

An aerial photograph of a museum courtyard at night. The courtyard is filled with people, many of whom are sitting on large, colorful beanbag chairs (blue, green, and purple). In the background, there is a DJ booth with a white table and a person standing behind it. The courtyard is surrounded by trees and a building with large windows. The overall atmosphere is social and relaxed.

# MFA *2020*

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
Strategic Plan

May 2017





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# Our Promise

We are committed to the care, study, and enhancement of an extraordinary collection of art. We celebrate it as a platform to spark creativity and embrace it in the pursuit of advanced knowledge and cultural understanding. We bring it to life with our community of diverse audiences.

We believe in the power of art. We believe that art can help create a context for understanding values and beliefs across time. In acknowledging this, we strive to be a meeting place of world cultures — expressed locally and internationally. In service of our goal of bringing art and people together, we aspire to be known at home and abroad for our purposeful collecting, our spirit of collaboration, and our ability to welcome and deeply engage audiences in the life of the Museum. We will celebrate artists across time. We will honor all visitors. We will invite many voices.

To deliver this promise, we will:

**Collect Purposefully**

**Collaborate Generously**

**Invite Boldly**

**Welcome Warmly**

**Engage Deeply**

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# Why 2020?

In 2020, the MFA celebrates the 150th anniversary of its founding. In the civic spirit of our earliest benefactors, we will position ourselves to further the Museum's heritage and distinguished reputation by actively cultivating engagement through thought-provoking and inspiring presentations of art.

Our shared vision for 2020 declares a set of MFA priorities for the next three years, with our sights on the horizon of ten years from now. In ten years we will be central to an international conversation about the role of art and artists in ways that influence museums around the world. We will lead in framing a national dialogue about the role of museums in our communities. We will be linked to a new generation of supporters, collectors, and advocates who share our commitment to the excellence of our collections. We will be known widely as an ambitious partner who welcomes others to join us in creating groundbreaking exhibitions, memorable programming, meaningful opportunities for artists, and new business enterprises. In pursuit of this vision we will invite, welcome, and engage expanded audiences.

This plan is a living document—our first installment in a process to achieve these transformational ambitions. Our plan invites broad staff involvement. It depends upon the continued dedication of staff, volunteers, and governance. As the Museum's long-term work plan, it will lead to metrics against which we will measure our success and identify and refine our priorities over time.







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# Expanding Audiences

Our focus in building the MFA of the future begins with a clearly expressed commitment to the Museum's current audiences. These are our members, supporters, repeat visitors, and tourists from across the globe, as well as prospective audiences with similar attributes—lifelong learners with an enthusiasm for art and culture. Our robust connection to such audiences is fundamental and will create opportunities for continued support and an ever-expanding base.

While we build and deepen our connection with current audiences, we also know we cannot succeed in our plans for the future without a commitment to broaden our reach. In our quest for additional growth, we will engage new and diverse communities. Establishing the Museum as a welcoming and inclusive place for all, we will place an increased emphasis on expanding three key audience segments.

## Students

We will commit to Boston-area college students with deepened resolve. Students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels will be invited to think of the MFA as their own. Our goal will be to engage them as enthusiasts when living here, and ambassadors for life. We will declare, "This is your Museum," and we will build programs and dedicated outreach to them, in their voice, that will encourage them to connect with us and support shared ambitions. In parallel, we will be a leader in providing access and professional development for K–12 teachers and administrators from school and community programs throughout Massachusetts—deepening their ability to engage and inspire younger students through art across a wide range of subjects.

## Multigenerational Families

We will dedicate new resources to build relationships with families across generations. In doing so, we will design and communicate special learning and convening opportunities. A particular focus will be our outreach to an increasingly diverse Boston. Families from all neighborhoods will be invited to see the MFA as a place to share experiences and celebrate identities and cultures through art.

## Professionals in Creative Industries

We will develop programming designed specifically to inspire professionals engaged in creativity and innovation, in fields relevant to both economic and cultural production—artists, designers, architects, musicians and performers; writers, filmmakers, and digital content creators; new product developers; research and development scientists; and advertising and marketing professionals. This is an investment in the future, with a community that is diverse in its composition and passionate about celebrating discovery and shared learning.



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# Strategic Goals

## Collection

Enhance a historical collection that represents the most important art of the past. Seek key gifts and pursue select purchases to build upon excellence and evident strength. Deepen strategic commitment in modern and contemporary art to embrace the present and boldly anticipate the future; find pillars and take risks. In all areas of our collection, expand the Museum's capacity to study, care for, and share the collection.

