

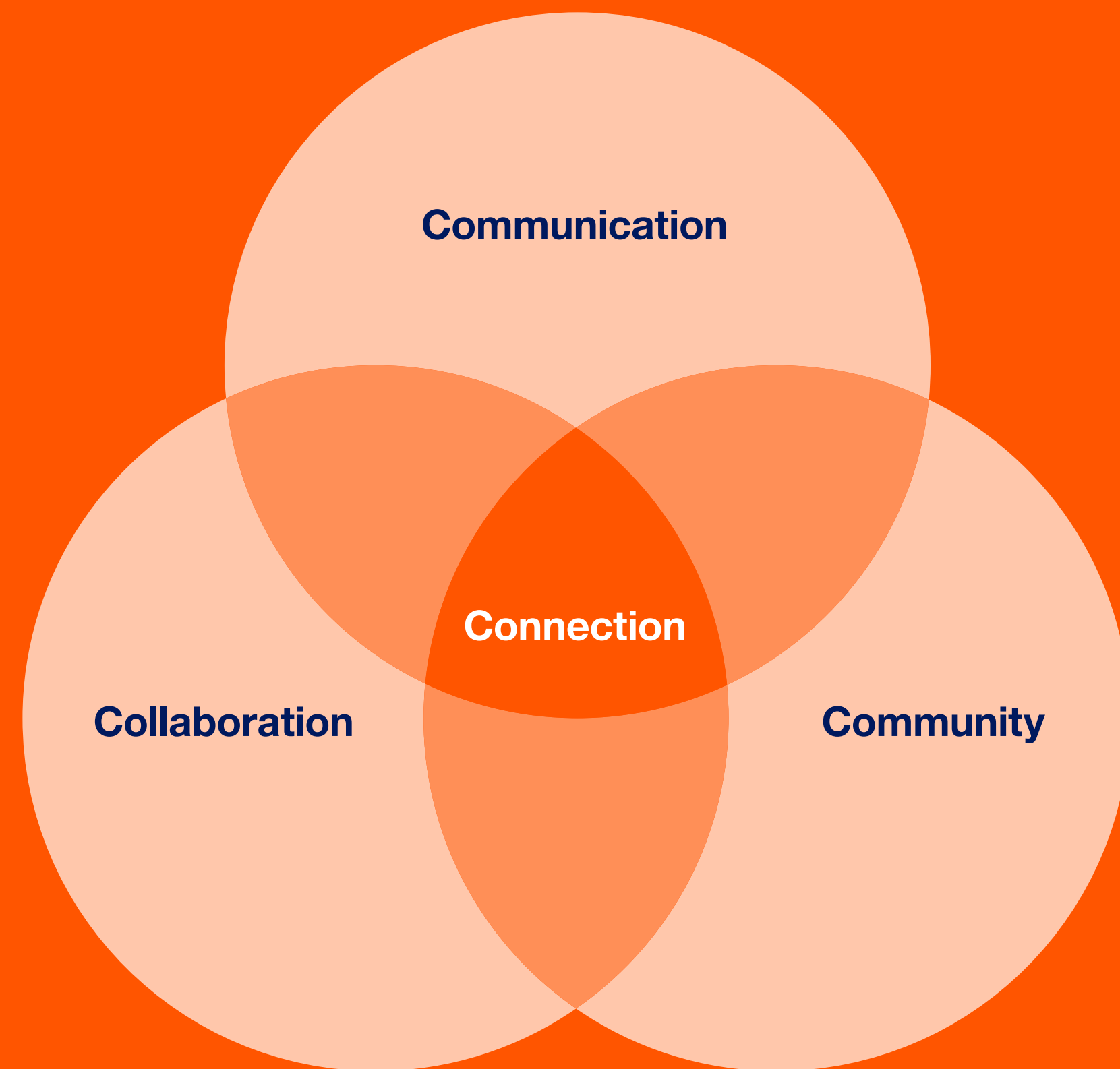
Cumulus at

**Strategic Plan
Implementation
Progress
Report 2021**



Introduction

The Great Reset



This report highlights key activities and accomplishments for Cumulus for June 2020 through June 2021, as we continue to grapple with the prolonged emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cascading disruptions it has brought to our institutions and the enterprise of teaching and learning in our creative disciplines.

