment industries, with life-long learning as a key component. To provide a forum where practitioners, educators and students can discuss advances in the design, management, and technical areas of the performing arts and entertainment industry. Consideration should be given to how to bridge to those segments of the industry where the relationships aren’t as strong as others.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Builds on foundation that exists in terms of program and structure. The new focus creates intentionality around a structure that evolved organically.</p> <p>New revenues through new membership, vendor, ad sales.</p> <p>Built in mentorship opportunities.</p> <p>New networking and information sharing from a sector of the industry that works on a bigger scale.</p> <p>Potential for increased visibility.</p> <p>Get “star” quality names from entertainment sector to join forces and advocate for the new partnership/outreach, and bring others with them.</p> <p>Activate grassroots network afforded by Regional Sections to get local USITTers to connect to local entertainment/theme park etc workers and join forces.</p>
Name	No change now, but keep it on table and possibly test market it. Consider if “theatre” is still appropriate to include in title; or simplify name to the acronym itself.

<p>Challenges</p>	<p>To more successfully engage the practitioner community, USITT will have to change an organizational culture currently rooted in academia and transform it into one that is more entrepreneurial.</p> <p>Will necessitate a changed timeline, flow and content of board meetings and conference schedule to accommodate the practitioner/vendor community.</p> <p>New leadership opportunities and programs of interest will have to be created for practitioners.</p> <p>What aggressive outreach mechanisms are in place to fulfill mission change to include entertainment industry? And what benefits of membership and services can USITT offer to attract this new major sector?</p> <p>What would motivate an entertainment professional to join this organization? What can they learn from nonprofit or educational theatre technicians working on extremely limited budgets? USITT currently has limited access to this sector of the industry. How will it reach out and bring them into their big tent?</p> <p>Conference faces increasing competition.</p> <p>Membership retention issues continue because students are lost after graduation and practitioners aren't served as deeply as they'd like nor is the organization structured to involve them (given time of year of meetings, voluminous board materials, lack of enough professional staff to support all functions).</p> <p>What programming could USITT provide to interest these disparate sectors?</p> <p>Staffing would need to be restructured to serve this new sector.</p> <p>Can the Board let go of leadership and share the reins with staff that it trusts and empowers?</p>
<p>Strategic Alliances</p>	<p>Become part of National Performing Arts Conference consortium and others as warranted.</p> <p>Consider: International Association of Assembly Managers; International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions; Themed Entertainment Association; Freelancers Union.</p>

<p>National/Affiliate Structure</p>	<p>Re-bridge to Regional Sections and increase the connection to them. Why fund affiliates but not strategically use them for programming, marketing, or membership? Consider providing dedicated staff support to a regional network. Formalize the relationship and better integrate them into USITT to ensure maximum awareness, participation, membership rolls, etc.</p> <p>Work to ensure practitioners can participate in this structure by considering when meetings are held, where, how they are organized. An opportunity now exists in NYC without the Clambake, for example.</p> <p>Activate this network to recruit participation and get entertainment professionals involved from the ground up.</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Define field sectors that should be represented on Board (college, university, public, private, educators, students, entrepreneurs, entertainment professionals, and nonprofit performing arts designers and technicians). Ensure that Board reflects these and consider assigned seats.</p> <p>More strategic representation on a smaller board, with a shift of role to governing over operations and the addition of an external advisory board and/or honorific board, multiple boards, categories of board membership.</p> <p>It was noted that a 12-15 person board is nimble and gets a lot done, for example. A robust committee structure allows for ideas to move up the ladder and having non-board members involved on committees engages others and allows for mentoring towards board service.</p> <p>Board composition would include vendors, entertainment professionals, educators, students, young professionals, Regional Sections, representation by discipline, and the Executive Director. Determine a role for exhibitors to further engage them. Can also consider secondary boards or committees, like a liaison with related organizations, national or international advisory board, separate fundraising committees for entertainment, performing arts, vendors, and others to be determined.</p> <p>Create advisory leadership council of practitioners to assist with fundraising efforts.</p> <p>Board composition changes if development is a function of board service; it also changes the nomination process. Consider separating governance and fundraising.</p> <p>Consider extending term of presidency to give enough time to accomplish goals. Consider a move to 3-year term or allow President to stand for re-election for a second term.</p>

