

**LOOK
NORTH**
UNT 2030

DEVELOP | DISCOVER | DRIVE



WHO WE ARE

At the College of Visual Arts and Design, we cultivate creative leaders and critical thinkers within a collaborative, rigorous, and forward-looking environment. Our work is driven by an unwavering commitment to student success, nationally recognized faculty, state-of-the-art facilities, and the dynamic creative economy of North Texas. We advance our mission through creative excellence, purposeful innovation, and interdisciplinary inquiry that connects making, research, and real-world impact.

With nearly 2,600 students, CVAD is one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive colleges of art and design, situated within a Carnegie R1 research university. Our 30 undergraduate and graduate degree programs include a nationally ranked graduate fine arts program, a graphic design program ranked first in the Southwest, a user-experience program ranked second in Texas, and the state's only Ph.D. in Art Education.



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Executive Summary

Strategic Direction Through 2030

By 2030, the College of Visual Arts and Design will position creative practice, design thinking, and interdisciplinary research as central drivers of student success, innovation, and economic impact at UNT. CVAD will improve retention and graduation rates, expand professional and global pathways, strengthen research infrastructure, and deepen industry partnerships across North Texas and beyond. Through strategic investments in recruitment pipelines, curriculum modernization, and interdisciplinary initiatives, CVAD will increase research activity, doctoral production, and revenue diversification. These efforts matter because creativity and design are essential to Texas's innovation economy, cultural vitality, and capacity to address complex public challenges.

Unique Role, Contribution, and Strengths

CVAD uniquely advances UNT's mission by integrating creative practice, design thinking, and scholarly inquiry within an R1 public university environment. As one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive colleges of visual arts and design, CVAD bridges studio practice, scholarly investigation, applied research, teacher preparation, and emerging technologies.

CVAD faculty include nationally and internationally recognized artists, designers, historians, and educators whose work receives major exhibitions, scholarly publications, competitive grants, and national awards. Our facilities support advanced fabrication, digital innovation, and interdisciplinary experimentation, while signature initiatives such as Creative U, the Texas Fashion Collection, the Onstead Institute, and the Curiosity Lab position CVAD as both a cultural steward and an innovation engine.

CVAD contributes to UNT's Develop, Discover, and Drive pillars by strengthening student pipelines, expanding interdisciplinary research collaboration, and building workforce-aligned professional pathways in high-growth creative industries. Our strength lies in translating creativity into measurable outcomes, including improved student success, expanded research activity, and increased regional engagement.

Navigating External Forces, Trends, and Contexts

CVAD operates within a rapidly evolving higher education and workforce landscape. Demand for creative and design-based problem solving is growing across industries such as technology, healthcare, education, digital media, and advanced manufacturing.

CVAD is well positioned to respond by developing stackable professional credentials and graduate certificates, strengthening internship pipelines, expanding online doctoral education, and deepening partnerships with regional industries and cultural organizations.

Strategic Goals (2026-2030)

- **Serving students uniquely:** CVAD will strengthen recruitment pipelines, modernize Core and Foundations curriculum, and improve retention and graduation outcomes. Initiatives include expanding Creative U as a leading pre-college arts program, reducing DFW rates in high-enrollment courses, and developing new learning opportunities that encourage curiosity, experimentation, and making across disciplines.

Success by 2030:

- First-to-second-year retention reaches 80%.
 - Four-year graduation rate reaches 50%; six-year rate reaches 75%.
 - Reduced DFW rates in foundational and core courses.
 - Expanded enrollment from pre-college and professional pathways.
- **Building interdisciplinary research and innovation capacity:** CVAD will expand interdisciplinary research through initiatives such as the Curiosity Lab and strengthened internal research infrastructure. These efforts will increase faculty research activity, student research opportunities, and collaboration across UNT.

Success by 2030:

- Annual R&D expenditures increase from \$2.5 million to \$4 million.
 - Doctoral degrees awarded increase from 4 to 10 annually.
 - Increased interdisciplinary grant submissions and student research engagement.
- **Expanding professional and global pathways:** CVAD will diversify revenue and expand workforce impact through new professional programs, expanded industry partnerships, and global program delivery. Initiatives include professional credentials in areas such as user-experience design, an online Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Art and Design, and expanded internship and residency opportunities.

Success by 2030:

- Professional credential programs generate sustainable net revenue.
- Stronger industry partnerships and experiential learning opportunities.
- Online doctoral enrollment expands global reach.
- Reduced time-to-degree for programs, with focused efforts through the studio art program.

Key Outcomes & Metrics

CVAD contributes directly to UNT's core metrics by targeting improvements in retention, graduation rates, research expenditures, doctoral production, and time to degree. By 2030, the college aims to increase first-to-second-year retention to 80%, raise four-year and six-year graduation rates to 50% and 75% respectively, increase annual R&D expenditures to \$4 million, and increase doctoral degrees awarded to 10 annually, the timeline of which will depend on the implementation of the Ph.D. as an online interdisciplinary option.

In addition to university metrics, CVAD is implementing a coordinated data strategy beginning in FY27 to strengthen evidence-based decision-making. This effort will include centralized tracking of post-graduation placement, career-aligned learning experiences, awards and recognitions, entrepreneurial activity, and alumni engagement. These systems will allow the college to better measure its impact on student success, workforce preparation, and public value.

