The Campus Art Museum: A Qualitative Study
IV. Challenges and Conditions of Success for Campus Art Museums

A Report to the The Samuel H. Kress Foundation

By Corrine Glesne
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Challenges and Conditions of Success for Campus Art Museums

Creativity and innovation is really at the heart of what a great education is about. If there’s one important thing you get out of an education beyond a little technical knowledge, it’s how to frame a problem. That’s a creative act...and the arts are really relevant to that. (university provost)

What does it mean to have an art museum at a college or university? Is it somewhat peripheral, the first to feel the pinch of economic cuts? Or might the art museum be well-integrated into the various missions of the institution? Most likely, campus art museums line up along a peripheral/central continuum of sorts, relative to the parent organization. Assuming this is so, what kinds of things make a difference in how campus art museums function and are perceived? This report explores some possible conditions for the success of campus art museums, garnered through 129 interviews with campus administrators, museum staff, faculty, students, and community members at seven sites. Museums that were recipients of Kress Collections (twenty-three) were invited to self-identify as exemplary. Out of those that demonstrated well their exemplarity, maximum-variation sampling strategy was used to select cases that varied on specific indicators (public/private; rural/urban; small/large enrollments; etc.). These exemplary museums face challenges that, we assume, other museums also confront. This report also identifies some of those challenges and how exemplary campus museums are addressing them.

The report begins with metaphors that study participants use to describe their campus art museum and suggests that these metaphors relate to ways of perceiving and interacting with museums. The second section discusses institutional histories and cultures that help set the context for positive attitudes towards campus art museums. Although a museum may enjoy a supportive campus climate, it has not necessarily avoided challenging times. A difficult period for a museum often parallels a hiatus in museum direction and leadership. The third section focuses on the difference inspirational leadership can make. Circumstances sometimes make things seemingly impossible even for talented and committed leaders. The major circumstance facing museums today is the economic situation. The fourth section attends to these difficulties. Nonetheless, some campus communities are arguing that the art museum is more important than ever. The final section provides testimony to the contributions of campus art museums.

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Metaphor and Meaning of the Campus Art Museum

Clearly museum is almost the wrong word. It gives off this aura... of exhibits which just hang on the wall... and people drift past looking at them. It’s not very interactive and it’s not very engaged.... The rethinking has started to make it something different, much more a Visual Cultural Center... and not just a museum.2 (humanities professor)

This professor’s observation draws attention to the fact that campus art museums can mean so much more than paintings on a wall or a collection of objects. A woman with severe Alzheimer’s, for example, stared at a 3rd century tapestry, thread-bare and full of holes, linked it to her mostly forgotten life as a seamstress, and told the curator that she could fix it. Study participants perceive the campus art museum in different ways and spontaneously resort to metaphors to describe their museum, as illustrated in Table IV.1. Each metaphor portrays a way in which museums are operating and being used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum Metaphor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gem</td>
<td>“It’s a jewel.” (student)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“For its size, it’s spectacular... It’s sort of this little gem.” (faculty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>“The University uses the pearl... It’s not necessarily the connotation - it’s distinguished, but that’s not what this is just about, it’s not a temple. I’d like to say bits of the world are here throughout time and history... The story of our humanity is here.” (curator)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I like to think of it as a catalyst. We are trying to ramp up the ways that we can make the museum and its holdings central to all kinds of discussions that take place at a university, that they can be points of departure for dialogues, for research, for performance, or teaching.” (curator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>“We always try to keep in mind that our museums are the equivalent for some of our faculty of the laboratories that our scientists need, that we need these materials for the research that some of our faculty do and for teaching.” (administrator)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>“The museum is like a library to a lot of people. It’s a place that you have reverence for knowledge and it’s a place that you know the information and pieces will always be there. You can always come back to them and they’re not going away and you can come in whenever you want and they’ll still be there.” (student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portal</td>
<td>“I see it as one of the portals to the community... We help make the teaching and learning at the university visible to the wider community.” (curator)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“It somehow is a gathering place... an intellectual center... I see us as having this way to the town and ideally to the rest of the state... as being an intellectual and creative center. I think we are doing a lot of inspiring students and others to come here and make their own work - to design programs and write poetry and make art and go and think about architecture. We are trying to inspire people in all areas of campus and in the community to view this as a resource and I think we are serving as a kind of creative caldron of ideas.” (curator)</td>
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2. Ellipses (…) indicate that a few words have been edited from the transcripts for the sake of space. Care was taken to not change the meaning of transcribed responses.
Some describe their campus art museum as gem-like in beauty and value. Perhaps because a huge gem show was in Tucson when I visited, the gem metaphor was particularly popular in describing the University of Arizona Museum of Art (UAMA). Interestingly, as often as the UAMA is described as a gem, it is also referred to as a hidden gem:

*We are sort of a hidden treasure.... (UAMA staff)*

...*someone dressed in a beautiful, stunning ball gown.... but sequestered, not as well seen as she should be.... She’s not out in the front room of the party.... She’s the little gem in the back room. (arts professor)*

The museum as gem attracts, it is special, beautiful, and valuable. It is a recipient of the gaze. Others emphasize the narrative aspects of their museum. More active than a collection of objects to be admired, the art museum can also tell stories and be the site for the production of multiple narratives, as noted by a curator: “Increasingly, we are finding opportunities to bring people together around art to talk about any number of things, whether it’s climate change or gender issues, or what have you.”

Campus administrators, in particular, describe the art museum as a research or teaching laboratory, comparable to those in science. As a research laboratory, art history students might study specific works of art or education students might observe a grade school tour and how children talk about art. As a teaching laboratory, faculty across disciplines explore ways to expand the scope of their courses and teaching methods through use of the art museum, as described by an administrator at Oberlin College:

*We see the museum as a teaching tool, as a pedagogical tool. It’s just an incredible resource for us to have.... What I think is effective at Oberlin in particular is that the art museum isn’t considered the domain of the art department.... But there are classes everywhere across campus that use the museum from economics to biology and neuroscience.... What I think is impressive about Oberlin is that clearly the academic program as a whole owns the museum.*

Another common metaphor is the campus art museum as library. A library’s resources are used for knowledge generation, research, and pleasure; the same is possible with a museum’s collections. Just as a good library is responsive to the needs of students and faculty, so too is the good campus art museum, as noted by an administrator at the University of Kansas (KU): “I know I could call down here and the art museum would go out of its way to help a student.”

Staff at several museums in the study focus attention on interactions with both campus and wider communities. This effort is reflected in how interviewees talk about their museum as a kind of portal or gateway that extends the museum beyond its walls and also draws people within. Although I heard this metaphor elsewhere as well, it was at KU where the Spencer Museum of Art (Spencer) puts considerable effort into extending the museum beyond the walls of the building,
that it is particularly prevalent. In describing the Spencer’s efforts to reach out and connect, respondents used images of a portal, the sun or a star. A museum intern likened the Spencer to “one star within a constellation... all the things we have going on here, sort of like this nuclear fission of ideas just sort of bubbling away, but also we have these connections to other places within the broader community and also within the campus.” The images of the Spencer as a portal and place of “bubbling ideas” fit well with what I heard and saw there. As a portal, the museum is a gateway and a link among people, resources, and ideas.

Several other metaphors include the campus art museum as a nursery, important in nourishing future artists, art historians, and curators. Interviews with students and museum staff provide evidence that a good art museum can help, indeed, to create artists, art historians, museum directors, curators, art educators, as well as an educated and interested public. A few describe the campus art museum as the heart or center of the college or university, particularly at Indiana University (IU) where that was also physically true. Situated in the middle of the campus, thousands of students go by the museum everyday from their dorms to classes on a path known as the “long march.” In addition to being physically at the center of the campus, the Indiana University Art Museum (IUAM) was, in 2010, also enjoying being at the center of attention as part of a Year of the Museum initiative out of the provost’s office.