The pandemic has uniquely challenged our association as a dynamic ecosystem for global mobility and knowledge exchange in art and design pedagogy, research, and practice. In its legacy form over the past thirty years, Cumulus has promised its members an enriching *closeness* through two on-site annual conferences hosted by our distinguished universities and a set of additional programs and activities that are often face-to-face and unites us as part of a diverse global family, bound together beyond our differences by common experiences and common values.

While it is unquestionable that the pandemic has undermined many of our traditional ways of meeting and working together, it has also represented a real-time laboratory for our community to manage transformation from inside the Zoom box. The current period of forced isolation and virtual encounters has accelerated key priorities we had outlined pre-pandemic in our Strategic Plan [Cumulus at 30 \(2019-2022\)](#) via the plan's three pillars of **collaboration**, **communication**, and **community** through *connection*.

With the first scenarios of a post-pandemic world upon us, we hear more and more about the concept of the **“great reset”**. This is a process of transformation necessary for recovery to occur as we emerge from a once-in-a-century crisis that has exposed the fragile state of our planet and the profound interdependence and inequities of our societies. This is a reset that an association like ours can, and must, contribute to in potent and holistic ways. The stakes have never been higher for our creative community to enact change towards a more sustainable future by design.

I look forward to greeting you all at our General Assembly in the context of the [Cumulus Roma Design Culture\(s\) conference at Sapienza University](#) and virtually around the world!

Mariana

Mariana Amatullo, PhD
President, Cumulus Association
June 2021

Where We Stand Macro Level View of Our Progress

To translate the seven strategic objectives of our strategic plan, the Cumulus Executive Board sub-committees have continued to partner throughout the year with the Cumulus President and Secretariat to pursue specific courses of action and implement many of the priority projects referenced in the plan.

The diagrams that are presented in this section offer a macro-level overview of the steady progress to date. We have quantified approximate percentages for each pillar by considering actions underway in many of the concrete projects we originally outlined.

Varying in nature and complexity, some of these projects represent goals from the strategic plan that have been met with substantive and measurable success: we can clearly point to these as contained projects we have completed or are near to completing (for example, the launch of a new institutional brand identity to be released at the June 2021 General Assembly and the unveiling of a new website in the last quarter of 2021); others are more complex goals that will remain diffuse, they will necessitate organizational shifts for our community over time and will demand the continued engagement of all our members to succeed.

Still, these goals—many reside in the community pillar of the plan—represent nascent initiatives where we are setting in motion intentional new mechanisms for support (for example, evolving our association to a more student-centric entity or creating bridges between Global North and Global South through strategic partnerships). By the end of this executive board's term in June 2022, we anticipate providing members with an in-depth report of the overall rate of success of the plan's implementation across all strategic areas.

