

Strategic Planning // Act 2

Harvest of Insights

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Watch a 1-min Video Recap of the Workshops ([Students](#)) ([Faculty + Staff](#))



***** This document serves as a draft attempt to group insights and ideas together. This list does not represent what will be in the final strategic plan – but aims to illustrate one potential structuring of ideas. Subsequent workshops with faculty and staff (Oct 28) will attempt to further clarify, articulate, and organize these insights into a final plan that everyone feels excited around.***

Oct 3 - 7, 2025
University Park, PA

Overview of Act 2 Process

The goals and objectives that follow represent the synthesis of 3 workshop sessions with faculty, staff, and students. Act 1 of this effort surfaced fifteen key insights—“what matters most” for the College’s future. During the Act 2 sessions, participants revisited those insights to refine, prioritize, and rewrite them – structuring them as potential goals and objectives.

After the Act 2 workshops, the planning team combined these themes with results from a college-wide survey of roughly 100 respondents. Together these inputs revealed consistent patterns across audiences:






- collaboration,
- civic engagement,
- career readiness,
- visibility of the arts, and
- access and belonging.

Those five themes became the backbone for the goals and objectives presented here.



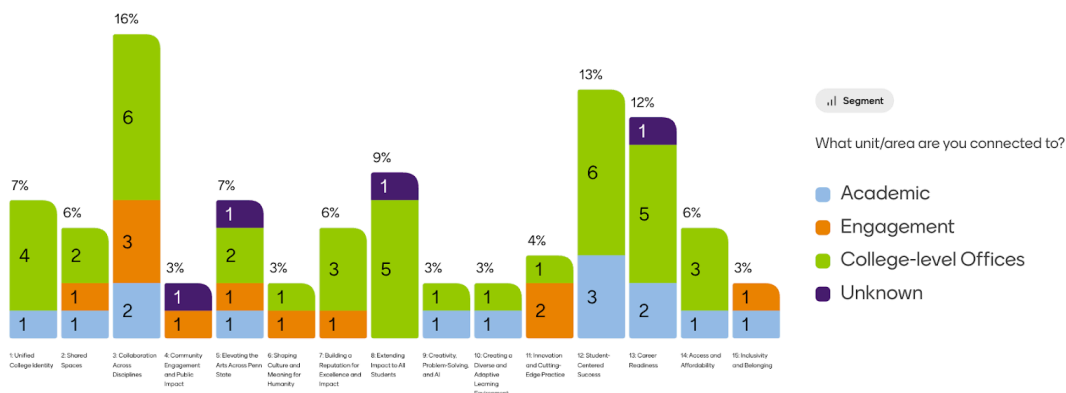
Proposed Goals and Objectives

The five goals outlined below are an attempt to summarize the key insights that emerged out of the Act 2 workshops. They align directly with Penn State's institutional priorities while capturing the distinct role that the College of Arts and Architecture plays within the University.

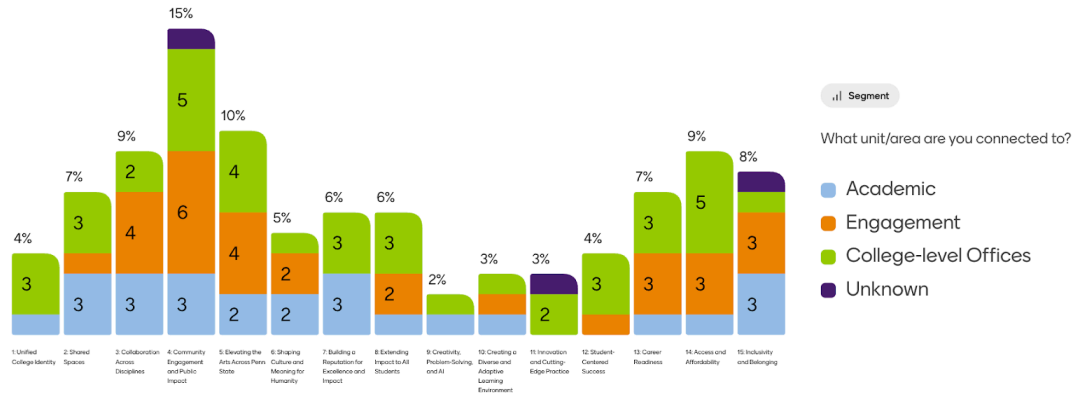
University Goals	Theme	A&A Goals
Transforming internal operations	 Collaboration	Goal 1: Build a collaborative culture that strengthens trust and connection across our people and programs.
Increasing land-grant impact	 Civic Engagement	Goal 2: Serve as a cultural bridge that enriches campus, community, and civic life across Pennsylvania – and beyond.
Enhancing Student Success	 Career Readiness	Goal 3: Prepare students for creative careers by cultivating the skills, imagination, and agency to envision and create the future.
Growing interdisciplinary research	 Visibility of the Arts	Goal 4: Champion the arts as a creative practice that advances interdisciplinary discovery and transformation within and beyond Penn State.
Fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging	 Access and Belonging	Goal 5: Ensure every student can thrive by making an A&A education accessible, affordable, and inclusive for all.

