



HICKORY MUSEUM OF ART

ARTS & SCIENCE CENTER

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JUAN LOPEZ
THANK YOU



HICKORY
MUSEUM
OF ART

2021-2025 Strategic Plan

Dear Friends,

The future is bright at North Carolina's second oldest (but most innovative) art museum! Against the backdrop of a rapidly changing world, Hickory Museum of Art continues to thrive, evolve, and grow. The great business theorist Peter Drucker once said:

"In the face of uncertainties, planning defines the particular place you want to be and how you intend to get there."

Indeed, our board and team's commitment to thoughtfully composing *and* implementing our strategic plans has provided a roadmap, as we navigate the opportunities and surprises that define contemporary life.

We initiated the process of developing this 2021-2025 strategic plan on March 6, 2020 at Catawba Valley Community College's Small Business Center. Exactly one week later, the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated that we close our doors to the public and not re-open until October 1. When our taskforce reconvened shortly thereafter, the context surrounding our important work had shifted dramatically.

A rigorous and expansive discovery phase yielded over 500 data points gathered through SWOT analysis exercises, internal surveys at every level of the organization, and external interviews with a wide ranging representation of our community. Through this inquiry our Task Force became completely immersed in the state of the museum's finances, collections, programming, and plant. Most importantly, though, listening to what the participants from outside the organization were telling us about their perceptions and needs from HMA affirmed the importance we have placed in **empathy**, which has been a key driver of our practice for several years.

If anything, recent history has only strengthened our belief in the mission and six core values that have served as Hickory Museum of Art's North Star since their adoption in 2018. The influence of these foundational assets, including the core values of **Complete Inclusivity**, **Communicative Collaboration**, and **The Creative Process**, is reflected in every aspect of our 2021-2025 strategic plan. Readers may also notice that this document builds off of our previous plan. The strategic focus areas read quite similarly, but with deeper ambition embedded within...as if, we are getting closer to our off-ramp on a highway of continuous improvement that will never end.

We are grateful for the many members, donors, supporters, and fans who believe in our mission:

To bring people together and inspire creativity through the power of art

Looking forward to seeing you in the galleries soon!



Jon Carfagno, Executive Director



Vision:

To become a catalyst for a future where creative exploration, inclusivity and community create the foundation for a more perfect world.

Mantra:

Productivity.
Positivity.
Proactivity.



CORE VALUES

The Power of Art

- We know that art has the power to engage, inspire and transform audiences of all backgrounds.
- We unlock this power through purposeful programming, intentional design, and diverse experiences.
- We believe in upholding the highest standards in interpretation, collections management, and conservation.

Complete Inclusivity

- We believe in the need for no-strings-attached inclusivity.
- We strive to foster a welcoming, nurturing, and empathetic environment.
- We celebrate that everyone has creativity within them.
- We pursue a world in which everyone can share their imagination.

The Creative Process

- We believe in the process of creativity.
- We know that innovation comes from boldly daring to take calculated risks and that there is always an opportunity for growth.
- So, we believe in experimenting and in solving problems with a purpose.

Lifelong Learning

- We believe in lifelong learning and the potential of curiosity.
- We are educators and optimists.
- We aim to inspire everyone to make the world a better place.
- We strive to lead by example, by perpetually asking questions and tracking/measuring impact to continuously better ourselves.

Communicative Collaboration

- We believe in the power of communicative collaboration.
- No great work of art is created or enjoyed in solitude; likewise, no great team is led by only one hero.
- We believe that transparency and effective communication fuel passion. And that passion fuels people.
- We know that when people are passionate, they can create incredible things together.

Sustainable Growth

- We believe in creating a sustainable environment for our staff, our guests, and our future.
- We deeply value our roots and our community.
- We strive to make a long-term positive impact for all people.



OUR STORY

From the very beginning, the Unifour Region has been a community of creative minds: entrepreneurs, innovators, and risk-takers. Those creative minds built furniture better than the world had ever seen. They made wagons that were sent worldwide and protected our military. They took revolutionary approaches to fighting the polio epidemic. They formed a community of people willing to dig in their heels and fight for one another. Those minds knew that survival depended on a network and collaboration—more than one plumber, woodworker, and doctor, but also with more than one painter, photographer and writer. Simply put, the arts were viewed as essential to the strength of the community. Though its forms have varied drastically, art has helped the creative minds of the Unifour Region build a community that has risen to nearly every challenge it has faced.

