

Jennifer Owen

*Artistic Director & Co-Founder –
Owen/Cox Dance Group*

Brad Cox

Co-Founder

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*Artistic Director –
Take the Stage*

Sharon Amason

President

Howard Haas

Vice President

Colin Cox

Treasurer

Christopher Peacock

Secretary

Directors

Logan Pachciarz

Rod Parks

Shari L. Wilson

Jeffrey Zimmerman

2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

Session: March 30th, 2024

Prepared: April 7th 2024

MISSION



Owen/Cox Dance Group's mission is to create new music and dance collaborations, to present high-quality contemporary dance performances with live music, and to engage as wide an audience as possible through affordable live performance, education and outreach programs.

With this mission in mind, founders Jennifer Owen and Brad Cox bring together some of Kansas City's most talented artists, representing a variety of genres, to perform contemporary dance with live music. With diverse backgrounds ranging from the Bolshoi Ballet and the Leningrad Chamber Orchestra, to Alvin Ailey and Dave Brubeck, these dancers and musicians form a highly skilled and multi-faceted corps. The collaborative results speak for themselves: fresh and vibrant new works that are classical in form, but contemporary in expression.

COMPANY REALIZED GOALS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Two world premieres commissioned by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
- Creative partnerships with newEar Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Charlotte Street Foundation, The People's Liberation Big Band, Ensemble Ibérica, YWCA of Greater Kansas City, Bach Aria Soloists, Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, Civic Opera Theater of Kansas City, Kansas City Public Library, Mattie Rhodes Center, Northeast Community Center, Paul Mesner Puppets, Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy, and Paseo Academy for the Fine and Performing Arts
- Collaborations with artists Peregrine Honig, Peggy Noland, Mark Southerland, and NEA Fellow Nate Fors
- Participation in annual events Spring to Dance Festival, Modern Night at the Folly, New Dance Partners, Festival on the Vine, Dance in the Park, and Open Stage at the J
- Free quality educational programs in conjunction with performances
- Over 100 performances, 60 new works including 8 full-length productions, presented to over 85,000 people
- Positive reviews and feature articles from major media sources in the Kansas City area
- Inclusion in Missouri Touring Performers Directory
- Take the Stage, an educational program providing year-long dance instruction to elementary school students in the Kansas City area
- Serving as fiscal sponsor for Moving Arts (formerly known as Kansas City Dance Festival)
- Recipient of Pitch Weekly 2012 Artopia Award
- Selected as a 2014-2015 participant in PerformARTS
- Selected as resident company for the 2016 Great Friends Dance Festival in Newport, RI
- Recipient of a U.S. State Department Public Diplomacy Grant to Ukraine
- Nominated for a Regional Emmy Award- Arts/Entertainment: Short Form Content 2022.

RETROSPECTIVE (HOW WE GOT HERE)

1. Added a part time staff position of “Operations Manager and Rehearsal Assistant” to assist in administration and dance production.
2. Increased board size of independent members to minimum of 11, reaching our goal.
3. Redefined committee structure and introduced ways of measuring outcomes.
We achieved this but have had a setback since Covid. We need to reinstate committees for greater efficiency.
4. Added a resource to search for new grants, both locally and nationally.
We haven't addressed this recently. I believe that identifying new donors is a better strategy than seeking new grants, which are limited.
5. Contracted with Support Kansas City to generate monthly financial reporting to help manage cash flow and monitor performance against budget.
We are now moving away from this to have a CPA assist us independently at a more cost-efficient rate.
6. Contracted a CPA to produce an annual audited financial report and move to an accrued method of accounting.
We haven't done an audit since Covid. It's very costly and funders don't require an audit.
7. Launched two new sub committees: 1) Touring committee 2) Take the Stage committee.
This should be a priority moving forward.
8. Established Take the Stage (TTS), an educational outreach program serving four schools with new funding resources.
9. Added a season ticket package available to patrons
10. Established a partnership with Kansas City Dance Festival (now Moving Arts) to help launch the annual festival.

