



# Harry Ransom Center Strategic Plan 2014–2019



HARRY RANSOM  
CENTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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## **VISION**

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The Ransom Center strives to be the leading research library and museum for the study and greater understanding of the literature and culture shaping our time.

## **MISSION**

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The Ransom Center encourages discovery, inspires creativity, and advances understanding of the humanities for a broad and diverse audience through the preservation and sharing of its extraordinary collections.

## **ABOUT THE RANSOM CENTER**

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The Ransom Center is an internationally renowned humanities research library and museum at The University of Texas at Austin. Its extensive collections provide unique insight into the creative process of writers and artists, deepening our understanding and appreciation of literature, photography, film, art, and the performing arts. Visitors engage with the Center's collections through research and study, exhibitions, publications, and a rich variety of program offerings including readings, talks, symposia, and film screenings.

## **VALUES**

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### **Collection Development and Stewardship**

The Ransom Center is committed to building collections of enduring cultural value and caring for them in accordance with the highest standards of preservation and access.

### **Public Service and Engagement**

The Ransom Center aspires to engage the broadest possible audience with its diverse and internationally renowned collections.

### **Creativity and Innovation**

The Ransom Center values creativity and innovation in the materials we preserve, in the interpretation of these materials, and in our service to the public.

**Positive Work Environment**

The Ransom Center values the professionalism and unique talents of our colleagues and fosters a community that encourages excellence, collaboration, transparency, and thoughtful action.

**Diversity**

The Ransom Center recognizes the fundamental importance of the diversity of individuals and ideas in the Center's collections, audience, staff, and programs.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

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This strategic plan outlines how the Harry Ransom Center will strengthen and extend its standing as the nation's leading research library and museum for the arts and humanities.

That ambitious aspiration will be achieved not by speculative new ventures but through a renewed commitment to the highest professional standards in all aspects of our work and through new investment in four major areas of activity:

- Collections
- Teaching and Research
- Public Engagement
- Staff Excellence

Looking beyond the life-span of this five-year plan, we know that the Ransom Center must prepare now for sustained growth of its collections and programs. The building, which has served the institution well over the past 43 years, must be reimagined for the work described in this document. In size, function, and appearance, that building should be commensurate with the world-renowned collections it holds and should be a visible signal of The University of Texas's ongoing commitment to teaching, research, and the life of the mind.

This plan reflects the thoughts and ambitions of a broad cross section of Ransom Center staff, members of the Center's Advisory Council, senior University leadership, colleagues from other University of Texas collecting institutions, faculty, and other campus partners. The planning was conducted between January and November 2014 and included study of the best practices at a number of leading national peer institutions. The plan has been prepared by the Ransom Center's Director with the assistance of Thomas Wolf and Jane Culbert of the consulting firm Wolf Brown, a Strategic Planning Committee of the Advisory Council, and the Ransom Center's senior leadership team.

## COLLECTIONS

The Ransom Center routinely receives first offers of the most important collections and is sought out by our finest writers, photographers, and artists as the archive of choice for the creative record of our time. The institution must position itself for

sustained growth of its world-renowned collections by creating deeper and more reliable sources of funding not tied to the vagaries of state or university budgets. In addition, in the coming years, resources will be directed to important new areas of priority including new investment in the Center's rich photography and film holdings.

The Ransom Center cannot be known, however, for acquisitiveness alone, and this strategic plan also outlines the many ways we will fulfill our responsibilities through the highest standards of conservation, cataloging, and research services support. Through the steps described in this document we will ensure that the Ransom Center's unparalleled collections continue to grow and continue to have a vital and useful life for years to come.

## **RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, and TEACHING**

Across the humanities, technological innovation is introducing new modes of conducting research, new ways of teaching, and new ways of extending access to primary source collections like those the Ransom Center holds. For all of the rich potential of new ways of doing our work, these innovations are, and will continue to be, additive. That is, they will supplement and enhance the ways the Ransom Center provides a rich teaching and research experience onsite. This plan proposes balancing these dual commitments to a direct experience of its collections with powerful new discovery and access initiatives that will greatly extend the reach and relevance of the Center's collections for an international community of scholars.

