

LEVERAGING THE BRANDS OF CAMPUS MUSEUMS:
OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

As university museums evolve to encompass broader, more diverse audiences and adopt innovative new approaches to visitor engagement, it has become necessary to establish a compelling brand identity for communications, development and programming initiatives to maintain this sector-wide momentum. This study identifies two patterns in the university museum sector -- new building projects and partnerships and affiliations -- through which it explores strategies for leveraging an institutional brand. A qualitative research model examines two case studies within each opportunity using a framework of three common themes: a focus on the future, an expanding academic reach, and recognition of brand value in meeting organizational goals. Interviews with communications, development and education staff illustrate the ways in which a compelling brand identity shapes a successful new building launch or partnership formation. Overall, the study emphasizes the role branding plays in the reimagining of a this unique sector of American museums.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The mission of the campus museum is evolving, as are the ways in which this new identity is being expressed. These institutions are transitioning from closed-door collections for departmental study into dynamic “town squares” that serve the broader university community and the public at large.¹ This reimagining is augmented by new modes of learning, increasingly diverse audiences and technologically innovative ways in which museums connect with and engage their visitors. In addition, drastic budget cuts across academia have forced campus museums to seek outside financial support, repositioning them in a highly competitive environment.² Thus, these institutions must make a compelling case for their existence to a wider range of stakeholders. The 2012 University of Chicago report, *Campus Art Museums in the 21st Century* underscores, “In addition to challenges common to all museums—programming for increasingly busy and distracted audiences, becoming more welcoming to a broader range of visitors, differentiating the experiences they offer from other cultural and artistic options in the marketplace, and making a strong case for financial support—academically affiliated art museums need to continually demonstrate their academic value to their host college or university.”³ These challenges call for a synchronized

¹ Vanessa Mack, “The Dual Role of University Museums: Its Influence on Management,” in *Managing University Museums*, ed. Melanie Kelly (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001): 30-31.

² Terry Zeller, “The Role of the Campus Art Museum,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 2, no. 28 (1985): 88.

³ Tom Shapiro, Peter Linett, Betty Farrell, and Will Anderson, eds. *Campus Art Museums in the*

and sophisticated approach to expressing the evolving institutional identity of the campus museum -- an organization-wide branding effort.

The importance of a campus museum branding effort may be examined through two particular phenomena. Both the construction of new or expanded museums and the establishment of permanent partnerships between cultural institutions exist in the wider museum world, but they have unique implications for the institutional identity of campus museums. How these opportunities are leveraged in the branding effort across marketing, public relations and development efforts reveal the museum's response to the numerous challenges and developments outlined above.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study is to identify opportunities and strategies for developing a strong university museum brand, while taking into account the sector's unique systems and emerging challenges. Although branding is a commonly used strategy to communicate institutional identity in a consistent and compelling way, literature is lacking on its application among campus museums. By examining the branding efforts of museums engaged in new building projects or new partnerships, this study indicates how a brand may be leveraged in times of major change. As indicated in the literature review section, there is a lack of discussion surrounding the impact of a new building on university museum operations, audience, funding, status and overall success, although the 2012 report *Set In Stone* underscored the prevalence and risk of such ventures across the cultural sector. Given the tremendous influx of new buildings on campuses across the country, and the great

potential and risks of such a major project, this phenomenon as manifested in university museums is deserving of direct attention. There is also minimal literature on long-term partnerships and affiliations in the museum world, including its academic sector. However, campus museums are forging strategic alliances with other cultural institutions, with implications beyond those of the temporary partnerships discussed in most literature.

In this paper, each branding effort is examined across four areas: its relevance to the museum's mission and values; its connection to programming and exhibitions; its navigation of the unique challenges of campus museums; and the ways in which the opportunity is communicated to various stakeholders and constituencies. This study also has implications for how the brand of a campus museum may serve as a tool for achieving its mission.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

- 1 What role can branding play in establishing institutional identity for campus museums?
 - a. What are the emerging opportunities and challenges unique to campus museums in the realm of institutional identity?
 - b. How can the museum brand be leveraged in times of major institutional change – specifically in education, communications and development efforts?

Significance of the Study

At this time of great potential and great change for university museums, a strong sense of institutional identity stands as a guiding, unifying and compelling force. This study seeks to contribute an examination of branding opportunities and strategies for campus

museums, through the lens of two emerging trends in the sector: new building projects and partnerships/affiliations. Thus, it will serve both as an investigation into the value and process of branding while also considering the impact of major institutional change on the identities of campus museums.

Definitions

This study uses the terms “campus museum” and “university museum” interchangeably, to encompass all academic or university-affiliated museums. The author has adopted the term “civic museum” to identify non-academic, “municipal” museums (no university affiliation), which includes both public and private institutions.

A “brand” is defined as an expression of a product or company’s identity, which represents an expected level of value, quality and experience to its audience.⁴ Internally, it is “an organizing principle”⁵ that guides how an institution represents and expresses its identity to various constituencies. The author uses the term “institutional identity” in place of “brand” when indicating a more abstract or loosely-defined expression of what the museum is, and what it represents. Institutional identity is not as deliberately and strategically designed or leveraged as a brand would be.

Limitations

This study’s investigation into the way university museums leverage their brands is limited to the realms of communications, programming and development. Other areas of

⁴ SeJeong Kim, "Understanding Museum Branding and Its Consequences on Museum Finance," (thesis, The University of Akron, 2008): 1.

⁵ Joanne Scheff Bernstein, *Arts Marketing Insights* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 193.

museum administration, such as curatorial, were not explored. This limits the author's ability to generate a complete analysis of the components of a museum's identity.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Part I: The Evolution of the University Museum

The world's first university museum, The Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University, was founded upon Elias Ashmole's donation of a collection of natural specimens and antique objects to the university in 1677. In the two centuries that followed, university museums were established around similar bequests, from collections of impressionist art to libraries of rare books. As these objects were intended for serious scholarship only, the spaces that held them were strictly private.

Rorschach writes that over time, universities began regarding campus collections as not only central to instruction and research but as “essential components of a university of the highest intellectual caliber.”⁶ Museums were integrally tied to an academic institution's identity and value. “University museums, having largely grown around their collections, (had) taken collections as the cornerstone of their existence, rather than their audiences.”⁷ In fact, the concept of “audience” was foreign to university museums; their treasures remained closed to all except select researchers.

By the mid-20th century, however, several forces initiated a shift towards a more public orientation.⁸ Certainly, non-academic museums (also referred to as “civic” or

⁶ Kimberly Rorschach, “Why Do Universities Have Museums?” The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, http://www.nasher.duke.edu/about_from-director.php

⁷ Sue-Anne Wallace, “Challenges for University Museums: Museums, Collections and Their Community.” *ICOM Study Series 2*, no. 11 (2003): 29.

⁸ Lyndel King, “University Museums in the 21st Century,” in *Managing University Museums*, ed. Melanie Kelly (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001):

“municipal” museums), were also moving beyond their “narrow programmatic focus... on collections and on scholarly and professional activities” to welcome a broader audience.⁹ For university museums in particular, four early factors augmented this refocusing: the move from object- to theory-based research and new modes of learning; the loss of full institutional support; the professionalization of university museum staff; and outside funders’ interest in community relevance and impact.

A Shifting Purpose

The university museum of the last century was deeply intertwined with its parent institution. Willumson writes, “With an academic department heavily invested in the museum, the director could count on departmental support at university meetings that addressed budget and other campus-wide issues.”¹⁰ However, as art and other disciplines began shifting away from object-based inquiry and towards a more theoretical approach, the university increasingly regarded the former as “the antiquated scholarship of an earlier era.”¹¹ These collections were losing their relevance to students and faculty, and thus were becoming lesser priorities in university-wide budgets. It was only a matter of time before university museums could no longer count on full financial support from their parent institutions.

University museums expert Peter Tirrell argues that consistent budget cuts severely

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⁹ Neil Kotler and Philip Kotler, "Can Museums be All Things to All People?: Mission, Goals and Marketing's Role," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 18, no. 3 (2010): 271.

¹⁰ Glenn Willumson, "The Shifting Audience of the University Museum," *Museum International* 2, no. 52 (2000): 15.

¹¹ Ibid, 16.

weakened the institutions: “University officials zealously cut museum programs and positions and failed to provide proper housing or support for collections.” Once-revered objects were now fading into the background. “As university museums deteriorated, their institutional value and identity were often compromised,” and the cycle repeated itself.¹²

According to Willumson, “The links between department and museum have been strained by two factors: the increasing professionalization of university museum staff and the shift in academic research models.”¹³ Certainly the latter brought into question the relevance of the museum setting for teaching and research. However, Willumson’s argument that the loss of full institutional support occurred as museum administration gained ground and diminished the influence of academics ignores the very challenges these institutions were facing in light of shifting research approaches. Tirrell and others maintain that most university museum directors were “scientists unprepared to deal with the corporate challenges of redefining and reinventing the whole museum,” as the object focus faded.¹⁴ The infusion of an administrative perspective into the heavily academic world of university museums, then, might be seen to have strengthened rather than weakened the institution’s capacity.

Around the same time that university museums began losing their full institutional support, two newly established agencies – the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) (1965) – were providing federal funding

¹² Peter B. Tirrell, “A Synopsis and Perspective of the Concerns and Challenges for the International Community of University Museums,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 2, no. 43 (2000): 159.

¹³ Willumson, “Shifting Audience,” 19.

¹⁴ Peter B. Tirrell, “The University Museum as a Social Enterprise,” *Museologia* 14, no. 2 (2002): 122.

for cultural efforts on the basis of community impact. Foundations and major donors echoed this focus, rewarding organizations that demonstrated tangible public value.

It was clear that seeking outside support was now necessary for university museums in order to offset the parent institution's drastic budget cuts. However, the traditionally inward focus of these institutions did not match funder interests. Rorschach notes that university museums "were ever more mindful of the fact that they needed to engage this outside audience on the level of programming as well as support, and their attention to students and faculty could no longer be undivided." (Rorschach) Zeller outlines the complexities of these challenges:

"... It is necessary for campus museums to broaden their base of financial support...(this) means providing more service to non-campus audiences. This very extension may further jeopardize university funding – first, by suggesting that the museum is not servicing the instructional and research needs of the students and faculty; second, by demonstrating that the museum can generate its own funds and therefore that scarce university dollars may be put to use elsewhere."¹⁵

University museums were at a turning point. They could either fade quietly into the background, eventually to be dismantled or forgotten, or open their doors to eager new constituencies. In his working paper "An Agenda for American Museums in the 21st Century," Harold Skramstad advises: "It is essential that ...individual museums are able to clearly define for themselves, and for those they purport to serve, their reason for being. To say that the museum mission is to collect, preserve, and interpret a collection no longer will suffice since those activities are no longer seen by many as an intrinsic social good."¹⁶

¹⁵ Zeller, "The Role of the Campus Art Museum," 92.

¹⁶ Harold Skramstad, "An Agenda for American Museums in the 21st Century," *University Of Michigan - Working Papers in Museum Studies* (2010): 3.

Supported by major funders like the NEA and NEH, civic museums were aiming for broader community engagement, not simply public access. King recalls a “significant shift” in museums’ mission statement language in the 1980s, noting, “While older statements said that the museum’s mission is to collect and preserve, the more recent statements talk about education first, or the audience’s experience... Research was almost never mentioned as part of the core mission... while it was a key part of the older ones.”¹⁷ Steven Weil, former Deputy Director of the Hirshhorn Museum, described this sector-wide change as “from being about something to being for someone.”¹⁸

Dual Focus

Partly as a result of changing learning models and outside funder expectations, university museums began to shift to a dual focus – one that served the academic needs of the students and faculty while also providing access and engagement for the public. Some authors view this as a natural role. “University museums are ideally situated to connect with their communities,” Tirrell writes. “The campus is the center of life in the community... a hub of activities that serve not only students and staff, but also the larger population of a town and region. Thus, the campus serves as both an environment for learning and a public space for the exchange of cultures.”¹⁹

For the parent institution, an on-campus museum is becoming a means to build a strong relationship with the local community. Vanessa Mack of the Council of Australian

¹⁷ King, “University Museums in the 21st Century,” 22.

¹⁸ Steven E. Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2002): 28.

¹⁹ Peter B. Tirrell, “Emerging Strengths and Resources of University Museums for Meeting Global Challenges.” *ICOM Study Series* 3, no. 11 (2003): 9.

University Museums and Collections (CAUMAC) writes extensively on this benefit:

The museum must create for itself an enhanced or new role as a public showcase of the university. This serves to attract new students, introduce the local communities to the university, and present the university as a place of culture.²⁰

Mack also suggests that the parent institution's (remaining) support is something that must be justified now that the university museum has adapted a public orientation: "The museum director increasingly needs to justify the financial contribution of the university by using the educational and cultural attractions of the museum to lure potential students, and by favorably increasing the public focus on the university. ... which increases its prestige in the community and which adds to the quality of life for all who are associated with the university."²¹ Certainly, from the standpoint of a parent institution, the appeal of a university museum has always been rooted in institutional prestige; however, it has flipped from a private to public valuation. The study *Campus Art Museums in the 21st Century* posits, "As more universities become concerned about the quality of their relationships with the cities and towns in which they sit, are universities looking to (campus museums) to serve as gateways for area residents to 'enter' the university and make enjoyable use of its cultural and intellectual resources?"²²

Of course, this "dual focus" has its critics. Willumson argues, "The need to please these new constituencies can exacerbate the challenges that university museums face... Too often, the necessity to build community audiences distracts attention from the museum's

²⁰ Mack, "Dual Role," 29.

²¹ Ibid, 33.

²² Shapiro et al, "Campus Art Museums," 12.

traditional university audience.”²³ “University museums are at risk of compromising their traditional mission of investigations, inquiry and challenge. Today’s museums now find themselves forced to reconcile the competing functions of marketing and mission,” warns Schwarzer.²⁴ Sue-Anne Wallace adds, “In times of economic belt tightening, when funds for teaching and research are at risk, such audiences may seem marginal to the university’s core business.”²⁵

However, unless parent institutions indicate willingness or ability to fully support university museums once again, these arguments fall flat. If university museums downsize to meet the reduced support of the parent institutions – now at just an average of 41% of total budget²⁶ – they will likely revert to a stoic, object-centered display space irrelevant to contemporary teaching and learning models. Yet, Willumson maintains, “Not by looking to outside audiences but only by reviving its commitment to its academic audiences can the university museum thrive in the twenty-first century.”²⁷

However, “Those tidy lists of campus and off campus audiences... mask enormous variation. Faculty hail from an array of disciplines, sub-specializations, and methodological perspectives. Students bring a mix of academic, cultural and social needs to the campus art museum.”²⁸ Even without the public audience, university museums serve a diverse

²³ Willumson, " Shifting Audience," 16.

²⁴ Marjorie Schwarzer, “Schizophrenic agora: mission, market, and the multi-tasking museum,” *Museum News* 6, no. 78 (1999): 41.

²⁵ S. Wallace, "Challenges," 29.

²⁶ King, "University Museums in the 21st Century," 24.

²⁷ Willumson, " Shifting Audience," 18.

²⁸ Shapiro et al, "Campus Art Museums," 9.

community.

Still, the consensus in the literature is that it is nearly impossible to create a twenty-first century university museum without significant and consistent funding – which can only be achieved with supplemental funding from outside sources. As discussed earlier, much of this funding is secured by demonstrating a public benefit. Considering the factors of shifting approaches to learning, increasing professionalization of museum staff, evolving missions, and broadening institutional value, it becomes clear that the university museum holds a great deal of potential.

Rorschach, the former director at Duke University's Nasher Museum of Art, envisions an era full of exciting possibilities:

...More intellectually risk-taking exhibitions; real engagement of students in creative and meaningful ways that have the potential to nurture life-long lovers and supporters of the arts; meaningful involvement of faculty across disciplines, that can lead to a broader understanding and appreciation of the key importance of art and visual culture in civilizations and cultures throughout human history; and new ways of thinking about collections... experimentation with new media in partnership with related university disciplines and resources, and the building of important collections in new areas not yet recognized by the major museums.²⁹

Rorschach's vision – which balances the needs and interests of a range of constituencies, maintains a focus on the educational value of university museums, and echoes the literature supporting dual focus. The 2012 report *Campus Art Museums in the 21st Century* reinforces, "This multi-layered, multi-stakeholder environment is part of what makes campus-based museums unique among cultural institutions."³⁰ That campus museums

²⁹ Rorschach, "Why Do Universities Have Museums?"

³⁰ Shapiro et al, "Campus Art Museums," 12.

represent a spectrum of meaning and purpose for audiences across the university community and the public at large is important in considering how these institutions approach education and engagement.

Professionalization of University Museums

21st century university museums have significantly more sophisticated systems than their predecessors. The human resources of a university museum, for instance, show increasing resemblance to a civic museum. “With the evolution of an outwardly focused public service museum,” Tirrell writes, museum directors and curators “share their power and budgets with a range of other specialized staff such as educators, exhibition planners, and marketing and development experts.”³¹ Despite this capacity, these institutions remain uniquely challenged by the larger university’s governance and management structures.

Bonnie Kelm, former director of art museums on the campuses of the University of California, Santa Barbara and the College of William and Mary explains,

These are inherent problems for university museums, in that they relate to their relationship with their parent organization, the university, and its governance structure and policies... While it must have a certain level of autonomy, where the director is responsible for the day to day operations and all professional policy decisions, frequently the lines of authority are not that clear or simple in actual practice.³²

Hugh Genoways continues, “Although a board of regents, trustees, or some similar group is the ultimate authority for most institutions of higher education, many decisions...are

³¹ Tirrell, “A Synopsis,” 159.

³² Bonnie Kelm, “Recent Museum Ethical Policies and Their Implications for University Museums,” *Museologia* 8, no. 2 (2002): 26.

delegated to administrators.”³³ Kelm adds, “University museums do not have boards with fiduciary responsibility. They may have advisory boards, but the ultimate responsibility for governance is channeled through the university administrator who supervises the museum.”³⁴ This framework is complicated by the lack of knowledge among typical university administrators of anything relating to museum operations – or values.

Bureaucracy aside, a “removed” or distant board of directors seems to bring a particular disadvantage in the cultural sector. Leading arts management expert Michael Kaiser explains, “Arts organizations require the goodwill of a large number of individuals: ticket buyers, donors, press, volunteers and government officials. Board members are best positioned to make the case for the value of the organization and its mission to the many members of this pool of potential supporters. This means the board must appreciate the mission, understand the plans, and support the direction of the organization.”³⁵ While there are indicators that more and more university museums are empowering their advisory boards to step up in their roles as “ambassadors” and fundraisers, the inability of a university museum to retain ultimate authority or even direct communication regarding its budget and other operations decisions – despite it pulling in a majority of its funding from outside the university – is considered an obstacle.

Challenges initiated by unique systems and structures are commonplace across university museums. Fortunately, there are growing opportunities through which university

³³ Hugh H. Genoways, “Challenges for Directors of University Natural Science Museums,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 3, no. 42 (1999): 219.

³⁴ Kelm, “Ethical Policies,” 28.

³⁵ Michael M. Kaiser, *Leading Roles: 50 Questions Every Arts Board Should Ask* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis, 2010): 18.

museum administrators can share ideas, experiences and concerns regarding the issues they collectively face. Professional groups such as ICOM-UAMC, the International Committee for University Museums and Collections (formed in 2000) and ACUMG, the Association of College and University Museums and Galleries (1980) convene and publish regularly. According to Tirrell – who is a leading voice in ICUMC – associations and groups have been formed out of “a growing sense of collective urgency and a call for international organization, advocacy, and cooperation.”³⁶

From these collective initiatives to the professionalization of human resources, university museums now closely resemble their civic counterparts. But as these institutions become increasingly oriented towards the public and reliant on outside funding, they find themselves in sudden competition with an entire spectrum of cultural institutions and other social enterprises.

Distinction in a Competitive World

Tirrell warns that “University museums may be losing out in an arena of fierce competition with a conglomerate of other providers.”³⁷ The key to overcoming this new scenario may be in emphasizing what distinguishes university museums from the entirety of the museum sector (as well as other cultural institutions), with which it now competes for the time or money of the public and the support of foundations, corporations, and individual donors. Top-tier institutions aside, Skramstad explains that for most museums, “success is less a result of the intrinsic value of their collections than it is the distinctiveness of their

³⁶ Tirrell, "A Synopsis," 157.

³⁷ Tirrell, "Social Enterprise," 120.

mission and clearly articulated and executed strategies based on that mission.”³⁸

In this new era of competitiveness, understanding of mission and purpose is a prerequisite to communicating effectively to various constituencies and stakeholders. Clarifying institutional identity is a means of distinguishing the university museum from numerous other institutions. Zeller writes, “More than its civic counterpart, the campus art museum has the opportunity to experiment and take risks.”³⁹ This sentiment that “risk-taking is valued”⁴⁰ is expressed often, for museums in both the arts and sciences. Skramstad writes, “The college and university museum has the potential and built in permission to become an intellectual and aesthetic provocateur that can raise issues, do exhibitions, and sponsor activities that could make it a focus and center of campus intellectual life.”⁴¹ In the 2012 report *The Campus Art Museum: A Qualitative Study*, Corrine Glesne adds:

Curators are not hesitant to address hot issues or engage in social critique through special exhibitions. These are sometimes done in conjunction with specific courses or become drawing cards for classes examining similar issues.⁴²

If this spirit of experimentation can be leveraged as a distinguishing trait, the university museum has reached an important step in communicating its identity and distinguishing itself. There is a significant base of literature that explores this “soul-searching” route, especially among scholars associated with the new professional associations and groups who are focused on the future. Steven W.G. de Clerq, Vice Chair of

³⁸ Skramstad, “An Agenda,” 3.

³⁹ Zeller, “The Role of the Campus Art Museum,” 94.

⁴⁰ Shapiro et al, “Campus Art Museums,” 4.

⁴¹ Skramstad, “An Agenda,” 3.

⁴² Corrine Glesne, *The Campus Art Museum: A Qualitative Study* (The Simon S. Kress Foundation, 2012): 16.

UMAC asks,

Who are we, what are we and for whom do we work? How does the museum fit into the mission of the university? How can we consolidate our position within our parent institution? What is the relevance of the museum, why is it there and for whom is it meant? ...What is our role in the community at large?⁴³

Questions of this depth accompany the major transition “from somewhat sleepy, internally focused teaching collections to much larger and more complex public museums with ambitious exhibitions and programs and varied audiences.”⁴⁴ Yet despite the adoption of a dual focus and attention on redefining an identity, campus museums maintain a traditional role in research. While this is a shared core value with civic counterparts, the way in which campus museums have shaped the scholarship framework revolves around one university community. The museum is a resource for an increasingly diverse range of departments and disciplines, and seems a natural space for not only scholarly investigation but dialogue and exchange. As a “lab” and a “hub,” the evolving campus museum is responding to the shifting learning approaches discussed earlier. Encompassing a broader range of perspectives and approaches is an important step in maintaining relevance and vibrancy on campus and beyond. Murphy emphasizes,

Museums today, more than ever before, need to be interdisciplinary and cross-cultural in their orientation. This is not only because of the sharp social, cultural and political challenges of today’s world -- and vast changes in the experimental horizons of sciences -- but also because museums themselves encompass such a great variety of materials within their scope.⁴⁵

⁴³ Steven W. G. de Clercq, "What If We Weren't Here?" *Museologia* 4 no. 3 (2007): 152.

⁴⁴ Rorsach, "Why Do Universities Have Museums?"

⁴⁵ Bernice L. Murphy, "Encircling the Muses: The Multi-disciplinary Heritage of University Museums," *Museologia* 8, no. 3 (2003): 9.

Overall, understanding the distinctiveness of this sector's core values is an important exercise in articulating institutional identity. Recognizing organizational uniqueness is a requirement for advancement and success in a competitive world. Bridson and Evans emphasize, "In an unpredictable operating environment it seems imperative for museums to 'step up' and take control of their identity and image."⁴⁶

Part II: Expressing Institutional Identity Through Branding

Marty Neumeier, one of the leading voices in brand strategy, describes a brand as "a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or company."⁴⁷ While marketers cannot control a person's intuitive response, they can influence it by communicating the distinguishing elements – however abstract – in a way that resonates with their target audience/consumer. Features, benefits and pricing remain powerful marketing components, but a brand sparks a deeper, emotional reaction.

Arts marketing expert Joanne Scheff Bernstein writes, "Brands are powerful because they work psychologically. They can enhance our sense of self-identity; articulate and confirm beliefs; change or endorse attitudes and values; influence perceptions, associations, and opinions; and when they act as the deciding factor in purchase choices, influence behavior."⁴⁸ In this regard, a brand is a compelling tool for stakeholder outreach. A brand represents an expected level of value, quality and experience; thus, it generates loyalty across

⁴⁶ Kerrie Bridson and Jody Evans, "Don't Tate Us! The Impediments and Drivers of Branding Museums," (paper presented at ANZMAC, Melbourne, Australia, December 3-5, 2007): 434.

