

WELLIN

Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art
Hamilton College

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2023

Adopted Spring 2018

Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art

WELLIN



DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



As the Wellin Museum moves into the second half of its first decade, it's an appropriate moment to consider how we can build on our successes in the coming years and learn from our challenges. How can this teaching museum, with its main priority of engagement in all its various facets, both acknowledge the history of the two-hundred-year-old campus and ethos of the College as well as forge new directions that respond to contemporary circumstances? Since opening in the fall of 2012, we at the Wellin have focused on mounting groundbreaking exhibitions, supporting students and faculty in new and innovative ways, developing and hosting dynamic events and programs, connecting with our communities, and building a globally representative collection. We consider the Wellin an institution that values inclusiveness and offers a plurality of voices through all these activities, bringing new perspectives to our Hamilton community and to the general public. For the last year, through the process of writing the strategic plan, we have explored how we accomplish this mission. By articulating the necessary steps to realize our objectives and charting the direction of the museum over the next five years, we are proud to share the results of our strategic-plan process. This exercise involved Hamilton faculty, staff, and students; artists, gallerists, and curators; peer institutions; stakeholders and Hamilton alumni; as well as local teachers and community members. The resulting document outlines our commitment to the four main goals:

- 1. Advance interdisciplinary teaching at Hamilton College*
- 2. Make art accessible through community engagement*
- 3. Bring the world to Hamilton*
- 4. Build a strong reputation in academia and the art world*

By supporting the interdisciplinary strengths of Hamilton's liberal arts education, facilitating interactions among artists, scholars, curators, and the community, introducing artists from around the world to new audiences, and generating original work and scholarship in the field, we hope to realize these stated objectives. We plan to build upon the College's strong traditions and foundations and be a part of its growth and change in the coming decades.

Tracy L. Adler

Johnson-Pote Director

Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College



Through the lens of art, the Wellin Museum sparks dialogues across disciplines, inspires experimentation, and fosters creative inquiry.

Embodying the liberal arts experience, the Wellin is an interdisciplinary hub for Hamilton College and the broader community to discover the arts and form unexpected connections through groundbreaking exhibitions, a globally representative teaching collection, and engaging programming.

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Building on its tremendous progress over the past six years, this strategic plan outlines four goals for the next five years. It is the result of a collaborative process that involved Wellin Museum staff, College leadership and administration, Hamilton students and faculty, community members, and peer institutions. The plan describes each goal, its current state, and success measures and impact.

FOUR STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1. Advance Interdisciplinary Teaching at Hamilton College*
- 2. Make Art Accessible Through Community Engagement*
- 3. Bring the World to Hamilton*
- 4. Build a Strong Reputation in Academia and the Art World*



GOAL 1

Advance Interdisciplinary Teaching at Hamilton College

The Wellin will advance interdisciplinary teaching at Hamilton College by expanding the reach and impact of our current object-based and experiential learning programs and offerings. We will do this by increasing depth of engagement for our active users and breadth of reach to new faculty and courses, with a focus on diversifying the disciplines working with the exhibitions and collection. Due to the increasing diversity of our collection and wide-ranging themes of our exhibitions, which have numerous points of access for many disciplines, we are poised to become, over the next five years, a co-curricular hub where academic departments can connect and collaborate, supporting interdisciplinary and innovative teaching by Hamilton College faculty. To achieve this milestone, we will work closely with Hamilton faculty and administration to design a plan that intends to result in generating new courses, research, and other initiatives that emphasize interdisciplinary thinking, support object-based and experiential learning, and provide new insights into the collection, programs, and exhibitions. Such increase in usage of the museum, as well as space needs related



to course visits and collection growth, may necessitate increased staffing and an assessment that explores space enhancements. Based on the current trend of growing use of the facility, some short-term space augmentations have been identified to streamline activities; ultimately, however, long-term facility needs will require consideration.

