Imagine Nashville as a City of Global Significance

The Imagine Initiative from Lipscomb University

December 2016
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Dear Friends,

For your position of leadership in our community and your interest in the tremendous growth of our city, I want to share with you information about a new program of the university. Named Imagine, the annual program is an entertaining and enlightening evening of conversation with national and global leaders that serves as a catalyst for a series of conversations held across the city. Driven by ideas presented at Imagine, both veteran community builders and Nashville’s future leaders are assembled to assess strategic priorities for influencing the direction of the city’s growth.

The vision and hard work of community leaders over the past two decades has positioned Nashville as an emergent global city. Today’s decisions will further those efforts in its next critical phase of growth. When I look at my grandchildren, I am mindful of how important our work is for their future. One of the most important decisions of our lifetime came from personal consideration for the next generation. At the 1978 Camp David retreat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had decided to withdraw from peace talks with Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat. It appeared their 30 years of conflict would continue. Before leaving Camp David, Begin asked President Jimmy Carter to sign photographs of him, Carter and Sadat for his eight grandchildren. President Carter not only signed them but also personally addressed the photographs to each of Begin’s grandchildren, then took the pictures to Begin. Begin was so moved thinking about what this occasion would mean for his grandchildren that he agreed to proceed with negotiations. Peace between Egypt and Israel continues today.

Planning for a better future involves discussions of personal elements from varied viewpoints. In February of this year, Lipscomb University launched Imagine with an interview-style forum with our first guest, President George W. Bush. He shared with an audience of more than 2,000 his personal stories, experiences and insights gained as the leader of the free world at a critical time in history. From that evening, conversations continued throughout the summer with a series of working sessions with key influencers in our city. These collaborations have culminated a variety of ideas to expand the scope and growth of Nashville. The findings are summarized in this executive briefing.

The ideas for action identified in the briefing come from direct engagement and dialogue with various community leaders who hope to propel the city forward for a strong future. It is our hope these conversations will continue with you and will lead to comprehensive plans for addressing the most critical issues facing Middle Tennessee today to help prepare for tomorrow.

If you would like to be involved in the next Imagine program, we would like to hear from you. You may contact my office or John Lowry, vice president for development and external affairs.

Cordially,

L. Randolph Lowry
President
Earlier this year, Lipscomb University created Imagine, a program designed to convene conversations of significance that brings leaders from around the world to Nashville to engage the community in topics of local and global importance as well as to share their stories and unique perspectives.

**President George W. Bush** was the featured speaker for the official launch of Imagine at Lipscomb University, on February 29, 2016. Lipscomb Associates, donors of $1,000 or more annually, and their guests comprised the 2,000-person crowd for the invitation-only event in Allen Arena to learn more about the Imagine initiative and to hear Bush’s perspective on leadership, global impact and his presidency.

“We thought about an event like this to talk about how to think more globally,” said **President L. Randolph Lowry**. “And the word Imagine just kept coming up as the definition: a sense of vision to see beyond what the event alone could be. Imagination is something we use every day at Lipscomb. We imagine the impact we can have in the community and what impact that will have on the world.”

Bush, **Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam** and **Nashville Mayor Megan Barry** joined Lowry for the launch of the program which examined the theme—“Nashville: An Emerging City with Global Significance.”

President Bush shared stories from his life, political career, family and his faith as well as his leadership philosophy in a question-and-answer session with Lowry. One of the most memorable moments of the Bush presidency was the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He shared the events of that day and lessons that all leaders can learn in a time of crisis.

He also answered questions about his work fighting AIDS in Africa, the presidential election, immigration and his newest hobby—painting. His visit was the second time a U.S. president has visited Lipscomb. In November 1985, Gerald Ford spoke to students in a special event in McQuiddy Gym.
“I am grateful that President Bush is at Lipscomb to share in the conversation about how Nashville is emerging as a global city,” Mayor Megan Barry said. “I am proud that we are a global city, and Lipscomb has played an important role in making that happen. Nashville is lucky to have Lipscomb and the leadership of President Lowry, and I look forward to how the university will continue to make a difference in the community in the future.”