⁴⁷ Marty Neumeier: *The Brand Gap: How to Bridge the Distance Between Business Strategy and Design* (Indianapolis, IN: New Riders, 2005): 2.

⁴⁸ Bernstein, *Arts Marketing*, 194.

audiences, members, donors, funders, volunteers and others.⁴⁹ Properly leveraged, it becomes a symbol of trust between the individual and the organization.

According to SeJeong Kim, “Brand identification and loyalty has become a critical tool in attracting customers in this competitive world.”⁵⁰ Numerous scholars echo the need for a sophisticated response in an aggressive new operating environment. “Brand orientation provides the cultural platform to retain the distinctiveness of the institution and build the symbolic representation sorely needed in order to attract increased funding, visitors, their time and discretionary income.”⁵¹ From development efforts to media pitches, a strong institutional brand delivers a consistent and compelling message. “Branding is not a tactic at all; it is an organizing principle so broad and so defining that it can shape and direct just about anything an organization does.”⁵²

In this regard, a brand does not just operate externally. Within an organization, a brand serves as a “keystone” that maintains balance and focus.⁵³ “A brand is to marketing what the mission is to the entire organization... because marketing is an organization-wide function, not something to be left to the marketing department, the brand... drives the entire organization.”⁵⁴ As brands represent the core values of an institution, they can invigorate and focus museum administrators. Bernstein adds that a brand campaign “is a long-term investment in the organization. Each individual event, program, communications strategy,

⁴⁹ Kim, "Understanding Museum Branding," 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 11.

⁵¹ Bridon and Evans, "Don't Tate Us!" 434.

⁵² Bernstein, *Arts Marketing*, 193.

⁵³ Kim, "Understanding Museum Branding," 9.

⁵⁴ Bernstein, *Arts Marketing*, 193.

and customer service encounter is a crucial element of the branding process.”⁵⁵ Internally and externally, the brand ensures consistency. Baumgarth reinforces, “The ideal outcome is a relatively constant and consistent brand offer, clearly differentiated from competing products in a way that is relevant to current and potential customers.”⁵⁶

As branding has its roots (and much of its success) in corporate culture, perhaps it is no surprise that nonprofits and arts organizations have been hesitant to embrace something so seemingly commercial. “Misconception about branding can be a major obstacle for nonprofit museums to undertake effective branding techniques,” notes Kim.⁵⁷ Yet an increasing number of cultural scholars and professionals are advocating for branding in the arts sector, sending the message that “Branding is no longer a marketing decision but a business imperative.”⁵⁸

Branding Museums

As the branding mindset has now integrated into the nonprofit and cultural sectors, “Museum brands have become valuable entities, and the managers of these brands are faced with challenges their predecessors could not have imagined. The power of museum brands is great and complex.”⁵⁹ Given the high stakes of major transitions, “Positioning museums

⁵⁵ Ibid, 208.

⁵⁶ Carsten Baumgarth, "Brand Orientation of Museums: Model and Empirical Results," *International Journal of Arts Management* 3, no.11 (2009): 31.

⁵⁷ Kim, "Understanding Museum Branding," 1.

⁵⁸ Margot A. Wallace, "Business Card to Business Plan: Branding Your Museum," American Alliance of Museums (2012): <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/webexclusive.branding.cfm>.

⁵⁹ Niall G. Caldwell, "The Emergence of Museum Brands," *International Journal of ArtsManagement* 3, no. 2 (2000): 30.

effectively in the 21st Century may become a matter of survival.”⁶⁰

As university museums move toward a more public orientation, they are suddenly in competition with civic institutions and other cultural, leisure or entertainment outlets for audience. Simultaneously, as audiences are becoming more and more inundated with messaging, they are becoming more selective about their options based on limited funds and time. In addition, “institutions are under increasing pressure to reach certain visitor targets in terms of absolute numbers and capturing diverse segments of the community.... Such factors are contributing to a cultural shift where the emergence of the brand as a governing philosophy is changing the priorities, processes and strategies of museums.”⁶¹ This overlap emphasizes the importance of a consistent message.

Scott cites Kiely and Halliday (1999) in distinguishing between three types of brands – corporate brands, product brands and values brands (the category to which museums belong): “A values brand has an enduring core purpose, which creates a long-term bond with those sectors of the market sharing the same values.”⁶² Suchy adds,

Emotional value, nurtured through trust relationships, influences the museum’s ability to connect and build community engagement... Sensing whether a museum is trustworthy enough to warrant an investment of economic and social capital is necessary due to competing claims on time, money, and relationships. From a museum’s point of view, using emotional intelligence skills to create social capital is a good investment.⁶³

⁶⁰ Carol Scott, "Using Values to Position and Promote Museums." *International Journal of Arts Management* 1, no. 11 (2008): 39.

⁶¹ Bridon and Evans, "Don't Tate Us!" 431.

⁶² Scott, "Using Values," page 36

⁶³ Sherene Suchy, "Museum Management: Emotional Value and Community Engagement," (paper presented in *INTERCOM* Taiwan, November 2-4, 2006).

While there is increasing scholarly attention on branding of cultural institutions, there are numerous unanswered questions regarding branding of university museums in particular. How do their unique circumstances and systems influence their branding strategy and approach? For instance, how does a single brand reflect a dual (audience) focus? Should a university museum brand parallel that of the parent institution? According to *Campus Art Museums in the 21st Century*, the struggle “to be seen as relevant to the core mission and identity of the university...has forced many campus museums to get better at framing and answering fundamental questions, such as... ‘What is my museum expected to contribute to the campus mission and brand?’”⁶⁴ In this time of major transition for university museums, these questions reflect the uncertainty around communicating institutional identity.

There is growing consensus that branding can be utilized organization-wide. Margot Wallace emphasizes, “Every iota of your museum...influences how the public perceives your brand. Branding therefore should have a presence in the full scope of a museum’s operations.”⁶⁵ However, the various departments within university museum administration will utilize a brand in different ways. While there is limited literature about branding that is tailored to specific departments, there is substantial discussion of the important role of marketing, public relations and development in general. These departments are especially crucial components of university museums in a period of reimagined institutional identity. This study contributes to the field of arts administration literature that aligns brand strategy with university museum needs, specifically in the realm of marketing, public relations and

⁶⁴ Shapiro et al, "Campus Art Museums," 5.

⁶⁵ Margot A. Wallace, "Business Card to Business Plan: Branding Your Museum," American Alliance of Museums (2012): <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/webexclusive.branding.cfm>.

development. This will create a foundation from which emerging issues and patterns in the university museum sector may be considered in terms of institutional identity and branding from the core departments that lead communications efforts.

Implications of the Brand in Development, Marketing and Public Relations

While outside funding has helped make up for the sharp decrease in financial support from their parent institutions and enabled university museums to operate at their proper capacity, new challenges arrive with new funder guidelines and expectations. “Pressured into delivering against social and economic policy objectives and required to justify their existence in terms specified by funding bodies, museums find themselves in a reactive position, struggling to articulate the unique value of the sector,” writes Scott.⁶⁶ Demonstrating institutional value is therefore as vital to fundraising as cultivating donors.

“Whether writing a grant or asking for government support, museums must stress the individuality of their goals. The development department must highlight the museum’s core values to attract philanthropists looking to support institutions with values that match their own,” writes M. Wallace.⁶⁷ Branding may play a role in the communication of core values and institutional identity. “Grant-makers, community and governmental supporters and fundraisers are looking for consistency along with distinctiveness,” she adds. A strong brand communicates all these elements in a compelling way.

In addition to differentiating the institution in the grant-seeking process, university museums encounter particular challenges given the academic ecosystem in which they exist.

⁶⁶ Scott, "Using Values," 29.

⁶⁷ M. Wallace, "Business Card to Business Plan."

Development staff is not necessarily in-house; they are oftentimes university administrators who fundraise for a range of initiatives and perhaps lack background in museums. In addition, the work of cultivating major donors who also contribute to the university may require careful navigation of political influence, especially in times of conflict. Another unique challenge is encouraging alumni and other committed university supporters to give to the museum in addition to the school's annual fund or other university-wide campaign. This scenario presents the dual challenge of aligning with the university's broader mission while distinguishing the museum for its independent vision.

A strong and authentic brand that reflects institutional identity would also resonate with individual donors, who are discussed in fundraising literature as devoted supporters of the mission and vision of a museum. Sparking and maintaining that emotional and personal association is essential for long-term support, as are distinguishing characteristics that remind donors of an institution's unique contribution. Despite the clear potential for leveraging the institutional brand in the development and fundraising arena, there is a serious lack of literature to support university fundraisers in pursuing that approach.

Tailored information is needed because university museums bring a new layer of complexity to development. For many, fundraising efforts are the territory of a campus-wide department, and thereby become the responsibility of administrators who are removed from the museum and unfamiliar with its operations and philosophy. Perhaps this makes an even stronger case for branding; a clear and compelling concept can be utilized by anyone and yet remain consistent, while also helping to leverage additional internal resources on campus. "Developing good programs and services, pricing them attractively, and making them available to target consumers is no longer enough," argues Judith Turner Phair, President &

CEO of Public Relations Society of America. “Today, institutions must also inform the public of their goals, activities, and offerings, and motivate them to take an interest in the institution.”⁶⁸ In other words, while marketing is essential to the communication of a museum’s offerings, a robust public relations effort ensures the community is connecting to the message of the institution in a positive way.

Misconceptions about the field of public relations often lead to the discipline being assigned to neighboring departments of marketing or development, or ignored altogether. Ledingham and Bruning blame this avoidance on the widely held assumption that public relations is rooted in the manipulation of public opinion. They present the discipline from the “relationship management” perspective, which embodies “a focus on building, nurturing, and maintaining organization-public relationships.”⁶⁹

Bernstein adds, “Although the main function of marketing is to influence behavior, the primary task of public relations is to form, maintain, or change public attitudes toward the organization.”⁷⁰ In this way, branding is as relevant to public relations efforts as it is to a museum’s marketing initiatives.

Once again, the unique systems around university museums and their parent institutions may mean few museums manage their own public relations efforts. University-wide public relations staff is often charged with representing the university museum in their communications with the media, interest groups, and the public at large. However, a strong

⁶⁸ Judith Turner Phair, "Integrating Marketing, Public Relations, and Fundraising for Successful Results," *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising* 10, no. 10 (1995): 85.

⁶⁹ John A. Ledingham and Stephen D. Bruning, eds. *Public Relations as Relationship Management: A Relational Approach to the Study and Practice of Public Relations*, (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000): 158.

⁷⁰ Bernstein, *Arts Marketing*, 109.

brand identity will serve both the university administrator unfamiliar with the inner-workings of the museum, and museum staff inexperienced with public outreach. In short, a brand empowers institutions – across the board – to leverage a compelling and consistent message.

A Synchronized Approach

When it comes to marketing, public relations and development, all disciplines “rely on a set of management and communication strategies and techniques to identify target audiences, to cultivate and influence the opinions of those audiences, and to gain a final result.” Phair emphasizes, “each party needs the other two if it is to succeed in its own sphere and if the organization served by all is to succeed. There is a great deal of common ground and common wisdom.”⁷¹ In a time of major transition, reduced operating budgets and increased competition, it seems a synchronized approach to these challenges is especially valuable. A brand campaign is a means through which marketing, public relations and development can be in step with one another. While I could find no literature that explores the role of the brand in this coordinated effort, Williams and Phair encourage a synchronized approach to museum communications and outreach.

Williams (1989) writes that the initial integration of marketing, public relations and development may have spurred from the modern capital campaign, “with its reliance on strong team effort, (it) has fostered growing respect which has led to the positioning of public relations, fundraising, and often, marketing under the overall umbrella of institutional advancement.”⁷² Phair elaborates, “Without strong, coordinated public relations to create the

⁷¹ Phair, "Integrating Marketing," 84.

⁷² Ibid, 87.

context for success, fundraising and marketing will not meet their goals. Similarly, poor fundraising and marketing efforts lower the prestige and visibility of the institution, making public attention and opinion harder to command.”⁷³ While all the moving parts of a museum – the curatorial department, the educational programming, etc. – impact institutional identity, it is the pressure of communicating these core values to a range of stakeholders that falls with the marketing, public relations and development departments. The bottom line is values. According to Neumeier, messaging “has evolved from a focus on ‘what it is,’ to ‘what it does,’ to ‘how you’ll feel,’ to ‘who you are.’”⁷⁴

Part III: Emerging Patterns in the University Museum Sector

The literature underscores that this is a time of great transition, risk, and opportunity for university museums, which are “still very much in the process of being shaped by – and helping shape – changing cultural and educational ideals of our times. They may now be at a critical juncture in determining what roles they can and want to play.”⁷⁵ Simultaneously, the cultural sector is beginning to understand the value of institutional identity as realized through a brand, especially in periods of transition. However, there is limited literature about how campus museums might create or recreate a brand around a major institutional change. Attention is due given two emerging patterns in the sector: the boom of new museum buildings and the influx in partnerships and affiliations with other cultural organizations. The impact of these major initiatives on a university museum’s institutional identity speaks to the importance of addressing the role of branding in times of transition.

⁷³ Phair, “Integrating Marketing,” 84.

⁷⁴ Neumeier, *The Brand Gap*, 151.

⁷⁵ Shapiro et al, “Campus Art Museums,” 18.

The Allure of the New Building

A museum's institutional identity is shaped and enriched by a range of features; in this sense, there are numerous brand assets: high quality exhibitions, trendy events, friendly front desk staff, and so on. Caldwell acknowledges, "Many other sorts of proprietary brand assets can affect the value of a brand and must be accounted for in detailing a composite picture of the brand... The physical location itself becomes a proprietary asset ...(and) part of the identity of the museum... the building itself is an integral part of the brand value."⁷⁶

Over the past decade, there has been a tremendous influx in new building projects across the cultural sector – particularly in museums. According to a recent survey by the American Association of Museums, nearly one quarter of US museums are currently engaged in a capital fund-raising campaign, with a median goal of \$10 million. According to *Set in Stone*, the most thorough examination of the spike in cultural building construction to date, half of museums have begun or completed building construction, renovation or expansion in the past three years. Cultural organizations spent more the \$16 billion dollars on building projects between 1994 and 2008.⁷⁷ The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums has even convened the annual symposium "Building Museums," which discusses themes of planning, implementation, and sustainability. Numerous factors have contributed to this sector-wide building boom. According to Tirrell,

One of the most critical challenges is the need for new facilities. Nearly all university museums need quality space to house and protect their collections

⁷⁶ Niall G. Caldwell, "The Emergence of Museum Brands," *International Journal of ArtsManagement* 3, no. 2 (2000): 33.

⁷⁷ Joanna, D. Woronkiewicz, Carroll Joynes, Peter Frumkin, Anastasia Kolendo, Bruce Seaman, Robert Gertner, and Norman Bradburn, eds. *Set in Stone: Building America's New Generation of Arts Facilities: 1994-2008*, (Chicago: Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago, 2012): 7.

and to meet their need for research, teaching and public services.

Unfortunately, many university museums are in buildings that were grand edifices in the past but are now ill suited for present-day needs such as electricity, preventative conservation, computers, group learning and cafes. Other museums are in buildings that were never designed to meet generally acceptable museum standards and practices.⁷⁸

However, most museum expansions, renovations and rebuilding projects stem from a desire far beyond necessary upkeep, or basic expansion to accommodate new audiences and programming. Kaiser elaborates, “Built at the right time, a new facility can be a landmark event for an arts organization. It can energize audiences and donors, facilitate the creation of better art and larger education programs, and provide an arts anchor in the community.”⁷⁹ From generating national media coverage to attracting potential students, there is great appeal in new buildings. “The fact is that museum building is a sexy trend,” Morris concludes.⁸⁰

Numerous authors and experts criticize the “build it and they will come” mentality. “Too many arts organizations have ‘edifice complexes’ – they want to build, build, build,” writes Kaiser.⁸¹ Bradburne adds that new museum buildings are sometimes “used as a panacea to cure all museum ills.”⁸² Others echo this apprehension, noting the “rush to a building as the solution to a problem of relevance, dwindling attendance, or to serve the

⁷⁸ Tirrell, "A Synopsis," 165.

⁷⁹ Kaiser, "Leading Roles," 98.

⁸⁰ Martha Morris, "Museum Building Boom or Bust?" *Museum Management and Curatorship* 22, no. 2 (2007): 101.

⁸¹ Kaiser, "Leading Roles," 98.

⁸² James M. Bradburne, "A New Strategic Approach to the Museum and its Relationship to Society," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 1 no. 19 (2001): 75.

dreams of governing boards or city leaders.”⁸³ *Set in Stone* underscores the array of challenges confronted by museums and other cultural organizations when embarking this major decision, and presents reservations about the seductive nature of such projects:

Most often, the primary reason for building a museum was to make an architectural statement either related to the prestige of the institution or the civic pride of the community...Furthermore, since the stature and originality of the architect and the architect’s vision was often central in these projects, these types of facilities had very ambitious design-related goals that the organization did not, in practical terms, always need.⁸⁴

A Branding Opportunity

While the allure of new buildings is undeniable, they are accompanied by incredible risk. “The risks that museums face in embarking on building projects include: unrealistic expectations, lack of successful planning, poor definition of scope, under-prepared board and staff, and poor synchronization of physical and program plans,” warns Morris.⁸⁵ However, a strong brand counters the risk. In order to ensure a successful transition into a new space – and a sustainable future – museum administrators must leverage the brand in two ways: internally, as a guiding force and focus, and externally, by generating a compelling case for public and funder support.

In terms of internal focus, successful building projects are the result of organization-wide preparedness. As noted in the introduction to branding, a brand identity is a valuable “rallying” tool that identifies a compelling and consistent set of values the museum embodies. By staying true to a brand during a period of extreme transition, institutional identity is upheld.

⁸³ Morris, “Museum Building Boom,” 104.

⁸⁴ Woronkowicz et al, *Set In Stone*, 20.

⁸⁵ Morris, “Museum Building Boom,” 102.

There is a consensus in the literature that much of the risk of new building projects is rooted in the financial implications of a new space, including maintaining it. First, the capital campaign itself is no small feat. Kaiser warns that building projects are not necessarily the “natural magnets for funding” they appear to be. “Mounting a capital campaign before the organization is ready is foolhardy; the arts world is littered with unfinished or unsuccessful capital drives. If the institution has not built a large, growing, and generous constituency, it will be unable to attract enough funds.”⁸⁶ Marketers, fundraisers and the staff as a whole must be ready to promote the new brand identity of the institution before it breaks ground.

Secondly, new buildings are larger, more elaborate, and nothing short of state-of-the-art. “Even if the funding required for the building is obtained, it is far harder to generate the annual funding required to operate the new, larger facility,” warns Kaiser.⁸⁷ Counting on ongoing grantmaker and donor support simply on the basis of a new building is unwise. Instead, the museum must leverage its strong institutional brand to encourage funders to invest in the vision for the future, not just the sparkling new space.

Finally, the “build it and they will come” mantra, which is disproved by current literature, is far from the marketing mindset required to attract and maintain increased attendance levels. A good portion of the museum’s existing audience base will be drawn to the new space itself initially, but a strong brand identity is necessary to build and sustain a new level of visitor interest and support. Rather than relying on the building as a marketing tool, university museums must utilize it as a component of their institutional identity.

In all, museums embarking on new building projects must ensure the developments

⁸⁶ Kaiser, “Leading Roles,” 99.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 99.

are seen as relevant, exciting, and worthy of support from a range of stakeholders. It appears a strong institutional brand can lead all these efforts, in a consistent and dynamic way. There is much ground to cover in investigating the implications of brand identity in a major university museum building project.

Partnerships and Affiliations

A second emerging trend in the university museum sector involves affiliating with other cultural institutions. MacDonald and Ostrower bring attention to the rise of temporary or smaller-scale partnerships, but there is a lack of discussion about permanent mergers and affiliations. “Both the research and wisdom practice literature on partnerships in the arts is limited,” notes Backer.⁸⁸ However, MacDonald and Ostrower’s contributions highlight the benefits and pitfalls of alliances, at any level.

MacDonald considers partnerships a way to recover from major budget cuts by parent institutions. While not all museums survive severe funding cuts (especially those that accompanied the economic downturn), “The more successful museums reinvented themselves, restructuring, reviewing their objectives and attracting new audiences. For some, new partnerships became essential to survival.”⁸⁹

The severe recession of 2008-2009 compelled a growing number of university museums and other cultural institutions to explore new ways of operating.⁹⁰ In creating these

⁸⁸ Thomas E. Backer, "Partnership as an Art Form: What Works and What Doesn't in Nonprofit Arts Partnerships." (Human Interaction Research Institute, 2002): 17.

⁸⁹ Sally MacDonald, "Desperately Seeking Sustainability: University Museums in Meaningful Relationships," in *International Committee for University Museums and Collections* (2003): 25.

alliances, they were strategically pooling resources and building capacity. University museums gained new skills, perspectives and approaches that helped weather the downturn. For instance, as arts audiences were expanding and become more diverse, partner organizations that emphasized specific constituencies brought valuable expertise.

University museums transferred many benefits to the partnering organizations as well, including “specialized collections accumulated for teaching and research, specialized supporting libraries and archives, access to cross-disciplinary expertise, tradition of quality provision, access to higher education and research funding, higher public profile through association with an academic institution.”⁹¹ Whatever the benefits, MacDonald advises, “An understanding of such complementary strengths is critical even to informal collaborations but essential for partners entering long-term or more formal relationships.”

Ostrower notes that foundations and other major arts funders were equally enticed by the potential of partnerships. Like the partners themselves, funders “believed collaboration was an appropriate strategy for community development and cultural participation,” citing three particular strengths in a 2005 Urban Institute report. Aside from enhanced organizational capacity, “Funders also praised partnerships as a way to bridge the divide between arts groups and the wider community.” This not only expanded audiences but professional networks as well, “thereby sparking future collaboration and reducing isolation in the arts world.”⁹² In effect, Ostrower writes, “partnerships build social capital.”

Funder enthusiasm and support has sustained this pattern of partnership. For instance,

⁹⁰ Ibid, 25.

⁹¹ Ibid, 25.

⁹² Francie Ostrower, "The Reality Underneath the Buzz of Partnerships," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Spring 2005): 37.

The Lodestar Foundation developed “The Collaboration Prize,” which calls for nonprofits from around the country to submit their partnership models in an effort to spotlight successful efforts. Other major funding endeavors, including The Patterson Foundation’s “Collaborative Restructuring Initiative,” have shaped a network of support around smart and innovative partnerships. The pattern seems to be continuing as this network grows; according to the 2013 Nonprofit Finance Fund Survey, 34 percent of arts nonprofits have collaborated with another organization in the last year to improve or increase services, and 46 percent plan to partner in some way in the year ahead.⁹³

Partnerships seem to mimic new building projects in their wide appeal. Once again, potential pitfalls and risks are ignored in the bright lights of the collaboration. Ostrower writes that grant-makers “had come to see partnering – which is no more than a method – as an end in itself,” continuing, “There is a tendency in the philanthropic world to assume that collaboration has an intrinsic value and effectiveness, and to expect partnership to serve as a solution, often to problems that have not even been well defined.”⁹⁴ In reality, significant work and preparation must go into such alliances, ensuring the match is strong and the plan is in place.

Out of 1,192 grantmakers surveyed by the Urban Institute, 69% reported they “actively encouraged collaboration among grantees.” 42% of this group said they “sometimes require partnering as a condition for funding.”⁹⁵ In another parallel with new museum

⁹³ Nonprofit Finance Fund, “2013 State of the Nonprofit Sector Survey.” Last modified March 25, 2013. Accessed April 1, 2013.

⁹⁴ Ostrower, “Buzz of Partnerships,” 36.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 36.

buildings, funding has perhaps become more accessible for nonprofits that embark on partnerships. Yet, extensive reports such as the Urban Institute survey highlight both the potential benefits and pitfalls of collaboration, drawing attention of all stakeholders as this trend becomes more and more commonplace.

Despite the increasing attraction of partnerships among institutions and grant-makers, there is a lapse in literature surrounding affiliations between university museums and outside endeavors or institutions. In addition, “Little attention has been given to branding issues involving public sector organizations, particularly when partnerships are involved.”⁹⁶ In an economic environment that remains unpredictable, and in this period of major refocus and reimagining by university museums in which they increasingly orient themselves to the outside community, more formal, long-term alliances are worthy of coverage, particularly from the standpoint of institutional identity.

A Branding Opportunity

Embarking on new building projects and entering major partnerships are two patterns that illustrate how a university museum’s brand can be leveraged at a time of growth and change. Not only does a strong institutional brand communicate values, mission and purpose to the outside world; it serves as a guide-star internally,⁹⁷ keeping the organization on track as it marks a new chapter.

