

VMFA Strategic Business Plan 2020 Summary

VMFA's mission statement:

“The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is a state-supported, privately endowed educational institution created for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, to encourage the study of the arts, and thus to enrich the lives of all.”

During 2014, VMFA's senior staff, trustees, and Foundation board members worked with TDC, a Boston-based nonprofit consulting group specializing in working with arts organizations, to identify a five-year vision that will help the museum continue to have a positive impact on Virginia. Discussions centered on current challenges, opportunities, and aspirations for the museum and culminated in *Strategic Plan 2020* which was ratified by VMFA's Board of Trustees in March 2015, and by the VMFA Foundation Board of Directors in May 2015.

The plan is defined by four major goals to be accomplished over the next five years with specific strategies tied to its success.

Goal I: Create exceptional experiences of art and culture on the museum's campus that engage, captivate and delight a growing and diverse visitor base.

Strategies:

- Deliver exceptional visitor experiences
- Leverage all the Museum's assets to engage visitors
- Increase attendance with a focus on repeat visitation and Greater Richmond
- Deepen relationships with two key populations: African Americans and young families
- Use data and research to learn about visitors and continually improve their experiences

Goal II: Build the industry-leading education platform to reach every corner of Virginia.

Strategies:

- Build a platform that can reach every K–12 student in the Commonwealth either through direct experiences with the Museum or students' teachers
- Promote the power of authentic objects and creativity through an Art Mobile
- Increase reach for industry-leading early childhood arts education
- Develop partnerships with community colleges and universities to support Plan initiatives
- In the field, increase awareness of the Museum's industry-leading education and interpretation platforms
- In the Commonwealth, increase awareness of the Museum's statewide impact

Goal III: Elevate the Museum's reputation in the museum field to match its outstanding collections, exhibitions, and engagement.

Strategies:

- Pursue a collections strategy that drives field leadership and visitor engagement
- Produce exhibitions that achieve visitor goals and promote the collections
- Increase the visibility of the curatorial and conservation departments and Museum leadership
- Encourage museum leaders, collectors, and critics to visit the VMFA's campus and collection

Goal IV: Build the organizational capacity to achieve the Plan, align these resources to the Plan and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Strategies:

- Build the organization's capacity and align the team to support the Plan
- Create short-term solutions to meet the Plan's facilities needs
- Retain and grow philanthropic support
- Create the economic model and financial management systems to achieve the Plan, protect against risks and support innovation
- Determine scope and scale of campaign to support the Museum for the next 20 years
- Assure the Boards' processes and structures enable oversight of Plan and execution of the Boards' fiduciary responsibility

Three key themes underpin these goals: **interpretation, technology, and brand.**

- VMFA's interpretive goal is to present art across place and time in a manner that is meaningful and relevant. It is the narrative thread connecting its vision, values, and mission to the strategies of the institution across collections, education and programming, exhibitions, and the visitor experience. By interpretation, the Museum means how it uniquely engages visitors to create compelling experiences. The Museum's belief in the power of engaging authentic objects, exchanging knowledge and stimulating creativity drives its collection, education, program, and technology strategies. Strong interpretation can also drive brand and attendance—visitors explore new offerings if they can expect a consistent, outstanding experience.
- Technology supports all aspects of Strategic Plan 2020 and, with appropriate implementation, will enable the Museum to strengthen its business platforms and better understand, engage, and educate its visitors. Technology is a tool that supports every goal of the proposed plan. It can enhance the visitor experience both internal and external to the museum; provide insight into visitors and their behaviors/interests; and enhances accessibility to the museum's intellectual capital.
- Strategic Plan 2020 also builds the Museum's brand or public image. It transitions from promoting discrete events to promoting the Museum's full offerings. With this shift, the Museum seeks to positively influence visitors, the Commonwealth, and philanthropic supporters.

Looking forward, the Museum can leverage its unique position as a state institution to become a museum leader in education and public engagement. There is demand for arts education for pre-K–12 students and teachers, and for experiences with authentic art objects for all ages. While museums are increasingly focused on education, few are excelling, and VMFA has an early lead. With targeted investments in new platforms and continued collaboration with statewide partners, the Museum could accelerate its impact and leadership in the field.