If given a list of these metaphors and asked to choose which fit their museum, interviewees probably would say that their campus art museums are, for example, both a portal and a laboratory, or a gem and a nursery. The museum plays multiple functions. The dominant metaphors in use, however, tend to reflect a group’s expectations and actions. If people see the museum as a gem and treasure, they are moved to value and protect it. But as a gem, it is somewhat set apart and positioned for a different type of interaction than, for instance, the museum as laboratory. Viewing the museum as a lab, people are more apt to think about interactions with collections or visitors. Seeing the museum as a library, faculty and students across disciplines seek out ways to make use of its resources. Thinking of the museum as a portal or gateway extends even further the scope and reach of the museum. Metaphors help shape actions. Together, the metaphors that interviewees use suggest perspectives on what campus art museum are and could be.

### Supportive Campus Cultures and Structures

Like metaphors, the cultures in which we are embedded affect how we think and what we do. Two possibly interrelated campus cultures assist in creating a climate for institutional support of campus art museums. One is a history and culture on campus of supporting the arts and the other is an institutional culture of collaborative and interdisciplinary learning. Organizational structures and procedures can also unwittingly affect campus art museums. Two identified through this research include the positioning of the museum within the overall campus structure and the ways in which general funds are allocated.
History and Culture of Commitment to the Arts

Four of the seven art museums in the study (Allen Memorial Art Museum, IUAM, Spencer, and Snite Museum of Art) were established before 1950. The remaining three were founded between 1955 and 1974. Those museums with a longer history tended to be situated on campuses with a history of supporting and valuing all kinds of arts. For instance, two of these institutions have renowned music schools. Oberlin College exemplifies a commitment to making the arts an integral part of the education of its students. As a college administrator said:

The museum is certainly an integral part of the culture on campus. In that sense, it plays a role in what we like to model for students in terms of art and the arts actually being an integral part of life.... Maybe the Art Rental Program is the strongest example of that.... Last year, I was walking home in the early fall and two students that I knew a little bit on campus just basically stopped me on the street and said, “You have to come into our apartment.” They were incredibly proud that three of the four housemates were the first in line, which involved camping out. So in their apartment, they had a Picasso, a Monet, and I forget the third... but to me this idea that fine art is something you can make a part of your everyday life and that students actually really value doing that is incredibly powerful and that has to be one of the most powerful experiences that students get out of being at Oberlin. I see the museum... as demonstrating by practice that the arts and an appreciation of fine art is just a part of what being a good citizen is all about.

“I can’t even imagine a college world without art. It would be much more closed... I feel like it broadens your perspective or broadens your understanding of the world and people learn differently....”

“I can’t even imagine a college world without art,” stated another Oberlin administrator, “It would be much more closed.... I feel like it broadens your perspective or broadens your understanding of the world and people learn differently. To be able to see or touch or listen to art, it helps them learn and engage in ways that they otherwise wouldn’t.” A professor in science noted how the composition of Oberlin students reflects the College’s support of the arts:

I noticed that my students, my science students, really enjoyed going to the art museum and so I think they have a love of the arts... I suspect that if we didn’t have an art museum, we would have fewer of these art-related activities and so the nature of the student would change.

The history of Oberlin College helped to create this art-supporting culture. Over the years, Oberlin College developed a reputation for progressive and liberal thought. It is home to the oldest, continuously operating Conservatory of Music in the country. The museum, itself, was founded in 1917. Ellen Johnson, a professor of art history who was active at Oberlin College from 1940 to 1992, receives much of the credit for making the Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM) a vibrant part of the campus. She began the Art Rental Program in the 1940s, added works of new...
artists to the museum’s collections, and recognized the value of the Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian House, which she purchased, restored, and bequeathed to the museum. She appeared to have unfailing energy and vision. One person can make a large difference in a museum and have a lasting legacy, as will be discussed later.

Oberlin is a small private college situated in a small rural town. It might appear relatively easier for it to have an arts-centric culture and to cater to a particular kind of student than a large university. Several of the large public universities in the study, however, also appear to be institutions where the arts have been valued and supported over time. In these cases, specific people have again helped to develop the climate for this support. For example, Chancellor Franklin P. Murphy (1951-1960) helped make the arts a vital part of schooling at KU through creating endowed travel funds to bring artists to campus as well as to send local art faculty elsewhere for conferences and research. As described by a curator,

He also invested heavily in the history of art library and left many books to us.... He was on the national board of the Getty and things like that, so he was very well connected, very farsighted.... He was totally intoxicated with art and understood its significance within the university context.

The chancellor’s work was not done in a vacuum. Interviewees mentioned Professor Marilyn Stokstad who got funding and worked to integrate the Spencer into undergraduate courses at the university following the opening of the museum in 1978. According to a curator, “We had a string of people who were smart educators before they were even called educators.... We’ve had some important people early on.”

At IU, credit for helping establish a culture of supporting the arts goes to Herman Wells who was a student, faculty member, president from 1937 to 1962, and finally chancellor at IU. He was instrumental in the creation of the art museum, the school of music, and the opera house, among other things:

Art was a central part of his commitment to students. He believed that they needed to have art in their lives, that it would make a difference for them, so you see art in public spaces around campus, very high quality art... He was... one of the great visionaries for this campus and its commitment to art.... When he became president... he wanted IU to be a place where students from small towns in Indiana could experience the world and he also wanted the world to be part of this university.... He did a lot of things that were very controversial, but he did them with a grace and ease and absolute shrewdness that was remarkable and effective.... Thomas Hart Benton’s murals are sitting in a barn or warehouse somewhere and he said, "We’d like to have those." He recognized the importance of art in the human spirit. (administrator)

IU has continued to build on Herman Wells’ commitment to art, as noted by IUAM personnel: “The whole profile that [IU has] defined for itself is strength in the arts and humanities—the school of music, the value and treasures in the library..., the theater program..., all of those in aggregate are the great strength that IU prides itself on.”
Institutional commitment to the arts appears to be more recent at sites in the study with museums established since the 1950s. For example, although the University of Chicago (UC) “has a strong humanities core” (intern) and is well-known as intellectually rigorous, an emphasis on the arts as part of what the university has to offer is fairly recent and due, in large part to a new president who took a strong interest in the arts after commissioned research suggested its importance in attracting gifted high school students. (See Appendix IV.A. for an interpretive distillation of this and other interviews.)

That changes in perspectives and institutional emphases are possible may give some solace to other campus museums. The UAMA, for example, is dealing with the most severe budget cuts of any museum in the study. These cuts put the museum and remaining staff under pressure as each person struggles to do more with fewer resources. Creative and innovative, they find ways to make increased use of University of Arizona (U of A) students and community docents who are enthusiastic about and supportive of the museum, as are faculty who use the museum in classes. The budget challenges at the UAMA, however, are augmented by a university culture that supports science and technology with, as a respondent stated, “arts and culture, a kind of afterthought.” Various interviewees commented on this point:

This is a really extraordinary university. Its level of research is so off the charts.... When the administration is trying to sell itself, which it has to do continually with the legislature, the strength of medicine and science is always at the top of the list.... When pressed, they can talk eloquently about the importance of the arts and humanities and social sciences, but the reality is what resonates with the legislature is high tech, new technology, new discoveries, how that relates to jobs. (staff, UAMA)

What is scariest, I think, is that people are saying ‘teach your kids math and science’ but they don’t get that art ties into those in so many ways. (student, U of A)

A culture of commitment to the arts somewhat obviously suggests that college or university administrators and faculty would be supportive of the campus art museum. Less apparent is the relevance of a culture of collaborative and interdisciplinary learning. What connection might institutional emphases on collaborative and interdisciplinary research and teaching have to appreciation and use of campus art museums?

