

INSPIRING GENERATIONS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND DISCOVERY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: STRATEGIC PLAN



Smithsonian Institution

Fiscal Years 2010–2015

Introduction

In the future, one touch of a screen is all you will need to get every bit of information on any given species. Or to visit Smithsonian objects online – see them, hear them, and watch them in motion. Visitors who come in person to experience exhibitions that amaze and inspire will be able to contribute their own memories of objects and events to enrich the permanent record.

All this and more is within our reach. The Smithsonian is on the threshold of a new era, when the formidable strengths of this 163-year-old Institution – the world’s largest museum and research complex, unique in its scope and unparalleled in its holdings – converge with the tremendous innovation that technology makes possible.

Our potential to reshape the Institution is limitless. To ensure that we seize the moment and build on the Smithsonian’s resources, bringing these vast resources to bear in powerful ways on the critical problems of the world, we embarked on the most inclusive and comprehensive planning process in our history.

Out of intense discussion came a vision for a 21st century Smithsonian, an institution characterized by:

- An interdisciplinary outlook that combines our disparate strengths in ways that increase perspective and impact.
- A collaborative spirit that encourages us to build public and private partnerships and forges strong ties with nations, organizations, agencies, and individuals whose interests we share.
- An entrepreneurial culture that leverages emerging technology, rewards innovation, and invents new business models that help us build capacity and extend our reach.
- A commitment to excellence and accountability that calls for us to improve performance, measure outcomes, support ongoing learning, provide equal opportunity, and recognize our people – the Smithsonian’s great resource.

The Plan charts our course through 2015; it is a roadmap that lays out specific priorities, which, in turn, will help guide the hard choices we must make. Most importantly, it will direct the allocation of human and financial resources.

MISSION

The increase and diffusion of knowledge

VISION

Shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world

VALUES

Discovery: Explore and bring to light new knowledge and ideas, and better ways of doing business

Creativity: Instill our work with imagination and innovation

Excellence: Deliver the highest-quality products and services in all endeavors

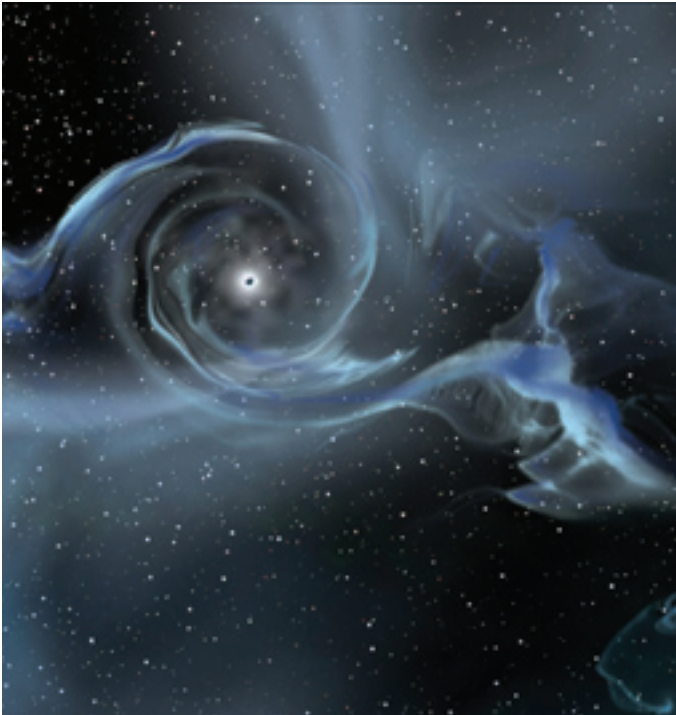
Diversity: Capitalize on the richness inherent in differences

Integrity: Carry out all our work with the greatest responsibility and accountability

Service: Be of benefit to the public and our stakeholders

FOUR GRAND CHALLENGES

Unlocking the Mysteries of the Universe



Understanding and Sustaining a Biodiverse Planet



Valuing World Cultures



Understanding the American Experience

Priorities

FOCUSING ON FOUR GRAND CHALLENGES

We will use the immense resources and talent of the Smithsonian toward four major purposes:

Unlocking the Mysteries of the Universe

We will continue to lead in the quest to understand the fundamental nature of the cosmos, using next-generation technologies to explore our own solar system, meteorites, the Earth's geological past and present, and the paleontological record of our planet.

Understanding and Sustaining a Biodiverse Planet

We will use our resources across scientific museums and centers to significantly advance our knowledge and understanding of life on Earth, respond to the growing threat of environmental change, and sustain human well-being.

Valuing World Cultures

As a steward and ambassador of cultural connections, with a presence in some 100 countries and expertise and collections that encompass the globe, we will build bridges of mutual respect, and present the diversity of world cultures and the joy of creativity with accuracy, insight, and reverence.

Understanding the American Experience

America is an increasingly diverse society that shares a history, ideals, and an indomitable, innovative spirit. We will use our resources across disciplines to explore what it means to be an American and how the disparate experiences of individual groups strengthen the whole, and to share our story with people of all nations.

