

MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2020

INTRODUCTION

The decade of 2003-2013 has seen significant growth and numerous successes at the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA). We began this decade by celebrating the centennial of The Art Study Club, the organization from which the MMA was founded; and we closed the decade in a new facility with a new Art Garden that expanded our footprint and demonstrated our commitment to growth in downtown Jackson. Two successful capital campaigns—one for \$15 million to renovate our current facility, and another for \$5 million to build The Art Garden—were accompanied by 185% growth in our endowments and the implementation of a capitalization plan that builds a sustainable financial model.

An aggressive programming schedule contributed to quadrupling our audience (from 40,000 visitors per year to 160,000 per year in FY2013). The MMA's number and quality of programs and community partnerships brought national recognition to the Museum in the form of a 2010 National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and several state awards, including a Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. And not only did our activity in Jackson multiply; we increased from 14 to 30 the number of organizations throughout the state that are formally affiliated with the Museum, and we share, with the affiliates, free-of-charge, 12-16 museum-quality exhibitions annually.

“A community without art is a very poor community...the fine arts are the one place that the beauty-starved citizen is able to rejuvenate his soul with works of the artistic imagination.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

“I think it is important for the public to be able to learn about the talent in our great state as well as seeing art from around the world.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

PLANNING PROCESS

Such growth cannot continue unchecked without thoughtful evaluation; the development of systems that nurture the staff and visitors; and a periodic study of our environment to determine responsible means for sustaining the institution and for living within the greater cultural community. In the two years since we opened The Art Garden in October, 2011, the MMA board and staff have undergone just such a disciplined evaluation and planning process.

RESEARCH AND DATA GATHERING

We have

■ **Commissioned a Demographic Analysis of Mississippi, and an analysis of current MMA participation.** Reach Advisors, a national consulting firm specializing in projecting demographic trends of the future, evaluated our current audience base, and compared it to projections for Mississippi’s projected demographics in 20 years. We then worked to determine how we can best meet our communities at those places with meaningful art programs.

■ **Participated in the EmcArts/American Alliance of Museums’ 2012 Innovation Lab for Museums,** in which we wrestled with the changing behaviors of American consumers and the outdated business models operated by museums, especially the museum membership program. In that lab, we developed a participation prototype to help us overhaul our membership structure.

■ **Commissioned Reach Advisors to produce quantitative and qualitative research to determine how people perceive the Museum, how they spend their valuable leisure time and money, and what methods would engage them more deeply and for longer periods of time with art at the Museum.** Research methodologies included the following:

- *In-depth interviews with 20 community leaders* to learn their observations about the community’s value placed on art, the Museum’s effectiveness in meeting local needs, and their personal recommendations for the Museum’s future.
- *Jackson area leisure-time survey* sent to local households to determine how individuals and families in the metro area choose to spend their leisure time. Participants were selected from mailing lists gathered from 13 organizations in the area that communicate with MMA targeted audiences of African-American communities, young professionals, and families. More than 1300 surveys were completed, codified, and analyzed.

- *Southeastern art-museum survey* distributed to lists of 12 regional museums (including 5 from Mississippi) to gather data about interests and habits of people inclined to visit art museums. More than 1800 responses were gathered, codified, and analyzed.
- *An on-line 7-week qualitative survey* in which 79 participants answered probing questions about their potential for becoming regular Museum visitors.
- *In addition*, Reach Advisers used data from its work with national clients in the museum field that offered comparable data and national benchmarks for the Mississippi work.

■ **Commissioned specific analytical reports from Reach Advisers**, which applied the learning from its research to specific areas of inquiry that surfaced during the strategic planning process.

■ **Analyzed metrics of MMA performance benchmarked against other comparable museums.** This study, presented to the staff and board, considered simple figures such as attendance, budget size, staffing, and percentage of earned vs. contributed revenue. Yet it also considered meaningful ratios that indicate efficiency and productivity, such as attendance per square foot, cost of operations per visitor, salaries paid per visitor and square foot, etc.

■ **Prepared specific internal reports for the staff and board** that

- Analyzed the *state of our permanent collection*;
- Evaluated our *Statewide Affiliate Network* program;
- Analyzed *opportunities arising from neighboring development projects*, such as a new boutique hotel to the west and improvements to Thalia Mara Hall to the north;
- Reviewed *budgeting practices and priorities*, as well as the overall fiscal health of the organization, and
- Prepared a report on the *impact of the building and garden capital projects* on MMA fund development and financial assets, operating liabilities, attendance, budget, and community/downtown development.

■ **Reported to the staff and board on trends affecting museums nationally**, including

- The *market value of art*, and the impact on museums' capacity to compete in the marketplace for the purchase of art;
- The *explosion of museum building growth* and the implications for sustainability;
- The *trend of philanthropists* to shift dollars from cultural organizations to international health-related causes;
- *Consumers' desires to have experiences delivered to them virtually*, on demand;
- The *rise of gaming* as means of social interaction and engagement; and
- The *interest of museum visitors to co-curate their own experiences* instead of accepting the authority of curators and institutions.

“I would like to see more exhibits reflecting the diversity in this community.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

“MMA is a strategic partner in promoting and preserving Mississippi’s culture and community. The Museum does an excellent job of informally and formally hosting our citizenry and tourists, while demonstrating that art is a basic part of our everyday lives.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

BOARD AND STAFF DELIBERATIONS

Absorbing and responding to the volume of information outlined above required intensive hours of thinking and talking with colleagues about the implications for the Mississippi Museum of Art. To that end, the MMA staff held three planning retreats:

- In the Spring of 2013 in the classroom at the Jackson Zoo, the staff developed lines of inquiry for further exploration and critical issues facing the MMA;
- In August, 2013, the staff wrestled with the big questions outlined below, and began brainstorming some pathways forward; and
- In October, 2013, the staff met for a day following the board retreat to reflect on the board’s deliberations and ideas and to begin to formulate an action plan.

The board’s involvement was multi-layered and was intensive for 18 months. Blake Wilson, MMA trustee and CEO of the Mississippi Economic Council agreed to chair the strategic planning committee. Blake had just completed Blueprint Mississippi, a comprehensive economic development plan for the state, and brought to our project expertise in data gathering, research methodologies, public polling, and the distillation of vast amounts of information into a compelling plan of action. He led the MMA’s strategic planning committee through a series of meetings during which trustees listened to reports, discussed their implications, and developed strategies for engaging their fellow trustees in thoughtful deliberations.

Four areas of investigation arose from the research and data-gathering stage, and the board of trustees was divided into four groups, each of which explored one issue in depth. All trustees discussed all issues in a two-day retreat in Oxford, Miss., in October, 2013.

**ISSUE: CREATE A
21ST CENTURY
BUSINESS PLAN FOR
THE MUSEUM.**

As museums experience increasingly complex financial structures, we are also becoming more mindful of the ways our budgets and balance sheets reflect our values as institutions and our relationships with our communities. In addition, our members and visitors are spending their resources in ways vastly different than the behaviors that dictated the creation of our current membership and donor cultivation structures. How does the Mississippi Museum of Art create a financial structure and business plan that is responsive to our increasing maturity as an organization, and to the changing needs of consumers and supporters?

**ISSUE: WHAT IS
THE 21ST CENTURY
APPROACH TO
COLLECTING AND
SHARING ART?**

Museums are distinctive because of the value placed on collecting original artifacts, in the case of art museums, of artworks. We know from research that visitors place primary importance on engaging with original works of art. We also know that the current art market makes the purchase of artworks by non-profit museums virtually impossible. How, then, do we approach collecting and sharing art with our community in the 21st century?

**ISSUE: HOW DOES
THE MUSEUM DEEPLY
ENGAGE WITH ITS
COMMUNITY, EVEN
SETTING THE STAGE
FOR SHARED SHAPING
OF THE AGENDA?**

The Mississippi Museum of Art is located in a diverse city beset with divisive politics and social issues, and—at the same time—full of promise as it revitalizes its downtown and realizes the potential creative capital of areas such as Midtown. The Museum also defines the entire state as part of its community, as well as an increasingly active virtual community made real through social media. How does the Mississippi Museum of Art deeply engage these communities in its work and remain vitally relevant to the members of our communities?