## Place

Enliven the Museum's campus for all visitors by creating a warmer welcome, greater sense of belonging, and deeper engagement with art—inside and outside the building. Evolve a physical environment that increasingly celebrates art in a context of comfort, service, generosity, and accessibility.

## Program

Create memorable content through exhibitions, gallery displays, and programming that boldly combine objects and ideas. Build and sustain partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally to learn from diverse points of view and create broad awareness, advocacy, and support. Encourage learning within a program that achieves both critical acclaim and growth of audiences.

## Brand

Define the Museum's brand—the collection of experiences that create meaning and loyalty in the lives of our audiences—and ensure that it is expressed in all that we do. Emphasize our commitment to invite boldly, welcome warmly, and engage deeply. Through these brand attributes, differentiate and reinforce our unique position in the cultural landscape.

## Organization

Align the organizational structure—departments and roles—to meet the opportunities of the future. Establish performance measures to set expectations and achieve strategic goals. Define and foster an increasingly integrated internal organizational culture. Undertake strategic hiring to achieve an agile and diverse workforce, and evolve a governance structure reflective of the changing needs of our Museum.

## Sustainability

Employ an overarching financial strategy that addresses the MFA's current and future well-being. Increase quality data collection to support decision-making. Enhance our technology infrastructure to proactively anticipate and ensure support across the Strategic Plan.









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# Collection

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## Initiatives

- Construct a new Conservation Center that augments our capacity to study, care for, and curate the collection with state-of-the-art technology and facilities. Encourage collaboration and sharing of techniques and ideas across the institution—and with national and international colleagues—while enabling greater public access and engagement.
- Invest in new relationships with collectors to strengthen the MFA's holdings in ways relevant to strategic collection growth. In areas of expanded excellence, build on our collections of French 19th- and early 20th-century and Dutch 17th- and 18th-century art. In areas of new and deepened commitment, secure support from loyal and new donors of 20th-century modern and 21st-century contemporary art. Acquire specifically identified works by cornerstone artists. Reflect leading achievements by Boston artists. Target strategic growth of our photography collection.
- Develop an ambitious program to renovate and/or reinstall key collection galleries. Gallery displays and renewals in the next three years will include Dutch art, French 19th-century painting and sculpture, and Ancient Greek art as well as cross-institutional displays of Islamic art and Judaica. Other gallery displays will be sequenced to follow the completion of the Conservation Center (Winter 2020) including new galleries for Asia, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and additional European galleries.
- Create specific gallery displays to highlight cross-cultural themes from our global collections in order to celebrate diversity and encourage the exchange of ideas across borders.
- Establish a Museum interpretation team to develop engaging content for our visitors, in traditional and new media, within our galleries and online.
- Reinvigorate the Collections Partnership Program—a national and international touring program that shares our collections and extends our brand beyond the MFA's walls—with a strategy that is ambitious, flexible, and that generates sustainable revenue for the Museum. Create new partnerships to achieve this.



