BRYN MAWR **FILM INSTITUTE**
Strategic Plan 2015-2020

INTRODUCTION

BMFI has successfully completed the 2014 Strategic Plan. Achievements included the expansion of the theater to four screens, the renovation of the old theaters and projection booths, and the significant increase (nearly doubling, in some cases) of our programs, including special events, main attractions, education, and membership, all the while maintaining a healthy bottom line. Building on this success, the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership have committed to creating a view of priorities for the next three to five years in a new Strategic Plan to carry BMFI forward. This is a summary of that plan.

MISSION RE-CONFIRMED

The success of BMFI in terms of its fiscal security, capitalization, programmatic strength, and popularity indicates that the mission is working well. The mission, as most recently evolved and stated, remains:

> *Bryn Mawr Film Institute is a nonprofit, member-supported motion picture theater and film education center. BMFI is dedicated to promoting shared experiences that entertain, engage, and educate audiences through a diverse range of independent-minded films, a full curriculum of courses, and an extensive program of special events. BMFI builds community through film culture, while maintaining strong connections to its historic venue's cinematic past.*

A broad approach was used to develop the context for identifying priorities for the next three to five years. An extensive review of current operations, programs, fiscal performance, and competitive milieu was undertaken as part of this strategic planning process. This included:

- Board and staff- articulated questions about the future of the industry and of the community.
- A review of recent audience surveys
- A newly commissioned survey of BMFI education students.
- An analysis of the competitive landscape to learn what other educational resources compete with BMFI in the region and online.
- Industry literature review and interviews about technological and/or operational changes likely to occur in the next three years (this revealed none that we believe will substantially alter operations).
- Discussions with staff, leadership, and the Board regarding priority areas that need improvement in BMFI operations.

Through this iterative process the final list of initiatives emerged and they are described in the following pages. It is important to recognize that these initiatives are incremental; they do not substitute for anything that we are currently doing. Indeed, our research and deliberations confirmed the value of what we are doing and the efficiency with which we are doing it. The initiatives below are mostly NEW initiatives, some of which may have been in the planning for several years and are ready now to launch. Others are interdependent, waiting until the organization is ready for them or until other parts of the plan are completed. But in most cases these initiatives must be added to already-full workloads or require new resources in order to be undertaken. The future calls for our finding ways to incorporate these strategic initiatives into our daily operations. Given the very lean structure of our organization, it will be challenging to accomplish this, but we are ready to try.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The individual initiatives are prioritized and described below. They are also labeled as to which category they belong, in the following way: Staff and Systems (S), Physical Plant (P), Fiscal (F), Audience and Programming (AP), and Community (C).

1. **Leadership**–From many perspectives, the single most important initiative is one that the Board, not the staff, must undertake, i.e. the creation of a Succession Plan and the search for an Executive Director (S). This effort is tied to the initiative of a Comprehensive Campaign (F) to support the dedication of an Executive Director's Chair, as well as other designated purposes. In addition, supporting the development of staff and enhancing the respect across departments and roles are efforts reinvigorated by this plan. (S)
2. **Environment**–Improving the working conditions of the theater managers/Operations Director (P), and providing space in which to add new employees (as necessitated to accomplish other elements of the plan) is also of high priority and entails an architectural assessment (P) to assess various possible configurations. In addition to working space, the plan calls for an assessment of audience flow and public space optimization (P) as well as storage space alternatives. (P) With an eye to the future, the availability of other spaces, nearby or remote, will be evaluated as they become available. The feasibility of live performance space creation will also be included. (P) Where enabled by appropriate changes to the physical plant and BMFI program, we

will undertake to devise new streams of earned revenue. (F)

3. **Business Tools**–Providing for improved systems in the infrastructure of theater operations (S) has been a priority for some time. This plan calls for the selection and implementation of a new ticketing/sales system that can interface with our donor data base as well as class registrations, concessions, online purchases, and inventory to permit deeper levels of analysis and marketing and more efficient operations in several departments.
    i. Sharpening and specifying protocols, policies, and procedures (S) in other areas of theater operations will also be undertaken.
    ii. Providing members with more/better benefits and easier access to engagement with the theater is another of the goals of this desired system. (AP)
4. **Funding**–A Comprehensive/Endowment Campaign (F) is envisioned in this strategic planning horizon, one that will not only support the position of a paid Executive Director, but will also provide for improvements, replacements, and maintenance of the physical plant, a "rainy day" fund, an opportunity fund, and the retirement of loans. (F)
5. **New Audiences**–The plan affirms efforts to explore programming opportunities that sustain current, and create new, audiences. (AP)
    i. A focus on younger patron/members, with targeted programming, marketing, and benefits will be strengthened in the plan years ahead. (AP)
    ii. Efforts should be supported to bring BMFI into brighter focus and wider awareness in the region and beyond in coming years. (C, AP)
6. **Adult Education**–The programmatic element over which BMFI has the most complete and direct control is Education. Therefore, this aspect became the first one to study, with assessments of other film education centers, and surveys of our students, audiences, and the competition. The major surveys are in the appendix. The results affirm the value of the present strategies, such as the current range of courses and the current ages of students, and, where appropriate, the decision to license courses for grades/ages not now covered.
    i. There is also a call for increasing student involvement and loyalty with possible curriculum certificates and social opportunities, testing more daytime courses, and continued emphasis on satellite locations for teaching (such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, retirement communities, etc.) (AP)
    ii. Improving space for teaching (the Multi Media Room) is another of the goals of the Physical Plant initiatives (P).

7. **Community Leadership**–Strengthening BMFI's role and leadership in targeted, crucial activities of the Bryn Mawr community is thought to be worthwhile for our future, e.g. improving parking, helping activate the Business Improvement District. (C)
8. **Board & Volunteers**–Encouraging the Board to add members with needed skills and resources is to be emphasized in the coming years. (S) In addition, developing and enriching the engagement of our volunteer corps has potential benefits we will explore and implement. (C)

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a mutable "to do" list; one that will guide our efforts and change as needed. It is intended to help us improve what is already a highly successful organization and we launch into these efforts with enthusiasm and commitment.