

2017-2018 CMTS Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning

The overall purpose of strategic management is to cultivate a continuing commitment to the mission and vision of an organization, promote a culture that establishes and supports the mission, and persistently maintain a focus on the organization's strategic agenda by means of a transparent decision-making process and subsequent activities. Thus, in September 2016, Dr. Charles Lindsay, Provost of Elmira College, asked Dr. Joseph Lemak, Director of the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies (CMTS) to create a strategic plan in order to identify and respond to the most fundamental and immediate issues facing CMTS, and develop strategies for fostering fiscally sustainable growth to assist in moving CMTS toward being one of the leading internationally recognized scholarly academic centers. The following strategic plan endeavors to create a culture within CMTS that fosters proactive discussion and formulation of action plans by all staff members within their spheres of influence and within the organization as a whole.

Vision

The Center for Mark Twain Studies strives to renew and deepen its identity as a scholarly center for Mark Twain Studies and all related academic disciplines with the goal of becoming one of the very best international academic centers.

To achieve this vision, the Center for Mark Twain Studies must harness its great energy and talents, inspire its supporters, and most importantly, exercise the collective imaginations of the greater Mark Twain community to build and maintain an improved Center for Mark Twain Studies for its current constituents and future generations.

Mission

The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies is dedicated to fostering and supporting scholarship and pedagogy related to all aspects of Mark Twain. The primary purpose of the Center is to serve an international community of professional and amateur scholars and educators. Thus, the Center closely collaborates with the Elmira College Mark Twain Archive, the home of primary and secondary sources dedicated to Twain and his circle. The Center's responsibilities include oversight of Quarry Farm, a scholar's retreat, and the Mark Twain Study, where Twain wrote many of his important works. The Center seeks to enrich local and regional community members and organizations by promoting and preserving the legacy of Twain and his deep connection to Elmira through facilitation and sponsorship of academic research fellowships and a number of scholarly events, including educational field trips, lectures, teaching institutes, symposia, and the quadrennial International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies, the world's largest scholarly conference focusing on Mark Twain.

Organizational History

The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies is known and respected world-wide as one of the premier sites for the research and study of Mark Twain. The Center was established in 1983 with the gift of Quarry Farm to Elmira College from Mark Twain's great-grandnephew, Jervis Langdon, Jr. This gift followed a long tradition of associations with Elmira College that began with Mark Twain's father-in-law, the first Jervis Langdon.

A prominent business man, Jervis Langdon was one of the seven-member "Building and Executive Committee," a group of progressive civic leaders, who in 1853 began to formulate the plans for Elmira Female College – the first college in the nation founded for women to offer a course of study and a degree equal to that earned by men. Jervis Langdon was later appointed to the first Elmira College Board of Trustees, a position he held until his death in August 1870.

Beginning in 1870, and continuing for more than twenty years, at the prime of his creative life, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, writing as Mark Twain, summered at Quarry Farm, the home of Susan and Theodore Crane. Susan Crane was Twain's wife's sister. Each year, the Clemens family members divided their time between their own home in Hartford, Connecticut, and Quarry Farm in Elmira. Life in Hartford was happy, hectic, and very social. In Elmira, life was slower. At Quarry Farm the family was more isolated, away from distractions, and in an environment conducive to relaxation where Mark Twain could concentrate on his writings.

In 1874, after Mark Twain had already successfully published his best sellers, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872), Susan and Theodore Crane surprised him with a small octagonal study. The Study was built on a secluded high knoll, one hundred yards from the main house at Quarry Farm. There, over the course of twenty summers, Mark Twain wrote many of his best works, such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), *The Prince and The Pauper* (1881), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). A number of important short stories and essays were also inspired and composed at Quarry Farm, including "A True Story, Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It," a short story recounting the life of ex-slave Mary Ann Cord. This story contained the first instance of an American author using an African-American dialect in a non-comedic way. The Clemens family spent its last summer at Quarry Farm in 1903. Mark Twain died on April 21, 1910, and was buried in the Langdon plot in Elmira's Woodlawn Cemetery.

