

STRATEGIC PLAN





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lehigh University Art Galleries (LUAG) is an invaluable resource for teaching, learning and research for both the University and the region. With key accomplishments over the past four years that include a tripling of attendance and a doubled operating budget, LUAG's impact is growing. With support from a three-year federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and with the guidance of consultant Laurel Molloy of Innovations Quantified, the LUAG team developed strategic thinking approaches as well as a strategic plan in order to guide the organization's work over the next five years. The three central pillars of the plan are

- 1) **Imagine**, with a focus on preparations for a stand-alone art museum building,
- 2) **Improve**, which centers on achieving accreditation and bolstering current operations, and
- 3) **Include**, which aims to grow strategic partnerships and DEAI efforts in order to broaden audiences and access.

During the process of creating this plan, input was gathered through stakeholder interviews, surveys and analyses of existing data to ensure the plan's responsiveness to community needs. LUAG commits to utilizing this strategic plan as a living document that continually guides the organization, while allowing for flexibility and input as needed.

THREE CENTRAL PILLARS



BACKGROUND: BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Founded in 1926, Lehigh University Art Galleries approaches its 100-year anniversary with an impressive foundation on which to build. With over 18,000 artworks from diverse time periods and cultures, seven gallery spaces on three campuses, an outdoor sculpture collection of over 50 works, and two art study centers, LUAG has become a critical resource for campus and community.

In the summer of 2018 the LUAG team began work to revise its mission statement in order to ensure relevance and to guide the organization's work into the foreseeable future. The new mission, adopted in August 2019 is: ***We advance critical thinking, cultural understanding, and well-being for campus and community through transformative experiences with art.***

From July 2018-June 2022, LUAG focused on five key priorities:

- 1) bolster infrastructure and facilities,
- 2) create a program strategy that increases engagement,
- 3) raise visibility,
- 4) increase support, and
- 5) address staffing needs.

Guided by these priorities, the LUAG team achieved significant progress over this four-year period, including a tripling of attendance (2,772 in FY18 which grew to 8,325 in FY22), programming growth to nearly 250

events annually, doubling of art storage space, and expanding digital access through the creation of a new website. Other major accomplishments included the hiring of LUAG's first Curator of Education, as well as the first Coordinator of Museum Experience and Access, and prioritizing the professional learning of the LUAG staff through attending national conferences and study trips.

With these accomplishments, support and engagement with LUAG increased. LUAG was awarded three federal grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), five state grants, and began to grow individual contributions through a new Membership Program that launched in July 2021. Through the creation of a Director's Advisory Council, LUAG expanded its expertise and input from alumni and supporters, as well as fundraising. In 2021, LUAG received an extraordinary gift from alumnus Kenneth Woodcock '65: a \$5M Director's Endowment that will provide unrestricted support for generations to come.

LUAG's new strategic plan builds on the momentum that has been achieved over the past four years with an ambitious vision to prepare for the construction of a possible stand-alone art museum, accreditation, and expanded partnerships in order to build audiences and access.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure a shared foundational understanding of terms and process, the entire LUAG team was trained in the spring of 2021 on the *5 Stages of Strategic Planning*, and oriented to how LUAG would approach each one. Members of LUAG's Advisory Council were also brought into the discussion. Goals for the process included:

- 1) articulate priorities and strategies for the next 5 years;
- 2) include a diversity of internal and external voices;
- 3) understand and articulate where LUAG can add value in light of evolving landscape (at Lehigh and in broader community);
- 4) communicate with internal and external stakeholders about who LUAG is, resources offered, and the seriousness and rigor with which it approaches its work;
- 5) ensure priorities and strategies articulated in plan authentically meet needs that exist and what people are aiming to do.

Given its work over the previous five years, LUAG had already identified some possible areas to explore through its strategic planning process. Using those as a starting point, six key stakeholders (including university representatives and program partners) were interviewed in the summer of 2021 to help inform the plan's main priorities, leading to the confirmation of the three key aims (Imagine, Improve, Include). Additional feedback on these aims was sought via a survey of Lehigh community members, which was completed by 184 people in the fall of 2021. Findings from the survey, as well as external research on the priorities of the broader community and input from LUAG team members and advisors, were then used to refine each aim's specific objectives. The final plan emerged from there.



We advance critical thinking, cultural understanding, and well-being for campus and community through transformative experiences with art.

— LUAG Mission

THREE KEY AIMS: IMAGINE, IMPROVE, INCLUDE

1

IMAGINE

Envision and plan a new and bold stand-alone art museum: the Lehigh University Museum of Art (LUMA)

- Objectives:**
- Conduct feasibility study with contracted architecture/planning firm in partnership with CAS Arts Departments/Units, University Architect/Facilities and other key stakeholders
 - Research peer/aspirational peer museums through interviews and study trips, particularly academic museum capital projects from the past 10 years
 - Contract with consulting firm to implement rebranding process for LUMA to include renewed visual identity, website, and marketing vehicles
 - With DAR, develop and implement fundraising strategy for LUMA with aim for public-facing launch to coincide with the 100-year anniversary of the art galleries at Lehigh in FY26

2

IMPROVE

Bolster current museum operations, capacity, and support

- Objectives:**
- Receive accreditation from American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
 - Participate in MAP peer review (Collections Stewardship) in FY23; Receive Core Documents Verification in FY24; Participate in MAP peer review (Organizational Strategy) in FY25
 - Improve collections files and management; increase public digital access
 - Analysis of existing Collections Management System (CMS) in FY23; Implement migration to new CMS in FY24; Place full collection online by FY27
 - Implement strategic exhibition & program plans that prioritize capacity building and outcomes over outputs
 - Host at least one traveling exhibition per year, accompanied by financial support, in order to increase staff capacity, build professional relationships, and diversify overall program offerings
 - Using outcomes framework and theory of change model developed in FY20-22, prioritize measurable shifts in audience attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors over outputs
 - Increase staffing to include at least 3 new hires in key areas of need by FY27
 - If approved by Lehigh BOT and Leadership, launch capital campaign for LUMA

3

INCLUDE

Build key relationships on campus and in community

- Objectives:**
- Develop and implement DEAI Plan in partnership with Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity and HR
 - Grow LUAG Membership Program by at least 10% annually
 - Build engagement across all Lehigh colleges with the goal of increasing student visitation from each of Lehigh's 5 colleges by 10% annually
 - Build robust community audience through strategic partnerships and co-created/co-planned engagement, including the launch of programs and accommodations for people with disabilities
 - Pilot and implement bilingual (English/Spanish) interpretive materials

NEXT STEPS

To be successful, strategic plans must be living documents. As the University implements an institution-wide strategic planning process in the 2022-23 academic year, LUAG will remain flexible and seek alignment with the aims of our parent organization. LUAG also commits to remaining responsive to needs in our ever-changing external environment, particularly as we emerge from the pandemic.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
IMLS, Museums Empowered | Laurel Molloy, Innovations Quantified | LUAG Director's Advisory Council | LUAG Student Advisory Committee | LUAG intern Olivia Dehoff | Associate Professor and Chair Nicholas Sawicki, Department of Art, Architecture and Design | CAS Dean Robert Flowers | Chris Cook, Vice President for Strategic Planning | LUAG team

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