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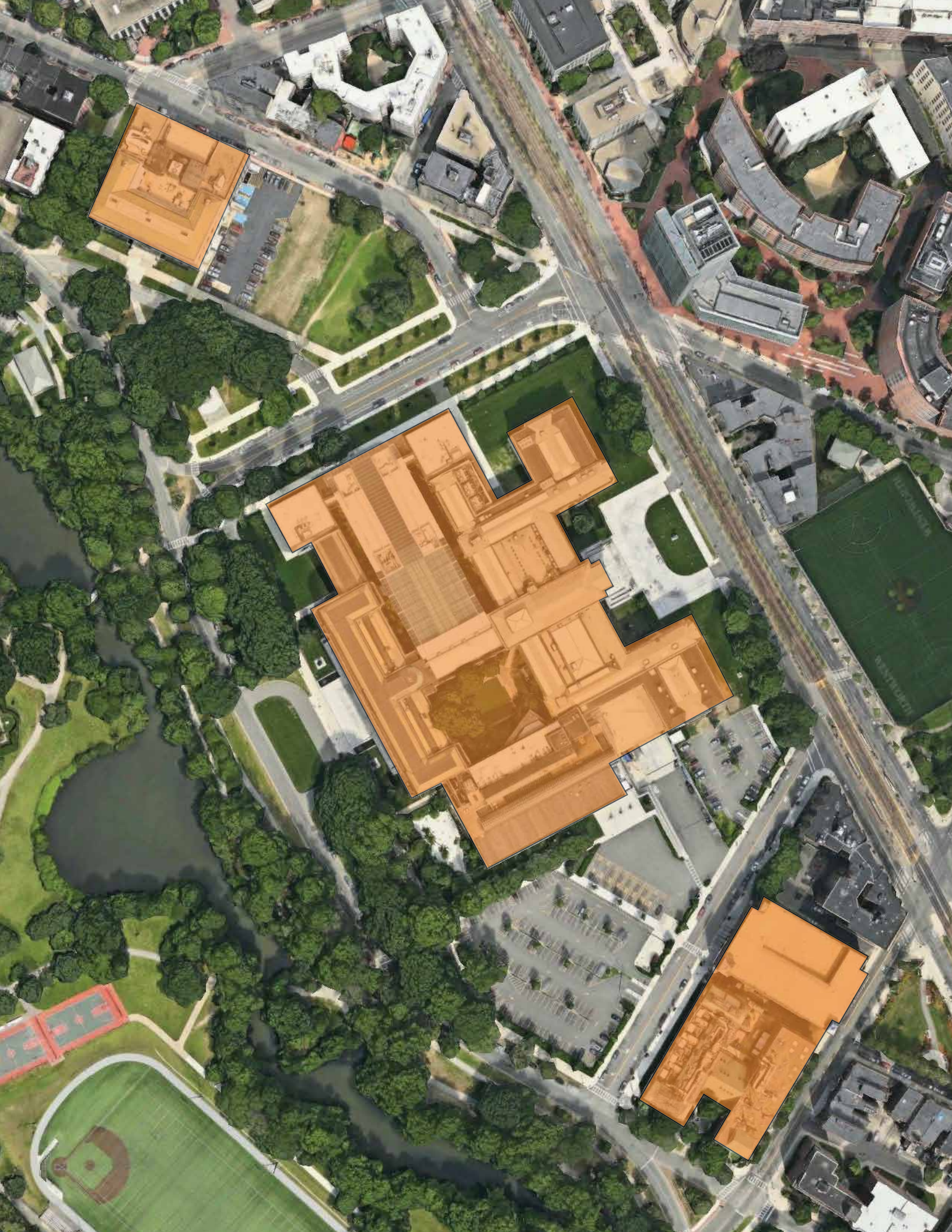
# Place

Enliven the Museum's campus for all visitors by creating a warmer welcome, greater sense of belonging, and deeper engagement with art—inside and outside the building. Evolve a physical environment that increasingly celebrates art in a context of comfort, service, generosity, and accessibility.

## Initiatives:

- Animate the campus and soften the boundaries of the Museum with outdoor installations of art, performance, film, art-themed play areas, and dining spaces.
- Rethink Museum entrances to be more welcoming and engaging for all visitors through inclusive design that encompasses architectural changes, art installations, services and amenities, and improved wayfinding.
- Assess the functionality of the public spaces and services in the Linde Family Wing including the Group Entrance, Linde Gallery, Taste Café and Bravo restaurant, MFA Bookstore and Shop, and the Druker Family Pavilion, to create a more accessible and welcoming convening space that is lively, engaging, and encourages visitation.
- Engage visitors of all ages and abilities through a range of offerings such as multimedia MFA guides, Museum orientation and navigation, and content-rich mobile apps.
- Consolidate existing and potential building projects into a comprehensive campus site plan that supports the long-term goals of the Museum. In the immediate term, identify distinct phases that will open gallery spaces currently used for other purposes. Evaluate administrative and curatorial workspaces to plan an improved and efficient work environment.











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# Program

Create memorable content through exhibitions, gallery displays, and programming that boldly combine objects and ideas. Build and sustain partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally to learn from diverse points of view and create broad awareness, advocacy, and support. Encourage learning within a program that achieves both critical acclaim and growth of audiences.

