Ackland Art Museum Strategic Plan
2013-2018

Preamble

At the Ackland, as with any mature organization, comprehensive planning does not have a finite beginning and end. The completion of a strategic plan and the generation of a new plan is a process of continuity, renewal, and discovery. Few of our goals and objectives can be ticked off as "completed" as each invariably leads to a new set of questions, challenges, and aspirations. Our responsibility is to focus on our clear institutional priorities, remain nimble enough to respond to unanticipated opportunities that may arise, and diligent in our stewardship of all that we do. With this understanding, we offer the following strategic plan for 2013-2018.

Vision:

The Ackland Art Museum will be recognized for innovation and imagination in all that we do as an exemplary public university art museum.

Mission:

The Ackland Art Museum collects, preserves, and presents great art to educate, inspire, and engage the university and its regional, national, and international audiences in free and open inquiry.

Guiding Principles:

- Art is essential.
- We use imagination and discovery to activate works of art.
- Our collection is the touchstone for all our endeavors.
- We are an integral part of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, sharing Carolina's core academic mission.
- We collaborate with colleagues within and outside the Museum and the University.
- We seek to understand and meet the needs of our varied audiences.
- We are responsible stewards of our resources and adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards, believing in particular that accuracy is essential to our authority.

Strategic Direction 2013 – 2018

Our guiding focus for the coming five years is to expand and enhance discovery in all that we do. Our collection is our strong base and platform for exploration and inquiry.

The possibilities and promise of making discoveries about and through art inform our strategic goals.

We are committed to discovering new audiences, new sources of financial support, and new approaches to the stewardship of all the resources entrusted to our care.

Six Strategic Goals to Expand and Enhance Discovery

GOAL 1: Our Commitment to Art

We will discover new aesthetic experiences through encounters with works of art; we discover new knowledge through research and scholarship; and we discover aspects of ourselves and our world through the powerful introspection, curiosity, and insight stimulated by significant art.

Our commitment to discovery includes the continuing obligation to not only facilitate and deepen encounters between our visitors and works that may be familiar to them, but also to add unfamiliar works to the collection, especially works of contemporary art.

Moreover, we recognize that installations and re-installations of the permanent collection offer prime opportunities not only for improving the accuracy and depth of curatorial information on the objects displayed, but also for sparking new insight through new, sometimes unexpected juxtapositions.

Equally, special exhibitions and their associated multifaceted programs and specialist publications can be occasions and conduits for nurturing visual curiosity, generating new scholarship, and deepening self-awareness.

Finally, we are dedicated to promoting discovery through high-quality research, both by facilitating and catalyzing the scholarly and interpretive work of others (faculty, students, other scholars), as well as by generating important new knowledge using our own staff and resources.

Our objectives in this area include:

1. Building our expertise in contemporary and Asian art through staffing, consultants, and associated resources;
2. Providing the optimum care of the collection and solidifying our regional leadership in works-on-paper conservation through building the staff and associated resources of the conservation program;
3. Broadening our reach to the widest possible audience, locally and internationally, through travelling exhibitions, loan of objects, widespread publication in all its forms (print and electronic), and exemplary online access;
4. Building and refining the permanent collection through strategic acquisitions and conscientious deaccessioning
5. Expanding and nurturing the base of potential contributors of works of art;
6. Organizing and presenting a dynamic program of exhibitions with related interpretation and programs.

GOAL 2: Our Commitment to Teaching and Learning

We will work during the next five years to maintain and build on our successful academic initiatives, to expand our reach in the University and its related communities, and to reinforce public perception of the integral role we play in the university's teaching and learning mission.

Our commitment to teaching and learning extends beyond structured programs, classes, and tours, to include individual discovery of our collections and exhibitions.

Our objectives in this area include:

1. Ensuring the high quality of our academic programs for college and university students and faculty, for K-12 students and teachers, and for community organizations;
2. Developing new and more varied educational offerings for all these audiences in concert with the Ackland's growing collection and new research about it;
3. Coordinating our educational programs with both established and emerging best practices in teaching and learning;
4. Expanding the Ackland's service to the University to reach every student, every year, through formal and informal curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities, social, and cultural programs;
5. Raising the Ackland's profile among the broadest possible section of the University community, including administrators, faculty, students, staff, alumni, and among our national and international peers;
6. Interpreting our exhibitions and collections for individual visitors utilizing a range of informal learning strategies.

GOAL 3: Our Commitment to Engaged and Motivated Leadership, Staff, and Volunteers

In order for the Ackland to continue to attract the most qualified and engaged board members, staff, and volunteers, we will facilitate processes that will build toward even greater engagement, empowerment, and active partnership in achieving our strategic goals.

