BEVERLY ROGERS
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BLACK MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE

Strategic Plan | February 2025-June 2028

Prepared in partnership with GBG Partners

BMI's Mission

Black Mountain Institute at UNLV champions writers and storytellers through programs, fellowships and community engagement.

We make space for meaningful collaborations and conversations; we understand service as vital.

We ask questions about access, the environment, and labor.

We find our home in Las Vegas–a place of hospitality in the middle of a desert.

Between the manufactured and natural, urban and wide expanse, built and rebuilt, bounty and scarcity, we live within narratives of destruction and preservation.

From the brightest spot on the planet, Black Mountain Institute amplifies writing and artistic expression to connect us to each other in the Las Vegas Valley, the Southwest, and beyond.

BMI's Purpose

Centered in Las Vegas, Black Mountain Institute illuminates the richness of individual experiences and expressions through literature and art.

By focusing on our shared human connections, we foster greater understanding and empathy.

This commitment helps cultivate community, opening possibilities for meaningful change.

10-Year Vision

In 10 Years, BMI will…

Operate a community hub that is like a third space, including:

- Physical space where BMI can present programming (e.g., classroom, bookstore, festival, writing conf.)
- Satellite locations
- Ecosystem of support for local writers
- Revenue opportunity (gifted or co-presented; fee for service (e.g., big workshops))

Own residential property for visiting fellows

Expand inclusivity of programming and communicate it effectively

10-Year Vision *Continued*

In 10 Years, BMI will…

Be known nationally/globally as a:

- Destination for cultural programming and literary events
- Space for important conversations
- A cultural center of Las Vegas

Be a place-based literary leader known for community engagement through:

- Formalized and expanded fellowships, mentorship, and workforce development that benefits the community
- Responsive community engagement that highlights individual experiences and builds connection with the following commitments:
    - Remaining thoughtful, rigorous, and service-oriented
    - Providing funding for community projects; empower the community to have curatorial control
    - Fellows and students facilitating programs in the community

Target Audience

Cultivate Deeper Connections

- Writers of literary fiction, non-fiction, and poetry
- Published (and not-yet-published) writers in need of support
- Friends of BMI in the arts and culture space

Target New Audiences

- Lifelong learners – people who are curious, with broad interests, who want to learn new things
- People interested in the arts, humanities, and cultural experiences (expansive definition of “literary” – e.g., art, photography, dance, music)
- Current and aspiring arts administrators
- More diverse communities (across all measures)
- New arrivals to Las Vegas
- Prospective donors, and those who support mentorship/workforce development

Strategic Priorities

1. Sustainability: Diversify our revenue to ensure sustainability and enable growth
2. Communications: Communicate about individuals and connections to build empathy and understanding
3. Programs: Create space for communities to better understand themselves and each other
4. Reputation: Develop cachet, legitimacy, relevance to the literary and arts community, and prestige through collaborations and partnerships
    - We are a cultural center of Las Vegas
    - We are the literary arts destination in the Desert Southwest
    - We are a point of pride for UNLV
    - We are beginning to grow in recognition nationally and internationally

Year One

Activities

Priority One

Sustainability

Sustainability: Year One Activities

Diversify our revenue streams to ensure sustainability and enable growth

1A. Develop a membership program over the next six months

1B. Create new development plan

1C. Recruit board members who can support the strategic priorities

1D. Develop plan for BMI's 20th anniversary, including pre-events and a celebration

1E. Develop partnership with City of Las Vegas and libraries

1F. Develop/maintain relationships with top supporters

Sustainability: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
1A. Develop a membership program over the next six months	Membership program should consider: • Different tiers/levels • Special private events with donors and board members, in consideration of the new proposed development plan and program series • Student, alumni, and UNLV affiliated membership. • Partnering with local businesses for discounts/special offers • Once the plan is developed, assess the viability by discussing with target members and advisory board	Launch membership program in January 2026 Recruit 100 members by March 2026 (timed with 20th Anniversary celebrations)

Sustainability: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
1B. Create new development plan	Plan should include steps to: • Increase individual grants/federal grant research • Expand volunteer program development • Update sponsorship opportunity list (corporate and individuals) to go out each fiscal year • Deliver updates from ED • Create schedule for friend/fundraisers • Create schedule for partnerships • Launch membership plan	New plan completed by June 2025
1C. Recruit board members to support the strategic priorities	• Develop board matrix • Propose a board agreement that includes board participating expectations. • Schedule and plan for fundraiser/friendraiser for board recruitment	Finish agreement/ document templates by June 2025 3-5 new members by January 2026