RETROSPECTIVE (2015-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW)

Priority: Stability with Growth

- a. Investigate options to secure a permanent rental space for rehearsals.
We have accomplished this.
- b. Search for a permanent office space to conduct company business activities and board meetings.
We have accomplished this (although space isn't great for meetings).
- c. Increase staffing from one part-time position to one full time administrator/production assistant position (2016 or 2017 based on budget considerations)
- d. Increase the number of schools adapting the TTS program to 6, along with additional support staff for development.
- e. Activate a corporate sponsor campaign with benefits clearly defined to marketers.
This is very challenging, but still worth the effort if we can identify corporate sponsors.
- f. Apply for additional grants in the following areas: metro, regional, and national (2016/17).
- g. Increase budget income for Owen/Cox to \$275,000 in 2015/16 and \$310,000 for 2016/17. **Note: This income does exclude the KCDF budget.*
We have gotten close to this goal.

RETROSPECTIVE (2015-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW)

Priority: Improve Board Governance

- a. Increase board size to 15 independent members, including Artistic Director (2017). Strengthen organization by attracting diverse members with needed skill sets.
This needs to be a priority. We have an excellent Board, but we are not adhering to our term limits because we aren't recruiting new members to replace those cycling off.
- b. Reactivate an advisory board to include members with financial resources, community stature, and expertise in the arts.
We can either do this or recruit new Board members to do this.
- c. Strengthen committee structure by adding non-board members.
We need to renew commitment to this.
- d. Enforce measurement outcomes of each of the board committees.
We need to renew commitment to this.

Priority: Advance

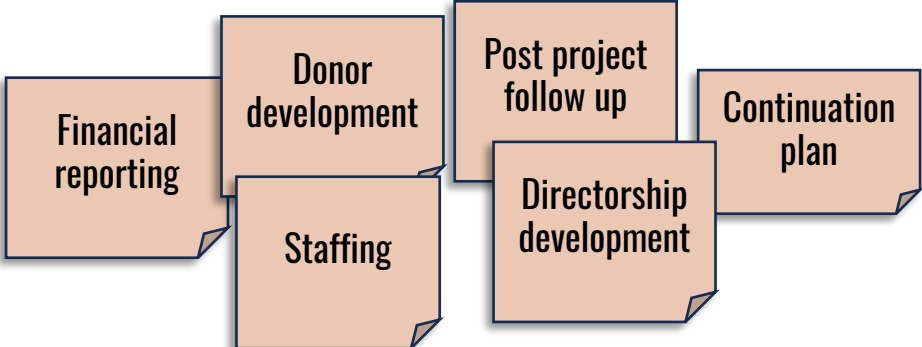
- a. Establish our company with a residency location.
We have a good relationship with KCVA for studio rental and JCCC and City Stage Theatre for theater rental now.
- b. Launch a capital or endowment campaign or to secure a more stable future.
Something to explore?
- a. Apply for participation in national dance festivals.
We do on a limited basis. This could be a more robust effort.

RETROSPECTIVE WORKING SESSION 2024

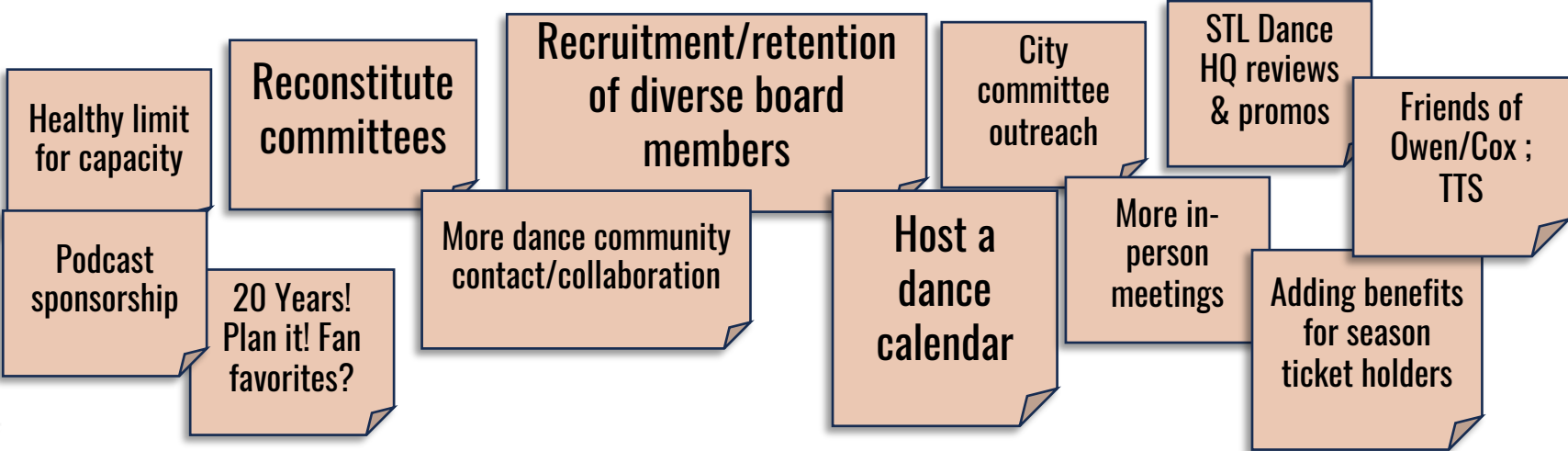
WHAT WENT WELL?