The Ransom Center will implement the best practices of peer teaching and research institutions while providing important leadership in development of new access models for the growing body of digital collection material that is now a part of nearly every archive we acquire. In addition, we will recommit to providing access to traditionally under-described collection materials (e.g., sound and moving image), the Center's own institutional records, and to the Center's extensive collections of photographs and other visual materials.

Even as we seek to advance the scholarly use of the Center's holdings, we also understand the obligations we have as a part of the state's flagship university to prepare the next generation of students for original research. This strategic plan signals a renewed commitment to teaching with primary source materials and invites collaboration with our faculty colleagues.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The collections that offer the most direct and unmediated experience of our cultural past are also objects of great interest to a broad public seeking a deeper understanding of and engagement with the past. This strategic plan embraces this opportunity for service and outlines how we will enrich the visitor experience for those in Austin and how we will extend the reach of the collections through collaboration with peer institutions in other geographic areas of the country.

The contemporary nature of many of the Ransom Center's collections reminds us that the cultural history we document is part of an ongoing and living tradition. In addition to supporting research in the Center's historical collections, this plan also describes an array of public programs we are committed to producing for the greater understanding and delight of intellectually engaged visitors, students, and scholars, both onsite and online. The Center is uniquely qualified to share its expertise through high-quality public exhibitions, lectures, readings, symposia, and conferences.

## **CURATORIAL and STAFF EXCELLENCE**

Further investment in the professional staff of the Ransom Center is essential for the Center to assume its rightful place as a leader in the nation's cultural life. The Ransom Center must be able to recruit and retain the most talented staff, and it must invest appropriately in their ongoing professional development in preparation for leadership at the local, state, and national levels.

Further, the Ransom Center will work to create a culture that values the individual and promotes community. We will do so through a commitment to transparency, openness, and participatory management in our policies and procedures and, more importantly, in how we conduct our day-to-day work.

## **CONCLUSION**

This strategic plan is a living document. As we realize the goals described here new forms of service will emerge. Looking beyond the five-year scope of this plan, we know that the building we have occupied since 1972 must be renovated to provide a safe and secure collection environment and to support future growth of collections and programs. Even as we conclude this strategic planning exercise, we launch an equally important series of planning discussions that will assess our space needs and envision options for future building enhancements.

We will measure and assess our progress toward the goals outlined in this plan on an annual basis, and I look forward to sharing details of our progress over the life of this plan.

In planning now for the activities described in this strategic plan, and longer range building enhancements, we are renewing our commitment to Harry Ransom's vision to create in the capital of Texas a center for the world's cultural compass. For all that has been achieved in the intervening years, the ambition of that vision ensures that the Harry Ransom Center will always be in a state of becoming. It is our responsibility now to sustain and extend that important work for the next generation.

Stephen Enniss  
Director

## **GOALS**

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### **GOAL 1**

**Develop, manage, interpret, and care for the Ransom Center's rare and unique collections in accordance with the highest professional standards.**

### **GOAL 2**

**Advance research, scholarship, and teaching in the humanities.**

### **GOAL 3**

**Create meaningful and engaging experiences with the Ransom Center's collections for broad and diverse audiences at the local, national, and international level.**

### **GOAL 4**

**Cultivate an effective institutional culture that values the individual, promotes community, and strengthens the organization as a whole.**

### **GOAL 5**

**Create a facility and infrastructure to support our mission and address evolving needs.**

### **GOAL 6**

**Secure resources to sustain growth and advance the mission.**

## **GOAL 1**

**Develop, manage, interpret, and care for the Ransom Center's rare and unique collections in accordance with the highest professional standards.**

- Strategy 1A: Empower curators to engage in the full range of curatorial work, including collection development.
  - Action 1. Following the newly implemented Collection Development Policy, engage curators and others with specialized subject expertise in collection development decision making.
  - Action 2. Charge curators with ongoing responsibilities for developing and maintaining relationships with collectors, collection donors, sellers, and agents, thereby expanding the Center's overall level of curatorial activity.
  - Action 3. Convene curators to review and strengthen policies and procedures related to collection development, acquisitions, management, and maintenance.
  - Action 4. Establish improved documentation and implementation of acquisitions among curators.
  - Action 5. Dedicate funding to enable curators to travel to view potential collections, engage in stewardship of potential donors, and participate in professional development opportunities.
  - Action 6. Develop procedures for curators to work in collaboration with the Digital Archivist on the acquisition of born-digital materials.
  - Action 7. Develop strategies to enable exhibition curators to devote sufficient work time to develop exhibitions and related publications and meet established content-delivery deadlines.
  
