

South Carolina Federation of Museums Strategic Plan: 2010-2015

Mission Statement:

To serve, represent, advocate and promote the best interests of South Carolina museums thereby strengthening professional standards and procedures, facilitating communication, fostering inclusiveness and increasing professionalism and sustainability of institutional resources.

Vision:

"Sustaining and supporting excellence in South Carolina museums"

History:

Despite the fact that the oldest operating museum in the United States, The Charleston Museum, began in 1773, South Carolina's community of museums and museum professionals did not begin to seriously move toward the creation of a formal professional organization until the late 1960s. As South Carolina geared up for the celebration of its Tricentennial in 1970, museum professionals seized the opportunity to make a strong case for the advancement of the field within the state. After a series of initial exploratory meetings, the South Carolina Federation of Museums (SCFM) became a formal organization on December 18, 1970. The purpose of the new organization was to create an advocacy group that would represent museum issues and museum professionals before state officials and would promulgate the development of stronger professional standards among museums in South Carolina. Over its thirty-year history, SCFM has been heavily involved in the development of museums. During the early 1970s, SCFM members led the lobbying effort that resulted in the creation of the South Carolina State Museum. In the late 1970s, SCFM began a relationship with the State Museum's field services program to strengthen professional standards that continues today. SCFM members were at the forefront of the development and implementation of the 1987 South Carolina Abandoned Cultural Property Act. Today, SCFM remains active in observing issues that confront South Carolina's museums and helping them grow professionally.

Membership:

SCFM represents South Carolina's most active community of museums and museum professionals. The Federation, a not for profit 501 (c) 6, has four membership categories. Institutional members cover five sub-categories based on the member organization's annual operating budgets. Although South Carolina's largest museums and all museum disciplines are active within the organization, SCFM's profile mirrors that of the state's overall museum community. Most of SCFM's institutional members are small- to medium-sized local history museums operated by counties, cities, or small private nonprofit organizations. The majority of SCFM's professional members are staff from the state's larger museums. The affiliate membership category includes a growing number of organizations that provide services or cooperate with museums including commercial firms, consultants, and training programs for new museum professionals. The associate membership comprises a cross-section of individuals interested in the state's museums, including students, volunteers, board members, and members of the general public.

Services:

SCFM provides a variety of services for South Carolina's museum community. The Federation's primary communication tool is its electronic newsletter, Good Muse! The newsletter focuses on news and issues affecting the state's museums. SCFM also maintains an active array of professional training opportunities for its members. The SCFM Annual Conference in March welcomes nearly 100 museum professionals for seminars and forums on various professional topics. Throughout the year, SCFM partners with member institutions and other cultural organizations such as The Humanities Council and PALMcop to produce daylong training workshops. SCFM supports the www.southcarolinamuseums.org web site. Through the web site, museum professionals and the general public can access a directory of all museums in South Carolina, an exhibit and event calendar for museums and a growing set of news and information for museum professionals. And, finally, SCFM offers its members the opportunity to participate in the state's largest network of museum professionals.

The 2007-2010 Strategic Process:

In fall of 2007, the Executive Committee began an inquiry into the process of updating the strategic plan for the short and long-term viability of this statewide organization. This strategic plan continues many aspects of the 2002-2007 Strategic Plan. They sent out the Triennial Survey in 2008 to determine the needs, concerns and issues of the museum community. After the survey deadline, committee members called numerous individuals and institutions to increase the number of submittals. The total submittals both written and by telephone was 51 among 250 organizations; many were received by non-member institutions.

Statement of Focal Issues:

Based upon the above strategic process, the committee identified the following broad focal issues to guide the federation for the next five years:

1. [Fostering Communication](#)
2. [Sustaining & Improving Professionalism](#)
3. [Developing Financial Resources](#)
4. [Concentration on Education](#)

Statement of Goals, Objectives & Actions:

The following goals, objectives and action statements are intended to guide the Executive Committee in decision making for the next five years. The Strategic Planning Committee recommends that that Executive Committee determine on a yearly basis what the organization will pursue based upon these goals by assigning timeframes, accountability and appropriate resources. Although this is a five-year plan, it is also recommended that the Executive Committee utilize the triennial 2011 survey to revise this document in 2012 for presentation at the annual conference.

Focal Area 1: Fostering Communication

Consistent communication in the museum community is critical to the survival of our treasured institutions. Communication between professionals and museums along with an ongoing dialog with our audience and community is integral.

Goal 1: SCFM will seek to understand, develop, respond and interact with our local and regional communities in appropriate ways.

- Action 1: Identify, model and promote best practices in community outreach and interaction.
- Action 2: Assist institutions in developing methods of gathering information about their visitor base.
- Action 3: Create or utilize existing relevant surveys to determine the demographic visitor base for a cross section of museums throughout the state.

Goal 2: Continue to provide marketing and public relations opportunities for the betterment of South Carolina museums.

- Action 1: Recognize excellence in marketing and public relations within the broader museum community and promote as appropriate model for South Carolina museums.