Earlier in the evening, more than 600 Lipscomb Academy and Lipscomb University students participated in a student forum with Bush, at his request. Jordan Beale, 2015-16 Student Government Association president, and Justin Avila, a student veteran, led the question-and-answer session with Bush. Through this initiative, the student body raised funds for Lipscomb’s veterans services program, global missions and the IDEAL program.

Imagine was conceived with the plan to bring a key leader to campus and Lipscomb’s donor community each year, but to go a step further by initiating a series of discussions involving the community following the guest leader event.

“Lipscomb University has a reputation for being a neutral convener of significant conversations in our community,” said John Lowry, vice president for development and external affairs at Lipscomb. “Imagine gives us the opportunity to expand that to topics of national and international importance. With this initiative, we are taking what we do well and being more strategic with these ‘deeper-dive’ conversations so that they have greater impact. We want Lipscomb to be a positive, successful force for collaboration and change.”
Lipscomb Imagine Series:
Executive Summary

Over the course of five months, Lipscomb University organized a series of six community meetings held across Nashville. Lipscomb brought together hundreds of community leaders to take a hard look at the current movement in the city’s business, healthcare, and entertainment sectors and to discuss opportunities to make Nashville an international leader. This interchange was created not to be a data-heavy analysis, but to be a kick-starter of ideas for action. From these community meetings, a brief recapping of the discussions was created.

Participants in these discussions agreed that some of the unique characteristics about Nashville are the substance that will sustain and propel the city forward in its mission to serve and engage the international community. These traits define who we are and our attributes that can be developed to make a global impact.

- **Creativity** – Our creativity is what binds us, and Nashville is exploding with creative minds.
- **Diversity** – With more than 100 languages spoken in our city, diversity is one of our best assets.
- **Education** – Nashville has numerous higher education institutions. But what our participants identified as more important is our quest for knowledge.
- **Health Care** – Approximately 400 health care companies that generate more than $73 billion on a global level is what makes Nashville a health care mecca.
- **Music** – Nashville’s music scene runs the gamut from gospel to classical, country and indie, and it is a $10 billion industry.
- **Technology** – The Nashville Entrepreneur Center has been critical to the growth in tech start-ups and the development of the technology sector.

Among the experts in the fields of business, health care and entertainment, there was a consensus on topics regarding the need for a global center, a new branding of Nashville and marketing strategy, better collaboration regarding nonprofits, and a shift from a health care services focus to a products for export industry.
The need for a central office or a global center was expressed among all of the groups. The entertainment leaders described having an agency that would act as a conductor directing a symphony. A global center orchestrating the arts and entertainment organizations would cut costs, improve collaboration and result in more effective international exchanges. The business and health care sectors envision a central organization much like the Nashville Entrepreneur Center, where people from around the world come to share ideas. This global center would be the hub for international start-ups, the transaction of trade negotiations, and a resource for leaders across the U.S. A global center for commerce and innovation is a critical institution for Nashville’s future.

A new, high-level branding campaign and marketing strategy was identified as a top priority to sell Nashville internationally. What Silicon Valley has been to technology, Nashville could be to entertainment, technology or health care. But we need a top-notch strategy. The “Music City” brand continues to work in the international music scene. Now, Nashville must examine how to promote the equally important segments of health care and technology, as well as entertainment in the film and fine arts space. An example suggested was to create a health care festival much like the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas. One thought on sharing a new brand is to increase the number of health care ambassadors traveling overseas, so they can sell Nashville internationally. Technology and entertainment—beyond just music, including film and the fine arts—are becoming increasingly bigger players in the boom of our city and are essential to a new Nashville brand.

While there is much collaboration among the entertainment organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit, there is a need for more structured coalitions. The act of artists working together on programs and projects is not only about economic benefits from sharing equipment, space or resources, but it’s about creative advantages from the synergy of like ideologies or aesthetic views. It’s about establishing an all-inclusive artist collective. Providing support for the entertainment community means addressing two of the most talked about topics in recent years in Nashville: mass transit and affordable housing. Mass transit options and affordable housing solutions are both “no brainers,” when it comes to progress. These two issues have been on the minds of Nashvillians for years and have been points of discussion throughout the metro council, church groups, business alliances and civic organizations. If Nashville wants to continue to grow and advance on an international level, the city must create an answer to the mass transit riddle. We want to attract the artists who are creating a new movement, the innovative thinkers, the international influencers, as well as bring more business to support this environment, so affordable housing is an obvious and necessary key element for this mix.

