

NPG Draft Strategic Plan



Working Document Toward A Strategic Plan

[As of June 2008]

2008-2012

Mission
Who We Are and Why We Exist

The National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution tells the story of the American people by portraying the lives of men and women who have shaped the nation's history and culture.

Vision
What We Hope to Achieve

The National Portrait Gallery seeks to inspire its visitors and the users of its collections to appreciate and honor our nation's enduring values and its diverse heritage by presenting American history through life stories expressed in art.

Who We Serve

Audiences

- The 800,000 visitors each year to the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture
- Visitors to other museums where works from the NPG collection are on exhibit
- Visitors to the NPG web site, including those who research its on-line catalog of American portraits
- Teachers, students, and adult learners served by NPG education programs

Key Partners

- Smithsonian American Art Museum
- Archives of American Art, National Museum of American History, National Museum of African-American History and Culture, Smithsonian Associates, SITES, and other Smithsonian museums and programs
- Other museums and historical agencies, nationally and internationally, with significant portraiture holdings
- Universities, professional associations, and other collaborators in research and scholarship

Key Stakeholders

- National Portrait Gallery Commission
- Smithsonian Regents, Secretary, Leadership Team
- Congress, on behalf of the American people
- Private donors including individuals, foundations, and corporations
- Members, visitors, and users

History

The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) entered the twenty-first century with a stunning renovation of the historic Patent Office Building that it shares with the Smithsonian American Art Museum. A six-year pause in normal

operations brought an opportunity for the Museum to revitalize its mission and goals, expand outreach initiatives, and reaffirm our commitment to be the national focus of recognition for distinguished individuals who made outstanding contributions to this country's history and culture.

In the years 2008 - 2012, NPG will continue to collect, document, and exhibit the lives and achievements of significant Americans through diverse forms of portrayal including portraiture and performance. An important priority is to expand its collections and programs to be inclusive of under-represented Americans. The Museum will continue to update its research base to serve the public via the Internet, and broaden the scope of its public programs. NPG will especially encourage family visitation to stimulate inter-generational learning, and we will provide a compelling destination for visitors from abroad to learn about Americans. Above all, we will seek to provide a rewarding, respectful, and innovative visitor experience.

NPG will target development strategies to support its initiatives by seeking advice and support from its advisory board, the National Portrait Gallery Commission. The Commission will enlarge its membership and represent a more diverse group of members. And the Museum will be ambitious in seeking new sponsors and resources, enlarging our Benefactors' Circle, and partnering with other Smithsonian units and Affiliates to share collections and outreach activities throughout the United States. NPG will work with the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM), our partner in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture, to develop strategies for building new audiences.

Four key elements connect each goal within the plan:

1. The need to restore staff positions and funding lost through attrition during budget cuts in recent years.
2. The need to strengthen private sector investment in NPG through aggressive fundraising.
3. The need to employ assessment and evaluation measures much more comprehensively in order to identify both success stories and activities requiring improvement or modification.
4. The need to operate in a fully transparent, ethical, and professional manner, in order to assure confidence in our work on the part of the Secretary, the Regents, the Congress, our donors, and our visitors and user.

This Strategic Plan and the accompanying Performance Plan are intended to reflect the overall goals and mission of the Smithsonian Institution, as well as the aspirations of the National Portrait Gallery.

DRAFT

Strategic Goals: 5 Year Desired Results

In July 2006, the National Portrait Gallery reopened the museum in expanded spaces in the historic and renovated Patent Office Building. In its opening year it doubled the size of its previous audience and won critical acclaim for its exhibitions and programs. The Museum met its goals of an enhanced presentation of its permanent collection, and a variety of temporary exhibitions which focus on historical and contemporary art, including its new initiatives, a portrait competition. The latter drew entries from more than 4,000 American painters and sculptors from every state.

For the future the Museum plans to build upon this success. Specific priorities may evolve in response to an emphasis on assessment and evaluation across the board, beginning with visitor and user feedback.

Throughout this Performance Plan, many Performance Indicators (which usually describe projects with budgets) are cross-referenced. Very few NPG activities serve just one strategy; in fact, typically they serve several.

1.0 Increase Public Impact

Exhibitions continue to be our flagship product. The Museum currently presents approximately four special changing exhibitions and two permanent collection rotations each year. These exhibitions range from historic to contemporary themes, some grounded more in the discipline of history and some in art history. The collections and exhibitions are enhanced by the Museum's education and outreach programs, including films, performances, tours, lectures, and the Museum's website.