CURRENT STATE

Wellin staff currently encourage faculty to utilize the Wellin in their teaching through person-to-person interactions as well as faculty-directed programming, such as an orientation tour for new faculty, biannual talks on aspects relating to the collection and collection use, tours of the current exhibitions that are held soon after the exhibition's opening and are geared toward faculty, and roundtable presentations involving curators and artists that introduce faculty to the upcoming semester's exhibition offerings. The active engagement of faculty has resulted in over 220 class sessions at the Wellin to work with the collection and exhibitions since 2012, with frequency of sessions increasing over time. Courses engaging with the museum have been diverse, ranging from physics and French to American history and environmental studies. In the spring of 2017, the Wellin's online collection database was upgraded, with the addition of images and an improved, user-friendly platform. With over 1,000 additional objects and a vast increase in images tied to objects, the database continues to expand and currently includes nearly 2,400 objects viewable by visitors to the Wellin's website, representing 40% of the entire collection. As a result of this active engagement and greater access to and knowledge of the Wellin's holdings, the museum's seminar rooms are at 40% capacity throughout the school year. Moving forward, we see an opportunity to expand the number of classes, faculty, and students working with the collection if we can provide staff to supervise and safely present artworks for these visits.

Since 2014, the Wellin has formulated an Acquisitions Policy and has made purchases—such as the museum's first piece of contemporary African art—to increase the diversity of its holdings to facilitate teaching by a variety of disciplines. The museum has made a commitment to developing a diverse and global collection to create a rich teaching resource for the Hamilton community. With Hamilton in the midst of a major transition with faculty retiring and new tenure-track hires, this is an opportunity to engage new faculty to partner with the Wellin Museum and activate the collection in new and dynamic ways. Through ongoing and active conversations with faculty and students, Wellin staff have learned that there is interest and demand for self-supervised visits



that do not require an appointment. This is currently supported through the glass vitrines in Archive Hall and the Object Study Gallery, which are designed for the display of three-dimensional works of art, but the Wellin does not have the appropriate space to display its vast collection of two-dimensional works, which represent 80% of the collection (including prints, drawings, ephemera, sketchbooks, photographs, artist books, and illustrated manuscripts). Stopgap measures such as retrofitting cases in the Object Study Gallery to display two-dimensional works of art have been undertaken.

GOAL 1 | ACTION SUMMARIES

1.1 **Expand Faculty and Class Engagement and Awareness**

Continue to engage a tenured faculty member as a *Faculty Liaison* to work with the Wellin to increase Hamilton College faculty awareness and encourage utilization of the Wellin's collection and exhibitions in order to increase the number of course visits to the museum. Foster use and awareness of resources available to faculty to encourage the incorporation of upcoming exhibitions into coursework through increased programming, dissemination of information, and collegial outreach. Support awareness of the collection online.

1.2 **Engage Faculty and Students Across Disciplines**

Maintain a diverse program of exhibitions that have points of contact with a range of disciplines and audiences. Continue to diversify the Wellin's collection to speak to a variety of fields and consult with appropriate faculty on potential acquisitions as they relate to their fields of study. Continue to engage students across disciplines through our docent program and student-oriented, peer-to-peer activities. Reach faculty through and coordinate efforts with on-campus, co-curricular, interdisciplinary academic initiatives, including the Digital Humanities Initiative, the Humanities Center, and the Levitt Center.

1.3 **Create Faculty Development Initiatives**

Develop a new initiative, such as a Wellin faculty research grant summer program, or other research opportunities to engage Hamilton faculty in research of the collection that could result in the development of a new course that would explore a topic related to the Wellin's permanent collection. Research could also potentially relate to an upcoming exhibition and publication.

1.4 **Integrate the Wellin Collection and Exhibitions into the Hamilton Curriculum**

Work with faculty to find opportunities to integrate the Wellin's collection into new courses, and provide resources and training on object-based learning. Host

presentations and workshops with the Faculty Liaison to illustrate potential approaches to teaching with the museum and invite faculty who have worked with the collection and exhibitions in the past to share their experiences. Discuss with Dean of Faculty office grants that could provide stipends/awards for faculty engaging with the museum. Explore potential partnerships with Hamilton College departments (for example, Education Studies) to integrate the Wellin's docent and K–12 teaching activities into their curricula.

