

Association for Theatre In Higher Education  
Proposed Strategic Plan Goals for 2011 – 2016  
Mid-Year Meeting Draft, January, 2011

**ATHE Mission: to support and advance the study and practice of theatre and performance in higher education.**

**Goal One:**

The core mission of ATHE is to promote and advance theatre as an essential component in higher education. To facilitate this work, ATHE will actively advocate within academic institutions to promote theatre as a lifelong tool for teaching and learning.

Strategies:

- Consistently present new advocacy issues affecting all members so that the awareness of the issue develops into knowledge and then action to protect current programs.
- Annually present research new models of alternative theatre programs serving present communities;
- Provide plans and research showing how departments have altered and changed current needs to suit future needs.

**Goal Two:**

As global circulations and integrations more obviously impact our daily life, the disciplines of theatre in higher education face increasing challenges on questions of marketability, usefulness and value. Although constituted differently throughout the world (and perceived with different historical value), the challenges faced by teachers, students and departments of drama, theatre, performance and allied disciplines are often the same. ATHE will engage with these international challenges.

Strategies:

- We aim to regularly have membership and conference participation from at least 25 countries worldwide, and to reflect this participation in organizational structures and governance.
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**Goal Three:**

Develop strategic and sustainable partnerships (local, national, international, and interdisciplinary) that advance the study and practice of theatre and performance in higher education. Such partnerships should be both practical and aesthetic, encouraging professional networking and artistic/intellectual exchange between, teachers, students, scholars, and professional artists/practitioners. Work to establish collaborations beyond the academy that promote the function of higher education in the disciplines of theatre; Continue to expand networks and affiliations

with local, state, national and international groups that promote theatre as a lifelong tool for teaching and learning in higher education.

**Goal Four:**

Develop appropriate and specific documents supporting full-time teaching positions, research positions, and staff positions necessary for the operation of a theatre department and program to serve members, including adjuncts and graduate students. These plans should include models that are bringing universities into collaborations with local agencies, secondary schools, and advocacy groups.

**Goal Five:**

Operational Continuity and Sustainability: develop and implement mechanisms to assess our organizational structure and operations, to ensure smooth transitions in organizational governance, to communicate processes of governance to members with transparency, and to promote opportunities for “engaged citizenship” in ATHE.

Strategies:

- Development of a Leadership Manual provided to members in elected positions.  
The manual should translate relevant information from the existing operations manual and provide additional resources (like position calendars and organizational charts) that centralize ATHE’s expectations for its leaders in clear, direct, concise manner. The manual should codify and clarify, explaining the different roles and responsibilities in elected offices, committee appointments, and other tasks within ATHE governance. It should also contain a history of position-holders, so new leaders are aware of their predecessors. It should be housed online so it can be a flexible document that lives and breathes with the organization; additionally, it would be available to any member to view, further supporting objectives of transparency. This manual could also support leadership development and recruitment efforts as it would provide useful information in a clear format for those considering nomination for an office or committee work.
- Reinforce operational procedures for focus groups and implement an effective leadership training program for focus group representatives and conference planners. The diversity of focus groups is one of our clear strengths of our organization, but the different structures and operational practices of these groups often leads to confusion and frustration when we join together as one body under ATHE. But Focus Group Representatives and Conference Planners must perform the same roles within the same calendar for ATHE. Although the GC will not legislate the internal affairs of each group, we need to insist that a group’s status as an ATHE Focus Group is contingent on fulfilling specific responsibilities. In other words, an FG’s internal operations are their business, but interaction with larger organization will be standardized. Appointments or elections for these positions should occur in a manner that allows newly elected leaders to

function in their roles from the beginning of each conference so that they can participate in opening leadership training sessions and GC meetings. The Operations Committee will work with focus groups to make sure these processes of standardization works within their individual bylaws.

- Development of a series of online electronic forms for ATHE members in elected positions to input information that will help us assess our structure and operations in a consistent, standardized manner.  
This will specifically include mid-year and end-of-the-year reports, but might also include specific surveys and other modes of assessment. Provide a means on the new website to allow members to post comments about the reports.
- Develop an Assessment Committee  
The committee should have a rotating membership of three to five individuals not currently serving on the GC; they might be recruited from previous GC office-holders. They would review the effectiveness of our operational procedures and makes recommendations. This committee should also be charged with monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the current strategic plan.