BROADENING ACCESS

New tools and technology will exponentially broaden our access worldwide. The nation's growing diversity challenges us to reach new audiences and ensure that Smithsonian collections, exhibitions, and outreach programs speak to all Americans. We also must remain relevant to visitors who come from around the world. To accomplish this, we will use new media and social networking tools to deliver information in customized ways and bring our resources to those who cannot visit in person. Digitizing objects and making them accessible online are major Institutional priorities, as is exploring next-generation technologies that speak to "digital natives" who expect to be reached online. Finally, we will improve the visitor experience, for even in the digital age, physical access to the "real thing" has enduring value.



REVITALIZING EDUCATION

Smithsonian content experts and educators will work together to help strengthen American education and enhance our nation's ability to compete globally. The Smithsonian will serve as a laboratory to create models and methods of innovative informal education and link them to the formal education system. Our venues will take advantage of a range of interactive, Web-based technologies, and our programs will encourage continuous exploration by learners of all ages. To guide our educational efforts across the Institution, we will create a central approach for education that leverages resources, strengthens communications, coordinates programming, and rewards inventive thinking and collaboration.



CROSSING BOUNDARIES

The loss of native languages, the degradation of landscapes, and the growing diversity of U.S. society – these are examples of complex issues researchers across the Smithsonian study every day. To maximize our impact on such critical problems, we must marshal resources across disciplines and strengthen external relationships. To leverage the scholarship and experience that resides in each field of knowledge, the Smithsonian will create interdisciplinary centers around each of the four grand challenges. These centers, which can be virtual as well as physical, will spark innovative research and educational programs, and broker partnerships. In addition, the Smithsonian will fortify existing external relationships and forge new ones as potential collaborators emerge in our priority areas.



STRENGTHENING COLLECTIONS

The Smithsonian's collections represent our rich national heritage, art from across the globe, and the immense diversity of the natural and cultural worlds. The collections are fundamental to our work and to that of countless scholars and many federal agencies; it is our responsibility to preserve them for future generations. To ensure the collections remain available, we will improve their storage and management, substantially expand access to them through digital technologies, and build public/private partnerships that strategically enhance collections care. We will also develop a pan-Institutional collections plan to support the Smithsonian's four grand challenges and Institution-wide initiatives.



ENABLING MISSION THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

To strengthen those organizational services that allow us to deliver on our mission, we will:

- Create an entrepreneurial and innovative culture that is aligned with priorities; is agile, transparent, and accountable; provides equal opportunity; and encourages the generation of new revenues.
- Support our dedicated workforce of employees and volunteers through ongoing learning, enhanced responsiveness, encouraging excellence, valuing diversity, and rewarding innovation.
- Enhance communications to Congress and the public, and involve audiences as partners in the dissemination of knowledge through new media.
- Expand essential support services including financial and facilities management, audience research, and marketing.
- Build and sustain a healthy physical environment, including renovating the Arts and Industries Building and opening the National Museum of African American History and Culture.
- Ensure financial strength by launching a national campaign and pursuing new revenue-generation opportunities in concert with the museums and centers.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Performance measurement is critical to sustaining the highest standards of excellence and is essential for clearly communicating our accomplishments to external audiences. We will engage all levels of leadership in matching outcomes, goals, objectives, and strategies to performance indicators that will specifically and annually measure progress toward our goals. Indicators will be transparent and updated regularly.

RESOURCING THE PLAN

We expect the major themes of the Plan, and the bold but achievable outcomes it describes, will require cumulative additional resources of approximately 16%–32% above our current base over the life of the Plan. Federal support for the Smithsonian, its museums, collections, and research activities, will always be essential to sustaining our mission, but we anticipate that less than half of the new money needed for the Plan will come from the Federal budget. The Smithsonian will become a more entrepreneurial organization, and we envision funding new initiatives through a variety of sources. These include a National Campaign, new revenue-generating ideas, and a growth in grants and contracts.

Conclusion: Reshaping the Smithsonian

This Strategic Plan offers a roadmap to success in a new era. It capitalizes on our great strengths and positions us to make a more significant impact on the critical issues of the world. We will be an Institution defined by our hallmarks:

- An adaptive, accountable, entrepreneurial culture.
- Cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, discovery, and scholarship.
- Museums that celebrate knowledge, inform inquiring minds, and instill wonder.
- Collections that reflect the fullness of the world's heritage and identity.
- Convening activities that stimulate thought, engender debate, and generate answers.
- New media that create interactive access and reach new audiences.
- A network of cooperative programs with universities.
- An ability to attract bright and passionate people to create and share new initiatives.
- Unrivaled informal educational programs.

We envision the Smithsonian of 2015 as an international leader, an institution that influences the important debates of the day and engages a far greater percentage of the world. In short, the 21st century Smithsonian will be an institution that fulfills its vast potential to serve the nation and the world.



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian Information
SI Building, Room 153
MRC 010, P.O. Box 37012
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Phone: (202) 633-1000
E-mail: info@si.edu
Web: www.smithsonian.org

G. Wayne Clough
Secretary

Board of Regents

John G. Roberts, Jr.
The Chief Justice of the United States
Chancellor

Patricia Q. Stonesifer
Chair