The business and health care industries see a real need for alliances in trade and modernization. Clinical research and health care regulations are two specific areas where partnerships could help develop new products or work through solutions for a coherent health care system. Our working group participants expressed an urgency to see more opportunities for public and private collaboration with agencies in all sectors—business, entertainment and health care.
Nashville’s health care business has been a principal in the service-based industry for decades, but now leaders agree that Nashville should take hold of the product-based commerce as well. The consensus is that Nashville should continue its success in providing services and hospital management practices, but shift its focus to the product side. Nashville has the potential to develop as a product-based hub for manufacturing the products here; selling them locally; and exporting them to other countries. Setting up a product development fund could bring together data analysis from thousands of data sources for product creation, as well as enable companies to get a return on their investment. Nashville is a service provider, and now we need to be a product provider, reaching the global market.

As we move forward in our ambition to make Nashville a global leader, it is vital to continue these conversations, always discovering new ideas. Lipscomb’s Imagine will continue to serve the people of Nashville by facilitating this dialogue to realize our impact on the world.
Lipscomb Imagine Series:
Imagine Introduction

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.” – C.S. Lewis

Imagine was the catalyst for a series of conversations held across the city to assess Nashville’s status on an international level and to discuss future objectives for how Nashville might become a different global metropolis making a positive impact around the world.

Over the course of five months, Lipscomb brought together hundreds of leaders to take a hard look at the current movement in the city’s business, health care and entertainment sectors and to discuss opportunities to make Nashville an international leader. This interchange was created not to be a data heavy analysis, but to be a kick-starter of ideas for action. The following executive briefing summarizes the series of conversations among leaders.

Nashville has been called the “Athens of the South”, “Music City USA,” the “It City” by The New York Times, as well as making the Forbes Travel Guide’s 16 Top Destinations for 2016. While these are all noble accolades, Nashville has the potential to do so much more beyond our state or national borders.

Nashville is a vibrant city with more than 20 post-secondary educational institutions, more than 700 churches, a $10 billion music scene, a $30 billion health care sector and sister cities in Germany, Japan, France and China. The Nashville population is over 650,000, with more than 100 languages spoken and the largest Kurdish community in the U.S. Hundreds of international programs and projects are in progress already. The potential is here. The work of the Imagine series is to serve as a conduit for this synergy to make a difference.

Lipscomb’s Imagine program was created to start the dialogue, share innovative ideas, explore opportunities, inspire us to take action and support the people and institutions of Nashville in bringing about constructive global change.
Over the past two decades, Nashville has been growing on a national level and expanding its reach to the international community. What began as a slow journey is now a city on a super speedway with construction cranes on virtually every corner, a TV show with its namesake shown in nearly 100 countries, international companies setting up headquarters in the heart of the city and *The New York Times* dubbing Nashville as the “It City.”

Business in Nashville is also on a fast track to becoming a national and international contender, and Lipscomb University supports the growth and success of the business sector, with a goal of making Nashville a positive leader in the global arena.

One goal at Lipscomb is not only to recruit students, but to recruit new Nashvillians, new leaders with creative and innovative ideas for our global community. Lipscomb has been working to incorporate students into Nashville life by engaging the students in the business community and placing the students in jobs throughout the city.

Lipscomb University brought together a number of business leaders to discuss the future of Nashville’s potential and global impact and how Nashville can make a difference in the international business realm.

**How is Nashville’s Business Community making a global impact?**

There was consensus among the business principals that the city’s success is being driven by several factors including:

- Higher Education
- Professional Sports
- Restaurants
It’s been well over 100 years ago that Nashville was named the “Athens of the South,” in large part due to the number of higher education institutions including:

- Lipscomb University
- Fisk University
- Meharry Medical College
- Belmont University
- Vanderbilt University
- Trevecca Nazarene University
- Tennessee State University
- American Baptist College
- Aquinas College

These institutions have been part of the fabric of Nashville for generations, drawing young people and scholars alike to the area, contributing to the economic growth and diversity of the city.