Staffing	<p>Empower staff to conduct the day-to-day business, led by a senior level Executive Director. Hire a staff leader who can consistently represent the organization externally at industry conferences, advocate, write articles, etc. This position becomes critical when board leadership changes so frequently. Volunteers can still be very engaged.</p> <p>The job description of the Executive Director includes being a continuity person in general and with the Board, and being the public/external face of the organization.</p> <p>Re-evaluate staff division of labor.</p> <p>Add contractors to fulfill increased fundraising, marketing and PR functions outside of the Executive Director's role.</p> <p>Consider retaining a Regional Section Program Manager to maximize opportunity afforded by this affiliation structure.</p> <p>As an organization that values professional development for its field, insist upon professional development for its own staff.</p> <p>Outreach into Entertainment Sector will require more intensive staffing w/knowledge of industry.</p> <p>More intensive membership services may be required to sustain the interest and investment of the entertainment industry. May need to create new staff position to service this sector (e.g. reference librarian/information manager who disseminates information one on one and via advisory services).</p>
Membership (Audience Served)	<p>Seek a better balance of members from all sectors of the industry: performing arts, entertainment, film, industrials, media, CGI, theme parks, educators, and students.</p> <p>Include improving diversity in outreach goals.</p> <p>Membership services/benefits will have to dramatically increase to serve practitioners.</p>
Location	<p>Stay in Syracuse at a minimum until 2012 when its current lease expires.</p> <p>While there is an increased external emphasis, presence in centers of the industry (e.g. NYC) can be increased through a larger travel budget for the staff leader.</p> <p>Syracuse University and the development of its cultural corridor provide an essential connection to the academic community that could be more vigorously fostered.</p>

<p>Program Overview</p>	<p>Recognize that the primary reason entertainment sector is involved is recruitment. Increase networking, job fair, internships, mentorships that meet the needs of emerging professionals (students) and commercial vendors.</p> <p>While they feel a sense of giving back to a community that nurtured them, that won't sustain membership and investment in USITT over the long term.</p> <p>Requires creating a network not currently in place.</p> <p>Establish regular evaluation mechanisms to determine value of its programs to members. The Conference should also have an annual evaluation mechanism that assesses program sessions' success with participants and speakers and also ensures ongoing dialogue with vendors.</p>
<p>Conference</p>	<p>Produce outstanding conferences that mix practitioners with academics.</p> <p>Be more open to non-members as panelists and treat them as professionals.</p> <p>Market conference to theatre management programs within university settings.</p> <p>Better accommodate practitioners by scheduling programs to suit their timing.</p> <p>Create Conference Tracks so that there are a series of sessions to accommodate all participants (students, faculty, set designers, costumers, etc.) to facilitate marketing. Don't allow any session to degenerate into whining.</p> <p>Location matters-pick cities that are major airport hubs and include centers for the industry in the US, including NYC</p> <p>Include tracks that will interest entertainment sector.</p> <p>Consider joint programs with partners who can facilitate connections into new segment of the industry.</p>
<p>Publications</p>	<p>Include more information for the practitioner community.</p> <p>Create a listserv that builds on successes of other models such as the Production Managers Forum listserv which is an active national network.</p> <p>Explore digital licensing agreements with nonprofit and commercial e-publishing outlets and public aggregators to place TD&T subscriptions in university libraries and make more accessible online.</p> <p>Also explore national print distribution of TD&T beyond membership.</p> <p>Include more guest interviews, articles geared towards and regarding the</p>

