

University of Alaska

MUSEUM OF THE NORTH

Strategic Institutional Plan 2022-2027

Approved by:

<p>DocuSigned by: <i>Daniel White</i> AE6BD6A19CA648C...</p> <hr/>	<p>October 26, 2022</p> <hr/>
<p>Daniel M. White, UAF Chancellor</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>DocuSigned by: <i>Anupma Prakash</i> 7C84E2807C864A7...</p> <hr/>	<p>October 26, 2022</p> <hr/>
<p>Anupma Prakash, UAF Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>DocuSigned by: <i>Patrick Druckenmiller</i> FF92FD6B8C71424</p> <hr/>	<p>October 26, 2022</p> <hr/>
<p>Patrick Druckenmiller, Museum Director</p>	<p>Date</p>

Strategic Institutional Plan 2022-2027

University of Alaska Museum of the North

Introduction

This strategic institutional plan was developed by the staff, faculty curators, and administration of the University of Alaska Museum of the North (UAMN). Our overarching goal is to develop a vision and set of realistic objectives to guide the museum's operation for the next five years, and beyond.

The last institutional plan was developed and approved in 2007 during UAMN's previous reaccreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. At that time, the museum had recently completed a \$42M renovation and expansion of the facility that created new collections spaces and scientific laboratories, doubled exhibition areas and improved facilities for public programming, resulting in what is arguably the most iconic building in Alaska.

Since reaccreditation in 2008, UAMN first experienced a period of expansion and relative financial stability in which several important goals of our institutional plan were achieved. Beginning in FY14, the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) – and by extension UAMN – entered a period of continuous financial challenges, resulting in a 50% reduction to date in our state appropriations, traditionally our largest single source of income. This was particularly felt after the election of a new state administration in 2018, when the university budget was severely cut over a three-year period that ended in June 2022. Compounding these challenges, COVID-19 struck in March 2020, and our second-most important source of income – visitation – was effectively cut to zero for several months. The net effect of these financial calamities, which included the loss of positions and staff furloughs, placed a severe strain on the operations and morale of the museum unequalled in its nearly century-long existence.

This strategic plan was developed in the context of our recent history and current financial situation and represents two major approaches to our future. First, it reflects what we hope is a period of recovery and an opportunity to re-establish ourselves in the wake of staffing reductions and operational constraints. Second, it captures our aspirations for growth and efforts to be a more effective and sustainable institution. These goals are articulated in the newly created mission, vision, and values statements and strategic plan that will chart a course for success.

Summary of the Planning Process

In an effort initiated by the museum director in the fall of 2021, museum staff embarked on a strategic planning process. To assist in the work, UAMN enlisted the support of UAF's Process Improvement and Training Crew, a university unit that facilitates focused discussion on organizational structure, improvement, and planning. Being external to the museum, they provided an independent perspective on structuring and organizing committees to undertake this process.

Our strategic planning process relied on input from several committees assembled by the director and selected from all areas of the museum operations, including administration, education, exhibition, visitor services, and research and collections. At an early stage of this work we conducted an internal assessment in which we evaluated our current strengths and any challenges that might interfere with attaining our objectives. We also considered the museum in relation to the external forces affecting it. Building on these realities, we first created new mission, vision, and values statements. Second, the team assembled numerous strategic initiatives, which were then organized thematically into five major strategic goals, presented below.

Museum staff surveys were used to garner feedback regarding the mission, vision, and values statements and the strategic goals. Comments were also solicited from the Friends of UAMN organization. Finally, these materials were reviewed and approved by the UAF Chancellor's Core Cabinet.

Mission, Vision, and Values statements

UAMN Mission:

UAMN illuminates the natural history and cultural heritage of Alaska and the North through collections, research, education, and partnerships, and by creating a singular museum experience that honors diverse knowledge and respect for the land and its peoples.

UAMN Vision:

UAMN is an essential contributor to the well-being of the local and global community, an engaging gathering space, and a recognized resource and leader among circumpolar museums.