In the late 1990s, the Tennessee Titans, Nashville’s professional football team, and the Nashville Predators, the city’s professional ice hockey team, arrived on the scene, bringing investment to the downtown area of the city. This provided the development and highly successful hospitality industries with entertainment and restaurants that rival any of the larger metropolitan areas like Chicago, New Orleans or Denver.

During the discussion, the observation was made that downtown Nashville is no longer a “9 to 5 city, but a 24-hour city.”

One example of Nashville’s global reach include Soles for Souls, the non-profit agency created to eradicate poverty, which has collected and distributed millions of pairs of shoes to those in need in 127 countries, as well as all 50 states in the U.S.

There are hundreds of churches in our community with an outreach to the world through mission trips and charitable support operations. Nashville has been a national center for religious publishing for more than 150 years, with representation from global companies like HarperCollins.
Health care is a $38 billion business in Nashville with 400 health care companies operating in the area, directly employing 126,000 people. On a global level, Nashville’s health care industry generates more than $73 billion in revenue and more than 500,000 jobs.

The business leaders also attributed some of the progress to the public leaders like former mayors and governors who had the vision and the ability to bring the plan to fruition. The Music City Center, Nashville’s convention center, is one of those components making a tremendous impact.

Nashville is a place for creativity with a welcoming culture of inclusiveness, and ingenious minds are attracted to this, from tech start-ups to artists. The music scene has been an integral part of the city for decades, as Nashville was named “Music City USA” long before it received the “It City” tag.

All of the aforementioned elements have brought about more diversity and economic prosperity, moving Nashville ever so closer to being a global player.

**Imagine the Future and our Next Best Steps**

The panel of business leaders agreed that Nashville will continue to be a center for higher education with world-class education at all levels, learning alternatives and a more skillfully trained workforce.

Nashville likely will remain a health care hub, but technology and innovation will dominate a bigger sector.

With mass transit solutions, affordable housing and programs to integrate the homeless and diminish poverty, Nashville will have to shift from being “Music City” to “Solution City”.

The community will be more diverse, but will maintain the core values of God and faith that are an important part of the foundation of our city.

In order for Nashville to advance its position on a larger scale, there are issues that need to be addressed now to keep the momentum going. Our participants identified the following as the next issues for Nashville to address as we move forward.

- Mass Transit System
- Public Education
- Engaging Stakeholders
- Identifying Revenue Sources
- Providing a “seat at the table” for Millennials
- Bringing Global Leaders to Nashville
- Creating a Center for Global Trade and Innovation
A mass transit system and public education were identified as the top priorities.

Mass transit has been a growing and increasingly complicated issue for Nashville one of the ideas flowing on this topic is to create a public private partnership (P3) to allow up to three elements to happen simultaneously. The benefits of P3 would be accelerating the project, to kick-start a plan and to make progress with a funding referendum. Another suggestion is to develop and initiate a plan on a smaller scale and perfect it before expanding the plan to a larger scale.

The topic of education is about more than just having world-class institutions or collaboration among private, public and charter schools. Education is related to having a world-class workforce and retaining the top talent for the businesses here. This is also about improving education beyond the city, expanding outside of Nashville to the surrounding rural communities.

Bringing more voices to the table to gain knowledge and learn from their experiences could be one of the most beneficial steps for Nashville.

Engaging millennials is critical because the work started now is for the future generations. Including people from the ground level to obtain insight, visiting other countries to study their best ideas and bringing workable solutions home to Nashville is equally important.

Finally, creating a global center for trade and innovation is essential for Nashville to move forward in the international business sector.