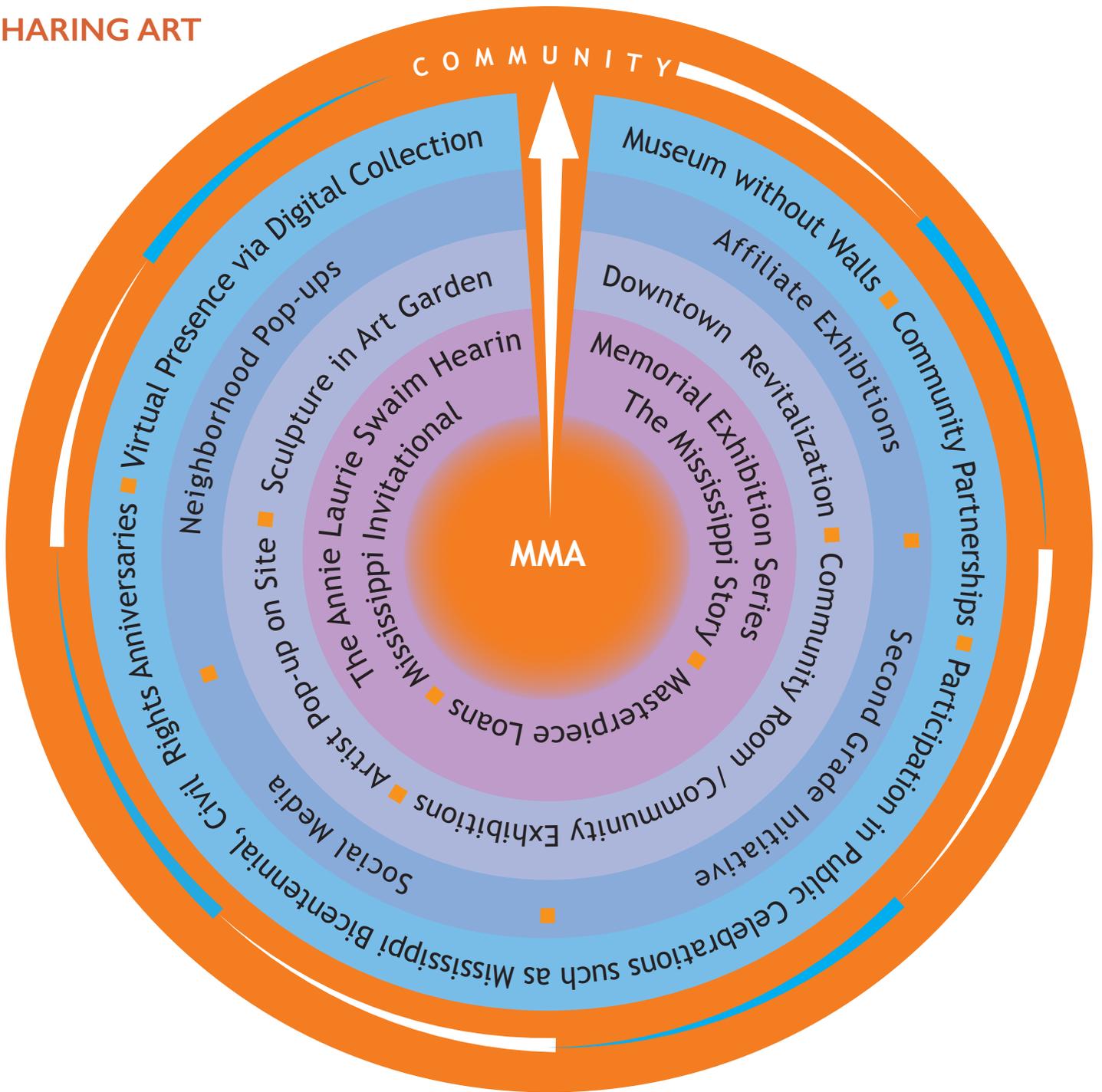
**ISSUE: WHAT IS
THE ROLE OF THE
MUSEUM BUILDING?**

A recent study, *Set in Stone*, articulates the huge building boom by museums and cultural organizations in the last 25 years. The Mississippi Museum of Art has participated in that boom. At the same time, people also expect to have experiences delivered to them virtually in their own homes and are inconvenienced by having to travel to a building, and pay for an experience with art. How do we manage a facility that is conducive to meaningful experiences with art in a way that is financially sustainable and is as beautiful as the nature of our mission requires? And how do we transcend the boundaries of our building to respond to needs of those who cannot or will not travel to our site?

Thirty-three board members devoted two full days to the discussion of these topics. The conversations were substantive and engaging and resulted in several significant gifts from the board members immediately following the retreat to help initiate work implementing the plan.

The following plan is the result of those deliberations, exhaustive research, and ongoing community conversations.

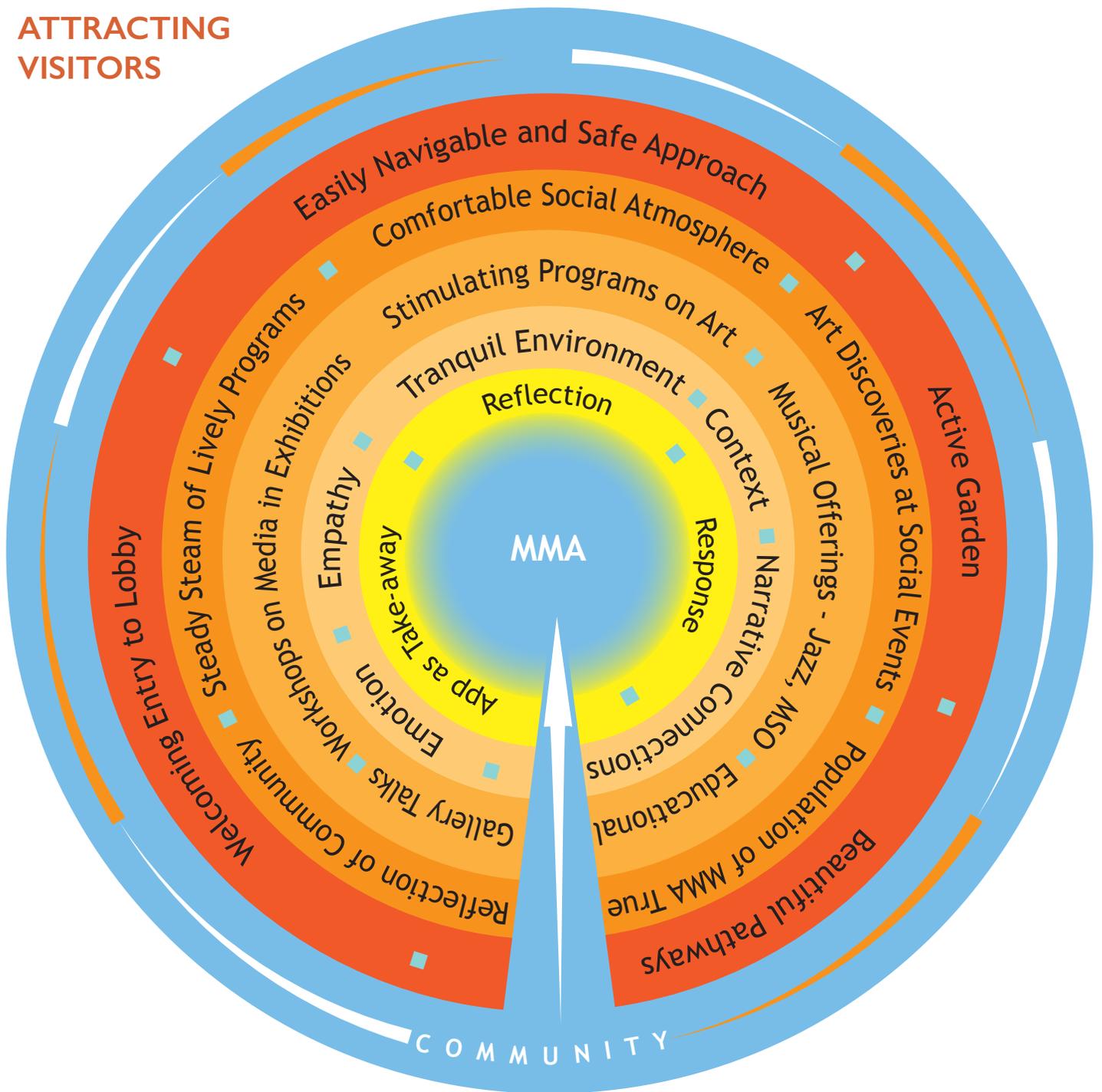
SHARING ART



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

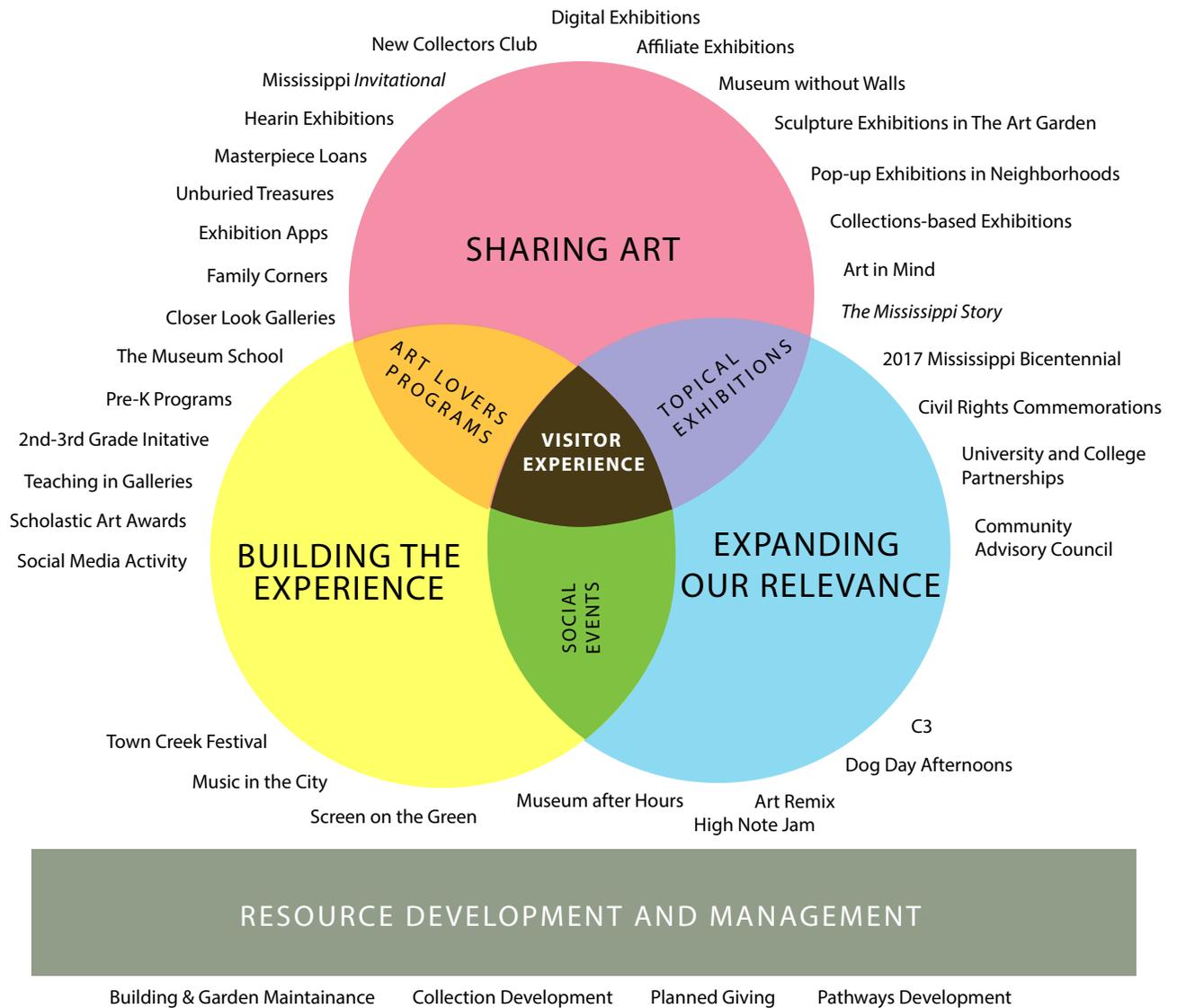
The following strategic plan focuses our work in four areas: broadly sharing art; deepening the experience of our visitors; expanding the relevance of the Museum to our communities; and building financial and operational systems that reflect our values. As you can see from these diagrams, this plan is about a dynamic relationship between the Museum and its communities, with art as the instigating force. The Museum will share art broadly, constantly pushing our resources from within the art vault to all corners of the community. Conversely, the Museum will work to attract people from all parts of the community into an ever deeper and more meaningful relationship with art and with the Museum.