1.5 Engage New Hires on the Faculty

Engage new Hamilton faculty in their first year to introduce them to the Wellin's offerings so they are familiar with how to work with the museum when planning their curricula. Work with the administration to ensure these interactions are supported and valued.

1.6 Complete Short-Term Space Enhancements

Accommodate short-term space improvements required to support current operations in our existing facility (i.e., modification of office space to accommodate staff).





1.7 Complete Facility-Needs Assessment

Complete an assessment of how space at the Wellin is utilized, assess space needs going forward, and support a feasibility study of the current facility to identify potential for a renovation and/or expansion to accommodate teaching goals in the coming years. Address issues such as how to feature 2-D works from the collection, mounting the senior thesis show, and creating a multi-use space for cross-disciplinary projects and the educational outreach program. Assess needs for additional staff (e.g., *Assistant Preparator*) if a larger facility is pursued.

1.8 Address Data-Storage and Digital-System Needs

Ensure that responsible digital archival practices are implemented and maintained as technology changes and improves. Continuously evaluate technology and systems needs in regard to the website, server space, collection database, online collection database, digital asset-management systems, and software available to Wellin staff and student workers to enable them to execute their tasks in the most efficient, responsible, and strategic way possible.

GOAL 1 | OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Outcomes

Successful achievement of this goal will position the Wellin as an indispensable resource that faculty actively seek out to support their courses. The permanent collection, exhibitions, visiting artists/curators, and other museum offerings will advance curricular innovation, foster interdisciplinary teaching, and encourage experimentation among faculty. The role of the Wellin on campus will be strengthened by Hamilton College administration advocating for interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty around the Wellin and incentivizing object-based and experiential learning centered on the Wellin's offerings. We will measure success with the following key metrics:

- Increase number of class visits to collection by 2–3 each semester (cumulative)
- Sustain 25 annual class visits to exhibitions by varying courses and disciplines
- Bring in classes by 2–4 faculty members who have not engaged with the Wellin per year
- Engage a faculty member from 1 new department/discipline per year



- Initiate 2–4 new courses that utilize the Wellin’s exhibitions, collection, or programming in the span of the next 5 years
- Bring in classes led by 1 newly hired faculty member per year
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the Wellin’s space needs to inform future decision making about the facility and its use
- Complete data-storage and digital-system analysis and implementation

Student Impact

As a result of Hamilton faculty’s tight-knit collaboration with the museum, students will experience a fulfilling liberal arts education, enriched by courses that teach a diverse range of topics through the lens of art. Hamilton students will be equipped with the necessary critical and visual-thinking skills to be successful in their lives after graduation. Through student-led and student-oriented activities, the student body will have an enhanced sense of ownership of and investment in the museum.

Faculty Impact

As active users of the Wellin’s interdisciplinary hub, Hamilton faculty will be challenged by unconventional, new ways of teaching, thinking, and collaborating with the museum in an integrated way. With the trend for interdisciplinary teaching, the Wellin can serve as a catalyst for new interactions and explorations with faculty outside the traditional classroom model.

K–12 Community Impact

A greater knowledge of the collection fostered by the activities of Hamilton’s faculty and Wellin staff, along with the building of a broader, more diverse collection, will provide K–12 students and teachers with greater resources, better examples, and more information with which to contextualize artworks for creating engaging learning experiences in their classrooms.

Art World Impact

The contextualization of collections and exhibitions, and the collaboration on projects and courses between the Wellin and Hamilton faculty, will contribute new research, scholarship, and innovative approaches to the larger art world. The Wellin can become a new model for the teaching museum of the 21st century.



GOAL 2

Make Art Accessible Through Community Engagement

The Wellin will make art accessible to all audiences by building a vibrant community-engagement and visitor-services program that serves all members of the campus and local community. We will continue to enhance the learning outcomes for Hamilton students and provide unique experiential learning opportunities through professional development and life-skills training. To achieve this milestone, we will improve and sustain the visitor experience, create new means for student growth and development, and deepen relationships with the campus and local community.