In 1952, Twain's niece, Dr. Ida Langdon, a professor of English at Elmira College, presented Twain's Study to Elmira College. It was then relocated from Quarry Farm to the heart of the Elmira College campus.

In 1983, Jervis Langdon, Jr., the great-grand-nephew of Twain, donated Quarry Farm to Elmira College. In a document entitled "The Four Party Agreement," Jervis Langdon, Jr. bequeathed Quarry Farm to Elmira College with two basic purposes: first, "to assure that Quarry Farm, as a residence, will be properly maintained and preserved, and the grounds included in the

donation will be cared for and protected, including the trees, lawns, shrubbery, flowers, and wild life;" and second, "to have the residence at Quarry Farm available as a Center for the Study of Mark Twain and as a temporary home for such members of the faculty of the College, visiting scholars, and graduate students as may be designated, from time to time, by the President of the College, because of their interest in Mark Twain, his works, his philosophy, and the environment in which he lived."¹ These words created the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies. While Jervis Langdon, Jr. and Elmira College constitute the two primary members of "The Four Party Agreement," the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Chemung County Historical Society are the other members. It is the responsibility of these two secondary organizations to insure that Elmira College carry out Jervis Langdon, Jr.'s intentions.

Quarry Farm offers Fellowships-in-Residence to scholars pursuing research or writing in the field of Mark Twain Studies. As one of the most important literary landmarks in American history, Quarry Farm is a working scholar's retreat with an updated, well-equipped work space for scholars and artists. Quarry Farm Fellows have access to a nearly complete reference collection on the premises, including the complete Oxford Mark Twain facsimile edition, Mark Twain Project publications, up-to-date secondary and reference works dedicated to Mark Twain Studies, and fine scholar collections of secondary scholarly material, including the comprehensive Michael J. Kiskis Collection.

Programming at Quarry Farm includes annual symposia on a wide variety of specific Mark Twain Studies topics, workshops for local teachers who wish to incorporate Mark Twain into their curricula, "The Trouble Begins" spring and fall lecture series, the "Park Church Summer Lectures" series, and dozens of school field trips every year. The lectures and field trips are offered free of charge to the schools and general public. While the main house at Quarry Farm is reserved as a home for visiting Mark Twain scholars, the nineteenth century barn and nearby housekeeper's cottage have been adapted for program use and serve as classrooms and lecture space.

Finally, CMTS houses the lion's share of Twain material in the Mark Twain Archive on the Elmira College campus. In conjunction with CMTS, the Mark Twain Archive affords scholars the uniquely rewarding experience of ready access to a collection of primary and secondary sources on Twain. In addition to various editions of Twain's works, the Mark Twain Archive collection includes photographs, books from Twain's personal library and the library at Quarry Farm, books and articles written about him, and microfilm letters and manuscripts from the Mark Twain collections at the Bancroft library in Berkeley, the Mark Twain Memorial in Hartford, Vassar College, and the Huntington Library.

¹ "The Four Party Agreement Regarding Quarry Farm, Elmira, N.Y.," December 31, 1982. Legal Contract involving Jervis Langdon, Jr., Elmira College, The National Historic Trust, and Chemung County Historical Society, (1983): 2-3

Process

CMTS has established an on-campus strategic steering committee that includes representatives of Elmira College faculty, staff, and administration. Members of the steering committee are:

- Mr. Nathaniel Ball, Archivist and Curator of the Elmira College Mark Twain Archives
- Ms. Patricia Cordell, Academic Secretary
- Ms. Jan Kather, Professor of Fine Arts
- Dr. Joseph Lemak, Director of the Center for Mark Twain Studies
- Dr. Charles Lindsay, Provost
- Dr. Matthew Seybold, Assistant Professor of American Literature and Mark Twain Studies
- Mr. Steven Webb, Quarry Farm Caretaker