UAMN Core Values:

1. *Preserving our shared cultural and natural history:* We are committed to preserving collections in perpetuity to address present and future needs.
2. *Partnership:* Collaboration with Indigenous, academic, agency, and other communities is central to our efforts.
3. *Integrity:* We foster public trust through openness and ethical approaches to our research, education, and partnerships.
4. *Respect and inclusivity:* We are stronger when we honor diversity and are committed to making the museum economically, physically, culturally, and intellectually accessible to everyone.
5. *Engagement:* We encourage curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning through teaching, exhibitions, and programming.

Alignment with UAF Strategic Plan 2027

Our parent institution, UAF, is one of three major academic units of the University of Alaska (UA) system. While UAMN is the university museum for the entire UA system, it is physically located on the Troth Yeddha' campus in Fairbanks and is financially and administratively positioned under UAF. UAF is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Beginning in 2018, a diverse cross-section of university partners was assembled to develop six goals that reflect the university's mission and vision. The goals of the UAF Strategic Plan 2027 are to:

1. Modernize the student experience.
2. Strengthen our position as global leaders in Alaska Native and Indigenous programs.
3. Achieve Tier 1 research status.
4. Transform UAF's intellectual property development and commercialization.
5. Embrace and grow a culture of respect, diversity, inclusion, and caring.
6. Revitalize key academic programs.

UAMN's location on the Troth Yeddha' campus means our strategic plan has particular relevance to UAF, particularly as it is the major research (and only PhD-granting) institution in the state. Thus, UAMN's plan was crafted to align with

these goals, highlight our unique position within the university, and avoid redundancy in some areas.

UAMN Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Enhance museum financial resources to achieve our mission and ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.

Our goal is to develop a sustainable financial model that is based on diverse funding streams to weather unpredictable fluctuations in state appropriations, external grant funding, and visitation.

Strategies

- 1.1 Increase philanthropic giving.
- 1.2 Increase earned revenue.
- 1.3 Increase revenue through grants and contracts.
- 1.4 Improve financial transparency.

Goal 2: Promote and support the museum team.

We recognize that a successful museum operates effectively when its employees, students, and volunteers are valued and supported in their work.

Strategies

- 2.1 Fill current staff vacancies.
- 2.2 Prioritize and hire new staff positions that enable us to fully achieve our mission.
- 2.3 Expand professional development opportunities.
- 2.4 Provide resources that support staff success.

Goal 3: Enhance the acquisition, preservation, and study of our collections and share these data and new knowledge widely.

Our research collections are the core of the museum. We will expand our successful legacy of collecting and preserving objects we hold in the public trust, along with their associated data, and effectively share these resources with users.

Strategies

- 3.1 Expand access to digital data for collection users and exhibition and outreach.
- 3.2 Develop and implement a digital data preservation plan.
- 3.3 Further develop a unifying connected system for digital data storage.

3.4 Continually enhance our collections and collecting practices to meet growing and changing societal needs and align with mission and resources.

Goal 4: Improve and expand our engagement with those we collaborate and serve.

We seek to understand and openly engage with our diverse and geographically widespread communities of people (university and research population, the local community, out-of-town visitors, government agencies, Indigenous groups, schools, and other museums, etc.) so that we can be responsive to their needs, improve museum advocacy, and ensure our efforts are timely, relevant, and widely supported.

Strategies

- 4.1 Engage visitors through new technologies and interactive experiences.
- 4.2 Present museum materials, both physical and digital, in multiple languages and accessible formats.
- 4.3 Enhance partnerships with existing groups and better understand their needs.
- 4.4 Establish new connections with underrepresented audiences.
- 4.5 Restructure the Museum Advisory Council.
- 4.6 Foster a climate supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Goal 5: Enhance the physical infrastructure of the museum through expansion and renovation.

We strive to provide a safe, respectful, educational, and modern visitor experience through expansion and renovation of our facility and exhibitions. We also must meet the rapidly growing demand for space to process and house new collections.

Strategies

- 5.1 Renovate the museum's flagship exhibition, the Gallery of Alaska.
- 5.2 Expand or develop new off-site housing to accommodate growing collections.
- 5.3 Add new family/gender neutral restrooms.
- 5.4 Improve parking lot layout and visitor access to the building and exterior exhibitions.
- 5.5 Construct a planetarium/aurorium.

