



Introduction

The Fleming Museum of Art opened in 1931 with its beaux-arts entrance and broad lawn facing the busy thoroughfare leading through Burlington from Lake Champlain. The Museum was heralded by the *Burlington Free Press* as "a practical place of learning — a vibrant, ongoing educational institution for both children and adults." Built by the University of Vermont to house its growing collections, the Fleming was unusual in its founders' intention that it serve not only the academy, but also the community in which it resides: one of the missions of a land-grant institution.

The Fleming Museum has served the UVM campus and the greater Burlington community for almost ninety years. As the most extensive fine art and anthropological collection in the state of Vermont, the Fleming's holdings represent worldwide cultures dating from ancient Mesopotamia to present-day America. Now numbering over 25,000 objects, the collection supports teaching and learning at the University of Vermont in innovative ways and diverse areas, from the College of Arts and Sciences to the STEM disciplines and Medicine. Along with its collection, the Museum's ambitions and successes have grown exponentially, reflected in its educational reach, international exhibition profile, award-winning publications, and its evolving, innovative approach to the purpose and use of collections in the twenty-first century.

The Fleming's assets include a broad collection of historical global art; the premier collection of Vermont landscape painting, covering three centuries; a strong teaching collection of fine art, anthropological artifacts, and material culture that richly supports curricular use by a broad range of disciplines; an outstanding staff, whose professionalism, creativity, and dedication achieving unexpected influence; a McKim, Mead & White building with one of the most elegant architectural spaces in the state; and a location that faces both the heart of campus and the Burlington community.



At the same time, the Fleming faces a number of challenges. The Museum's 1931 facility limits the capacity to acquire contemporary art and store current collections. Larger and more flexible spaces are needed for students to work directly with the collections. The Fleming staff, with single-person departments, is 30% the size of its peer institutions. The closing of the Museum's original entrance on Colchester Avenue in the mid-1980s creates a physical disconnection to the broader Burlington community.

Currently, the Fleming is planning a transformative project to reconnect the Museum's building to the life of the community of which it is a part, working with Campus Planning Services, the University of Vermont Foundation, and UVM programming partners to reopen the original entrance. A subsequent transformation is envisioned for the south side of the building facing the heart of campus, creating spaces for audience engagement with global contemporary art, and larger, flexible object study space for students and faculty to work with the collections on a scale that can accommodate the rapidly growing use of object-based pedagogy at the University of Vermont and beyond, attracting scholars, school groups, and community members.

This Strategic Plan charts the Fleming Museum's course for the next three years in collaboration with the UVM administration, the Fleming Board of Advisors and staff, UVM faculty, and community partners. The Strategic Plan is an iterative, dynamic process informed by stakeholders and guided by work plans, timetables, and responsibility matrices.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Fleming Museum of Art serves as a gateway for active cultural exchange and critical thinking in our communities and an essential learning resource for the University of Vermont. Through the experience of our diverse collection, dynamic exhibition schedule, and innovative educational programming, people of all ages are inspired to discover the arts and cultures of the world.



GOAL 1

Ensure Academic Excellence and Contribute to Student Success

Over the past 20 years, the Fleming has become an interdisciplinary classroom for students across campus, providing experiential learning through object-based pedagogy. Fleming curatorial and education staff work with faculty in disciplines as diverse as engineering, physical therapy, global and regional studies, environmental studies, history, classics, and medicine, as well as art and anthropology, to present artistic, cultural, and historical primary source material that supports and enhances curricula. Student engagement ranges from close observation practice and research on collection objects to internships and class-curated exhibitions that contribute to professional development. We are committed to building on this strong foundation through technology, partnerships, and collaborations, sustaining those already established with the Center for Cultural Pluralism, Center for Teaching and Learning, Gund Institute for Environment, Lane Series, Honors College, Office of Community-Engaged Learning, Special Collections, TAP Seminars; as well as the Departments of Art & Art History and Anthropology (Museum Studies IDM), Department of English (Painted Word Poetry Series), among other academic departments across campus (exhibitions, programs, and projects).