Where We Stand

Macro Level View of Our Progress



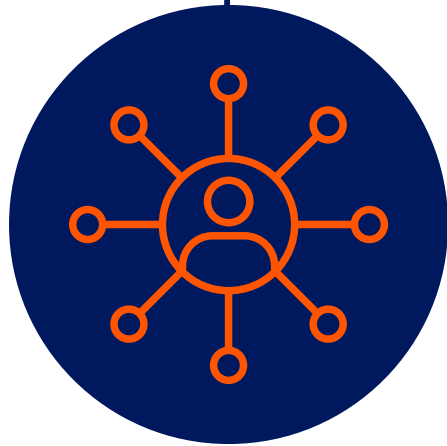
Communication Strategy



Design Aesthetic



Shared-Governance Practices



Ecosystem of Partnerships



Student-Centric Association



Innovate Convenings



Bridge Between the Global North and the Global South

Progress on Strategic Plan

Communication

1. Develop & Implement Comprehensive Communication Strategy

2. Embrace Contemporary & Inclusive Design Aesthetic

Collaboration

3. Strengthen Shared-Governance

4. Build on Our Ecosystem of Partnerships

Community

5. Evolve Cumulus to Become More Student-Centric

6. Innovate our Convenings

7. Create a Bridge Between Global North & Global South

Communication Pillar



1. Develop & Implement Comprehensive Communication Strategy

70% Complete

Priority Projects

- Social media activation across LinkedIn
- Twitter and expansion of facebook channel
- Launch of CumulusConnects YouTube channel
- Editorial strategy for newsletter, refresh of all MoUS
- New website commission underway digital ecosystem underway with CumulusConnects launch in Sept 2020



2. Embrace Contemporary & Inclusive Design Aesthetic

70% Complete

Examples

- Institutional brand identity and system launch at the 2021 GA. The new visual language builds on the progressive evolution of our design aesthetic since the launch of CumulusConnects
- Some work remaining to fully deploy identity across all touchpoints with new website and guidelines for members available in last quarter of 2021

Collaboration Pillar

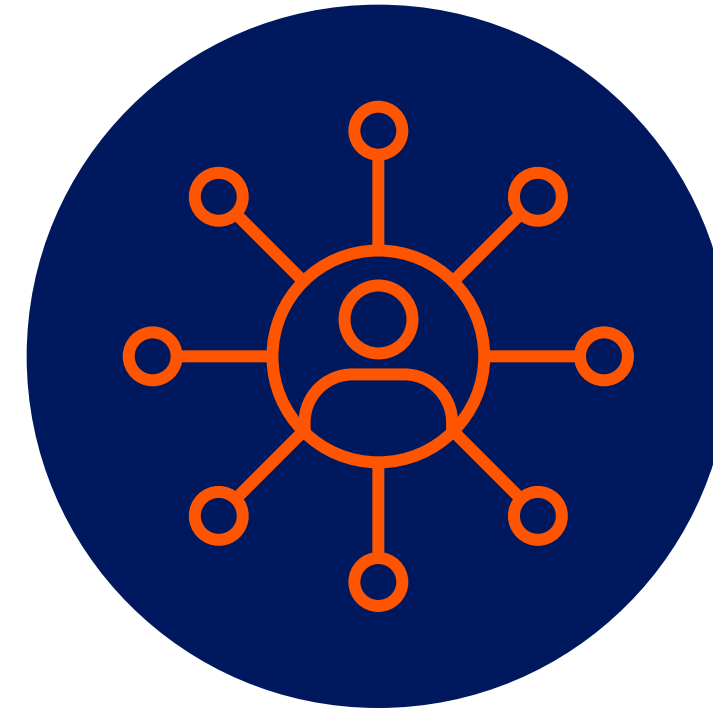


3. Strengthen Shared-Governance

60% Complete

Examples

- Board Handbook
- Review and updates of calls for proposals and participation by the community
- Solidarity in model in progress



4. Build on Our Ecosystem of Partnerships

60% Complete

Examples

- “Network of networks” concept in progress
- Articulation of a strategic POV for partnerships; reformulation of MOUs with tangible goals