## Initiatives:

- Develop and implement an exhibition schedule and public programs that increase the Museum's reputation as a thought leader, generate opportunities for creativity and scholarship of staff and colleagues, deepen philanthropic support, expand audiences and strengthen our commitment to access for all. Do so with a vibrant program that celebrates art and artists and takes risk with the exploration of ideas in our time.
- Establish collaborations with key local, national, and international academic and cultural institutions as well as with civic agencies and city-wide initiatives. Convene and collaborate for the purpose of advancing knowledge, fostering creativity, leveraging expertise, encouraging cost-share models, developing new revenue sources, enhancing our profile, and building audience.
- Strive to work with a broad range of institutions of higher learning, notably the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. To achieve this, create an Academic Coordinator position that will liaise with university students and faculty in order to promote attendance, further curricular integration and develop opportunities for sustained engagement.
- Launch MFA Lab—an innovative think tank—to mark the MFA as a leader in community, creative, intellectual, and social exchange. Develop new MFA Lab programs that will include a groundbreaking Museum STEAM pre-college summer program; an advisory group of young people (ages 15–25) to create programs for peers; a residency program for artists and other creative professionals to collaborate with MFA staff on cross-disciplinary work; and a fellowship program to support the next generation of museum professionals.
- Revitalize First Fridays and/or create a new multi-disciplinary signature evening series. Prioritize giving voice to artists and commit to partnerships.
- Mark our role as a resource for Boston and as a place of convening around issues critical to our city. Expand collaborative programs with a local focus such as The City Talks, in-gallery interpretive experiences, and family offerings. Expand programs for the medical community and explore applying the model to other sectors. Broaden access for Massachusetts educators at all levels and bolster professional development opportunities for K–12 educators in both school and community settings.

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# Brand

Define the Museum's brand—the collection of experiences that create meaning and loyalty in the lives of our audiences—and ensure that it is expressed in all that we do. Emphasize our commitment to invite boldly, welcome warmly, and engage deeply. Through these brand attributes, differentiate and reinforce our unique position in the cultural landscape.

## Initiatives

- Affirm key components of the Museum's brand, defining our brand promise and values. Inform and empower staff and volunteers to embody the brand promise and use it as a filter in decision-making toward increased awareness, attendance, and loyalty of audiences.
- Align offerings, operations and the built campus environment to deliver on brand promise, including our front-line service model, membership categories, hours of operation, admission and event pricing, and dining and retail experiences.
- Optimize digital platforms — web, social, advertising, and e-mail — to build community, engage with expanding audiences and generate attendance.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS







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# Organization

Align the organizational structure — departments and roles — to meet the opportunities of the future. Establish performance measures to set expectations and achieve strategic goals. Define and foster an increasingly integrated internal organizational culture. Undertake strategic hiring to achieve an agile and diverse workforce, and evolve a governance structure reflective of the changing needs of our Museum.

## Initiatives

- Define the organizational culture that will achieve our strategic goals, and incorporate it into the requirements for our leadership and management positions as well as our performance management system.
- Strengthen the Leadership Team with new positions: Chief of Learning and Community Engagement to oversee the Museum's revitalized education and public engagement programs; and Chief of Curatorial Administration, to integrate curatorial functions within the organization and create increasingly shared accountability.
- Identify which new challenges staff should undertake. Discontinue those activities that no longer meet our priorities. Determine where new positions need to be created and recruited for externally. Establish hiring priorities; first and foremost, Curatorial Chairs.
- Evolve a purposeful recruitment process that builds a diverse complement of staff, volunteers, and governance. In doing so, reflect the demographics and key industries of the City of Boston and values of our Museum.
- Refine the existing performance management system, re-focusing staff and management objectives on Strategic Plan deliverables, desired values and behaviors, and rigorous metrics. Create programs and realign resource allocation to strategically encourage and reward achievement and innovation. Provide management training and professional development in anticipation of the cultural shift envisioned by the Strategic Plan.
- Assess Board Committee structure in light of current museum best practices. Realign the Standing Committee structure — and related ad hoc working groups — to provide guidance and support for Strategic Plan initiatives and ensure overall success.
- Assess the Museum's Visiting Committees and Friends Groups and implement recommendations to achieve greater clarity of purpose and engagement.

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# Sustainability

Employ an overarching financial strategy that addresses the MFA's current and future well-being. Increase quality data collection to support decision-making. Enhance our technology infrastructure to proactively anticipate and ensure support across the Strategic Plan.

## Initiatives

- Develop a financial model that is responsive to changing external conditions and the priorities established by the Strategic Plan.
- Plan and initiate fundraising strategies that will create deeper loyalty among existing supporters and develop new donors and funding sources. Conceptualize and plan a campaign in support of the Museum's future needs and ambitions, including building improvements and a new campus plan.
- Form a business measurement team to expand research and data collection activity within the MFA. Introduce new data analytics to decision-making processes across the organization.
- Enhance our technology infrastructure in support of our goals.