- Strategy 1B: Expand the Ransom Center's subject expertise in underserved areas of collection strength.
  - Action 1. Conduct competitive searches for two vacant curatorial posts.
  - Action 2. Identify and prioritize curatorial and subject-area needs, and develop a plan for strengthening subject expertise in these areas.
  - Action 3. Define roles and responsibilities for faculty advisors, visiting curators, or other advisors in areas where the Center lacks subject expertise (e.g., Latin American literature and culture, music, etc.).
  
- Strategy 1C: Consistently apply the highest standard of collection management to all Ransom Center collection materials.
  - Action 1. Define collection management activities and responsibilities.
  - Action 2. For consistency of operations, centralize within one unit all accessioning, processing, cataloging and description, internal tracking, and stacks maintenance for all collection materials. *See also Goal 1, Strategy C, Action 3.*

- Action 3. Establish a working group to review internal databases related to collection management and investigate options for integrating and streamlining these databases and records. *See also Goal 1, Strategy C, Actions 2 and 4.*
  - Action 4. Select and implement a content management system (CMS) for visual materials. *See also Goal 1, Strategy C, Action 3.*
  - Action 5. Develop and implement a preservation plan for all digital collection materials, including born-digital, from all curatorial areas. *See also Goal 1, Strategy G, Action 3; Goal 2, Strategy D, Action 2; and Goal 5, Strategy E, Actions 2 and 3.*
  - Action 6. Form a cross-departmental committee to discuss security issues, improve security policy including a regular review of the SOP, and discuss physical enhancements that will better safeguard the Center's collections.
  - Action 7. In coordination with campus peers, review and improve loan policies, procedures, and documentation for campus, state, and system offices. *See also Goal 3, Strategy E, Action 9.*
  - Action 8. Review and improve documentation needed for insurance purposes, including collection locations and values and loan/deposit records.
- Strategy 1D: Complete retrospective conversion and eliminate the backlog of uncataloged and hidden collections.
    - Action 1. Determine appropriate cataloging priorities and levels for retrospective conversion (ReCon) and for uncataloged and hidden collections, after consulting with the deaccessioning working group. *See also Goal 1, Strategy F.*
    - Action 2. Determine staffing requirements and timeline for completing ReCon.
    - Action 3: Determine staffing requirements and timeline for reducing backlog of uncataloged books, serials, archives, and visual materials.
- Strategy 1E: Review and improve Conservation Department processes and procedures to better address all format types and institutional priorities.
    - Action 1. Conduct or commission an external survey of conservation needs for the full range of the Center's collections.
    - Action 2. Establish a process by which priority conservation needs and backlogged projects will be completed, and ensure curatorial engagement in priority selection and approval.
    - Action 3. Consult with UT stakeholders and conservation staff and specialists on
    - the potential benefits and risks—including costs, facilities and staffing requirements, collection needs, and the impact on current treatment backlogs—of expanding conservation capabilities to serve the entire university community.
- Strategy 1F: Deaccession out-of-scope collection materials for which the Center is not an appropriate steward.
    - Action 1. Establish a working group to review and implement the deaccessioning process.
    - Action 2. Consult with other campus entities that have recently escalated their deaccessioning activities, such as the Briscoe Center and the Texas Memorial Museum, for advice and recommendations.