ATTRACTING VISITORS



The board has agreed to these priorities. Now the staff must organize itself to develop and execute a plan of work so that we can meet the targets set by the board. In order to develop that work plan, the staff will work in teams dictated by these priorities. As the visitor is central to our work, the Visitor Services Director will serve on all teams except resource development, which undergirds the work of the MMA. All teams include people from multiple MMA departments, so that our work is collaborative, yet purposeful.

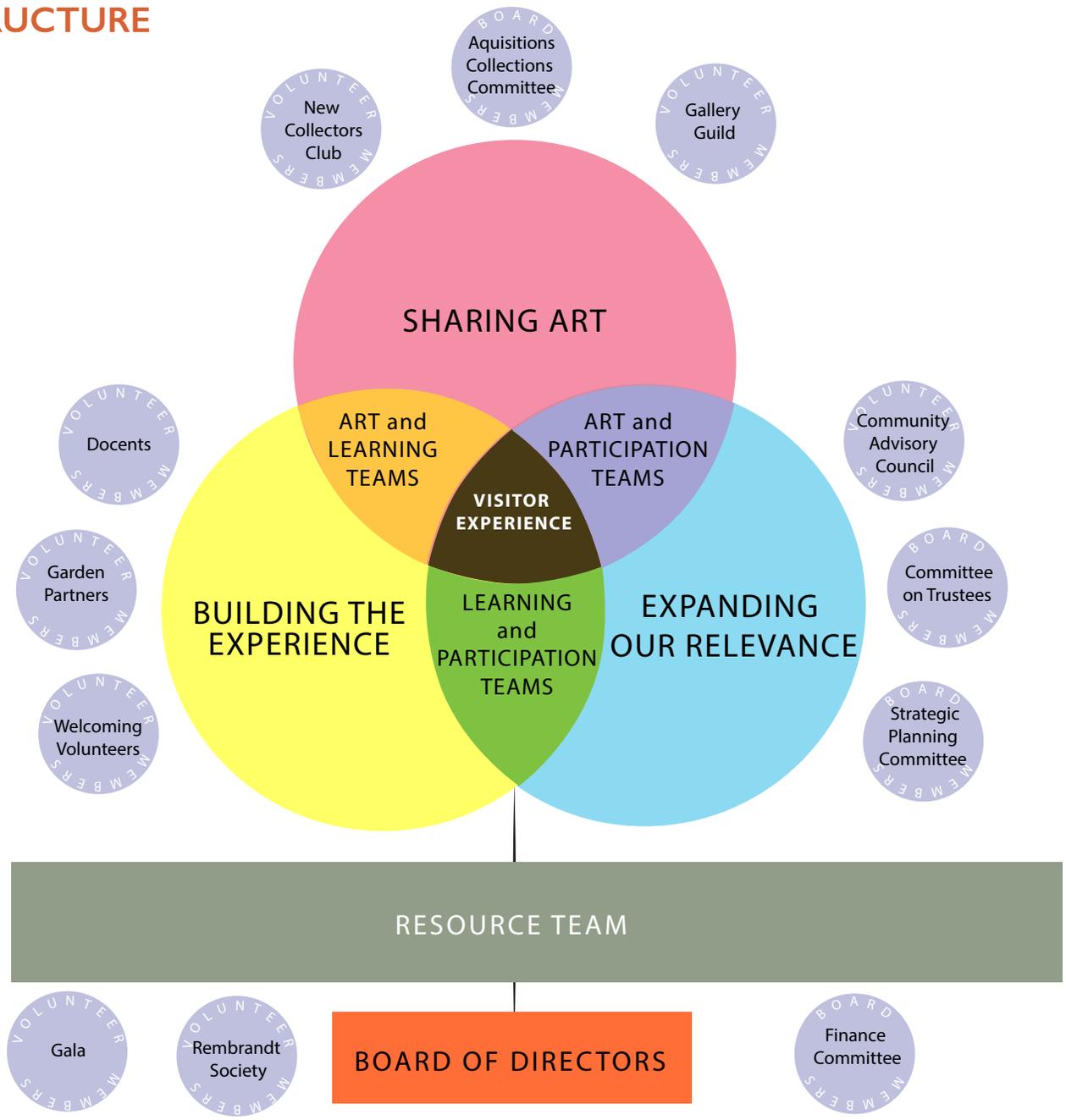
PROGRAMS



“I love our art museum and many in our community believe it enhances the “product” our city has to offer. Not only are there great exhibits, but events that are culturally enriching—films on the lawn, art festivals, “dog days” in the garden. There are many facets to the museum, not just looking at art on the walls. I think many people in community appreciate that. Having all of those things makes it more appealing not only to locals, but to visitors, which helps to enrich our city.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

MMA STAFFING STRUCTURE



LEARNING TEAM

- Director of Education
- Curator of the Collection
- Curatorial Associate
- Chief Curator/Deputy Director
- Director of School Programs
- Director of Family Programs
- Museum School Coordinator
- Director of Marketing and Development
- Membership Director
- Director of New Media

Visitor Services Director
Director

PARTICIPATION TEAM

- Director of Marketing and Development
- Director of New Media
- Membership Director
- Designer
- Director of Operations
- Director of Events
- The Museum Store Manager
- Executive Chef
- Museum School Coordinator
- Director of Family Programs
- Chief of Security
- Receptionist
- Visitor Services Director
- Director

ART TEAM

- Chief Curator/Deputy Director
- Curator of the Collection
- Curatorial Associate
- Registrar
- Preparators
- Director of Education
- Director of School Programs
- Director of Family Programs
- Museum School Coordinator
- Director of Operations
- Marketing Director

Visitor Services Director
Director

RESOURCE TEAM

- Director of Finance and Administration
- Director of Marketing and Development
- Office Manager
- Director of Operations
- Membership Director
- Museum Store Manager
- Director of Events
- Executive Chef
- Chief of Security
- Communications Director

Director

Mission: To engage Mississippians with visual art.

“I always feel more alive after a visit to the museum, more open to possibilities.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

The Mississippi Museum of Art transforms us personally and strengthens our communities by broadly sharing art and offering meaningful cultural experiences.

VALUES:

- Providing opportunities for individualized experiences with art.
- Stimulating creativity throughout our communities.
- Establishing a culture of innovation in Museum operations.
- Placing primary value on arts experiences that stem directly from objects in our collection and exhibitions.
- Creating an MMA audience that reflects our communities and changes as our communities change in demographics.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Broadly Sharing Art
- Deepening Relationships with MMA Visitors and Our Communities
- Building a Mission-based Balance Sheet

FOUR GOALS:

- Share art with all Mississippians and visitors to our state.
- Attract visitors to the Museum from all parts of our communities, and create meaningful opportunities for engaging with art.
- Expand the relevance of the MMA to its communities.
- Ensure that its institutional values shape the MMA’s business plan, sustainability strategies, and collection development.

Strategic Priority: BROADLY SHARING ART

Goal One

Share art with all Mississippians and visitors to our state.

1) Transcend the physical boundaries of the MMA facility by sharing art in neighborhoods, across the state, virtually, and in public celebrations of significance to Mississippi's people.

Art museums are place-based institutions, and depend upon an environment that allows for people to see original artifacts under conditions that safeguard the art. The MMA has worked diligently to create a physical space that offers optimal art experiences for the public. However, in order to attract people who don't know about the MMA, and to reach those unable to visit it, we must not be limited by the space where our art is stored. Thus, the MMA will work to reach people beyond our walls with art, and to gain strength from people and art in communities that can improve the work of the MMA with their creativity and social capital. This work will be done in recognition that place does matter for art museums, but that the museum building itself is not the only place where people and art come together.

