

## SMTD STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: 2025 - 2035

### Introduction

The University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance stands as a vibrant community where teaching, learning, and artistic discovery flourish through deep care, purposeful collaboration, and meaningful connection. As one of the nation's premier performing arts schools within a distinguished public research university, we embrace our privilege and responsibility to create an expansive, welcoming environment where diverse voices, perspectives, and artistic expressions enrich our shared journey of growth and innovation. Our commitment to excellence on the national stage is matched by our dedication to accessibility and public engagement, positioning us as leaders in advancing the performing arts across the country and beyond.

Our strength lies in being a "big tent" - a space where established and emerging artist-scholars, educators, staff, and students come together to explore, create, and lead. Here, the performing arts serve as both a foundation for individual discovery and a catalyst for collective impact. Through rigorous artistic training, scholarly inquiry, and community engagement, we prepare students to shape both the present and future of the performing arts while serving the public good.

SMTD's position within one of the world's leading public research universities amplifies our ability to foster connections across disciplines, cultures, and communities. We thoughtfully draw upon our rich legacy of artistic and scholarly achievement while actively expanding the boundaries of creative practice. Our faculty, staff, and students work together to create an environment where examination of foundational practices ignites new possibilities, where questioning leads to discovery, and where our differences strengthen our shared commitment to artistic vitality and social impact.

Our leadership responsibility demands we engage thoughtfully with tradition even as we shape new possibilities. Our dynamic community requires enhanced resources, skills, and opportunities to develop both their creative and scholarly work in ways we have yet to imagine. Our faculty will guide this evolution while fostering artistic vitality and scholarly discovery. Together we will create an environment where critical examination leads to meaningful growth.

As a student-centered community, we recognize that transformative education happens not just in classrooms and performance spaces, but through the daily interactions, collaborations, and mentoring relationships that define the SMTD experience. Through these connections, we cultivate a space where students thrive, discovering their authentic artistic voices, developing sustainable and fulfilling careers, and building the knowledge and ethical foundations needed to lead positive change in their communities and across the performing arts landscape.

## Mission, Vision, and Values

### MISSION

SMTD cultivates artistic vitality, advances knowledge, and serves the public good through exceptional teaching, creative practice, scholarly inquiry, and community engagement. As a premiere performing arts school in a world class public research institution, we prepare students to lead with both artistic excellence and ethical action, enriching society through the transformative power of the performing arts.

### VISION

We aspire to be a model of what a performing arts school can achieve - a dynamic community where diverse artistic voices flourish, where innovation emerges from thoughtful engagement with tradition, and where the performing arts catalyze positive change in service of the greater good.

### VALUES

Our vision is rooted in our identity as a public institution and our commitment to serving broad and diverse communities through the performing arts. These values guide our teaching, creative practice, research, and engagement:

1. **Artistic Vitality:** We celebrate the dynamic interplay between established practices and emerging possibilities. Through deep engagement with foundational forms and bold exploration of new frontiers, we expand the boundaries of creative expression while preparing artists to shape the future of their fields. Our approach integrates classroom learning with practical experience, scholarly inquiry with creative exploration.
2. **Community & Care:** We cultivate a supportive, respectful environment where diverse perspectives enrich our community and strengthen our work. By fostering genuine connection across differences, we create conditions where all members thrive personally and professionally, enhancing both individual growth and collective achievement while maintaining a commitment to holistic well-being for students, faculty, and staff alike.
3. **Public Service:** As part of a premier public university, we embrace our responsibility to serve broad communities through teaching, performance, research, and engagement. We prepare our students to be both artists and citizens, using their creative gifts to address pressing challenges and enhance public life.

## Strategic Foundation

Building on our legacy of distinction and embracing our profound responsibility to shape the future of the performing arts, we chart interconnected pathways of thoughtful evolution and purposeful growth to meet the yet-to-be-imagined needs of tomorrow's artists, scholars, educators, and leaders. This commitment requires concrete action, honest reflection, and sustained investment in our people, programs, and impact.