- Action 3. In consultation with curators and the Director, identify and prioritize potential collections for deaccessioning.
  - Action 4. Work with legal counsel at The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Texas System to ensure that all deaccessioning activities follow University guidelines.
  - Action 5. With public affairs staff, develop and communicate a strong and consistent message about the value of deaccessioning activities.
- Strategy 1G: Adopt and implement records management best practices for Ransom Center administrative records.
    - Action 1. Review and update the Ransom Center's Records Retention Schedule, previous records management activities and documentation, and records manager designations. Determine staffing requirements and responsibilities for improved records management activities.
    - Action 2. Establish best practices and policies for the scheduled destruction or transfer to the HRC Archive or to the UT Archive of all appropriate administrative records.
    - Action 3. Incorporate appropriate born-digital administrative records (such as email) into the Ransom Center's Records Management Program. *See also Goal 1, Strategy C, Action 5.*
    - Action 4. Improve description, access, and physical arrangement and control of the HRC Archive.

## **GOAL 2**

### **Advance research, scholarship, and teaching in the humanities.**

- Strategy 2A: Adopt forward-facing and innovative approaches to support research with rare and unique primary source materials.
  - Action 1. Create a new position of Digital Strategist to provide strategic leadership in the development of the Center's digital initiatives.
  - Action 2. Consider alternative staff structure to drive innovation in digital projects and initiatives.
  - Action 3. Organize and host a colloquium for Special Collections libraries and Digital Humanities Labs to envision sustainable partnerships between content providers and DH makers.
  - Action 4. Use semantic web technologies to allow our collection metadata to be more useful, portable, and interactive.
  - Action 5. Complete preservation survey of Center's sound recordings that will inform digitization priorities, processes, and standards.
  - Action 6. Review the fellowship program and identify potential areas for improvement and development.
  - Action 7. Establish fellowships or stipends for scholars engaged in digital projects and tool building that utilize Ransom Center collections.
  - Action 8. Establish guidelines governing the approval and management of sponsorship of non-fellow scholars.
  - Action 9. Continue regular evaluation of public service models for researchers.
  - Action 10. Secure external resources needed to review currency of and expand content in the Writers, Artists, and Their Copyright Holders (WATCH) and Firms Out of Business (FOB) databases.
  
- Strategy 2B: Review and revise policy framework to support greater access to, and use of, digital and born-digital collections.
  - Action 1. Draft and adopt an Open Access Policy for the Ransom Center that will guide future access initiatives.
  - Action 2. Regularize and streamline policies and procedures for permission requests of collection materials.
  - Action 3. Adopt a risk-analysis model for providing responsible online access to selected collection material still under copyright.
  - Action 4. Work with rights holders to develop agreements that permit the Ransom Center to provide some level of online access to selected collection materials still under copyright.
  
- Strategy 2C: Provide enhanced support for teaching with primary source materials to faculty and educators on campus, in the local community, and online.
  - Action 1. Create a full-time staff position responsible for University engagement.

- Action 2. With UTeach and the College of Education, develop lesson plans and other supplementary materials to facilitate classroom use of existing digital collections.
- Action 3. Work with Humanities Texas and other community partners to offer primary source workshops and attendant web resources for secondary school educators.
- Strategy 2D: Implement access to born-digital content.
  - Action 1. Establish working collaboration among stakeholders to shape and create models for access to born-digital materials in the reading room.
  - Action 2. Develop policy and procedural framework for delivery of born-digital content.
  - Action 3. Create a workflow for the management of and access to institutionally created media (i.e., archiving of web pages, images, audio, and moving image).
- Strategy 2E: Engage UT Austin faculty and students with initiatives that will promote their use of Ransom Center materials.
  - Action 1. Work with other UT units to identify, test, and implement technologies or tools that serve to foster discovery and advance scholarship and learning.
  - Action 2. Strengthen working relationship with iSchool through targeted initiatives, e.g., digital humanities and Ransom Center digital/born-digital collections.
  - Action 3. Seek greater opportunities to join with UT science and art communities in the pursuit of technical research to advance understanding of materials for conservation treatment, preservation, and scholarly understanding.
  - Action 4. Look to peers for successful models of campus liaison(s).
  - Action 5. Offer scheduled group orientations for faculty and students at the beginning of each semester.
  - Action 6. Develop easily accessible online information for faculty developing student assignments requiring the use of the gallery or reading and viewing rooms.
  - Action 7. Send an all-faculty email at the beginning of each semester, highlighting current exhibition(s), programs, acquisitions, and/or new web content. Priority messages will be determined each semester in consultation with the Director.
- Strategy 2F: Prioritize digitization and access activities around collection materials with preservation concerns or strong research and/or teaching value.
  - Action 1. Hire a full-time digitization manager.
  - Action 2. Create a prioritized list of collection materials, across formats, targeted for online access.
  - Action 3. Create a prioritized list of collection materials requiring reformatting due to preservation concerns.
  - Action 4. Solicit feedback from a subset of scholars in regard to priorities for online access to collection material.
  - Action 5. Establish regular assessment of digitization software and equipment for needed upgrades and replacements.