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# 2020 Outcomes

## Financial Strength

- Increased attendance
- Increased membership
- Increased audience-driven income and earned revenue sources
- Increased fundraising and expanded donor base
- Fiscal sustainability including campaign plan

## Institutional Excellence

- Enhanced reputation around quality and care of the collection, its display, and interpretation
- Clarity and consistent delivery of MFA brand
- Critical acclaim and recognition by those in the field
- Greater diversity of visitors, volunteers, governance, and staff
- Improved visitor experience
- Strong reputation in the cultural sector as one of the best museums in which to work
- Revitalized Visiting Committees and Friends Groups
- New Board Committee structure

## Community Engagement

- Recognized as a key collaborator and participant in the life of the City of Boston
  - Relevant and timely celebration of 150th Anniversary
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# Process

## **Staff Working Group convened—January 2016**

Comprised of 21 staff from across the Museum, organized into teams based on three central ideas: how we INVITE, WELCOME, and ENGAGE our visitors. The Staff Working Group put forward an initial set of recommended strategies and projects.

## **Trustee Task Force convened—January 2016**

Comprised of 9 Trustees, each assigned to one of the Staff Working Group teams. The Trustee Task Force collaborated with staff on idea generation and over the course of the process provided guidance to Museum leadership on Board involvement, agendas, presentations, and approval.

## **Expansion of Staff Teams—Summer 2016**

The Staff Working Group expanded to seven Goal-Based Strategy Teams numbering nearly 70 staff including all Department Heads, Senior Curators, and Conservation Lab Heads. Teams further strengthened and honed proposed strategies and projects with input from their departmental colleagues.

## **Leadership Team Review—Fall 2016/Winter 2017**

The Leadership Team reviewed, refined, further developed, and prioritized the work of the staff teams.

## **Board of Trustee Involvement—ongoing**

Updates were provided to Trustees at regular Board meetings over the course of the planning process. In addition, Trustees engaged in interactive workshops and breakout sessions.

## **Staff and Volunteer Involvement—ongoing**

All staff and volunteers were invited to participate early on by providing input at an “Ideas in Circulation” event, followed by several other engagement opportunities including informal coffee sessions with the Director. Regular updates were provided at bimonthly All Staff meetings, and a dedicated e-mail address was created as an open channel for ongoing input and feedback.

## **Constituency Updates—ongoing**

At milestone moments throughout the process, key constituencies—including Governance, Patrons and Museum Council—received updates about the process and direction of the Strategic Plan.