■ Launch **Museum without Walls**. Install images of artwork from *The Mississippi Story* (and selected icons from other parts of the collection) in key locations throughout Jackson and its suburbs. Extend value of exposure by displaying a QR code that offers more information on the Museum and the artwork.

■ Seize opportunities to insert art exhibitions into **public celebrations** or events of community importance. Continue to focus on civil rights anniversaries, and mount a major cultural exhibition related to the 2017 celebration of Mississippi's Bicentennial.

■ Curate and present **two pop-up exhibitions annually** in Jackson city wards that have low participation in Museum activities.

■ Continue 10-15 **affiliate exhibitions** per year, and add interactive/reflective components, as well as digital access to further information on artists represented.

■ Activate MMA **website** to engage audiences with artworks. Aggressively install **digitized images** of the collection to be accessed by the general public as well as by museum and art history fields.

Timeline:

- Digitization of collection must occur before any new initiatives can go live. Digitized images are critical to the Museum without Walls program, affiliate exhibition enhanced applications, a more active web site, and pop-up exhibitions' social media campaigns.
- Collection digitized by June 30, 2015.
- Miss. Bicentennial: planning immediately. Events/exhibition November-December, 2017.

FY2015:

- Field work and planning for pop-up exhibitions.
- Site visits and review of all affiliates.
- First annual meeting of affiliates in Jackson.
- Development of content for interactive and reflective spaces in travelling exhibitions.
- Develop digital companion platforms.

FY2016:

- Launch new website with digitized collection and accompanying in-depth information about collection.
- Launch digital companion platforms to accompany affiliate exhibitions.
- Begin semi-annual pop-up exhibitions.
- Museum without Walls images displayed in community.

Budget Implications:

- Seek funding for Bicentennial project during 2014. Have funding secured by April, 2015.
- Use digitization grants for Museum without Walls and web site retooling.
- Develop sponsorship and grant proposals for pop-ups during FY2015.
- Slight increase in travel budget to insure more personal relationships with affiliates.

Capital Investments:

- Large scale printer for banners (FY2016).
- Electronic tablets to accompany exhibitions to affiliates (FY2016).

Staffing Implications:

- Art, Learning, and Participation Teams share leadership.
- Will need to hire Bicentennial project manager July 1, 2015. This will be a 30-36 month position.

Indicators of success:

- Measureable increase in recognizability of images from MMA collection.
- Increase in intentional visits to MMA in search of particular objects.
- Increased discussion of MMA objects on social media.

- Miss. visual artists are central to the celebration of the Miss. Bicentennial.
- Visitors to cultural component of Miss. Bicentennial add demonstrated positive impact to the local economy.
- Demonstrated rise in use of MMA web-site, specifically pages associated with collection.
- Increase in requests for catalogs and other printed materials as a result of learning about artwork from web site and Museum without Walls project.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Deepen relationships in Jackson Public Schools (JPS) central office and with Miss. Department of Education (MDE) curriculum specialists.
- Meet with second- and third- grade teachers and principals at the school level, throughout JPS, private, and parochial schools, as well as home school group leaders.
- Design curriculum for tours. Articulate evaluation criteria and set up metrics for measurement. Determine appropriate partnerships with Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) Whole Schools Initiative and Parents for Public Schools' Ask 4 More Arts.
- Devise training program for gallery guides and second- and third- grade teachers.
- Recruit gallery teachers from graduate programs at area IHLs.

FY2016:

- Pilot program with limited number of Jackson schools.
- Make plans for expansion. Raise funds.

FY2017:

- Expand to cover all of Jackson elementary schools.

FY2018:

- Evaluate success and determine appropriate expansion to tri-county then other schools statewide.

2) Connect MMA to children and families.

- Launch initiative to offer focused education experience for **second- and third-grade students**.

Research indicates that the window of opportunity for making a deep impression on children in museums is that of ages 5-8. Not only is that the time of greatest elasticity for absorbing information, but it also shows up in research when people's memories are mined for deep impressions of early museum visits. Museum visits during that age have the greatest impact on a person's proclivity to a lifelong habit of attending and supporting museums. Interaction with authentic, original works of art is also critical to the quality of a museum educational experience. Thus, the MMA is uniquely positioned to use its galleries and collections as teaching tools for this age group in a focused manner. This new research, combined with our commitment to help ameliorate the gap in arts education faced by children in our school systems, results in the Mississippi Museum of Art's creation of an initiative to provide meaningful, personal experiences with art for second- and third-grade students. Some components of this work will include

- Teacher training of second- and third-grade classroom teachers and art teachers when available,
 - Custom-designed on-line teaching tools that adhere to state curriculum and stem from objects in MMA collection and exhibitions,
 - Two field trips to MMA per school year for each class,
 - Post-visit art-making and writing activities,
 - Tickets for each student to share with parents for visit to MMA,
 - Evaluation of impact on students and repeat visits outside of school to MMA,
 - Training of teaching artists, docents, and gallery staff on second- and third-grade core curriculum standards,
 - Art integration strategies using MMA permanent collection shared with second- and third-grade teachers, and
 - Analysis of available data and teacher feedback regarding current curriculum standards that could be enhanced by resources available from the MMA.
- **Improve in-gallery teaching** by employing gallery teachers recruited from graduate/honors programs at local colleges and universities.
 - Continue **exhibition-based teacher training** and **curriculum guides** based on exhibition content areas.
 - Continue to host **home school groups** for in-gallery and studio visits.
 - Continue highly popular "**Look 'n Learn with Hoot**" program for pre-K children and parents. Explore expansion of program to day-care centers and Head Start programs.

Budget Implications:

- None initially. During FY2015, we will develop budget for planning, pilot, evaluation, and expansion phases.

Staffing Implications:

- Learning Team. This will be managed by our director of education and coordinated closely with the visitor services coordinator. Gallery guides will be

graduate students or upper classmen from area colleges and universities, and will be trained by MMA staff.

Indicators of Success:

- Buy-in of initiative by Jackson Public Schools central office, elementary principals, and second-grade teachers.
- Steady growth in number of schools enrolling in program for five years.

- Teacher satisfaction with quality of in-gallery teaching, materials sent before field trips, and content of tours. Colleges and universities increase their level of commitment to providing students to teach in galleries.
- Schools from outside JPS request special second-grade tours.
- Funding is secured for continuation and expansion of program.

3) Develop exhibitions that engender personal connections to art, expand understanding of art from other places, and encourage continued excellence in art by Mississippians.

Surveys and other research indicated that MMA visitors understand and appreciate the Museum's dual approach to its exhibition schedule: to offer both in-depth examinations of art from and about our home state, and to bring to Mississippi art from around the world. Exhibition attendance continues to grow annually, rewarding the staff for the thoughtfulness and quality of its exhibition development. However, we are also eager to introduce new voices to the curatorial authority entrusted to us. Thus, we will continue our dual strategy of exhibition development at the same time that we integrate new voices and interpretive tools to the exhibition experience.

- Re-energize *The Mississippi Story* by
 - Increasing amount of contextual information in galleries;
 - Connecting art in galleries to other artists and artworks in the permanent collection;
 - Using Closer Look gallery for rotating exhibitions that
 - Connect to significant community milestones
 - Offer non-curatorial voices and perspectives on discrete thematic topics
 - Dig deeply into a particular "story," whether a community, artist/family, or part of daily life
 - Offer small solo exhibitions of ex-patriot artists
 - Staffing the exhibition with trained gallery guides who can lead interactive components and offer twice-weekly tours; and
 - Developing an app that connects works on display to others in collection; provides video from artists, community members, or relatives; gives in-depth artist information; and connects artworks to plants in The Art Garden and changing exhibitions.
- Articulate priorities for *The Annie Laurie Swaim Hearin Memorial Exhibition Series*, and evaluate the impact of each presentation on the community, economy, and progress toward MMA strategic goals.
- Onto Hearin exhibitions, graft a *Masterpiece Series* of small exhibitions featuring just one or a few works by one of art history's greatest names.
- Extend impact of the bi-annual *Mississippi Invitational* by offering programs that connect exhibited artists to visitors, social media audience, and emerging artists.
- Consider a *People's Choice* award to a *Mississippi Invitational* artist, in addition to the Hiatt fellowship award. Have public program that includes dialogue about the relationships between art selected by juror and Hiatt fellow judges and art loved by public.
- Continue collections-based exhibitions that include in-depth examinations of Mississippi artists following the success of *To Paint and Pray: The Art of William Hollingsworth* (2012). Planned exhibitions will feature the work of Jacksonian Marie Hull; Baldwin, Miss.,-native George Wardlaw; and Greenwood, Miss.,-native James Seawright.
- Explore the establishment of bi-annual *Art Garden sculpture exhibitions* displaying single-artist exhibitions of nationally-recognized artists.
- Continue to rotate works from the permanent collection into theme-based exhibitions in the Icons Gallery near the lobby of the MMA.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Produce next Hearin exhibition and *Mississippi Invitational*.
- Seawright exhibition during Welty Biennial.
- George Wardlaw exhibition.

FY2016:

- Secure funding for and plan inaugural outdoor sculpture exhibition.
- Marie Hull retrospective

FY2017:

- Inaugural outdoor sculpture exhibition.

Budget Implications:

- Use digitization grants (received in FY14) to develop app for *The Mississippi Story*.
- Secure funds for research fellow/field worker to identify visual artists and collectors in Mississippi and to research rotating exhibitions for *The Mississippi Story*.

Staffing Implications:

- Art and Learning Teams share responsibility.
- Augment curatorial staff with research interns and fellows for field work and exhibition development.
- Ensure team-based approach for visitor services coordinator, curators, and educators in training gallery guides to staff the exhibitions.