Areas of Strategic Focus

Reflecting its vision and mission statement, the Center for Mark Twain Studies has established the following strategic goals:

1. Sustain and enhance service to all constituents of CMTS
2. Increase the quality and quantity of scholarly productions associated with Quarry Farm
3. Increase the services and materials offered by the Mark Twain Archive to the academic community
4. Preserve the historical infrastructure of Quarry Farm, the Study, the Exhibit, and the Mark Twain Archive
5. Increase financial sustainability to help promote and support CMTS' mission and strategic goals

Strategic Goal #1 - *Sustain and enhance service to all constituents of CMTS**A. Sustain and enhance services to the scholarly community*

Reflecting its mission, service to the scholarly community is the most important aspect of this strategic plan. CMTS has a long history of hosting successful academic symposia and conferences. In fact, the quadrennial International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies is the largest Mark Twain conference in the world. CMTS endeavors to continue this legacy of accomplishment.

One of the most important literary landmarks in American history, Quarry Farm is a working scholar's retreat with an updated, well-equipped work space for scholars and artists, thus CMTS continues to facilitate the Quarry Farm Fellowship program. It funds scholars from around the

world to live at Quarry Farm for short time periods while working on Twain-related scholarship. Quarry Farm Fellows have access to a nearly complete reference collection on the premises, including the complete Oxford Mark Twain facsimile edition and Mark Twain Project publications as well as up-to-date secondary and reference works dedicated to Mark Twain Studies. A focus on new Twain scholars is a particular emphasis of the Quarry Farm Fellowship program. The fellowship program not only supports senior scholars, but also graduate students and scholars with newly-minted doctoral degrees, ensuring the continuation and rejuvenation of Mark Twain as a central figure in American literature and the field of the Humanities. In the past, scholars published some of their findings in the now defunct *Quarry Farm Papers* publication. The merit of transforming this now defunct publication into an on-line format is being explored.

At the same time, a new website and the relatively new emphasis on digital humanities in academia offers fresh, innovative ways to serve the Mark Twain Studies scholarly community. CMTS has recently acquired the permission from David Fears, the author of the seminal reference work *Mark Twain Day By Day*, to display his reference volumes on the CMTS website. Since this important reference is not available at most libraries, it will have a profound effect on the everyday research methodology for Twain scholars and enthusiasts. CMTS will create the *Mark Twain Day By Day* project, turning the print work into a searchable, linkable, and updatable online platform.

Tactic #1A - Facilitate Elmira 2017: The Eighth International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies “The Assault of Laughter” (August 3-5, 2017)

Tactic #2A - Begin the *Mark Twain Day By Day On-line* project

Tactic #3A - Explore the idea of rejuvenating the *Quarry Farm Papers* publication

Tactic #4A - Facilitate Quarry Farm Weekend Symposia on an annual basis

B. *Sustain and enhance service to the web community*

In October 2016, CMTS launched its first stand-alone website, MarkTwainStudies.org, which features manuscripts and images from the Mark Twain Archive, updates about CMTS activities, announcements of Twain-related publications and events, interactive tours of Quarry Farm, and original commentary by CMTS staff. Dr. Matthew Seybold, Assistant Professor of American Literature and Mark Twain Studies at Elmira College, was named editor-in-chief.

While assuming a leadership role for the website, Dr. Seybold identified three distinct audiences which CMTS serves: the international community of Twain scholars, the local community of Elmira residents and Elmira College students, and a large, amorphous audience of

amateur Twainiacs of all ages who read his books, recite his jokes, visit the museums in Hannibal and Hartford, and generally ensure Twain's esteemed place among the icons of Americana. Dr. Seybold postulated that this latter audience has little or no awareness of Twain's connection to Elmira. MarkTwainStudies.org is better oriented than other CMTS programs and publications to reach this specific audience and produce content relevant to a diverse community of hobbyists, collectors, journalists, and secondary school teachers.