In the 2012 report, *Campus Art Museums in the 21st Century*, the authors write, “Museums on college and university campuses are facing the challenges both of adapting to

⁹⁶ Mary Tschirhart, Robert K. Christensen, and James L. Perry. "The Paradox of Branding and Collaboration," *Public Performance & Management Review* 29, no. 1 (2005): 70.

⁹⁷ Kim, "Understanding Museum Branding," 1.

and influencing a new and still-shifting cultural landscape.”⁹⁸ In this period of rapid evolution and great opportunity and risk, the question becomes, “Can university museums afford *not* to create a brand?” However, voids in current literature leave the complexities and nuances of institutional identity unaddressed, and thus branding seems daunting, impractical or unrewarding. This study contributes to the marketing, public relations and development efforts of the university museum by demonstrating how a brand can be leveraged in times of transition.

⁹⁸ Shapiro et al, "Campus Art Museums," 2.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methods

This study identifies two patterns in the campus museum sector -- new building projects and partnerships and affiliations -- through which it explores strategies for leveraging an institutional brand. A qualitative research model examines two case studies within each opportunity: one campus museum in the planning stages of a branding campaign and currently transitioning to a new building or partnership, and one campus museum several years into a new building or partnership.

As a framework, each case study was examined across four areas: the brand's relevance to the museum's mission and values; its connection to programming and exhibitions; its navigation of the unique challenges of campus museums; and the ways in which the opportunity is communicated to various stakeholders and constituencies. Data were gathered in two ways: through the author's collection and analysis of marketing, public relations and development materials from each case study, and through interviews with museum administrators in these respective departments. Material analysis and narrative data were categorized into three themes corresponding to the areas outlined above: Future Focus, Expanding Academic Reach, and Brand Value. This methodological approach enabled the researcher to compare and contrast the circumstances, strategies and results within case study pairs and across all case studies.

Data Sources: Case Studies

The first case study in the New Building Project section is the University of Michigan Museum of Art in Ann Arbor, Michigan (UMMA), which completed major expansion and renovation in 2009 that repositioned it as a vibrant center of campus and community life. The researcher gained data via questionnaires or interviews with Lisa Borgsdorf, Manager, Public Programs and Campus Engagement, and Carrie Throm, Deputy Director, Development and External Relations. Bradley Taylor, Associate Director of the Museum Studies Program at University of Michigan, also provided insights in an e-mail conversation with the author.

The second case study in the New Building Project section is the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (Broad MSU). The researcher gained data via questionnaires or interviews with Sandra Syzmanski, Development and Membership Coordinator, and Leyna Lightman, Manager of Education. Linda O. Stanford, Associate Provost for Academic Services and Project Coordinator for the Broad MSU, relayed the university's perspective on the new museum by providing materials to the author.

Both case studies in the Partnerships & Affiliations section involve an independent, established collection or museum affiliating with a university and relocating to its campus. The first case study considers the 2011 affiliation between the Academy of Natural Sciences (ANS) and Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The researcher gained data via questionnaires or interviews with Amy Miller Marvin, Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Carolyn Belardo, Senior Communications Manager, ANS; and Dr. Jacquie Genovesi, Senior Director of Education, ANS.

The second case study in the Partnerships & Affiliations section explores the Textile Museum's (TM) plans and strategy behind its transition to a new complex at the George

Washington University Museum (GW) in Washington, DC. The researcher gained data via interviews with Katy Clune, Communications and Marketing Manager, Textile Museum, and Eliza Ward, Director of Development, Textile Museum.

Data Collection

Interview subjects provided information by phone and/or email with the author. While exact departments and titles varied across the case studies, one staff member from each of the following areas was interviewed: communications, marketing or external relations; development and membership; and education or engagement.

The researcher used a standard checklist (see appendix) to collect data from materials research. The checklist included the following elements: assessment of the presentation of organizational history, relationship with university and coverage of the “opportunity;” recurring themes of identity including mission, vision and values; design and brand aesthetic; platforms of engagement including publications, social media, website, advertising, etc.; marketing and development campaigns related to the transition; engagement initiatives and breakdown of offerings by audience segment; press coverage of transition; museum and university coverage of transition. The interviews

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred on three levels -- the first two involving primary data and the final level involving secondary data. First, within each case study, the strategies, opportunities, challenges and other themes addressed by each department were categorized based on the research questions posed to each interviewee. On this level, the value of the

brand for each individual museum could be evaluated in a nuanced way, incorporating the varying responses of its department representatives. On the second level, the responses of like departments -- for instance, development departments within case study pairs and across all four case studies -- were also categorized by research questions. This enabled the author to draw connections by discipline more generally, as well as connections by discipline in terms of type of institutional opportunity (new building project or partnership/affiliation). The third layer of analysis was drawn from the collection of secondary data -- the research materials outlined in the researcher's checklist -- and categorized based on the research questions. Interview (primary) data could then be considered alongside against research (secondary) data to evaluate for corroboration. Given that the concept of a brand exists both internally (as designed and implemented by various departments in an institution) and externally (how various constituencies perceive this expression of identity), this multi-layered analysis was required.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES

Introduction

This study is organized into four case studies of university museums in the United States, two of which have undergone major building projects and two of which have been created through a partnership between a museum and a university. Each pair of case studies was selected based on several factors, including significance of the project, visibility and caliber of the museum and existence of in-house communications, development and programming staff. As noted in the Methodology section, one museum in each pair is in transition, while the other is more established (at least one year into its project). This design ensures a multi-layered analysis, which is echoed in the framework discussed below.

The template for evaluating these four case studies is based on three themes. The first, *future focus*, provides a framework through which to consider a brand's ability to fix attention and generate enthusiasm about the future of the museum. As a guide star, the brand can be leveraged to reflect the vision of a university museum in transition; it is a representation of not only identity but ambition. This category is particularly tied to new ideas around engagement and experience – a central focus of the 21st-Century campus museum. The second theme, *expanding academic reach*, reflects a major pattern in academia: multidisciplinary learning. This area is designed to evaluate the museums' cross-campus initiatives, and assesses the ways in which campus museums are enhancing their relevance and value in the university community through a branding effort. The final theme in the case study approach is *brand value*, an evaluation of the ways in which these brands are leveraged to help realize top organizational goals.

As this study's data collection incorporates perspectives from communications, development and education departments, these three main themes are assessed from multiple vantage points and disciplines. This framework also echoes the patterns identified in the literature review: dual focus, professionalization of university museums, and distinction in an increasingly competitive environment. More broadly, the template enables comparison and contrast of approaches to branding across new building projects and institutional partnerships.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MUSEUM OF ART

I. Introduction

The University of Michigan Museum of Art was constructed in 1909 as Alumni Memorial Hall, although the building did not serve initially as a space for the display of artwork. Originally part administrative office and part war memorial to fallen alumni in the Civil War, its secondary role was holding artworks acquired by the university. As the expanding art collection commanded more prominent and sophisticated display, however, the building fully transitioned into the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA). It is now one of ten museums on campus, which span the fields of archaeology, natural history, anthropology, zoology, paleontology, dentistry, music and the arts, in addition to an herbarium and an observatory. For the University of Michigan (est. 1817), a leading research university, these spaces are central to scholarship and teaching, and contribute to a campus-wide culture -- an identity -- of inquiry and enrichment.

Nearly 100 years after its construction, however, the Beaux-Arts building was failing to meet the needs of UMMA's growing reach:

Public programs have always been a critical part of the Museum's role to broaden and deepen its audience's experience of visual art. While for much of UMMA's history program offerings had consisted of lectures on artists and art history, over recent years an evolution has taken place, with a broadening in the range of programs to offer a more meaningful place to the literary and performing arts alongside visual culture.⁹⁹

Attendance was higher than ever, with 130,000 visitors in 2003, a 50% increase from five years prior.¹⁰⁰ However, exhibition and programming options were severely restricted by

⁹⁹ Stephanie Rieke, "New programs to make UMMA a 'town square' for the arts." University of Michigan Museum of Art, accessed February 2, 2013, http://www.umma.umich.edu/news/archives/town_square.html

¹⁰⁰ UMMA, "U-M Unveils Landmark Design for Major Expansion of Museum of Art," news release, June 17, 2004, http://www.umma.umich.edu/news/archives/building_design.html

the outdated and outgrown facility. Just 3-4% of the total collection, which had grown to include many important works, could be displayed at one time.¹⁰¹ In addition, student and faculty engagement was inhibited by a lack of space to convene for classes and study objects closely.

Identity, Reimagined by Space

In the early 2000s, a consensus emerged that the building was coming between the museum and its mission “to transform individual and civic life by promoting the discovery, contemplation, and enjoyment of art.”¹⁰² In 2004, UMMA and university leadership decided to renovate the 1909 building and double the space of UMMA’s galleries with a state-of-the-art addition. The museum’s Director at the time, James Steward, revealed the vision for the expansion:

One of our central goals has been to turn the Museum inside out, to make it dramatically more accessible to our students and the broad community... We are seeking to eliminate many of the boundaries between scholarship and public engagement, putting scholarship to the service of the broad public. Spaces such as these in which the hand of the artist can be observed close-up are critical to a renewed interest in the authentic experience art can provide in this digital age.¹⁰³

As design plans were authorized and a planning process was underway, boundaries dissolved and the museum declared a new identity:

With the newly expanded and restored UMMA, the Museum is now shaping a new role for itself as a new kind of town square for the arts, a meeting place transcending disciplines, creative media, and practices, with a renewed outlook on programming. An expanded range and volume of public programs will provide myriad points of entry and opportunities to engage with the Museum’s collections and exhibitions and with creative expression in different ways.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “The UMMA Story: Mission.” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/about-umma/mission.html>

¹⁰³ “U-M Unveils Landmark Design.”

The reimagined UMMA would honor a legacy of scholarship and discovery, while enabling a new role as a center for expanded community engagement. When the design by Allied Works Architecture was unveiled, featuring a gleaming, transparent structure alongside the historic stone facade, leaders praised it as “a marriage of old and new.”¹⁰⁵ University President Mary Sue Coleman remarked, “The architect’s choices embody our commitment to art, to education, and to building bridges to the community.”¹⁰⁶

The dramatic 53,000 square foot addition of the Frankel Wing and the full restoration of Alumni Memorial Hall was completed in March 2009. The \$41.9 million dollar project initiated -- and represented -- a new era for UMMA. Grand re-opening materials announced,

Five key factors combine to make this project remarkable: architecture that reflects and enhances the Museum’s mission and its location at the intersection of campus and community, singular collections that represent 150 years of art collecting at the University of Michigan, programming that will position the Museum as a meeting place for the arts, the vibrancy of a 40,000 member student community eager for academic and social opportunities centered on the visual arts, and the project’s position at the heart of a powerhouse research university. Together, these elements serve a common goal of putting art at the heart of contemporary life and civic experience.¹⁰⁷

With its versatile new building and multi-faceted potential, UMMA embraced a dual identity. It would be a “gateway” to the university¹⁰⁸ and a “vital town square.”¹⁰⁹ “All these

¹⁰⁴ “New programs to make UMMA a ‘town square.’”

¹⁰⁵ “UM Students - See.” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013. <http://www.umma.umich.edu/for-students/see.html>

¹⁰⁶ “U-M Unveils Landmark Design.”

¹⁰⁷ “University of Michigan Museum of Art Announces Grand Reopening,” news release, December 2, 2008, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/news/archives/reopening.html>

¹⁰⁸ “University of Michigan Museum of Art / Allied Works Architecture,” ArchDaily, last modified February 25, 2011, <http://www.archdaily.com/112010/university-of-michigan-museum-of-art-allied-works-architecture/>

enhancements seek to place the arts at the center of public life,” promotional materials declared.¹¹⁰ At the same time, the expansion was an expression of deep commitment to the university’s mission. The enhanced opportunities for exploration, experimentation and interaction would more resolutely serve the campus community:

“One of the Museum of Art’s most important roles is its contribution to the academic mission of the University of Michigan. From the research and study uses of the extraordinary works of art in our collections, to the teaching implications of all of our temporary exhibitions, the Museum plays an increasingly central role in the academic life of the University, even as it connects to broad regional and national community audiences.”¹¹¹

UMMA’s ability to provide diverse and meaningful opportunities for engagement with art for both the university and the public had been a key part of the case for a new building; it was also central to the fundraising strategy. Its capital campaign, *The Museum Reimagined*, raised over \$61 million dollars for the building project, endowment and programming. The majority of leadership gifts to the capital campaign came from University of Michigan alumni, including \$10 million from the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation, which established the namesake wing of the museum, and a \$4 million gift from A. Alfred Taubman. Numerous other university alumni contributed at the \$1 million level, shaping a critical base of support in the early stages of the campaign. In the messaging of the appeal for *The Museum Reimagined*, the building was once again leveraged both as the initiator and the mark a new era:

This landmark building project... effectively reimagines the university art museum, dynamically reaffirms our mission as a vital center for both formal and informal

¹⁰⁹ “The UMMA Story: The Building Project.”

¹¹⁰ “The UMMA Story,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/about-umma/index.html>

¹¹¹ “The UMMA Story: Mission.”

learning, and recommits our role as a bridge between the University, the community, and the visual arts.¹¹²

Emphasizing that a new museum would more effectively serve the University's mission was perhaps the most crucial in the corresponding, university-wide *Michigan Difference Campaign*. UMMA's fundraising needs were encompassed by the University of Michigan's three-year effort, which raised \$3.2 billion by the end of 2009.¹¹³ The museum was one of many initiatives promoted in the record-breaking campaign, which garnered support from 365,000 donors of all levels.

A third and less observable layer of the fundraising effort, the *Campaign for Art*, focused on expanding the museum's collection -- both in scope and caliber. "With purpose-built new galleries to showcase more objects from UMMA's singular collections, many leading collectors stepped up to offer the Museum objects of distinction that both complemented particular strengths and filled critical gaps in the collections."¹¹⁴ Once again, the dual aspect of serving the University mission as well as extending engagement opportunities for all visitors generated significant response. Led personally by the Director and a special campaign chair, the initiative generated \$37 million in gifted and pledged objects to UMMA. This incredible contribution set the total *The Museum Reimagined* campaign to nearly \$100 million. It was a significant statement of support for UMMA's vision and role going forward.

¹¹² University of Michigan Museum of Art, "UMMA Reimagined." Accessed January 28, 2013. http://www.umma.umich.edu/giving/brochure/umma_campaign_brochure.pdf.

¹¹³ Lindy Stevens, "\$3.2 Billion Michigan Difference Total Announced," *The Michigan Daily*, February 2, 2009, <http://www.michigandaily.com/content/na/32-billion-michigan-difference-total-announced>

¹¹⁴ Stephanie Rieke, "Historic Campaign for Art Grows and Complements UMMA's Collections," UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, http://www.umma.umich.edu/news/archives/campaign_for_art.html

Design played a major role in the rebranding process. UMMA's logo went through a major change for the expanded museum, adopting a more stylized and contemporary aesthetic that suggests a fresh, innovative and even inviting identity (see Figure 1). Many of the development and marketing materials created for the new museum share this enlivened design, which parallel the promotional messages such as, "reimagining, redefining, reshaping" and "this is the moment." One of numerous other examples is the redesign of the member magazine *Insight*, which was re-released as *UMMA Magazine* in 2011 with a design that later won a national Museum Publications award from the American Alliance of Museums.¹¹⁵ Across all of UMMA's visual communications – from the revamped website to on-campus fliers – a cutting-edge aesthetic emphasizes that a new era has begun. However, a comprehensive understanding of UMMA's new identity can only be gained by examining the major themes that shaped the core of the brand.



Figure 1. UMMA logo.

¹¹⁵ "UMMA magazine wins national museum publications award," UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/images/2011-winners-II.pdf>

Brand Development

As illustrated by the capital campaign messaging and overall promotion of the reimagined UMMA, the new building plan represents a 21st-century vision of a university museum: one that honors its legacy of academic commitment with a revived focus on the university community, while also embracing its increasingly influential role in the public sphere. Syncing the museum's dual purpose with the new building's potential provided a compelling case for support and solidified UMMA's identity in this critical transition phase. However, only the foundational part of establishing identity takes place in the planning stages; the themes that shape an institution's brand develop in the actual operating phase, where the mission is realized, and people are impacted.

At the time of this case study, UMMA is four years into its new campus home. As the exhibitions and programming have found a rhythm, as systems and strategies for outreach and engagement have coalesced, and as the building has settled into the campus landscape, themes of a brand have developed. This case study seeks to outline three major themes: how the dynamic new building has enabled deeper impact experientially; how broader reach has become possible in terms of new approaches and interpretations; and how this reimagining has translated into a well-respected and highly valued brand.

The first component of UMMA's new brand is the deeper engagement made possible with the expansion. Due to the size and nature of the space, UMMA is able to present more extensive exhibitions, programs and events -- more in terms of quantity but also variety. These offerings are enriched by the immersive and innovative approaches made possible through new technology and smart design. These two layers of engagement respond to diversity of interests and diversity of learning styles, making it possible for all visitors to

connect with art in a meaningful way. All of these components relate to an overarching vision of the university museum in the 21st century – a future-focused effort of engagement for all, through new channels. This case study examines how such opportunities are shaped and presented as a crucial and distinguishing part of UMMA’s brand.

The second component, broader audience reach, reflects UMMA’s vision of orchestrating cross-disciplinary and collaborative projects that extend beyond the traditional art museum constructs. This element strongly reflects the museum’s dual purpose, and in particular, its commitment to advancing learning, research and exchange across the university community. In addition to evaluating the way these multi-faceted initiatives shape the museum’s brand, the author will also investigate how the theme of broader audience reach is leveraged in fundraising and external affairs efforts.

This case study also considers the ways in which the branding process reflects UMMA’s priorities and goals. It will consider how the museum, through branding, “bridges the gap”¹¹⁶ between the university community and the public as the “front porch to the university”¹¹⁷ and conveys prestige of the “reimagined” museum and the opportunities it has generated. Throughout the case study, these three components of the brand will be explored through communications, education, development and other efforts as a means to understand their collective value as a means for realizing goals.

II. Themes of Identity

Future Focus: Deeper Impact by Design

¹¹⁶ Leah Burgin, “Standing on a Threshold,” The Michigan Daily, October 3, 2010, <http://www.michigandaily.com/content/umma-director-profile?page=0,0>

¹¹⁷ Bradley Taylor, e-mail message to author, February 16, 2013.

The catalyst for UMMA's new building -- and the case for its nearly-\$100 million campaign -- was that art could have a much deeper impact on visitors, individually and collectively. The blueprint for the state-of-the-art, purpose-built museum centers around the concept of meaningful engagement and innovative approaches to access. According to Lisa Borgsdorf, Manager of Public Programs and Campus Engagement at the museum:

“Because of the expansion of (different) types of spaces, we have been able to significantly increase the number of programs. Now we have auditoriums, classrooms, a multi-purpose room, the “commons,” the “vertical gallery,” and the forum – the entrance to the new wing that works as an event space. We can have simultaneous programming and can have different types of programming. So, it serves a much wider audience in numbers, and in terms of diversity of interest.”¹¹⁸

A more impactful visitor experience becomes possible with these dynamic spaces, as they provide not only flexibility but the technological and functional capabilities required for today's modes of learning and methods of engagement. UMMA's innovative approach is a result of the Interpretive Project, a three-year planning process in preparation for the new museum.

“(This project) is shaped by UMMA's commitment to creating a museum environment profoundly conducive to reflection, teaching, and close looking, while enabling visitors to deepen their experiences through self-directed, layered multimedia interpretation that suggests the complex ways in which works of art can be approached and understood... UMMA has deployed installation and interpretation strategies that emphasize the visual encounter with outstanding original works of art while fostering connections across media, disciplines, geographies, and cultures.”¹¹⁹

The Interpretive Project produced numerous vehicles through which visitors could interact with art in self-directed, meaningful ways. The headliner of this initiative is the DialogTable, a “social learning tool” that invites visitors “to explore topics and relationships

¹¹⁸ Lisa Borgsdorf, interview with author, February 14, 2013.

¹¹⁹ “Project History,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, http://www.umma.museum/view/DialogTable/project_history.php

suggested by works of art within UMMA's collections.”¹²⁰ Multiple participants may explore various artworks on the digital interface (which resembles a tabletop) and explore the object's context in the collection.

Another example of UMMA's dedication to deeper engagement can be found in the open storage areas of the museum, which feature close to 1,000 objects for close examination. The Albertine Monroe-Brown Study-Storage Gallery, a transformed space in the original building, offers “the enjoyable sensation of slipping behind the scenes into a private treasure house of art.”¹²¹ The gallery also includes computer kiosks for accessing further information.

Between the diversity (and volume) of programs and the immersive nature of visitor experiences, UMMA has leveraged its building to enrich the impact of art for a wide spectrum of people. On its strictly academic side, this theme remains. Borgsdorf says that specially-designed object study rooms (one for 2D works and another for 3D pieces) grant “a greater ability to work in a more hands-on way with the collection for faculty and students.”¹²² Faculty can request artworks from the collection that are relevant for class study (or their own research), enabling much deeper examination. Art and Art History departments can host lectures and symposia in the expansive auditorium, and courses can be shaped around major exhibitions that the expanded UMMA now attracts. The Museum Studies program “has benefited greatly from the expansion of the museum,” says Brad Taylor, the program's Associate Director. In addition to enjoying office and classroom space in the heart

¹²⁰ “DialogTable,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.museum/view/DialogTable/about.php>

¹²¹ “The Albertine Monroe-Brown Study-Storage Gallery,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/view/open-storage.html>

¹²² Lisa Borgsdorf, interview.

of the state-of-the-art building, the Museum Studies track has really been enhanced by the expansion:

“Both graduate and undergraduate students are given assignments that are based at the Museum of Art. It is really ideal to be able to have students exit the classroom and immediately find themselves within museum space. UMMA staff provide internship opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students and the Director of the Museum of Art is a regular member of the Steering Committee for the Graduate Program.”¹²³

For students interested in pursuing a career in museums or the arts more broadly, UMMA’s focus on enrichment is incredibly valuable. Ruth Slavin, the museum’s Deputy Director, said in an interview with *The Michigan Daily* that “working with young people on campus in various stages of their career and assisting them to become future museum professionals” is an ongoing goal.¹²⁴ A volunteer student docent program and a range of internships and employment positions in departments across the museum present meaningful learning opportunities. Student volunteers and employees also establish an important connection between the museum and the 15,000 students it serves through exhibits and programs each year.¹²⁵ To foster this connection further, UMMA established the Student Programming and Advisory Council (SPAC), which “helps support UMMA’s mission of commitment to students and engagement with the arts” by developing and promoting student-oriented programs and providing valuable insights to museum administrators,¹²⁶ which helps the museum position itself more effectively on campus. SPAC also oversees the

¹²³ Bradley Taylor, e-mail message.

¹²⁴ Taylor Wizner, “UMMA \$650,000 grant is largest in museum’s history,” *The Michigan Daily*, November 30, 2011, <http://www.michigandaily.com/news/umma-receives-mellon-grant>

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ “UM Students: Get Involved,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/for-students/advisory.html>

museum's blog for students, *The Annex*. Featuring the student voice in such a wide-reaching marketing tool keeps the campus connection strong.

Importantly, the relationship between the visitor and the museum isn't always intensive, educational or even art-related. One of the main themes of the new building is to be simply accessible. A review by *ArchDaily* noted, "Where the historic Alumni Hall is introverted, the new architecture is open and immediate. Thousands of students flow along the 'diag,' the main circulation path through campus, moving by and through the galleries, classrooms, and cafes."¹²⁷ Relaxed spaces for study and conversation remain open for several hours after the galleries close. This design component further emphasizes the museum's commitment to engagement of all forms. Notably, the DialogTable was placed in this space outside the galleries, so that anyone could explore the museum's collection, even after hours.

Through conscientious design of spaces and experiences, UMMA has built its reimagined brand around exploration, experimentation and interaction. The building represents a new era for the museum -- and perhaps for the future of university museums in general -- in its commitment to deepening audience engagement with the arts. This tenet of the brand is central to education tools and marketing materials, but it also is quite valuable in the development effort.