Hickory Museum of Art's visionary Founding Director, Paul Whitener was one of those creative minds. Faced with the challenge of bringing art to Hickory, Paul connected with artists in their various forms and started the museum we know today. This museum brings together people from all walks of life and inspires creativity in a way that launches this community forward as a leader in innovation and culture.

Just like in our region's earlier days, we find ourselves surrounded by a community of creative minds. Creativity of any kind is what makes us human. It is what brings us together, it is what creates and drives change. Hickory Museum of Art continues on the pursuit of inspiration, imagination, and creativity. We keep meeting challenges head-on: to continue fostering important conversations, to continue being a catalyst for positive change, and to keep shaping our future, today and every day.



ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

A New Chapter

With this 2021-2025 strategic plan, we continue our commitment to the mission of bringing people together and inspiring creativity through the power of art. Hickory Museum of Art's recent history, has affirmed our belief in the 3 P's that define our culture: Productivity, Positivity, and Proactivity, as well as the core values that guide our work. The four strategic focus areas reflect our drive for continuous improvement by building on the pillars of the institution's 2018-2021 roadmap. Now, they have taken on new forms that push us further toward our ambition of being the best art museum our size in the country. We will strive to meet our goals by channeling our efforts to enact the action items listed for: Community and Audience Engagement, Art, Financial Growth, and Operational Excellence. As a team, along with our Board, volunteers, and audiences, we will be vigilantly inclusive in driving HMA to become a catalyst of creative exploration and foundation for a more perfect Unifour region.

works by
WARHOL



works by
WARHOL



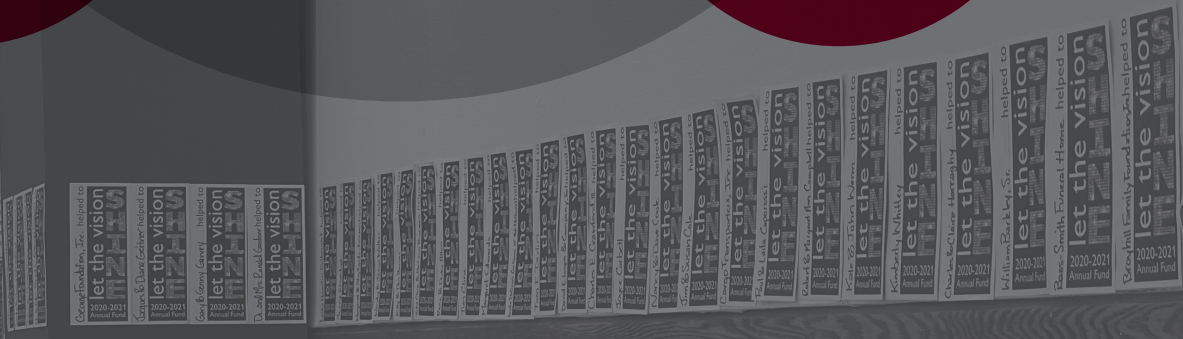
**COMMUNITY
& AUDIENCE
ENGAGEMENT**

ART

**STRATEGIC
FOCUS AREAS**

**FINANCIAL
GROWTH**

**OPERATIONAL
EXCELLENCE**





COMMUNITY & AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Goal:

Build and continuously evaluate programs/partnerships that activate creativity and empathy for diverse audiences

Community & Audience Engagement

I

OBJECTIVE #1:

Promote lifelong learning about the creative process and foster social connections by expanding Education offerings for K-12, Higher Education, and Community partners and other targeted audiences

ACTIONS:

- Collaborate expansively with the K-12 and Higher Education community to co-create curriculum initiatives and programmatic offerings, inviting targeted audiences to collaborate with our team in building experiences that are meaningful to them
- Position the “Art for All” program as a key driver for reaching new audiences and strategically enhancing the museum’s focus on community impact
- Pilot after-hours programming for mid-career and young professionals, including remix nights, concerts, and other social learning and engagement opportunities
- Promote summer camps as a vehicle to counteract summer learning loss
- Continue to monitor the profit and expense margins of Education programs for young learners, families, and adults to actualize \$45,000 in program fees by FY 2023-2024
- Ensure that participants in outreach, education, and community events are encouraged/incentivized to visit HMA and invite collaborating partners to share ideas about how the museum can create lasting connections and deeper relationships

Community & Audience Engagement

2

OBJECTIVE #2:

Leverage our focus on data collection and continuous improvement to measure and demonstrate quantifiable gains in the expansion of audience diversity, geographic reach, and the impact of the HMA's programming

ACTIONS:

- Inventory and analyze the current footprint and establish baseline numbers for membership, education programs, and community collaborations
- Identify additional target audiences beyond the K-12 Community, Diverse Families, and mid-Career professionals and establish relationships with key stakeholders and community leaders within these groups
- Assess, revise, and execute strategic communications plans to ensure that our messaging reaches defined target audiences, including expansive use of social media marketing
- Conduct forum discussions and build collaborative frameworks to co-create programming and opportunities for authentic engagement with HMA's exhibitions and programs
- Embed evaluation and assessment as a cornerstone of our team's commitment to reflective practice by ensuring that planning for every program and exhibition includes at least one data collection instrument or method

Community & Audience Engagement

3

OBJECTIVE #3:

Continue Building HMA's brand through targeted communications focused on reaching new audiences and celebrating the participation of our visitors, champions, and supporters

ACTIONS:

- Continue to experiment with paid media placements, promoted posts, and digital/paper mailers and measure the impact of every investment
- Recruit and enlist the support of tactical marketing specialists on the Audience Engagement Committee
- Enhance the design and functionality of the website by utilizing audience feedback to update the Squarespace template
- Refine email marketing by segmenting distribution lists to align audience interest and communications messaging
- Create a street team to blanket area hotspots with HMA collateral
- Celebrate sponsors, members, and donors on the blog, newsletters, and social media channels



ART

Goal:

Leverage the success of HMA's Exhibitions and Collection Management programs to further our delivery of excellence in these areas

Objectives for

Art

I

OBJECTIVE #1:

Collaborate with the community, external stakeholders, and across HMA Departments to ensure that every gallery is immersive, experiential, and reflective of the museum's expertise in design, interpretation, and curatorial practice

ACTIONS:

- Continue to present a diverse array of international, regional, and local exhibitions of the highest caliber by maintaining the discipline of planning out at least two years ahead of any given time
- Ensure the continued dynamic usage of the entrance gallery, objects gallery, and windows gallery, integrating a mix of local/regional art, smaller exhibitions, the permanent collection, and participatory experiences in these spaces
- Continue programming the engage HMA gallery as an interactive supplemental space to support hands-on learning/responses centered on themes in nearby galleries. Monitor and assess the impact of these interventions
- Plan a big-idea reinstallation of the third floor mezzanine that positions the Folk Art Collection in dialogue with Fine Art holdings. Extend this strategy throughout other exhibitions of the museum's collections
- Initiate and complete a fundraising strategy to complete this project
- Enhance evaluation of exhibitions programming to include visitor intercepts, onsite surveys, and follow-up forums with participants

Objectives for

Art

2

OBJECTIVE #2:

Increase art storage and capacity for best practices in conservation

ACTIONS:

- Secure a venue, partner, or other means to re-home Enola Group non-collections holdings
- Initiate planning with the SALT Block Facilities Committee and Catawba Science Center to transition spaces adjoining the existing third floor vault to expanded art storage
- Enlist the service of design and/or engineering consultants to draft plans for the third floor renovation
- Develop and implement a fundraising strategy to complete this project
- Secure funding and re-appoint the second-floor storage area to provide an additional 163 square feet of storage

OBJECTIVE #3:

Create a framework by which to evaluate potential acquisitions, as well as to critically assess works for deaccessioning

ACTIONS:

- Collaborate with the Collection Committee to develop a list of desired artists and/or movements for each section of the Collection (American Art, Folk Art, Glass, and Pottery)
- Ensure that diversity and representation within the full scope of American Art guide the prioritization of new holdings
- Undertake a focused examination of both collection and non-collection Folk Art holdings, in order to ensure strategic curatorial oversight of this important area of our work
- Partner with the Collection Committee to identify candidates for deaccessioning



FINANCIAL GROWTH

Goal:

**Sustainably grow our
capacity for community
impact and innovation**

Objectives for

Financial Growth

I

OBJECTIVE #1:

Increase membership through incremental gains achieving a total of 675 members or \$100,000 of line item income by June 2025

ACTIONS:

- Initiate the practice of bi-monthly evaluation of program performance by the cross-functional membership taskforce to maintain 75% retention
- Initiate the practice of contacting 5 lapsed members per week to promote rejoins and measure/record success rates for this tactic
- Create and aggressively market programs, initiatives, and promotions, such as Member Mondays, Members-only tours, and travel
- Develop marketing initiatives to expand geographic penetration in surrounding zip codes
- Invest in targeted media buys that support broader awareness of the value of membership
- Host focus groups and survey existing and potential new members to understand their motivation and how to appeal more directly to their wants and needs

Financial Growth

2

OBJECTIVE #2:

Enhance the performance of the museum's giving channels, including annual fund, exhibitions support, grants, and contributions general to grow total fundraising by 12% by FY 2023-2024

ACTIONS:

- Review Internal Management Report to identify potential prospects for deeper investments
- Schedule conversations and nurture relationships that support the increased engagement of existing donors
- Create a menu of projects and institutional needs and align with specific donors based on their areas of interest
- Ensure that recognition is accurately reflected in print, digital, and onsite channels
- Develop a proactive system that engages our team, board, and Guild in recognizing donors to the annual fund and exhibitions sponsors
- Continue to embed donor recognition and thank you events into the production calendar and event conceptualization during seasonal planning

Objectives for

Financial Growth

3

OBJECTIVE #3:

Expand and diversify our donor base to grow overall fundraising from new sources

ACTIONS:

- Create a baseline understanding of our existing donor base by category
- Refine and aggressively promote HMA's case for support
- Collaborate with the Development Committee to identify new potential targets adding at least three new individual and corporate sponsors each year in accordance with the Fund Development Strategy
- Initiate the practice of pursuing new and lapsed donors weekly (5 per week)
- Continue to refine sponsorship materials, while adding creative experiential activations for sponsorships

Objectives for

Financial Growth

4

OBJECTIVE #4:

Leverage HMA's core competencies and entrepreneurial acumen to enhance earned income performance by 33% by FY 2023-2024

ACTIONS:

- Develop our rental policies and market HMA as a unique facility for weddings and corporate events, while exercising a disciplined, strategic focus on considering facility-usage requests from other non-profits
- Create and market premium experiences for corporate groups, including day-away team building retreats and evening events for customers, clients, and staff
- Undertake a focused evaluation of the business model and relevancy of shopHMA and explore opportunities to evolve the retail experience and earned income capacity of this amenity

Objectives for

Financial Growth

5

OBJECTIVE #5:

Increase the museum's primary endowment

ACTIONS:

- Initiate marketing efforts to identify planned giving targets and establish contact with interested parties
- Create a list of supporters who have maintained 10 consecutive years of membership and reach out to them individually
- Develop a menu of endowment giving options, including named funds for positions, programming, and museum spaces
- Establish a Planned Giving Society and identify long term supporters to initiate conversations regarding potential contributions

Objectives for

Financial Growth

6

OBJECTIVE #6:

Initiate feasibility planning for a comprehensive campaign

ACTIONS:

- Model associated costs for addressing staffing, physical plant, and technology needs and concerns
- Contract a consultant to survey major donors about their motivation and capacity to support the needs



**OPERATIONAL
EXCELLENCE**

Goal:

**Strengthen
the foundation of
HMA to ensure
sustainable growth**

Objectives for

Operational Excellence

I

OBJECTIVE #1:

Position HMA as a leader in the museum field by enhancing our capacity for mission growth and organizational culture building

ACTIONS:

- Create a job description and hire a Community Engagement Manager charged with enhancing the depth and quantity of relationships with community partners, as well as ensuring that the museum's focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility is reflected in the entirety of the museum experience
- Maintain a targeted plan consisting of one professional development opportunity per team member per fiscal year
- Create a position and/or redefine job descriptions to ensure that responsibility for earned income opportunities, after-hours events, and programmatic evaluation/audience research fall under someone's clear purview

Objectives for

Operational Excellence

2

OBJECTIVE #2:

Ensure that guildHMA remains a vibrant and diverse engine of energy and volunteer support in all areas of the museum by growing the participation to 75 members

ACTIONS:

- Host meet and greet/recruitment events for new volunteers
- Continue the practice of an annual volunteer brunch and rewarding key contributors
- Examine planning for events, programs, and day to day operations seeking opportunities to utilize more volunteers

Operational Excellence

3

OBJECTIVE #3:

Continue crafting alignment between the Board/Board Committee Structure and HMA's key strategic initiatives

ACTIONS:

- Ensure that HMA's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility is reflected on the Nominations and Governance Committee and portfolio of institutional documents
- Continue the review and revision of institutional documents, including the Personnel, Conflict of Interest, and General Privacy Policies
- Integrate review of the Audience Engagement Dashboard into the agenda and brainstorming for each Audience Engagement Committee meeting
- Initiate the discipline of reviewing strategic plan action item progress at every Full Board Meeting
- Continue to monitor and report board engagement metrics. Ensure that all board members are members of the institution and strongly encourage each board member to make an annual fund contribution

Operational Excellence

4

OBJECTIVE #4:

Undertake analysis of HMA's physical plant, human resources, and infrastructure to ensure that the museum is positioned for sustainable innovation

ACTIONS:

- Review Job Descriptions and day to day operational norms to ensure coverage by a team member for every FY 2021-2025 strategic plan action item
- Conduct a comprehensive benefits and compensation review to create alignment with industry and cost of living standards, as well as a cost model and timeline for achievement of a new structure
- Contract an engineering or architecture firm to evaluate the museum's Catering Kitchen, Education Classrooms, and technology resources to proactively identify the obsolescence horizon, as well as potential for updates in these areas

Financial Model

FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS

FY 2020-2021

Source	Annual Fund	Contributions Gen	Exhibitions	Arts Councils/ Operating support	Total
Individual	\$97,842.65	\$4,040.70	\$17,000.00		\$118,883.35
Grant/Foundation	\$72,000.00	\$43,832.57	\$23,500.00	\$42,207.80	\$181,540.37
Corporate	\$7,092.00	\$15,842.00	\$28,000.00		\$50,934.00
Memorial/Misc		Included above			\$-
Government			\$11,000.00	\$30,573.00	\$41,573.00
	\$176,934.65	\$63,715.27	\$79,500	\$72,780.80	\$392,930.72

FY 2021-2022

Source	Annual Fund	Contributions Gen	Exhibitions	Arts Councils/ Operating support	Total
Individual	\$103,200.00	\$4,000.00	\$30,000.00		\$137,200.00
Grant/Foundation	\$127,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$37,000.00	\$44,000.00	\$219,000.00
Corporate	\$45,500.00	\$3,500.00	\$21,000.00		\$70,000.00
Memorial/Misc		Included above			\$-
Government			\$-	\$-	\$-
	\$275,700	\$18,500	\$88,000	\$44,000	\$426,200

FY 2022-2023

Source	Annual Fund	Contributions Gen	Exhibitions	Arts Councils/ Operating support	Total
Individual	\$105,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$30,000.00		\$139,000.00
Grant/Foundation	\$127,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$37,000.00	\$44,000.00	\$219,000.00
Corporate	\$47,500.00	\$4,000.00	\$25,000.00		\$76,500.00
Memorial/Misc		Included above			\$-
Government			\$-	\$-	\$-
	\$279,500	\$19,000	92,000	\$44,000	\$434,500

FY 2023-2024

Source	Annual Fund	Contributions Gen	Exhibitions	Arts Councils/ Operating support	Total
Individual	\$106,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$30,000.00		\$140,000.00
Grant/Foundation	\$127,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$37,000.00	\$44,000.00	\$219,000.00
Corporate	\$50,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$25,000.00		\$80,000.00
Memorial/Misc		Included above			\$-
Government			\$-	\$-	\$-
	\$283,000	\$20,000	\$92,000	\$44,000	\$439,000

15 MINUTES OF FAME

Acknowledgements:

The Board and Staff of Hickory Museum of Art would like to express our appreciation of Doug Hartjes, President of COR Consulting, for his expert guidance throughout the crafting of these materials. Doug's commitment to providing our museum with a meaningful set of tools to drive innovation and growth is observable not only in these documents, but also in the countless hours he contributed to getting the job done. Doug is an insightful, gifted, and empathetic leader, who walks his talk in everything that he takes on. We would like to recognize our Board's Strategic Planning Chair, Brian Hargreaves, whose expertise in project management, revenue modeling, and organizational effectiveness is observable in the timely delivery of an exemplary product. We also give enormous thanks to our Strategic Plan Taskforce for their deep dive into the current state and spectrum of possibilities for the future of HMA, as well as the connections they fostered with internal and external stakeholders. Last, but certainly not least, we would like to share our gratitude for our members and audiences, whose enthusiasm and love for the museum inspires us to strive for new heights.



HICKORY
MUSEUM
OF ART

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