Collaboration Pillar



5. Evolve Cumulus to Become More Student-Centric

40% Complete

Examples

- Student group launch
- More visibility of competitions for students

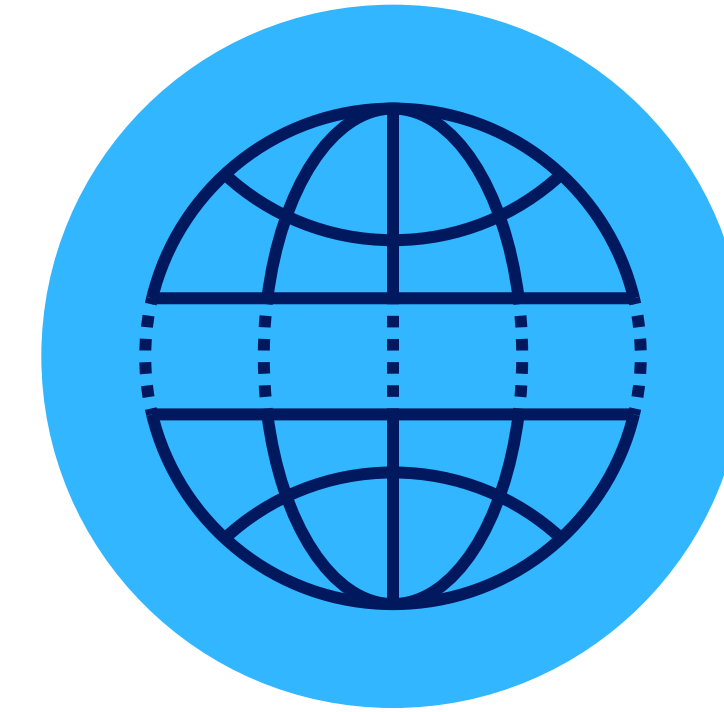


6. Innovate our Convenings

40% Complete

Examples

- CumulusRoma new model of online immersive conference
- CumulusConnects
- Research underway for more intentional digital embrace and tools for our ways of meeting and working together



7. Create a Bridge Between the Global North and the Global South

40% Complete

Examples

- Solidarity model and key partnerships such as DISUR

Organizational Resilience and Transformation

3 Highlights

01

Cumulus Association Treasurer Summary Statement

As all Cumulus members know, the treasury role in the Cumulus Executive Board was newly created in June 2020 with approval from the 2020 General Assembly of Cumulus member institutions.

During the past year as Treasurer, I have worked with the President, Secretariat team, and the Executive Board to ensure that Cumulus continues to grow in a sustainable and financially prudent manner. We continue to work with our host, Aalto University, and their financial team to ensure that Cumulus operates to the best international financial management and auditing practices. The Treasury role has afforded an extra level of oversight to the management of the Association's finances. In this regard, I am happy to report that the Association continues to remain in good financial health.

During the Pandemic, we funded the development of the [CumulusConnects](#) platform to allow members to share and connect online. Through this and other initiatives, we have learned much from the global pandemic and how our network can become more inclusive and accessible for those in the Global South.

We know that barriers to membership remain for many of the best Art, Design, and Media institutions that we would want to see join our association. So the development of a more inclusive 'Solidarity model' remains a priority for this current Executive Board as we seek to decouple membership fees from conference participation and propose a new financial model for Cumulus. We look forward to presenting all members with a comprehensive proposal on this front in June 2022 at the conclusion of this board's term.



Adam de Eyto, PhD

Treasurer, Cumulus Association

02

CumulusConnects: Online Conversations that Matter

CumulusConnects was launched in September 2020 and has been online now for ten full months. The platform has been successful in connecting our community with conversations that matter when all collaboration, communication, and even conviviality went digital.

The Editorial Board, a team of 5 highly committed Cumulus members from France, Ireland, Chile, Finland, Germany, and with the support of Anna Lindberg from the Cumulus Secretariat, have been critical in facilitating the engagement of our community on the platform.

About 125 members have personally registered to join, listen, share and contribute. About 10 Expertise Talks were captured on the site and offer insights from different individuals and cultural perspectives. Our 15 Global Conversations, mostly convened by Cumulus Working Groups, were attended by over 400 members from more than 40 countries. All contributed to a global exchange of ideas, challenges, expertise, practices, and visions for different futures for our diverse communities. At the beginning of the year, the Cirro Cumulus Student Group started to use CumulusConnects for their convenings, creating new energy, diversity and connections to students and faculty from all over the world.

All of the above activities have also informed new ways of collaboration for our Cumulus Working Groups and are inspiring the beginning of new collaborative fronts. On the heels of a series of three meetings with all Cumulus Working Group chairs and coordinators we see new opportunities ahead for an ongoing process of hybrid collaboration for our members.

