



## **Investing in the Future: A New Strategic Plan for FY26-28**



Approved by the Board of Trustees  
November 1, 2025

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## Introduction



Fall 2024 marked a pivotal moment for the Biggs Museum of American Art. An anticipated building expansion project and new organizational leadership clarified the need for refreshed strategic directions. The Biggs hired Anne Bergeron & Co. Consulting to lead a planning process intended to more closely connect the Museum to the community, integrate its physical campus with Dover's Historic Green, and advance economic development efforts underway in Delaware's capital region. Forty-four trustees, staff, civic leaders, and local residents came together over nine months to ideate, collaborate, share insights, agree on common purpose, and chart an inspired course for the future. We are deeply grateful for their many contributions.

This resulting three-year plan is designed to embed the Biggs Museum in community—local, regional, statewide, and Mid-Atlantic—by embracing its role as the cultural anchor of Kent County. It is also designed to seamlessly weave together growing programs, operations, and campus facilities. We are excited by the aspirations expressed herein and invite you to join us in realizing this art- and people-centered vision.

Wilma Mishoe, EdD  
Board President

Philip Tobey  
Trustee and  
Steering Committee  
Co-Chair

Elise Zoller  
Trustee and  
Steering Committee  
Co-Chair

Hassan Najjar  
Executive Director

## Methodology and Timeline

Anne Bergeron & Co. Consulting (ABCC) began its discovery process in January 2025 with a review of documentation ranging from organizational history and bylaws to finances and facility master planning. ABCC also performed independent research to understand greater Dover and its environment. In addition, the consulting team conducted confidential interviews with 20 trustees, staff, and community members, and made a three-day site visit to Dover and the Museum in early March. Two months later, ABCC presented its findings at a visioning retreat with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (see roster below, page 19) to guide the Museum in reconsidering its mission, envisioning its future, and affirming its organizational values.

From the retreat's rich dialogue, ABCC drafted new mission and vision statements alongside core values, goals, and objectives. Following Steering Committee approval, the planning group was organized into larger teams with other trustees, staff, and community members to address the five new goals. These teams each met independently between June and August to articulate actionable goals and intended outcomes.

Concurrently, at ABCC's direction, the staff developed *personas*, a suite of fictional characters designed to represent present and future Museum visitors and help to visualize the all-important end users during planning and implementation. These personas are included in the Addendum and used to illustrate how, through the realization of this plan, diverse visitors can feel welcome and engaged at The Biggs. The Museum staff also completed customer service exercises called *safaris* to understand the visitor experience first-hand and shared their learnings at a full staff meeting.

ABCC consultants then wrote this comprehensive plan as a reflection of the collaborative process. The timeline, below, summarizes the planning methodology.

## Timeline

	9/24	10/24	11/24	12/24	1/25	2/25	3/25	4/25	5/25	6/25	7/25	8/25	9/25
<b>RFP Process</b>													
<b>Discovery, Research &amp; Analysis</b>													
Kickoff					Jan 13								
Documents Review													
Co-Chairs Meetings					Jan 16, 23	Feb 13, 20	Mar 20	Apr 3, 17	May 28	Jun 26	Jul 8		
Environmental Scan													
Stakeholder Interviews													
On-Site Visit							Mar 4 - 6						
Core Values Exercise													
Data Analysis													
<b>Strategic Direction</b>													
Visioning Retreat									May 1				
Retreat Outcomes													
Personas Exercise													
Strategic Pathways Team Meetings													
Safaris Exercise													
Steering Committee Meetings											Jul 24	Aug 27	Sep 16
<b>Final Plan</b>													
Board Presentation													Sep 15
Strategic Plan Delivery													Sep 30
<b>Deliverables</b>													
	<b>RFP Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry</li> <li>• Client meetings</li> <li>• Proposal</li> <li>• Contract</li> </ul>				<b>Documents Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 Organizational history, bylaws &amp; background</li> <li>• 12 Organizational &amp; facility planning</li> <li>• 10 Financial</li> <li>• 13 Fundraising &amp; marketing</li> <li>• 8 Personnel</li> </ul> <b>Environmental Scan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographics, geography, history, economy, politics &amp; culture research</li> </ul> <b>Stakeholder Interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 trustees, staff &amp; community members</li> </ul>				<b>Visioning Retreat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New mission, vision &amp; values</li> <li>• New strategic goals &amp; objectives</li> </ul>			<b>Final Plan</b>	

## **Mission**

We transform our community through the art of our region: rooted in discovery, guided by collaboration, and open to all.