Sharing ideas is a form of learning, and welcoming diversity is a way of expanding minds. Creative and innovative thinking produces solutions. Higher education, diversity and welcoming creativity are all things that Nashville does well to fuel the business sector. So engaging more people from the ground level up to global CEOs and building an environment ripe for global trade through education, infrastructure and collaboration are the next steps for Nashville's success in the global arena.
“Nashville is world famous for its music industry, which boasts an economic impact of some $10 billion on the city and its surrounding region each year. But perhaps what’s even more impressive is its thriving health-care scene, which nearly quadruples that stat.” – Kate Rogers, CNBC Reporter

“Healthcare is a $38 billion business in Nashville with 400 health care companies operating in the area, directly employing 126,000. On a global level, Nashville’s health care industry generates more than $73 billion in revenue and more than 500,000 jobs.” – Nashville Health Care Council

And the health care industry in Nashville shows no sign of slowing down. Earlier this year, Aspire Health, a Nashville-based palliative care company co-founded by former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, received $32 million from an investment round led by GV, formerly known as Google Ventures.

Lipscomb University brought together this year’s class of the Nashville Health Care Council Fellows to discuss the future of this vital market in Nashville and how our city is moving forward in the global health care community.

Nashville continues to grow as a global city in the entertainment and hospitality arena, but how is Nashville going to impact international health care going forward? The health care leaders came together to address this and other questions about Nashville’s role in the global health care market.

How is the health care community in Nashville serving a global audience?

If we are to move forward in expanding Nashville’s role in the global health care industry, we must understand our current position.
There are a number of international services and outreach opportunities in Nashville today including:

- Technology services based overseas
- Medical tourism specifically in fertility medicine
- Importing talent from other countries like China
- Staff located overseas
- Hospitals serving an immigrant population
- Hospitals conducting mission trips
- Cancer research connecting drugs and patients from overseas
- Exchange of international education
- Health care culture changing to serve diverse population

**Diversity is key in Nashville.**

One in seven people in Nashville were born outside of the U.S. This level of diversity means that serving patients involves dealing with international issues related to language and disease epidemics, forcing Nashville health care providers to be part of the global conversation and communication.

Serving a diverse population has led to working with international companies to help solve problems, buying more international products, recruiting international nurses and doctors, and the sharing of ideas.

The impact of this diversity has spread into other areas. Health insurance companies and law firms now have translation services to connect patients with multi-lingual attorneys, and health care billing companies now assist patients in different languages.

Nashville is an ethnically mixed community, and diversity leads to sustainability. For example, the culture in our hospital corporations is changing to meet the needs of patients from around the world. While some IT work is outsourced overseas, there is an exchange of international education and research. Cancer research and medical procedures are being shared on a global level to find solutions.

In the race to serve an ever-changing patient profile, there is ongoing work to create a platform for commercialized drugs and lab related processes. And health care management is searching around the world for workable solutions.

What sets Nashville apart from other cities is our quest for knowledge. Nashville’s health care community is actively acquiring data and researching different avenues, and the theme of building and employing around this is driving the diversity in our community.
Challenges for Nashville

The Nashville health care industry is largely about providing services—a service heavy market. But for all of the services and investment, we have not developed a universally accepted system. Traveling overseas, we find that the amount of money we spend on our health care system is far more than what some countries report for their entire Gross National Product.

While our hospital cultures are changing, we have not built our organizations around the diversity of patients and different cultures. Health care around the globe has a cultural focus, but health care in the U.S. has not been developed in the past with varying cultures in mind.

Nashville already has a global reach in the international health care industry in a number of ways, but we are not there yet in regards to technology, regulations or culture.

Imagine the Future and our Next Best Steps

Imagining Nashville as a global leader in the health care industry requires some major ideas from altering the economic direction of health care to changing the physicality of our citizens. While the participants agreed that Nashville should continue its success in providing services and hospital management practices, the consensus was more focused on change.

Ideas for Expanding our Global Footprint:

• Expand our economy from service based to include product based
• Manufacture and sell products in the local area
• Sell products, specifically software, overseas
• Changing regulations
• Studying models in other countries
• Collaboration of clinical research
• New pathways to use massive data
• Innovation and angel investors
• Improve the health of our population
• Create an international center for health
• Provide visas to foreign health care workers to come here
• New international branding movement for Nashville
• Recruit new companies
Nashville’s health care scene has been a service-based industry for a long time, but now leaders agree that Nashville should become a product-based industry as well. Not only does Nashville need to be product-oriented, but the thought is that we should manufacture the products here, sell locally and export to other countries.