Indicators of Success:

- Increased interest by the public in the *Mississippi Invitational*, as demonstrated by exhibition attendance, social media activity, and participation in conversations staged about the art.
- Consistent growth in audiences for Hearin exhibitions, and increased impact by the exhibitions on the state's economic and cultural activity.
- Increase in pedestrian traffic to The Art Garden from outdoor sculpture installations. More outdoor sculpture added to the permanent collection.
- Positive feedback from exhibition visitors to gallery hosts and on social media regarding updates to *The Mississippi Story*.
- New artifacts and information presented to curators that strengthen the Mississippi art collection and intellectual resources about Mississippi's art history.
- Increase in quantity and diversity of artists submitting work to *The Mississippi Invitational* exhibitions.

Strategic Priority: DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MMA VISITORS AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Timeline:

FY2015:

- New visitor services coordinator has welcome desk in lobby staffed at all times.
- Lobby desk moved and signage installed to convey warmer welcome and more effective information.
- Gallery hosts recruited and trained.
- Informational kiosk installed in lobby.
- Continue Screen on the Green, Art after Hours, and Downtown Jazz series monthly.
- Continue Art Remix concerts.
- Launch Friends program.

FY2016:

- Evaluate and continue or refine programs, based on participant feedback.

Budget Implications:

- Use trustee gifts (received in 2013) for lobby reconfiguration and kiosk installation.
- Budget stipends for gallery hosts.

Staffing Implications:

- Participation Team.
- Visitor services coordinator trains gallery hosts in collaboration with curators and educators and marketing team.
- Marketing/visitor services team will be responsible for accurate and timely information distributed at front desk.
- Events staffing will continue as currently organized.

Indicators of Success:

- Number of event participants and first-time visitors who register for Friends program.
- Number of Friends who convert to membership.
- Feedback from visitors on surveys, registration forms, and tablets at lobby kiosk indicate a pleasant, friendly visit to the MMA.
- Social media activity sees demonstrated increase in number and frequency of posts, “likes,” and “re-tweets.”
- Diversity of participation, as indicated by zip codes on Friends forms, observation at events, and self-identifiers and comments by visitors, increases at Museum events.

Goal Two

Attract visitors to the Museum from all parts of our communities, and create meaningful opportunities for engaging with art.

In order for visitors to have a meaningful experience with art, they must first be comfortable and free of distractions or anxiety. Above all, they must feel that they belong in a space. The MMA has built a building and environment that are open and symbolize a welcoming experience for all visitors. The work, as we live in this space, is to make sure that the systems—from the people who greet visitors to the interpretive tools offered them—are designed to set the stage for people to have life-changing encounters with works of art.

1) Build a visitor experience that begins with social engagement.

When approaching the MMA and entering the building, visitors should see friendly, safe activity populated by a diverse audience in which they can imagine mixing comfortably. They should be able to discern easily where to go for various activities, have their physical needs met, and be warmly and personally greeted. Leisure-time habits of our visitors, not Museum staff preferences, should dictate Museum hours, event calendars, and access to amenities. Attract visitors to the Museum from all parts of our communities, and offer opportunities for engagement with art at many levels.

■ Orchestrate **approach and entrance** to Museum to optimize a visitor's sense of being warmly welcomed.

- **Redesign the lobby** to better orient visitors to possible activities and current schedule of events.
- Offer a **personal welcome** from a volunteer or staff member to each person entering the Museum. Staff the lobby and galleries with hosts who reflect the diversity of our community.
- **Display information** in lobby connecting the MMA to its neighborhood and community.
- Launch **free Friends program** which guarantees free admission to all permanent collection exhibitions and discount in The Museum Store in exchange for basic information such as email and mailing addresses.
- **Track participation preferences** of Friends and target email communications to them based on program preferences.
- Open exhibitions **after the work day** during busy times for popular exhibitions. Re-create the highly popular 50 x 50 weekend, during which visitors could enjoy the *Old Masters to Monet* exhibition 24 hours a day.

■ **Activate the Museum** physically and virtually.

- Invite targeted groups of affinity organizations to programs and exhibitions related to art that connects to missions of those organizations.
- Aggressively **create events calendar** to activate Museum space with families, young professionals, and creative workers. Include programs such as
 - outdoor events presenting film, popular music, etc.;
 - extended exhibition hours with social components;
 - family times in galleries with dads and children ages 6-8; and
 - rotating displays in community room of art created by emerging artists or other non-profits that use art to achieve their missions.

- Continue to activate [social media platforms](#) to engineer connections between people, the MMA and its exhibitions, and their personal creativity.
- Build a [broadly diverse participation mix](#) at programs so that all Mississippians feel welcomed and comfortable.
- Instill into each social event an opportunity for an “[art discovery](#).”

2) Stimulate intellectual development of visitors via public programs and multi-disciplinary links to exhibitions.

Regular Museum visitors must continue to learn and be enriched by repeated visits to the MMA. The MMA has become a place where people can expect to learn about different elements of exhibited art, as well as connections to other humanities disciplines that expand the relevance of the art. Therefore, the MMA will strive to be a center of learning for those eager to grow in their understanding of art and its place in our collective intellectual development. We are aiming for a growing group of people who are delighted by opportunities for lifelong learning at the MMA.

- Continue [monthly multi-disciplinary program](#) focusing on art of MMA collection.
- Recruit nationally recognized authorities on subjects presented in changing exhibitions.
- Present [performance by Mississippi Symphony Orchestra](#) (MSO) during each Hearin exhibition.
- Continue [ongoing presentations of classical and jazz music](#) in galleries.
- Create a [menu of lectures](#) and in-gallery talks for visitors based on themes, appealing to special-interest groups.
- Employ the “Visual Thinking” strategies in tours for all ages.
- [Develop videos](#) which introduce both *The Mississippi Story* and temporary exhibitions, with information on a few major artists and their works, which can be down-loaded for future study and reference; adapt for use as app (example: America and the Taste for Spanish Art).
- Develop videos which document the conservation of important artworks, whether in the collection or from a special exhibition.
- [Contextualize exhibitions](#) with maps and photographs of people, places, sites, and things.
- [Provide links to information](#) from other museums' websites and on-line catalogues about artworks by artists represented in *The Mississippi Story*, or in special exhibitions.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Continue Unburied Treasures, Jazz, and Music in the City programs.
- Recruit and train gallery teachers from local colleges and universities.

FY2016:

- In-gallery app for *The Mississippi Story* and changing exhibitions launches.

Budget Implications:

- Budget stipend for in-gallery teachers.

Staffing Implications:

- Art and Learning Teams share leadership.

Indicators of Success:

- By end of FY2015, a regular audience of 15-30 people attend weekend gallery talks.

- The relationships with colleges and universities expand to further collaborations beyond sharing interns and student teachers.
- Gallery teachers and their professors engage in research of objects in MMA permanent collection.
- Gallery teachers become involved in other MMA programs, and continue involvement beyond graduation.

- MSO concerts become institutionalized part of Hearin exhibition programming with audiences new to MSO and MMA. Increase in MMA Friends program and MSO ticket sales tied to these concerts.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Install *Spanish Sojourns* Hearin exhibition with intentional use of transformation principles.
- Insert narrative components in *The Mississippi Story*

3) Enable personal transformation of visitors by creating an exhibition environment that connects people personally to artworks, artists, or issues presented.

Visitors have experiences in art museum as varied as they are. While some want pleasure and relaxation, others seek stimulation and provocation. Some, as evidenced in feedback from our visitors, simply feel that their lives have been changed by a deeply moving encounter with a work of art. The MMA strives to set the stage for the highest quality experience, at all levels.

- Create exhibition space that employs the highest quality of visual design and results in a **tranquil atmosphere**.
- Begin the exhibition experience with **contextual information** that immerses visitors in the culture being presented.
- Develop an **exhibition narrative** that is compelling and relevant to typical MMA visitor, and pulls out major human issues at work in the art. Whenever possible, link national and international exhibitions to people, issues, places, or events familiar to Mississippians.
- Create spaces for visitors to **actively make connections** between art being presented and Mississippi, as well as personal histories. Install prompts that **engender empathy** for subjects of exhibitions.
- Insure **space for coached reflection** on artwork visitors have seen, and questions for curators. Include opportunity to take away reflections, and to share them with friends or the MMA staff.

Budget Implications:

- None

Staffing Implications:

- Art and Learning Teams share leadership

Indicators of Success:

- Visitors increase amount of time spent inside exhibition galleries.
- Increase of requests to find specific objects from MMA collection by visitors.
- Comments from visitors in galleries,

welcome desk, and social media indicate emotional connections with exhibitions.

- Increase in number of first-time visitors who return to MMA within a 12-month period.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- *Art by Choice* exhibition and sale.
- Continue New Collectors Club monthly gatherings.
- Continue Museum School classes for adults and families.

FY2016:

- Identify first private collection to be featured in an exhibition.

FY2017:

- Identify first private collection to be highlighted in new exhibition series.
- Mount first exhibition of a Mississippi private collection.

4) Cultivate personal commitment to collecting, sharing, and creating art among people in our communities.

Works of art are the catalysts that draw people together in art museums. Even though (and perhaps because) we live in a world populated with incessant images of virtual realities, people are increasingly drawn to things that are unique, original, and handmade. The MMA seeks to be the center of activity for those who want high-quality works of original art to be part of their personal lives, in their homes, offices, and public spaces. Many who love art seek to extend their relationship with it by building their own collections of art. And the more that our community is filled with educated and accomplished art collectors, the richer the MMA's possibilities for building its own collection. The volunteer-led New Collectors Club has steadily grown at the MMA since its early days ten years ago, and generates important interest in informed art collecting in Mississippi.