# Participation

## Trustee Task Force for Strategic Planning

Jill Avery, *Co-Chair*

Kevin Callaghan, *Co-Chair*

Barbara Alfond

David Croll, *ex-officio*

Tarun Khanna

Jeffrey Leiden

Joyce Linde

Carl Martignetti

Amy Poorvu

Roger Servison

Lis Tarlow, *ex-officio*

## Leadership Team

Matthew Teitelbaum, *Ann and Graham Gund Director*

Kristin Ferguson, *Chief of the Director's Office*

Katie Getchell, *Chief Brand Officer, Deputy Director*

Mark Kerwin, *Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Director*

Maria Muller, *Chief of External Relations, Deputy Director*

Chris Newth, *Chief of Curatorial Administration*

Edward Saywell, *Chief of Exhibitions Strategy and Gallery Displays*

## Strategic Plan Project Team

Cynthia Glott, *Senior Director, External Relations and Governance*

Jill Goldstein, *Project Manager, Strategic Planning Initiative*

Beth Nowers, *Consultant*

Julianna Buck, *Executive Assistant, External Relations*



## Goal-Based Strategy Teams

*\* Indicates Staff Working Group Member*

### Collect Purposefully

Chris Newth, *Co-Leader*

Ben Weiss, *Co-Leader*

Elliot Davis

Kristen Gresh\*

Pam Hatchfield

Kelly Hays

Frederick Ilchman

Annette Manick

Jen Mergel

Meredith Montague

Pam Parmal

Phoebe Segal\*

Matthew Siegal

### Invite Boldly

Katie Getchell, *Co-Leader*

Dawn Griffin, *Co-Leader\**

Larry Berman

Jeff Bradford\*

Julie Crites\*

Karen Frascona

Darcy Kuronen

Gary Mak\*

Tom Michie

Anne Morse

Liz Munsell\*

Janet O'Donoghue

### Welcome Warmly

Ed Gargiulo, *Co-Leader\**

Matt Murphy, *Co-Leader*

Ronni Baer

Ellen Bragalone

Brooke DiGiovanni Evans\*

Nonie Gadsden

Anne Havinga

Nicki Luongo

Camille Mendoza\*

George Scharoun\*

Lauren Whitley

Linton Young\*

### Collaborate Generously and Engage Deeply

Barbara Martin, *Co-Leader*

Edward Saywell, *Co-Leader\**

Linda Apple\*

Marietta Cambareri

Tom Catalini\*

Jacki Elgar

Gordon Hanlon

Erica Hirshler

Christine Kondoleon

Debra LaKind

Rhona MacBeth

Maureen Melton

Richard Newman

Adam Tessier\*

Emiko Usui

Lucinda Zuniga

### Financial Strategy

Mark Kerwin, *Co-Leader*

Pat Lyden, *Co-Leader*

Rita Freed

Cynthia Glott

Kathryn Gunsch\*

Rachel Harrington

Patrick McMahon\*

Maria Muller

Cynthia O'Brien

Leah Sullivan

John Toulmin

Susan Veroff

### Organizational Strategy

Kristin Ferguson, *Co-Leader*

Jane O'Reilly, *Co-Leader*

Katie Getchell

Cynthia Glott

Mark Kerwin

Maria Muller

Chris Newth

Edward Saywell\*

### Digital Strategy

Tom Catalini, *Co-Leader\**

Janet O'Donoghue, *Co-Leader*

Jeff Bradford\*

Kathryn Gunsch\*

Kelly Hays

Debra LaKind

Gary Mak\*

Patrick McMahon\*

Brendan Mulligan

George Scharoun\*


Adam Tessier\*

Emiko Usui

Ben Weiss

Linton Young\*





The Calderwood Courtyard was transformed during one of four #mfaNOW Overnight events — free, all-night parties centered around engagement with art — that attracted 23,000 attendees in the fall of 2016.



Museum of Fine Arts Boston

**Image Credits** COVER: Calderwood Courtyard during #mfaNOW Overnight event, Fall 2016. INSIDE FRONT COVER: Edgar Degas, *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*, original model 1878–81, cast after 1921. Frederick Brown Fund and Contributions from William Claflin and William Emerson. On view in Sidney and Esther Rabb Gallery, 255. Photograph © Tony Rinaldo. PAGE 3: Choi Jeong Hwa, *Breathing Flower*, 2016. Fabric, electric air pump, LED Lights and Motor. Courtesy of the artist and Park Ryu Sook Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Huntington Avenue Entrance installation, Summer 2016, as part of “Megacities Asia.” PAGE 4: Ellsworth Kelly, *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red* (detail), 1968. Oil on canvas. Gift of the Bank of America Corporation. Copyright © Ellsworth Kelly. Photograph © Tony Rinaldo. PAGE 7: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Huntington Avenue Entrance, 2017. PAGE 8: Frida Kahlo, *Dos Mujeres (Salvadora y Herminia)*, 1928. Charles H. Bayley Picture and Paintings Fund, William Francis Warden Fund, Sophie M. Friedman Fund, Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow Fund, Tompkins Collection—Arthur Gordon Tompkins Fund, Gift of Jessie H. Wilkinson—Jessie H. Wilkinson Fund, and Robert M. Rosenberg Family Fund. On view in the Robert and Jane Burke Gallery, 335. PAGE 11: Aerial view of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Map data ©2017 Google Imagery ©2017, DigitalGlobe, MassGIS, Commonwealth of Massachusetts EOE, Sanborn, USDA Farm Service Agency. PAGE 12: Art making in Education Center in Druker Family Pavilion, Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art, during #mfaNOW Overnight event, Fall 2016. PAGE 15: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Huntington Avenue Entrance, Bank of America Plaza, 2016. PAGE 16: Museum staff exhibition planning. PAGE 19: Visitors in William I. Koch Gallery, 250. Photograph © Tony Rinaldo. PAGES 20 AND 21: Curator and conservator examine the conservation of Claude Monet’s *La Japonaise*. All photographs © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, unless otherwise noted.