History and Culture of Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Learning

Collaboration and interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, or sometimes transdisciplinary, are current academic buzzwords. Collaborative and cross-disciplinary approaches are integrated into many of the ten key high-impact educational practices identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Kuh
Supportive Campus Cultures and Structures

This emphasis reflects a larger cultural pattern of perceiving teamwork and interdisciplinary knowledge as vital in a globalized world. Although suspicious of the degree to which such academic rhetoric is actualized, particularly in the classroom where budget allocation structures continue to work against interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching, I heard a lot about these efforts. The institutions that support collaborative and interdisciplinary learning tend to also support the involvement of the campus art museum in these activities.

KU offers an example. Staff and faculty there have created The Commons, a partnership that includes the Hall Center for Humanities, the Biodiversity Institute, and the Spencer Museum of Art. Its purpose is to explore the relationships between nature and culture across the sciences, humanities, and arts. Each spring, a thematic Commons course, in collaboration with the University Honors Program, is proposed. Academic departments suggest speakers and The Commons then funds a set of cross-disciplinary talks. Students attend the speaker series and engage with faculty in small groups. The Commons also supports research that integrates methods and ideas from the sciences, humanities, and the arts. According to a KU administrator, “The museum’s connection to The Commons has been fantastic... that relationship with The Commons is all about getting out of our silos and collaboration, and collaboration in a way that really yields new research and new ways of thinking.”

Faculty and museum staff at other institutions similarly talked about annual cross-disciplinary, and often first-year, seminars where a theme (such as peace) is chosen and faculty across the disciplines shape courses around that theme. In conjunction with these thematic seminars, the campus art museum develops an exhibitions and curators or museum educators lead academic interactions with the exhibition, while also serving as guest lecturers in classes.

Some of the museums play collaborative roles on campus and in the community as well. For example, as Oberlin College went through a renovation process, it was responsive to a campus “green” initiative, investing in geothermal wells to reduce its energy consumption by fifty percent. This was recognized by students as “setting a standard and showing what the museum can do for the environment.” For another example, over the last five years, the University of Missouri (MU) Museum of Art and Archaeology has run a special therapeutic art program for Alzheimer’s patients in collaboration with the Adult Day Connection, and in consultation with the MU Interdisciplinary Center on Aging and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. The program includes art creation, visits to the museum, and provision of reproductions of favorite works for people’s rooms. The exemplary campus art museum links with and bring its strengths to communities and initiatives beyond its walls.

Institutional Structures

The culture of the museum is a mix of the physical space, the collections, and the people—museum staff, faculty, administrators. With people it’s a history

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4. The educational practices identified for high-impact learning include first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, research, diversity/global learning, service learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects.
of up and down.... We have great people right now, but it's hard to know how long we all will be here. Staff don't have tenure and some will and should go on to other positions. Right now the administration is supportive, but that too changes. (museum director)

Institutional structures and procedures can contribute to varying degrees of backing for campus art museums. Where the museum is located within the parent organization (part of an academic department, part of some other institutional entity, autonomous, etc.) seems to affect how it is perceived and supported. Whether or not the museum director is considered to be on par with campus deans helps determine the level of inclusion in campus decision-making. The institutional location also positions some museums in seemingly unfair competition with other units for scarce resources as described by the following director of a museum located within a university research division:

We report to the Vice President of Research. When cuts are handed down, they are handed down through the colleges or through the various divisions. So each of those vice presidents and deans are told, "you need to cut x percent from your budget." In research,... a number of those divisions, maybe even as many as half, have to do with... human subject compliance, nuclear materials,... all kinds of things that the federal government requires. You can't cut those. So I think other divisions within the portfolio... got hit harder... [The VP] said, "We have to focus on the primary mission of the university and that is instruction and you are not an instructional unit." And I said, "We are an instructional unit.... We don't give degrees and we don't have majors, but we do instruct everyday. Hundreds of students are in here everyday."

A procedural issue is how funding is determined for institutional units. As indicated in the previous quotation, non-instructional units are likely to be first on the chopping block during economic downturns. Although the campus art museum provides a venue for teaching and learning and although curators and museum educators often teach, co-teach, and provide guest lectures, the museum, in general, does not generate academic credits. For college or university's accounts, therefore, they are "non-revenue generating units." This does not work in the museum's favor, as noted by another museum director:

The whole university switched to something called responsibility centered management which meant that... if you earned 300,000 in credit hours that would be yours to spend. Every unit got what it earned. In one sense it was a much more practical approach. It made everybody more responsible for their own budgets. On the other hand, it balkanized the university. There was duplication in course offerings. The business school in order to beef up the credit hours it was earning would offer English for business majors... and our budget—we didn't earn any credit hours so how was I going to justify my existence?

Academic art museum staff, therefore, sometimes find themselves putting many extra hours into keeping records and writing reports that defend the work that they do.
It’s Not History and Culture Alone: People Make the Museum

Institutional support, economical and psychological, can be affected also by administrative turnover. Some directors feel as though an aspect of their role is continually educating and communicating with administrators about the museum. As one director said, “I’ve been here for six and a half years and am on the third provost... I try to think of it as—to keep myself sane—we’re just another hungry mouth, essentially, in a very big operation.”

Overall, institutional support appears to be, at least somewhat, a relational issue. A dynamic, energetic, hard-working, and creative director tends to correlate with administrators’ verbal support for the museum. For example, an administrator stated: “There are really positive feelings about the [campus art museum]. Now I have to say that when people glow at great length about the [campus art museum], they are also talking about [the director].”

One museum had a drastic cut in its budget and lost a number of staff under a previous director. The current director has created a shift in administrative perspective in favor of the museum, as described by a museum board member, “[The director] shows the dean how important the museum is and when there are cuts, he doesn’t get cut.... Since he has been here, for the administration, it’s not just the museum, but my museum.” As a museum staff member stated, “Administrators can change both in the sense of you get a different administrator but... sometimes administrators change the way they view things.” Invariably, at the sites where the museums were doing well, I heard praise of the director and museum staff from administration and vice versa. Together campus administration and museum directors and staff can create a working relationship and an environment in which things can and do happen.

Administrative and institutional support is shown in other ways as well. For example, at IU, the provost’s office initiated the “Year of the Museum” which highlighted all the museums on campus and set up a series of invited speakers and various activities. At Oberlin, museum personnel observed that “the Dean has been working on getting visual literacy into the description of education at Oberlin and maybe down the line, into accreditation.” If visual literacy were part of the description of what a good education means, then the museum’s role in education would be more easily institutionalized as part of the curriculum.