- Continue *Art by Choice* bi-annual exhibition of museum-quality works available for sale to the public.
- Continue *New Collectors Club* visits to artists' studios, galleries, and private collections, as well as annual art lovers excursions.
- Launch *exhibitions series* that highlights strong private collections of Mississippians.
- Create opportunities for art lovers to create art related to exhibitions on view through *Museum School* classes and workshops.

Budget Implications:

- Increase in *New Collectors Club* membership and *Art by Choice* sales should offset expenses related to *Mississippi Collects* exhibition.

Staffing Implications:

- Art and Participation Teams share

leadership. Membership and PR staff provide support for *New Collectors Club* and *Museum School*.

Indicators of Success:

- Increase and diversification in *New Collectors Club* membership and participation.

- Identification of previously unknown private collections of art held by Mississippians.
- Increase in requests for, and participation in, adult classes in *The Museum School*.

Goal Three

Expand Relevance of MMA to our communities.

1) Create a **Community Advisory Council (CAC)** that builds city-wide ownership of MMA, strengthens relationships that result in better advice and feedback to the MMA, and provides more effective and efficient distribution of information from the MMA to people in every neighborhood.

While the MMA has significantly increased the diversity of its staff, its board, its membership, and its visitors in the past five years, there continue to be pockets of the greater Jackson community that have no relationship with the Museum. Other art museums nationally have found community advisory councils to be helpful structures in developing relationships with parts of their communities they don't normally reach. In order to be as meaningful as it is symbolic, this council will require careful planning to establish a composition of people committed to its success as well as clear expectations of commitments from community members and the Museum. The agenda will be shared, not set only by the Museum. The MMA is committed to being intentional and strategic in the establishment of this organization, and to jointly shaping its agenda with representatives from the various communities within the tri-county area.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Planning Year.
- Identify and recruit Council members. Establish logistics and staffing. Have first meeting and establish goals, procedures, and norms.

FY2016:

- First full year of meetings.

Budget Implications:

- Invest resources in start-up support and hospitality for CAC, and also funds for CAC to initiate and develop its own programs that target specific populations. Offer free Museum memberships to Council members. Expect in-kind contributions of "guerilla" marketing and increase in earned revenue at MMA events to offset expenses in years 2016 and following.

Staffing Implications:

- Participation Team.

Indicators of Success:

- Membership of CAC reflects diversity of metro Jackson area.
- CAC members fully engage in establishment of CAC goals, policies, and programs.
- By year 3, MMA sees demonstrated increase in participation at MMA events from people in zip code areas previously under-represented.

- Free Friends program increases in targeted zip code areas.
- Social media activity expands with new voices and new networks of people.
- MMA staff invited to community gatherings in neighborhoods previously not active in MMA exhibitions and programs.
- New voices identified and employed in MMA programs and exhibitions.
- Participation in MMA programs demonstrates annual increase in diversity toward goal of audience becoming a true

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Develop corridor between MMA and Thalia Mara Hall into Art Garden extension leading to the new Westin Hotel on Court Street. (A proposal has been submitted to the NEA's Our Town program to support this project.)
- Seek grant funding to beautify Court Street side of MMA, links to Federal Courthouse, and walkway from back parking lot over Town Creek to MMA.
- Install kitchen garden.
- Secure funding for Art Food Truck, and open it in Spring, 2015.

FY2016:

- Actively market Art Food Truck to travel to local community festivals.

2) Strengthen ties to our downtown Jackson neighborhood.

The MMA celebrates its location in the heart of downtown Jackson. Seeking to contribute to the vibrancy of downtown and to be part of its revitalization strategies, the MMA actively partners with Downtown Jackson Partners, the Convention & Visitors Bureau, and our neighboring arts organizations to realize a safe, urban space that has a positive impact on our community. Survey respondents offered glowing comments about the "brilliance" of The Art Garden and its power to attract people to downtown Jackson. Indeed, in 2013, the developers of a new boutique hotel told the MMA that The Art Garden had been a significant factor in their choice of a location, and they are thus contributing a major financial gift to the MMA for us to visually link their property to The Art Garden. In addition, the enormously popular Mississippi Blues Marathon changed its race route to begin and end in The Art Garden. We will continue to provide links to downtown by upgrading our southern and western boundaries, as well as work with partners to maintain an active, festive atmosphere in our city's core.

- Develop **physical tentacles** of Museum to downtown that provide path ways to MMA with high placement of horticulture, good design, and art.
- Encourage other cultural organizations to use The Art Garden to increase frequency of activity for downtown residents.
- Explore installation of **Art Food Truck** on perimeter of Art Garden. Feature locally sourced food with seasonally changing street food.
- Install **kitchen garden** on MMA grounds to supply fresh herbs and food for The Palette Café, and Food Truck.
- Continue to produce the **Town Creek Arts Festival** annually on the first Saturday in October.

Budget Implications:

- Ensure adequate maintenance budget for areas with new landscaping and public art. Earned income in café sales increases as result of Food Truck and pedestrian walkways.

Staffing Implications:

- Participation Team

Indicators of Success:

- Increase in pedestrian traffic from different areas of downtown into Art Garden and MMA.
- Increase in daily population of Art Garden when no formal events are scheduled.
- Food Truck debut is successful and met with enthusiasm from community.
- Food Truck business is self-sustaining.
- Food Truck is invited to participate off-site in local festivals.
- Increase in earned income due to traffic populating café, Art Garden, and The Museum Store.
- Participation by artists and the public in the Town Creek Arts Festival grows annually.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Secure funding for Bicentennial planning and development.
- Create Bicentennial exhibition plan, identify art loans needed, secure venues, and enlist cultural partners.
- Develop complete Bicentennial budget and fundraising plan.
- Work with MEC and MAC to develop statewide participation in Bicentennial art exhibitions in local communities.
- Develop list of MMA artworks available to lend to communities.

Timeline: FY2015: Cont. next page

3) In partnership with the Mississippi Economic Council, the Mississippi Development Authority, and the Mississippi Arts Commission, help lead the implementation of the Creative Economy plan.

- Participate in the **Year of the Creative Economy** activities.
- Lead efforts of the cultural community to launch major exposition during the **2017 Mississippi Bicentennial**.

The 2017 celebration of Mississippi's Bicentennial of its statehood offers a unique opportunity for a comprehensive statewide exposition exploring 200 years of art produced in and about Mississippi. Because of our permanent collection of Mississippi art, our relationships with our 30 affiliates across the state, and our development of *The Mississippi Story*, the MMA is uniquely positioned to lead the development of a year-long schedule of exhibitions across Mississippi

that increase the understanding of, and pride in, Mississippi's visual arts history among its citizens. In addition, the December, 2017, opening of the new Mississippi History Museum and the Civil Rights Museum provides a unique opportunity for an invitation to all Mississippians (currently living in the state and those who now live across the country and globe) to come to their capital city to enjoy the new museums on one side of downtown and a cultural exposition highlighting Mississippi's best art on the other side.

The vision for the visual arts component of the Bicentennial is as follows:

- Local exhibitions created or hosted by [all 30 MMA affiliates](#) in communities across the state during January through September, 2017. These exhibitions will highlight either artists of significance to local communities or curated examples of art related to particular issues or historic periods. The MMA will aim to lend virtually all of its collection of Mississippi art to affiliates wishing to borrow either single works or small exhibitions curated by the MMA.
- In October, all artworks will return to the MMA for the mounting of an [expansion of *The Mississippi Story*](#) which fills the entire museum with owned and borrowed art that represents the best of Mississippi artists from 1817-2017.
- In addition, the MMA will oversee an [Art, Design, and Industry Pavilion](#), either in temporary constructions in The Art Garden or in the Convention Complex, which will honor Mississippi's contributions to architecture, design, and industry. This exposition will be mounted in partnership with MEC and its network of local chambers of commerce, as well as MDA, and its network of tourism and economic development agencies.
- Finally, the MMA will collaborate with MAC and its statewide colleagues in other disciplines to attract a performing and literary arts showcase to the Arts Center and Thalia Mara Hall that will complement the visual arts exposition and the history museums across town.
- This effort will require complete and close collaboration with the Mississippi Bicentennial Commission, the Mississippi Development Authority, and the Mississippi Arts Commission, as well as significant public and private funding.

Timeline: FY2015: Cont.

for local Bicentennial exhibitions. Establish parameters of Art, Design, and Industry Pavilion, especially roles and responsibilities of partners. Support MEC, MDA, and MAC in work implementing Creative Economy plan recommendations.

- Contract for national and international marketing and brand development.

FY2016:

- Secure final phase of funding for Bicentennial.
- Finalize schedule for local art exhibitions statewide. Complete loan agreements for outgoing and incoming loans.
- Logistics planned and finalized for Art, Design, and Industry Pavilion.
- Launch national and international marketing.
- Development of K-12 curriculum to augment exhibitions.

FY2017:

- Exhibitions statewide, January-October.
- Mississippi Art Exposition; Art, Design, and Industry Pavilion in Jackson, November-December.
- Performing and literary showcases.

Budget Implications:

- This will require significant planning funds as well as public and private dollars for implementation. Return, in terms of earned income from visitors and shoppers, will correlate directly to effectiveness of marketing campaign.

Staffing Implications:

- All staff will be involved. In addition, this effort will require at least one additional staff person at the leadership level for FY2015, and two during fiscal years 2016 and 2017. This will also require an enormous effort of volunteer recruitment and training.

Indicators of Success:

- All 30 MMA affiliates mount successful and well-attended exhibitions of MS art during the first nine months of 2017.