Regulations in the U.S. are a huge deterrent from making progress in health care. The regulatory agencies need to incorporate changes in order to stimulate innovation, to build product manufacturing, and to make staffing and management easier to do business.

There is more clinical research being done in Nashville than in any other city in the U.S. However, the research projects are very much operating in silos, isolated and progressing on individual paths. There must be collaboration among the researchers, if they want to advance. Big data is another avenue that needs an organized strategy on how best to use the data collected and put it to work. There is massive data collected here, but we need a director to orchestrate how to put it to work.

The Nashville business environment is currently healthy for angel investors, and investments in the health care information technology (HIT) have been increasing significantly in recent years, surpassing the services subsector in 2012. The shift towards tech firms in health care and infusing more venture capital could be the key for the health care industry to imitate the tech startups in creating business trials for systems in health care.

The health of our citizens is an issue and a challenge for Nashville to become an international principal in this industry. We want to be regarded as a leader in health, but the majority of Nashvillians are not living healthy lives.

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.” - Albert Schweitzer

Nashville cannot lead, nor make a significant impact without being a living example of good health.

Nashville could open an office of the World Health Organization or establish an international health center, much like our own Nashville Entrepreneur Center. This would be a place where we listen and learn from others, where we develop new ideas for products or work through solutions for a coherent health care system. The Mayo Clinic is a destination clinic. Nashville could be an industry haven, if we create a health care ecosystem through collaboration with HCA, Vanderbilt, St. Thomas, and the hundreds of health care organizations centralized here, including for-profit, nonprofit, government and academic.

In order to further expand and build on the benefits of our diversity, we need to recruit more from outside our national borders. For example, we could provide visas to bring foreign industry leaders here. But in order to do that successfully, our companies must do a better job at selling the Nashville brand. And Nashville needs more international marketing.
The collaboration among competitors and utilizing technology are crucial to our global impact. Reducing the costs of health care is critical for everyone. A health information exchange, sharing health records in a highly efficient and successful model or formulating a system to reduce health care costs to one-tenth of the current cost, is possible through alliances. Nashville could become the health care epicenter through collaboration, a diversified health care economy, and using technology to give a disruptive leverage, like cognitive computing.

Demonstrating quality, value and collaboration in our clinical research, a healthier population, regulatory changes and creating an international health center are all ways to attract new leaders and to expand our global presence.

**What’s the next step?**

The first step to achieving our global place in the health care industry is to create a shared vision and mission, which answers the question of why we are doing this.

Once Nashville has established the answer of why we want to make this impact on the world, we can begin to look at how we accomplish this.

Is the Nashville mission one of economic development for the city, profit growth for health care companies or is it an altruistic approach to finding real solutions to the chaos, or perhaps finding more cures for cancer?

The Nashville Health Care Council currently orchestrates health care trade mission trips to other countries, like China, where US health care executives learn firsthand of current developments and progress of reforms taking place in China’s health care system and the opportunities open to U.S. health care companies and organizations for collaboration and partnerships.

And health care leaders agree that one next step is to expand the international trade mission exchanges and to grow the number of international ambassadors, who travel outside the U.S. to study health care in other countries, bringing back knowledge gained from innovative, successful programs overseas. These international education programs in health care help prepare future leaders with a better understanding of other cultures and their systems, as well as how the business side of health care collaborates internationally.

Our international ambassadors are charged with bringing global industry leaders to Nashville to collaborate on issues, as well as recruiting company headquarters to move to Nashville, which might include tax incentives and an aggressive marketing campaign.

A bold marketing strategy might piggyback on the Music City brand, the hospitality scene and include direct international flights. A Music City health festival much like the SXSW festival could be a way to bring together music, education and health.