Carrie Thom, Deputy Director of Development and External Relations, notes that in grant proposals, donor appeals and other development materials, "We talk a great deal about what the new addition has been able to do in terms of transforming our exhibitions and programming – spaces for exceptional viewing of our collection, new opportunities for in-depth interpretation of works on view, technological tools for people to learn even more

¹²⁷ "University of Michigan Museum of Art / Allied Works Architecture."

about certain works of art.”¹²⁸ The level of impact made possible by the building is a compelling and distinguishing value in the eyes of funders and donors, who already appreciate the dual focus of UMMA’s engagement efforts. According to Throm, “The new building is central to our mission and allows us to talk about how we’ve made a dramatic impact both on campus and for the community at-large. UMMA has truly become a meeting place for the arts, thanks to the addition and renovation.”¹²⁹

Expanding Academic Reach: Broader Relevance

UMMA’s brand presents an institution that is invested in meaningful and “direct” engagement with art, but this new era also brings enhanced focus to multidisciplinary learning and exchange. The makeup of the museum’s all-faculty Executive Committee reveals this as a priority, as it consists of representatives of the following departments: History of Art; Women’s Studies; Art & Design; English; Music, Theater & Dance; Communication Studies; History; Architecture and Urban Planning; Museum Studies; Afroamerican and African Studies; and Anthropology. UMMA incorporates these perspectives in the development of university-wide outreach and engagement efforts based on connecting various curriculums through visual culture. The museum has introduced its cross-campus role most broadly by aligning with the College of Literature, Science and the Arts’ “Theme Semesters,” a unifying topic across the humanities and sciences departments. At the time of this case study, the theme of “Understanding Race” was being explored across LSA. At UMMA, a selection of artwork and corresponding materials designed to “illuminate the complexity of conceptions and representations of race within several cultures. Themes

¹²⁸ Carrie Throm, interview with author, February 15, 2013.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

and artistic strategies include presentation of self; the history of slavery in the U.S.; the interconnected roles of gender, sexuality and race; and the ironic and humorous recasting of icons of western art to put into question the dominant historical paradigm.”¹³⁰ The museum offers a portal through which various courses can explore the theme of “understanding race” in a dynamic way. It positions itself on campus as a space for the entire academic community.

With a revamped building of over 90,000 square feet, UMMA has broadly expanded its reach beyond the Art History and Fine Arts departments to “unconventional” partners on campus. The museum has developed course-tailored educational materials that enable student access to art through the lens of their academic area. For instance, “Language Learning” initiative draws foreign language classes into the galleries and “invites students to engage with language through dynamic and experiential learning activities.”¹³¹

Some collaborations engage not only diverse participants, but new audiences. An annual concert series with the students and faculty of the School of Music, which presents a site-specific piece conceived in relation to an exhibition at UMMA, is held at the museum rather than the university’s concert hall. Borgsdorf notes that the popular event draws “new audiences compared to who would come to a typical School of Music program and new audiences for UMMA as well. The concerts connect with the artwork in a way that is less didactic and more experiential, (creating) a new window for people into art.”¹³² Projects that

¹³⁰ “LSA Winter '13 Theme Semester: ‘Understanding Race’ through Visual Culture,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/education/understandingrace.html>

¹³¹ “Language Learning at UMMA,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, http://umma.umich.edu/education/language_learning.html

¹³² Lisa Borgsdorf, interview.

impact both university and public segments enrich UMMA's identity as a center for collaboration. Borgsdorf adds:

"Because we're small, and because we think it's smart, a lot of the programming we do aims to serve both (the public and the university community). For example, a Screen Arts & Culture class made a movie about artwork for the Dialogue Table... so the end result was public. (UMMA is) deepening engagement with campus but leveraging that to create really unique experiences for the broader community."¹³³

Collaborations across disciplines are not limited to coursework, however. UMMA welcomes a wide range of extracurricular engagement opportunities. For instance, The Zell Visiting Writers Series, organized by the Department of English and the Office of the Provost, hosts talks with noteworthy writers, and The Webster Reading Series gives students in the graduate Creative Writing Program an opportunity to share their work with the public. "Flip Your Field," a series of exhibitions in which faculty from various departments investigate and present works in an entirely different discipline, is meant to forge new connections and stimulate dialogue across campus. Director Joseph Rosa told the student newspaper, "The purpose is to show students that you can be a specialist in one component, but your interest is not limited to that area. It's about expanding what is possible and opening your mind to thinking," Rosa said."¹³⁴

From the fundraising standpoint, UMMA's functioning as a "hub" for exchange across all areas of academia (made possible by the expansion) is a powerful message for cultivating ardent supporters of the university's greater mission. Throm explains,

"We talk about our partnership with the University constantly in our development efforts, and we're viewed as a huge asset for broadening interests of major University donors. I collaborate with my development colleagues across campus all the time to tap into the passions of donors holistically. Supporters of UMMA are rarely exclusive

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ "UMMA \$650,000 grant."

givers to our Museum – by far the majority of our donors support multiple units on campus and appreciate the varying means of impact their philanthropy can have.”¹³⁵

That UMMA’s development effort itself involves a multidisciplinary approach underscores the embrace of this theme internally. This is particularly valuable not only with university donors but major funders as well, given that collaboration is a rising interest.

In 2011, UMMA received a \$650,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation -- the largest grant award in the museum’s history. Rosa expressed to members that the award -- spanning a 40-month period -- “will have far-reaching implications for how UMMA can engage more broadly with the University in its mission to encourage multidisciplinary and global thinking.”¹³⁶ The prestigious foundation, which is highly regarded for its support of higher education and museums, awards funds with a long-term, capacity-building approach. Citing the foundation’s interest in UMMA’s collaborations across campus,¹³⁷ this significant grant serves as a valuable endorsement of UMMA’s multidisciplinary initiatives. For Rosa, it presents “an incredible opportunity to increase our engagement with faculty, students, and other units on campus and to transform the traditional notion, purpose, and function of a university art museum.”¹³⁸

To attract support, whether \$15 student memberships or grant awards from leading foundations, UMMA leverages its brand as a space where manifold opportunities for immersive connections with art exist for all people. With the new building as the means

¹³⁵ Carrie Throm, interview.

¹³⁶ “From the Director: Fall 2012,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/about-umma/director/2012/fall2012.html>

¹³⁷ “UMMA \$650,000 grant.”

¹³⁸ “From the Director: Spring/Summer 2011,” UMMA, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.umma.umich.edu/about-umma/director/2012/ss2012.html>

through which this depth and breadth of engagement has become possible, expanded space has translated into expanded audiences for the university museum.

Brand Value: Conveying Organizational Prestige

UMMA's extension filled one of the few remaining gaps on the University of Michigan's central campus, forming part of the "facade" of the university. Its placement and prominence is a statement on the central role of the arts at Michigan. According to Brad Taylor, the Associate Director of the University of Michigan's Museum Studies program:

"I have come to appreciate the role the Museum of Art plays as one of the critical gathering spaces for people on the Michigan campus. Given its physical location on campus and the large portico that faces onto State Street, I like to think that the Museum of Art provides a sort of 'front porch' to the university, a place where visitors are greeted, the university puts on its best face, and people are drawn out of their everyday lives and into the very special world of the university."¹³⁹

The new building received a great deal of attention for the innovative design elements that enabled but also echoed UMMA's reimagining. Praised for its "open and inviting space that orients students and visitors to the experience of the art within,"¹⁴⁰ the project earned Allied Works Architecture the prestigious American Institute of Architects National Honor Award in 2010. Besides its service to the themes of the mission as discussed earlier, the building's stature solidifies UMMA's importance at Michigan and communicates institutional prestige. In a circular way, the expansion not only expresses but enables this sense of status. For instance, UMMA can now attract and accommodate major touring exhibitions, which are typically limited to larger regional or national institutions. At the time of this case study, UMMA is hosting *El Anatsui: When I Last Wrote to You About Africa*, a

¹³⁹ Bradley Taylor, e-mail message.

¹⁴⁰ "University of Michigan Museum of Art / Allied Works Architecture."

major retrospective of the preeminent artist organized by the Museum of African Art in New York. Exhibitions of this caliber certainly augment the UMMA's status in the university museum realm and beyond.

Prestige is a valuable element of institutional identity, and for many organizations, a major aim in the branding process is conveying high standing. Aside from a state-of-the-art building that has enhanced UMMA's reputation, another major component enhances the museum's prestige is the university itself. When asked about the influence of the university's brand on UMMA's identity, Throm emphasizes:

“It plays a major, central role. The fact that UMMA is situated at one of the top public research universities in the world is a major asset for the Museum, and we feel the same is true vice-versa. UMMA is a stronger museum because of its association with the University: we are surrounded by a curious student body and a faculty with rich expertise in the humanities and arts – the possibilities for creative partnerships are endless. And likewise, UMMA can offer to the Michigan student experience a sense of the global culture that awaits them, in a way that a textbook or classroom setting can't convey alone.”¹⁴¹

In considering the extent to which UMMA promotes deeper understanding and works across disciplines on campus, this alignment may seem natural, but Throm makes clear that it is also an effort to enhance UMMA's status by association. The benefits to the university are enriching as well. On one hand, the museum represents a commitment to the arts -- certainly a draw for students across related disciplines who may see the museum as a major distinguishing feature from other universities. Borgsdorf emphasizes that the new building has generated acclaim for the broader public as well: “With the new building, UMMA has really become a destination. I've heard so many people say that they now come to the museum to bring visitors from out of town... that it represents ‘(The University of)

¹⁴¹ Carrie Throm, interview.

Michigan' to them."¹⁴² UMMA capitalizes on this sense of status with several high-profile (but free and public) events each year, including the bi-annual *UMMA After Hours*, which Borgsdorf describes as "a big open house for the entire community... that adds to the concept of having a real presence in the art community here."¹⁴³ As an illustration of the profile of such events, the most recent *After Hours* was sponsored by Fidelity Investments, a leading financial corporation.

In addition, utilizing social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr enables the museum to speak the language of the younger generation while helping to extend the brand far beyond the campus community. Social media's value as a platform for word-of-mouth information –the peer to peer sharing of ideas, opinions and experiences – seems to be fully appreciated by UMMA. The museum's social media accounts are updated consistently and are animated expressions of the museum's work that engage a spectrum of audiences. This outreach serves an array of purposes – from announcing events to sharing interesting works of art from collections or exhibitions – but in spreading the word about the museum's innovative pursuits, social media also helps bolster UMMA's reputation.

UMMA has also leveraged its prominence to establish numerous partnerships. According to Borgsdorf, "The expansion has raised the bar in terms of prestige because it enhanced the quality of the collection and the scale and diversity we are able to show. My sense is that we're sought out more than we were before as a partner, as a venue... and because of the different spaces and initiatives we have."¹⁴⁴ Whether related to programming or sponsorships, a range of partnerships is a reflection of a reputable and attractive brand.

¹⁴² Lisa Borgsdorf, interview.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Organizations are eager to align with UMMA's identity.

The building has enhanced this in numerous ways, including the type of work that can now be properly displayed and celebrated at UMMA. In particular, the embrace of contemporary art -- from bold installations to the New Media Gallery -- has really cemented the museum's identity as an enthusiastic supporter of artistic experimentation. Borgsdorf elaborates:

"It's changed the way people think about our character and what we do and we have more of a home in contemporary art now. Synergies that weren't as strong before. There wasn't such a commitment to contemporary art and more cutting-edge work before. It's clear that people are thinking of us as a partner who can give them access to this contemporary art-loving community -- (a segment) that aligns with what they want to do."¹⁴⁵

While bold curatorial vision, high-level exhibitions and innovative programming are fundamental to a museum's status, equally central are the audiences that are drawn to these opportunities for engagement, and the funders who underwrite it all. UMMA has leveraged these components of status in its reimagined brand, presenting just another example of how the new building enabled the museum to surge ahead in its field.

The Brand

It was clear from the tagline of the capital campaign -- *UMMA, Reimagined* -- that the University of Michigan Museum of Art was aiming for more than just a physical transformation when it embarked on its new building project. Four years in, its branding revolves around a commitment to deep engagement with art and a broader consideration of who might find value in a museum -- two themes that have positioned UMMA as a leader in its field. In pursuing all the possibilities of its new space, the institution has in effect

¹⁴⁵ Lisa Borgsdorf, interview.

embraced the shifting landscape of university museums. This leadership has translated into prestige for the museum (and its brand), a powerful and valuable element to leverage across development, external relations, curatorial efforts and more. The new museum initiated a new era for UMMA, but the brand identity is what has enabled this transformation to come full circle.

THE ELI AND EDYTHER BROAD ART MUSEUM AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

I. Introduction

By the 2000s, Michigan State University's 50-year-old Kresge Art Museum did not seem to be reaching its full potential. Its 6,000 square feet were inadequate, and its "introverted" presence¹⁴⁶ did little to encourage visitors. University leadership initiated a project to revamp the museum, which while modest in size and appearance held priceless objects spanning 5,000 years of human history. The fundraising effort began, as most capital campaigns do, with top stakeholders and the highest-level donors. Eli and Edythe Broad, billionaire philanthropists with a legacy of giving generously to projects at Michigan State (MSU), were approached early on.

Mr. Broad, a 1954 graduate of MSU, founded the Fortune 500 companies SunAmerica Inc. and KB Home. With his wife, the Broad name has become synonymous with philanthropic support for education, the sciences, and particularly, the arts. The Broad's paramount collection of modern and contemporary art has positioned them among the most influential figures in the art world, with Mr. Broad serving on boards including The Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Known on campus for establishing the Eli Broad College of Business and The Eli Broad School of Management at MSU (1991), the couple was also deeply involved in the university.¹⁴⁷

When approached with the opportunity to contribute toward a new Kresge Art

¹⁴⁶ "Architectural Tour: Creating a New Institution," Broad MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/tour/arch/398>.

¹⁴⁷ "About: Eli and Edythe Broad," Broad MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/about/eli-and-edythe-broad>.

Museum, the Broads responded with an unexpected idea. What if an entirely new kind of university art museum could be constructed, something so innovative that it not only expanded learning opportunities on campus but enhanced the community, both culturally and economically? Sandra Szymanski, Manager of Development and Membership at the museum, recalled, “It was Eli who saw the potential to get the students of MSU excited and help jumpstart the community with this large economic powerhouse. He then offered to donate the funds for a new art museum located on the edge of campus and the edge of the city, the perfect balance point for students of MSU and the greater community.”¹⁴⁸

The Broads’ vision aligned with the university’s goal of “advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities.”¹⁴⁹ The gift, at \$28 million, was the largest single contribution by an individual to Michigan State University¹⁵⁰ and would certainly provide the momentum for the project. In addition, the Broads offered to loan a comprehensive range of artworks via The Broad Foundation, their “lending library” that shares the couple’s significant postwar and contemporary art collection with museums around the world.¹⁵¹

An international design competition was held to select the architect for this prolific museum. Zaha Hadid, a Pritzker Prize-winning architect, was chosen to design a dynamic, state-of-the-art structure that would convey the bold and innovative vision for the museum. MSU leadership authorized construction in December 2009 for the 46,000 square-foot Eli

¹⁴⁸ Sandra Szymanski, interview with the author, February 26, 2013.

¹⁴⁹ “MSU Mission Statement,” MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://president.msu.edu/mission>.

¹⁵⁰ Patrick Cole, “Eli Broad Gives \$26 Million for Art Museum at Michigan State,” *Bloomberg News*, June 1, 2007, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=akMHZz1TmCZ8>.

¹⁵¹ “About: Eli and Edythe Broad.” Broad MSU.

and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (Broad MSU), which would open to the public in November 2012.

Early Outreach

It was clear that this landmark project, with a world-renowned architect on board and an unprecedented support from one of the most prominent names in the art world, would require a visionary leader. Michael Rush, the former director of the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University (Boston), was hired at this early stage in the museum's development. Rush brought not only the experience of managing a high-profile university art museum, but a full career of curation, scholarship and leadership within the contemporary arts. Rush was also an effective marketer and fundraiser, and went right to work promoting the vision and future impact of Broad MSU. In a guest column for Lansing's *City Pulse* newspaper a year in advance of the opening, the new director was already presenting a compelling case for the museum:

Simply put, the Broad Art Museum will be like nothing else. Culturally, artistically, architecturally, economically -- the project is poised to create a brand new landscape on all fronts... This museum is an investment. It is an investment in our local economy, in arts and culture and in the new fabric of our community weaved from a rich history.¹⁵²

This early messaging reveals that Broad MSU would be leveraged as an injection of energy; it would be a "game-changer" on campus and a cultural and economic force in the Lansing community. From the time of his hiring, Rush has applied this argument with particular emphasis in business circles. To a Lansing Regional Chamber Economic Club in

¹⁵² Michael Rush, "Get Ready for a 'game changer': The Broad is coming," *City Pulse*, January 4, 2012, <http://www.lansingcitypulse.com/lansing/article-6814-get-ready-for-a-game-changer-the-broad-is-coming.html>.

September 2012, he said in a statement that made headlines, “We know without a shadow of a doubt that we are going to have enormous community impact by virtue of this museum.”¹⁵³

Reporter Matthew Miller noted, “Rush framed (the museum) as a practical investment, the museum as a willing partner to local business.”¹⁵⁴ Even before construction was complete, future impact was already a key message for the new director.

Rush was able to spread this message widely, as he was already quite familiar with the national media and vice versa. Not only had his long career in the arts positioned him as a visible figure, but his previous role at Brandeis University’s Rose Art Museum had involved his stepping down in protest of an attempt by trustees to sell the museum’s collection -- a move that while later withdrawn -- generated international attention. It seems that the ordeal left him an even stronger spokesperson, able to deliver a compelling case for the museum, consistent yet tailored to each outlet or audience.

While Rush was skilled at managing his message of impact, he knew how to leverage the two big names -- Broad and Hadid -- as well. This intersection of art world influencers generated incredible media interest long before Broad MSU was to open. Rush was interviewed for numerous national and international publications including *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Art Newspaper*, opportunities which he used to create excitement about the museum’s potential to become equally high-profile. “We want to participate in the conversation at a high level. We have this really great opportunity, to create these synergies and dialogues,” he told *Art and Antiques Magazine*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Matthew Miller, “Michigan State’s Broad Art Museum impact ‘enormous,’ director says,” *Lansing State Journal*, September 13, 2012.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Tedd Roos, “Interview: Michael Rush, Head of Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum,” *Art and Antiquities Magazine*, accessed January 29, 2013, <http://www.artandantiquesmag.com/2012/11/michael-rush>.

On the university's end, the forthcoming museum was an expression of its own identity and mission. MSU's outreach seemed to revolve around the university's "core values"-- quality, inclusiveness and connectivity.¹⁵⁶ Broad MSU would include a top-tier, extensive collection of work from leading contemporary artists, and it would all be presented in an engaging way. This museum would be dedicated to making contemporary art accessible, which supported MSU's establishment as a land-grant university: "a commitment that we would have cutting-edge ideas be accessible to folks from ordinary backgrounds," according to Simon. Specifically, the Department of Art

...needed to be able to connect to the community in ways that we could, in fact, not simply teach people about art in a more traditional classroom setting, but be able to engage the community with art and, therefore, with our students. That's the elements of these land grant roots that we talked about for the 21st century, because there was to be a connection to community that improved quality of life.¹⁵⁷

Importantly, the cherished collection of works from The Kresge Museum would be incorporated into the Broad MSU, honoring the university's legacy of artistic inquiry while also providing a distinctive contextualization of contemporary art. Rush frequently emphasized in university publications and outlets that the collection inherited from the Kresge "...will enable the Broad MSU to explore the art of our time through the long lens of art history,"¹⁵⁸ and gave a sense that this newly conceived institution reflected the deep-set values of the university. At this early stage, the museum's most evident department connections were in the Art History and Fine Arts departments, as faculty typically served as co-hosts for artist talks and other events. It seems that plans for how the university would

¹⁵⁶ "President's Statement on Core Values," MSU, accessed January 29, 2013, <http://president.msu.edu/statements/core-values/>.

¹⁵⁷ "Architectural Tour: Lou Anna K. Simon," Broad MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/tour/arch/390>.

¹⁵⁸ Jason Meyers, "A Cultural Transformation: The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum," *MSU Alumni Magazine*, Winter 2013, 27.

engage with academic units on campus were more abstract at this point, but indications that its reach would be multidisciplinary came through in early messaging. The cutting-edge museum would, according to university President Lou Anna K. Simon, “help MSU become a one-of-a-kind university in the 21st century.”¹⁵⁹ Its impact would be far beyond the arts, representing the entire university’s forward movement.

Despite strong ties to MSU’s vision and values and the close connection to the former campus museum, there was still the acknowledgement that an audience base would have to be built from the ground up. Museum administrators recognized that they would need to cultivate supporters well before opening day. As a way of introducing Broad MSU to the Lansing community while the museum was still under construction, they created “Broad Without Walls,” a series of free, public programs out of an offsite location in downtown Lansing. Dubbed the “Summer Annex,” the space held film screenings, family days, community art projects and other events during the summer before the museum’s completion. It enabled museum staff to connect with the public and increase awareness of what the future held for Broad MSU. It was particularly valuable in providing a sense of the audience the museum would soon be serving on campus. Once the 2012-2013 academic year began and over 48,000¹⁶⁰ students were back in school, Broad MSU integrated into campus life through activities such as screen-printing workshops for “Welcome Week” posters and participating in the homecoming parade with a float decorated with help from its new student support group, MSU Students for the Broad Art Museum (MSUBAM). As the November 9-11, 2012 opening weekend drew closer, the anticipation was mounting, as people had already

¹⁵⁹ Derek Blalock, “Broad Impact,” *The State News*, November 11, 2012, <http://statenews.com/article/2012/11/broad-impact>.

¹⁶⁰ “MSU Facts,” MSU, accessed February 4, 2013, <http://www.msu.edu/about/thisismsu/facts.html>.

been able to connect with the new museum in a range of ways.

Brand Development

With the culminating efforts of an enthusiastic Rush and the proud university, along with the grassroots work of the museum's curators and educators, Broad MSU built interest and momentum around its launch. In that process, an identity took shape. Less than six months in at the time of this case study, the museum's brand now has a strength and clarity that seems more typical of established institutions. This case study aims to investigate the themes that make up Broad MSU's brand, and the way the brand is leveraged in outreach and development efforts.

First, the case study considers how the building is presented as a metaphor for what Broad MSU represents. From its placement on campus to its provocative facade, Hadid's design not only enables the museum's mission to be realized, but conveys its vision. This study will assess how Broad MSU's overall design represents the focus and future direction of the institution, and how this brand component is leveraged to generate interest and support around the future of this new museum.

Secondly, the case study looks at the ways in which the museum reframes what is meant by multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional in the university museum sector. Positioning itself as both a local and a global force, Broad MSU seeks to be a center for exploration and exchange of international issues for the public and university community. The study considers how the brand aligns with the university's vision of international engagement while also adopting messaging around local impact.

Finally, the case study examines the way The Broad MSU has shaped and applied its brand to build interest, involvement and investment since its opening – a primary goal in this time of transition. The role and value of branding in the process of generating support “from the ground up” as a new museum (and new concept) will be assessed.

II. Themes of Identity

Future Focus: The Building as Metaphor

One of the preeminent themes of Broad MSU’s brand is the building itself. Zaha Hadid’s bold design seems to signal that the work inside will provoke and inspire. The “architectural landmark” makes a statement about the museum’s vision and direction. President Simon noted in the alumni magazine, “We’ve described this design as symbolizing our trajectory into the future, given the nature of the architecture and the architect we selected.”¹⁶¹ Being future-focused in design, content and application signals a commitment even beyond the arts: “It’s a place that announces Michigan State’s deep desire to be fully embedded in the 21st century,” Rush says.¹⁶²

The opportunities for exhibition and programming that accompany the state-of-the-art space help realize this 21st-century vision. “Museums for art must provide an opportunity for the unknown and untested, and for new technologies and media to be explored,” the architect has stated.¹⁶³ From a New Media Gallery to an Education Wing, “The Zaha Hadid-designed

¹⁶¹ “A Cultural Transformation,” 24.

¹⁶² “Spartans Will 360: The Art of Transformation,” MSU, accessed February 20, 2013, <http://report.president.msu.edu/360/broad/video>.

¹⁶³ “A Cultural Transformation,” 26.

building is absolutely a key player in the programming we offer at the museum,” says Leyna Lightman, Manager of Education.¹⁶⁴

Many of the elements of the space symbolize the vision for a 21st-Century university museum. On its website, Broad MSU features a multi-faceted architectural tour of the aspects of the building that enable immersive experiences to take shape. From Art History department faculty to Hadid’s leading designers, a range of perspectives present the museum as an innovative blueprint come to life. In these extensive interviews, museum staff highlight these features in relation to their work. Registrar Rachel Vargas explains the glass doors to the object study center and education wing: “To be able to make elements of the building as well as the work that we do at the museum clearly visible and accessible to the public is... a testament to our belief that first and foremost, as a university museum we should represent the museum as a teaching instrument of sorts...that’s already been factored into the design of the building.”¹⁶⁵ Deputy Director Min Jung Kim adds, “Because we’re a university art museum, we thought it very important when we were planning the museum to have a study center, an education wing, and a flexible storage area so that we could make the permanent collection... more accessible to students, faculty, scholars and visitors.”¹⁶⁶ Noting the placement of the Education Wing, she adds, “Most education wings in many museums are relegated to the basement... the fact that it’s here on the ground floor in this sun-filled room, visible from the Grand River Avenue side.... shows the museum and the university’s commitment to education.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Leyna Lightman, in e-mail message to author, February 25, 2013.