WHAT DIDN'T GO WELL?



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



PRIORITIES/VISION – OWEN/COX DANCE GROUP

1. Enhance Board effectiveness
2. Increase audience size at performances
3. Utilize established relationships to foster new collaborations, outreach, and expand the audience
4. Seek more opportunities for traveling regionally, nationally, and internationally
5. Title Modifications and Consolidation (Executive-Artistic Director)

Strengthen Board to include more new members of diverse backgrounds so that those who have been serving can cycle off.

In addition, reactivating committees to increase Board involvement and support (and to alleviate some of the burden on staff).

Rather than seeking a new person to perform the role of Executive Director, perhaps merge Jennifer's position into Executive-Artistic Director. She is already doing both roles, so it might be a good title change.

PRIORITIES/VISION – TAKE THE STAGE (TTS)

1. Develop Advisory Board for TTS

- More KCPS Schools
- Find inroads into KCK & Shawnee Mission

2. Increase reach in schools

Based on national and state standards. In general, we should be moving our curriculum toward helping students make their own dances by 5th grade. Maybe hire a consultant to help us make sure we're hitting on what we need.

3. Curriculum Development

4. Staff/Professional Development

How do we continue recruiting and training the best Teaching Artists? How do we support their teaching and development?

5. 5-7 Year Plan: Succession

Considerations: Will the Company continue after Jennifer is (someday) not involved? If so, will TTS continue to be part of OCDG? If not, do we craft a plan that eventually makes TTS its own entity?

PRIORITIES/VISION – OWEN/COX DANCE GROUP

ACTION STEPS

- **Capacity Building**
 - **Instate ‘Friends of OCDG/TTS’ program**
 - **Each board member find two individuals to interview each year**
- **Building Relationships**
 - **Season ticket holder party for the end of the season**
 - **Individual outreach to season ticket holders**
 - **Handwritten cards by board members**
 - **Getting dancers involved**
 - **Screening of new film in production**
 - **Ft Hays Cultural Center**
- **Reinstate Touring Committee led by Shari Wilson**
- **Title Change**

PRIORITIES/VISION – TAKE THE STAGE ACTION STEPS

- **Curriculum Development**
 - Shari Wilson will lend her expertise on standards
- **Outreach**
 - Educators/retired educators
 - With other school programs
 - Board recommended several individuals for Advisory Board outreach
- **Succession Planning**
 - Planning session to be scheduled to develop strategic initiatives for the distant future of Owen/Cox Dance Group and Take the Stage

APPENDIX

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SWOT ANALYSIS



- What do we do well?
- What are our weaknesses?
- What is our potential to develop further?

- What are the key trends we should be watching?
- Who are our major competitors?

APPENDIX

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
STRENGTHS	Where Opportunities and Strengths are aligned, we need to INVEST	Where Threats and Strengths are aligned, we need to DEFEND, MOBILIZE RESOURCES, ENTER INTO ALLIANCES
WEAKNESSES	Where Opportunities and Weaknesses are aligned, we need to INVEST, DIVEST, OR COLLABORATE	Where Threats and Weaknesses are aligned, we need to DIVEST OR DAMAGE CONTROL

APPENDIX

SMART GOAL EXAMPLE

GOAL: Establish a 3-month operating reserve by budgeting \$XX annually over the next 3 years.

CHECKLIST:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Agreed-Upon
- Realistic
- Time-limited