CURRENT STATE

The Wellin Museum had the largest numbers of Hamilton, K–12, and community visitors to date in 2017, including over 14,000 visitors and 2,000 members of local school and community groups. Central to the museum’s visitor experience are a user-engagement model, meaningful art experiences, and, following the need-blind admissions policy



of Hamilton College, free admission and free programs that are open to the entire community. The museum never charges visitors for access to the museum or for any of its programs. This experience and visitor interaction is made possible in part by a strong student-docent program. The program has grown in correspondence with the numbers of visitors, with 30–40 Hamilton College students employed by the museum each semester.

From September 2015–September 2017, community engagement and visitor experience was supported by a Mellon-funded educator position. Sustaining the current scale and depth of programming has required establishing a permanent staff position (with support staff) and further developing the student-docent program. Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the docent program as well as looking at best practices by peer institutions are ongoing to further scaffold this valuable program, which has an impact on campus and in the community. A strategy for tracking attendance and follow-up with visitor-satisfaction surveys will be put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of programming.

GOAL 2 | ACTION SUMMARIES

2.1 Sustain and Build Engagement Operations and Growth Opportunities for Hamilton Students

Continue to develop the student-docent program to enhance student training and define specific roles for hires (i.e., greeter positions, tour docents, seminar-room supervisors, collection and exhibition assistants). Refine new Docent+ program for future museum and education professionals to develop career and life skills, such as project management and colleague communication through specialized projects. Establish a yearlong *Postgraduate Fellowship* position annually for one Hamilton graduate that exposes the new alumnus/a to the inner workings of a museum and supports career development in the museum field. Continue to collaborate with experiential learning areas across the College to strengthen opportunities for students with a range of interests. These ongoing endeavors will enhance the museum's outreach to the Hamilton community, deepen local community relations, and improve visitor experience.

2.2 Enhance Visitor Experience

Support meaningful art experiences through an improved and welcoming entry (greeter station) and initiate an audience-research program that captures visitor demographics, information, and satisfaction with our offerings. Respond



to and implement findings. Share information with experiential learning areas across campus, College administration, advancement, communications, and museum peers.

2.3 Cultivate Opportunities in Education for Hamilton Students

Continue to create experiential learning opportunities for Hamilton students interested in pursuing a career in education through exposure to and involvement with the robust K–12 community-outreach program at the museum. Assess the need for an *Education Assistant* to support the Hamilton student-docent program, and improve and expand partnerships with K–12 schools through customized collections, publications, and programming.

2.4 Cultivate Digital Opportunities for Hamilton Students

Create experiential learning opportunities for Hamilton students to work alongside Wellin staff utilizing digital platforms for collections management, exhibition design, social media, visitor data gathering and assessment, and digital asset management. Explore new technologies for mapping object data and retrieving visual information through scanning and reproduction processes (such as reflectance transformation imaging, 3-D scanning and printing, among others).

2.5 Deepen Relationship with the Hamilton College Community

Continue to pursue opportunities for the Wellin staff to engage with the Hamilton College community and increase awareness of the museum’s offerings through





activities such as presentations at Staff Assembly and Wellin staff attending events hosted by other departments and groups across campus.

2.6 Create Welcoming and Accessible Community Events

Create opportunities to introduce the Wellin to new audiences—Hamilton faculty, staff, and the greater regional community—through “gateway events” that are welcoming, entertaining, do not require RSVPs, and are easily accessible to all.

2.7 Co-Create Welcoming and Accessible Events for Hamilton College Students

Continue to support the Wellin Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) group to help plan a range of events to support student engagement and activities, and partner with other student organizations and clubs across campus.

2.8 Support Campus Wellness through Art

Explore ways to create programming, space, and events that provide opportunities for students to retreat, relax, and recharge through activities like Wellin Unwind, hosted by WISE. Pursue additional opportunities to advance wellness initiatives on campus, such as partnered programming with the Health and Counseling Center on campus. Use WellinWorks as potential site for this collaboration.