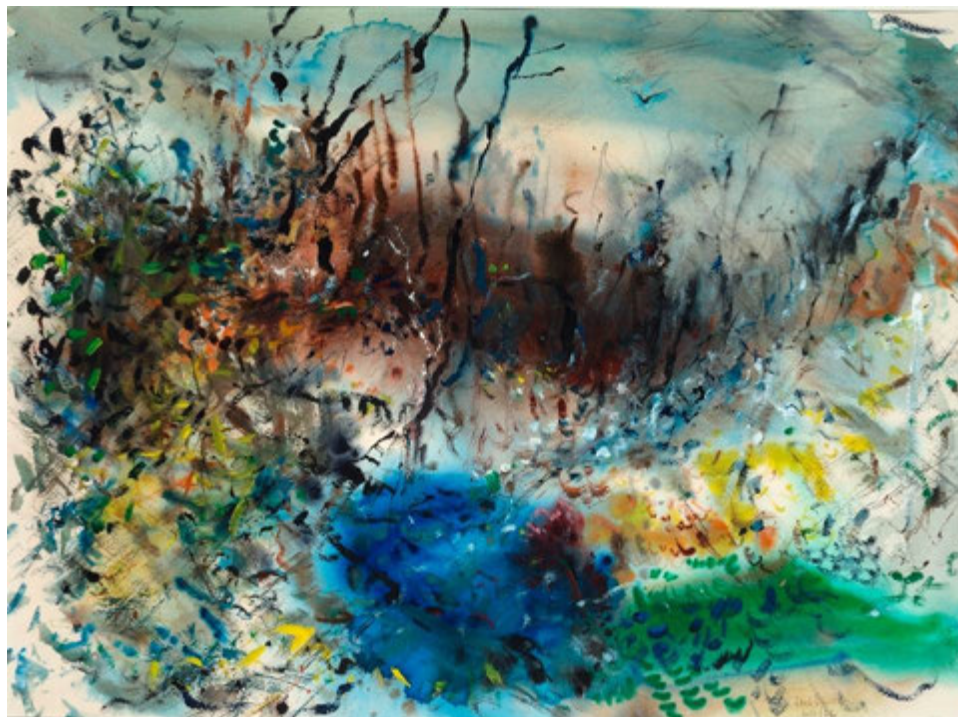
## **Vision**

The vibrant campus of the Biggs Museum of American Art is the heart of Dover's cultural community and the city's lively downtown. As a catalyst for learning, economic development, and tourism, the Museum enhances the Mid-Atlantic region's vitality through partnerships that advance the arts as essential to civic well-being.

## **Core Values**

We pledge to make the following values visible and tangible in all that we do at the Biggs Museum:

- **Inspiration:** We believe that engaging with art excites, provokes, and expands the world around us.
- **Inclusivity:** We invite all into a welcoming, accessible, just, and safe environment.
- **Community:** We co-create shared space, both real and conceptual, that belongs to everyone in our region and beyond.
- **Collaboration:** We partner via common purpose and agency to build networks, share resources, and respect the many contributions of our community.
- **Integrity:** We embrace ethical practice to uphold accountability, honor stewardship, and engender public trust.





**Goal I: BEACON**



**Establish the Museum as a dynamic cultural hub for Dover and the region**

*The Biggs Museum seeks to leverage its close relationship with state government to advance the economic development efforts already underway in Delaware's capital city. Utilizing proven methods in creative placemaking to celebrate local history, identity, and the arts, The Biggs strives to build cultural awareness, nurture social cohesion, improve civic health, and enhance community pride in the greater Dover area. Through expanded partnerships and coalitions with local and regional institutions, the Museum pledges to work collaboratively to attract visitors, talent, and investment in art-focused ways that enhance the quality of life for all.*

Objectives	Actions
1. Invest in creative placemaking as an economic driver for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the Delaware Arts Alliance to advance its <a href="#">CREATE Plan</a> in the Dover region.</li> <li>b. Actively participate in regional associations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Dover Partnership, Rotary Club) to advocate for civic life transformation through the arts.</li> <li>c. Strategically develop new pilot projects in collaboration with area cultural, civic, and corporate entities to showcase regional art and artists, and demonstrate how the arts can bolster economic development (e.g., St. Jones River Greenway art and nature walk, art festivals downtown on the Historic Green).</li> <li>d. Take the lead in organizing a public art initiative for downtown Dover, working with partners and advisors (e.g., Downtown Dover Partnership, University of Delaware, Mural Arts Philadelphia, City Fest Wilmington). Identify 3-5 sites, secure funding and permissions, commission new work, and celebrate installation(s).</li> </ul>
2. Partner with regional institutions to advance the arts for mutual benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to cultivate relationships with state government and the Governor's Office, especially the new Secretary of State, to engage her participation via board service. Also deepen relationships with the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, and the Delaware Division of the Arts.</li> <li>b. Partner with the Division of Visual and Performing Arts at the Delaware Department of Education and Dover regional</li> </ul>