During the Act 2 workshops, participants were asked to review the fifteen key insights identified in Act 1 and prioritize those they believed were most essential to carry forward into the final goals and objectives. Using a prioritization process, faculty, staff, and students identified the ideas that they felt had the greatest potential for impact, as well as those which they had the greatest ownership to help advance.

Faculty + Staff (Morning session)



Faculty + Staff (Afternoon session)



The top 6 elements as identified across the sessions included:

3. Collaboration Across Disciplines (20 votes)

Breaking down silos and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration was seen as essential for innovation and identity-building.

4. Community Engagement and Public Impact (17 votes)

A&A has a unique role in fulfilling Penn State's land-grant mission through direct community engagement, outreach, and cultural presence.

13. Career Readiness (15 votes)

Participants emphasized the importance of preparing students for sustainable creative careers, including stronger pipelines to internships, residencies, and industry connections.

5. Elevating the Arts Across Penn State (15 votes)

The arts must be seen as central to Penn State's mission. A&A can raise the profile of arts and design across the University to ensure their value is understood and celebrated.

12. Student-Centered Success (13 votes)

Students must remain at the center of A&A's mission — with expanded enrollment, opportunities, and support systems to help them thrive.

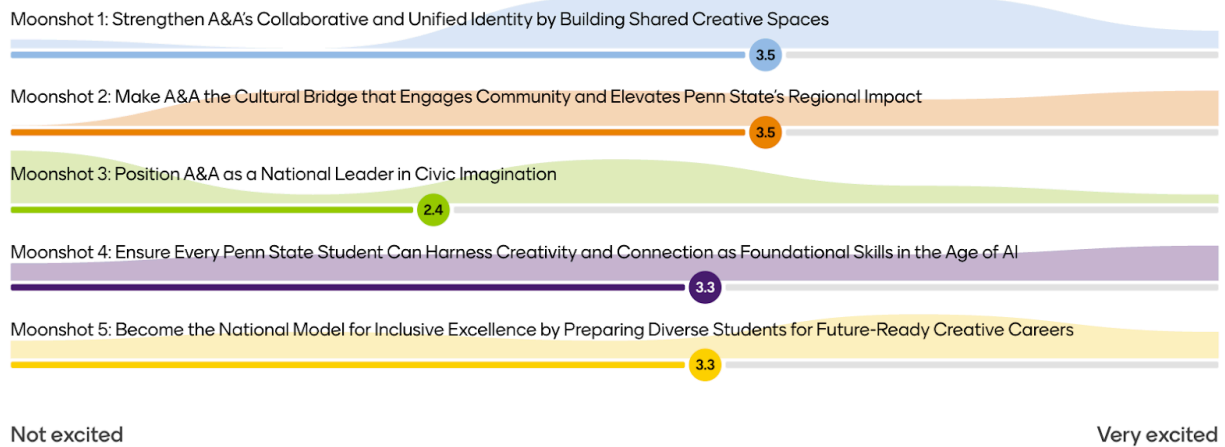
14. Access and Affordability (13 votes)

Ensuring that students can afford and access an A&A education was consistently raised as a core need.