It’s Not History and Culture Alone: People Make the Museum

Despite being situated in an institution with a history and culture of supporting the arts and innovative collaborative teaching and research, museum staff and faculty had stories of times when the museum was not doing well, when it was fairly inactive, or when high drama centered on the museum. Invariably, a talented and energetic director turned things around and, with support of able and competent staff, was able to imbue the museum with a sense of excitement and energy that radiated out into the campus community and beyond. This section focuses first on these extraordinary leaders of campus art museums and then discusses what curators and museum educators perceive as needed to be even more effective.
The Exemplary Campus Art Museum Director

Interviewees suggested the seven actions of successful leaders of exemplary campus art museums that are discussed below. All of these actions are supported by the exemplary director’s commitment to his or her campus art museum. That is, they do not view the job as a “stepping stone” to some other position and they devote their time and energy to the museum. As described by a curator, “[The director] has charisma, energy, vision. And she’s genuine, totally committed. She’s giving two hundred percent. It doesn’t feel hard for the rest of us just to give one hundred and twenty percent.”

**Development of a Thoughtful Mission or Plan for the Museum.** The mission statement generally became a focal point of discussions when current directors arrived. Several initiated procedures for clarifying and creating new mission statements as described by one director, “The mission statement when I got here was forty-six lines long and defined which kinds of students we served. When I got here, I asked everybody what the mission was and nobody could tell me, because they had no clue.” At other institutions, the mission statement was part of discussions in helping to set a direction or vision for the museum as described by another director:

> This person wanted us to change the mission, but what she was really talking about was the vision statement. I said, “We can’t change our basic mission…. What we can change is how we envision doing that, who we think our audiences are.” So we... really came to the conclusion that our first audience is our students and our faculty and we decided to gear the communication level to an educated non-specialist....

In general, the exemplary campus art museum director and staff examined the mission; came to an agreement on not only goals, but also procedures; created a plan; and then examined each action of the museum in light of that agreed-upon direction. As more than one director noted, “It’s really very, very important to be strategic because we can’t afford to have one penny that doesn’t go towards our goal. Every single thing we do, we think about, we question, we say, ‘Is this something that really advances our mission or our strategic plan?’” See Appendix IV.B. for the mission statements of museums participating in this study.

**Creation of a Collaborative Working Environment.** The successful director facilitates collaboration among staff so that they feel part of a team. “We have a very cohesive staff,” commented a staff member. “Everybody feels as though we are working towards making the [campus art museum] as welcoming and as interesting as it can be.” Weekly meetings are part of this process, with museum directors reporting, “We have weekly staff meetings and I try to call special groups together to talk about things.”

Occasionally, creating this cohesive team requires the difficult task of replacing some staff with new people with similar philosophies. Some directors “encouraged” people to leave through increasing expectations. Others were more direct:
I had to fire a senior curator; I had to prematurely retire an assistant director who had been here her entire career... I gave them both chances and it just wasn't working... you have to do that sometimes because the institution was suffering. And then I hired new people who thought more in a public way and things began to change and become much more collaborative.

Promotion of Individual Initiative. The successful director encourages teamwork, but also supports independent thinking and actions. As a museum board member reflected, “[The director] made a good hire in [the new curator] and gives her freedom to do her job.” And staff take the initiative, as exemplified by this registrar:

I went out to Washington and did a three or four day seminar on provenance research..., got the gist of how to go about doing it, came back, wrote a manual, and we got to work on it.... What it did for me is... really gave me the opportunity to organize all of the materials right here in the building that happened to be located in places that should have been down in the registrar’s office. For instance, all the dealer and donor files were locked away in the director’s closet,... our invoices and records for payment on paintings, I found in accounting.... I was able to get a lot of records that we needed in those object files dealt with and entered into our database.

Communication Campus-Wide. The thriving director models interacting with and involving university faculty and administrators in discussions concerning the activities and direction of the museum, as noted by a humanities professor, “Since [the director’s] appointment, there’s a good deal more consultation with faculty. My view is that she actually feeds off faculty discussions and so on for ideas.” Some of the museums have an academic advisory council or faculty committee made up of professors from various disciplines with whom the museum director and staff work on academic and curriculum planning and who also inform other faculty about potential uses of the museum. Most museums work as well with student advisory boards or committees whose main function is to plan and facilitate museum events for students.

Successful directors get involved in campus-wide university committees and make sure others know what is happening at the museum, as described by a university administrator:

They have a great public relations program. We get the news of what’s happening in the [museum] each week and [the director] is especially good at emailing the Chancellor and the Provost and me when something really special is happening or the [museum] receives a particular recognition. So they are good at blowing their own horns in a very positive way and in keeping people informed.

Such communication not only advocates for the museum, but also protects it from budget cuts as a director relates:

With responsibility-centered management, I thought, “Damn, we will have to
It’s Not History and Culture Alone: People Make the Museum

The successful academic art museum director also connects with people who may not be museum members. These wider connections are a way of getting more people using, involved in, and supportive of the museum.

justify our existence.” And so I created this huge document about... all the ways the museum interacts with the university on so many levels and it’s quite a stunning document... I peremptorily sent that to the provost and to the dean and, I think I sent a copy to the president, in advance of a budget conference and I never heard another complaint.

In addition, the successful director advocates for museum staff and works to gain positions and higher salaries, even if it takes creative reframing as this director describes:

I’ve been able to figure out ways to get them more money... even in years when we were not allowed to increase salaries. I have done that by rewriting the job descriptions or doing position changes, so that [the registrar], for example, has been here for 34 years and he spent 32 of those years as an assistant curator because there was no registrar position... I created a new position and... I was able to get away with that... You aren’t allowed to give people a raise, but if you change them to a new job-title, the new job title can have a different pay rate.

Connections beyond Campus. All of the museums have some form of museum membership, usually at differing levels associated with annual fees. Referred to as Museum Friends (Partners, Associates), a museum’s expectations of members vary from attending events to advocating for the museum through membership recruitment and fundraising to even managing endowments. The successful director engages this group of community members in active ways.

The successful academic art museum director also connects with people who may not be museum members. These wider connections are a way of getting more people using, involved in, and supportive of the museum as described below:

[The director] has been really focused on trying to get the community involved here too which is really amazing. There was an art collective that had something set up in one of the galleries once... having artists from Lawrence have their pieces right next to Seventeenth Century Dutch masterpieces. It’s awesome. (student)

[The director] got some of us together and actually elicited some of our opinions and comments about things we could do to help expand the art museum and make it more obvious... We broke up into small teams and presented a whole bunch of ideas on how to improve the museum and get it more involved in the community. (community member)

The director’s ability to communicate about the work of the museum with people who may not be familiar with art and artists takes special skills, articulated well by one community member who had joined the campus art museum board:

[The director] is so unusual in that he can see the whole picture. He can see how the museum fits into the whole community... His biggest gift is that he is so unpretentious that you can ask him any kind of question. He is highly
cognizant of what is going on globally and he makes me feel like I am in the loop. He is a member of all these organizations and yet knows how to nurture our enthusiasm by not squashing our ideas. He shows an openness to everything. He is also adept at relating with people above him in the university hierarchy. He’s respected.

**Fund Raising.** Many directors of campus art museums have to go further afield than the campus and its community to court donors and raise funds for the museum. This is not necessarily a role for which directors were trained, nor one all particularly enjoy. Nonetheless, exemplary campus art museums tend to have a director who is good at raising funds:

The part that I was most worried about and, in a way, find the most satisfying is trying to raise money for the institution. We created a national advisory board…. We meet once a year…, they come at their own expense, and when they join the board, I tell them, the expectation is that we get some committed annual support and… when they are ready for it, a major gift—we’re really talking hundreds of thousands and into the millions…. When I started out, we had absolutely zero in endowments and I think we have thirteen million in place now. (museum director)

The exemplary campus art museum tends to have a national advisory board or council. These boards are made up of “people from other museums, collectors, and benefactors.” In general, members of these boards are expected not only to help with strategic planning and facilitate connections to potential donors, but also to contribute financially themselves.