	<p>schools to ensure that all Dover area K-12 youth have the opportunity to visit and engage with The Biggs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Continue to develop the <i>Be Well: Health &amp; Well-being Initiative</i> with Bayhealth and Delaware State University's Department of Nursing. Research other museum health and wellness programs and pilot community health-focused lectures, clinics, and workshops at The Biggs. Also pilot art-centered training programs for Bayhealth residents and fellows, plus DSU RN and LPN students, to enhance empathy, observation skills, etc. Formalize partnerships via Memorandums of Understanding.</li> <li>d. Serve as a conduit between the local artists' community and Bayhealth to feature artwork in hospital facilities. Investigate the feasibility of and pursue, as warranted, providing fine art reproductions of works from The Biggs's collection in Bayhealth venues.</li> <li>e. Further the collaboration with the Rehoboth Art League and the Partnership of Arts Leagues (PALS) program to build capacity among Delaware's creative organizations that support artists.</li> <li>f. Explore partnership opportunities with Delaware State University for co-developed programs (e.g., Schwartz Center for the Arts programming, academic enrichment, and student mentoring and/or employment).</li> <li>g. Formalize internship opportunities for University of Delaware museum studies majors supported by the Choptank Foundation.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Create curatorial, educational, and marketing coalitions in the region for resource sharing, networking, and awareness building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Organize a network of curators statewide to pursue coordinated exhibitions, collection sharing, tours, etc.</li> <li>b. Organize a network of museum educators, K-12 arts and humanities teachers, and 13-16 arts and humanities faculty to meet periodically to pursue collaborations around arts learning and impact.</li> <li>c. Organize a series of site visits with peers around the state to pursue online resource sharing opportunities (e.g., collection management systems, website promotion, etc.).</li> <li>d. Create a coalition of key strategic partners in the region (libraries, banks, arts organizations, visitor centers, media</li> </ul>

	<p>outlets) to expand marketing opportunities through co-promotion, co-branded events, and other awareness building initiatives. Formalize partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding and meet biannually to discuss opportunities, share calendars, and agree on metrics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Explore the feasibility of creating an artists' marketing cohort to amplify each others' creative content with The Biggs. Pilot social media and other initiatives (e.g., with PALS, see Goal I.2.e.) to call attention to Dover's creative community.</li> <li>f. Create, maintain, and utilize a shared system of trackable metrics among marketing coalition members to collectively assess and improve reach and impact.</li> </ul>
4. Enhance cultural tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the Delaware Tourism Office to increase awareness of the cultural amenities in Dover and provide guidance on creating packaged tours that are appealing and include visits to The Biggs.</li> <li>b. Become a <a href="#">DE250</a> Nonprofit Partner to take advantage of promotional opportunities designed to build awareness for statewide arts and culture during the semiquincentennial.</li> <li>c. Seek visible, sponsored branding opportunities to promote The Biggs statewide (e.g., donation of a wrapped van to transport art and/or people).</li> </ul>





## Goal II: IMAGINATION



### **Celebrate artists, creative makers, and the cultural heritage of the Mid-Atlantic**

*The Biggs Museum is committed to artists and artisans of all disciplines and at all levels. This commitment is rooted in the Museum's collection, along with the strong belief that artists are central to growing both the Museum and Dover's creative economy. The Biggs supports active artists and craftspeople throughout the state in a variety of ways, including professional development, connection-making, and career support. It also plays a critical role in fostering the artists and creative thinkers of tomorrow. Through this work, The Biggs ensures that everyone has the opportunity to participate in Delaware's arts community.*

Objectives	Actions
1. Engage with living artists and artisans as a signature of The Biggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gather ideas and feedback from Delaware artists through focus groups and surveys regarding what they would like to see from The Biggs.</li> <li>b. Develop and offer ongoing artist-focused programs and professional development (e.g., critique groups, master classes, practical support).</li> <li>c. Facilitate connections between and among artists and art disciplines, including exhibitions that bring artists into dialogue with each other and engaging artists with 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century permanent collection objects.</li> <li>d. Create an Artists Advisory Council, with a representative of this group serving on the Board of Trustees (see Goal IV.6).</li> </ul>
2. Advance the benefits of creative practice through art- and fine craft-making programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Map existing artist resources in Delaware to promote collaboration and help to create new resources rather than competition.</li> <li>b. Host a convening of regional arts organizations to discuss potential collaborations around advancing the benefits of creative practice through art- and craft-making.</li> <li>c. Create a menu of offerings and test interest in them with surveys and focus groups.</li> <li>d. Offer beginner art-making classes with an easy entry point and a strong hook, with the intention of later providing more extensive and multi-session art-making classes for all levels.</li> </ul>

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|  | e. Collaborate with art teachers and Delaware arts organizations to better serve K-12 audiences in art- and craft-making. |
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### Goal III: GATEWAY



#### Expand access to the Museum's collection, exhibitions, and programs

*As a museum dedicated to transforming its community, The Biggs is currently growing its collections, exhibitions, and programs to better represent and engage Delaware's diverse communities. Both in the Museum and beyond its walls, The Biggs is creating tools and programs to help people of all backgrounds, across the region, connect with art. Through its galleries, activities, and online platforms, The Biggs offers everyone the opportunity to discover, collaborate, and thrive through art.*