The core constituency for the Center for Mark Twain Studies remains scholars. MarkTwainStudies.org currently serves them by promoting events and publications, circulating ephemera, and making archival materials accessible. In coming years, CMTS plans to digitize as much of its collection as possible, including three decades of recordings of the "Trouble Begins" lectures. Such projects will attract grant money and be substantively aided by Elmira College student interns, the first of whom began her work with CMTS in January 2017. Student interns will not only digitize archival materials and upload them to the web, but also make regular contributions to the blog, in consultation with Dr. Seybold.

In less than six months, the website attracted tens of thousands of visitors. Such traffic exceeded all expectations, especially considering the site had an amateur design, minimal coding, and virtually no search engine optimization. However, this will soon change, since MarkTwainStudies.org will undergo a professional re-design. CMTS will also challenge Elmira College students to implement a digital marketing campaign with the express goal of raising MarkTwainStudies.org to the first page of Google search results for "Mark Twain."

Finally, MarkTwainStudies.org will become permanent home to a digital version of David Fear's voluminous research aid, *Mark Twain Day by Day*. CMTS will establish a foundation for a searchable, linkable database, complete with photographs and other visual aids, and open to ongoing revisions. CMTS aims to provide for Mr. Fear's resource, already a tremendous boon to Twain scholars, a digital interface which, in his words, "will do the work justice and me honor." Done correctly, the *Mark Twain Day By Day Online* database will serve Twain researchers for generations and, in the process, help maintain the CMTS's rightful place at the center of the scholarly community.

- Tactic #1B Redesign and launch updated website
- Tactic #2B Begin the *Mark Twain Day By Day Online* project
- Tactic #3B Create a "Resources for Teachers and Students" section on website
- Tactic #4B Elevate website to top page of Google results for "Mark Twain"
- Tactic #5B Apply for digital humanities grants for website

C. Sustain and enhance service to the local and regional community

CMTS currently does an excellent job serving the local and regional community, mainly through the facilitation of the Spring and Fall “Trouble Begins” and the Summer “Park Church” lecture series and service to local schools. Between the two lecture series, ten to twelve high-quality talks from top scholars in the field of Mark Twain Studies are offered to the general public for free. Furthermore, these lectures are consistently well attended. It is worth noting that the younger demographic (18-40 years) are not well-represented at these lectures. The following action steps look to create content that preserves the demographic that has long supported CMTS, yet reaches out to new ones at the same time. As a result, the long-standing lecture series will remain the same, but an additional emphasis will be placed on new academic programming aimed at the millennial generation. CMTS plans to reach out to, and perhaps partner with, other local institutions, such as the Tanglewood Nature Center and the Chemung County Historical Society, in order to brainstorm and create meaningful educational program material which may benefit all organizations involved as well as interest a younger group of participants

Each year the Center for Mark Twain Studies hosts local school students as they delve into the world of one of America’s greatest literary figures, Mark Twain. Students ranging from elementary to high school explore the life of Twain and local history as they tour sites that include the exhibit and Mark Twain Study at Elmira College, Woodlawn Cemetery (Twain’s final resting place), and Quarry Farm - the summer home of Twain and his family. These field trips are completely cost free to the schools.

A partnership with WENY-TV, a local news station, has aided in bringing those journeys to life for many students from regional schools. Students receive free books through the Mark Twain Literacy Project - an annual program in partnership with WENY-TV and Lilly Broadcasting, which owns the television station. The program, which has been in place for about ten years, provides students with a book that they can keep in order to learn about the famous author. This book donation is often followed up with a field trip to the Mark Twain sites. According to Dr. Joseph Lemak, Director of the Center for Mark Twain Studies, “students of all ages are really struck by seeing the Study and Quarry Farm. They study Mark Twain’s life and literature in the classroom, which really comes alive when they can see the places mentioned in their textbooks. Teachers have also told me that their students often walk away with a sense of hopeful pride of their home and their own futures, knowing that someone as important as Mark Twain accomplished so much in Elmira.”