Goals and strategies for attaining them will be prioritized annually by the strategic planning committee. In consultation with the director, it is the responsibility of subcommittees to implement a pragmatic subset of these objectives

based on the most pressing needs at that time. An annual reassessment of priorities will allow UAMN to be responsive to changing fiscal and administrative landscapes.

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes/Objectives	Measures/KPI	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
1. Enhance museum financial resources to achieve our mission and ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.						
	1.1 Improve philanthropic giving	1.1.1 Greater donor engagement	Number of donor communications and visits	Museum Director, Development Coordinator	staff time, funds to assist in donor engagement	Ongoing effort
		1.1.2 Increased philanthropic giving	Amount of donations raised	Museum Director, Development Coordinator	staff time	Ongoing effort
		1.1.3 Increased number of donors	Number of donors	Museum Director, Development Coordinator	staff time	Ongoing effort
	1.2 Increase earned revenue	1.2.1 Increased revenue from admissions and store sales	Revenue amounts from admissions, store sales	Director of Visitor Services	staff time, advertising funds	Ongoing effort
		1.2.2 Increased revenue through events and services	Revenue amounts from events, services	Director of Visitor Services	staff time, advertising funds	Ongoing effort
	1.3 Increase revenue through grants and contracts	1.3.1 Increased number of grants/contracts	Number of grants/contracts	Curators and Collection Managers and other proposal-writing staff	staff time, professional development funding	Ongoing effort
		1.3.2 Increased revenue from grants/contracts	Revenue from grants/contracts	Curators and Collection Managers and other proposal-writing staff	staff time	Ongoing effort
		1.3.3 Develop collaborative proposals with multiple museum collections	Number of collaborative proposals	Curators and Collection Managers and other proposal-writing staff	staff time	Ongoing effort
	1.4 Improve financial transparency	1.4.1 Produce annual financial report	Completed annual financial report by December	Museum Director	staff time	produce first report by Dec. 2022, then annually thereafter
		1.4.2 Improved understanding of budgeting process by staff	Number of staff meetings concerning budgeting process	Museum Director	staff time	Ongoing effort
2. Promote and support the museum team.						
	2.1 Fill current staff vacancies	2.1.1 Identify and prioritize hiring of vacant positions	Completed prioritized hiring plan or rubric	Museum Director; Hiring Committee	Staff time	Fall, 2022
		2.1.2 Recruit and fill vacant positions	Number of filled vacancies	Museum Director, HR coordinator	Commitment of funds for salary and benefits	starting 2022 and then ongoing e
	2.2 Prioritize and hire new staff positions that enable us to fully achieve our mission.	2.2.1 Identify and prioritize new positions needed to fulfill mission	Completed prioritized hiring plan or rubric	Museum Director; Hiring Committee	Staff time	Fall, 2022
		2.2.2 Recruit and fill newly identified positions	Number of filled new positions	Museum Director, HR coordinator	Commitment of funds for salary and benefits	starting 2023 and then ongoing
	2.3 Expand professional development opportunities	2.3.1 Provide time and resources to attend professional meetings and trainings	Number of meetings/trainings attended; staff feedback	Museum Director	Staff time and funds (either through grants or administration) to attend meetings/trainings	Ongoing effort
		2.3.2 Provide DEI training	Completed DEI trainings	Museum Director	Staff time; training fees	Beginning 2022, ongoing effort
		2.3.3 Provide technology training	Number of trainings	Museum Director	Staff time; training fees	Beginning 2022, ongoing effort
	2.4 Provide resources that support staff success	2.4.1 Commit time in workloads to develop and complete projects	Number and quality of successfully completed projects; staff feedback	Museum Director	Staff time	Beginning 2022, by request and ongoing effort