Goal 3: Expand, regularize, improve and monitor all current communication mediums.

- Action 1: Strengthen Good Muse as a yearly print publication highlighting organization and member accomplishments.
- Action 2: Continue and strengthen the electronic newsletter as a means of monthly communication with members.
- Action 3: Continue to update the SCFM website so it remains a comprehensive clearinghouse for museum needs, questions, issues and concerns.
- Action 4: Investigate the current use of Scmusenet and consider policy to refine this valuable communication resource to include an assigned monitor.
- Action 5: Establish a committee to discuss and determine which new and emerging media should be used for communications. (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)

Goal 4: Strongly consider opportunities for SCFM to be available on a more regular basis for the museum community.

- Action 1: Establish a field services committee to respond to the needs within the museum community.
- Action 2: Create a list of core resource needs for museums and identify and recruit existing professionals in the field to provide expertise on specific content areas.
- Action 3: Explore ways for SCFM to be consistently available between annual conferences.
- Action 4: Create a membership committee to develop additional members on all levels for inclusion in SCFM membership.

Goal 5: Promote the contributions of museums in South Carolina on the overall quality of life for our citizens.

- Action 1: Create, analyze and utilize an educational impact study to determine actual influence on the financial and educational resources of our state.
- Action 2: Create and capitalize on opportunities for political advocacy for South Carolina museums.

- Participate annually in Museum Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C.
- Action 3: Consider developing a comprehensive, collaborative major South Carolina travelling exhibit involving the resources of South Carolina's museums.
- Action 4: Continue, develop and expand yearly South Carolina Statewide Museum Day in conjunction with International Museum Day.
- Action 5: Develop on a yearly basis South Carolina's agenda for the Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) to further the goals of SCFM on a regional scale.

Focal Area 2: Sustaining & Improving Professionalism

Over the past decade, SCFM has made great strides and difficult steps in achieving a new level of professionalism within its ranks and for the overall museum community. It is imperative that the federation maintain momentum while expanding opportunities.

Goal 1: Utilize the existing means of professional development and look for options to expand offerings on a regularized, consistent basis.

- Action 1: The Professional Development Committee (PDC) should utilize the conference survey and evaluations to set annual conference sessions.
- Action 2: The PDC should continue duties to include annual topical workshops.
- Action 3: Analyze the current annual conference award offerings, including scholarships, to determine whether or not the award program is effective, representative and meets future goals.

Goal 2: SCFM should be a leader in the support of employee and trustee diversity in the South Carolina museum community.

Goal 3: SCFM should identify and distribute to the museum community examples of best practices in the following areas: Volunteers, Collections Management, Storage, Museum Stores, Ethics, Board Development and Technology.

Goal 4: Identify and establish open partnerships with agencies, organizations and associations with similar interests and missions.

- Action 1: Work with similar agencies to determine successes in the management of large scale, statewide programs for the betterment of constituent museums.
- Action 2: Create a bylaws committee to revise and update existing bylaws for the long-term success of the organization based upon this and future strategic plans.

Focal Area 3: Developing Financial Resources

Whether it is in difficult financial times or booming economies, the S.C. museum community has a consistent need to secure financial resources, which solidify their institution's financial base.

Goal 1: Communicate with members, supporters, partners and friends the need to create a stable base of funding for museums.

- Action 1: Create, promote, advocate and help implement a statewide grant program (Federal State Partnership).
- Action 2: Identify best practices in fund raising for museums and communicate opportunities and model excellence.

- Action 3: Assist museums to identify recurring fiscal support.
- Action 4: Pool grant-writing resources for the betterment of the larger museum community.

Goal 2: Assist in audience development for the long-term viability of S.C. museums.

- Action 1: Identify attendance numbers throughout the state and analyze for trend information.
- Action 2: Determine who repeat visitors are and determine reasons for multiple visitations.
- Action 3: Increase constituent base by diverse programming.
- Action 4: Proactively cater to new populations in the state thereby developing a new visitor in the early stages of interest.

Focal Area 4: Concentration on Education

Even as the state and nation looks to better education, museums have historically offered educational opportunities for people of all ages. Now is the time for museums to rise to preeminence in the sphere of future educational excellence.

Goal 1: Develop a relationship with schools on the local, county and statewide levels.

- Action 1: Establish/create an Education Committee to foster strong connections with school districts and programs like Teaching American History.
- Action 2: Establish a statewide awards program and associated criteria to recognize excellent standards-based museum curriculum in member institutions.
- Action 2: Encourage museums to participate in national or statewide programs such as National History Day and discipline related programs for Science and Art.

Goal 2: Assist museums with the broad-based integration of educational programming into every aspect of the museum and its mission.

- Action 1: Provide workshops on how to develop programs
- Action 2: Provide resources on where to go for ideas and training
- Action 3: Partner with other education/interpretation providers such as National Interpreters Association.
- Action 4: Encourage museums to conduct evaluations including how to establish goals/outcomes.