Objectives	Actions
1. Articulate the Museum's curatorial and educational philosophies to serve as organizational guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Draft and then implement a learning and engagement philosophy that incorporates curatorial and educational ideals.</li> <li>b. Discuss and finalize a plan for revising and communicating philosophies over time.</li> </ul>
2. Continue to augment the permanent collection to better represent the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify who/what/where is not represented in the permanent collection and planned exhibitions.</li> <li>b. Update the Museum's Collections Plan accordingly, as well as The Biggs's Collections Priorities document.</li> <li>c. Create and implement an interdepartmental framework for approving exhibitions and disseminating information about upcoming exhibitions.</li> <li>d. Create and implement a plan to collect and utilize community feedback related to the permanent collection and exhibitions.</li> <li>e. Reorient the Child HELP Foundation Gallery to create a community space that features exhibitions of work by local artists.</li> <li>f. Partner with the development team to raise funds to create an acquisitions endowment and/or support annual purchases to expand the permanent collection.</li> </ul>
3. Develop exhibitions, interpretive strategies, and educational programs in collaboration with and relevant to the regional populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop an understanding of regional populations and identify potential collaborators.</li> <li>b. Expand access to the Adopt-an-Artwork program, including diversifying the content offered.</li> </ul>

	c. Collaborate regularly with regional guest curators and speakers to expand curatorial and educational offerings.
4. Invest in visitor-centric digital strategies that broaden engagement	<p>a. Digitize the collection and increase online access.</p> <p>b. Make the website more user-friendly and create opportunities for visitor feedback.</p> <p>c. Add learning and engagement opportunities to the website (e.g., upload lesson plans online for free access).</p>
5. Learn about visitors through data gathering, research, and analysis	<p>a. Continue collecting visitor information and compiling data through the point-of-sale system.</p> <p>b. Create an evaluation plan to identify what data to capture, how to gather it, and how it will be used.</p> <p>c. Institute quarterly reviews and analyses of data and utilize findings to inform decision-making.</p>



## Goal IV: FORTITUDE



### Strengthen organizational capacity to support strategic priorities

*The ambitious goals outlined in this strategic plan necessitate The Biggs to grow its staff and boost its internal capabilities. The Museum seeks to build an inclusive, empowered, caring organization that engenders a high-performing staff reflective of its community and invested in realizing its future vision. Recognizing the importance of financial stability to institutional sustainability, the Museum seeks to enhance its financial management and investment practices to responsibly steward and grow its assets consistent with organizational expansion. It also seeks to build a culture of generosity by bolstering its fundraising practices to attract substantially increased philanthropic support, led by an engaged, dedicated board of trustees.*

Objectives	Actions
1. Build a diverse, empowered staff and a collaborative, performance-oriented culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prepare and implement (as resources allow) a staffing plan that supports the Museum's strategic plan, facility expansion, and future growth.</li> <li>b. Improve new staff onboarding procedures to include an informal evaluation process at 6-12 months to ensure that performance is aligned with strategic goals.</li> <li>c. Widely disseminate job openings to The Biggs's broad network (local, regional, and national contacts; social media posts; university listings; church bulletins) to attract a diverse candidate pool.</li> <li>d. Continue to prioritize staff professional development through peer mentoring (e.g., membership and participation in associations such as American Alliance of Museums, Art Museum Curators Association, Art Museum Development Association, Association of Historians of American Art, Delaware Alliance of Nonprofit Advancement) and training.</li> <li>e. Institute monthly peer trainings by paired staff to share professional expertise, as well as learnings from recent workshops, webinars, site visits, etc.</li> <li>f. Inventory existing platforms for staff collaboration and information sharing (e.g., Microsoft Office, Sharepoint, Slack, VEEVART), then research and purchase other needed team-based tools to support organizational efficiency and growth.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Institutionalize an annual one-day staff retreat in January to reflect, set goals, agree on strategies, and connect as a team. Also institutionalize a mid-year check-in to confirm current directions and/or course correct, as needed.</li> </ul>
2. Ensure financial stability and foster accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Activate a task force—to transition into the board’s Investment Committee—to review and adjust the Museum’s current investment policies to promote sustainable growth. Also create separate investment strategies for restricted gift and grant monies, and secure board approval.</li> <li>b. Through RFP processes, recruit investment advisers aligned with the newly refined approaches to manage the Museum’s assets.</li> <li>c. Broaden and deepen the endowment asset allocation to move closer to nonprofit comparators.</li> <li>d. Institute conservative cash management strategies that emphasize high interest yields.</li> <li>e. Improve the management of monthly expenses—review all suppliers and services, eliminate waste and/or duplication, and prioritize fair terms, excellent service, reasonable cost, and community-orientation.</li> <li>f. Implement participatory budgeting practices. Train and empower department managers to develop, monitor, and be accountable for their annual budgets.</li> <li>g. Forecast budgets for facility expansion ramp-up and increased operations, including <a href="#">custodial care</a>, required by the expanded facility.</li> </ul>
3. Develop ethical guidelines for philanthropic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Align fundraising practices with The Biggs’s mission, vision, and core values centered on inclusion and integrity.</li> <li>b. Establish and maintain ethical gift acceptance policies for annual and capital giving.</li> <li>c. Ensure legal and regulatory compliance.</li> <li>d. Safeguard the rights of donors and beneficiaries per accepted professional standards.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Elevate donor stewardship practices with timely, substantive acknowledgements, content-rich reports, compelling recognition and event strategies, and community-focused storytelling.</li> </ul>
4. Advance a community-centered annual fundraising program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer multiple, community-oriented giving opportunities to invite donor participation at all points along the giving spectrum—membership, donor societies, giving circles, major gifts, corporate and institutional giving, sponsorship, etc. Emphasize the importance of all gifts, small and large.</li> <li>b. Enhance prospect research acumen, tools, and support.</li> <li>c. Each year, identify, cultivate, and solicit 120+ major donor prospects capable of giving \$5,000 or more.</li> <li>d. Strengthen relationships with federal, state, and city leadership to secure support for The Biggs as a leading cultural asset in Delaware.</li> </ul>
5. Plan and launch a capital campaign to underwrite the Museum's expansion and enlarged operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish an achievable campaign goal to underwrite the building and operational expansion, including an endowment goal, based on feasibility study results. Fine tune the case for support, prepare a campaign timeline, and establish a campaign budget.</li> <li>b. Identify, research, create engagement strategies for, and cultivate prospects, emphasizing individual donors. Secure 75% during the quiet phase before announcing the campaign's public phase. Integrate annual and capital giving strategies.</li> <li>c. Continue to strengthen The Biggs's relationships with institutional funders (e.g., Choptank, Crystal, Kelsey, Longwood, Welfare Foundations) to ensure generous and multi-year support.</li> </ul>
6. Foster board development to deepen engagement of volunteer leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Analyze the growing needs of board leadership (e.g., expertise, community representation, network) and recruit accordingly to ensure a diversity of talent and affiliation.</li> <li>b. Improve onboarding of new members through a refined orientation process, mentor assignments, and tailored trainings.</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>c. Enhance board knowledge via presentations at quarterly board meetings and information sharing via the quarterly director's report.</li><li>d. Continue to conduct a formal, biannual review of board performance by an external consultant using <a href="#">principles advanced by Independent Sector</a>.</li></ul> |
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## Goal V: PULSE