GOAL 2 | OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Outcomes

Successful achievement of this goal will further integrate the Wellin into the fabric of campus culture, activities, and community to build ownership and provide a model for inclusion. A robust docent program and welcoming visitor experience will help shape student citizenship and strengthen the town-and-gown relationship. We will measure success with the following key metrics:

- Maintain number of Hamilton students engaged in professional development positions (including greeter positions, tour docents, Docent+ positions, and a potential yearlong, postgraduate fellowship)
- Sustain and support Hamilton students engaged with the K–12 community-outreach programming
- Engage 3 new K–12 schools per year to visit the Wellin Museum
- Ensure Wellin staff each attend and/or present at a total of 5 campus events each year
- Bring new visitors to the museum through two “gateway events” per year (in addition to Wellin Kids)



- Implement recurring data collection to track visitation and analyze engagement at the museum
- Partner on 1 event per year that strengthens partnerships with other experiential-learning hubs across campus
- Inform Wellin Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) each semester about opportunities and spaces available for their use
- Partner with WISE on 1 event per year that supports collaboration with other student groups and clubs
- Host 1 event per year that supports cross-campus efforts to increase wellness options for students

Student Impact

The student-docent program engages students from a wide range of disciplines, building transferable skills they can apply to their professional careers. For those interested in careers in museums or education, the museum offers comprehensive, customized, and useful work opportunities that support this goal. By giving tours, student docents develop critical oral-communication skills and learn to engage with various audiences from schoolchildren to faculty to trustees and community groups. By working alongside staff who are professionals in the field on museum projects, they are guided in learning about collections, outreach, exhibitions, and public programs. In addition, students in this program learn valuable life skills like project management, and how to effectively communicate with a range of constituents.

By providing docents opportunities to effect positive change in their local community through teaching with art, the docent program helps shape students' active citizenship and fulfills the College's goals for professional development as well as the community's needs. In addition, the creation of engaging events that build ownership and enjoyment of the Wellin Museum and its collections will exemplify Hamilton College's goal of fostering a "love of learning, a creative spirit, and informed and responsible engagement with an ever-changing world." Through the WISE group, students can find opportunities for leadership and peer engagement. The museum also can be a place for students to "de-stress" during intense periods of study, supporting wellness initiatives.

Faculty Impact

To date, more than 220 Hamilton College class sessions have used the Wellin Museum's permanent collection and exhibitions to support their curricula. The creation of engaging events that build ownership and enjoyment of the Wellin Museum will increase

the quality of life for Hamilton College faculty and staff. In addition, such activities will provide a venue for peer-to-peer engagement among faculty and staff that might result in unexpected collaborations.

K–12 Community Impact

The K–12 community will continue to benefit from Wellin Museum programming through using the museum’s permanent collection and exhibitions to enhance their curricula, exposing children to new ways of learning about subjects in a range of disciplines through the lens of art.

Art World Impact

Hamilton student docents go out into the world, work at other museums and arts institutions, and bring their Wellin Museum experience and liberal arts education with them. Through developing innovative docent and outreach programs, the Wellin can share what it has learned with peer institutions nationwide to support engagement.





GOAL 3

Bring the World to Hamilton

The Wellin will bring the world to Hamilton by collecting art that reflects the abundant diversity of artistic output and by mounting groundbreaking exhibitions that invite specialists (such as curators and scholars) and artists from around the world to the Wellin Museum. The museum's programming will continue to feature international artists, curators, and other creative leaders who engage directly with Hamilton classes and the broader community, thus exposing students, faculty, community members, and K–12 school groups to global issues and concepts to help develop a deeper understanding of the world. In the area of collecting, the Wellin will continue efforts to create range and depth in underrepresented areas such as women artists and artists of color from diverse cultures and eras. This will support a range of disciplines and subjects through object-based and interactive learning. These efforts are paramount in creating meaningful art experiences, encouraging interdisciplinary teaching, promoting experiential learning opportunities, and supporting a new understanding of topical global issues.



