

Request for Proposal
California College of the Arts
October 2014

California College of the Arts (CCA) seeks assistance in clarifying, refining, and updating the institution's brand. The college wants to build its reputation and improve its marketing and communications efforts by achieving a strong unified voice that effectively articulates CCA's distinctive characteristics. The resulting branding platform will inform and enhance all aspects of CCA's outreach—admissions, fundraising, business development and industry partnerships, public programs, faculty and staff recruitment, and alumni engagement.

Background

CCA's branding efforts in the past have centered solely on marketing to prospective students. This endeavor initially grew out of a set of marketing recommendations and key messages developed in 2002, which were based on an extensive research project conducted by Kane Parsons. The centerpiece of the brand promise—*make art that matters*—resonated immediately with prospective students and continues to be compelling to that audience as evidenced by consistent enrollment growth and confirmed in surveys of incoming students.

Since that time, the college's programs have expanded greatly and additional brands have come into use (The Wattis Institute, Center for Art and Public Life, Design MBA, Architecture at CCA, etc.). Other audiences—business leaders, donors and potential donors, parents, and thought leaders—have become important stakeholders, but often do not have a clear idea of CCA's mission, values, and important contributions to art and design education. While the college has a strong and favorable international and national reputation among certain audiences (students, their parents, the design community, and contemporary art practitioners and patrons), local community and business leaders, philanthropists, and thought leaders don't seem to have CCA on their radar screen.

For most of its 107-year history the college has been an East Bay institution, and currently occupies a historic four-acre site in Oakland. Since 1985, CCA has had a presence in San Francisco, and a permanent campus was opened in 1996. Since that time the college has expanded its programs and San Francisco holdings significantly, and enrollment has increased by 75 percent. The two-campus environment has presented numerous challenges, both in operations and campus culture.

Opportunities

Today, the college finds itself at the convergence of several important events and circumstances that present a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Brand clarity is needed to set priorities and to realize the full potential of these efforts.

- The college is currently undergoing a significant campus planning effort, motivated by the acquisition of a 2.5-acre lot adjacent to the San Francisco campus

- The college is planning to launch a major capital campaign in the next few years
- The college has expanded its collaborations with industry and community partners and desires further growth in this arena

Expectations

Phase One: Discovery

Researching the market's current perceptions of CCA would be an important part of this plan, along with interpretation of the data and insights gained in the process. The discovery phase would include internal research with administrative as well as academic leaders. Also important to the success of this endeavor will be an analysis of the communications vehicles by which our audiences are receiving our messages.

Phase Two: Brand Development

Included in the deliverables would be a comprehensive brand platform (including brand positioning, personality, and architecture) and a set of recommendations for implementation. This phase would include development of key messages for each audience that clearly articulate our brand.

Conclusion

We believe that in order to differentiate CCA from similar institutions, an agency must demonstrate an energetic, inventive, and resourceful approach to branding and marketing. Knowledge of CCA's market and its competition is essential. Experience with higher education marketing a plus. The college expects to have the advice and attention of principal members of the firm selected.

Proposals should be submitted to Chris Bliss, VP for Communications, California College of the Arts, at cbliss@cca.edu or 1111 Eighth Street, San Francisco, CA 94107 by October 31, 2014.