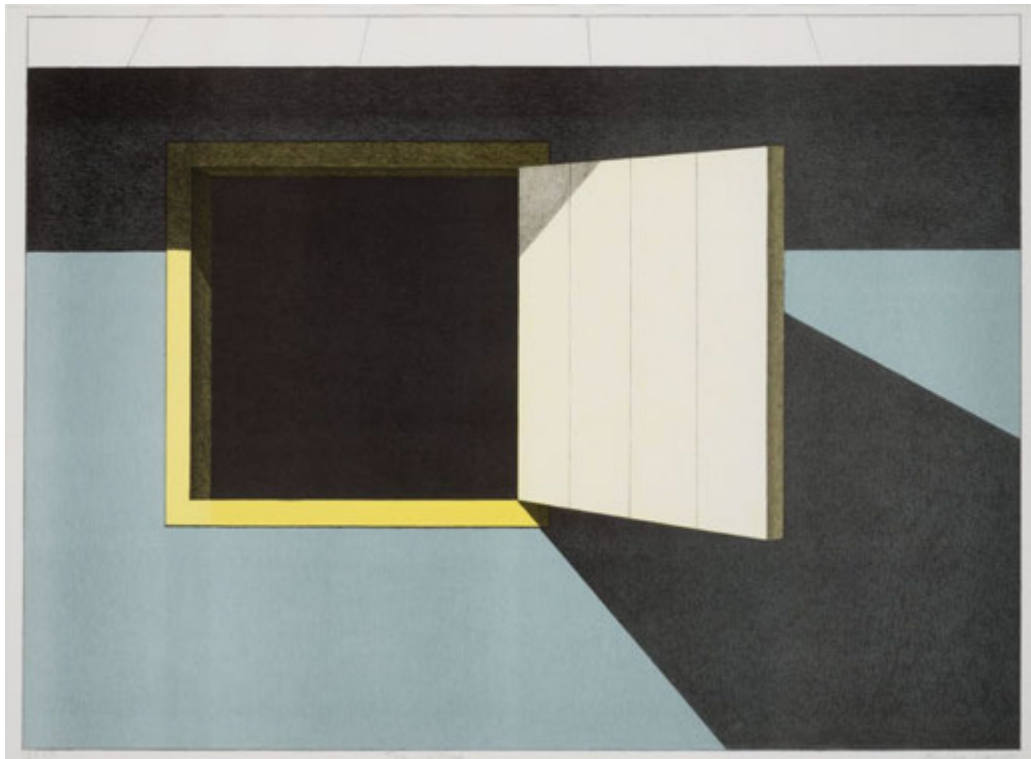


### Create a vibrant museum campus

*Embracing its role as Dover's cultural anchor, the Biggs Museum strives to create a physical plant that extends beyond its walls to exude a sense of welcome. Following expansion, its built environment and landscape will be further integrated with its historic surroundings and the seat of state government. Its physical presence will draw on and be invigorated by an artistic spirit celebrating American fine art and craft from the region, and enlivened by the artists, artisans, and art appreciators who enjoy its offerings.*