Sustainability: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
1D. Develop plan for BMI's 20th anniversary, including pre-events and a celebration	Communications and marketing opportunity, including: • Institutional recognition, on-campus • Press coverage and media appearances • City proclamation with Mayor's office Focus on the fundraising opportunity • Further define and include in development plan	Pre-event friend raiser (lit program) for 20th anniversary celebration by December 2025
1E. Develop partnerships	Clarity on mutually beneficial relationships with: • City of Las Vegas, also explore Mayor's Fund, Arts District Business Improvement District tax base for local artists • Las Vegas Clark County Library District	Partnerships established by February 2026
1F. Develop/ maintain relationships with supporters	Maintain connections and share progress with the institute's funders quarterly and/or annually.	Continue quarterly meetings and annual reports

Priority Two

Communications

Communications: Year One Activities

Communicate about BMI's programs which highlight individuals and connections, to build empathy and understanding

2A. Develop full year marketing plan

2B. Reimagine newsletter

2C. Involve Media GA, Program GAs, and interns in marketing to support their professional development

2D. Prioritize programmatic press partnerships

Communications: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target

2A. Develop full year marketing plan	Marketing plan should consider:
	• Formalize and expand paid media plan, press tracking, and workflows
	• Identify timelines for program announcements / press releases and outreach calendar for paid advertising, co-branding / collaborative opportunities
	• Email – aesthetics for a season / production timelines / brand style guides and application across media (digital, merch, advertising)
	• Distillation of talking points for staff, board, media appearances
	• Advisory board engagement:
	  • Host a board preview for entire season
	  • Engage members as program ambassadors with talking points
	  • Consider communications committee
		Complete plan by July 2025

2B. Reimagine newsletter	Reimagined newsletter should consider: • Feature more content in newsletter written by staff members, community stakeholders, and graduate assistants (repurpose for social) • Focus on personal stories – former fellows, staff, students, attendees (small bytes; translate to social) • Opportunities for interaction beyond tickets • More video • Digest version for targeted audiences – consider how to segment events and relevant info • Not event based	Reimagined Newsletter in place by August 2025

Communications: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target

2C. Involve Media GA, Program GAs, and interns in marketing to support their professional development	• Assignments would include newsletter production/editing, graphic design, video editing, flyer distribution
	• Develop process docs (e.g., how to manage event outreach, how to write a press release, etc.)
	  • Establish project timelines for each task
	  • Identify final review process and approvals
		Develop process docs by July 2025
		
		Media GA trained by September 2025

2D. Prioritize programmatic press partnerships	• Evaluate existing partnerships • Explore paid marketing in different markets (e.g., Los Angeles, Nevada State, etc.)	1 new partnership by February 2026

Priority Three

Programs

Programs: Year One Activities

Create space for communities to better understand themselves and each other

3A. Identify 2-3 clearly-defined, branded series of original programming

3B. Develop biannual programs schedule

3C. Evaluate programs to collect data which will inform future programming decisions and our success in achieving the above priority

3D. Cultivate relationships with local writers and arts/culture leaders; formalize partnerships

Programs: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
3A. Identify 2-3 clearly-defined, branded series of original programming	Streamline public-facing programming: • Including fellow-curated events. • Evaluate online/virtual programming to assess audience target and impact. Streamline UNLV-facing programming: • Create an umbrella of focused workshops, departments, and student support. Establish annual plan by summer board meeting • Consider responsiveness, local programming • Consider internal vs external communications • Activate a Program Committee	Reformatted approach to public programs reviewed internally by April 2025, in effect by August 2025. 2 advisory board members engaged in a program committee by February 2026.
3B. Develop biannual programs schedule	Biannual program schedule development to include: • Fall – program series work February-May; deployed by August • Spring – program series work June-January; deployed by January • Consider how to calendar community partnerships, requests for co-sponsorships • Consider impact on communications	Program deadlines established by June 2025 for Fall, and November 2025 for Spring Board members serve as program ambassadors by February 2026

Programs: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
3C. Evaluate programs to collect data which will inform future programming decisions and our success in achieving the above priority	Set early and specific goals for events: • Target audiences – new audience cultivation • Mini vision statements per program • Survey strategy – experiences for authors, workshop outcomes, partner hopes/goals, opportunities for replication/additional open reflections • Revise intrinsic impact questions • When, where, and how will collect testimonials expand collection processes and consider format • Seek professional development about documenting impact in the humanities and arts	Develop new, reliable metrics to gauge program success by June 2025, revisit May 2026 for year 2
3D. Cultivate relationships with local writers and arts/culture leaders; formalize partnerships	Strategies include: • More appointments for staff to meet people in related areas of work – authentic relationship building (Not Transactional) • Attend more community events;bring fellows, GAs, interns • Host more small gatherings with board members and GAs • Find ways to build on existing community relationships – invite stakeholders to moderate, participate in programs	Each staff member makes 10 new friends/ authentic relationships