Finally, setting up a product development fund could bring together data analysis from thousands of data sources for product creation, and enable companies to get a return on their investment. Nashville is a service provider, and now we need to be a product provider, reaching the global market.
Lipscomb alumnus Thomas Rhett won the 2016 CMA Award for Best Single of the Year.
When *Travel & Leisure*, a New York based magazine, announced the results of its annual readers’ survey, “The World’s Best Awards,” Nashville was named the fifth best city in America on the “Best Cities in the U.S.” list for 2016.

“*Music City was a no-brainer to win gold in the overall music category, and also scored nearly perfect scores for two related categories: concerts and bars.*” - Travel & Leisure

The National Center for Arts Research recently named Nashville as second on the “Top 20 Arts Vibrant Large Cities” list.

The Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission estimates that the economic impact of arts and entertainment is around $13 billion.

“The region as a whole ranks fourth highest among all U.S. cities on the Creative Vitality Index (CVI) developed by the Western States Arts Federation.” - Culture Here, Metro Arts Commission

Nashville is clearly on the national and global cultural radar, so how does the city move forward in expanding its worldwide footprint? In order to determine the next best steps, the Lipscomb Imagine Series working group participants assessed where Nashville’s entertainment industry is today and how it might evolve in the future to establish Nashville as a global city of influence.
How is Nashville’s Entertainment sector currently making a global impact?

The Nashville cultural scene is making waves across the spectrum in music, film, and the fine arts.

The Creative Artists Agency, a leading talent agency based in Los Angeles, has a well-established office in Nashville. CAA works to exchange information and bring artists in from around the globe, as well as booking festivals and shows overseas to send artists and musicians from all different genres to other countries to share the Nashville message, from Lady Gaga to Kings of Leon and Carrie Underwood.

The Nashville Symphony hosts international conductors and soloists, and is one of the most active recording orchestras in the country. The Nashville Symphony has released 25 recordings on Naxos, the world’s leading classical label, and two recordings on Decca. These recordings have received a total of 17 GRAMMY® nominations and eight GRAMMY® wins.

The Country Music Association describes its vision as one that is “dedicated to bringing the poetry and emotion of Country Music to the world.” And that is just what the CMA does. The CMA Festival and the CMA Awards show are worldwide hits with international broadcast partners.

In recent years, the creators and producers of the film industry in Nashville have collaborated on a number of programs and projects.

Film-Com, in connection with the Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), is a financing and distribution market for connecting those in the film industry.

Film-Com, although not a festival, was created in 2010 and has expanded each year, establishing itself as a world-class event, with attendees traveling from China, Australia, South America, Africa, Russia and the UK, as well as all across America. Attendees primarily come for the networking opportunities that focus on putting filmmakers in touch with domestic and foreign distribution companies, equity financiers, lender capital, P&A funding, gap financing, co-production partners, packaging agents, production integration specialists and more.

In 2016, Nashville Film Festival received more than 6,700 submissions from 125 countries and programmed 271 films. Nashville Film Festival is working actively with international festivals and projects through other countries including the United Kingdom and China.
The Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) recently completed a marketing trip to China to share ideas and to arrange for Chinese delegates to visit Nashville to exchange information and work collaboratively on new projects.

The Frist Center for the Visual Arts presents magnificent exhibits from local artists to international collections, showcasing new art in its galleries every six to eight weeks, and produces a bi-weekly news cast in Spanish. The Frist curators travel all over the world collecting information and sharing our message, and bringing back the foreign experience.

The Nashville Children’s Theatre is one of the oldest in the country. Over the years, NCT has been named one of the top five children’s theatres in the nation by Time magazine and achieved an international reputation through alliances in theater for young people.

Other examples of the Nashville entertainment industry impacting the global community include sports, law, and nonprofits like the YMCA.

The Predators, Nashville’s professional ice hockey team, produces international broadcasts of the games and recruits players from outside the U.S. which results in travel and the exchange of influences between Nashville and other countries. In addition, Bridgestone Arena broadcasts numerous events and shows to overseas outlets.

OZ Arts in Nashville describes itself as a destination for world-class, innovative contemporary art experiences. The inaugural OZ Art Fest included over 90 local artists and two international artists respectively from Israel and France. In fact, the Ozgener family is a living global connection for Nashville. The family established OZ in 2013, as a gift back to the city and country that have been so hospitable to them as first-generation, Turkish-Armenian immigrants.