CURRENT STATE

The Wellin provides a portal for the Hamilton community to the world through innovative exhibitions and programming, and by developing the collection with an aim to represent the wealth of diverse artists and cultures both contemporary and throughout history.

Through its exhibitions, the Wellin offers shows that broaden visitors' perspectives and challenge audiences to think critically about the issues that impact their world. Through dynamic programming that provides opportunities for direct interactions with the artists via class visits, studio critiques, and assistantships, the Wellin brings these shows to life, providing a deeper awareness of different cultures and contemporary issues. As part of the exhibition programming, artists, curators, and other creative leaders are brought to the Wellin to interact with the Hamilton and broader community. According to visitor feedback, these interactions are among the most exciting and rewarding aspects of the museum's programming, and they help support teaching initiatives at Hamilton College.

The Wellin is building a globally representative permanent collection with an emphasis on artists and cultures that have not been represented in the collection and are often overlooked due to race or gender. The Wellin highlights artists and art objects that are teaching tools for a wide variety of subjects and emphasizes object-based learning through direct interaction with significant works of art throughout history. In so doing, the Wellin provides audiences with a platform to learn about new cultures to emphasize our commonalities and to explore our differences.

The Wellin's permanent collection—which includes 6,000 works of art and artifacts, 575 of which have been acquired since 2012, the year the museum opened—represents a wide range of cultures, time periods, and artistic practices, and has long been used for study on Hamilton's campus. By making these objects available digitally online and growing the collection through select gifts and purchases, the Wellin has made substantial strides in developing the collection and making it accessible both virtually and for Hamilton faculty and students wishing to view works in person by appointment in the Seminar Rooms.

GOAL 3 | ACTION SUMMARIES

3.1 Continue to Develop Innovative and Experimental Exhibitions

Create dynamic exhibitions that expose the Hamilton College and broader community to new and diverse perspectives. To sustain the exhibition program



and broaden its range of Wellin-curated exhibitions, we will assess hiring an *Assistant Curator*.

3.2 Continue Engagement with Artists and Art Professionals

Continue to bring art-world luminaries, significant artists, and art professionals to Hamilton in association with exhibitions and the collection to provide a deeper understanding of the context of the arts across cultures, periods, and mediums.

3.3 Continue to Strengthen the Permanent Collection

Continue to build a globally diverse collection that offers a plurality of voices, broadening the dialogue on art to address significant social, cultural, and historical/contemporary issues. To support growth of the permanent collection, traveling exhibitions, increased use of the seminar rooms, and potential future growth of the facility, the Wellin will assess hiring a *Registrar/Collections Manager*.

3.4 Grow Endowments for Collection, Exhibitions, and Programming

The Wellin will work with the Department of Advancement to identify potential donors and create new endowments, as well as grow existing ones, to support innovative exhibitions, public programs, artist engagements, publications, and development of the permanent collection.





GOAL 3 | OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Outcomes

Successful achievement of this goal will establish the Wellin among its peers as an institution known for its inventive and international exhibitions, and prescient and diverse collecting. The Wellin will measure success with the following key metrics:

- Maintain exhibition calendar of 2–4 exhibitions and 2–4 artist engagements/academic visits per year
- Make 1 major acquisition purchase per year that supports the diverse-collection initiative
- Make 10–20 acquisitions through gifts and purchases that expand the breadth and depth of the collection

Student Impact

Hamilton students arrive on campus with varied exposure to the arts: Some have visited museums frequently throughout their lives and some have limited experience with museums. The Wellin can play a major role in educating students from a range of disciplines and introducing them to artists and artwork created by a diverse group of significant artists working today, as well as to historical artifacts and objects of material culture. The College's goals of aesthetic discernment, understanding cultural diversity, and engaged citizenship can be furthered by the Wellin's programs, collections, and exhibitions. Hamilton students have direct engagement with artists through assisting with the creation of site-specific artworks, studio critiques by visiting artists with students, informal discussions, and class visits in all disciplines. Education in the arts, and/or using art as a lens for exploring other subjects and areas of study, is an invaluable part of the liberal arts experience.