Priority Four

Reputation

Reputation

Reputation: Develop cachet, legitimacy, relevance to the literary and arts community, and prestige through collaborations and partnerships

- *We are a cultural center of Las Vegas*
- *We are the literary arts destination in the Desert Southwest*
- *We are a point of pride for UNLV*
- *We are beginning to grow in recognition nationally and internationally*

Reputation: Year One Activities

4A. Evaluate (periodically) effectiveness of existing partnerships, grow what's working, cut what's not; develop strategies for specific partnerships

4B. Articulate BMI's history

4C. Gather and tell impact stories that will help highlight programs that resonate with target audiences

4D. Share with UNLV Leadership

4E. Leverage BMI's 20 Year Anniversary as a moment to educate the community on what BMI is, and what BMI does

4F. Meet more people to share the BMI story!

Reputation: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
4A. Evaluate (periodically) effectiveness of existing partnerships, grow what's working, cut what's not; develop strategies for specific partnerships	• Set strategies for measuring this effort. Staff should attend a webinar on best practices for measuring impact of partnerships and workshops, especially. We need to stretch beyond surface-level questions like "did you enjoy yourself?" • Develop partner agreement for cross-marketing and promotion; communicate partnerships and highlight partner programs. • Use strategic plan to inform revisions to the intrinsic impact survey questions asked of event attendees. • Postmortem conversations with partners • Within staff meeting time, set aside a review or check in to say something about a partnership we have, how it went, what to refine in the future.	Update intrinsic impact survey questions by July 2025 Starting in the fall of 2025, begin having postmortem conversations after partner events. By February 2026, we are getting enough feedback that is helpful in refining and defining reputation.

Reputation: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
4B. Articulate BMI's history	Continue conversations about BMI's history and current work – prestige through partnerships • Highlight partnerships that can grow reputation through association Actively connect to past fellows and visitors • Highlight achievements, especially of alumni and past fellows Use the annual report to tell the story of building reputation as well as what we've done • Consider more audiences for the annual report Use the marketing plan to be on the same page about leading with vision	By February 2026: 3 partnerships profiled Earned media resulting from highlights Annual report is getting us responses from the community
4C. Gather and tell impact stories that will help highlight programs that resonate with target audiences	• Determine how to use data collected and testimonials to tell the BMI story • Collect testimonials (e.g., grad students are curating programs under our mentorship) • Produce more videos and related visual content (build on successful examples) • Find ways to share these stories with target audience • Tell the story of GAs; include GAs in writing	50 stories/ content collected by February 2026

Reputation: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target

4D. Share with UNLV Leadership	• Invite UNLV President to attend BMI event(s) months ahead of time. Think deeply about what BMI event he should attend and why.
	  • Create semester-long strategies for getting in front of university leadership.
	  • Consider small curated groups to visit/convey BMI news that is worth sharing (this might be board members, BMI friends, etc.); this could be a pre-event.
		By February 2026:
		
		UNLV President attends 1 event
		
		5 supporters engaged in sharing BMI story

4E. Leverage BMI's 20 Year Anniversary as a moment to educate the community on what BMI is, and what BMI does	Consider the following:
	• BMI highlights 20th anniversary in the newsletter
	• Create "segmented documentaries" to tell BMI's story, through short interviews with past Shearing Fellows, past BMI workshops attendees, book clubs attendees, contacts from community-funded projects, scholarship recipients, etc.
	• Collaborate with UNLV's Integrated Marketing and Branding Division
	  • Explore high-impact and efficient opportunities
	  • Seek partnership to share the BMI story
	• Share with UNLV President's Council
	• 20 Year Anniversary flier at Art Walk 2025 to reach large audiences
		By fall 2025, 20th Anniversary branding on all programs for the year, the celebration and throughout the newsletter
		
		2 press stories on the history of BMI by February 2026

Reputation: Year One Activities

Activity	Details	Target
4F. Meet more people to share the BMI story!	All staff and partners will share the story of BMI: • In our own professional circles, expanding relationships • Recommendations from the board, community members, other partners	Each staff member makes 10 new friends/ relationships by February 2026