¹⁶⁵ “Architectural Tour: Public and Private Space,” Broad MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/tour/arch/457>.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

Broad MSU's placement on campus is another element that very intentionally represents the commitment to public and academic communities and the underlying effort to connect both spheres. The prime location is "a decision driven in large part by a desire to connect the new museum with the community and to enhance the economic and cultural development of the region at the same time that it transformed the cultural and architectural landscape of MSU's campus."¹⁶⁸

Particular features of the building symbolize this unifying identity. "Hadid very intentionally designed the building to be open to the East Lansing community by incorporating many strategically placed windows and even including two primary entrances – one facing downtown and the other facing campus," says Leyna Lightman.¹⁶⁹ While every other academic building at MSU opens to the center of the campus, the museum would serve as a gateway between the public and the university. In an architectural tour, Rush explains:

This is a new type of agora – the place where people can meet, can discuss, and they can go into a building and then exit the building and still remain in the atmosphere of the museum, engaging in conversation, engaging in laughter... This is not your typical removed, reverential situation where... you enter into this temple to art... This experience here is one that's much more kinetic... and one that invites participation.¹⁷⁰

In the architectural tour, Curator of Contemporary Art Alison Gass adds,

I think that that continued insistence on the connection between the interiority and the exteriority... alleviate(s) the way that a museum insists that you're somewhere different. Traditionally, you go to a museum, you sort of stand at a remove from the work, and you admire. We want this museum to be a place where you don't leave the world you know... We really want there to be a fluid connection... you have all the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ "A Cultural Transformation," 24.

¹⁶⁹ Leyna Lightman, e-mail message.

¹⁷⁰ "Architectural Tour: Designing the Museum," Broad MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/tour/arch/402>.

information you know from your life, and you apply it to what you're seeing in the museum. You use it as your own tool to interact with the work.¹⁷¹

The building, then, is a manifestation of the museum's reframing of what a university museum means in terms of access and engagement. As an architectural wonder it is also a statement about the university's trajectory into the future and art's major role in that momentum. In her 2013 President's Report, Simon emphasized,

Accessible to both campus and community, it pushes boundaries and challenges visitors to do likewise with their own preconceptions. What better way to showcase MSU's commitment to world-class innovation, global vision, and transformative opportunity? The Broad MSU will be a hub for excellence in education, artistic entrepreneurship, and global connectivity. It demonstrates the MSU ethos of connecting dreaming to doing, of applying our drive and hard work to innovative approaches.¹⁷²

For development staff, messaging revolving around the physical wonder of the museum was naturally central to the capital campaign phase. Now that the museum has settled into programming and exhibitions, this messaging has shifted to celebrate the building's role in empowering such a change. "The museum is a transformative project that will alter the cultural landscape of MSU and the state of Michigan now and in the future," reads the fundraising webpage.¹⁷³ "The building is extremely valuable from a development standpoint," Sandra Syzmanski emphasizes.¹⁷⁴ This incredibly distinct structure enables an entirely new approach to art, a compelling concept for donors.

¹⁷¹ "Architectural Tour: Connections to Everyday Life," Broad MSU, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/tour/arch/444>.

¹⁷² "World Class Building for a World Class Place," *Spartans Will 360: President's Report*, accessed February 20, 2013, <http://report.president.msu.edu/360/broad/presidents-comments/#sthash.FaEhAYr1.dpuf>.

¹⁷³ "Join," Broad MSU, accessed January 27, 2013, <http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/join>.

¹⁷⁴ Sandra Szymanski, interview.

Hadid's building has become a vehicle through which the mission is not only realized but expressed as a brand, in both messaging as described above and also in visual language. The architectural elements are fully embraced by Broad MSU's graphic design efforts (see Figure 2). To start, the museum's logo incorporates the most recognizable features of Hadid's design: diagonal lines and geometric forms. This bold aesthetic evokes the contemporary focus and forward course of the museum across numerous materials and platforms. There is no visual reference to MSU or any hint of academic relation -- no school colors, no traditional typefaces; Broad MSU's design approach appears accessible from multiple standpoints, academic or otherwise. By appropriating the multifaceted building -- with its peaks, folds and "fins" -- in its brand design, Broad MSU's physical elements translate into a multifaceted sense of purpose. The visual aspects of the brand convey a cutting-edge, dynamic place for the arts that exists not strictly as an academic institution but as a space for all.



Figure 2. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum logo.

Expanding Reach: Local/Global Platforms

In its feature on the Broad MSU, Alumni Magazine proclaimed, "a new, iconic structure puts MSU front and center on the international cultural map while enriching life on campus."¹⁷⁵ This concept of local and global relevance is a major theme of Broad MSU's

identity, particularly because the museum is an intersection of two influential brands -- the university and the Broads -- each known for their impact on the individual and the international.

For Szymanski, the global positioning of the museum is parallel to the university's ambitions. "MSU is an international school," she emphasizes -- 13.5% of students are not from the U.S.¹⁷⁶ She adds,

MSU has many projects going on internationally from water supply, to agriculture, education and many many more. There are also many veteran and upcoming contemporary artists emerging in these same parts of the world -- artists the world (and the Broads) are taking an interest in. It is through art that we bridge the gap and bring the two together, showing how arts and culture is a direct reflection of society and can bring light to issues that would otherwise go unknown.¹⁷⁷

MSU's emerging identity as a truly international institution is evident in its recent campaign, *Spartans Will 360*, themed around MSU's projects and impact abroad. Broad MSU was featured prominently in the campaign, giving attention to Rush's statement that "There's been a clear expression of a genuine global interest on the part of MSU and wanting this museum to be part of that global identity of the university." The feature reads:

It's Rush's desire to have the museum be the artistic wing of the global mission of the university. In that vein, he plans to feature the finest creative practice from artists throughout the world, especially from areas where MSU has a strong presence in terms of programs and alumni, including China, South Korea, continental Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Russia.¹⁷⁸

"There is no subject in the modern world that is alien to the interest of international artists," Rush adds. "Artists are engaging science, engineering, new media and

¹⁷⁵ "A Cultural Transformation," 24.

¹⁷⁶ "MSU Facts."

¹⁷⁷ Sandra Szymanski, interview.

¹⁷⁸ "Michael Rush," *Spartans Will 360: President's Report*, accessed February 20, 2013, <http://report.president.msu.edu/360/broad/michael-rush>.

communications, land, agriculture, design, and on and on. Our doors will be wide open for collaborations and research opportunities.’¹⁷⁹ Acknowledging art as the connection point between international issues and ideas is a strong thread throughout Broad MSU’s messaging, shaping a brand that represents cultural exchange and understanding -- all the way back to Lansing. Gass stated: “The museum’s programming will engage every possible audience -- simultaneously exploring the specifics of this place and broadening to illuminate the conditions of diverse communities around the globe... This expansive focus mirrors the ways in which local issues confronting us in East Lansing and throughout the United State impact and echo the challenges facing a global community.”¹⁸⁰ Through art, the global becomes local.

International reach translates into local impact in other ways, both cultural and economic. Broad MSU “...symbolizes a major cultural transformation for the university, the region and the state. The introduction of this important entity puts MSU, Greater Lansing and all of Michigan on the map as a major center for the study and appreciation of international contemporary art and architecture.”¹⁸¹ As a cultural hub, an important component of the museum’s “local identity” is that it will spur economic development in the area.

Recognizing the value of economic impact in its marketing and development efforts, Broad MSU commissioned a study to project visitorship. The report estimated that the museum would attract about 150,000 attendees each year, including 30,000 first-time visitors -- “cultural tourists” who would travel to Lansing specifically for the museum.¹⁸² With this

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ “A Cultural Transformation,” 28.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁸² Ibid, 25.

data in hand, the museum augmented its outreach to the business community. "We want the business community to see us as their friend in economic development," says Rush. "We're a singular cultural presence that can contribute to a stronger economy."¹⁸³

The message stuck. Matthew Dolan of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, "Mr. Broad hopes the space will have a 'mini-Bilbao effect,' drawing cultural tourists who flock to architectural icons like the Frank Gehry's titanium-covered Guggenheim Museum in Spain. Museum officials said the new space should... pump \$5.75 million into the economy annually."¹⁸⁴ In an article entitled "Michigan State's Broad Art Museum impact 'enormous,' director says," Matthew Miller writes, "the hope is that a strong art community will grow up around it, anchored by the university's master of fine arts program."¹⁸⁵ And Leslie Donaldson, Executive Director of the Arts Council of Greater Lansing, commented in a *Lansing Chamber of Commerce* feature,

The Broad Art Museum not only physically enhances the arts and cultural landscape of Greater Lansing, but its programming and emphasis on contemporary culture, ideas, and international issues will ignite creativity and innovation in our region, leading to increased economic and educational opportunities.¹⁸⁶

From boosting business for local restaurants and hotels to attracting new venues like galleries and artist studios, the museum emphasizes that its local impact will be transformative. By projecting both immediate and long-term economic impact, Broad MSU

¹⁸³ Ann M. Kammerer, "Broad Museum Brightens Cultural and Business Horizons in Mid-Michigan's City of the Arts," *Lansing Business Monthly*, February 2013, <http://www.lansingbusinessmonthly.com/articles/237-february-2013/2832-broad-museum-brightens-cultural-and-business-horizons-in-mid-michigans-city-of-the-arts.html>.

¹⁸⁴ Matthew Dolan, "A Mini Bilbao' Opens in Michigan," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 8, 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204349404578102692551482064.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

¹⁸⁵ "Michigan State's Broad Art Museum impact 'enormous.'"

¹⁸⁶ "The Broad Art Museum - Transforming the Face of MSU and the Region," Lansing Regional Chamber, accessed February 20, 2013, <http://www.lansingchamber.org/article/broad-art-museum-transforming-face-msu-and-region#sthash.VIZhMW5T.dpuf>.

has developed a message that resonates with key groups around the city and beyond. The museum conveys its cultural power through its international reach and local impact.

Brand Value: Building Support from the Ground Up

In terms of brand development, there are many appealing aspects of being a completely new institution. To a certain degree, initial interest is easy to secure -- it was a guarantee that the MSU and Lansing communities would take note of the major project. Much of the messaging during the “rollout” phase -- as explored in the first section of this case study -- involved long-term vision but was based on short-term ambitions like introducing the institution to the community and meeting the fundraising goals before opening day. This successful phase required strategy and savvy, but benefited from a curious audience. However, the long-term goals of maintaining interest and cultivating support are inherent challenges for Broad MSU, as it did not have an existing audience or donor base. There were no members or volunteers to inherit, nor any longtime funders. All of these stakeholders would need to be generated from scratch. Perhaps in no other way was the brand identity of Broad MSU more valuable; it presented a compelling and consistent message that could be leveraged in both outreach and development efforts. Considering the magnetism of the building and the values-based local-international theme, this section seeks to explore how the brand was deployed to build support from the ground up.

On the audience side, the “Broad Without Walls” initiative, which presented art activities and events offsite while the museum was under construction, was an important step in introducing Broad MSU to the community. Maintaining those kinds of grassroots connections became the charge of educators and curators once the museum opened. They

worked to continue programming that was as interactive and “community based” as the summer series, which had been supported by many different kinds of spaces engaging with art. In this sense, the museum became very focused on the welcoming effort. After all, at an early stage, as Szymanski explains, the widest net must be cast because there is not yet a fully formed sense of visitorship. She notes that main challenges are “not knowing who to approach, not having a base to start with...There’s no way to properly target your audience because you don’t know who your audience is...you are speaking to the entire population.”¹⁸⁷ While she adds that “It is slowly becoming clearer and clearer in regards to audience and focus,” it will be some time before the museum is able to “to project numbers, figures, income or possible successes”¹⁸⁸ and develop informed strategy toward audience development. However, this openness to outreach has brought several benefits:

We are finding ways to connect art to people/organizations who traditionally wouldn’t have been in the ‘expected’ audience. Whether it’s through programs, the architecture, or the art itself, people in East Lansing and the entire mid-Michigan region are discovering they really do love art and it’s creating a much more diverse, non-typical base for us. This is increasing our possibilities for sponsorship, membership, and giving.¹⁸⁹

Part of “extending the net” means reconsidering the ways in which people engage with art, and Broad MSU has worked to position itself as a space where art can be approached from all kinds of reference points. For instance, March Madness, the annual college basketball tournament, has inspired “Art History Slam.” Museum educators chose 64 works of art from the collection (the same number of teams selected to compete for the basketball championship) and posted the objects on a blog called “March Madness at the

¹⁸⁷ Sandra Szymanski, interview.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Broad.” Viewers are invited to comment on their favorites in order to advance their pieces of choice to the “Sweet 16.” Keeping with the pace of its sports counterpart, the Art History Slam will convene in the final week of the tournament, which will enable voters to share their reasons for selecting particular works with others. The winning piece will be then placed on view in the museum. This example illustrates the out-of-the-box thinking that the museum has embraced to develop its audience.

Social media has played a significant role in outreach to new audiences. From sharing updates on the building’s progress with international followers via Twitter, to engaging visitors in one-on-one conversations on Facebook, the museum has utilized these 21st-Century channels to cultivate a network of supporters. Across all its social media platforms, Broad MSU’s visual identity is particularly striking. Its dynamic aesthetic language, informed by Hadid’s design, is showcased through logos, images, photographs, event announcements, and more. The museum uses this signature design in spreading awareness, developing interest and connecting directly with supporters around the world, shaping a critical component of its outreach efforts.

A donor base is a crucial component for any cultural institution, as it demonstrates community support and diversity of funding. While Broad MSU was starting from scratch on this front, its parent institution did provide a starting point. Development efforts have leveraged Broad MSU’s identity as a “teaching museum” deeply tied to the values of the university. This approach is an effective appeal for donors who are already MSU supporters, especially as it enhances learning opportunities as well as the status of the university.

Along with starting from scratch, the development effort faced another challenge: raising money for a museum named after one of the world’s wealthiest arts patrons. In *The*

New York Times article “Who Wants to Donate to a Billionaire’s Museum?” the Broad MSU was mentioned directly in questioning whether a rich benefactor’s namesake museum inspires or discourages others to give. “The name on the door suggests that no matter how much a donor contributes, the credit will go to the Broads,” the author wrote.¹⁹⁰ More so, convincing potential donors that the museum relies upon contributions to operate on a daily basis -- that it is not a pet project of a benefactor with unlimited funds -- is a hurdle. The development department and the director clarify often that Broad MSU must raise its own operational funds. “We are in constant heavy fundraising mode,” Rush told *The Art Newspaper*.¹⁹¹

On the other hand, for those potential donors familiar with the Broads’ role in the art world, a museum in their name could provoke interest and convey legitimacy. The status of the collection and the force of the vision behind the museum would be a compelling association -- perhaps enough to encourage a contribution. Szymanski argues, “Names like Hadid and Broad garner excitement. Pair that with an innovative looking museum and a staff that’s looking to go places and do things that other museums haven’t done yet, or at least, not in the way we are, and it makes it very easy to talk about with donors.”¹⁹²

At the time of this case study, Broad MSU is just four months into its actual operations as a museum -- and thus, still in the very initial phases of building its audience and donor base. Over time, the former will become a segment of the latter. Over time, data will be generated on audience demographics, which will help guide programming decisions.

¹⁹⁰ Fred A. Bernstein, “Who Wants to Donate to a Billionaire’s Museum?” *The New York Times*, March 14, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/15/arts/artsspecial/trade-offs-in-museum-naming-rights.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

¹⁹¹ Helen Stoilas, “Director aims to bring the world to Michigan,” *The Art Newspaper*, November 8, 2013, <http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Director+aims+to+bring+the+world+to+Michigan/27981>

¹⁹² Sandra Szymanski, interview.

Evidence of impact -- from visitor numbers to the economic influence on area businesses -- will emerge and become a valuable tool for fundraising. And over time, a general sense will solidify that Broad MSU is a valuable part of the fabric of Lansing and the state of Michigan, bolstering a core component the museum's identity.

The Brand

The components of the Broad MSU's launch -- the spectacular building, a renowned namesake and a distinguished academic partner -- did much to elevate museum in its infancy. The communications and development efforts leveraged these aspects of the museum's identity in tandem with innovative programming and a top-tier art collection. The major themes of Broad MSU's brand reflect the ambition of this unique institution. With all eyes on the Hadid structure, marketers and fundraisers took advantage and found various ways to communicate how the building conveyed the new museum's vision and future potential. The brand also incorporated the museum's local commitment and global reach as a major theme, partly as a way of expressing alignment with its main stakeholder. Aware of the challenges of building an audience and donor base from the ground up, Broad MSU utilized the branding process to generate enthusiasm and support for this innovative university museum.

THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF DREXEL UNIVERSITY

I. Introduction

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (“the Academy”) was formed in 1812 by a group of science enthusiasts interested in collecting objects and literature related to natural history. Early gatherings included members John James Audubon, Charles Darwin and other leading naturalists of the time. In the decades to follow, strong leadership and patronage, as well as major bequests of books and specimen, helped the Academy make its mark in the city well-recognized as the “center of science” in the United States. As it grew and developed throughout the 20th century, the Academy broadened its focus beyond research to encompass public education and more open dialogue, becoming a true center for discovery and exchange.

As the Academy neared its bicentennial year (2012), its leaders recognized that the institution did not have the resources necessary to leverage new opportunities and the future growth they envisioned. The board began considering the benefits of an institutional partner - an organization sharing in its commitment to inquiry and discovery with the additional layer of financial and political capital. In 2011, the Academy’s Board selected a partner, voting unanimously to affiliate with Drexel University, a Philadelphia university with a strong research tradition. In September of that year, the Academy became officially known as “The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University,” operating as a not-for-profit subsidiary of the academic institution. It would retain its own board and endowment, with several university administrators joining as trustees. The president of the Academy would now report to the president of Drexel.

The affiliation “unites two of Philadelphia’s most respected research institutions and promotes discovery, learning, and civic engagement in the natural and environmental sciences,”¹⁹³ Academy materials announced. In a letter to members, Academy President and CEO George W. Gephardt, Jr. wrote, “We determined that collaborating with a science-led, university-based partner would allow us to advance our science and museum more innovatively and comprehensively than we could on our own.”¹⁹⁴ Significant resources made possible through the alliance would lead to joint research opportunities and enhanced programming and exhibits as The Academy entered its third century. From Drexel University’s standpoint, the affiliation was also a growth opportunity

“...to take a national leadership role in environmental science and environmental policy, and grow the scope, capacity and reputation of the natural sciences at the University. It connects our stellar faculty to resources that will help them make even greater contributions to the natural and environmental sciences, and moves the University, and particularly our College of Arts and Sciences, to the next level in research and teaching.”¹⁹⁵

Learning opportunities for students would also be enhanced with access to the Academy’s researchers and collections of over 18 million objects. In addition, the Academy’s long history of engaging diverse public audiences meant that new constituencies would now be exposed to the university.

Identity and Partnership

¹⁹³ “What’s Next?” Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013, <http://www.ansp.org/explore/online-exhibits/stories/whats-next/>

¹⁹⁴ Drexel University, “The Academy of Natural Sciences and Drexel Announce an Historic Affiliation,” news release, May 19, 2011, <http://drexel.edu/now/news-media/releases/archive/2011/May/The-Academy-of-Natural-Sciences-and-Drexel-Announce-an-Historic-Affiliation/>

¹⁹⁵ Drexel University, “Drexel and The Academy of Natural Sciences,” President’s Message, May 19, 2011, <http://www.drexel.edu/president/messages/message/DrexelAndAcademy/>

Before embarking on the search for an institutional partner, the Academy's leadership clarified several "core values" that they considered "critical to the success of any partnership," including mission and identity.¹⁹⁶ Given its extensive history, the Academy's commitment to advancing the study and exploration of the natural sciences was deeply embedded in its identity. Education and access were the foundation of its established brand. As the bicentennial challenged the organization to balance legacy with vision for the future, the Drexel alliance added an additional layer to the brand. In order to negotiate these dual challenges and initiate this exciting new chapter, the Academy embarked on a strategic planning process.

The Academy's "Sustainable Strategic Plan" clarifies mission and identity and sets a foundation for the next five years. The process, which involved Academy leadership, trustees and staff, Drexel leadership and "influential stakeholders," was developed "within the context of the University's recently approved Plan, so the Academy and Drexel can fully leverage the potential of (the) collaboration."¹⁹⁷ While the plan paralleled some of Drexel's own strategic initiatives, it was at the same time an opportunity to solidify its independent identity. As later expressed to stakeholders, the plan "outlines an exciting and ambitious vision for the Academy—one that builds creative collaborations between the Academy and Drexel while ensuring that the Academy remains a leader in biodiversity and environmental science."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ "The Dinosaur Meets the Dragon." *Academy Frontiers*, Summer 2011, 8-9.

¹⁹⁷ Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, *Five Year Sustainable Strategic Plan: 2012-2017*, November 1, 2012, i.

¹⁹⁸ Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, *Strategic Plan Affiliation Successes*, February 2012.

In its previous strategic plan (2007), the Board had “re-adopted” the Academy’s original mission -- the version created by its founders in 1812. The statement “The encouragement and cultivation of science” was embraced for its simplicity and sincerity.¹⁹⁹ Just five years later, The Academy unveiled a new mission in the strategic plan: “We advance research, education, and public engagement in biodiversity and environmental science,”²⁰⁰ emphasizing a commitment to inquiry and discovery. As part of the vital strategic planning process, the mission statement solidified identity, a major step in initiating this new chapter.

The mission was articulated further through the plan’s outlining of vision and values, forming the foundation for the institution’s identity going forward. Here, the core tenets of “who we are” become evident. The Academy’s vision incorporated three statements, including “The new Academy will be *the* destination in the region to interact with our changing world.” This underscores that the partnership would enable “world-class scientists, research, and collections (to) create the leading academic experience focused on experiential learning of biodiversity, earth, and environmental science.”²⁰¹ In these vision statements, reputation is central as a means to achieve mission; the Academy’s high standing makes the advancement of research, education and engagement possible. The third statement -- “Every Academy experience will have an educational impact” -- succinctly emphasizes the organization’s primary aim.

¹⁹⁹ “Celebrating Our Past, Embracing Our Future.” *Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia Annual Report*, 2007, 3.

²⁰⁰ *Sustainable Strategic Plan*, 3.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Another layer of identity is laid out in the institutional values, the “guiding principles that will serve to shape the direction of the strategic plan.”²⁰² At this level, expressions of a brand are clearly identified. One statement reads, “A core component of the Academy’s identity is an authentic focus on real science: ‘Science lives here.’”²⁰³ Others (there are nine) address enhanced visitor experience, quality educational experiences for all ages, and partnership opportunities. Notably, the strategic plan also includes “shared values” with Drexel University, stating, “We embrace the core values of our partner as we frame our strategic initiatives.”²⁰⁴ These shared values indicate not as much an alignment but a parallel interpretation of Drexel’s broader vision.

In the goals section, strategies for implementing this reimagined identity shaped by mission, vision and values are articulated. The first goal: “Create an organizational structure that builds a fiscally healthy business and engaged employee culture that leverages brand and identity.”²⁰⁵ The plan acknowledges that in a time of transition, having a strong internal embrace of the brand is particularly valuable. Before identity is expressed outwardly, it must resonate within the organization. While each department is charged with expressing the identity of the museum through different means, the tenets of the brand remain solidly in place via the strategic plan.

Brand Development

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ *Sustainable Strategic Plan*, 4.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 5.

The *Sustainable Strategic Plan* sets the foundation for the Academy's new brand by looking to the future to establish core tenets -- mission, vision, values -- while referencing the identity rooted in its 200-year history. It also leverages Drexel University's identity through "shared values" that help direct strategies and goals. Several themes emerge from the strategic plan as well as the campaign around the affiliation's announcement, which point to the makeup of the brand going forward. This study examines how predominant themes of the brand -- engagement for all, expanded opportunities for discovery, and a leadership in the field of natural sciences -- are augmented by the partnership. The author seeks to determine how the Academy has leveraged its alliance with Drexel University in the expression of its mission and identity.

The engagement of audiences with the Academy's vast collection had always been an important focus of the organization, but with its new partner and new mission to follow, public outreach and access became the focus. With this "education-for-all" ambition, the Academy has assumed the goal of becoming "the premier learning lab in the Philadelphia region for the natural and environmental sciences"²⁰⁶ -- a "public stage for science."²⁰⁷ This case study will investigate the ways in which the Academy expresses this vision as an element of the brand.

A second component of the Academy's reimagined brand is its expanding research capacity and influence. The affiliation produced instant constituents -- Drexel students and faculty -- who are already engaging with the collections and collaborating with Academy researchers at an advanced level. Reversely, the Academy's research staff benefit from the opportunities and resources only possible through a leading research university. This case

²⁰⁶ *Sustainable Strategic Plan*, 6.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, i.

study will examine how the Academy is shaping its brand around the research “powerhouse”²⁰⁸ formed in the alliance, and the expanding reach it has on campus.