International humanitarian ministry work is part of the Nashville impact as well. Just Hope International partners with arts organizations here to help the people in some of the world’s most poverty-stricken or difficult areas. Just Hope enables people to transform their future with a way to produce income for their families, serving people in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Panama, Honduras and Togo.

The Adventure Science Center, the Frist Center and Nashville Public Television all have produced and distributed material for an overseas audience. The Scarritt Bennett Center sponsors global cultural events. Third Man Records and Cheekwood both generate international connections. The TV drama, Nashville, has aired in 82 countries.
Nashville has international law firms like Loeb & Loeb LLP, a multiservice law firm with approximately 350 attorneys and offices in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Nashville, Washington, D.C., Beijing and Hong Kong.

And of course, Jack Daniels is one of the most recognizable and well-known brands worldwide.

Nashville has the start of a healthy portfolio outside of the U.S. already, but there’s a great deal of work to be done to strengthen our influence and actually achieve the goal of making a difference on the global level.

**Imagine the Future and our Next Best Steps**

Imagining the future of our cultural landscape, our participants had these reactions.

- It’s about changing the mindset.
- Nashville is a big little town, already making an impact, but capable of so much more.
- It’s about ‘Think local, act global.’
- Nashville is so much more than music, and what binds us is our creativity.
- Being music city is really in the past decade; Nashville is more.
- The international business community will come here for the cultural scene and help drive more growth in the arts.
- Growing the Nashville brand and selling it around the globe is essential. The Music City brand came out of a marketing strategy, and for so long we were insular. But in the past decade, we’ve been intentional about really getting our brand out there and selling Nashville. And we have to do that in the future.

How should Nashville move forward to become a major global city?

Greater sustainability for the arts and the nonprofits in Nashville is a must, generating more support from both the public and private sector.

The Nashville Arts Commission has a budget of around $2 million, whereas Seattle’s Office of Arts & Culture operates with about $9 million. Tennessee’s Arts Commission receives approximately $7 million, while Massachusetts receives double that. Establishing intelligent financing mechanisms and looking at what works for other cities are important steps to our own success.

It has been said that the “same five families” have been the main support system for the arts. The feeling now is that it’s time for others, including the millennials, to contribute to sustaining the cultural scene.
More TV and film projects would make an impact around the world. The television drama, *Nashville*, created a lot of buzz and stoked a greater following when the stars of the show went on tour. This year, the United Kingdom was added to the tour, which garnered even more attention for the series and for our city. The producers and cast of *Nashville* should consider creating extensions of the show, extensions of the brand, or developing new projects from this whole *Nashville* entity.

A mass transit solution for all Nashvillians and visitors alike, and affordable housing for our artists are at the forefront of making our city a global contender. And Nashville needs more event space and inexpensive creative workspace for artists.

More collaboration among arts organizations in the creative space was identified as a step forward. Nashville, as described by our participants, is one of the most caring, most giving and one of the best cities for collaboration, but more could be done in collaborating on creative projects and supporting fellow organizations.

Establish diversity portals, to include other ethnic groups and bring them to the table for exploring new ideas. Our city has approximately a 12 percent foreign-born population, with more than 100 languages spoken at Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Additional suggestions for raising Nashville's profile include:

- Soccer is the sport of the world, so bring a major league soccer team to Nashville.
- International law firms and accounting firms to serve the needs of organizations and artists working overseas.
- International flights from Nashville’s airport.
- Nashville needs a fashion presence.
- More food trucks and more food branding.
- We still have a rural vs. city mentality across the state, which must be resolved for the state to support our steps forward to international success.

A final thought about our next best steps is that “Nashville has the talent.” The talent in our artists, musicians, producers and others is here. What we need is more original, truly great art to be created here. Doing what we in Nashville do...creating something exceptional, awe-inspiring will do more to make a difference and for improving our global reputation and influence.
Over the past year, we invited hundreds of individuals to participate in one of our Imagine working group sessions. We especially appreciate the following for their involvement.

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