In addition to seeking donors, the successful museum leader is active in applying for grants as described by an administrator working with grants and outside funding, “I think we have put in more grants probably in [the museum director’s] first year than we had the three years before. She started in July and I think we did our first grant in October.” As this administrator went on to say, the director did “a really good job of engaging curatorial and other staff” in the grant-writing process, so that there was “buy-in on their part” and also so that the grants were informed by the specialized knowledge that the staff could bring to it.

**Maintaining a Connection to Art.** Museum directors’ lives can get so hectic that connection to art, what often brought them to the director’s position in the first place, can get set aside. Directors speak of art as both a creative and spiritual base for their lives. As one director stated: “When I have a bad day…, it’s always the art that gets me through.” This director begins each staff meeting with time in the galleries. She also works to bring in visiting artists so that they can help replenish the creative well for students, faculty, the public, and herself.

The museums in this study were chosen because they are exemplary in some way. This exemplarity is reflected in the leadership of the museums. The directors, however, must have a good team with which to work. They do. The talent, energy, and thoughtfulness of the museum personnel with whom I met are extraordinary.
Museum Staff

An art history professor described the kind of museum staff sought at Oberlin as a “very particular kind of person.” She went on to say:

*They have to have a teaching mission as well as a curatorial mission. People who come here who just want to make exhibits so they can land a better job in LA and New York—and there have been people like that here—are not the ones who are most successful. The most successful people are those that... believe they are here to show young people the best art they can show them and find undiscovered stuff and have a visionary idea of art and collecting and of making that museum a very unique and very amazing place.*

The curators and educators with whom I talked are working to make museums “unique and amazing places.” They enjoy the work that they are doing and are good at making connections with faculty and students throughout the campus community and with teachers, docents, volunteers, grade school students, and others in the larger community. They have research interests and seek to share their work in a variety of ways, including publications and presentations. They love being with art and enjoy teaching. Knowing that no job is perfect, I probed for their frustrations and identified four main areas: job expectations; institutional status; teaching remuneration; and ability to pursue scholarship.

**Job Expectations.** This category could be summed up as “too much to do without enough time or money,” and, in a sense, all of the frustrations are a subset of this grouping. Curators and educators have a mixture of job expectations. In varying degrees, they develop and curate exhibitions, work with interns and other students, teach or co-teach courses, do research, publish, present at conferences and workshops, teach docents, develop museum “tours” for grade school to university/college classes and community groups, sit on student thesis or dissertation committees, participate in college/university committees, organize and coordinate public talks or other museum events, work with donors, and more. No wonder, in places where resources are stretched and museum staff is limited, a curator might say, “We try to do everything we can. We have a very small staff. We’re a bit worn out right now.” The curators and educators in the study are a creative, talented group of people, however, and even when stretched, are likely to put a positive spin on things, as did this curator, “The wonderful thing about being in a small museum with a really deep collection is that I am the only curator which is hard, but on the other hand, I get to curate whatever I want.”

**Institutional Status.** How museum curators, educators, and other staff are classified as professionals varies from one institution to another. Categories include academic research staff, research associate, researcher/scholar, professional

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5. Curators in the study tend to have primary responsibility for working with museum collections to create exhibitions and facilitate dialogue among art, artists, and audiences. Museum staff who work with educational programs, school tours, and docent training might have the title of curator of education, education director, or museum educator. Some museums have created a position for a person to liaise with faculty and the academic curriculum. These positions are variously called academic curator, academic coordinator, or director of academic programs. In this section, I am referring to all these positions when stating “curators and educators.”
specialist, and professional staff. Although one university has a history of art museum curators also being tenure-track art history faculty, that is changing as expectations and demands challenge a person's ability to do both jobs. Most of the curators and academic coordinators in the study have doctorates and are expected to do some teaching and research. While curators at a few of the institutions report that they are fully included in the academic life of the institution, others feel “somewhat second-class.” As more than one curator noted, “I think that there is somewhat of a sense on every university that the faculty is the ‘A’ team and everybody else is everybody else.”

Teaching Remunerations. At some institutions, curators and educators are expected to teach classes, at others, teaching is voluntary. On some campuses, they receive a stipend for teaching; at other places, they do not. Museum staff report that they enjoy teaching and want to teach, but not always as an add-on. See Table IV.2. for configurations of teaching expectations for curators.

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<thead>
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<th>Table IV.2. Configurations of Teaching Expectations for Curators</th>
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<td>Teaching as part of the job salary</td>
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<td>Teaching as part of the job with added compensation</td>
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<td>Teaching as something extra, with pay</td>
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<td>Teaching as something extra without pay</td>
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Ability to Pursue Scholarship. Even though often categorized as academic research staff or as researcher/scholar, a common complaint of curators and academic coordinators is that they have limited time and few resources for scholarly endeavors. As they curate shows, prepare for classes, or give guest lectures and museum tours, they research particular works of art or artists, but many want to have time (and funding) to go to other museums, libraries, or locations to do more in-depth research. Although research may be part of the mission statement, curators and educators generally are not required to publish as part of their jobs. Nonetheless, many of the staff desire to contribute to scholarship. Most also hold year-long positions with no associated sabbaticals and have little opportunity to pursue research interests if travel is required. The museum staff position is contrasted to a tenure-track faculty position with summers free, as stated by a curator: “I would like to be able to do more research, I really would, but this is a
twelve-month position." Most academic museums also have limited, if any, extra funds to support travel for attending conferences and other professional meetings.

What counts as scholarly contributions includes debates regarding exhibitions, museum catalogues, and technological sharing of information. As noted by several curators: “Exhibitions and catalogues would not count towards tenure, even though some of those exhibitions are intellectually driven.” Along with electronic publishing, museums are active in using technology (blogs, podcasts, videos, audio tours, etc.) to communicate object-related information and knowledge. The museums with sufficient resources also digitize the objects in their collections, providing increased access for use by others. Although some of these forms of producing and sharing knowledge are clearly part of museum outreach, others could be considered forms of scholarship, though possibly not acceptable as such by tenure and promotion committees. See Appendix IV.C. for examples of educational uses of technology by museums in the study.

In general, curators, educators, and other museum staff are doing remarkable work with the resources and time available. They are knowledgeable, energetic, and enthusiastic. They contribute to knowledge production and sharing, and are well-situated to be key persons in facilitating a variety of educational practices.

**Economic Challenges**

Budget information was not systematically collected from museum directors. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that available funds vary widely. Each of the museums in the study has some endowments or trust funds, generally with specifications for how they can be spent (frequently for collections; sometimes for a staff position; infrequently for conservation). Each of the museums obtains some funds from museum memberships and through special events. Whether or not the museum has to rely on raising funds to help pay for day-to-day operations—for such things as environmental controls, building repairs, gallery preparation for new exhibitions, conservation of objects, publishing, photocopies, and salaries for security and professional staff—differs. In general, museum funding comes from a combination of endowments, earned income, and university or college general appropriations. Support from the parent organization tends to make up forty to sixty percent of the budget with the museum responsible for the rest. What that base amount is, however, varies, as described by directors of two different academic museums:

*Our budgets are quite small. Excluding salaries, we have a total operating budget of roughly $30,000 a year. Almost half that gets paid back to the university for... telephone, copiers, all that kind of stuff. So a lot of stuff is done with smoke and mirrors. We're able to get money from donors or from small grants or other things just to supplement that on an on-going basis... It's a very small pot. (museum director)*

*We are very fortunate in that [the university] provides almost all our operation budget. So I don't need to raise money for paper for the copier or to buy gas for the museum van or to pay salaries, which is a real luxury. When I'm*
raising money, I raise money for the sexy things, for exhibits, publications, to buy works of art, organize symposia... So right up front, to open the doors, that cost is covered by the university. We've got about 25 million dollars in endowments, even after the great recession. Most of those are dedicated to art purchases, but there are some that support exhibitions, education programs, conservation, lectures, but the majority of the money is for acquisitions. The operating budget, I'm going to guess is about a million and a half a year... The artistic program varies greatly, but another two to three million dollars a year. So our overall budget would be three to five million, depending upon what's going on in a particular year. (museum director)

Museums that have endowments for staff positions are better protected from the overall impact of budget cuts compared to those where institutions pay the salaries. One art museum in the study lost six full-time staff due to cuts in institutional funding.