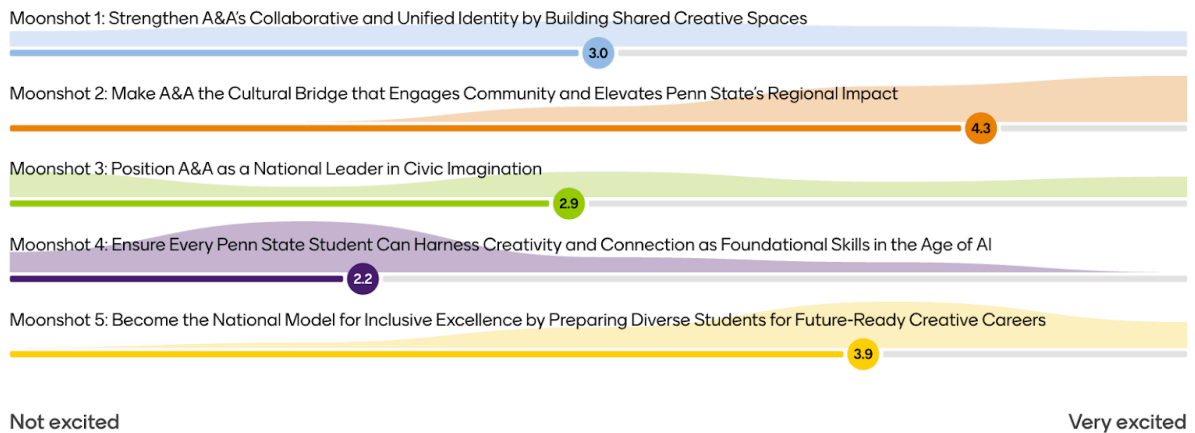


Participants also reviewed the five “moonshots” that emerged from Act 1, ranking them on how closely they aligned with the College’s long-term direction. The graphs below illustrate their ranking.

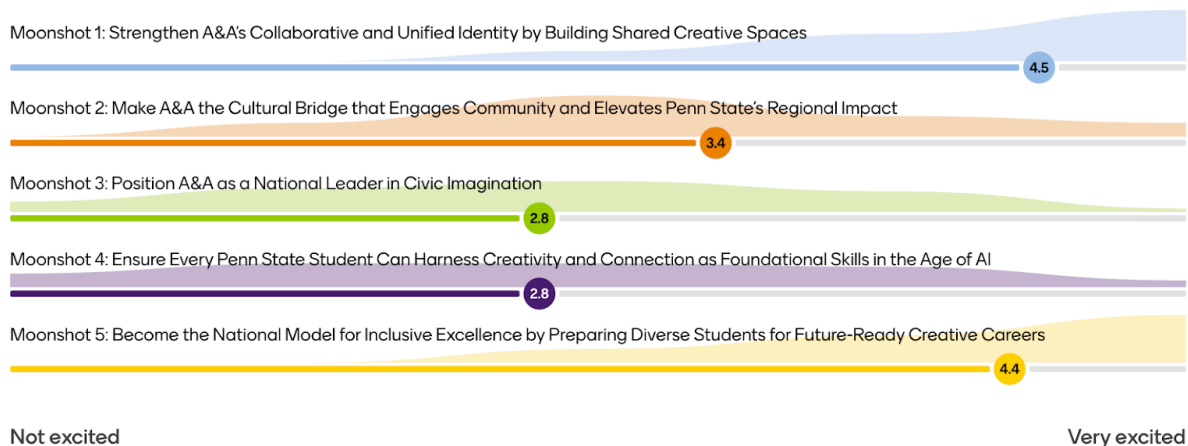
Faculty + Staff (Morning session)



Faculty + Staff (Afternoon session)



Students



By combining these data points — high-vote insights, moonshot rankings, and survey feedback — the planning team distilled the most widely supported and high-impact ideas into the five goals and corresponding objectives presented in this document.

At a high level, the five goals center on the following themes:

- **Goal 1:** Build a collaborative culture
- **Goal 2:** Serve as a cultural bridge
- **Goal 3:** Prepare students for creative careers
- **Goal 4:** Champion the arts
- **Goal 5:** Ensure every student can thrive

■ Goal 1 – Collaboration

Draft Goal

Build a collaborative culture that strengthens trust and connection across our people and programs.