	entertainment sector. Publish glossy monographs of industry leaders, etc. Use this as a way to build groundswell of support. Change scope of what do to make more accessible to practitioners.
Website	<p>Update design to reflect that USITT is part of the design industry.</p> <p>Streamline look and content and trim copy.</p> <p>Embrace new technologies (blogs, vlogs, streaming media exchange/bulletin board) to share images of design and technology.</p> <p>Make more user friendly for students conducting research.</p> <p>Include needs of practitioners.</p>
Research	Research needs may diminish in light of increased member services
Professional Development	<p>Create new Mentorship programs for faculty members with established theatres to develop practical knowledge of new developments in the field.</p> <p>Recognize that practitioners have extremely limited time for professional development. Provide a resource that matches the available time of a practitioner.</p> <p>Foster a sense of responsibility along full span of membership so there is 'give back' to the community.</p>
Networking	<p>Connect better through the Regional Sections.</p> <p>Create more networking opportunities at the Conference to foster interaction and address skill development to aid in employment seeking and work-related presentation.</p>
Job Placement	<p>Sponsor Internships, Mentorships for students through a structured program that provides on-the-job training, builds connections to practitioner community, and fosters employment opportunities for membership.</p> <p>Improve recruitment opportunities for vendors as this is one of primary reasons they attend Stage Expo.</p> <p>Dramatically increased member service regarding human resource functions (e.g. Job Fairs, interview recruitment at universities, more aggressive jobs database, e-blast classified, etc). The purpose is not to teach students how to interview but to result in job placement for practitioners and vendors.</p>

Advocacy	<p>Raise profile of theatre designers, production staff, and technicians (and USITT) - present panels at other conferences (TCG, APAP, NPAC, etc.), publish in other journals, etc.</p> <p>Advocate on behalf of the design and technical entertainment community at large (and especially to management); these staffers often represent the biggest expenditure in budget after salaries but are lowest in rank when it comes to recognition and understanding from management of their work.</p> <p>Recognize that member services need to increase to reflect government advocacy needs of a growing freelance community (e.g. health insurance, taxation, etc.).</p> <p>Sponsor events and panels at large industry showcases to get name out and demonstrate USITT as a viable partner and standard bearer.</p>
International	<p>Book USITT USA exhibitions at other venues 2-3 years prior to initial installation to maximize PQ investment.</p> <p>Create a traveling teaching tool to accompany USITT USA exhibit that becomes incorporated into university (who books exhibit) curricula.</p> <p>Also work to identify speaking engagements for international visitors to annual conference at regional college campuses.</p> <p>Provide increased networking opportunities for international peer visitors to US.</p> <p>Create forum for international professionals' idea exchange</p>
Exhibits	<p>Book exhibitions at other venues 2-3 years prior to initial installation to maximize PQ investment.</p> <p>With the engagement of entertainment, industrials, etc. and the increase in other functions, this role may diminish in importance.</p>
Awards (Recognize Excellence)	<p>Honor achievements in the field: engage non-member individuals as panelists, speakers, mentors – with no expectation they will join. Be sure there are enough awards made outside of membership to diminish the perception of the value of this program as for insiders only.</p> <p>Dramatically increase the number of awards to entertainment sector to help build groundswell of support.</p> <p>Proactively publicize USITT's awards in related media.</p>
Certification & Standards	<p>Investigate the field and determine if able to become the body for certification and standards over the long term.</p> <p>Better promote partnership w/ESTA so that members understand what USITT is doing in this area.</p>

Financial Implications	<p>2 full-time equivalent staff positions added in near term.</p> <p>Fund new mentorship and internship programs, exhibit/presentation.</p> <p>Increased investment in marketing & PR, membership recruitment, sponsored panels and travel costs.</p> <p>Necessitates a comprehensive fundraising plan; aggressive pursuit of ad sales and vendors; & reduction in expenditures (e.g. more reduction in printing, postage).</p> <p>New board structure results in members who assume greater percentage of their travel expenses and contribute annually.</p> <p>Increased investment in marketing & PR (consider commission of new branding/marketing strategy), membership recruitment, sponsored panels and travel costs to further raise visibility.</p>
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Resource Guide

The following organizations offer multiple resources for board and staff development, executive search tools and ongoing technical assistance.

Nonprofit Boards

BoardSource: Building Effective Nonprofit Boards

www.boardsource.org

Select Publications: *Hiring the Chief Executive, Transforming Board Structure, How to Help Your Board Govern More and Manage Less*

Governance Matters

www.governancematters.org

The Art of Governance edited by Nancy Roche & Jaan Whitehead . Published by Theatre Communications Group, New York (2005).

Staff, Board, Organizational Development and Technical Assistance

Support Center for Nonprofit Management

www.supportcenteronline.org

Council of Community Services of New York State

www.ccsnys.org

Human Resources

National Association of Professional Employers Organizations

www.napeo.org