Despite differences in the museum operating budgets, all of the art museums in the study have been affected by the economic downturn. Although some have fared better than others, most are exploring ways to raise funds and reduce expenses. Public university museums, particularly, are scrambling to figure out how to depend less on institutional dollars. When budgets are tight, museums, like other units on campus, feel these pressures. Interviewees spoke of seven main effects of the economic crisis on the museum, illustrated in Table IV.3. The first four (deferred maintenance; staff attrition; lack of replacement staff; inability to attend conferences or do research) are felt by other academic units as well. The last three (deferral of acquisition and conservation of objects; reduced ability to share art; decreased ability to market and promote events) are more specific to museums.

Table IV.3. Effects of the Economic Downturn of Academic Museums

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<tr>
<th>Effects of Economic Downturn</th>
<th>Example Quotations from Interview Transcripts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred Maintenance</td>
<td>“We are aware of what a treasure we have [in the museum]. I wasn't aware until I came into this office the extent to which repair and rehabilitation needs are there for the galleries and for the building itself. And those are very expensive, at a time when virtually any unit on campus could say it has repair and rehabilitation needs—because they do. Normally funds for that had been given to us by the State…. They did, always in the past, supply funds for the physical plant, and that's ending.” (administrator)</td>
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| Staff Attrition | “I'm retiring in a year and a half… my understanding is that [the university] doesn't want to commit to the benefits, so they'll give [the director] the equivalent of the salary to use to do things like hire interns.” (curator)

  “The problem with the museum is that when people leave, the positions disappear.” (museum director)
| Lack of replacement staff | “One of the things that's hard is that we don't have any excess capacity. What that means is that every time we decide to do something new, it ends up being at the expense of something else… If [the registrar] goes on vacation, we don't have a registrar… When [a curator] is gone, European and American art—some of us pretend to know something about it—but in reality anytime somebody is not here, there's something missing. There's no easy solution to that, but it is one of the main challenges we face.” (museum director) |
| Inability to attend conferences or do research | “I'm not nearly as engaged in the field as I would like to be. I don't have any money for travel. I gave all that up before I got rid of people.” (museum director) |
Deferral of acquisition and conservation of objects

“This is a campus that has prided itself on having a lot of collections in a lot of areas. The cost of maintaining these collections has never been at the forefront of people’s minds as they collected these over a few hundred years. It is right now…. We know that we need to pay attention to some of the things that we’re preserving which are unique and quite extraordinary research and teaching tools…. A few years ago, we began a concerted effort... to do a strategic plan for preserving our collections. We are still trying to look for funding for this because we have a lot of things…. We need to make sure we understand the role we play as a conservator and provider of these cultural treasures. There is discussion now every time there is an issue of receiving a collection of some sort, and it’s the responsible discussion to have—can we preserve and maintain and use this collection appropriately?” (campus administrator)

Reduced ability to share art

“At the peak, five years ago, we were doing about twenty exhibitions a year…. Now about all we can handle is ten.” (museum director)

Decreased ability to promote Events

“We have no marketing director. We have a trade with NPR. We pay for half and they put us down as a sponsor. We don’t do a magazine anymore. We do a two-page ad in multiple arts magazines.”

Not all campus art museums, of course, experience these belt-tightening measures to the same degree. Some are fortunate to have healthy endowments, supportive alumni, good donor relationships, and even fairly strong institutional economic support. Others are not so fortunate and experience all of the effects listed here and more.

Given the constraints upon the museums hardest hit by the economic downturn, one might wonder if they have to engage also in struggles to keep works in their collections from being sold or to even keep open their doors. Despite decisions to deaccession and sell campus museum objects in cases around the country, none of the museum staff or administrators at the study sites perceived this as a potential issue at their institutions. Although occasionally an object might be deaccessioned because it does not fit the scope of the collection (old furniture as part of a package donated by an alum), no significant items in the collections are subject to deaccessioning discussions.

Some of these institutions, to be sure, have stories of an administrator or trustee suggesting that the museum raise funds through deaccessioning; but this suggestion was never taken seriously according to museum directors as indicated by the following quotations:

The previous executive vice-president... long ago when we were talking about the need for a new building, said, “well, why don’t you just sell the pre-Columbian collection and use that money for the new building.”

I was invited for a dinner at the president’s house... the trustees are all kind of bantering around and one of them sort of grabbed me and said, “Well you could sell your Picasso and solve all your financial problems. That would be a good solution, wouldn’t it?” And I said, “Would you fire your only Nobel laureate to have a bunch of teaching assistants?” Seriously, there’s never been that discussion.

6. Brandeis and its Rose Art Museum has been a prominent case. In 2009, Brandeis University announced that it was going to close the Rose Art Museum and sell its collection, valued at hundreds of millions of dollars. This decision was recently reversed, thanks to a large public outcry (Rush 2011).
A safety catch in protecting significant collections is that objects donated by private parties and foundations tend to come with a clause that they revert to the donor if the museum's budget is cut below a level of properly caring for the object and making them available to the public. This was noted by a museum director where budget cuts have been severe:

“When I was making the point about what would happen if we couldn’t meet our obligations, I made the point that the Kress collection would go back to Kress, that the Gallagher collection... the Gallagher Foundation would be forced to reallocate all of those items that were purchased with Gallagher funds and to redistribute them... eighty percent of the collection would go back to other places.

But even there, the director emphasized, “There’s never been discussion though about closing the museum. There’s never been even inquiries about selling collections. None of that has ever happened.” Although these seven museums’ ability to do exemplary work may be challenged by the economic situation, their collections appear safe from risk of monetization.

“Contributions of Campus Art Museums

People talked about many contributions of campus art museums, but their foci generally fell into one of the following four categories: Academic art museums are central to an education in the arts, are important for a good education, contribute to a good life, and address inequities in communities’ access to art. Each is discussed below.

Sixty-four percent of the people with whom I talked are students or professionals in the arts. They are, therefore, likely to think of ways the museum has been crucial in their education or teaching. Although professors of art history, studio art, and art education sometimes rely on slides and digital images for large classes, interviewees commonly talk about the physicality of the object whether a Grecian urn or a landscape painting. The museum provides access to this physicality; the reproduction does not:

The original has an aura. It’s just different when you see it reproduced.... Somehow in the presence of the actual object... just to be that close, to see things that aren’t visible in reproductions—the quality of the paper, the tiny smudge mark, little finger prints, being able to tell where a pencil embossed the paper because the artist pressed really hard and then maybe erased. Students love this one image, it’s this Degas, where he drew an image and ran out of room for the foot so he just taped a piece of paper on the edge and they always comment on it. It’s those kinds of things, the physical materiality of being in the physical presence of these objects. (arts professor)

My best answer to people who say why can’t we just show them pictures is to say, “Well, you know, you don’t need to go the Grand Canyon, let me just show you a couple of still shots.” (arts professor)
Students and professors in the arts also talk about how campus art museums provide an opportunity to “learn from the masters,” as noted by a studio art professor: “For the first 10 or 15 minutes of class, students are just in awe walking around, choosing the drawing they’re going to draw.... This is not an opportunity that people often get, to draw and learn from the masters.” The exemplary campus art museum is central to teaching and learning in the arts.