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes/Objectives	Measures/KPI	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
		2.4.2 Provide or improve lab/facility/office spaces	Number of filled requests for improvements of workspace; staff feedback	Museum Director	Commitment of funds for equipment, supplies	Beginning 2022, by request and ongoing effort
3. Enhance the acquisition, preservation, and study of our collections and share these data and new knowledge widely.						
	3.1 Expand access to digital data for collection users and exhibition and outreach	3.1.1 Improve usability of Arctos (online collections database)	More user-friendly Arctos interface	Curators and Collections Manager in collaboration with Arctos programmers	Staff time; grant supported Arctos improvement funds	2023 and ongoing
		3.1.2 Improve UAMN website	Greater and easier access to exhibit and educational materials online	Education and Public Programming team; Communications officer; Development Coordinator; Curators and Collection Managers	Staff time	Ongoing effort
	3.2 Develop and implement a digital preservation plan	3.2.1 Plan for archiving long-term collections data (Arctos and associated images, files)	Completed plan	Curators; Collections Managers	Staff time	Establish committee Jan 2023
		3.2.2 Plan for archiving exhibitions and outreach data	Completed plan	Director of Exhibitions; Director of Education and Public Programming	Staff time	Establish committee Jan 2023
		3.2.3 Implement plan	New, improved digital data preservation capacity	Curators and Collection Managers; Director of Exhibitions; Director of Education and Public Programming	Staff time	2023
	3.3 Further develop a unifying and connected system for digital data storage	3.3.1 Improved data storage infrastructure	New storage devices	Curators and Collections Managers; Museum Director; Director of Exhibitions	Expense of new storage devices	Beginning 2022, and ongoing
		3.3.2 Museum-wide protocols for unified data storage	New protocols document	Curators and Collections Managers; Museum Director; Director of Exhibitions	Staff time	2023
	3.4 Continually enhance our collections and collecting practices to meet growing and changing societal needs and align with mission and resources	3.4.1 Strategically build collections	Number and types of collection objects and their associated data	Curators and Collection Managers; Museum Director	Cost of housing collections; fieldwork costs; staff time	Ongoing effort
		3.4.2 Updated collection practices and collection management policies	Revised collection management plan; MOAs with agencies; updated collection plans for each department	Curators and Collection Managers; Museum Director	Staff time	Ongoing effort
		3.4.3 Deaccession collections that are not aligned with mission and resources	Number and types of objects deaccessioned	Curators and Collection Managers; Museum Director	Staff time	Ongoing effort
4. Improve and expand our engagement with those we collaborate and serve.						
	4.1 Engage visitors through new technologies and interactive experiences	4.1.1 Expand and optimize mobile apps	Number and quality of mobile apps	Director of Exhibits; Director of Visitor Services; Director of Education and Public Programming	License fees; digital infrastructure; staff time	Ongoing effort
		4.1.2 Develop movie/video program with enhanced access (captioning)	Number of captioned movies/videos	Director of Exhibits; Director of Visitor Services	New video equipment; staff time	Ongoing effort
		4.1.3 Expand Family Room offerings to increase interactivity and functionality	Number and type of offerings	Director of Education and Public Programming, Director of Exhibits; Director of Visitor Services	New educational objects and furniture; staff time	Ongoing effort
		4.1.4 Integrate opportunities for multi-modal interactivity throughout the building	Number of multi-modal interactives	Director of Education and Public Programming, Director of Exhibits; Director of Visitor Services	New educational objects and furniture; staff time	Ongoing effort

