OVERVIEW
The University of Wyoming announces the launch of the Neltje Center for Excellence in Creativity and the Arts (Neltje Center), an initiative within the College of Arts and Sciences engaged in instruction, creative activity, research, collaboration, and related service.

The Neltje Center provides a platform to link higher education with the arts and humanities in one of the most scenic locations in the country. The Neltje Center will draw and recruit talented students, faculty, and artists to the University of Wyoming (UW) for an experience only Wyoming can provide. Importantly, it will connect the arts to other disciplines through partnerships, programming, and collaborations. The center is named after Neltje, a renowned painter and philanthropist who in 2001 founded the Jentel Artist Residency.

The Neltje Center will include programming, educational opportunities, events, and workshops at the UW campus in Laramie, in the Sheridan region, and in coordination with the Jentel Artist Residency. Beyond these locations, the Neltje Center is poised to create and support activities that are statewide, regional, national, and virtual.

Since its inception, Jentel has awarded fellowships to 835 visual artists and 418 writers from Wyoming, the Rocky Mountain region, and across the U.S.
Many fellows have produced work during residency that subsequently received national recognition.

Neltje Center programming and the Jentel Artist Residency will provide opportunities for UW students in art, creative writing, and music to create, develop their practice, and expand their entrepreneurial skills. These opportunities will include residencies, workshops, and concerts as well as chances to engage with world-class artists, writers, and performers. These multifaceted experiences will help prepare students for successful careers in the creative economies of Wyoming and beyond. In addition, the Neltje Center will give faculty the opportunity to advance their creative activities and research, develop ambitious cross-disciplinary projects, and engage more broadly with Sheridan and other Wyoming communities. Faculty engagement with Sheridan colleagues and Sheridan College will build long-lasting connections intended to foster the creative economy of the region. Communities only thrive when they have a strong culture in the arts and humanities. The Neltje Center is an opportunity for UW to intentionally develop synergies between the College of Arts and Sciences, the Sheridan community, and more broadly the state and region.

There will be opportunities for students across UW to benefit from the Neltje Center programs. Personal growth, the development of creativity and critical thinking skills, and the study of the arts are valuable to everyone. The development of these attributes is fundamental to a college education and is crucial to forming the leaders of the future.

**STRUCTURE AND LOCATION**

The Neltje Center will be part of the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) and will include two areas of focus: the nationally-recognized Jentel Artist Residency and innovative arts and educational programming and experiences for UW students, faculty, and Wyoming community members.

A&S focuses on the arts, humanities, and social sciences. It is home to numerous sought-after degree programs and teaches a large percentage of the core curriculum for all UW students. Because the arts and humanities are central to the college’s land-grant mission, it is an ideal home for the Neltje Center. The center will distinguish UW as a leader in the education and development of visual, literary, and performing artists and as a catalyst for Wyoming’s creative economy.

Neltje Center programming can occur in multiple locations including Sheridan, Laramie, statewide, regionally, nationally and virtually. The Jentel Artist Residency will continue to operate at its location in Banner.

Jentel is governed by a board of directors, and currently chaired by the A&S dean. The Friends of Jentel will expand to assist with fundraising, identify additional resources, and provide feedback about programming. Residency alumni, faculty, and students — as well as local, regional, and national artists and colleagues who support the residency program — will be included.
The Neltje Center will be staffed by a director who reports to the A&S dean. The director will organize programming and events and communicate these events widely to UW, Sheridan, and other Wyoming communities. A new Friends of Neltje Center group will be created to engage people who are connected to Neltje, the vision of the center and want to support its success.

AMK Ranch in Jackson Wyoming is a UW entity for biological research. The Neltje Center is poised to become its sister initiative — a place for creative research and production. The Neltje Center will support important student, faculty, and community creative activity, research, experiences, and workshops. The Neltje Center will develop the incredible potential of the home as a source of earned income for workshops and retreats in an inspiring and creative setting for private and public entities.

**GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

1. **Expand opportunities for visual, literary, and performing art students to achieve excellence in their fields.**
   - Grow enrollment and retention of arts students at the University of Wyoming.
   - Strengthen students’ ability to deepen their creative practice with faculty-led intensives in Sheridan.
   - Create opportunities for students to engage with Jentel residents and alumni for creative and professional development growth. These engagements will occur in Sheridan, Laramie, and other locations in Wyoming.
   - Partner with the Wyoming Innovation Partnership, Impact 307, Sheridan College, and other stakeholders to develop innovative professional development opportunities and programming for students and UW alumni to add to the creative economy of Sheridan and Wyoming.
   - Build summer programming, post-baccalaureate programming, master classes, a low-residency MFA in Creative Writing, and early college programs for potential art students.

2. **Strengthen Jentel’s reputation as a nationally recognized artist residency.**
   - Develop the administrative infrastructure required for Jentel to continue its successful residency while attracting funding and other resources.
   - Expand the experience of Jentel residencies to include performing artists and UW students and faculty.
   - Create opportunities for Jentel residents and alumni to engage with UW students, faculty, and Neltje Center programming.
   - Foster innovative partnerships with local, regional, national, and international entities.

3. **Collaborate with cross-sector partners to contribute to Wyoming’s creative economy through innovative professional development programming and excellent arts experiences for community members and visitors.**
   - Explore the vibrant northeast Wyoming arts community and identify opportunities for the Neltje Center to participate with arts and culture leaders in Sheridan.
• Identify opportunities for UW to build and participate in collaborations and partnerships with arts and culture leaders locally, regionally, and nationally that support the creative economy of Wyoming.
• Develop mentorship opportunities, programming, and resources to address the need of students and alumni to continue their creative practices beyond graduation and build sustainable careers in the arts in Wyoming.
• Connect with creative partners in the Sheridan region to learn about opportunities to collaborate on producing excellent arts programming for community members and visitors.
• Create evaluation criteria and tools to measure the impact of the Neltje Center programming.
• Develop opportunities to enhance the role of the creative economy in Wyoming and the region.

Growing excellence in creativity and the arts through the Neltje Center will not happen overnight.

In Year One, the university will focus on developing an administrative infrastructure and implementing pilot programs for students and the public. A Neltje Center director will be hired by spring 2023. When launching community-facing programming, UW will pay particular attention to opportunities to collaborate with Sheridan-based arts and humanities colleagues.

In Year Two, the Neltje Center plans to grow programming, deepen national fundraising efforts, and clarify earned income strategies. Exhibitions at UW and at Neltje’s home are slated to take place in summer 2023.

By Year Three, the center will have launched a series of earned income strategies and will have increased the opportunities for students, alumni, and community members to engage with the Neltje Center statewide and nationally. UW will continue to seek grants, sponsorships, and donations from entities aligned with the Neltje Center activities and values.

By Year Four, we hope to be nearing full capacity. UW will continue to engage friends of Neltje Center nationally, seek new opportunities for cross-sector and interdisciplinary programming for students, and identify new opportunities to collaborate and partner with Sheridan, regional, and national arts and culture colleagues.