The academic art museum is also seen as potentially important for education in general. Since the time of Aristotle, people have debated what a good education entails. Should colleges and universities focus on preparing students for the world of work or should they enhance critical thinking skills and creativity? The seven colleges and universities in this study are playing out this debate in their strategic emphases and also arguing that one point of view does not have to preclude the other, that creativity and critical thinking skills are very much part of science and technology, the subjects purportedly needed for life in the United States in these times. This integration of art and science is crucial for perceiving the museum as significant in a student’s good education. Interviewees, for example, emphasized how the art museum can be used to facilitate the development of creativity campus-wide. As a museum director said:

*We have to produce students that are as creative as we possibly can in whatever discipline. By looking at the kind of crazy things that artists do, and understanding how they think and how they go about it.... Anybody that knows a really capable research scientist understands that they are just like an artist. They walk into the lab and they say, “What is possible?” I think we can enhance that by showing that through the arts... that ability to create something out of nothing, [is something] we can all do.*

Respondents also discussed the role of art and art museums in teaching a language of nonverbal communication. “Art helps us to communicate things that words sometimes don’t do very well,” stated a curator. Communication through art involves more than simply using images in the place of words. It produces different ways of thinking, as noted by a neuroscientist who described how the arts develop new “pathways in the brain.” She talked about how students who learn to think artistically “might link the science of metamorphosis as part of a dance. It becomes part of the way they think.” Just as learning a different language expands students understanding of the world, so too learning art as a new language can expand students ways of expressing themselves and appreciating the self-expression of others.

In addition, the campus art museum is perceived as a powerful tool for enhancing critical thinking skills through exploring a given issue across time and cultures. By creating a forum for comparison, the museum helps “prepare students to be global thinkers and to be culturally savvy,” stated an academic curator. She continued by describing how through their interactions with the museum, students come to “understand [other] worldviews, to see how [others] think, not just to impose their own understanding.” The museum can thereby be an important forum for addressing issues of diversity and prejudice, as described by a museum director:
The idea that you can look and see the world in radically different ways is something that art tells you. Once you appreciate the idea that there are fundamentally different viewpoints that are equally good and equally revealing, that’s not just about racial diversity or ethnic diversity, that’s about intellectual diversity and intellectual pluralism. That is what universities are supposed to be about.

Students understand this. One young woman in an Islamic art and architecture course observed, “It's really interesting to see how Islam evolved and how close it is to Christianity and Judaism.” Through studying Islamic art, she found that she and classmates developed “a more worldly view of culture, differences in people... if you learn art and history you get to see the whole process or evolution of religion, culture, and societies. It’s a new perspective on how you look at life.”

What one gains through art museums extends beyond the academy. A recent survey of over 50,000 adults in Norway found that people who both engage in artistic activities and who partake in “receptive” cultural activities such as visiting museums and the theater feel in better health and enjoy life more than people who do not (Cuypers, K., et al. 2011). In our study, respondents frequently talk about feeling a sense of joy or peace when in the museums. This sensual evocation contributes to a sense of well-being, noted by students, faculty, and museum specialists, and described here by a museum director:

We had an event a month ago and had a featured speaker... a museum specialist... what she spoke about were the very, very tangible ways in which museums help communities become a better place. One of the things she pointed out was that medical studies have been done where people inside museums exhibit lower blood pressure and the lessening of stress because they recognize museums as sort of sacred and safe places and respected places, good places to be.

Finally, campus art museums help address inequities in communities’s access to art. Many of the nation’s large art museums are located near either the east or the west coast. Most of the museums in the study are in the middle part of the country where the campus art museum might be the only “encyclopedic” art museum in the state. Students from the Midwest, in particular, talked about the limited access to art museums they had as children. The campus art museum helps address this need not only for students at the college/university, but for school children and the general public in the area, and is noted here by a museum intern:

Access is really important... I'm from the Midwest... I think that having access to artistic resources and the creative activities that surround those resources that museums facilitate is so valuable for the development of students, even from a really, really young age. And to have access to that in the Midwest is an even more valuable thing because of the rarity.
Concluding Thoughts

Duncan Cameron (1971/2004, 69) in *The Museum: A Temple or a Forum*, states that many museums cannot decide whether they want to remain a temple or become a forum for “confrontation and experimentation.” Temple and forum were not metaphors generally used by study participants. They are useful, however, for describing how, increasingly, the perception and role of the campus art museum is changing. As a temple, the museum holds precious gems and people make pilgrimages to stand before great works of art. As a forum, the museum is a catalyst for various kinds of interactions that might be more like a laboratory or even a portal for the mixing of peoples and ideas. The thriving campus art museum is one that embraces its role as facilitator for all kinds of dialogues, research, performances, exhibits, and experiences. It welcomes diverse and interdisciplinary perspectives. It sees its role as serving a population broader than the arts community and it seeks to make a difference not only in the academic lives of students and faculty but also in their and others’ day-to-day lives. It also considers how the museum itself is part of the broader culture of the campus and local community and seeks to be a leader and model in local initiatives.

The thriving campus art museum chooses directors with vision and energy. The director and staff work at developing positive relationships with institutional administrators, potential donors, and the wider community. They tend to create national boards that assist through advice, connections, and donations. In return, campus administrators and legislatures understand the value of the campus art museum as a site of teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and creativity and experiences that goes well beyond valuable pictures on a wall. As museum directors across the country are quick to point out, raising funds to help support museum activities is part of their work. A balance must be reached, however, between support by the parent organization and revenue raised by the museum, so that the director and staff can put time and energy into the creative activities for which they are well-trained and positioned.

This study of exemplary campus art museums suggests that it is possible for a campus art museum to be well-integrated into a college or university. The kinds of things that make a difference include visionary leadership and talented staff who reach out across the disciplines; a campus-wide history and culture of supporting the arts; a campus-wide context of commitment to interdisciplinary education and research; and ability to obtain resources to carry out the museum’s vision. Similarly, in *Making Museums Matter*, Stephen Weil (2002, 63) states that, “the things that make a museum good are its purpose to make a positive difference in the quality of people’s lives, its command of resources adequate to that purpose, and its possession of a leadership determined to ensure that those resources are being directed and effectively used toward that end.” Although availability of sufficient resources is problematic for several of the museums in the study, all are seeking to make a difference in the quality of people’s lives and, from the perspectives of those interviewed, are succeeding. A curator describes the work in which the museum staff and others from across the campus are engaged as one of “rethinking what a museum is, what is should be, and what it can be.” Through work like this, some campus art museums are mattering, to quote Weil (2002, 74) again, in “many marvelous ways.”
Appendix IV. A.

Interpretive Distillations of Selected Aspects of Interviews with Academic Art Museum Directors

This appendix provides a few “interpretive distillations” of interview transcripts. These displays use only the words of the interviewee, but many words are edited out to “distill” the essence of the perspective. Some sequencing of the interviewee’s talk may be rearranged. These distillations, sometimes referred to as poetic transcriptions, are put into blank verse form to distinguish them from direct quotations.

Metaphor
My metaphor for this museum is a tree—
a core system that branches in many directions.
Each branch has interdependence,
each leaf turns towards the sun.