- Artworks by Mississippi artists in national public and private collections are secured for loans in MMA exhibition, bringing home rarely seen work by Mississippi master artists ranging from Richmond Barthe to George Ohr to Sam Gilliam.
- Attendance to art and design expositions tops 300,000 people.
- Logistics are flawless, including transfer of visitors back and forth between history museums and cultural events.
- New collaborative marketing strategies are developed among museums, galleries, and art venues statewide that extend beyond 2017, and result in better cultural tourism packages offered to visitors to the state.
- All hotel rooms in downtown Jackson are booked solid for November and December, 2017.

- Gifts of art to MS museums increases as a result of success of visual art exhibitions. Research developed during the curatorial process leads to improved permanent display of *The Mississippi Story* and fresh new interpretive tools.
- A new group of well-trained volunteers that continues to be involved in the MMA and other cultural organizations. Increased pride in Mississippi's cultural legacy by its citizens.
- Increased use of Mississippi's cultural legacy in promoting the state by statewide and local tourism and economic development agencies.
- Updated curriculum for K-12 educators on Mississippi's visual arts history.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Meet with all art department chairs, education chairs, and deans to discuss partnerships. Begin immediate recruitment of students to be interns, gallery guides, and gallery teachers.
- Host and train paid intern from JSU or Tougaloo as part of AAMD/UNCF partnership.
- Hold training for new gallery guides and gallery teachers.

FY2016:

- Evaluate and refine in-gallery teaching and tour programs.

4) Build relationships with area colleges and universities.

The Mississippi Museum of Art resides in the heart of a city that is home to five colleges or universities, as well as the state's only school of medicine. The MMA has the opportunity to function (in a fashion not dissimilar to the University Press of Mississippi, which serves all Mississippi universities) as the University Museum to all of those institutions. In addition, all of those colleges or universities house art scholars, professors, and students who can strengthen the MMA's research into its collection and its teaching about art in its galleries. Millsaps College has an impressive Museum Studies Concentration, and Tougaloo College owns a significant art collection with much overlap with the MMA's collection. A Jackson State University professor of art has published research on the pre-Columbian ceramics in the MMA collection. Formalizing and extending relationships between these institutions and the MMA will transmit intellectual and human resources back and forth in a way that maximizes learning and teaching opportunities at the MMA and the colleges.

- Continue the [close relationship with Millsaps College's Museum Studies](#) program by offering internships, field trips, and guest speakers for the class. Explore expanding this model to other colleges.
- Work with [Tougaloo College's Art Department and Collection](#) to collaborate on research on artists in both art collections, docent training for tours of both collections, etc.
- Recruit [students to teach in MMA galleries](#) and to work as gallery guides. Use Yale Art Museum model of training undergraduate and graduate students for teaching in galleries as well as for guiding tours.
- Work with art history professors to [increase research on objects in our collection](#).
- Use MMA [galleries as learning laboratories](#) for students to develop teaching styles, language skills, and abilities to study and analyze art.
- Continue to build our [internship program](#) to employ college students.
- Participate in partnership initiative between AAMD and the UNCF to build a pool of qualified museum professionals from local HBCUs.
- Explore a [partnership with University of Mississippi Medical Center](#) to include close looking at art as part of its curriculum in training diagnostic skills in future physicians. Share examples of these partnerships between art museums and medical schools in other cities.

Budget Implications:

- Stipends need to be budgeted for in-gallery teaching. A contract for initial training of students needs to be budgeted. Initial training will include training of MMA staff to take on this role in future years.

Staffing Implications:

- Art and Learning Teams share leadership. Hourly staff who are well trained are essential to effectiveness of in-gallery teaching.

Indicators of Success:

- Increase in school tours due to quality of teaching in galleries.
- MMA permanent collection featured in research projects by area art faculty and graduate students.
- Increased intellectual control of MMA on its collection due to expanded pool of people researching objects.
- More effective use of MMA collection in teaching and exhibition development due to new information provided by scholars.

- Decrease in average age of volunteers due to active student volunteer base.
- Increase in membership of New Collectors Club, in participation in MMA social events and programs, by recent college graduates who discovered MMA through internship or teaching programs.
- Development of more museum studies courses in local colleges and universities. Increased inclusion of art education in curriculum of regional education programs and assignments.

5) Cultivate community creativity.

The more that people in Mississippi pursue creative hobbies or activities, the more they will look to the MMA as a gathering place of people they enjoy and a resource to increase their own creative abilities. The MMA should function as a hub of creativity in the community for people of all ages and backgrounds.

- Continue annual community art-making project (C3) in partnership with an artist/activist and that culminates in a temporary installation in The Art Garden.
- Support art-making components of community events.
- Host [pop-up exhibitions](#) by local and emerging artists, and screenings of films by local filmmakers.
- Continue the partnership with [Midtown Partners' creativity incubator](#).
- Continue to honor and showcase middle-and high-school artists in annual presentation of [The Scholastic Art Awards](#). Recruit SAA winners to be volunteers and docents at MMA.
- Continue [Art in Mind](#) partnership with the Mississippi Chapter of the Alzhiemers Association to provide gallery and studio experiences for patients suffering from Alzhiemers and dementia.
- Invite [nonprofit partners to showcase art](#) created in their programs in rotating installations in the Yates Community Room (Stewpot Community Services, Mustard Seed, Mississippi Children's Museum, and the Mississippi World Trade Center are just a few organizations that include art in their programs.).

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Develop and distribute guidelines for nonprofit art exhibitions.
- Continue C3, The Museum School, and The Scholastic Art Awards.
- Host at least two pop-up exhibitions by emerging artists.

FY2016:

- Launch exhibition schedule for Yates Community Room.

Budget Implications:

- None.

Staffing Implications:

- Participation and Learning Teams share leadership.

Indicators of Success:

- MMA relationships with non-profit partners is strengthened by community room exhibition program.
- Nonprofits increase use of art in their programming to serve their constituents.
- New community partners identified annually through C3 project.

- Increase in interest by local and national artists in leading C3 project.
- SAA winners become volunteers at MMA, and continue relationship with MMA beyond high school.
- Growing relationship with Mid-Town artists, and increase in collaborative planning of events and programs.

“Keep up the great work. Just love the new green space and the outdoors concerts tied with museum activities. Keep(s) us fresh, invigorated, peaceful, and moving forward!”

“I will say again that I think the new Art Garden is brilliant. It is a truly inviting space downtown. I always feel rejuvenated after visiting it.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent

Strategic Priority: BUILDING A MISSION-BASED BALANCE SHEET

Goal Four

Ensure that core institutional values shape MMA's business plan and sustainability strategies.

1) Operate a financial model that reflects the priority of personal engagement and an understanding of current consumer behavior.

The Museum membership program has been the traditional business model by which museums have monetized individual participation. Participation at the MMA has quadrupled in the past ten years. Our audience at events and exhibitions has become younger and more diverse. And, while we have attracted more members and realized greater revenue, growth in those figures is much slower than that in participation. In an effort to examine those trends in the context of changing consumer behavior, the MMA applied to the EmcArts/American Association of Museum's Innovation Lab program in 2012, and was one of 3 museums nationally selected to address a pressing issue through innovative practice. We developed a 10-person team, equally split between those "inside" the Museum (staff and board) and those "outside" of it (MSO president, a professional artist, the director of AlternateROOTS, among others) to study and discuss the issue, and to develop a prototype to test our hypotheses. The process revealed that we needed more sophisticated systems to track behavior by our participants, and so we purchased Blackbaud's Altru program, which went live in December, 2013, and now comprehensively links all of our databases and activity tracking systems. We also realized that we needed a deeper understanding of the people who attend museums and those who don't; we engaged Reach Advisors to conduct that research and to provide an analysis with implications for strategic planning. And, finally, we ran a prototype of a new visitor loyalty program, the results of which were analyzed and shared with the staff in January. As a result of that process, we will do the following:

- Implement the findings of the [Innovation Lab prototype](#), including a free Friends program which offers access to the permanent collection and a discount in The Museum Store. Require minimal contact information to aid in targeted communications.
- Study individuals' participation data (tracked by new Altru database) regularly and design targeted communications based on people's program preferences and demographics.
- [Cultivate donors](#) based on trends in giving and participation. Use participation data for targeted gift solicitations.
- [Realign current membership benefits](#) to offer maximum benefit and flexibility to members.
- Ensure [cross-departmental sharing of data](#) to increase responsiveness of program design to participants' feedback.

Timeline: FY2015:

- Launch Friends program, with appropriate marketing and staff training.
- Release new membership levels with first annual membership campaign.

"I am retired from the military. Enjoying and supporting the museum helps me to enjoy a softer side of myself rather than the harsh life of war and rigid lifestyle that I am used to."

– 2013 Survey Respondent

Budget Implications:

- In conjunction with MMA Finance Committee, set targets for membership campaign and annual incremental membership growth.

Staffing Implications:

- Participation and Resource Teams share leadership.

Indicators of Success:

- More effective communications yield stronger participation at MMA exhibitions and events.

- Membership numbers and dollars meet annual goals.
- Demonstrated movement from Friends to membership program for 10-20% of Friends annually.

2) Fulfill the board-adopted capitalization plan for long-term sustainability.