Objectives	Actions
1. Upgrade The Biggs's physical plant to transform the museum experience and anchor the organization as the cultural hub of Dover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Working closely with the design and technical consultants, expand and renovate the facility to enhance accessibility and environmental sustainability, comply with ADA and building codes, and increase space for exhibitions, art storage, education, artmaking, and community gathering.</li> <li>b. Prioritize enhancements that can foster sustainable revenue generation through philanthropy and earned income strategies.</li> <li>c. With the architectural team, develop presentation materials (e.g., printed collateral, slide decks, gallery installation) that convey mission-focused architectural and landscape design to publicly promote the upgraded building and site for fundraising, educational, and visibility purposes.</li> <li>d. With the architectural team, develop a facility implementation plan and timeline that accommodates building design, exhibition design and interpretation, gallery temporary closing, off-site storage, construction, on-site storage, gallery re-installation, new technology, wayfinding, staff training, and ramp-up to reopening.</li> <li>e. Prepare a comprehensive operational plan (in tandem with a staffing plan; see Goal IV.1.a.) to be ready, post-construction, to secure, outfit, commission, clean, install, and operate the new spaces. Throughout the construction process and prior to opening, photograph the renovation and the final installed spaces for archival purposes.</li> </ul>

<p>2. Integrate the Museum and Dover's Historic Green through landscaping and public art</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. With the design team, develop and execute an exterior campus plan that reflects The Biggs's permanent collection and educational programs intended for community engagement.</li><li>b. Create intentional connections to Dover's Historic Green in ways that complement the existing built environment, foster a sense of welcome, and differentiate the Museum from neighboring statehouse buildings.</li></ul>
<p>3. Activate public space around and near the Museum by engaging the regional creative community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Create partnerships—with artists, artisans, designers, musicians, other creatives, and organizations that support them—to enhance outside programming opportunities on the Museum, Historic Green, and Statehouse grounds.</li><li>b. Identify needs and opportunities for event space serving the local community and incentivize participation to make greater public use of the Biggs Museum.</li></ul>





### **Metrics of Success**

The Biggs Museum seeks to fulfill the above goals via the following indicators by December 2028:

1. People who live, work, and visit Dover consistently encounter public art and other signs of The Biggs's presence throughout the Historic Green and Legislative Green, as well as downtown.
2. Artists and arts organizations in Delaware view The Biggs as a trusted and valued supporter and collaborator.
3. The Biggs's new Artist Membership Level has over 150 members, at least 25 percent of whom regularly visit the Museum and participate in Museum programs (at minimum, four times annually).
4. Twenty-five or more living artists from the region exhibit art at the Museum each year and/or lead studio programs on behalf of the Museum.
5. The Biggs offers multi-session studio artmaking classes for beginners in a variety of media that are routinely fully subscribed.
6. The permanent collection has grown by 10 percent in fine art and fine craft objects made by or selected to represent regional artists and audiences.
7. The majority of the Museum's collection is available and searchable online, as are lesson plans that encourage teachers to use the collection.
8. The Biggs regularly collects, analyzes, and uses data to improve its programming.
9. Museum staff members report feeling empowered and safe, collaborating productively with colleagues, engaging in professional development opportunities, and managing a reasonable workload. Museum trustees report feeling better informed about and more deeply engaged with organizational activities.
10. The Biggs has tripled its donor base, which includes a diverse group of individuals who regularly contribute amounts of varying sizes to help sustain organizational programs and operations.
11. Capital fundraising for the building expansion is completed, with the total raised equaling or exceeding the board-approved goal and fulfilling all funder matching requirements.
12. The building expansion project is nearing completion and includes sufficient back-of-house space, visible and attractive landscaping that integrates The Biggs with the Historic Green, and exhibition, classroom, and community spaces that are intentionally designed to meet strategic goals.

## **Strategic Planning Steering Committee**

**Philip Tobey**, Co-Chair, Trustee; Architect

**Elise Zoller**, Co-Chair, Trustee; Artist

**Josh Balcena**, Executive Assistant and Board Liaison

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**Kathy Dwyer Southern**, Trustee Emerita; Retired Museum Director and Professor of Museum Studies, George Washington University

## **Other Contributors**

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**Charlie Cleary**, Visitor Experience Assistant

**The Honorable Nancy W. Cook**, Founding Trustee Emerita; Retired Delaware State Senator

**Marcia DeWitt, JD**, Trustee and Board Secretary; Attorney and Entrepreneur

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**Kiara Florez**, Development Associate

**Sarah Ganter**, Executive Director, Rehoboth Art League

**Debora Hansen**, Trustee; Education Associate for Visual and Performing Arts, Delaware Department of Education

**Ilona Holland, EdD**, Trustee; Educator and Children’s Book Author

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**Ursula Sadiq**, Visitor Experience Assistant

**Charles “Chazz” Salkin**, Trustee Emeritus; Former Director, Delaware State Parks

**Suzanne Savery**, Director, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

**W. Laird Stabler, III**, Trustee; Government Relations Expert

**Daniel Thompson**, Trustee; Assistant Vice President of Finance and Controller, Delaware State University  
**Rex Varner**, Trustee and Board Treasurer; Management Consultant  
**Thomas Vaughn, MD**, Radiologist and Chief Wellness Officer, Bayhealth  
**Dina Vendetti, PhD**, President, Dover Chamber of Commerce  
**Jaimie Watts**, Deputy Director, Delaware Division of Small Business  
**Georgeanna “Gigi” Windley**, Executive Director, Kent Narrows Development Foundation  
**Nicole Worthley**, Park Superintendent, First State Heritage Park  
**Carson Zullinger**, Trustee; Artist

### Strategic Planning Consultants



**Anne Bergeron**, Managing Principal  
**Rebecca Shulman**, Affiliated Consultant



## ADDENDUM

The following materials were prepared as part of the strategic planning process to aid organizational learning and plan implementation.