SMTD's Strategic Foundation advances along three key pathways:

1. **People:** nurturing a culture of creativity, dedication, belonging, well-being, and leadership
2. **Exploration:** advancing artistic excellence through innovation at the intersection of tradition and discovery
3. **Impact:** activating the transformative power of the performing arts

## Pathways and Strategic Initiatives

**PEOPLE:** The foundation of our pathways forward, nurturing a culture of creativity, dedication, belonging, well-being, and ethical leadership

At SMTD, our strength comes from our community – emerging and established artist-scholars, professional staff, and alumni who bring diverse perspectives and talents to our shared endeavor. By fostering an environment where every member can thrive personally and professionally, we create a culture of continuous growth that empowers our community to adapt, innovate, and lead in an ever-evolving performing arts landscape. Strategic Initiatives:

- **Community Development & Support**  
We nurture a vibrant, respectful community of emerging and established artist-scholars, staff, and alumni, celebrating their diverse perspectives, talents, and expertise.
- **Holistic Growth & Well-Being**  
We cultivate an environment where physical, mental, and artistic well-being empower all of our community members to thrive personally and professionally.
- **Professional Development & Advancement**  
We invest in lifelong learning opportunities and leverage the rich resources of the University to prepare our community to lead, innovate, and succeed in a dynamic performing arts landscape.

**EXPLORATION:** Building on our foundation in people, advancing artistic excellence through innovation at the intersection of tradition and discovery

Our creative energy emerges from productive tensions between established practices and bold experimentation, between artistic foundations and new frontiers. We create an environment where rigorous engagement with foundational creative practice catalyzes groundbreaking exploration. By providing world-class facilities, fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration, and creating global engagement opportunities, we empower the SMTD and greater University of Michigan community to question thoughtfully, experiment boldly, and shape the future of performing arts. Strategic Initiatives:

- **Research Excellence & Creative Practice**  
We leverage SMTD's outstanding resources to advance groundbreaking research and creative practice across traditional and emerging forms of artistic expression.
- **Cross-Campus Collaboration**  
We work with the University of Michigan to cultivate partnerships across disciplines and departments that spark innovation and create new possibilities for artistic and scholarly exploration.
- **Global Community**  
We build global connections that enrich our artistic practice, expand our cultural perspectives, and strengthen our worldwide impact.
- **Technological Innovation & Infrastructure**  
We embrace emerging technologies, support experimental approaches, and provide the necessary infrastructure to discover new frontiers in artistic expression and performance.

**IMPACT:** Through exploration and discovery, activating the transformative power of the performing arts

At SMTD, we believe in the arts' unique ability to create lasting positive change. Through the integration of artistic excellence, civic engagement, and thoughtful leadership, we prepare the next generation of artist-scholars to lead with purpose and vision while making meaningful contributions to society. Strategic Initiatives:

- **Intentional Practice**  
We pursue work that addresses pressing societal challenges, seeks to make meaningful connections, and inspires creativity in all its forms.
- **Community Impact**  
We build lasting partnerships that connect our artistic work to community needs and amplify diverse voices and perspectives.
- **Entrepreneurial Vision**  
We develop artist-scholars who combine artistic practice with entrepreneurial thinking to transform the performing arts landscape.

## How We Will Ensure Success

At SMTD, we recognize that progress along our strategic pathways requires assessment, shared accountability, inclusive implementation, and meaningful engagement with the campus and beyond. Through comprehensive evaluation processes and transparent reporting mechanisms, we will ensure our initiatives deliver meaningful outcomes for our entire community and the wider world. By engaging all constituencies in measuring progress and refining our course, we create a culture of continuous improvement that advances our collective mission.

- **Thoughtful Stewardship:** We will work in the mode of reflective practitioner by first assessing where we are and then creating clear goals. We will establish clear goals, metrics, and evaluation processes that acknowledge both measurable outcomes and the inherent complexity of artistic growth. We will always be aware of best practices and benchmarking to ensure responsible growth and evolution.
- **Shared Accountability:** We will engage all constituencies in transparent decision-making, embracing diverse perspectives even when they create productive tension. We ensure equitable participation of students, faculty, and staff in our strategic initiatives while thoughtfully balancing institutional stability and necessary change.
- **External Engagement:** We will actively seek partnerships and collaborations beyond our institution, recognizing the value of diverse perspectives and shared resources to advance our mission.
- **Student-Centered Approach:** We prioritize the experience and development of our students as emerging artist-scholars, ensuring their voices help shape our programs and initiatives.

By advancing along these interconnected pathways, SMTD will continue to evolve as a leading institution for artist-scholars, supported by exceptional professional staff, enriched by our position within one of the world's premier research universities, and actively engaged with the broader, global community.