CMTS also collaborates with the Schuyler-Chemung-Tioga-Corning Teachers’ Center to offer an annual Summer Teachers’ Institute. Dozens of local teachers attend the two-day institute held on the Elmira College campus and at Quarry Farm. The institute is often led by visiting scholars who are experts in the field of Mark Twain Studies. Michelle Halperin, a fourth grade

teacher in Elmira stated that “the Mark Twain Teachers’ Institute is an outstanding opportunity to meet other educators interested in integrating Twain into their curriculum. The discussions on how to offer our students rigorous, age appropriate texts in authentic and meaningful ways inspires me...I use Twain’s biographical information, letters, quotes and short stories to connect my students not only to reading and writing, but to a sense of community pride, as well.”

Tactic #1C - Create new programming aimed at 18-40 year olds by working with the Tanglewood Nature Center and the Chemung County Historical Society

Tactic #2C - Promote the Mark Twain Literacy Project and CMTS field trips on the website

Tactic #3C - Continue to facilitate the “Trouble Begins” and “Park Church” lecture series on an annual basis

Tactic #4C - Continue to facilitate the Mark Twain Summer Teachers’ Institute on an annual basis

D. Sustain and enhance service to the Elmira College community

Attempts at implementing the study of literature and history of Mark Twain in Elmira College’s general education program have had mixed results. These worthwhile attempts usually targeted the entire incoming freshman class, requiring a large student population to work on and complete a specific assignment at the same time. While there is real merit in exposing freshman students to the legacy of Mark Twain in Elmira, the assignment was usually met with discontent by both the students and instructors. The following tasks look to expose Mark Twain Studies to Elmira College students and faculty in ways that are not required, but optional. The strategy is to incorporate a more “grassroots” approach, in hopes of creating and fostering a student culture which finds CMTS as a valuable resource for students’ liberal arts education and career goals.

Tactic #1D - Create a CMTS internship for two to four students annually

Tactic #2D - Create the “Mark Twain Creative Arts Contest” and Award, supplementing the “Mark Twain Writing Contest” and Award

Tactic #3D - Create a Visiting Scholar System among the Quarry Farm Fellows for the Elmira College Honors Program

Strategic Goal #2 – *Increase the quality and quantity of scholarly production associated with Quarry Farm*

At the heart of CMTS' mission are Quarry Farm and the Quarry Farm Fellowships. Quarry Farm is unique; it is, at the same time, an important literary landmark and an occupied house. The lodgers of Quarry Farm are the Twain scholars who live there for extended periods of time (mostly one week to one month), as envisioned by Jervis Langdon, Jr. when he donated Quarry Farm to Elmira College in 1983. CMTS' goal is to improve the scholarly work amenities, both direct (lights, desks, chairs, computers) and indirect (kitchen amenities and sleeping amenities). At the same time, CMTS wants to encourage a more diverse pool of applicants, and resulting occupants, for the Quarry Farm Fellowships.

Tactic #1 – Revise the Quarry Farm Fellowship Application (2017)

Tactic #2 – Update the scholarly work and living amenities at Quarry Farm (2017)

Tactic #3 – Advertise the Quarry Farm Fellowship program on-line, in relevant journals, and in specific academic departments

Strategic Goal #3 – *Increase the services and materials offered by the Mark Twain Archive to the academic community*

Elmira College has created a new systemic relationship between CMTS and the Mark Twain Archives. Based on Provost Charles Lindsay's input, administrative functions are now relegated to CMTS while resource preservation and access are the responsibility of the archivist, maximizing each department's professional competencies. This new strategy has led to several notable accomplishments: increased availability of resources for the use of scholars at Quarry Farm, increased use and traffic at the Mark Twain Archive itself, bibliographic control of the books in the scholar's library and Langdon library at Quarry Farm, a preservation budget from the Mark Twain Foundation for 2016-2017, and a vision towards a comprehensive historic preservation plan for Quarry Farm.