EXHIBITIONS

1. Maintain a dynamic exhibition schedule

- a. Establish an appropriate balance of history and portraiture themes, responding to the strengths of the collections, audience interests, and curatorial resources.
- b. Contingent on the availability of funding, mount up to two major (60-80 objects), two mid-sized (30-50 objects) and two smaller exhibitions a year, with an emphasis on new contributions to the understanding of American history and personalities and the evolution of portraiture as an art form.
 - i. Schedule a minimum of 30 months in advance
 - ii. Have development package for all exhibitions 24 months in advance
 - iii. Prepare loan requests 12 months in advance
 - iv. Develop education programs 9 months in advance
 - v. Have Public Relations package ready 12 months in advance
- c. Rotate permanent collection
 - i. Change new acquisitions installation a minimum of every 9 months.
 - ii. Change paper objects throughout the galleries at regular intervals (3 – 12 months)
 - iii. Assure funding and staff resources for rotation of long-term loans.

PUBLICITY

1. Public Visibility

- a. Develop long-lead publicity 12 months in advance of exhibitions
- b. Develop a range of exhibition publicity tactics specifically targeted to various media and diverse audiences
- c. Promote both the exhibition and the DWRC as a destination
- d. Develop unique stories about the collection

- e. Develop compelling promotions for forthcoming education programs, exhibitions, philanthropic gifts
- f. Distribute calendar items in a timely fashion
- g. Develop a weekly e-mailing
- h. Develop media partners
- i. Continue to improve Profile magazine
- j. Develop and distribute rack cards for every exhibition

2. Collaborations

- a. Strengthen collaborations with other Smithsonian museums for public outreach
- b. Coordinate exhibition and program calendars as fully as possible with Smithsonian American Art Museum.
- c. Identify and pursue additional DWRC collaborations with SAAM in staffing, audience development, assessment, and evaluation.
- d. Provide resources to serve other museums throughout the country, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Affiliates and Smithsonian Associates programs.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Maintain a dynamic series of public programs based on exhibitions, collections, and curatorial resources.

- a. Develop education programs for exhibitions 9 months in advance
- b. Present 6 REEL Portraits Programs Yearly
- c. Present 4 Cultures in Motions Programs Yearly
- d. Present 40 Face to Face curatorial talks on works in the collection
- e. Offer at least 7 regularly scheduled Docent Tours weekly
- f. Offer at least one bi-lingual docent tour weekly
- g. Meet docent requests for special tours as needed
- h. Provide up to 40 VIP tours by curatorial staff yearly
- i. Initiate systematic visitor surveys and maintain accurate statistics on visitors served
- j. Present 8 family days a year

- k. Present 1 scholarly symposium yearly
- l. Provide an average of 3 curriculum-centered school tours a week.
- m. Initiate, conduct, and evaluate at least 2 teacher training institutes annually.
- n. Promote Lunder/McEvoy joint programming
- o. Ensure that all adult and family-oriented public programs are accompanied by information and encouragement for membership in the museum.

ELECTRONIC ASSETS AND WEBSITE

- 1. Enhance resources and interactivity of website
 - a. Assure that each special exhibition has a web presence
 - b. Develop webcasts and/or podcasts
 - c. Add images and information on 100 collection items to web yearly & add 400 CAP entries to web yearly
 - e. Increase visitation to web site by 5% yearly
 - f. Keep NPG calendar of special events up-to-date
 - g. Develop e-commerce capability for event registration, membership, and image reproductions.
 - h. Engage contractors to update and expand TMS
 - i. Regularly update architecture of website
- 2. Audio tours
 - a. Develop and make available complimentary audio tours of long-term and special exhibitions, beginning with the Hall of Presidents.
 - b. Assess technology options, including cell phone-based tours, and implement accordingly.

2.0 Strengthen Research, Scholarship, and Collections

Research is the foundation on which all of NPG's projects and products are built. Research leads to acquisitions, exhibitions, cataloguing data and conservation techniques. The Museum is a partner in the Smithsonian's

larger fellowship program and it regularly accommodates outside researchers.