Faculty Impact

National and international trends in the art world as well as current events are brought directly to the Hamilton campus through the Wellin Museum's ambitious, global exhibition program and its growing collection. Hamilton faculty have access to artworks that enhance their teaching methods and encourage interdisciplinary engagement. They can incorporate exhibitions, collections, and programming (such as visiting artists, scholars, and lecturers) into their curriculum to add dimension and depth to their courses and provide new perspectives on their subjects. When classes



meet in the museum, it provides an alternative to the classroom experience that encourages unexpected and meaningful dialogues for students and faculty alike. As an understanding of the value of interdisciplinary learning increases, so too does the importance of the museum as an active nexus where diverse disciplines can converge on campus.

K–12 Community Impact

Many children in the region have limited or no access to museums and artists. Therefore, meeting an artist and visiting the museum provides a vital and deeply meaningful experience for growing minds. Seeing exhibitions on the cutting edge of art and being exposed to a plurality of artistic voices will promote a better understanding of the world, both near and far, and introduce young minds to the arts in a way that excites and engages them. It will also intentionally foster a deeper understanding of diversity. The museum is free and open to the public, all programs are free, and student docents are always on hand to support children learning in the museum.

Art World Impact

The Wellin Museum is building a regional, national, and international reputation for exhibition programming on par with leaders in the field. The Wellin develops unique exhibitions and robust publications that introduce new scholarship and exhibitions to the field. The Wellin is becoming known as an institution that is developing a collection that is global, innovative, and selective in its scope.





GOAL 4

Build a Strong Reputation in Academia and the Art World

The Wellin will build a national and international awareness that brings attention to Hamilton College through continuing to develop innovative exhibitions, building a significant teaching collection, producing major publications, receiving coverage in the media, and sustaining digital outreach. This will be bolstered by the Wellin Museum obtaining accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.

CURRENT STATE

As a young institution, the Wellin continues to explore how to best amplify its work as a teaching museum both within and outside the museum's walls. Since opening in 2012, the Wellin has presented twenty-four exhibitions, twelve of which were generated by Wellin staff and three that have traveled to peer institutions nationwide. The Wellin has become known for mounting artists' first major solo museum exhibitions in the



U.S. and supporting the creation of works exploring new directions in their creative practices. In addition, the museum has developed and published fourteen original, exhibition-specific publications, four of which were co-published with an international publisher and distributor. These high-quality publications extend the life of an exhibition through documentation and provide critical analysis of artworks, which contributes to a broader dialogue in art and academia. In developing these exhibitions and publications, the Wellin Museum introduces new scholarship to the field and contributes to a broader awareness of the museum and Hamilton College.

The Wellin Museum is also dedicated to raising awareness of its robust publications, compelling exhibition program, and growing permanent collection through online initiatives and outreach efforts. The museum has gained recognition in arts-based and mainstream media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Art Newspaper*, *Forbes*, *Hyperallergic*, *Modern Painters*, and *ArtNet*, among others. In an effort to grow online and onsite engagement, the museum has committed to developing an institutional social media plan to engage with the growing crowd of almost 3,000 followers across major platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). Additionally, the Wellin has created twenty-four videos, including three 360-degree tours, which encourage digital interaction with museum exhibitions and activities. With the recent launch of its Online Collection Catalog, the Wellin is further encouraging visitors near and far to explore the over one-third of the museum's permanent collection that has been digitized. In bringing awareness to the Wellin's exhibitions, collections, and programming, the museum looks to foster greater access and continue its role as a valuable contributor to the College, community, and greater art world.

GOAL 4 | ACTION SUMMARIES

4.1 Continue to Build a Reputation for Mounting Innovative Exhibitions

Continue to mount shows of work by artists from around the world who have not had major exhibitions in the U.S. or whose work has been underexposed, thus contributing to the field and gaining recognition as a museum known for its curatorial innovation. Support artists to explore new artistic directions through commissioning new works for exhibitions. Continue to foster artistic collaboration and innovation.