### I. Values-Based Organizational Decision-Making Guide

*To ensure consistency and continuity with the strategic plan, ask the following questions before embarking on a new initiative or venture:*

#### 1. Aligned with mission, vision, and values

- a. Mission: Fostering discovery, transformation, and collaboration; presenting art from the region; serving the region without barriers
  - Will this help to foster discovery or transformation for individuals and/or communities?
  - Does this prioritize collaboration and open access?
  - Does this position the greater Dover region at the center of this venture?
- b. Vision: Arts at the heart of Dover's revitalization; enlivening downtown; bolstering economic development; cultural placemaking as The Biggs's and Dover's "brand"; enhancing quality of life
  - Will this contribute to Dover's revitalization through the arts?
  - Will this help to cement The Biggs as engaged in cultural placemaking?
  - Will this enhance the quality of life in Dover for a significant number of people? Or will this meaningfully enhance the quality of life for select individuals?
- c. Values: Inspiration, inclusivity, community, collaboration, and integrity
  - Is this inspiring, stimulating, and motivating to others?
  - Is this inclusive? Might anyone feel excluded and, if yes, how could that be mitigated?
  - Does this welcome The Biggs's existing audiences? New audiences? If yes, how so?
  - Does this prioritize collaboration in ways that support institutional goals?
  - Is The Biggs acting honestly, transparently, and ethically?

#### 2. Community focused, -affiliated, and -partnered

- a. Is this venture externally focused and designed to uplift the community?
- b. Does this foster collective benefit (a rising tide lifts all boats)?

#### 3. Stewardship (past) and innovation (future)

- a. Does this honor history and care for the past?
- b. Does this energize and help to invent the future?

#### 4. Positive reputation and brand

- a. Does this affirm The Biggs's brand as catalytic, collaborative, creative, and relevant?
- b. Does this promote a favorable perception of The Biggs?
- c. Is The Biggs acting in accordance with its values?



**5. Financially viable and revenue generating**

- a. Including associated indirect costs, will this venture make money, lose money, or break even?
- b. Is this venture pivotal to The Biggs's impact on the community, and thus worthwhile as a loss leader?
- c. Is this venture sustainable?

**6. Programmatically and operationally feasible**

- a. Are there sufficient staff and other resources to manage this venture? If not, what is needed and can these be secured without hardship?
- b. Is there risk involved, and if so, is the risk manageable and/or justifiable?
- c. Is failure embraced as an opportunity for learning, or is failure not an option?





## II. Personas

*Developed by the Biggs Museum staff as part of a planning exercise, the below personas represent the range of visitors the organization seeks to attract and embrace. ABCC has translated them into the following stories of impact that envision how the Museum can make a difference in the lives of six local residents as a result of implementing the FY26-28 strategic plan.*



**BOB SMITH is a retired restaurant manager and amateur woodworker.**

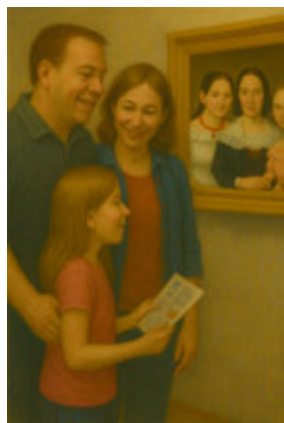
He has whittled since he was a teenager, when he immigrated to Kent County from Haiti. Sometimes he gifts his work to family and friends. When the Biggs Museum launched a new program to spotlight regional makers and invited Bob to join a showcase of five local artisans, he readily accepted. This was the first time Bob had shared his handiwork in a public setting. In keeping with the artists' backgrounds, the Museum presented the group exhibition with object labels translated into Haitian Creole, Spanish, and English. Bob not only felt recognized by the Museum but bonded with the other artists in the show. Soon, the five of them began discussing ways they could collaborate. The Museum has become their go-to space to socialize, see art, and build community together.

**JAMIE SMITH is a recent alum of Widener University** and last year she joined a law firm in downtown Dover. Jamie often walks to the Kent County Courthouse and has never really paid attention to the Historic Green. But when the Biggs Museum upgraded its landscaping and added outdoor art and performances that stretched across the expansive lawn, her workday walks began to feel different. One Thursday evening, she stepped out of court and into a concert under the trees. Families sprawled on blankets enjoying the music while artists sold their work along the paths. For Jamie, the Museum transformed from a place she visited to the heartbeat of the city pulsing with life. Now she brings friends and clients to events, proud to show off Dover's cultural vitality. The Biggs is not just an institution she frequents—it's part of the rhythm of her days.