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes/Objectives	Measures/KPI	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
	4.2 Present museum materials, both physical and digital, in multiple languages and accessible formats	4.2.1 Develop multilingual brochures	Number of different languages represented by brochures	Director of Visitor Services	Staff time; printing costs	Beginning 2023
		4.2.2 Develop multilingual exhibit labels	Number of completed exhibit labels	Director of Exhibits	Staff time; printing costs	Beginning 2023
		4.2.3 Develop more accessible exhibit content to help visitors better see, read, and hear	Number of augmented exhibit content	Director of Exhibits, Director of Education and Public Programming	Staff time; printing and hardware costs	Beginning 2023
	4.3 Enhance partnerships with existing groups and better understand their needs	4.3.1 Conduct visitor feedback surveys	Recent visitor demographics data	Director of Visitor Services; Director of Education and Public Programming; Museum Director	Hire professional survey company	2023
	4.4 Establish new connections with underrepresented audiences	4.4.1 Encourage visitation by minority groups	Increased visitation by underrepresented groups	Director of Visitor Services; Director of Education and Public Programming; Museum Director	Staff time; targeted marketing efforts	Ongoing effort
	4.5 Restructure the Museum Advisory Council (MAC)	4.5.1 Develop bylaws that better define membership, duration, demographics of members	New bylaws document	Development Coordinator; Museum Director	Staff time	Beginning 2022
		4.5.2 Recruit new MAC members	New MAC members	Development Coordinator; Museum Director	Staff time	2022
	4.6 Foster a climate supporting diversity, equity and inclusion	4.6.1 Display and distribute Land Acknowledgment	Display panel at museum entrance; posting on museum website; printing on museum documents and communications	Museum Director; Director of Exhibits, Director of Visitor Services; Director of Education and Public Programming	Staff time; display costs	2023
		4.6.2 Develop a community-curated exhibition space to address social issues	Development of dedicated exhibit space	Director of Exhibits; Director of Education and Public Programming; Curators	\$50K+	2024
		4.6.3 Critically reexamine existing exhibit labels/text	Number of replaced or new labels	Director of Exhibits; Director of Education and Public Programming	Staff time; printing costs; materials/supplies to modify exhibits	Ongoing effort
5. Enhance the physical infrastructure of the museum through expansion and renovation of our facility.						
	5.1 Renovate the museum's flagship exhibition, the Gallery of Alaska	5.1.1 Newly renovated exhibit hall	Completed renovation	Museum Director, Director of Exhibits	\$7+ M, staff time	Campaign starting 2023 and continuing
		5.1.2 Improved collections care	Reduced degradation of exhibit objects	Curators, Collection Managers	Conservation costs; staff time	Ongoing effort
		5.1.3 Modernized visitor experience	Visitation numbers, Visitor feedback	Director of Visitor Services	Staff time	Ongoing effort
		5.1.4 More respectful and inclusive exhibits	Visitor feedback	Director of Exhibitions	Exhibition development costs; staff time	Ongoing effort
	5.2 Expand or develop new off-site housing to accommodate growing collections	5.2.1 Construction of Museum Support Center or renovation of existing off-site facility	Completed MSC or off-site facility	Museum Director, Development Coordinator	New construction: ~\$10M+, Renovation ~\$2-5M	2025
		5.2.2 Improved collections care and access	Number of specimens in collection, quality of object preservation, number of loan requests, number of collections visitors	Curators and Collection Managers	Staff time	Ongoing effort
	5.3 Add new family/gender neutral restrooms	5.3.1 New or renovated restroom area	Completed construction; visitor feedback	Museum Director, Director of Visitor Services	\$500K+	2023
	5.4 Improve parking lot layout and visitor access to the building and exterior exhibitions	5.4.1 Improved parking lot design	Completed redesigned parking lot; improved traffic flow; visitor feedback	Museum Director, Director of Visitor Services, Director of Exhibitions	Design and Construction engineering costs	2024
		5.4.2 Safe walking routes	New walking tours; visitor feedback	Director of Visitor Services, Director of Exhibitions	Parking lot/sidewalk modification costs; new signage costs	Beginning 2023; major modifications 2024 or later
		5.4.3 New exterior exhibits and walking tours	Number of exterior exhibits and visitors	Director of Exhibits, Director of Visitor Services	exhibition costs vary; Bus 142 costs expected to be \$1M+	Beginning 2023 and then ongoing

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes/Objectives	Measures/KPI	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
	5.5 Construct a planetarium	5.5.1 Construction of 10 m planetarium dome as a building addition	Completed planetarium construction	Museum Director, Director of Visitor Services, Director of Exhibitions	\$7.2M	2023-2024
		5.5.2 Increased visitation	Number of visitors; percentage of visitors who attend a planetarium show	Director of Visitor Services	New visitor services staffing	2023 and ongoing effort
		5.5.3 Expanded educational opportunities	Number of school groups; number of UAF classes taught, number of new planetarium shows	Director of Education and Public Programming; Director of Exhibitions	Staff time; costs for new planetarium show productions	Beginning with final funding for planetarium
		5.5.4 Financially sustainable business plan	Additional revenue supports operational costs of planetarium	Museum Director	Staff time	Upon opening of planetarium and thereafter