Finally, the Academy’s goal in solidifying its reputation as a leader in the field of natural sciences can be understood through its branding approach. Several elements contribute to this standing: its top-tier collections and research; its location in Philadelphia, “a city central to the advancement of scientific research and education;”²⁰⁹ and the sustainability of the Academy’s organizational path, bolstered by the new partnership. Throughout this case study, these messages of reputation and identity will be explored across programming, marketing, development and more.

II: Themes of Identity

In order to examine components of the brand for the reimagined Academy of Natural Sciences, it is necessary to consider how the organization positioned itself through the bicentennial campaign, which marked the end of one chapter and the beginning of the Drexel alliance. In speaking with staff and reviewing marketing and development materials, the bicentennial seemed to grant a sense of brand steadiness in this time of major transition. The 200-year milestone provided an opportunity for the organization to leverage its legacy as the core of its identity in order to ignite enthusiasm for its “Third Century.”²¹⁰ While the initial stages of the alliance were underway, a year-long campaign including special events and programs celebrated “The Academy at 200.” A feature exhibition of the same name

²⁰⁸ “Creating a Scientific Powerhouse in Philadelphia.” *Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia Annual Report*, 2011, 3.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 1.

²¹⁰ “Creating a Scientific Powerhouse in Philadelphia,” 1.

commemorated “the Academy’s extraordinary collections and two centuries of scientific exploration. It celebrates the institution’s groundbreaking discoveries of the past and present and provides a glimpse into the future of one of the world’s great natural history museums.”²¹¹ A celebration of this magnitude required a branding process of its own. The milestone was expressed with its own logo, which concurrently served as a bridge between the pre- and post-affiliation period. “The Academy at 200” campaign generated significant attention and became a platform from which the organization could “roll out” its partnership messaging.

The campaign’s theme of looking back and looking forward paralleled the intensive planning and goal-setting process going on internally. The enthusiasm generated by the celebration also encouraged the new partners to be ambitious in their vision for the Academy. Jacquie Genovesi, Senior Director of Education at the Academy and a primary player in the strategic planning process, explained,

What the Academy is doing is celebrating its history but at the same time moving towards the future. And what I think our affiliation has helped us to do is taking large jumps in innovation and creativity to reach what a natural science museum could be... It’s not enough to (exist) for the sake of a collection. It’s really looking to our community and what they want and where the field is going. What does the next great natural science museum look like?²¹²

By galvanizing community support in the year-long bicentennial celebration, the Academy had generated significant interest in the new partnership. But despite this high-profile campaign, there were still assurances to be made that the alliance with Drexel University would not overpower the Academy’s identity. After all, it was a beloved

²¹¹ The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, “Bicentennial Festivities Begin March 24,” news release, March 7, 2012, <http://www.ansp.org/about/press-room/releases/2012/bicentennial-weekend/>

²¹² Jacqueline Genovesi, interview with author, February 4, 2013.

institution with which a wide range of constituents felt connection. Vice President of Institutional Advancement Amy Miller Marvin noted,

Ensuring that the Academy retained its own identity and brand was an important part of the affiliation and was written into the affiliation agreement. We worked very closely with our Drexel colleagues, a marketing consultant, and a PR firm to help us manage the affiliation announcement and rollout to our members, donors, staff, and the general public.²¹³

Marvin's emphasis on the variety of stakeholders underscores a central branding challenge embedded in any organizational transition: the reality that different groups will respond to change in different ways. When the transition is a partnership, these groups essentially double. The Academy teamed up with Drexel to ensure all messaging was carefully considered. For instance, the Academy's past donors would need to understand how the affiliation would impact the organization's financial goals. While the partnership was pursued in part to increase resources to the Academy, the organization would still need to generate a significant portion of its annual funding needs itself. As indicated in the sections to follow, the team was able to leverage exciting new opportunities that stemmed from the partnership to invigorate donors. "Our challenge has been to ensure that our donors know that their support is still necessary, but we've seen a steady increase in donor support since the affiliation," notes Marvin.²¹⁴

Crafting the new brand's messaging for audiences was another major undertaking. Fortunately, the partnership provided enhanced tools and new resources for outreach and engagement. Communications Director Carolyn Belardo explains,

There are many new opportunities to promote the Academy and its research and public programming through the university's many communications vehicles, public events, large communications staff, collaboration, and press contacts, including

²¹³ Amy Miller Marvin, interview with author, February 13, 2013.

²¹⁴ Marvin, interview.

national press. The university is a highly visible national university system and being affiliated with them now is raising the Academy's profile considerably, which is a major goal of this office.²¹⁵

Belardo emphasizes that Drexel's communications support not only enables the Academy to communicate with the university community in an informed way, but that the university's visibility will help cultivate a much broader interest in the Academy. While the majority of the Academy's initiatives are handled by in-house staff, having Drexel's communications team as a partner is a valuable asset for promoting exhibitions, news and programs at a new level.

The strategic plan, being a team effort itself, benefited from the perspectives of communications, education and development staff from both partner organizations. Thus, the strategies and goals outlined in the document created a foundation from which the Academy's brand could be reimagined but also implemented effectively. While this nascent partnership is still requiring adjustments and alterations along the way, Genovesi notes that "Where we have institutional clarity is with our mission. We can present that in multiple ways and in different layers."²¹⁶ The mission is the guide-star, the core of the Academy's identity. This study explores three central themes of the new brand: engagement for all; expanded opportunities for discovery; and leadership in the field.

Future Focus: Engagement for All

One of the major themes of the Academy's brand is its message that it is a place for people of diverse ages and backgrounds to explore the natural sciences. Using terms like "town square" to describe this public orientation, the Academy aims to make science

²¹⁵ Carolyn Belardo, interview with author, February 7, 2013.

²¹⁶ Genovesi, interview.

accessible and engaging for all visitors. One of the goals of the strategic plan, “Create a sense of wonder about the workings of the natural world through the creation of engaging, authentic, and memorable experiences that allow visitors to connect with one another,”²¹⁷ highlights this priority.

Through its offerings and the marketing and development efforts that promote them, the Academy takes two main approaches as a “public stage for science:”²¹⁸ inventive programs for children through family-oriented programs and school events, and advanced learning opportunities and casual events for adults designed to make science fun and interactive. The Academy promotes this theme of “engagement for all” extensively, while simultaneously leveraging the concept “science tailored for *you*.” From primary school students to senior citizens, the message is meaningful engagement.

In school-orientated programs alone, the Academy serves over 50,000 school children each year (including a weekly homeschooler’s program) in both museum-based and off-site programming.²¹⁹ Touchable objects, live animals and other tools encourage an interactive experience. The organization also hosts a range of innovative family programs, from the weekend festival *Paleopalooza* to the *Safari Night* sleepover party. The aim to “create a sense of wonder” around the natural sciences is realized through these immersive experiences.

Engagement of youth is a predominant theme in the Academy’s marketing and development efforts. From the website features to the member magazine *Frontiers* to

²¹⁷ *Sustainable Strategic Plan*, 10.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, i.

²¹⁹ “Annual Fund.” Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://ansp.org/get-involved/support/annual-fund/>

Facebook posts, images and descriptions of children connecting with the natural sciences are plentiful and used with emphasis. In the majority of examples, a child is interacting with an object from the Academy's collection. In concert, these visuals seem to present an expression of wonder and childlike curiosity. When the Academy presents such images with the phrase "fun for all ages," it works in two directions: the Academy makes clear that it is accessible to young visitors, while perhaps inspiring adults to engage with the sciences in this genuine way. Still, there is no mistaking that children are a primary force in the work of the Academy.

As the Academy's focus on youth education is a cornerstone of its brand, it is a primary message in development efforts. Leveraging the value of engagement with science at an early age, the Academy has garnered significant corporate support for its youth initiatives. The Academy's development department presents a range of sponsorship opportunities in this realm, including a selection of "corporate partnerships" that enable companies to align with the theme "engagement for all." The arrangements encompass Exhibit and Event Sponsorships, as well as Education Sponsorships, which fund teacher workshops, subsidized admission and education programming for underserved groups, and more.²²⁰ Notably, many of these initiatives are collaborations -- not just a result of Academy and Drexel resources but the schools and other educational authorities -- so inviting sponsors to join as "partners" enables corporations to directly and visibly share in this major expression of the Academy's mission. For instance, "Head Start on Science," an Academy initiative in collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia and the Please Touch Museum, provides preschool educators with the skills and resources to engage young children with science. Aside from

²²⁰ "Corporate Partner Program." Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://ansp.org/get-involved/support/corporate-sponsors/>

foundation grant support, a leading funder is PNC Bank's Grow Up Great with Science initiative. Offering a range of funding opportunities means that companies like PNC can support programs that align most closely to their priorities. In no other Academy program or audience area is there such a variety of ways to provide support. This tailored approach has proven an effective strategy for Academy fundraisers; the new corporate development program generated a 36% increase in corporate partners.²²¹ With the Drexel alliance, these funding opportunities may become even more appealing as the university's status as a strong research institution stands as validation and also provides systems and resources that enhance these efforts. In this regard, the Academy's development department is able to leverage not only the theme of educational impact, but the strength of the alliance as well.

While engaging children with the natural sciences is predominant in the expression of the Academy's brand, outreach to adult audiences is also a realization of the theme "engagement for all." The homepage of ansp.org reads, "The Academy makes the natural world fun for all ages,"²²² leveraging access and enjoyment as a central message. Carolyn Belardo notes, "The audience for our public museum is generally families with young children. But for a long time we have been reaching out to involve young adults, empty nesters, and college students."²²³ One of the strategies is making science fun and inviting through casual events. The Academy has developed a range of relaxed, interactive events targeting the segments identified by Belardo. *Mega Bad Movie Night* is an after-hours screening of "awesomely awful" science-themed films, complete with Academy researchers

²²¹ *Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia Annual Report*, 2011, 18.

²²² Homepage, Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://ansp.org/>

²²³ Belardo, interview.

as hosts who humorously refute Hollywood's science myths. The popular gatherings, which also involve exploring the exhibits and mingling over local craft beers, allow attendees to engage with science in a relaxed atmosphere. Another regular offering, *Science on Tap*, is a "monthly science café" held in a downtown bar. The discussion of topical science issues is led by an expert but open to anyone, and organized in conjunction with other science-centered organizations in the city. These types of events are a break from traditional approaches to engaging with science, and they are marketed accordingly. Sponsors of Mega Bad Movie night tend to be local breweries. Ticket giveaways are offered through niche blogs such as Geekadelphia, Drink Philadelphia and Cheap Date Philadelphia. With these initiatives, the Academy is able to attract and cultivate new audiences by transplanting dialogue about science into casual environments.

Certainly, "engagement for all" encompasses novices as well as enthusiasts. For those adults interested in engaging with science in a more in-depth way, the Academy offers a range of lectures and symposia, as well as classes and off-site "field studies" led by staff researchers. Materials announce, "Participate in current research by accompanying our scientists on field studies to collect bugs, identify fossils, or wade knee-deep in a stream to catch fish... (or) take an intimate class supplemented by the Academy's collections, archives, specimens, or even live animals."²²⁴ The messaging and materials around the Academy's adult classes circles back to the emphasis on wonder and meaningful engagement expressed in the children's offerings. In all, the reimagined brand conveys a 21st-century museum that is focused on impactful experiences for all visitors.

²²⁴ "Adult Programs." Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://ansp.org/get-involved/programs/adult-programs/>

Expanding Academic Reach: New Opportunities for Discovery

During the launching phase of the affiliation, both Academy and Drexel messaging emphasized the “powerhouse” research partnership.^{225 226} Research is central to both brands, and the vision and strategies that were generated in the planning phase aimed to enhance this element even further. The Academy researchers -- staff scientists who contribute to both museum and behind-the-scenes efforts -- are still positioned at the core of the Academy’s identity, but are now leveraged as the major point of direct collaboration with Drexel. The theme of “expanded opportunities for discovery” is a mutual concept; the new Academy branding effort focuses its messaging and materials around the following goals: “Serve as a magnet to researchers, educators, and students by showcasing the combined strengths of Academy and Drexel university scientists,”²²⁷ and “Build strong collaborations across Drexel schools to extend the educational reach and competence of the Academy.”²²⁸

As it is an entirely new segment, the university community is engaged differently than the Academy’s public audiences. Jacquie Genovesi, Senior Director of Education, acknowledged a strong effort to create unique opportunities just for students and faculty. “We think of Drexel students and faculty as another layer,” she explained. “They are their own segment in that we think about our different programs and how they may relate to the students.”²²⁹ New opportunities in connecting with academic departments at Drexel are beginning to emerge in this first year of the affiliation. “We’ve started projects with different

²²⁵ “Creating a Scientific Powerhouse in Philadelphia,” 3.

²²⁶ “The Academy of Natural Sciences and Drexel Announce an Historic Affiliation.”

²²⁷ *Sustainable Strategic Plan*, 11.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

²²⁹ Genovesi, interview.

schools throughout the university,” Genovesi noted, citing a range of initiatives that embody the Academy’s new identity as they illustrate this exchange of ideas and resources.

The initiative promoted most enthusiastically is the establishment of a new academic department, Biodiversity, Earth, and Environmental Sciences (BEES), following the alliance. “Extraordinary field research opportunities around the globe, outstanding faculty from the Academy and Drexel, and unprecedented access to the Academy’s biological collections make BEES one of the most exciting environmental science programs anywhere in the country,” the partners proudly announce.²³⁰ The messaging around the BEES program maintains the theme of access and engagement as utilized in the public programming side: “This unique academic affiliation with Drexel gives students the opportunity to work alongside of and to learn from some of the world’s leading scientists. Students also have access to the Academy’s extensive natural science collections and community outreach programs.”²³¹ Although less than one year old, the program is positioned as a hallmark of the alliance.

Another degree program, a graduate Museum Leadership program through Drexel’s Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design, is in development for Fall 2013. With significant Academy input, the program “will prepare future museum leaders with a diverse set of management skills,”²³² utilizing the museum as a real-world classroom, with the vast collection and experienced staff within reach. The Academy will certainly benefit from the program as well, if the activities of the inaugural year are any indication:

²³⁰ *Strategic Plan Affiliation Successes.*

²³¹ “Academy Scientists Step into New BEES Role.” Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, last modified June 20, 2012, <http://www.ansp.org/about/academy-news/archive/2012/June/BEES/>

²³² *Strategic Plan Affiliation Successes.*

Exciting new enhancements to the Academy’s public experience are being developed in partnership with faculty and students from the Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design. For instance, in celebration of the Academy’s Bicentennial, Westphal faculty members created a soundscape that was installed in North American Hall and a 10-minute bicentennial video shown daily in the Academy’s auditorium and online. Westphal students are also currently creating a smartphone and tablet app for Academy visitors.²³³

The element of mutual benefit is clear in these new programs, and this “teamwork” theme continues in Academy-university collaborations across all disciplines. For instance, students from the LeBow College of Business are analyzing the effectiveness of the Academy’s public programs. Moving forward, “The Academy’s senior leadership team is working closely with faculty across Drexel to tap into new resources for business planning and development.”²³⁴ Engagement with the sciences is not limited to students and faculty in the sciences. The theme of “engagement for all” that was so embedded in the public orientation is leveraged in the university community as well.

In an example of brand alignment between the partner institutions, the Academy has adopted the co-operative education approach, a central component of Drexel’s identity that emphasizes real-world learning. The co-op program – a paid employment program that matches students to relevant professional experiences – now includes 30 positions at the Academy. “They are assets,” Genovesi says of the co-op students. “Because the Academy is such a small institution, the ability to have staff and researchers from all over the university helps us to grow.”²³⁵

Pursuing a range of collaborations with the university community does more than enhance the image of the Academy as a “powerhouse” and a “lab for exploration” -- it also

²³³ *Strategic Plan Affiliation Successes*

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Genovesi, interview.

presents new possibilities in fundraising. “There have been strong opportunities to partner on projects with funding potential, such as a partnership with the School of Education (and the School of Public Health) on an Autism Access program,” Amy Marvin explains. “Donors have reacted positively to opportunities to invest in these new collaborative efforts.”²³⁶ The diverse projects can attract a broader range of support for the Academy.

Having an established academic institution as a partner provides validation for the Academy as it pursues support from high-level funders:

Together, Drexel and the Academy can compete more effectively for public investment from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, as well as private funding from foundations and philanthropists involved in important research areas such as environmental degradation, biodiversity, global ecosystem interactions and sustainability.²³⁷

In its orientation toward the university community, the Academy is fully leveraging the value of partnership -- in part because the university is the partner, but also because with teamwork emerges expanded opportunities for discovery. In the Academy’s array of initiatives across disciplines, a familiar theme emerges: as with public audiences, access and engagement are central. There are engagement opportunities for all, whether or not these departments focus on the sciences. These diverse offerings contribute to the uniqueness of the Academy and thus are a valuable resource for Drexel, as demonstrated in various university marketing materials. The strategic goal to become a “magnet” for prospective students, faculty and researchers is bolstered by such distinctive and high-level opportunities. As these programs develop in the years to come, it seems the theme of “discovery” will be solidified in the Academy’s identity.

²³⁶ Marvin, interview.

²³⁷ “Drexel and The Academy of Natural Sciences.”

As the partnership develops, engagement with the university community is expanding beyond classes and research. One particular goal in the strategic plan, based directly on a Drexel initiative -- “‘Intensify and improve the student experience’...by creating attractive social programs that enhance Drexel student involvement with the Academy”²³⁸ -- emphasizes this as a priority. By gaining understanding of this new segment via the academic collaborations already underway, the Academy seems to be well-positioned for other types of engagement. Belardo notes, “With the affiliation, we have direct access to the eyes and ears of college students, and Drexel alumni everywhere and of all ages.”²³⁹ In addition, Drexel’s resources enable the communications team to disseminate information more broadly and strategically: “Now, the information is being distributed not only through Academy vehicles and networks, but also through Drexel tools (e-newsletters, magazines, videos etc.) tailored to students, alumni, staff, faculty.”²⁴⁰ As the Academy continues to leverage the affiliation in its branding, the Drexel community may feel a sense of ownership -- a natural alliance with the museum. Into the future, this segment may develop into frequent visitors, members and donors; presenting them with a more nuanced identity (reflective of the adult groups above) will show that there are numerous ways to access the Academy -- and science more broadly.

Brand Value: Conveying Leadership in the Field

With 200 years of research contributions and a collection of 18 million objects, the Academy’s identity pre-affiliation was rightfully rooted in its top-tier status. Significant objects -- such as pieces from the Lewis and Clark Expedition and John James Audubon’s

²³⁸ *Sustainable Strategic Plan*, 10.

²³⁹ Belardo, interview.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

research -- remain a focus of website features, fundraising materials, Facebook posts and more. When the affiliation with Drexel University was announced, the emphasis on authority in the field continued as the two organizations promoted the strength of each other's reputations and their joint "powerhouse" standing. The branding process, in part, was oriented toward this goal of conveying leadership in the field.

The Academy's new brand incorporates a new layer: leadership in the field means more than highly-valued collections or world-renowned research; it means leading the conversation on important issues in science. From environmental sustainability to hydraulic fracturing, the Academy is establishing itself as a center for dialogue and problem-solving. Circling back to the vision of the "town square" first mentioned in the strategic plan, the institution's role as a convener of thought leaders, policy makers, experts, and interested members of the public is becoming a more prominent part of its identity. There seems to be potential for the Academy to leverage the Drexel affiliation to a greater extent in these programs, as the university's mission is "focusing our collective expertise on solving society's greatest problems."²⁴¹

Although the Academy's Center for Environmental Policy (CEP), which organizes most of these forums, positioned the Academy as "a key player in the environmental and sustainability community in the greater Philadelphia region,"²⁴² Drexel did play an important role. At the time of the affiliation, Drexel University was already lauded as "a national leader in sustainability."²⁴³ The university's experience and resources helped the Academy enhance

²⁴¹ "Mission and Vision." Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://www.drexel.edu/strategicPlan/message/mission/>

²⁴² "The Center for Environmental Policy." Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013, <http://ansp.org/get-involved/cep/>

its own sustainability efforts. In terms of the brand, this joint concern also signaled a shared value between the two partners.

Sustainability is a critical and topical issue in the sciences and beyond. By initiating this dialogue while also implementing organizational and operational practices that support it, the Academy is positioning itself to remain a leader in the field. The development team recognized the value of promoting this environmental commitment, and worked to establish a corporate membership opportunity called “Profitable Pathways to Sustainability Membership.”

This new initiative of the Academy’s Center for Environmental Policy helps companies find the business value and profitability in sustainable practices. Profitable Pathways membership is perfect for companies who wish to engage with the Academy at a more active level, through participation in seminars and workshops focused on sustainability topics.²⁴⁴

As the partnership with Drexel matures, perhaps more widespread sustainability efforts will be developed, and the Academy’s commitment to this cause will become a more visible component of its brand. For so many organizations and businesses, eco-consciousness is shaping up to be a requirement for competitiveness and relevance in the marketplace, as well as the court of public opinion.

Philadelphia Identity

Location is a natural part of any museum's identity, but the Academy’s home base is a core component of its brand -- as it has been for 200 years. “The Academy in the mid-19th century was the place to be for natural science. From all over the world, scientists, naturalists, and figures of social importance flocked to Philadelphia to trade and discuss the

²⁴³ “Greetings from the Academy.” *Academy Frontiers*, Fall 2011, 2.

²⁴⁴ “Corporate Partner Program,” accessed February 1, 2013.

burgeoning world of fossils and other specimens,” the website describes.²⁴⁵ As a center for scientific inquiry, placement in Philadelphia granted the Academy additional legitimacy. Looking forward, the institution recognizes a mutual impact on its home city, even as “of Philadelphia” was dropped from its name to create “The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University.” The institution “will continue to stand at the forefront of scientific research and education and will further establish Philadelphia, the birthplace of modern science in North America, as a city central to the advancement of the natural and environmental sciences,” public relations materials proclaim.²⁴⁶

Drexel, which was established in 1891, is also deeply rooted in Philadelphia’s identity and is closely tied to its Philadelphia heritage: ... “Our affiliation with one of the world’s great science museums, in one of the world’s premier cultural destinations, Philadelphia’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway, will help Drexel better fulfill its potential to be a major cultural and economic force in the region.”²⁴⁷ For these two institutions, a partnership establishes a true presence -- a stronghold -- in Philadelphia.

Organizational Stability

While environmental stewardship is a growing component of the Academy’s identity, a sustainability of a different kind has been critical to messaging around the alliance. Communicating a solid path forward was a top strategy for the Academy throughout the transition and into this new chapter. This aspect of the brand is directed less at the general

²⁴⁵ Bridget Brown. “A Peak Into the Past.” Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, last modified February 7, 2013. <http://www.ansp.org/about/academy-news/archive/2013/February/a-peek-into-the-past/>

²⁴⁶ “What’s Next?” accessed February 1, 2013.

²⁴⁷ “Drexel and The Academy of Natural Sciences.”

public and more towards stakeholders like members and donors -- those whose ongoing support is particularly crucial in times of change.

As laid out in the aptly titled “Sustainable Strategic Plan,” the new partnership is designed to strengthen both institutions going forward. Drexel featured the tagline “two legendary pasts, one sustainable future” prominently on its website, in executive talking points and even across campus buses.²⁴⁸ On the Academy’s end, “A Sustainable Future” was the title of the 2011 Annual Report. In development efforts, this focus on mutual strength provided confidence to existing funders, donors and members, as well as new prospects. Marvin, who heads the Academy’s development team, emphasizes, “We have worked closely with the Drexel Institutional Advancement team to identify prospects to support the affiliation as an investment in the Academy and Drexel’s shared future.”²⁴⁹

Thanks to this coordinated effort, the first year of the affiliation has been “extremely well-received in the community,” according to donor materials. “Together, the Academy and Drexel have raised more than \$3.5 million in support of the transition and the new opportunities presented by the affiliation.”²⁵⁰ Importantly, Drexel President John Fry wrote supporters, “The Pew Charitable Trusts committed a \$1 million planning grant for the affiliation to explore how best to leverage the strengths of both our organizations.”²⁵¹ This level of support is a significant gesture of confidence, and certainly contributed to the sense

²⁴⁸ “Two Legendary Pasts. One Sustainable Future.” Drexel University, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://drexel.edu/undergrad/ans>

²⁴⁹ Marvin, interview.

²⁵⁰ *Strategic Plan Affiliation Successes*.

²⁵¹ “Drexel and The Academy of Natural Sciences.”

that the Academy was headed for a promising future. This illustrates the value in conveying leadership and reputation in the branding process.