We live in a grassland, prairie grass,
big blue stem taller than me in wild prairie.
Underneath, longer than up here.
A way to create endurance,
to weather wind, snow, fire.
All that is under the surface,
waiting the next season.

I started with the leaves, not the trunk.
Now I feel like we have [the trunk] and I need to get out here again, but bigger,
to establish us nationally—internationally.

Mission Statement
We didn’t want a mission statement that sounded stupid.
We had consultants work with us,
a long laborious process.
And then we’d use it for six months and say,
“No, that doesn’t really work.”
The one we have, the senior team word-smithed.
We said, “Not too sexy, but it’s what we do, what we are.”
I still look at it and think it’s pretty much
who we are and what we do:
The intersection of art, ideas, and experience.
Key—the heart of it—a place of crossing.
**Fund Raising**

I’m not a bloodhound that likes the smell of money,  
I don’t get a buzz sitting with powerful people.  
I can’t pretend to be interested in jewelry or cars.  
I just tolerate all of that until  
we can talk about something important.

I have to watch myself. I try to think,  
“Here is a person who has creative leanings.  
Your job is to build a bridge  
so you can respect each other enough  
to go to the next level.”  
I have to find their creative thing—  
to love them enough to raise money.

In the end, it’s not about the money—  
it’s “Can I turn this person onto the mission?”  
I fail if they give me money,  
but think they are done.  
They give you $25,000 but that is not the end—  
only the beginning of the trust relationship  
with the long-term donor.

**Transforming the Climate for the Arts**

What has changed completely since I came is the climate for the arts.  
School of Economics—big for a long time—half the undergraduates major in economics.  
The Medical School, the Law School, the Business School get a lot of attention.  
Arts weren’t on the radar screen.  
My predecessor set her goal: Make the museum essential to the University.  
I’m not sure we’ve gotten there, but what’s changed is this whole attitude about the arts.

When this president—a mathematician—was discussing his appointment,  
instead of the standard university model of a thousand points of light,  
one unrelated to the next, he was interested in broad strategic arcs:  
What are the top 10 things we are trying to do here?

And he said, “You are committed to this performing arts center already.  
You are publically committed—the trustees have voted to support it—  
but you aren’t able to explain it in a coherent context.”  
So there was this reappraisal about the role the arts play here.

He commissioned some research.  
The most gifted high school students in America—who could choose to go anywhere—what are they looking for when they choose their university?  
Two things emerged at the top: Great study abroad programs and
access to the highest quality arts. He now has data. If you want to be competitive, this is something you need to do. One manifestation is to ensure students avail themselves of the arts on campus: The professional arts organizations like the Smart Museum, the Court Theater, but also, and this is where this new center fits in, access to art-making facilities—painting and sculpture, theater and video. Things in which they participate and things to which they can go, access to high-quality opportunities on both fronts. Well, that’s what transformed the landscape at the University. The arts are now one of the strategic priorities.
Appendix IV. B.

Mission Statements of Participating Campus Art Museums

**AMAM:** The Allen Memorial Art Museum is founded on the belief that the study and appreciation of high-quality original works of art is an indispensable part of an excellent liberal arts education. The AMAM acquires, preserves, exhibits, and interprets its collections to promote the highest standards of visual literacy and encourage multi-disciplinary inquiry. Open free of charge to all, the AMAM is a vital resource for the students, faculty, and staff of Oberlin College as well as the public of Northeast Ohio and a national and international audience.

**IUAM:** The IU Art Museum’s mission is to preserve, exhibit, collect, research, publish, and interpret original works of art to advance the academic goals of Indiana University and to enrich the cultural lives and spiritual well being of society.

**MU Museum of Art and Archaeology:** The Museum of Art and Archaeology advances understanding of our artistic and cultural heritage through research, collection, and interpretation. We help students, scholars and the broader community to experience authentic and significant art and artifacts firsthand and to place them in meaningful contexts. We further this mission by preserving, enhancing and providing access to the collections for the benefit of present and future generations.

**Smart:** As the art museum of the University of Chicago, the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art promotes the understanding of the visual arts and their importance to cultural and intellectual history through direct experiences with original works of art and through an interdisciplinary approach to its collections, exhibitions, publications, and programs. These activities support life-long learning among a range of audiences including the University and the broader community.

**Snite:** The Snite Museum of Art provides opportunities to enjoy, respond to, learn from, and be inspired by original works of art. As an integral unit of the University of Notre Dame, the Museum supports teaching and research; furthers faith-based initiatives for greater internal diversity and service to the external community; and reflects the traditions and values of the University.

**Spencer:** The Spencer Museum of Art sustains a diverse collection of art and works of cultural significance. It encourages interdisciplinary exploration at the intersection of art, ideas, and experience. The Spencer strengthens, supports, and contributes to the academic research and teaching of the University of Kansas and is committed to serving communities of learners across Kansas and beyond.
UAMA: The University of Arizona Museum of Art is a forum for teaching, research and services related to the history and meaning of the visual arts for the University community, the citizens of Arizona, and visitors from around the nation and the world. The museum collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets original works of art. In all of its efforts, the museum serves as an advocate for the expressive, intellectual and sensory importance of art in society.
## Appendix IV. C.

### Examples of Educational Uses of Technology by Museums

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<tr>
<th>Technological Use</th>
<th>Example Quotations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Videography</td>
<td>“We are working on another project called Smart Voices… a group of short videos that will be really nicely produced that will include introductions…, and then brief clips talking about some of the signature objects that are on view. Those would be sought from faculty members, from students, from people who are expert in different ways and can talk about the work from a point of passion as well as intellectual information. Those videos would be available on a touch screen near the entrances. . . . And then we could build up a database of these videos that would be archived in a lasting way on the web so that when the work isn’t on view, you could still get that.” (Smart)</td>
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<td>Audio Tours</td>
<td>“A number of us here are interested in exploring… the idea of audio tours where you could create levels of information that are available so somebody that just wants a general highlights tour can have that general highlights tour but if they get to a piece that is of interest to them for whatever reason, they could get more information about that artist… specific iconography or the time period and all that.” (IUAM)</td>
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<td>Podcasts</td>
<td>“Some of our most popular podcasts… have been the ones professors have recorded. So we have, for instance, our Medieval and Early Renaissance professor talking about one of our northern Renaissance portraits… and when you listen to it you can understand why he’s popular among the students…. We have one of our professors of musicology talking about the instruments in [a painting] and he actually identifies them and talks about their history and Renaissance music in particular, and we have a neuroscience professor talking about Cezanne and how he really was almost this artistic precursor, in a visual sense describing how the brain works in a way that now neuroscientists describe the way the brains works…. The idea behind the podcasts… was that they were a cheap and effective way to create interpretive technologies that then can be used across different platforms.” (AMAM)</td>
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<td>Radio</td>
<td>“I’ve been the editor and voice of the Art Minute which is broadcast on Kansas Public Radio. It’s an out-reach effort of the museum. So every week, four times a week at different times, there is a minute, well, actually it’s a minute and a quarter…. where I will… address a particular work in the Spencer collection or speak about a current exhibition…. A lot of the scripts are produced by our interns, some of them docents, I’ve written some myself.” (Spencer)</td>
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<td>Digital Slides</td>
<td>“I use [the digitization of the collection] all the time because they have about 30,000 works on paper that are not on display and you can search by geographical region, by date, by century, by topic and so I can prepare class… and my students can go and use these sites too, so that’s a wonderful tool.” (non-arts professor, KU)</td>
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Sources