## **GOAL 3**

**Create meaningful and engaging experiences with the Ransom Center's collections for broad and diverse audiences at the local, national, and international level.**

- Strategy 3A: Define and prioritize the Ransom Center's audiences.
  - Action 1. Work with the Director to prioritize and allocate resources for research services, digital initiatives, scholarly programs, exhibitions, and visitor engagement.
  - Action 2. Institute all-staff training and new-hire training about the Ransom Center, its mission, and its messages. *(See also Goal 4, Strategy E, Action 3)*
  - Action 3. Incorporate formative and evaluative assessments of audience expectations and experiences into the exhibition planning process.
  - Action 4. Explore the cost and benefit of offsite programs in attracting new audiences.
  
- Strategy 3B: Redesign the website to support the Center's varied audiences and their needs.
  - Action 1. Conduct user survey to determine the current web audience and their needs.
  - Action 2. With the assistance of a web design consultant, undertake detailed analysis of functionality and ease of the Ransom Center website, including functions not presently supported, and carry out a redesign based on those findings.
  - Action 3. Investigate current trends in finding aid design and functionality, and implement natural language changes for greater clarity and ease of use.
  - Action 4. Build web space to highlight scholarly work with Ransom Center materials.
  - Action 5. Build out and increase visibility of the web space provided as a resource for K–12 educators.
  - Action 6. Create workflow to regularly retire and/or archive outdated or redundant web content. *See also Goal 2, Strategy D, Action 3.*
  
- Strategy 3C: Provide a consistent, positive, and enriching experience for onsite visitors.
  - Action 1. Commit, as an institution, to consistently welcoming the public to the Ransom Center.
  - Action 2. Increase visitor services staff hours to improve visitor engagement and consolidate attendance and tour management.
  - Action 3. Evaluate the number and quality of public and behind-the-scenes tours that are offered, and determine if they are suiting our visitors' needs.
  - Action 4. Hire a full-time event manager to manage Ransom Center events and facility rentals.
  - Action 5. Install comprehensive interior and exterior signage.
  - Action 6. Work with campus peers for parking options.
  - Action 7. Explore options for creating a permanent exhibition space on the first floor to feature Ransom Center's collections.

- Action 8. Convene regular “lessons learned” meetings between exhibition organizers and exhibition implementers with the goal of improving the visitor experience. *See also Goal 3, Strategy A, Action 3.*
  - Action 9. Extend the visitor experience into the plaza.
  - Action 10. Explore ways to coordinate the recruitment and management of volunteers across the building, so they are assigned projects appropriate to their skills and to coordinate training and appreciation events.
- Strategy 3D: Develop a comprehensive program of outreach to The University of Texas campus to encourage staff, faculty, and students to engage with the full range of activities the Center offers (*see Goal 2, Strategy E*).
    - Action 1. Seek opportunities to more actively promote the Ransom Center’s presence across campus.
    - Action 2. Offer incentives and/or personalized invitations to encourage new faculty and staff to visit the Center.
    - Action 3. Expand programming specifically for University students.
    - Action 4. Consider creating a student organization to engage undergraduates.
    - Action 5. Convene a meeting between administrative and curatorial departments each semester to plan University engagement, including program promotion.
- Strategy 3E: Develop an exhibition program that shares the Ransom’s Center’s collections in ways that both serve scholarly goals and reach a broad public.
    - Action 1. Define intent and scope of Ransom Center exhibition program overall with definable measures of success.
    - Action 2. Form a Director-led exhibition planning group of senior staff to plan exhibitions and related programming well in advance.
    - Action 3. Formalize and communicate a more streamlined process for moving ideas for exhibitions from proposal through to realization.
    - Action 4. Seek partnerships with local, national, and international peers that will provide opportunities for the Ransom Center to share its collections and practices beyond Austin.
    - Action 5. Utilize emerging technologies to streamline exhibition design, fabrication, and installation systems and processes.
    - Action 6. Achieve greater consistency and control over design of promotional materials for exhibitions and related activities.
    - Action 7. Identify resources needed to make exhibition content more accessible to visitors with special needs.
    - Action 8. Develop capacity to create bilingual exhibition content (print and guide by cell) and assess the effectiveness of the initiative in attracting new audiences.
    - Action 9. Evaluate costs and potential income of exhibition loan services with attention to their impact on the Center’s own activities.
- Strategy 3F: Leverage the Ransom Center’s position as a premier cultural heritage institution to develop programs that balance scholarship with engaging content with broad appeal.