Draft Objectives

1A – **Develop a 10-year plan for new and renewed physical spaces** that foster cross-disciplinary connection and community well-being.

1B – **Reimagine shared spaces** to make collaboration visible, accessible, and inspiring across departments.

1C – **Integrate collaboration into the curriculum**, including first-year and general-education experiences that blend disciplines.

1D – **Reimagine how AI-enhanced tools can enable more human-centered teaching at scale** and reduce administrative burden for faculty and staff.

1E – **Develop college-wide platforms** that celebrate collaborative projects, partnerships, and cross-disciplinary opportunities (*i.e. events, showcases, storytelling*).

1F – **Establish structural incentives that encourage cross-department collaboration** and remove bureaucratic barriers preventing faculty, staff, and students from working together seamlessly.

Goal 2 – Civic Engagement

Draft Goal

Serve as a cultural bridge that enriches campus, community, and civic life across Pennsylvania – and beyond.

Draft Objectives

2A – **Create a “Campus-to-Community Arts Corridor”** linking the Palmer Museum, CPA, and downtown State College as a living lab for civic engagement.

2B – **Expand artist residencies and student-curated programs** that connect Penn State creativity with public audiences.

2C – **Embed human-centered design principles** into courses, performances, and creative practice to prepare students for socially engaged work.

2D – **Strengthen partnerships** with regional arts and cultural organizations to extend A&A's presence across the Commonwealth.

2E – **Document and share the social impact** of A&A's creative engagement as part of Penn State's land-grant story.

Goal 3 – Career Readiness

Draft Goal

Prepare students for creative careers by cultivating the skills, imagination, and agency to envision and create the future.

Draft Objectives

3A – **Integrate ethical AI literacy and future-ready skills** into curriculum and co-curricular learning so that every graduate leaves with fluency in the creative and responsible use of AI.

3B – **Expand career pathways and industry partnerships** that connect students to creative professions, residencies, and entrepreneurial ventures.

3C – **Expand alumni mentorship and portfolio programs** that help students articulate and hone their creative strengths in career contexts.

3D – **Expose students to diverse career options** that apply creativity and design across industries and sectors.

3E – **Increase enrollment in University-wide General Education courses** introducing all Penn State students – not just A&A majors – to creativity, design thinking, and the human-centered use of emerging technologies like AI.

■ Goal 4 – Visibility of the Arts

Draft Goal

Champion the arts as a creative practice that advances interdisciplinary discovery and transformation within and beyond Penn State.

Draft Objectives

4A – Position A&A as Penn State’s creative hub—the place where faculty, students, and partners come to learn how creativity sparks imagination, innovation, and critical thinking across disciplines.

4B – Elevate the visibility and recognition of A&A’s creative research and scholarship at the national and international level through exhibitions, performances, publications, and collaborations.

4C – Advocate for the arts as an institutional priority through university initiatives and cross-campus partnerships.

4D – Lead the exploration of the human, cultural, and ethical dimensions of AI and its influence on creative practice.

4E – Embed creativity and design into interdisciplinary research addressing social, environmental, and technological challenges.

■ Goal 5 – Access and Belonging

Draft Goal

Ensure every student can thrive by making an A&A education accessible, affordable, and inclusive for all.

Draft Objectives

5A – Strengthen holistic student support systems that integrate advising, financial resources, mentorship, and well-being to enhance student success, retention, and sustained enrollment.

5B – Address affordability and access barriers across programs to reduce cost of participation.

5C – Increase scholarships and targeted financial support for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students.

5D – Create inclusive spaces, experiences, and support networks that foster belonging and community across differences.

5E – Define and track A&A-specific measures of success that honor creative, academic, and personal growth.

Appendix

Below are the raw notes from the workshop. The insights and moonshot ideas in this Harvest Document were developed partially from these notes, as well as combined with the survey responses.