**Originally from Alabama, SHAYLA MARIE is an emerging tech entrepreneur**

who runs her own business. With the flexibility to live anywhere in the country, friends urged her to consider Delaware because of its central location, affordability, and access to beaches. Scouting the area online, she saw photos of all the cultural activity sponsored by the Biggs Museum—nature walks with public sculpture, murals enlivening downtown, movies and concerts on the green, and young professionals enjoying lectures over happy hour. The energy convinced her that Dover and its arts scene were the place to be. Within weeks of arriving, Shayla attended a Friday night event at the Museum and discovered it was a great place to meet people: new friends, potential clients, even a yoga buddy. For Shayla, the Biggs was proof that she had chosen the right city—a place offering connection, opportunity, and a sense of belonging. Her sister recently visited and is considering a similar relocation.

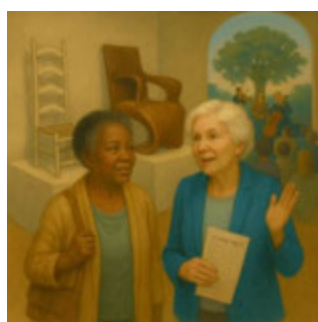


**ADAM CARROLL** has worked and lived on the Dover Air Force Base as part of its civilian corps for the past 10 years. He doesn't think of himself as a "museum person" and, until recently, doesn't recall ever having set foot in one. But a few months ago, Adam's wife chaperoned a school trip to the Biggs Museum with their daughter's fourth grade class. Over dinner that evening, mother and daughter spoke about how much fun they had and convinced Adam to return to the Museum with them on the weekend. At first, he was hesitant—museums seemed too quiet, serious, even a bit boring. But he found himself enjoying the experience: the easy-to-follow exhibition guide to prompt conversation, the collaborative art-making activity, and the excitement he witnessed in his daughter. Adam realized he didn't necessarily have to "get" art to enjoy it. He surprised his daughter with a family membership and now The

Biggs is part of their regular routine. Adam still wouldn't call himself an art lover, but he's a museum person now—because The Biggs became a gateway to experiencing the world around him in a new way.

**KHAI NGUYEN** is a first-generation college student on an athletics scholarship. His love of both baseball and art feels at odds with his parents' hopes for his future. At Delaware State University, he is double-majoring in studio art and kinesiology. He also plays on the varsity baseball team—and is still searching for a way to balance all three pursuits. At the suggestion of a mentor, Khai applied for and was awarded a paid summer internship at the Biggs Museum to support its

*Be Well: Health & Well-being Initiative*, a co-sponsored program with Bayhealth. Khai has thrived at the Museum. Every staff member has made him feel welcome and valued. He is regularly invited to participate in staff brainstormings when they come together as peers to discuss and solve problems. He even joined staff members for a nearby one-day museum education conference. The Biggs has shown him that teamwork is as essential to the art world as it is on the sports field.



**With the Biggs Museum's capital campaign in full swing, CARMIA WHITNEY is determined to bring others into the fold.** A long-time member and trustee emerita, she is proud of the Museum's sustained growth and community engagement. She insisted that her recently retired neighbor, Judith, join her for an afternoon at the Biggs. Carmia guided her friend through a new exhibition of 19th- through 21st-century furniture, then listened to a lecture by the guest curator before enjoying refreshments in the pop-up café and a mid-day concert by local youth. Judith was struck not only by the liveliness of the Museum full of excited school groups, but by Carmia's fierce

loyalty to the organization. Before they departed, Judith joined as a member—and within a few months, she pledged a major gift to sustain The Biggs's campaign momentum. For Carmia, it was another triumph: one more friend converted, one more generous supporter to the institution she has championed for three decades.

## Image Credits

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William Louis Sonntag. *A Mountain Stream in Western Pennsylvania*, n.d.

Ethel Pennewill Brown Leach. *Lotus Beds on the St. Jones River*, 1931.

Frederic Judd Waugh. *Heavy Surf*, 1915.

Jack Lewis. *Living Marsh*, n.d.

John Hesselius. *Portrait of Anna Dorothea Finney*, 1790.

Walter Elmer Schofield. *Delaware River in Winter*, 1920.

Laussat Richter Rogers. *Untitled Landscape*, n.d.

Probably James McDowell or Daniel McDowell. *Slant-Lid Desk*, 1805-1820

Unknown maker. *Armchair*, 1800-1815

Rembrandt Peale. *Commodore Jacob Jones, U.S.N.*, 1813-14.

Charles Willson Peale. *Jane Hunter Ewing*, c. 1788.

Tom Wilson. *Summer Day – Milton (Delaware)*, 1983.

Emilio Sanchez. *Ty's Place*, 1976.

Alexi Natchev. *The Clever Fox*, 1995.

Ben Austrian. *Two Chicks*, 1906.

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