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Launch and promote our online collections database to increase web access to records for the Fleming's 25,000 objects, significantly expanding and facilitating teaching and learning opportunities for faculty and students, scholars, and the public. FY20
- 2 Formalize the Museum's support role in a robust Individually Designed Minor in Museum Studies, in collaboration with the departments of Art & Art History, History, Anthropology, and Global Studies; with deans and faculty, determine the feasibility of a formal Museum Studies Minor. FY21
- 3 Develop an exhibitions advisory council to work with the Fleming curatorial and programming staff to optimize curricular value of Fleming exhibitions and programs. FY21
- 4 Develop a sustainable Collections Plan that articulates our philosophy on the purpose, development, and use of the Fleming's collection, and a Collections Care Plan that considers both offsite and onsite storage facilities. FY20-21
- 5 Assign a team to plan the expansion of the Fleming on the campus side, with purpose-built classrooms to facilitate object-based teaching and learning; spaces for housing, exhibiting, and teaching with large-scale contemporary art; and design of a new, general purpose classroom. FY22-23



GOAL 2

Expand Community Engagement and Enhance Visitor Experience

The Fleming Museum is unusual in the field of academic museums, conceived and created by the University of Vermont not only to serve a teaching role within the academy, but to serve its local community. When the Fleming Museum opened in 1931, it faced the community on Colchester Avenue and offered year-round public programs for all ages. The Fleming has remained committed to its public programming throughout its 90-year history; we now seek to reengage the physical connection between the building and its community, reopen in the summers, and expand daily hours year-round.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Develop a sustainable staffing plan and funding model to ensure year-round access, including summer exhibitions and programming. FY20-23s
- 2 Raise \$2M for the Fleming Gateway Project, in concert with the UVM Foundation, to reopen the Colchester Avenue entrance and provide a public northern gateway to central campus. FY20-21
- 3 Create innovative and artistic landscaping that showcases UVM's commitment to the environment and a rich collaboration between the arts and sciences (Addendum B, see attached document). FY20-21
- 4 Expand youth access to the Fleming through sustainable education programs. FY21-22
- 5 Evaluate satisfaction with expanded summer community programs and learning outcomes achieved. FY21-23
- 6 Increase diversity and inclusion in the Fleming board, staff, exhibitions, and audiences. FY21-23
- 7 Prioritize cultural diversity in contemporary art acquisitions that help reinterpret historical cultural collections and represent a diverse audience. FY22-23
- 8 Expand awareness of online collections database to support teaching, learning, and design and artistic inspiration. FY20-21
- 9 Establish a planning process for expansion of the Fleming to the campus side, with classrooms for object-based teaching for K-12 classes, and for use by scholars, researchers, artists, and designers, and community members. FY22-23



GOAL 3

Build financial and staffing sustainability

In order to meet its basic mission and to achieve the above goals, it is imperative that the Fleming Museum build financial sustainability, raise major project funds, and ensure a manageable workload for our staff.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Raise the philanthropic capacity of the Fleming Board of Advisors by 25%, in concert with the UVM Foundation. FY20-21
- 2 Raise an annual fund of \$120,000 to contribute to financial sustainability. FY20-23
- Raise \$2M in direct funds for construction of the Gateway Project, in concert with the UVM Foundation. FY20-21
- 4 Raise \$3M endowment or secure \$125,000 in current use funds on an annual basis to remain open for the summer months, in concert with the UVM Foundation. FY20-23
- 5 Expand private events in the Marble Court to increase earned income from event rentals in collaboration with University Event Services. FY22



ASPIRATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Expand Staffing

Secure the following, in concert with the UVM Foundation, UVM leadership, and Fleming Board. These two positions would replace, respectively, a part-time collections assistant, and a part-time education assistant, both temporary, hourly, grant funded positions:

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 \$3M Directorial Endowment
- 2 \$2M Curatorial Endowment

By endowing these two leadership positions in the Museum, the Fleming will be able to direct existing funds to support additional curatorial and education support. Specifically, the additional funding from a *Directorial Endowment* will provide for a 12-month 1.0 FTE assistant curator for collections and exhibitions in order to sustain and deepen our ongoing commitment to academic excellence and student success. The position would assist both the Fleming's Curator, and the Fleming's Manager of Collections and Exhibitions, in caring for, researching, and publishing on our 25,000-object collection; advancing our exhibitions program; and working with UVM students in these areas.