Our objectives in this area include:

1. Providing stewardship to ensure the expertise, passion, range of perspectives, and support of our three official boards: the National Advisory Board, the Academic Advisory Committee, and the Student Friends of the Ackland;
2. Developing a local advisory council to address the needs of the local community;
3. Strengthening committees and volunteer programs, i.e., the K-12 Advisory Committee and the Docents;

4. Establishing and implementing strategies that create an environment of commitment, trust, and opportunity for all of our volunteers;
5. Improving and streamlining inter- and intra-departmental processes and communication;
6. Providing appropriate tools, training, and professional development for staff and creating an environment that will encourage and support innovation and creativity in achieving individual and departmental work plans.

GOAL 4: Our Commitment to Financial Stability

The Ackland recognizes that the University shall continue to be our first audience and our single largest investor. Yet, in order to attain our goals and to ensure our ability to plan exhibitions, publications, and other major initiatives several years in advance, we must build on our record of successful fundraising and create new strategies to increase support for the general operating budget and endowment. This goal aligns with the University's major development campaign, slated to begin in 2014 and continue for 7-8 years.

Our objectives in this area include:

1. Achieving our goals within the University's development campaign, working closely with the Office of University Advancement to forge partnerships with the major schools and units to coordinate our role in the campus-wide campaign and develop partnerships to maximize results;
2. Maintaining balanced annual budgets;
3. Increasing the general endowment;
4. Expanding our individual support and developing a program of major gifts;
5. Increasing grant support from local, national, and international foundations and granting agencies;
6. Building sponsorship opportunities for individuals, businesses, and corporations;
7. Creating a program of planned giving;
8. Enhancing and expanding revenue generating opportunities.

GOAL 5: Our Commitment to Technology for Access and Efficiency

Building on the successful completion of the collection digitization, the Museum is committed to enhancing access to the collection, exhibitions, and programs through a strategic investment in technology. This will include user-friendly access across multiple platforms and devices. Our commitment will require deep consultation with experts in the field (both on and off campus)

to bring the Ackland into the technology 2.0 age with innovation, interactivity, and engagement as key to our success.

In addition, the Museum is committed to implementing best practices internally, in order to address with the highest level of efficiency all aspects of our other goals. This commitment will enable the Ackland to expand knowledge in the galleries and beyond the walls of the Museum. It will ultimately make our collections, exhibitions, and research immediately accessible to audiences worldwide.

Our objectives in this area include:

1. Reviewing our current technology uses, needs, and training requirements, including a critical evaluation of the financial investments needed for a comprehensive modernization of current infrastructure – from desktops to digital media;
2. Integrating social media and web-presence into a multiyear strategic communications plan, including long-term and special exhibition marketing and branding initiatives;
3. Aligning our traditional and social media to reach strategic goals and target audiences (students, staff, faculty, and general audiences);
4. Designing and implementing a multiyear initiative to archive the collection and curatorial files, presentations, research, and other data for online and in-gallery dissemination and use;
5. Reimagining and redesigning ackland.org to create a vibrant and user-friendly interface for information, research, collection access, online giving, and 2.0 activity.

GOAL 6: Our Commitment to Facilities that Foster Discovery

To enable the expansion of the collection, exhibitions, and programs, and the increased demand by our university constituency and the community, the Ackland must secure additional gallery, teaching, program, and support space. Our exterior space needs improvements from updating the landscaping to making it usable for programs, events, and installation of art. The quality of public spaces — interior and exterior — is essential to the visitor experience and to our competitive position with respect to museums in our region and beyond. While current thinking, driven by the existing funding environment, causes us to focus primarily on creative uses and improvements to our existing building, we remain alert to, and will pursue possibilities for acquiring significant additional space.

Our objectives in this area include:

1. Updating and prioritizing our physical plant and projected space needs in cooperation with our campus architects;

2. Creatively utilizing our building and surrounding exterior spaces for additional gallery and other programmatic needs;
3. Developing a plan for re-landscaping the exterior grounds;
4. Exploring options for off-site and expanded space;
5. Developing a prioritized facilities plan and budget.

Conclusion

We will accomplish our 2013–2018 Strategic Goals through a combination of discovery, creativity, and focused work, informed by our stewardship of the many resources that we hold in trust. We have the duty to: care for our permanent collection through conservation, documentation, research, and access; present thoughtful and engaging exhibitions; responsibly use the financial resources provided to us; and communicate the fulfillment of our mission to key stakeholders. Our mission to "educate, inspire, and engage" applies to all – students and faculty, gallery visitors, members and donors, and even to our staff, all of whom make our work possible.