Mission

The mission of the Palmer Museum of Art is to fulfill its dual roles as the academic art museum of The Pennsylvania State University and as one of Pennsylvania’s principal civic and cultural institutions.

The museum seeks to foster an understanding and appreciation of art by presenting a variety of exhibitions and education programs for a broad range of audiences and by providing opportunities for research and publication.

In accordance with the highest aesthetic, intellectual, and professional standards, the museum preserves, exhibits, interprets, and augments the collections it holds in trust for future generations.

Needs and Opportunities

Major collections of American and European Baroque art have been promised to the museum and could arrive within the next twenty years. More than 270 works of art (paintings, works on paper, sculpture, and ceramics) are included. The museum will become a major destination for scholars, students, collectors, and the general public to see, study and learn about American art and the richness of its history. The museum will need additional space to exhibit and store the pieces. The 6,865 square feet included in phase I of the proposed expansion would address the most pressing need, although not until phase III would all space needs for collection access and care be addressed.

A public, open storage room could be created for easy access for students, faculty, and visitors.

The donations will attract other donors to the museum and the addition would reassure donors that their works will be exhibited, not placed in storage, and be enjoyed by generations to come.

The collections will provide a much richer resource for classes in art history, studio art, American studies, African-American studies, history, literature, etc.

The museum will be an even better showcase for the University and College to use for its visitors, donors, and alumni.

The expansion will serve the community’s needs for more visual art education experiences for people of all ages. The Friends of the Palmer Museum of Art will get a boost in their ongoing efforts to serve their community and attract and retain members who support the museum’s education programs. (No University funds are used for the museum’s education programs)

What museums have that is distinctive is objects … and what gives most museums their unique advantage is the awesome power of those objects to trigger an almost infinite diversity of profound experiences…. Stephen E. Weil, November 14, 1997
1. Increase accessibility to works of art in the museum’s collection for the staff, faculty, and students of Penn State, as well as the general public.

   a. Acquire good quality digital images of all works in the permanent collection of the Palmer Museum of Art.
      Performance indicators: Of permanent collection objects, about 71 percent (about 4,150) will need photography to meet this goal. Spread over a five-year period, this would require us to photograph about 830 objects per year. Other issues: How much time is needed to unframe framed works on paper; how much time is needed to properly house these works; what supplies will be needed; how much time is needed to clean up the basic data; and what delivery system will we use to get this information onto the Web?

   b. Continue to develop collaborations with the Libraries, the Visual Resources Centre, the E-Learning Institute, and the Teaching and Learning with Technology staff to ensure a broad and thorough approach to attaining access.

   c. Make basic information and low-resolution images available on-line to staff, faculty, students, and the general public.
      Performance indicators: 100 percent of collection will be accessible by 2013.

   d. Prepare funding proposals for granting agencies, foundations, and potential individual and corporate sponsors.
      Performance indicators: Identify potential sources for grants and secure at least one by 2010.

   e. Prepare planning and funding proposals for the dean and development staff.
      Performance indicators: Submit at least one proposal by October 2009.

2. Strategically build on the current collection, adding works as gift opportunities and funds for purchases allow.

   a. Seek opportunities to purchase outstanding examples of sculpture, including outdoor sculpture in collaboration with the Outdoor Public Art Committee.
      Performance indicators: Secure one outdoor sculpture and two sculptures for the galleries by 2013 (nineteenth century and post-1945).

   b. Investigate the acquisition of new media and possible partnerships with Pattee Library and the School of Visual Arts at Penn State in this initiative.
      Performance indicators: Hold at least two meetings and review with Advisory Board by May 2010.
c. Expand the museum’s collection of photography and other works on paper to enhance its use for teaching and exhibition purposes.
   Performance indicators: Add at least three photographs, one print, and two other works on paper per year selected from major categories established by staff.

d. Identify, cultivate, and solicit new collectors.

e. Build endowments for acquisitions, conservation, and storage.
   Performance indicators: Amount of additional funding secured, currently have $728,596 acquisitions (principal) and $108,212 conservation (principal).

3. Maintain commitment to exhibiting objects of the highest aesthetic quality that serve as unique barometers of art and cultural history.

   a. Continue to organize and present exhibitions that complement or amplify the permanent collection reaching beyond standard monographic parameters into thematic and cross-disciplinary fields, and utilizing multimedia presentation and innovative installation formats where warranted.
      Performance indicators: Number of exhibitions per year.

   b. Continue to seek out opportunities to present exhibitions that are international in scope and/or that advance issues of diversity.
      Performance indicators: Add three of these exhibitions to our schedule by 2013.

   c. Partner with other institutions—especially university museums—as a means to reduce costs, pool artistic resources, increase exhibition attendance, and increase scholarly contribution.
      Performance indicators: Secure three venues in five years.

   d. Strengthen and promote the museum’s use as a learning resource for departments—within and outside the humanities—across campus.
      Performance indicators: Maintain list of new and ongoing collaborations, add at least one per year.

   e. Investigate the cost benefit of opening one hour earlier on weekdays.

   f. Prepare funding proposals for potential corporate sponsors, granting agencies, and foundations to help cover rising exhibition costs (rental fees, shipping costs, etc.), related publications, research travel, other resources required to organize exhibitions, and advertising.
      Performance indicators: Secure one new funding source per year.
4. Refine a comprehensive range of education programs and special events for audiences of all ages.
   a. Engage University departments, programs, institutes, and units as potential partners for programs and educational events.
      Performance indicators: Continue to involve at least two units per year.
   
   b. Explore and utilize current technologies for educational and interpretive efforts.
      Performance indicators: Add at least one new technology in five-year period.
   
   c. Expand collaborations with undergraduate and graduate student groups and form a student group at the museum.
      Performance indicators: Have group identified by end of calendar year 2009.
   
   d. Prepare funding proposals for granting agencies, foundations, and/or potential individual and corporate sponsors.
      Performance indicators: Prepare and secure at least one per year.
   
   e. Communicate with Friends volunteers to assist their fundraising efforts and membership drives.
      Performance indicators: Have curator of education attend two Friends board meetings per year.

5. Prepare a comprehensive operational plan for a 75,000 gross square foot addition.
   
   a. Prepare space needs assessment and justifications by 2010.
   
   
   c. Prepare funding proposals for development staff and potential donors.