The *Curatorial Endowment* would free up existing funding for a 12-month 1.0 FTE assistant curator for education and public programs to sustain and build on our ongoing commitment to community engagement and visitor experience, as well as academic excellence and student success. The position would assist in the conception and organization of the programming for students, faculty, K-12, families, adults, seniors, New Americans, and audiences with special needs, as well as working with UVM students to these ends.

ADDENDUM A

STAFFING SCENARIOS

Goal 2 of the Fleming's Strategic Plan: **Expand Community Engagement and Enhance Visitor Experience**, includes as one of its objectives: "Work with UVM Administration and Foundation to identify the best strategy to fund or endow staffing and programing to ensure the Museum's capacity to reopen for the summer months, [and] to remain open on select holiday weekends...."

BACKGROUND

From 1931 to 2014 the Fleming was open year-round. While it is not clear how the galleries were guarded in its early decades, from some point, likely mid-20th century, through the 1980s, UVM security guards provided this service. Those positions were cut by the early 1990s and replaced by a staff of work-study students numbering up to 80 per semester. In the summer months not covered by the Federal Work-Study Program, the Fleming has paid temporary wages to UVM students for gallery staffing. Beginning in 2014, cumulative budget cuts, as well as a staff need for planning time, led to our decision to close the Museum for some or all of the summer months. Since that time, our fundraising landscape has narrowed, making the loss of general funds even more critical. The passing of several major annual donors, depletion of large multi-year gifts and grants, increasingly competitive federal funding, increases in the benefit rate, and changes to our galleries requiring a larger guard staff, have all have converged to increase the cost of remaining open in the summers.

The Fleming is currently open to the public for 7 months of the year, closed for all UVM holiday weekends, and for winter, spring, and summer recesses. The Fleming's guest services staff (gallery guards and front desk receptionists) is composed of UVM work-study students. The advantages to this arrangement are the costs-savings afforded to the Museum by utilizing the FWS Program, and the professional training opportunities we are able to offer our students. Disadvantages include closing on all holiday weekends; the need to hire a separate guest services staff for the summer; and the inherent risk involved in having students guard art, particularly when we are exhibiting valuable and publicized works on loan from public or private collections.

SCENARIOS

We present two potential scenarios in which the Fleming remains open for the summer, along with the associated costs of both:

- 1 Hire a professional guard staff, retaining a small group of FWS student gallery positions, extending daily hours, remaining open all summer with full exhibition and programming schedule, and remaining open most UVM holiday weekends.
- 2 Continue to hire work-study student guards and pay temp wages for the summer, with full exhibition and programming schedule, same daily hours as currently, and closed UVM holiday weekends.

SCENARIO 1

Professional Gallery Attendant Staff

This estimate includes extended hours, open through most UVM holidays, breaks, academic recesses, and summer.

6 Gallery Attendants @\$16/hr, 50 weeks/Yr: **\$211,200**

UVM Hourly Benefit Rate: 11.6%

Annual: **\$235,699**

*UVM work study students would be supplemented alongside the professional gallery staff to ensure proper levels of staffing during the year

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SCENARIO 2

Student Gallery Staff, Summer

This estimate includes our current hours and temporary student wages.

* No funding for FWS staffing during academic year

6 Student Gallery Attendants @\$11/hr, 16 weeks/Yr: **\$36,960**

UVM Hourly Benefit Rate 8.6%

Annual: **\$40,138**

ADDITIONAL SUMMER FUNDING

Exhibitions, programming, and outreach

Summer Exhibitions: \$50,000
Summer Programming: \$8,000
Summer Marketing: \$10,000

Annual: **68,000**

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