The MMA has raised \$20 million in donations to improve its facility during the last ten years. As responsible stewards of those resources and the resulting physical plant, the MMA staff and board wanted to put into place systems that enable us to upgrade our plant regularly in a way that does not threaten financial resources needed for mission-based programming. In 2012, we commissioned the CPA firm of Matthews Cutrer and Lindsay to help us create a capitalization plan, the result of which was a \$1 million grant from the Kresge Foundation to seed a Building Reserves Fund, that will allow for systematic upgrades to the facility. The stakeholders with the most investment in the long-term sustainability of the MMA are the community leaders who have served as trustees of the institution. Therefore, cultivating their lifelong and loyal support is one strategy articulated in the plan. Other items called for in the capitalization plan direct us to do the following:

- Implement a **planned giving program** to grow the MMA endowments to \$10 million by 2025. (Endowments currently have \$5 million of liquid assets.)
- Initiate an annual **gathering of former board chairs** on the topic of sustainability.
- Encourage gifts by them to continue to build operating and capital reserves funds.
- Host **annual reception honoring past trustees** to give highlights of accomplishments and outline current needs.

Budget Implications:

- Training required for development and finance staff on planned giving.

Staffing Implications:

- Resource Team.

Indicators of Success:

- 75% of board members document planned gift to the Museum by FY17.
- Planned gifts that indicate potential gifts of \$5 million to endowment documented by FY2020.

- All former chairs become Rembrandt Society members.
- 75% of former trustees renew annual giving commitment to MMA.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Develop strategy and communications for launch of planned giving program.
- Hold first annual gathering of former board chairs.
- Hold first annual reception honoring past trustees.

FY2016:

- Continue above programs annually.
- Launch planned giving program.

3) Position the MMA to move nimbly into a future of reduced operating encumbrances and increased flexibility.

By increasing the percentage of our budget realized by earned revenue, the MMA will more closely link itself to the demand by the community for its programs and be held accountable to those participants. It also protects the MMA from uncontrollable vicissitudes in the philanthropic community.

- Increase percentage of earned revenue in total budget as a reflection of community ownership in MMA and its increasing public value.
- Craft a **zero-based budget** every 3 years to ensure operating efficiencies.
- Employ a **disciplined review of all cost centers** every two years to determine market competitiveness; operating efficiencies; and technology opportunities.

Budget Implications:

- Incremental reduction of percentage of budget dedicated to administrative costs.

Staffing Implications:

- Resource Team.

Indicators of Success:

- Reduction in administrative overhead.
- More efficient resource sharing between staff members.
- More staff ownership of budgeting and financial tracking procedures.

- More accurate budgets; less fluctuation and fewer mid-year budget corrections.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- MMA Finance Committee establishes specific goals for percentages of earned/contributed income in annual budgets.

FY2016:

- Repeat zero-based budgeting procedure used for FY2014.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Review of sponsor benefit structure; make recommendations for changes.
- Continue conversations with MDA to identify potential national sponsors. Work with Office of Creative Economy to draft impact statement to use in recruiting sponsors. Define and institutionalize procedures for sponsor cultivation and communication strategies.
- Refine annual calendar for sponsor recruitment to facilitate more accurate budgeting.
- Research national sponsorship opportunities.

FY2016:

- Continue to evaluate procedures and improve cultivation strategies.

4) Analyze and revise sponsorship recruitment strategies to increase depth of engagement for sponsors; expand pool of sponsors to include new businesses; and exploit opportunities for national sponsorships.

The Governor's focus on The Year of the Creative Economy, and the establishment of a Creative Economy office in the Mississippi Development Authority, as well as the Mississippi Economic Council's inclusion of the Creative Economy in Blueprint Mississippi, all point to the possibility of stronger partnerships between arts organizations and economic development agencies. The MMA will work with these entities to explore new relationships with national and international corporations doing business in Mississippi as an opportunity to expand the pool of corporate sponsors. These economic partners will also prove helpful in assisting the MMA to craft a message of its impact that is meaningful and

Budget Implications:

- Should result in more consistent contributed income, with less uncertainty at the beginning of the annual budgeting process.

Staffing Implications:

Resource Team.

Indicators of Success:

- Sponsors grow in commitment to MMA programs over time.
- Increased sponsor satisfaction.

- New corporate sponsors annually.
- 100% of current sponsors renew for future sponsorships at same or increased level.
- Budget projections are 90% accurate for actual revenue.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Form program evaluation committee. Staff develops program benchmarks and goals to present to committee.
- Institute rewards system for program innovation by staff.

5) Develop program evaluation schedule and benchmarks for all major programs. Report regularly on indicators of success.

While the MMA staff regularly reports on its progress toward its strategic goals (the goals of the plan form the agenda at all trustee meetings), there is a tendency in an organization that is structured around changing exhibitions to move to the next program cycle without adequate reflection, analysis, and program refinement. As the MMA board sets clear targets for strategic growth, it is interested in the MMA staff developing metrics that offer ways to track progress clearly. To this end, the MMA staff seeks to better articulate its program goals and report more clearly on progress to institutional targets.

- Include board and CAC in [development of benchmarks](#) for MMA programs.
- [Reward staff members](#) who share reading about innovative programs and exhibitions from blogs such as Museum 2.0, Center for the Future of Museums, Culture Grrl, National Arts Strategies, Blouin Artinfo, and Real Clear Arts.

Budget Implications:

- Reduced operational expenses as a result of better decision making about when programs need to be discontinued or phased out.

Staffing Implications:

- Resource takes leadership, with involvement of Arts, Learning, and Participation Teams.

Indicators of Success:

- Annual review of program success results in intelligent decisions about scaling program up or giving it a graceful exit.
- Establishment of benchmarks results in data tracking system that increases quality of information reported to funders.
- Program successes results in increased investment by sponsors and other funders.

- Communications with membership and the public better articulate impact of MMA programs on the community.
- More ownership by staff of annual program goals as a result of clearly tracked progress and areas for improvement.

6) Initiate innovation fund for annual support of staff-designed projects that respond to identified changes in economic environment, participant behavior, or technological opportunities.

Staff work in the Innovation Lab and visioning for this strategic plan have resulted in a desire to continue to cultivate a culture of innovation at the MMA. To that end, we will

- Reward staff members' exploration of other museums and attractions when on personal trips;
- Regularly infuse staff meetings and retreats with readings and reports of trends and innovation outside the museum field; and
- Highlight staff innovation at regular board meetings and on the MMA blog.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Budget \$5,000 in operating budget for an experiment to be conducted by a staff member (new program, different operating procedures, or technology application). Run first prototype from fund.

FY2016:

- During annual budgeting process, evaluate initial prototype and make decisions about refining, scaling up, or abandoning.
- Fund second experiment.

Budget Implications:

- Minimal increase to operating budget.

Staffing Implications:

- Resource Team leads, all staff participate.

Indicators of Success:

- MMA receives increased recognition by museum field and cultural sector for innovative practices.
- Museum workplace culture becomes increasingly creative, dynamic, and gratifying.

- Staff retention increases as opportunities for personal stimulation and growth increase.
- MMA programs continue to be more responsive to participant behavior and requests.
- Number of members and Friends sees steady growth.

7) Continue to maximize the use of MMA facilities for the benefit of the public and for an optimal visitor experiences.

As part of its capitalization plan, the MMA completed a systems replacement plan (SRP) that carefully maps out capital investments needed to support upgrades to our facility. With Kresge funds and regular deposits from MMA endowment proceeds, the fund will for 20 years be sufficient for needed and even unexpected replacements.

- Continue to implement the systems replacement plan.
- Update systems replacement plan to include Art Garden systems.
- Refuse to be limited by MMA physical boundaries when designing programs that deliver high value art experiences to individuals and partnering organizations.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Update systems replacement plan to allow for Art Garden systems.

Budget Implications:

- Modest investment in SRP update.

Staffing Implications:

- Resource Team.

Indicators of Success:

- Building and garden repairs and systems replacements are funded and do not divert resources from mission-based programs to facility upkeep.

8) Care for and build the art collection by focusing on areas of relevance to our audience and history, and by seizing opportunities to employ resources to accomplish collections goals.

The board-appointed Acquisitions and Collections Committee operates according to industry standards and reviews all offers of art to the collection, making decisions about whether or not to accept gifts based on criteria set forth in the committee policies and collections plan. They also function as the stewards of donor-restricted funds in the endowment that generates proceeds for the purchase of art. Our recently hired Chief Curator is in the process of reviewing and updating our collections development plan to include priorities based on what we learned from our audience research, as well as current art market trends, and his assessment of collection storage and conservation needs.

- Ensure proper resources for care and storage of art collection.
- Secure new storage equipment for growing collection of textiles, works on paper of all kinds, and frames.
- Strengthen intellectual control of collection by defining priorities for research in updated collections plan.
- Engage in ongoing board education about collection priorities and the state of the collection.
- Build conservation funds to accompany major gifts of art to the collection.
- Regularly update digital access to collection, incorporating new technology and user applications as they become available.
- Tie identified needs for purchases or conservation to annual fund appeals to offer donors opportunities for specific gifts related to their interests.

Timeline:

FY2015:

- Purchase storage systems for textiles.
- Create a new collections development plan.
- Continue to actively seek conservation funds locally, and research national grant opportunities.
- Digitize collection.

FY2016:

- Implement collections development plan.

Budget Implications:

- Include conversations about conservation funds to accompany all major gifts of artwork to the MMA.

Staffing Implications:

- Art Team takes leadership, with support from Resource Team.

Indicators of Success:

- Increase in gifts to the MMA of funds for conservation.
- More efficient use of acquisitions/collections committee and staff time in targeting collectors for gifts, as a result of clearly articulated collection building goals.
- More frequent rotation of permanent collection into exhibitions as a result of more robust conservation program.

- Increase in opportunities to highlight permanent collection artwork in education programs as a result of increased research about objects.
- Increase in major gifts of art as a result of donor respect for MMA standards for collections care.

“It (the MMA)’s necessary.”

– 2013 Survey Respondent