4.2 Obtain AAM Accreditation

Enhance the reputation of the museum by obtaining accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. AAM accreditation offers high-profile, peer-based

validation of museum operations and impact. Accreditation increases museum credibility and value to funders, policy makers, insurers, community, and peers, as well as to lending institutions and collectors.

4.3 Expand the Traveling Exhibition Program

Establish partnerships with significant, geographically diverse institutions, particularly those affiliated with colleges/universities, which will extend the life of Wellin-generated exhibitions and ensure they reach new audiences.

4.4 Strategically Enhance the Museum's Virtual Presence

Curate the museum's online and digital presence to enhance visitor experience through immersive digital offerings on our website, a strategic social media plan, and expanded digital access to the collection.

4.5 Strengthen the Publications Program through Partnerships

Expand the reach of our existing publication program through partnerships with prominent publishers and collaborations with significant peer institutions (i.e., co-publishing with other museums). Establish and grow an endowment for publications.

4.6 Continue to Build Awareness in the Press

Expand upon current communications and outreach initiatives to secure press coverage of Wellin-generated exhibitions and publications with PR agency support.





4.7 Support Wellin Staff Development and Promote Staff as Emissaries of the Institution

Encourage museum staff to attend and participate in professional conferences related to their area of expertise, give lectures, present, and sit on panels, and foster networking opportunities, which support the development of the staff members and increase awareness of the Wellin Museum and Hamilton College both nationally and abroad.

4.8 Engage Hamilton Alumni

Work with the Department of Advancement to identify a dedicated advancement officer for the Wellin and define a coordinated effort to identify, engage, and develop relationships with Hamilton alumni. Build future donor relations by continued contact with past docents and members of WISE. Offer targeted opportunities for alumni to get involved and advocate for the museum. Work with Advisory Committee to help cultivate support for alumni interested in supporting the programs at the Wellin.

GOAL 4 | OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Outcomes

Successful achievement of this goal will establish the Wellin as a voice in the national and international conversation of teaching museums. We will measure success with the following key metrics:

- Obtain AAM Accreditation by FY19–20
- Increase the run of traveling shows from 1 to 2 venues
- Increase digitized collection materials by 50% over 5 years
- Increase website visitation by 10% annually
- Increase number of books co-publisher orders by 50% or increase print run for co-publisher
- Expand press coverage to 20 placements per year over 5 years
- Ensure each Wellin staff member presents or attends at least 1 conference annually
- Increase alumni and family giving by \$50,000 per year and 10 donations of works of art per year



Student Impact

Increasing the museum's visibility boosts the number of incoming students interested in attending a college where they can engage with a museum that has established itself as a significant contributor to the field of art through its robust programs. Additionally, students would have greater access to museum resources through an expansion of digital initiatives. As a result, the role of art is better integrated into their education, supporting the liberal arts experience in a transdisciplinary manner. Visibility of the museum could enhance job opportunities for graduating students.

Faculty Impact

Through accreditation and increased visibility, the Wellin Museum can continue actively contributing to Hamilton College's recruitment of high-caliber faculty and staff who are interested in engaging with an institution that maintains a diverse collection and produces innovative exhibitions and publications. By building the museum's reputation, the Wellin contributes to the growing reputation of Hamilton College overall. Faculty and staff will also benefit from the expansion of digital initiatives such as the digitization of the collection, as these projects can make teaching and interacting with the museum increasingly accessible.

K–12 Community Impact

The K–12 community inherently benefits from the museum's development and amplified reputation, as these factors encourage further community-based programming. This constituency directly benefits from the Wellin's exhibitions and programming. Additionally, increasing the museum's digital outreach will greatly affect the K–12 community by making more of the museum's collection and resources available online. This ultimately enhances educators' experience and makes opportunities to collaborate with the museum more convenient and accessible.

Art World Impact

By creating high-quality exhibitions and publications, the Wellin can be seen as a resource for critical analysis and new scholarship delivered via exhibitions and publications that contribute to larger conversations within the art world. The Wellin Museum is becoming known for supporting artistic innovation and development, which puts the museum in dialogue with significant artists and institutions worldwide.