Core Metrics: Established Benchmarks that Define University Performance

Metric	UNT Baseline (2024/25)	UNT Target (2030)	CVAD Baseline (2024/2025)	CVAD Target (2030)
1st to 2nd year retention	77%	90%	74.2%	90%
4-year graduation rate	42%	65%	39.5%	65%
6-year graduation rate	61%	80%	58.9%	80%
Annual R&D expenditures	\$124M	\$250M	\$2.5M	\$4M
Doctoral degrees awarded	286	300	4	10
Time to value	6 years	Decrease time for programs over median	9 years (median)	Decrease time for programs over median

Emergent Metrics: Important Dimensions of Our Success that Require New Approaches

Post-graduation placement: Percentage of graduates placed in high-demand occupations or graduate and professional programs

CVAD currently collects post-graduation placement data in a decentralized manner through individual programs and faculty outreach. Beginning in FY27, the college will implement a centralized alumni outcomes database in collaboration with the Career Center to systematically track employment, graduate school placement, and industry alignment within six months of graduation.

Career-aligned learning: Percentage of academic programs that integrate internships, industry-sponsored projects, or other work-integrated learning experiences

While many CVAD programs integrate internships, sponsored studios, and client-based coursework, this activity is not centrally tracked. In FY27, CVAD will develop a standardized reporting mechanism to measure the percentage of programs incorporating work-integrated learning and to assess student participation rates annually, in collaboration with the Career Center.

Awards and recognitions: Prestigious awards, exhibitions, and performances achieved by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni

Student and faculty awards, exhibitions, and performances are currently tracked informally at the program level. CVAD will establish an annual recognition reporting system to document national and international distinctions, strengthening visibility, benchmarking, and advancement efforts.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: New ventures, startups, and public impact projects launched by students, faculty, and alumni

CVAD does not currently track venture formation, startup activity, or public-facing creative enterprises launched by students and alumni. In partnership with university innovation initiatives, CVAD will develop mechanisms to capture entrepreneurial outcomes and public impact projects beginning in FY27.

Student and alumni engagement: Perceptions of how well UNT prepares graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose

CVAD has historically participated in the SNAAP national arts alumni survey. Beginning in FY27, the college will supplement national benchmarking data with targeted alumni surveys and engagement tracking to better understand career trajectories, preparation effectiveness, and long-term impact.

College-Level Metrics: Other Important Priority Metrics Tracked at the College Level

- **Faculty teaching deployment:** Ensure equitable and efficient teaching load distribution aligned with enrollment demand, revenue generation, and faculty expectations.
- **Retention of faculty:** Monitor faculty retention trends, compensation competitiveness, and climate indicators to sustain program quality, research productivity, and institutional knowledge.
- **Retention of staff:** Track staff retention and climate to preserve operational continuity, service quality, and morale within a resource-constrained environment.

- **Rates of current students accepted into major status (programs):** Monitor progression into major status to assess program capacity, student demand, and access across degree pathways.
- **DFW rates in large-scale courses:** Track DFW rates across our Foundations courses and Art Appreciation 1300 to improve student success in completing freshmen-level requirements.

CVAD is developing a coordinated college-level data strategy to improve decision-making, accountability, and alignment with university priorities. FY27 will prioritize establishing consistent data collection practices across student success, research activity, and workforce outcomes across the college.

Goals in Action

Develop the potential of UNT students, faculty, staff, and community members

- **Creative U expansion:** Scale Creative U to become the premier pre-college summer art and design program in Texas, strengthening recruitment pipelines, expanding access to high-achieving high school students, and generating net revenue to reinvest in student success initiatives.
- **Core and Foundations modernization:** Redesign art appreciation courses as innovative, flipped, high-engagement courses with updated content and delivery models to improve student success metrics, including DFW rates. Ensure the Foundations curriculum structure supports and aligns with the university's flipped classroom initiative.
- **Design thinking in the Core:** Launch the new Core curriculum course in design thinking that serves students across majors, positioning creative problem-solving as a university-wide competency and strengthening interdisciplinary learning.

Discover new knowledge and insights that bridge traditional academic disciplines

- **Curiosity Lab launch and integration:** Establish the Curiosity Lab as a visible front door to interdisciplinary innovation at UNT, using design thinking and creative making, and technology-enhanced research methods — including digital and material fabrication, interactive media tools, and emerging computational platforms — as collaborative methodologies to connect faculty, students, industry, and community partners across colleges.
- **Strengthen research infrastructure:** Enhance CVAD's research ecosystem by incentivizing and rewarding faculty research, identifying sustainable funding models for college-level research support, and reinstating previously paused research development programs. Expand student research participation and external grant activity through faculty mentorship and support from the centers and institutes in the college (Curiosity Lab, Onstead Institute, Galleries, Texas Fashion Collection, and xREZ Lab).
- **Spark Lab development:** Launch the Spark Lab as a dedicated lighting research facility that supports creative research, industry collaboration, and interdisciplinary experimentation, using advanced lighting technologies, sensors, imaging tools, and simulation platforms, and positioning CVAD as a leader in emerging lighting technologies and applied innovation.

Drive creative advances, partnerships, and new models of higher education

- **Year in Dallas initiative:** Develop a Dallas-based final-year professional residency model for design students, integrating coursework with industry partnerships to accelerate career placement and deepen regional economic impact.

- **User-experience design expansion:** Expand user-experience design offerings to include flexible, stackable credentials and professional programs that serve nontraditional students and working industry professionals, particularly within emerging markets such as Frisco and North Texas innovation corridors.
- **Texas Fashion Collection facility development:** Create a permanent, high-visibility home for the Texas Fashion Collection that enhances preservation, research, teaching, and public engagement; increases national and international recognition; and strengthens partnerships within the fashion industry and cultural sector.
- **Reimagine the Ph.D. in Art Education:** Transform the existing Ph.D. in Art Education into an online Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Art and Design, expanding global reach, increasing access for working professionals, and strengthening UNT's leadership in advanced creative scholarship.