Tactic #1 - Digitize primary source materials for inclusion on [New York Heritage](#) and [CMTS website](#)

Tactic #2 - Catalog objects and artifacts located at Quarry Farm and the Mark Twain Exhibit

Tactic #3 - Create "Finding Aids" for Twain Collections

Tactic #4 - Install ultra-violet protection glass in the Mark Twain Archive

Strategic Goal #4 – *Preserve the historical infrastructure of Quarry Farm, the Study, the Exhibit, and the Mark Twain Archive*

Due to the historic importance of Quarry Farm and the Mark Twain Study as National Historic Landmarks, it is essential that CMTS take a proactive approach to their preservation and maintenance. The first step in this is to obtain a historical preservation report. According to the U.S. Department of Interior, a historical preservation report “provides documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property’s history and existing condition. Broadly recognized as an effective part of preservation planning, a historic structure report also addresses management or owner goals for the use or re-use of the property. It provides a thoughtfully considered argument for selecting the most appropriate approach to treatment, prior to the commencement of work, and outlines a scope of recommended work. The report serves as an important guide for all changes made to a historic property during a project-repair, rehabilitation, or restoration-and can also provide information for maintenance procedures. Finally, it records the findings of research and investigation, as well as the processes of physical work, for future researchers.” (From the [National Park Service Website](#)) While this report would be invaluable for CMTS’ stewardship of Quarry Farm in the long term, it is also provides a road map necessary for the CMTS staff to deal with immediate maintenance concerns.

CMTS is currently working with Johnson-Schmidt & Associates, Architects (Corning, NY). Not only is this organization local and has a complete familiarity with the history and legacy of Quarry Farm, Johnson-Schmidt & Associates specializes in historic preservation and is dedicated to the preservation of historic resources. They are long-standing members of the New York State Board of Historic Preservation and have worked on large-scale, important projects such as New York City’s Grand Central Terminal, Harvard University’s Boat Houses, and Boston’s Trinity Church.

Tactic #1 – Start the process of obtaining a Historical Preservation Report from Johnson-Schmidt & Associates for Quarry Farm

Tactic #2 – Secure funds for the Historical Preservation Report through historical preservation grants and other potential sources of revenue

STRATEGIC GOAL #5 – *Increase financial sustainability in order to help promote and support CMTS’ mission and strategic goals*

With generous support from the Mark Twain Foundation and individual donations from loyal private supporters, CMTS is in a stable financial condition. However, with large projects looming such as the Historical Preservation Report for Quarry Farm, the “On-Line Mark Twain Day By Day” project, and the digitization of the Mark Twain Archives, while still preserving the Quarry Farm Fellowships and the other customary annual programming (lectures, field trips, symposia, teachers’ institutes, et cetera), CMTS must reexamine its current financial situation in order to help foster positive growth. CMTS will need to continue its most helpful relationship with the Mark Twain Foundation and individual donors, while at the same time, aggressively look for grants associated with historic building preservation and digital humanities. In 2016, the U.S. Mint produced and sold a series of commemorative coins. The profits produced by the coins are earmarked for the four Mark Twain centers (i.e. Hartford, C.T., Hannibal, M.O., Berkeley, C.A., and Elmira, N.Y.). It is essential that CMTS secure the funding from the U.S. Mint.

Tactic #1 – Continue positive relationship with the Mark Twain Foundation and loyal individual supporters

Tactic #2 – Ensure that CMTS receive funding from the U.S. Mint Commemorative Coin Program

Tactic #3 – Aggressively seek out grants on an annual cycle which focus on historical preservation and digital humanities projects