- Action 1. Work with on-campus and community partners to develop programs that reach new audiences.
  - Action 2. Offer programs at different times of day (lunch-time and day-time) and new types of programs (book clubs, gallery talks) to reach on-campus and other audiences that might not attend evening lectures.
  - Action 3. Use regular programming (symposia, conferences) to establish the Ransom Center as the center of conversations about the state of archives, museums, and the humanities.
  - Action 4. Partner with national leaders in rare book and manuscript education to offer courses at the Ransom Center.
  - Action 5. When possible, host public events featuring writers and artists in conjunction with the announcement of either the acquisition or the opening of their archives.
  - Action 6. Host events (authors in conversation, artists from different fields) that are reflective of the Center's broad collections and show the value of having those collections in conversation with each other.
  - Action 7. Evaluate attendance and audience responses to determine if number of and types of programs are suiting our audiences' interests and needs.
- Strategy 3G: Capture and share local programming with audiences beyond Austin.
    - Action 1. Define aims and scope of publications program with definable measures of success.
    - Action 2. Enhance our ability to share recorded programs online.
    - Action 3. Continue current practice of soliciting blog content from speakers and visiting writers. Promote through e-news event announcements when possible.
    - Action 4. Continue to identify and strengthen relationships with community and cultural organizations to leverage the Ransom Center's role in the city's efforts to be a cultural destination for out-of-town visitors and new Austin residents.
    - Action 5. Consider delegating rights and permissions management to an existing staff position to secure rights on behalf of the Ransom Center.

## **GOAL 4**

### **Cultivate an effective institutional culture that values the individual, promotes community, and strengthens the organization as a whole.**

- Strategy 4A: Review staff roles and responsibilities, realign (where called for), and plan for growth or change in light of strategic directions and Shared Services implementation.
  - Action 1. Director reviews and reconfigures organizational chart in consultation with associate directors and following on other strategic plan recommendations.
  - Action 2. On a timetable to be determined, staff review position descriptions for currency and accuracy and discuss with supervisors, who will reconcile internal titles and recommend selective reclassifications to be prioritized.
  - Action 3. While adapting the organizational chart to accommodate mandatory Shared Services changes, acquaint UT administrators with the need to retain certain staff in house, as a matter both of maintaining user services and cost-effectiveness.
  
- Strategy 4B: Ensure salaries and other rewards are commensurate with job duties and that compensation is competitive with national peers.
  - Action 1. Review salary comparisons compiled by University of Texas at Austin HR, carry out comparison with national peer institutions, and make adjustments where called for.
  - Action 2. Give initial priority to resolving internal equity issues and (as necessary) improving salaries for open positions, then to achieving parity with equivalent positions at UT libraries and museums, and ultimately with peer museums and libraries nationwide.
  
- Strategy 4C: Enhance opportunities for professional development for all staff, and support scholarly activities of subject specialists.
  - Action 1. Charge professional development committee with management of building-wide professional development programs and develop policies and procedures on research leave and other matters.
  - Action 2. Create suitable opportunities for staff at all levels to make presentations at the Ransom Center of research, conference papers, and reports on conference/workshop attendance. Some events will be of interest to faculty and should be publicized to academic departments.
  