The Brand

The Academy's smooth transition and solid first year as an affiliate of Drexel can be attributed to this collection of themes that guided the careful planning and implementation of the brand. Access and engagement for all, expanded opportunities for discovery and leadership in the field formed a compelling identity that galvanized audiences and supporters. The branding process was purposefully designed as an organization-wide effort, a soul-searching and collaborative endeavor that put into focus "who we are" and "what we stand for." Within the education, communications and development spheres in particular, a true consensus on the identity of the museum emerged -- even in this nascent stage.

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University presents itself as a platform for exploration of the natural world, a welcoming town square, a research powerhouse, and a world-renowned collection in the city of scientific inquiry in America. It honored its two hundred-year legacy while generating excitement for "the Third Century," and perhaps most importantly, leveraged the historic affiliation with Drexel University by underscoring the strength and solidarity of partnership.

THE TEXTILE MUSEUM AT GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

I. Introduction

In 1925, textile enthusiast George Hewitt Myers founded The Textile Museum (The TM) in Washington, D.C. to share his vast collection of rugs, weavings and other objects with the public. The museum's specialized focus, extensive collection, and mission to "expand public knowledge and appreciation—locally, nationally, and internationally—of the artistic merits and cultural importance of the world's textiles"²⁵² positioned it as a leader in the field of textile arts.

The TM's current brand identity revolves around two major factors: its contributions to the field through research and conservation, and its leading role in the international cultural community. Over its 87-year history, The TM has developed an identity centered on scholarship. Despite its fairly small size, the organization produces a number of high-level publications, often on major exhibitions. The museum's scholars and curators travel frequently for lectures and symposia around the country, helping to promote the work of The TM and enhance its status through scholarship. Member newsletters and donor appeals emphasize the research and conservation aspects of the museum's work. Most of The TM's offerings revolve around or stem from scholarship. As the 2009 Annual Report outlines,

The Textile Museum is dedicated to its role as a center for the scholarly research, conservation and interpretation of textiles. The museum serves as a leader in the field through the care of its permanent collection, publications, educational programs and other endeavors.²⁵³

²⁵² "Mission & History," The Textile Museum, accessed January 28, 2013, <http://www.textilemuseum.org/about/history.htm#annualreport>.

²⁵³ The Textile Museum, *2009 Annual Report*, 2.

Another central component of the museum's brand is its international scope. As the textile arts are a global medium, The TM has established itself as a center for the exploration of diverse cultures. In addition, The TM's current location in Washington, D.C.'s Embassy Row area presents numerous opportunities for diplomatic partnerships around various exhibitions:

Because of the global focus of its collection and exhibitions, The Textile museum is an effective platform for cultural exchange. Through collaborations with the U.S. State Department, embassies and other international organizations, the museum helps support awareness and appreciation of other cultures around the world.²⁵⁴

From special member dinners held at Ambassadors' residences to financial support from cultural attaches, alliances with leaders and organizations from the nations of focus have shaped an identity of the museum as a deeply connected institution.

With a reputation as a center for scholarship and cultural exchange, The TM has established itself in its field with a loyal base of supporters. However, the "graying" of its audiences and donors called for new strategies. A rising focus around the cultivation of "the next generation of textile enthusiasts"²⁵⁵ was marked in 2010 by "PM at the TM" museum after-hours series, which has been an increasingly popular draw for audiences in their 20s and 30s ever since.²⁵⁶ For this segment, the educational-entertainment fusion provided an innovative way of accessing textiles.

The TM's commitment to textile scholarship and conservation and international exchange was central to its identity, and its interest in cultivating the next generation of supporters emerged as another top priority. While the museum was performing solidly in

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 17.

²⁵⁵ The Textile Museum, *2010 Annual Report*, 2.

²⁵⁶ The Textile Museum, *2011 Annual Report*, 8.

these areas, its capacity was too limited to enhance any one initiative dramatically. For instance, the building -- the 1913 former home of its founder -- presented major challenges in the care and storage of the 19,000-object collection. The residence-turned-museum also limited the size and number of exhibitions. With a vision that may have exceeded its resources, The TM recognized that a special partnership opportunity would be the key to realizing this potential on a new scale.

The Opportunity

In 2011, The Textile Museum Board of Trustees voted unanimously to affiliate with George Washington University (GW), the largest university in Washington, DC. The TM would relocate to GW's campus as "the cornerstone" of the university's future museum, scheduled to open in fall 2014. Board President Bruce Baganz told supporters,

The Textile Museum is helping to build a new model of museum practice. It is unprecedented for an independent museum with a collection of the TM's magnitude and international renown to join with a university. This unique position will foster exciting research and programmatic synergies across broad academic disciplines... (and) will also allow the museum to expand its tradition of art, scholarship, education and fostering of cultural understanding for generations to come.²⁵⁷

Founded in 1821, GW's identity is rooted in its role as a center for international studies, spanning policy to culture, in the heart of a city that is a major player on the world stage. Just blocks from the White House, GW's campus is situated among institutions such as The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, The Art Museum of the Americas and several Smithsonian museums. Certainly, GW's academic focus and position in an increasingly interconnected world paralleled The TM's emphasis on forging international partnerships and promoting cross-cultural exchange.

²⁵⁷ The Textile Museum, *2011 Annual Report*, 2.

Most notably, the affiliation would significantly enhance The TM's efforts in scholarship and conservation. The move to a hub for education and research would serve as a "springboard" for inquiry and exchange. "Being embedded in an academic community gives us a built-in network, to carry our scholarship even farther," says Eliza Ward, Director of Development at The Textile Museum.²⁵⁸ Built into the agreement between institutions was not only a 35,000 square foot museum on the downtown campus, but "a collections and conservation resource center on (GW's) Virginia Science and Technology Campus in Loudoun County, Virginia, with 23,000 square feet of space for the storage, study, and care of museum's collections."²⁵⁹ These state-of-the-art spaces would enhance The TM's stewardship and exposition of its collections.

The forthcoming move also presents unprecedented access to a younger generation, and has initiated a revived focus on the museum's impact and relevance on audiences well into the future. With the affiliation, "our mission has greater impact as we expand our audiences locally, nationally and internationally, and perpetuate our programs through the next century," Baganz noted.²⁶⁰ With this major announcement, The TM began preparation for the move to its new home -- not only addressing the logistics of moving the collection, but revamping its communications and development efforts to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

²⁵⁸ Eliza Ward, interview with author, February 15, 2013.

²⁵⁹ "The Textile Museum and the George Washington University," The Textile Museum, accessed February 10, 2013, <http://textilemuseum.org/tmatgw>.

²⁶⁰ George Washington University, "The George Washington University, The Textile Museum and Albert H. Small Celebrate Groundbreaking for the George Washington University Museum," news release, October 18, 2012, <http://mediarelations.gwu.edu/george-washington-university-textile-museum-and-albert-h-small-celebrate-groundbreaking-george>.

Identity in Transition

At the time of this case study, The TM has about eight months remaining at its original location, before closing for one year before the move. For the entire museum staff, from building managers to conservators, this means striking a balance between phasing out and gearing up. Katy Clune, the Communications Manager, is responsible for promoting the exhibitions and programs as head of marketing and media relations. The key now is “Opening the last exhibition on S Street... pulling things together in promoting the show while hoping to capitalize on the fact that we’re moving. We’re having to think about how to get the message out about how we are winding down, but in the next breath explaining what’s coming.”²⁶¹

Out of Southeast Asia will be the last exhibition held at The TM’s original location, closing in October 2013. The language around the upcoming show incorporates the dual messaging Clune addresses: “As The Textile Museum prepares to move to its new location, *Out of Southeast Asia* provides a fitting visual link between the past, present and future while demonstrating the continued relevance of traditional textiles.”²⁶² Leveraging the transition from the platform of a high-profile show, the communications effort maintains enthusiasm for current programs while keeping constituents connected to the affiliation’s progress.

For the development team, the messaging is also a balance of current and future needs. Mainly, there is an effort on generating early investment in the new space, while also

²⁶¹ Katy Clune, interview with author, February 22, 2013.

²⁶² “Out of Southeast Asia: Art That Sustains,” The Textile Museum, accessed January 29, 2013, <http://textilemuseum.org/exhibitions/OutofSoutheastAsia.html>.

addressing perhaps the most pressing current issue, the documentation and eventual transport of the vast collection.

Ward explains, “We worried a little about individual funders, that they would have the impression that they did not have to give (anymore), in that the university is taking care of us. So we must include line in all our materials about having to support our own programming to dispel that myth.”²⁶³ The line reads:

Preparing for The Textile Museum’s bright future takes considerable resources. The Textile Museum is responsible for the costs of moving its collections, as well as many of the equipment needs at the new facilities – from conservation lab equipment to library shelving. Once at GW, The Textile Museum will still rely on generous contributions from donors, members, and institutional funders to support its exhibitions, programs, scholarship, collections care, and staff. While the university will cover facilities and maintenance costs for The Textile Museum’s new home, The TM will continue to support its programmatic budget through fundraising.²⁶⁴

Ward says that this messaging emphasizes, “We want donors to help get us to GW and fulfill the potential that we see. It’s tailored to initial/early investment, being a founding partner.”²⁶⁵ In donor appeals and membership correspondence, Board President Bruce Beganz makes statements such as, “Remember it is your support that will ultimately help us realize the success of this new venture” and “I encourage you to stay involved as we envision a new future for The Textile Museum together.”²⁶⁶ As this effort is done in tandem with promoting the current work of the museum, it benefits from the strength and richness of these offerings. By incorporating fundraising appeals into the marketing materials for the

²⁶³ Eliza Ward, interview.

²⁶⁴ “The Textile Museum and the George Washington University,” The Textile Museum, accessed February 10, 2013, <http://textilemuseum.org/tmatgw>.

²⁶⁵ Eliza Ward, interview.

²⁶⁶ The Textile Museum, *2011 Annual Report*, 2.

impressive *Out of Southeast Asia*, for instance, supporters are positioned to consider the potential the move to GW holds.

This forward focus must be deployed along with appeals about current needs, however, as they are substantial. The development team has centered on one particular challenge: the preparation of the vast collection for a move across the city:

The Textile Museum collections encompass over 19,000 artifacts, and each piece is carefully safeguarded by our collections and conservation staff for the benefit of future generations. The move of the collection to a new, climate-controlled collections storage facility is an exciting prospect, and an opportunity that requires much preparation.²⁶⁷

Numerous platforms were used to emphasize this major effort, from a full feature in the member's magazine to Tumblr posts that highlight individual objects being processed for the move. Within the Annual Fund effort, the cause "Help Our Collections Move Safely" revolved around these promotions, emphasizing the great care and cost that goes into such a move.²⁶⁸

GW Messaging

On GW's end, promoting The TM affiliation and its forthcoming museum is based on a few key themes, which provide an idea of the larger GW Museum's brand identity. First, GW emphasizes the "unprecedented and innovative" affiliation with The TM as "an entirely new model for the university museum in the 21st century."²⁶⁹ This message of being at the forefront corresponds with GW's recent rebranding effort. The consulting firm FutureBrand

²⁶⁷ "The Textile Museum and the George Washington University."

²⁶⁸ Claire Marie Blaustein. "Inch by Inch: Moving the Textile Museum's Collections." *Textile Museum Members' Magazine*, Winter 2013, 2-3.

²⁶⁹ "The George Washington University, The Textile Museum and Albert H. Small Celebrate Groundbreaking for the George Washington University Museum."

created “a modernized visual identity rooted in the heritage of the university and its aspirational traits.”²⁷⁰ The new logo, an image of George Washington “looking forward, with hope and pride, toward the future,”²⁷¹ parallels the themes of innovation and leadership found in the university’s messaging around its upcoming museum.

Second, and to a greater extent, GW addresses the combination of “the academic assets of the largest research university in the nation’s capital with the educational and scholarly resources of a world-renowned specialized art and cultural history museum.”²⁷² While specific initiatives for the university community are still in development, GW is able to speak broadly of the learning and research potential the museum holds. This relates with the university’s revamped brand, which was designed to convey “a real-time, real-world education... (which) places the George Washington University at the catalytic intersection of policy, practice and research.”²⁷³ A commitment to providing students and faculty with interactive, dynamic and immersive learning platforms is a core focus for the university -- and a campus museum is a direct realization of this aim. As the launch date nears, it seems that GW will begin emphasizing the impact of the museum in a more specific way. For now, even the Museum Studies program lacks any mention of the forthcoming institution. At this point, the focus is on determining and shaping The TM’s new identity.

Brand Development

²⁷⁰ “A Centennial Celebration Inspires a Look Toward the Future,” FutureBrand, last modified August 27, 2012, <http://www.futurebrand.com/news/a-centennial-celebration-inspires-a-look-toward-the-future>.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² “The George Washington University, The Textile Museum and Albert H. Small Celebrate Groundbreaking for the George Washington University Museum.”

²⁷³ “A Centennial Celebration Inspires a Look Toward the Future.”

The TM faces a major challenge during this period of transition: it has not yet appointed a Director. Its Interim Director, Richard West, oversees current operations but does not play the role of “visionary” as his position is temporary. The museum has thus enlisted a range of stakeholders and consultants to assist in planning its future at GW, a critical element of which is establishing a new brand. The process of branding, then, has become a necessary and galvanizing exercise in the transition. “Your brand plays one role when you use it in various tools, but it is also the backbone that defines these efforts,”²⁷⁴ says Clune. This case study seeks to identify the major themes that are shaping The TM’s new brand. Unlike the previous case studies, which extract themes from the output of “settled” museums (programs, design, and the like), this approach will involve assessing the communications and development process that is laying the groundwork for the new museum. In considering the evolving materials and messaging from both partners, along with interviews of the museum’s communications and development staff, several major themes -- three tenets of the brand – become evident.

First, this case analysis looks into how The TM will leverage the alliance in addressing one of its current priorities: engaging the next generation of textile enthusiasts. Although strategies are not yet in place for outreach in its future environment (a high concentration of young people), considering how the museum has presented itself to younger demographics in recent years will give an idea of the mindset for cultivating this important group. This focus on future generations can be detected to some degree in the early stages of The TM’s brand development.

Secondly, the theme of “textiles as a portal” is examined, as this highly specialized museum seeks to claim a wide relevance on campus and beyond through new applications

²⁷⁴ Katy Clune, interview.

and approaches. The philosophy behind multidisciplinary learning at the museum will be explored not only through its programming and communications, but through its development efforts as well.

Finally, the merging of The TM's identity with its university partner presents a case of "nested brands," a balancing act between expressing solidarity and maintaining an individual spirit. This case study looks into the brand development process around this goal, while considering GW's recently revamped identity and The TM's brand heritage. The ways in which teamwork between the two institutions' communications teams may be laying the groundwork for brand alignment will also be explored.

PART II. Themes of Identity

Future Focus: Engaging the Next Generation

As noted in the Introduction of this case study, The TM has made cultivating "the next generation of textile enthusiasts" a priority. While this seems like a natural progression for any museum, there is an important motivating factor behind this focus. Ward explains that The TM's highest-level supporters – textile collectors – initially chose the textile market as an investment strategy for accumulated wealth, but over time developed a passion for global textiles. That market has changed considerably and is now out of financial reach for many of today's textile enthusiasts. Consequently, many younger supporters:

...will become part of The TM community not because they have the work at home but because they can only access textiles here. Other (art) museums went through this a long time ago. We're just starting to cultivate a group that simply loves textiles rather than just collecting them. We saw our donor base shrink because the pool of collectors shrunk. The board recognized that a shift had to be made to direct efforts to another generation, so we can build our next audience and donor base to support the museum.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ Eliza Ward, interview.

The TM is not only being proactive to the graying of its support base; it is recognizing that the textile arts are experiencing a major shift in how future supporters will connect with the objects. Though this changing dynamic requires a significant adjustment, fortunately for the museum, as Ward says, “The move to a college campus puts us in the heart of the next generation.”²⁷⁶ Promotional materials read, “The affiliation positions The Textile Museum to educate the next generation of textile enthusiasts and expand on its rich tradition of art, education, scholarship, and fostering cultural understanding.”²⁷⁷ This instant community presents a major opportunity in terms of rebranding.

While it is not yet known how this connection to a younger demographic will be expressed through the brand, evaluating the museum’s recent communications and development efforts around this segment -- especially during the transition phase -- provides a sense of direction. Three efforts revolve around this theme: an embrace of social media; the concept of accessing art in social ways; and a true cultivation of textile appreciation.

Certainly, if an organization is going to connect effectively with a younger generation, it must speak the same language. By engaging in social media, The TM not only connects with this segment directly, but benefits from the dialogue enabled by such platforms. Its active Facebook page (6,300 followers at the time of this case study),²⁷⁸ for instance, generates numerous comments, questions and “tags” from followers. The TM leverages Facebook’s framework in two major ways: first, through vibrant images of textiles, costumes, baskets and more, which catch the attention of users on the stimulation-heavy

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ “The Textile Museum and the George Washington University.”

²⁷⁸ The Textile Museum’s Facebook page, accessed February 20, 2013, <http://www.facebook.com/TextileMuseum>.

social media site. Communications staff also recognize the everyday utility of Facebook, and by incorporating regular announcements and reminders for events and programming, integrate the museum's offerings into its followers' discussions and plans.

The TM's Twitter account, @TextileMuseum, has the highest following among social media platforms with 7,700 people as of this case study.²⁷⁹ It is designed as a highly engaging forum with a focus on interaction and an entertaining spin on learning. For instance, the #TextileVocab initiative features 140-character definitions of techniques, materials and design. @TextileMuseum is also a heavily visual platform, a way to highlight objects from exhibitions and incite interest. The TM also maintains a presence on Tumblr, a microblogging platform (short-form posts). One of the major features on the museum's Tumblr page is the documentation of the process of preparing the vast collection for the move. As noted earlier, given the exceptional time and care involved in this effort, a fundraising appeal has arisen out of it. Tumblr spotlights particular pieces as they are processed, giving followers a behind-the-scenes glimpse while keeping everyone abreast of the progress of the move.²⁸⁰

In its social media efforts, The TM engages with a diverse following, but at the core of its outreach strategy is its next generation of audiences. It leverages technology only slightly in its development effort -- for instance, each of its 2011 Annual Fund campaign email appeals featured a free digital wallpaper of one of the collection's objects for supporters' computers or smartphones.²⁸¹ Efforts like this seem likely to continue as the

²⁷⁹ The Textile Museum's Twitter page, accessed February 20, 2013, <https://twitter.com/TextileMuseum>.

²⁸⁰ The Textile Museum's Tumblr page, accessed February 20, 2013, <http://textile-museum.tumblr.com>.

²⁸¹ "December at The Textile Museum," *E-Friends News*, The Textile Museum, December 2, 2011.

museum benefits from an innovative new website and other enhanced technological resources.

As outlined in the upcoming section, one of the most central and visible aspects of The TM's new identity will be its accessibility from various perspectives and disciplines. But the museum's engagement with GW's student body will not be limited to course-related inquiry, if The TM's past efforts in engaging a young demographic are any indication. A major part of cultivating the next generation of textile enthusiasts will be developing opportunities for students to connect with the objects outside of a class context -- making the museum a part of their regular lives. One strategy in this realm, which the museum has successfully enacted before, is creating social points of entry. The popular PM @ The TM series will likely continue in the new museum, but with enhanced potential of being based on a college campus. Offering casual, entertaining events that encourage even those least familiar with textiles to participate is an initial step in building a new audience. Certainly, more "serious" programs such as lectures and symposia may be sought out by certain segments within this diverse group, but these initial encounters with the art and the museum itself are critical, simply because they are welcoming in nature.

If The TM can leverage its new brand identity to attract and cultivate younger audiences, it will position itself for a more sustainable future as these audiences become loyal supporters. In particular, the affiliation with GW has the potential to enhance the perception that the museum is committed to the next generation. By "nesting" brands with the university as discussed earlier, this alignment would be clear. In addition, the larger, brand new, state-of-the-art building will certainly echo this commitment to new audiences, as it enables enhanced and innovative access to textiles -- breaking down the barriers, in a sense, to create

new points of entry. Recalling that the changing landscape of the textile arts has led to fewer people entering via the collector route, a new building comes just in time for repositioning The TM as a space to connect with textiles from multiple angles. This is critical both to the development of the next generation of textile lovers and longtime TM supporters as well. Ward notes, “The message of expanding audience is meaningful to our traditional donors, because they want people to carry on their passion.”²⁸² So, in pursuing the next generation, The TM will also be satisfying the motivations of some of its most established donors.

Expanding Academic Reach: Textiles as a Portal

What has emerged as the predominant theme for the new TM is the concept of textiles as a lens into not only world cultures but also a myriad of disciplines, from business to the sciences. While this emphasis is surely augmented by The TM’s sudden immersion into an academic community, it is part of a trajectory embraced by the museum long ago. For instance, among the programs in the 2011 “African Art and Culture Series,” which corresponded with a Kuba textiles exhibition at The TM, was a lecture given by a computer scientist and ethno-mathematician. “Computational Perspectives on African Art” presented the mathematical algorithms behind the designs and patterns in the show’s textiles.²⁸³ The museum is in the very early stages of planning collaborative projects with various GW departments, including a museum education course and an interior design course. The museum is eager to reach out to the sciences, business, and other disciplines as well.

²⁸² Eliza Ward, interview.

²⁸³ “African Art and Culture Series,” The TM, accessed February 3, 2013, <http://www.textilemuseum.org/education/AfricanArtCulture.html>.

“Opportunities around collaboration are among the most exciting. They bring new perspectives, resources, and expertise that lead to something richer at the end,” Ward says.²⁸⁴

The understanding that textiles are portals through which other realms can be explored “...shows the richness of textiles...so that the objects are an entry point for many other disciplines,” says Ward.²⁸⁵ While the specifics of collaborations with GW’s various departments have not yet been determined, Ward mentions potential for examining the science behind fibers, or the economics around trade. She also emphasizes that although this young generation is typically unfamiliar with the textile arts, their deep interest in world cultures – enhanced through the lens of their course or academic concentration -- can be the means through which they engage with the work.²⁸⁶

Linking students through The TM’s objects to cultures that span thousands of years is a popular talking point of the transition, particularly by the university. A *Washington Post* feature quoted GW President Steven Knapp:

This isn’t just like going out and forming a partnership. This is bringing the museum where it’s going to be part of the intellectual life of the university as a whole. It’s good for the museum and our university because it will help broaden what it means to be educated at the George Washington University.”²⁸⁷

Knapp understands that the kind of engagement made possible by direct connections with art aligns with GW’s approach to learning and indicates shared values. In The TM’s 2011 Annual Report, Knapp writes, “With collections that can be interpreted across

²⁸⁴ Eliza Ward, interview.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Lonnae O’Neal Parker, “Textile Museum to get new home,” *The Washington Post*, October 4, 2012, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-10-04/entertainment/35499172_1_textile-museum-museum-world-interim-director.

disciplines, the museum will also serve as a catalyst for GW scholars to integrate these spectacular collections into a wide range of academic studies.”²⁸⁸ This message underscores that with a multidisciplinary approach, the museum holds relevance campus-wide.

From the development standpoint, Ward says, “The message of broadening from just art and culture has really been resonating with people.... that there are so many ways that textiles can be relevant. This gets people excited about supporting us.”²⁸⁹ Attracting donors who see the value of textiles from different angles has always been a component of The TM’s fundraising strategy, but now the museum can leverage the partnership and its potential in this area. According to Ward,

A brand identity that shows textiles as just the starting point, or a vehicle for accessing other categories, will help convince people from outside that we are more than just textiles; that textiles are one way of starting the dialogue. This helps us get our mission even farther. It always goes back to the textiles, but we are able to attract more people with a wider lens.²⁹⁰

For grant proposals in particular, Ward says that the partnership grants flexibility. “We are an independent 501c3, so we can apply for grants alone, or apply under the umbrella of the university. This allows us to look at the particular funder and figure out what (approach) would be most meaningful.”²⁹¹ Either way, the affiliation has strengthened The TM’s capacity, which helps the museum position itself as capable of realizing the goals of a given proposal. Ward points to the National Endowment for the Arts’ recent list of museum grantees: “A good number compared to the last ten years or so are university museums. Reviewers are buying the argument around your richness of resources in a university

²⁸⁸ *2011 Annual Report*, 2.

²⁸⁹ Eliza Ward, interview.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

community... funders see (a partnership) as more stable, less of a risk.”²⁹² While an innovative vision is an exciting appeal, stability and strength are equally critical in the eyes of a funder. By building both elements into its brand, The TM presents a persuasive investment opportunity.

Time will tell how The TM’s development effort will ultimately take shape, but the theme of approaching textiles from different angles has proven to be a compelling message -- on both sides -- throughout the transition phase. It seems likely that the branding agency’s research results would support this focus, given the mutual benefit, possibly leading to the creation of a “nested brand” that identifies strongly with GW while maintaining the distinctiveness of The TM’s identity.