Appendix A: Moonshot Statements and Potential Objective Statements as Developed by Participants

Moonshot	Morning	Afternoon
<p>Moonshot 1: Collaborative Identify</p> <p>– <i>“Strengthen A&A’s Collaborative and Unified Identity by Building Shared Creative Spaces”</i></p>	<p>Building / re-imagining transdisciplinary, multi-sensory creative spaces with a shared goal of amplifying + connecting students + colleagues across A&A to foster collaboration, new knowledge, and understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards a 10 yr plan to build new spaces where disciplines connect and community well being is strengthened (11 dots) • Reimagine spaces to be more collaborative! (7 dots) • Create/host compelling cross disciplinary opportunities that are attended by those across College/University (7 dots) • Faculty and staff learn more about College prism – each school’s/program’s work (6 dots) 	<p>Create a unified identity that allows space for collaboration + shared creative experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a unified identity that allows space for collaboration + shared creative experiences. (6 dots) • Shared spaces are the result of collaboration efforts — trust needs to be established first, then the spaces will evolve & be used. (5 dots) • Trust needs to be established that involves time, resources, and acknowledgment. (1 dot)
<p>Moonshot 2: Cultural Network + Community Impact</p> <p>– <i>“Make A&A the Cultural Bridge that Engages Community and Elevates Penn State’s Regional Impact”</i></p>	<p><i>Did not revise title</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an entry-level class that students will be required to take as a gen ed (like English 15 or public speaking). (14 dots) • Artist residencies supported by endowments (10 dots) • College-hosted activities and events both on & off campus like Shakespeare in the Park, 	<p>Transform A&A into a cultural network that leverages university-community connections to elevate Penn State’s impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a recognized ‘Campus-to-Community Arts Corridor’ linking the Palmer, CPA, and on-campus galleries to downtown. (11 dots) • “Elevate access to the arts on Penn State’s campuses and beyond.” (6 dots)

	<p>combination of free and paid programming (7 dots)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community activities supported by the college • cross-department input (6 dots) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 student-curated event per year to engage community on campus and beyond.” (5 dots) Create intentional opportunities for intergenerational connections and learning through interdisciplinary arts experiences. (2 dots)
<p>Moonshot 3: Civic Engagement</p> <p>–</p> <p>“Position A&A as a National Leader in Civic Imagination”</p>	<p><i>Did not focus on moonshot</i></p>	<p>Position A&A as a thought leader in civic engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civic engagement center. (9 dots) Every student has a meaningful civic engagement experience. (5 dots) Courses that teach students how to engage. (3 dots) Faculty known for civic engagement experience. (2 dots)
<p>Moonshot 4: Future Skills</p> <p>–</p> <p>“Ensure Every Penn State Student Can Harness Creativity and Connection as Foundational Skills in the Age of AI”</p>	<p><i>Did not revise title</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mandatory non-curricular opportunities for all 1st year / pre-major undergraduates to engage with the arts (8 votes) The arts experience with community service opportunities. (7 dots) Provide guided experiences imagining, creativity and problem solving and AI (hard to read, no dots) 	<p>Harness Creativity, Criticality & Connection as foundational skills in career building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student success & career preparedness. (13 dots) Innovation and bleeding edge practice. (4 dots) Critical and ethical problem-solving with AI. (2 dots)

**Moonshot 5:
Student Success
–**

*“Become the
National Model for
Inclusive
Excellence by
Preparing Diverse
Students for
Future-Ready
Creative Careers.”*

**Become a leader in excellence by
preparing students for success &
future careers**

- Expose students to career options that include creativity/design in various fields (14 dots)
- Establish a student center that includes support for (13 dots)
 - Career, Academic, Engagement, Financial / Scholarship, Experiential Learning / Internship, Study Abroad, Tutoring, Advising, Clubs activities, Link students with industry & alumni mentors)
 - Regardless of thriving or surviving student status
- How many students use student center (8 dots)
 - ↑ Retention, Completion, Satisfaction in Senior Exit Survey
- Create a required true 1st year seminar that every student in the college takes & the enrollment is not based on A&A major – each class is a mix of every (was posted after voting, no dots)

**Preparing ALL students for
future-ready careers.**

- Create a mentorship program with alumni and current students. (10 dots)
- College-level inclusive creation zone: student-driven, collaborative, safe (inclusivity agreement) (9 dots)
- Audit class resource and materials for affordability. (1 dot)