

Friday, January 29, 2010

Dear friend:


Brock University is looking to secure provincial support for a proposal presented to the finance minister for consideration in the 2010 budget. This funding will allow us to relocate the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts to downtown St. Catharines. As we turn to the province to endorse this initiative, letters of support from all parts of the community will help enhance our request. That is why I am writing to ask you for your help.

The goal of Brock University and the City of St. Catharines is to create a world-class arts facility and a neighbouring campus for the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts in the heart of St. Catharines. The Arts Centre will house and showcase professional artists of local, national and international stature for the cultural enrichment of the greater Niagara community. Brock's initiative will see 400 full-time students and faculty members relocated from their current cramped and challenging space on campus to this new, centralized and well-equipped downtown campus. It promises to be truly remarkable project.

This partnership represents synergies that neither partner can generate alone; the convergence of the academic and professional realms, students and the community will create a unique and exciting hub that will elevate our cultural, economic and academic potential. As a member of the community, you can help by sending a message to the province encouraging them to support this very important project.

I have attached a fact sheet about the project and key points that are important to include or address in your letter. Signed letters should be sent to the attention of Dr. Jack Lightstone and can be faxed or sent electronically. I would also ask that you provide your letter of support prior to Thursday, Feb. 11, 2010. Should you require any further information, please contact Meaghan Rusnell, Government Relations Adviser, at [mrusnell@brocku.ca](mailto:mrusnell@brocku.ca) or 905-688-5550 x5864.

Sincerely,



Rosemary Hale  
Dean, Faculty of Humanities

## **Address your Letters to the President's Office:**

Dr. Jack Lightstone  
President  
Brock University  
500 Glenridge Ave  
St. Catharines, Niagara, Ontario L2S 3A1

Fax: (905) 684-2277  
Email: [jlighstone@brocku.ca](mailto:jlighstone@brocku.ca)

### **Items to include if possible:**

- A brief description of your connection to the project
- A brief description of your role (business/personal) in the region
- The positive economic or social impact that this project will have on you/your business/ or the cultural sector of Niagara.

## **QUICK FACTS**

### **Details of the facility:**

#### School

- The School will benefit from an additional 113,000 square feet of enhanced, well-equipped and purpose built space
- A dedicated theatre of 250 to 300 seats has been included in support of the dramatic arts program, along with four rehearsal/teaching/research studios, with two or more flexible spaces also capable of supporting performances

#### Arts Centre

- A concert hall of 800-900 seats, suitable for orchestral, choral, and popular music and large community gatherings
- A recital hall of 250 to 300 seats, used primarily by the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and performing Arts as a music performance, rehearsal, and classroom venue, but also, primarily on weekends, available to community-based and centre-presented programming
- A dance performance venue of 200-250 seats, suitable for a range of theatrical and music events – although designed primarily for dance – and a studio theatre of 125 seats for community groups (combined into a single venue for the purpose of the first phase)
- A 200-seat film theatre with a vigorous schedule of high quality first-run and curated revival film programming, also to be used for daytime classes.

### **Fulfills the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts Needs:**

- Brock University is currently the most under spaced University in Ontario according to the Council of Ontario Universities (COU).
- The Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts enrolment numbers have increased by 121% since 2000
- Brock's existing Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts facilities are lacking in comparison with programs of comparable size at other Canadian universities
- The presence of all of Brock's Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts departments in a single complex, combined with exposure to touring professionals and

community-based activity within the arts centre and the cross-pollination of the academic with the professional, will create synergies that will greatly benefit our students and faculty.

- Locating Brock's Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts downtown promotes Brock's goal of increased community engagement and enhances the school's teaching and research capabilities

#### **Regional benefits:**

- This project is a cornerstone in the revitalization of downtown St. Catharines.
- St. Catharines is very poorly served in comparison to similar cities in Canada with respect to its existing stock of arts spaces in the City for professional and semi-professional companies alike.
- Based on experiences in other cities, it is the catalytic economic impacts of the project that are expected to be truly enormous over time. As the Centre changes the very character of downtown St. Catharines it will increase property values, stimulate commercial development, and fundamentally alter the City's economy
- This project fulfills the goal of the City of St. Catharines' Municipal Cultural Policy to facilitate the development of the cultural community and its ability to provide cultural opportunities for the citizens of St. Catharines."
- This project will support neighbouring businesses and tourism of the region by bringing more people to the region and downtown core. Niagara Centre for the Arts will attract 100 people on its least busy evenings, over 1,000 when there are performances in the Concert Hall, and well over 100,000 annually, not including the regular presence of School's faculty, staff, and students.

#### **Economic Impact:**

- Art is big business. Canada's cultural sector directly contributed about \$46 billion - or 3.8 per cent - to overall Canadian gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007, according to a Conference Board report. Moreover, this analysis, *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy*, has determined that the culture sector's impact on the economy is much broader – \$84.6 billion in 2007, or 7.4 per cent of total real GDP, and represents more than 1 million jobs.
- Substantial one-time economic impacts related to the construction of a \$75-million project and start-up costs related to the multi-venue arts complex. We forecast direct one-time tax benefits of roughly \$10 million to the Federal government and \$5.8 million to the Province, and total indirect economic impact of approximately \$178 million.
- Ongoing direct economic impact of nearly \$7.4 million per year, including a minimum of \$1.6 million from outside the Niagara region, and total direct and indirect economic impact of \$17.3 million per year.
- Catalytic economic impacts resulting from the project that cannot be quantified in advance, but which are likely to fundamentally change day-to-day life in downtown St. Catharines and will likely be valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

**Thank you for you Support!**