- Strategy 4D: Foster a culture of transparency, open communication, and participatory management.
  - Action 1. Enhance communication and participatory management by hosting staff-wide workshops on topics such as effective workplace communication, running an effective meeting, and managing projects.

- Action 2. Make the staff portal a more effective vehicle for internal communication by reorganizing and improving searchability.
  - Action 3. Provide as much budgetary transparency as possible, including monthly budget reports for managers and annual departmental budget conversations with the Director.
  - Action 4. Review roles of business office and other support staff for greatest efficiency. Ensure that purchasing or other business policies and procedures are effectively and regularly communicated to other staff. Create and mount SOPs and forms on staff portal.
- Strategy 4E: Provide meaningful work experiences for interns, student workers, and volunteers, and take steps to ensure they are full members of the Ransom Center community.
    - Action 1. Create uniform volunteer policy, reflecting best practices and security requirements, and review online recruitment and application materials.
    - Action 2. Seek out annual evaluations of graduate and undergraduate interns regarding their work and educational experience; where appropriate, structure the programs more formally to involve other Ransom Center departments, area cultural institutions, and presentations by interns.
    - Action 3. Perform regular review of all department-level training and orientation materials (or if necessary create them) for staff and volunteers so that clear and updated information is available. *(See also Goal 3, Strategy A, Action 2)*
- Strategy 4F: Enhance diversity in the workplace and among audiences, members, and supporters.
    - Action 1. Ensure that supervisors are aware of need to improve workplace diversity in all hiring and are acquainted with diversity documents created by professional organizations (RBMS, SAA, AAM, AIC).

## GOAL 5

### Create a facility and infrastructure to support our mission and address evolving needs.

- Strategy 5A: Improve security within Ransom Center facilities.
  - Action 1. Bring Building Management into Ransom Center administration, and revise responsibilities to include accountability for security operations (*see Goal 4, Strategy A, Action 1*).
  - Action 2. Convert existing analog security cameras to digital as part of an integrated video surveillance program.
  
- Strategy 5B: Analyze long-term facility needs, developing appropriate plans to ensure a strong future for the Center, its collections, and its programs.
  - Action 1. Undertake a master space study to inform interim and long-range space planning.
  - Action 2. Develop a decision pathway for deciding on full building renovation, an entirely new facility, or some combination of the two.
  
- Strategy 5C: Secure additional offsite storage capacity, and review service model with other campus partners in light of the expansion of these remote operations.
  - Action 1. Work with UT partners to determine future plans for offsite storage, estimated time frame, and capacity.
  - Action 2. Meet with other UT departments using the LSF system to determine how work flow can be made more efficient.
  
- Strategy 5D: Examine physical impediments to our work, and make low-cost, interim modifications to improve adjacencies, workflow, and communication.
  - Action 1: Form a committee to plan reallocation of 4<sup>th</sup>-floor space, and redesign workspaces to support consolidation of all descriptive practices within cataloging services.
  - Action 2. Repurpose the Moseley Room as a staff break room and eliminate break areas on upper floors in order to foster improved staff interaction and protect the collection from food-associated threats.
  - Action 3. Repurpose spaces on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors to create additional conference rooms.
  - Action 4. Evaluate staff locations regarding adjacencies and possibilities for expanding stack space by relocating staff to non-stack floors.
  - Action 5. Replace outdated furnishings with more functional and ergonomically appropriate furnishings.

- Strategy 5E: Explore current and anticipated needs for technological infrastructure, and build capacity for a program of continuous improvement.
  - Action 1. Form a staff committee, or hire a consultant, to plan and anticipate future IT needs.
  - Action 2. Explore the possibilities of offsite and/or cloud storage for digital assets.
  - Action 3. Explore future solutions for the integrated management and delivery of digital and born-digital content.
  
- Strategy 5F: Maintain an optimum preservation environment for the full range of material types housed by the Center.
  - Action 1. Contract with a pest control company to address Ransom Center's special needs and requirements.
  - Action 2. Establish regular preventative maintenance for exposed pipes over collection material in the basement.
  - Action 3. Install motion sensors and timers for lighting, and examine UV exposure levels in all stack spaces.
  - Action 4. Continue and expand on building condition monitoring, including a program to maintain and update environmental monitoring equipment.
  - Action 5. Develop an institution-wide food policy for individual staff and public events to ensure that the collection is not endangered.
  - Action 6. Task conservation and building management to upgrade the Ransom Center Emergency Response Plan to better match the University plan, and establish bi-yearly training sessions in emergency response and safety practices for appropriate staff.