RESEARCH

1. Sustain a steadfast commitment to collections, research, and scholarly studies.
 - a. Undertake scholarship for each year's exhibition schedule (travel expenses, conferences, acquisitions, other)
 - b. Produce a minimum of one exhibition catalogue yearly
 - c. Produce at least 3 scholarly articles, essays or lectures yearly
 - d. Submit one scholarly research or publication grant yearly
 - e. Present one collection related scholarly symposium yearly
 - f. Produce three issues of Profile yearly

COLLECTIONS

1. Increase size and quality of collections
 - a. Develop and implement a collecting plan that fills gaps in collection categories and anticipates future needs and opportunities.
 - b. Add an average of 75 objects to the collection yearly
 - c. Seek gifts and donative sales where possible to extend buying power of available funds
 - c. Catalogue all objects within six months
 - d. Enter all new acquisition onto the CIS system within 9 months
 - f. Significantly expand the endowment to support acquisitions
2. Care of collections
 - a. Add a paper conservator
 - b. Secure funds for frame and object conservation
 - c. Increase size of secure, climate-controlled collection storage areas
 - d. Acquire funds for new frames

3.0 Achieve Greater Financial Strength

Beginning in the late 1990s NPG no longer had the ability to tap the annual federal appropriation for exhibitions, education programs, publications, and other services. All federal monies are now dedicated to salaries with the exception of the development staff who are supported through trust funds. In the next five years the Director and the Development Office will focus on increasing endowment and securing program funds for exhibitions, acquisitions, educational and research programs, and staff augmentation.

EXHIBITIONS

1. Increase funding through corporate, foundation, grants and private support
 - a. Develop funding proposals a minimum of 2 years in advance
 - b. Expand the endowments supporting exhibitions, education, and outreach.
 - c. Partner with other institutions to share the cost of exhibitions

ACQUISITIONS

1. Increase funding through corporate, foundation, grants and private support
 - a. Develop funding proposals a minimum of 2 years in advance
 - b. Pursue collection gifts and donative sales

EDUCATION

1. Increase funding through corporate, foundation and private support
 - a. Seek funding for endowments (\$1,000,000)
 - b. Partner with other institutions to share costs

RESEARCH

1. Increase funding through corporate, foundation and private support
 - a. Seek named fellowships
 - b. Seek endowment for research travel

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

1. Seek increased funding from Smithsonian and from private sources for website enhancement and collections management

STAFF

1. Increase staff to implement goals
 - a. Readjust priorities and staffing structures accordingly
Note: Some positions must be trust-funded.

Development Office

Corporate Fundraiser (Trust)
Foundation Fund Raiser (Trust)
Major Gifts Fund Raiser (Trust)
Membership Coordinator (Trust)
Events Marketing Coordinator (Trust)
Public Relations Coordinator (Federal)

Education Department

Scheduler
Public Programs Ass't.
Assistant Public Programs Manager

Publications Department

Staff Editor (Federal)

Center for Electronic Research & Outreach Services

IT/AV specialist shared with SAAM
Data Entry specialist

Exhibitions & Collections Management

Photographer
Exhibitions Assistant
Art Handler
Rights & Repro. Coordinator

Design & Production
Exhibits Specialist (2)

- b. Increase investment in staff and staff expertise through professional development
- c. Implement alternative staffing practices to fill critical gaps.
- d. Seek endowed directorship and departmental chairs

NPG COMMISSION

- 1. Re-energize the Development Committee
- 2. Tap Commission contacts with foundations and individual donors

MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Increase “Director’s Circle” by 5% annually.
- 2. Expand ‘Adopt a Portrait’ program.
- 3. Continue to work with SAAM on joint memberships under \$500.
- 4. Increased earned income through shops, restaurants and special events.

INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

- 1. Implement management and operating practices which demonstrate transparent decision making, focused planning and priority setting, delegation, and open communication.
- 2. Increase size of staff as outlined above
 - a. Develop long range plans for additional federal and trust positions
 - b. Work with Office of Human Resources to give them compelling justifications for the positions the Museum requires

3. Increase professional development opportunities for staff
 - a. Promote attendance at Smithsonian provided raining
 - b. Encourage participation in professional conferences
 - c. Encourage promotion of NPG staff scholarly achievements

4. Increase utilization of Smithsonian-wide staff expertise
 - a. Collaborate more with OEC, TSA, CSI, etc.
 - b. Foster a working environment which embraces change and values teamwork

FACILITIES

1. Plan for facilities that accommodate increased staff and collections
 - a. Acquire approximately 4,000 square feet of adjacent space for staff and intern work stations.
 - b. Plan for necessary expansion of collection storage and care facilities, both off-site and on-site, within the next five years.