While we anticipate our Cumulus conference sessions will remain highlights, the virtual platform for dialogue that CumulusConnects has opened up is a promising channel to give access to the diversity of our community and allow additional connections to be forged with Cumulus friends and partners.

In the last quarter of 2021, Cumulus will be launching a new institutional website. CumulusConnects will become part of this new website currently being realized. With it, we anticipate offering all members robust digital tools and mechanisms for engagement, exchange, and collaboration. Meanwhile, we look forward to meeting you online in one of our upcoming Conversations. For all new members, we encourage you to register on the platform, and get in touch with the editorial team to suggest topics for discussion and dialogue as we continue to shape together online conversations that matter!

Philipp

Professor Philipp Heidkamp
Vice President, Cumulus Association

03

A Renewed Institutional Brand Identity for Cumulus

As Cumulus celebrates its 30th anniversary in a year of a global pandemic and exponential growth in digitalization, it was a natural time to revisit the Cumulus logo and visual identity to evaluate how to best serve the association in its next phase moving forward and as the association also expands its digital ecosystem, a key priority of our board to connect all members. As we know, Cumulus has matured into a truly global organization reaching a broad community of members and partners through a variety of digital and physical touchpoints.

The existing logo, designed by Ranko Novak, Professor Emeritus at the University of Ljubljana, served the association very well for an impressive thirty years. However, with today's competition for attention, demands for accessibility, and the use of small screens in multiple digital platforms, the original logo was proving increasingly difficult to deploy effectively. There were often issues with its visibility and legibility, which was particularly true when using the tagline in the logo mark. Furthermore, the existing visual identity of Cumulus was also becoming somewhat fragmented and inconsistent in its applications.

The board agreed it was time to refresh the Cumulus logo and visual identity. The brief for the new logo was to acknowledge our legacy and heritage, align the revised identity with our overall strategic plan, and position Cumulus as a forward-thinking contemporary association. We also aimed for a fresh and bold visual identity that will be simple to use and allow for a structured brand architecture for sub-brands and associated activities such as the student competition Cumulus Green to strengthen the recognition and impact of the Cumulus institutional brand overall.

I was honored to lead the project with the strategic support of Philipp Heidkamp and the rest of the board. This was an initiative we launched at the end of 2020, and that took us about six months of work to evolve over multiple iterations. We were thrilled to collaborate closely with designer Karen Davison. Karen is an award-winning independent designer from California, and an alumna of Cumulus member institution ArtCenter College of Design. Karen has gained deep insight into our association over the past several years of collaboration. Thus it was a natural decision to continue this successful collaboration with her on this important project for Cumulus.

Karen has been responsible for the design of our 30th-anniversary logo, our strategic plan, and CumulusConnects, among key projects. We are deeply grateful for Karen's dedication, creative vision, and partnership. We trust you will appreciate the dynamic and inclusive nature, global versatility, and contemporary aesthetic of the refreshed institutional identity of Cumulus once we unveil it at our General Assembly on June 10 in Rome and virtually around the world.

Rachel

Professor Rachel K.B. Troye
Vice President, Cumulus Association

Saying Thank you

We remain grateful for our Cumulus Secretariat team's day-to-day partnership and tireless hard work and accomplishments: thank you to **Ms. Eija Salmi**, **Justyna Molik** and **Anna Lindberg** and for the ongoing support of our founding host institution, **Aalto University** and the leadership of **Dean Tuomas Auvinen**

In the virtual context of collaboration, our Executive Board (CEB VII) has come together across time zones with nimbleness, creativity, and collegiality to lead our association through a period of unprecedented uncertainty. It has been a privilege to serve our members with the partnership of **Rachel K.B. Troye** and **Philipp Heidkamp**, Vice Presidents; **Adam de Eyto**, Board Treasurer and Board Members **José Allard**, **Lorenzo Imbesi**, **Michael Krohn**, **Teemu Leinonen**, **Robin Turner**, **Anne Pikkov** and **Xiao Yong**.

Mariana Amatullo, PhD
President, Cumulus Association