## **GOAL 6**

### **Secure resources to sustain growth and advance the mission.**

- Strategy 6A: Review and strengthen Advisory Council roles and responsibilities.
  - Action 1. Review role of Advisory Council and rewrite bylaws. Bylaws should include specifics on giving expectations, structure, nomination process, attendance, participation, and terms.
  - Action 2. Deepen engagement of Advisory Council through enhanced communications, special events, travel opportunities, projects, and assignments.
  
- Strategy 6B: Grow and reposition development operations for a significantly expanded level of fundraising activity including in the areas of major gifts, foundation and corporate relations, planned giving, and membership.
  - Action 1. Hire development officer for Foundation and Corporate Relations
  - Action 2. Strengthen the coordination of Ransom Center development activities with University central development operations, especially in the areas of planned giving and major gifts.
  - Action 3. Consolidate all gift processing in one Development Associate position.
  
- Strategy 6C: Maintain the Center's competitive position as the archive of choice for new collections by creating more reliable and sustainable sources of acquisition funding.
  - Action 1. Increase endowments that support acquisitions by \$10 million over the next 10 years, including new endowments in unfunded subject areas such as film.
  - Action 2. Increase annual funding for photography acquisitions to a minimum of \$100,000 (i.e., \$2.5M endowment).
  - Action 3. Engage curators in collection fundraising activities, including cultivation of collectors and development of proposals to foundations active in their fields.
  - Action 4. Recruit more collectors to the Advisory Council who are able to support opportunistic acquisitions in their area of collecting interest.
  
- Strategy 6D: Expand the number of position endowments to recruit and retain the most talented staff and to relieve pressure on the state-funded personnel budget.
  - Action 1. Develop proposals with corresponding budgets for senior-level positions attractive for endowment support.
  - Action 2. Where possible, broaden purpose of existing endowments to maximize flexibility.
  - Action 3. Build endowment capacity for staff professional development.
  
- Strategy 6E: Expand total annual giving, especially in the areas of major gifts, planned giving, and foundation support.

- Action 1. Develop prospect lists for outright gifts, foundation support, and bequest gifts.
  - Action 2. Engage identified prospects through personal visits by Director and development staff.
  - Action 3. Hold a fundraising gala to determine cost and potential benefits as a recruitment and fundraising vehicle.
  - Action 4. Position the membership program as the avenue for Austin audiences to engage more deeply with the Ransom Center.
  - Action 5. Broaden base of support by hosting strategic events in major metropolitan areas such as NYC, LA, Chicago, Santa Fe, and D.C.
  - Action 6. Develop short lists of donors and foundations willing to make gifts for special and time-sensitive acquisitions.
  - Action 7. Reinforce through the Advisory Council the importance of bequest gifts, and establish a working group of Advisory Council to help with this effort.
  - Action 8. Continue to research and solicit current donors with capacity to make bequest gifts.
  - Action 9. Produce a direct mail end-of-year appeal to current members as a test case.
- Strategy 6F: Begin capital campaign analysis and planning.
    - Action 1. Meet with appropriate campus entities including Central Development and UT System to determine campaign potential and timeline.
    - Action 2. Develop case statement and other campaign collateral.
    - Action 3. Identify current and new donors with major gift potential.
    - Action 4. Create Capital Campaign Committee (including Advisory Council members) to help with prospect development.
    - Action 5. Work with UT Central Development Office of Foundation and Corporate Relations, and Major Gift Officers to coordinate capital campaign fundraising activities.
    - Action 6. Secure lead gifts prior to public announcement of capital campaign.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The following Advisory Council members served on the Strategic Planning Committee. Many thanks to this group for their hours of work.

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The development of this plan would not have been possible without the support and guidance of the Ransom Center's Advisory Council, most notably the Council's chair, Frank Needham. The following people serve on the Advisory Council.

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