Brand Value: Establishing Nested Brands

As outlined in the introduction, The TM’s current brand identity was built by eight decades of scholarship, leadership in conservation, and a prime position in Washington’s international cultural realm. Naming “tradition” as one of its hallmarks, the museum’s 100-year-old home among embassies and mansions seemed suitable for an institution of such caliber. Although in recent years The TM was ardently pursuing new audiences and innovative approaches to the textile arts, organizational limitations -- from its relatively small, \$3 million budget to its cramped storage areas -- impeded full realization of this potential. The opportunity to affiliate with GW and secure a state-of-the-art space on a bustling campus in the center of the city seemed to synchronize with the museum’s vision. Not as clearly aligned are The TM’s 87 years of history -- its “brand heritage” in marketing terms -- with the recently redesigned brand of George Washington University. At the time of

²⁹² Ibid.

this case study, the museum (with its new partner's input and the guidance of a consulting firm) is embarking on a branding process to generate a new identity.

In reviewing the responses from the RFP (Request for Proposals) put out several months in advance of this case study, The TM made a noteworthy decision not to go with the brand consultancy firm FutureBrand, which had just rebranded GW. Instead, reviewers chose Minelli, a Boston-based brand consultancy firm. The agency has extensive experience with museums, from the Amon Carter Museum of American Art to Boston's New Center for Arts & Culture, but its work for the Peabody Essex Museum was what convinced The TM. "We liked that it was similar in that the Peabody and the Essex had merged. Minelli began with the collection and built a brand based on that, which was really relevant for us," explains Katy Clune.²⁹³ According to the agency,

The 203-year-old Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) underwent a transformation that physically reconfigured its facilities. Much of what PEM offered was new — new facilities, new ways of exhibiting work and new attitudes and approaches. The transformation was an opportunity for reinvention.... PEM hired Minelli, Inc. to create a brand that complemented and promoted their new aspirations and philosophy.²⁹⁴

Indeed, articulating "aspirations" and "philosophy" would become central to The TM's rebranding process. With a timeline to create its new brand by June 2013 – four months from the time of this case study compilation -- the organization is deep into a reflective and investigative "research and analysis phase," which Clune explains "involves meeting with key stakeholders on both sides of the process."²⁹⁵ This group includes several board members and cultural leaders, and will eventually bring in members of the GW

²⁹³ Katie Clune, interview.

²⁹⁴ "Peabody Essex Museum," Minelli, accessed February 1, 2013, <http://www.minelli.com/work/portfolios.cfm?pfid=22>.

²⁹⁵ Katie Clune, interview.

Museum board. This phase will involve “ 5 to 7 lengthy interviews with these stakeholders, and after that a more open online survey process, which goes out to audience segments including members, staff, volunteers, visitors, even tour group organizers.”²⁹⁶

The interviews and surveys aim to reveal what stakeholders hope for in the affiliation. After this research and analysis phase, a “synthesis phase” will look deeper to establish what Clune calls “expressions of our vision.” “Minelli views a brand as the expression of the heart of the institution... they want to understand how can they make that message resonate emotionally with people.”²⁹⁷ Thus, the end result should reflect a mutual purpose: the brand should resemble both The TM’s vision and the values its constituents care most about. Because a brand would serve as a “guide-star” for planning and strategizing for future exhibitions, programs, etc., this connection to stakeholders is especially valuable.

There is a third layer to the brand “synthesis” beyond The TM’s vision and its constituents’ expectations: the partner. According to Clune,

The brand has to serve our present audiences and the audiences as the university. We must first be identified as a museum but must still mesh with the university and its brand. Minelli is exploring how to ‘nest’ or ‘bucket’ the institutions within each other. It’s important we retain our name but we are interested in exploring variations.²⁹⁸

How the transition process has been organized by the joint communications effort of the partners gives clues about the degree of brand alignment. The teamwork around promoting the affiliation and preparing for the new museum may indicate (or initiate) a deep sense of shared values, which would certainly translate into a brand that emphasizes the

²⁹⁶ Katie Clune, interview.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

partnership over independence. To start, GW is building The TM's new website, to be launched in the fall. This primary marketing tool will thus share a design approach with the university, although it is not yet clear to what extent. Perhaps more tellingly, The TM is working in tandem with GW's Communications/External Relations department, with which it now collaborates on media relations, especially press conferences. "We approve or help author the materials on the transition (coming out of GW)," says Clune. "In the spirit of collaboration, I make sure our messages are in the same tone and that we're highlighting the same themes."²⁹⁹ This approach addresses an important issue in a transition/new partnership: consistency. Teamwork, along with a "nested brand" concept, will ensure that all components of identity have a sense of continuity and coalition. So far, The TM and GW have made a dedicated effort to partner in planning. Over the next year and a half, a working group of representatives from both organizations (communications and development staff, trustees, project managers) will meet regularly in preparation for the launch of the new museum. In particular, the branding process beginning now will function as an exercise through which intensive dialogue can strengthen the partnership and shape a foundation for The TM's new identity.

The Brand

The Textile Museum may be a year and a half away from relocating to its new campus home, but a strong sense of identity can be gleaned from the museum's strategies during the transition and planning phase. Pursuing a "nested brand" with The George Washington University that maintains the museum's rich and distinctive heritage but celebrates the potential of partnership is a central focus. Also harnessed early on is the role of

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

textiles as portals to other cultures and platforms to new perspectives and applications. The museum has also indicated that its vision of cultivating a new generation of textile enthusiasts will resonate in its new identity. Across all these themes, an effort to leverage the alliance with GW to the fullest extent is evident. Groundwork has already been laid for The TM's fusion of new technology and (eventually) new space with the generation of eager learners, budding enthusiasts and loyal supporters. While the results of the brand development research are not yet conclusive, patterns suggest a dynamic new identity that positions The Textile Museum for the trailblazing opportunities ahead.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion

The template for these four university museum case studies presents a multi-layered investigation into how brands are leveraged in times of major organizational change and growth. Themes of *future focus*, *expanding academic reach* and *goal-oriented branding* emerge across all cases, offering different vantage points on the evolution of university museums in the early 21st Century.

Future Focus

The new building project case studies – UMMA and Broad MSU – reveal that purposefully-designed spaces enable university museums to connect with audiences in meaningful and innovative ways – in ways that reflect a vision for the future. A brand philosophy is evident in both designs, which accommodate values of engagement and education via elements such as openness, accessibility, interaction and technology. For UMMA, an expansion meant more programs and exhibitions – and thus, more diverse offerings. Building upgrades also meant technology could be seamlessly incorporated into the museum experience, with innovative tools such as the “DialogTable.” A key component of UMMA’s brand revolves around immersive and innovative approaches to art, for a wide range of people. At Broad MSU, the new building’s state-of-the-art design serves as a metaphor for the museum’s mission, vision and values. Aside from a dynamic space that enhances the connection between visitors and contemporary art, symbolic elements such as the two primary entrances – one facing the East

Lansing community and one facing the campus – and a prominent education wing echo Broad MSU’s identity as a trailblazing university museum.

Like their new building project counterparts, the partnership case studies are deeply motivated to enrich engagement and expand audience. On this end, the Academy and The TM recognized that joining forces with a university would not only build capacity but also present an opportunity to reinvigorate their brand around this vision. For the Academy, the theme of “engagement for all” was a cornerstone of their strategic plan – their blueprint for the future. While its pre-partnership goals also acknowledged broader accessibility and education, the Academy saw the Drexel alliance as an opportunity to position itself as a true “public stage for science.” Even in the nascent stages of partnership, the Academy has leveraged this “town square” theme throughout its branding efforts. For The TM, partnership with George Washington University carries many benefits, from enhanced care of the collection to a vibrant downtown location. An equally valuable element would be the access to younger demographics – the next generation of textile enthusiasts. This opportunity to revive interest through tailored engagement is already central to the museum’s messaging around the upcoming transition, and by all indications will be an important component of the visual identity being developed in the months following the case study.

Across all four museums, the theme of *future focus* was marked by an effort to create but also convey an inclusive and engaging experience, which directly reflects the patterns identified in the literature review around the evolution of university museums. The concept of “town square,” “hub,” and “gateway” – the university museum as a community space for people to connect with art or science – is present in each museum’s branding efforts. As opportunities for engagement are augmented by building projects and partnerships, building projects and

partnerships become central components of the museum's brand identity – as tangible elements of a vision. In both marketing and development efforts, the value of deeper and broader impact is a key message, as it generates enthusiasm and confidence in the institution's direction.

Expanding Academic Outreach

As one part of the 21st-Century vision shared by these four university museums is engaging a broader public in meaningful and innovative ways, this study's second theme, *expanding academic outreach*, reinterprets the value of these institutions in their traditional role on campus. All four museums approach the university community in a multi-dimensional way, a marked difference from the campus museum's origins as a place for study and research by departments most closely associated with the collections. Through new building projects or partnerships, these university museums have reinforced their multidisciplinary relevance – and their marketing, development and programming efforts ensure this core value remains a key component of the brand.

For UMMA and Broad MSU, an expanded reach is fostered by new utilizations of space for academic exploration, collaboration and exchange –leading to new interpretations of art and its place in the world. No longer limited by an outdated facility, UMMA's identity now revolves around being a “lab” and a “hub” – “a meeting place for transcending disciplines.”³⁰⁰ Just as the dynamic space has expanded programming opportunities for growing public audiences, it has also enabled the museum to engage a broad spectrum of the campus community. The multi-disciplinary nature of UMMA's programming and outreach indicates that even with a dual focus, its academic role is more relevant than ever. In the first few months of Broad MSU's existence, a commitment to incorporating various disciplines and perspectives has solidified the museum's

³⁰⁰ “New Programs to make UMMA a ‘town square.’”

identity as an inclusive and stimulating place for dialogue, with art as a platform but not as a limit. Broad MSU's branding effort has aligned this multi-disciplinary vision with a key element of the university's own brand: a simultaneously local and global focus. This brand association pulls the new museum into the fabric of the university community.

In the partnership case studies, there is an equally enthusiastic effort to cultivate connections with a range of academic departments to establish wide-reaching value on campus. While both the Academy and The TM have legacies as research institutions, university alliances have positioned them to consider scholarship in new dimensions. Importantly, research becomes a shared value between these new partners. For the Academy in particular, the affiliation with Drexel formed a "research powerhouse." This theme has become an important component of the Academy's brand identity. Its esteemed collection – which in itself is central to the brand – was reinvigorated by new possibilities for academic inquiry. The TM has also recognized the value in positioning its renowned collection as a platform for multi-disciplinary engagement. Early branding messages focus on textiles as "portals" to accessing and understanding a range of subjects. Notably, GW's recent rebranding effort – which emphasizes immersive and innovative learning platforms as a core focus for the university – seems to echo this approach.

In all case studies, the theme of *expanding academic outreach* garnered the strongest associations with the university's brand. That the new building or partnership enriches learning across campus in cutting-edge ways is a message employed in all four institutions' development efforts. In addition, the reframing of art or science through a multidisciplinary lens is not only an educational strategy but a marketing strategy as well: the 21st-Century university museum looks not only to broadening audiences in the public sphere, but within the campus community as well.

This shared focus on expanding academic inquiry reinforces the university museum as a valuable contributor to the greater mission of the university.

Goal-oriented Branding

The value of a brand is particularly high during times of organizational change or growth. There is a need to establish meaning and set a direction – a need to create a guide-star in anticipation of a major transition. The branding process provides a means through which an organization can express its core values and its vision – and in that, articulate its goals. Each of the four university museums is seeking to realize a specific goal through branding. While this component is not as directly expressed as future focus or expanded academic reach, there are key references to the underlying goals of the transition itself. This component also differs from the others in that there are less significant connections across cases, as each museum holds a different set of goals.

To start, UMMA has utilized the rebranding process as a way to establish prestige. Its reimagined identity harnesses a 150-year legacy while also emphasizing the museum's pioneering approach to engagement and inquiry. The building expansion has enabled UMMA to attract high-level artists and exhibitions, which further enhances its standing among university museums but also reflects its aim to serve as a regional museum. Finally, as the “front porch” of the university, the museum makes a statement about the caliber of the University of Michigan. All these components of identity shape a brand identity that is reinforced by development, communications and education initiatives.

Broad MSU has found the greatest value in the branding process as it builds support from the ground up. Although a high-profile project, the completely new museum was challenged to

develop a compelling identity that would resonate with unacquainted audiences and potential supporters. The consistent messaging around economic and cultural impact was crucial in this effort, as were the grassroots efforts in community engagement leading up to the opening. This foundation has proven critical as the young museum cultivates audiences and donors. Its near-future brand is most certainly in risk-taking, boundary-pushing contemporary art, but at this early stage, Broad MSU's identity is rooted in community impact.

The Academy has approached the task of rebranding as an opportunity to convey its leadership in the field of natural sciences. Since the initial "rollout" phase of the partnership, the Academy has leveraged the university's standing as a top-tier research institution nearly as much as its own 200-year history of scientific investigation and impressive collection of 18 million objects. This close alignment with Drexel underscores the Academy's goal to position itself at the helm of the sector. A brand identity that emphasizes the museum as a thought leader and key player in the natural sciences works toward achieving this aim.

The TM, entering the brand development stage at the time of this study, is approaching the process as a way to ensure a seamless transition to GW's campus. From both the marketing and development perspectives, there is a need to balance the independence of the museum with the joint identity of the partnership. As The TM embarks on stakeholder meetings and focus groups around the formation of its brand identity, the concept of "nested brands" is at the center. This particular case underscores the power behind the philosophy of a brand. By all indications, The TM at GW brand will aim to convey a new beginning while referencing a legacy.

In summary, the results demonstrate that these university museums find value in branding in three important ways: in setting direction, in establishing value and in realizing goals. While

these benefits are mostly externally oriented, they also carry internal value. It is also important to consider the internal processes that shape this brand identity.

Internal Brand Value

Across the cases, the internal branding processes share common ground in terms of how far the museum is into its transition. UMMA and the Academy are at least one year into their new project; on the other hand, Broad MSU is just several months old, and The TM is only in the preparation stage for the transition. It appears the museums experience similar constraints and opportunities based on their place on the project timeline, not just within the frameworks of project type (new buildings or partnerships). This is noteworthy because it demonstrates that an organization's project "lifecycle" impacts the branding process and the internal brand value. Of course, marketing objectives shift as an organization evolves and grows – but understanding this in combination with the ways in which resources, finances and priorities adjust to organizational lifecycle helps ensure a successful branding effort. In a circular way, an effective branding process generates a strong sense of placement as much as it does a sense of identity. All four museums appear highly aware of their stage in the transition, and fairly realistic about the challenges and opportunities they are facing now and expect to face in the near future as a result of that timeline.

The external themes related to the value of a brand discussed earlier – future focus, expanding academic outreach, and goal-oriented branding – demonstrate closer relations between case studies in the same types of projects (similarities between new building project case studies and between partnership case studies). While further research would need to be

conducted in order to determine the efficacy of internal initiatives around branding, the value of the brand and branding process can be drawn from these findings.

The museums that are further into their new chapter – UMMA and the Academy – have more established brands. The marketing, development and programming staff hold a very clear vision of the components of the brand, and seem to operate more independently within their departments. This freedom is granted because the brand itself is a construct within which each department operates. In contrast, the departments within the museums in the early stages of the transition, Broad MSU and The TM, work closely together to leverage the brand. They are focused on building a campaign that introduces their museum to a range of constituencies – both audiences and donors – so the process is done in tandem between marketing/communications and development. The brand process is very much a joint effort, and will likely remain so until they reach the “established” stage.

What Works

While further research would be required to measure the effectiveness of each brand strategy – based on the brand perceptions of various audience segments – there is one discernible, key feature that appears to validate a strong brand identity of this unique museum sector: enabling students to promote the museum themselves. Getting the brand in the hands of the students, so to speak, enables the museum to be absorbed or integrated into the fabric of the campus community. While all four museums advocate for multi-disciplinary learning that reaches many departments across campus, it’s the utilization of students as active promoters – “ambassadors” – for the museum that appears to validate the brand.

UMMA seems to have the best approach in this marketing tactic, starting with its Student Programming and Advisory Council (SPAC), which as discussed serves as a link between the museum and the student community. Besides serving an advisory role, this diverse body of students from all realms of academia contributes to special outreach efforts such as The Annex blog. Inter-network communication and a sense of authenticity undoubtedly help spread marketing messages. UMMA empowers the student voice, understanding that connectivity of this level fosters a brand identity that is rooted in campus culture. Although a public orientation has been widely embraced by these four museums, the dedication to a genuine university connection remains strong.

As the other three museums grow into their new roles, adopting similar approaches to student engagement in marketing will likely prove quite valuable. A close connection with students outside the class context ensures that the museums understand how this generation engages with art and science on their own time, and how they will shape into future museum visitors and donors. With the next generation of museum supporters is right at their doorstep, university museums should follow UMMA's lead in engaging with this segment as not only an audience, but ambassadors.

Conclusion

This study seeks to answer the following research question: What role can branding play in establishing institutional identity for campus museums? Two sub-questions delve further: (1) What are the emerging opportunities and challenges unique to campus museums in the realm of institutional identity? (2) How can the museum brand be leveraged in times of major institutional change – specifically in education, communications and development efforts? Revisiting patterns

identified in the literature review provides a framework for contextualizing these case studies in the broader university museum sector.

One of the major themes of the sector's evolution, dual focus, emerged out of several factors. To start, cultural institutions of all kinds have adapted to an increased funder interest in community impact and diverse audience outreach. All four case studies recognize the value of both public and university orientation; whether building projects or partnerships, these opportunities have been translated into new platforms for engagement and education. While the ways in which these two constituency groups are segmented for programming and outreach varies across cases, development managers in all four museums emphasize dual focus as a key fundraising message for foundations, government and corporate funders, as well as individual donors and members. The literature review also noted that changing learning models have contributed to the shift to a dual focus in university museum practice. The museums in this study are taking full advantage of new buildings and partnerships to create innovative, immersive and inclusive learning opportunities. A shared theme across all four was a desire to emphasize multidisciplinary value of the museum and its collection; reaching out beyond traditional departments (strictly arts or, for the Academy, strictly sciences) was one of the strongest commonalities in brand identity. The university museum of the 21st century is a place a hub for cultural and academic exchange and a lab for technology-enhanced exploration. As this role has been enabled by new building projects and partnerships, the brands of these museums have made cross-campus relevance a central marketing and fundraising message in these major transitions. As a final component of dual focus, existing literature argues that the 21st-century university museum is evolving into a "public showcase" for the university. These four cases support this claim, as an enhanced role on campus and in the community is central to each museum's brand. Top-tier

collections, whether of biological specimen or contemporary art, and enriching learning environments are leveraged to suggest these institutions are leaders in the academic museum sector. Each museum's branding also conveys the prestige of their university. Marketing and development messaging is beginning to position the museum as a magnet for students and faculty, as well as a gateway to the university for the public at large. There appears to be recognition across cases that the university museum is showcasing the university, and that the brand as a whole enables this dynamic.

A second theme in the literature review surrounding the evolution of university museums is the professionalization of museum administration. The museums in this study are indeed structured similarly to their civic counterparts. The three realms of focus – education, communications and development – demonstrate just how professionalized the sector has become. Education revolves around curatorial and engagement efforts with a dual focus. Development managers maintain a sophisticated fundraising operation that obviously would not have been necessary in the days of full university support. Finally, communications staff lead the way in branding the identity of the museum. This is a break from the traditional positioning of these institutions, which until fairly recently fully absorbed the identities of the academic department in charge or the university itself. The university museum brand is now a complement to the mission and vision of the parent institution, as it broadens its scope of audience and support. Notably, there is true synchronization across engagement, development and marketing efforts in all four case studies, which truly strengthens the brand.

A final pattern in existing literature is the need for the university museum to distinguish itself in an increasingly competitive world. To start, the branding process itself is an exercise in distinguishing institutional identity. On one end, the four brands emphasize the unique qualities

of university museums. The TM and the Academy, with their “adoption” of a university community through partnership, both emphasize how the museum’s research efforts are becoming intertwined with academic departments across campus. This is a more dynamic different research framework than their previous approaches as traditional museums. For UMMA and Broad MSU, reimagined spaces enable them to fully embrace the risk-taking encouraged in higher education. Their brands convey a willingness to push boundaries and expand dialogue in ways that some of their civic counterparts may not. In addition, the four museums approached the branding process as a means through which to realize major goals – whether building an audience and donor base at Broad MSU, or conveying leadership in the field of natural sciences at the Academy. Goal-oriented branding is a highly strategic response to a competitive environment as it leverages the unique identity of the institution with specific aims in mind.

The answer to the question of what role branding plays in establishing institutional identity corresponds the progression of the entire campus museum sector: the importance of branding has increased as these institutions have evolved. By examining two patterns – new building projects and partnerships – this study identifies the ways in which campus museums are responding to emerging opportunities and challenges. In considering perspectives across engagement, communications and development efforts, this study highlights the institution-wide effort and institution-wide value of branding. In conclusion, these four case studies demonstrate that a well-conceived brand is a highly valuable tool in times of transition and transformation. A brand is a guide-star that focuses mission, vision and goals; it is a clarifying and compelling expression of the museum’s case for support across numerous departments; it is a means of generating interest and enthusiasm for the museum across various constituencies; and for these campus museums, it is part of the exploration of identity for the field as a whole.

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the limitations of this study is that it focuses on mid- to large-size campus museums with ten or more staff members. All four museums have a dedicated development department, and all four museums are configured to handle communications in-house (although UMMA and Broad MSU were in the hiring process for a Communications Manager at the time of this study). This human resources capacity is not standard among university museums and galleries, as many are too small-scale to hire their own development and communications staff. Oftentimes, that work is delegated to university-wide external affairs and development offices. This structure would certainly influence the ways in which a museum's brand is developed and implemented. Further research on how smaller-scale institutions leverage their brands would be a useful contribution, as it would reflect a large section of campus museums. In addition, there is an opportunity to test the internal process of branding in university museums large and small. Determining if there are particularly effective organizing tactics within and across departments would provide a valuable course of action for museums embarking on a branding effort.

This topic could be enriched by an investigation into the measurement of brand reception and impact across various constituencies. Examining the way segments within university and public audiences perceive a campus museum's brand would serve as a valuable measurement of brand effectiveness and resonance. Whether conducted through focus groups or surveys, this approach would yield insights that could further advance the sector's understanding of brand value.

APPENDICES

A. Primary Research: Records and Framework*Interview Subjects*

Carolyn Belardo
Senior Communications Manager, Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University
February 7, 2013

Lisa Borgsdorf
Manager, Public Programs and Campus Engagement, University of Michigan Museum of Art
February 14, 2013

Katy Clune
Communications and Marketing Manager, Textile Museum
February 22, 2013

Dr. Jackie Genovesi
Senior Director of Education, Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University
February 4, 2013

Leyna Lightman
Manager of Education, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University
February 22, 2013

Amy Miller Marvin
Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University
February 13, 2013

Bradley Taylor
Associate Director of the Museum Studies Program at University of Michigan
February 16, 2013

Carrie Throm
Deputy Director, Development and External Relations. University of Michigan Museum of Art
February 15, 2013

Sandra Szymanski
Development and Membership Coordinator, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University
February 26, 2013

Eliza Ward
Director of Development, Textile Museum
February 15, 2013

Interview Questions

A. Communications

- How does the new building/partnership reflect the mission, vision and values of the museum?
- What was the motivation for the project?
- How has the university museum's brand evolved since the new building/partnership?
- How does the museum leverage the project in its branding?

B. Engagement

- What kinds of opportunities for engaging the university community have emerged or grown with the new building/partnership?
- What kinds of opportunities for engaging the public have emerged or grown with the new building/partnership?
- In terms of programming, how distinct is the public audience from the university community? Is there significant overlap, or are engaging the university community and engaging the public separate efforts?
- How are outreach efforts around this "dual audience" shaped by the new building/partnership?

C. Development

- How does the museum leverage the new project in its development effort? What role does the (space or alliance) play in the museum's identity, as conveyed in grants, fundraising, etc.?
- What is the brand's value in how the museum is presented to potential donors, members, and other supporters?

D. The University

- How does the parent institution's brand reflect/resemble the brand/institutional identity of the university museum?
- How central is the university to the museum's identity? How does the university relationship manifest itself in (Development/ Communications) efforts?
- How does an academic affiliation shape the museum's brand identity?
- What does the museum represent within the university community?
- What does the museum represent about the university to the public?

E. Brand Value

- What value does a reimagined sense of identity – a new brand – hold for the department (Development/Communications/Education and Programming) in this time of transition?

B. Secondary Research: Checklist

Each university museum's branding effort was evaluated in the following areas:

- A. Presentation of organizational history
- B. Marketing of the new building or partnership
- C. Recurring themes of identity including mission, vision and values in museum materials
- D. Platforms of engagement including publications, social media, website, advertising, etc.
- E. Development efforts related to new building or partnership
- F. Engagement initiatives and breakdown of offerings by audience segment
- G. Press coverage of new building or partnership
- H. University coverage of new building or partnership
- I. Design and brand aesthetic

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