

FY 2014 SFAC Base Augmentation Request

1. **Executive Summary: Mission and means of accomplishing goals; justification of Blaffer Art Museum's student fees allocation in terms of student benefits.**

Blaffer Art Museum's mission is to further the understanding of contemporary art through exhibitions, publications, and public programs of merit and distinction. It serves as a resource for the exploration of visual art and contemporary culture for the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Houston and beyond. As the gateway between the University of Houston and the City of Houston, Blaffer Art Museum is a catalyst for creative innovation, experimentation, and scholarship. Its exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public, create community through dialogue and participation, and inspire an appreciation for the visual arts as a vital force in shaping contemporary culture.

The museum accomplishes this mission through many activities that involve UH students, including, but not limited to (not in priority order):

- The presentation and origination of exhibitions and publications of the highest aesthetic caliber, coordinated with participation from a corps of student employees/volunteers;
- Lectures, tours, film screenings, and performances by visiting artists and scholars, free and open to students and the public;
- Collaborative programming for and by students in the newly renovated museum courtyard (summer 2013);
- Educational outreach programs for predominantly high-school aged youth and up, guided by some highly trained, paid UH students from various backgrounds, such as Art/Art History and Education;
- Formal internship program where students can receive credit hours for their work;
- School of Art Annual Student Exhibition and Masters of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition developed in collaboration with the School of Art.

Blaffer Art Museum reaches the larger population of university students through student outreach volunteers; paid and unpaid museum internships; curricular tie-ins through professor and curator guided tours in the museum in fields including Architecture, Philosophy, Education, Comparative Cultural Studies and English; hands-on teaching experience for educators-in-training; and more broadly through the opportunity to explore ideas and culture through visual art.

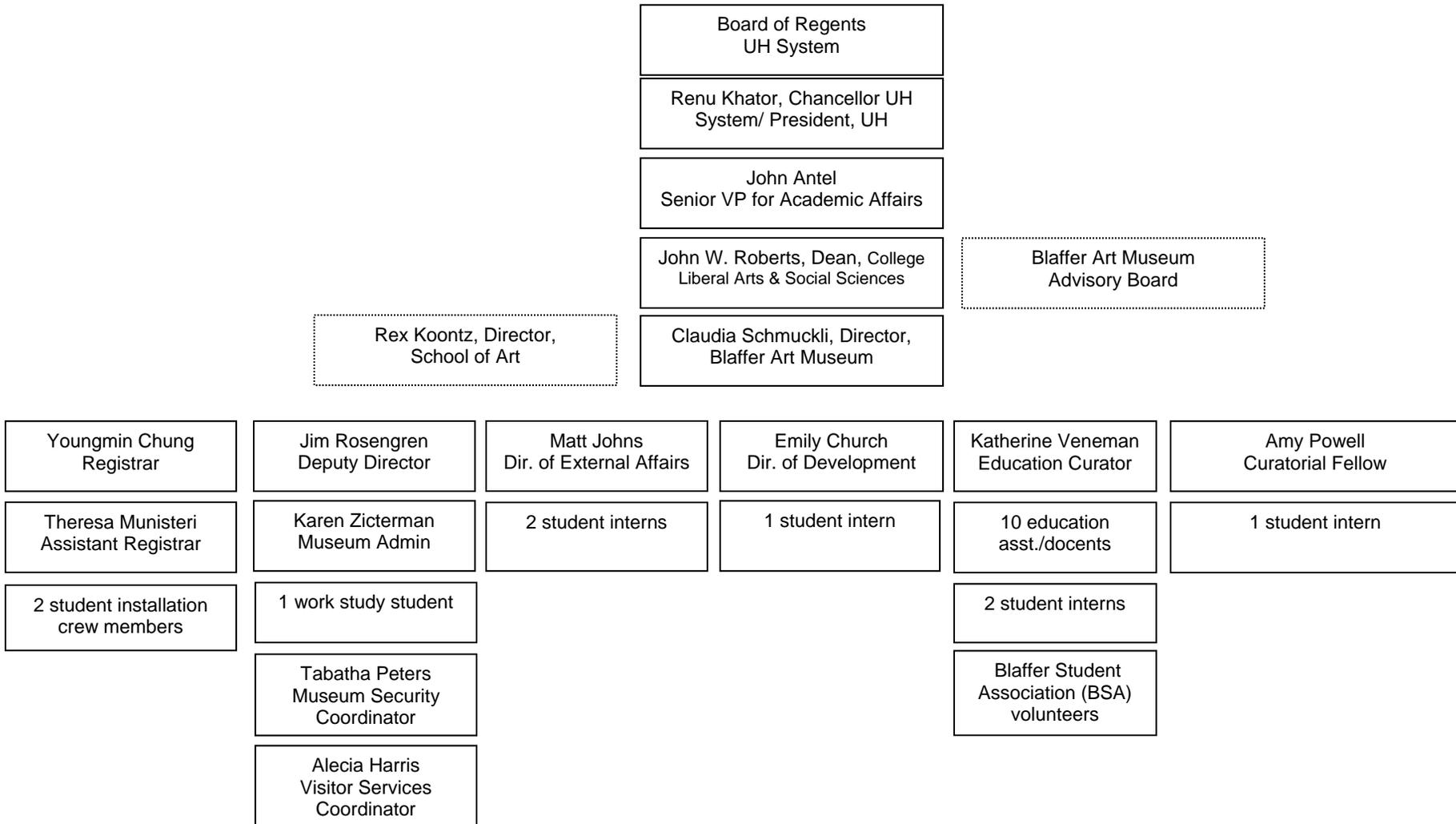
One significant aspect of the museum's service to University students is through the museum's **tour program**. Aimed at helping students discover the newest, most innovative contemporary art and to explore the social, political, and artistic forces that shape our surroundings, these free guided tours are offered to college classes, student interest groups, and any other group of 10 or more adults or kids. Tours are led by advanced undergraduate and graduate students in art, art history, and education at the University of Houston, as well as professional artists. Specialized sketching, foreign language, and tours for non-native English speakers are available, as are tours of the University's public sculpture collection.

In 2013-2014 Blaffer will begin working with Student Housing and Residential Life to offer customized tours to students residing in Moody Towers, Cougar Village and Cougar Village 2. During the fall and spring semesters, groups of up to 40 people in size (with a ratio of 13:1 students: docent) will be led on a museum tour that lasts between 45 minutes to an hour. Following the tour, refreshments will be served, encouraging dialogue about the art and a chance for students to get to know each other in a relaxed and social manner.

Blaffer Art Museum respectfully requests a \$2,500 base augmentation to support this expansion of its tour program into UH's residential dormitories.

2. Organization Chart

Blaffer Art Museum currently employs 19 students per semester as docents; installation crew; curatorial, marketing, development, and education work-study assistants/interns; as well as museum attendants. The student employees provide invaluable assistance and gain employment and/or professional development experience at Blaffer.



3.Objectives provided with SFAC 2013 request: success in achieving objectives; any changes in objectives, rationale, and success of additional objectives.

Please see Blaffer's SFAC 2014 base support request for response to this question.

Please see answer to question 6 for new 2014 objectives pertaining to our base-augmentation request.

4. Discuss means for evaluating success in reaching objectives; their importance as compared to other objectives; data for number of persons served; any assessment measures used to evaluate program success.

Blaffer is implementing this expanded tour program as part of its strategic initiative to create an engaging, experiential social venue that enhances the quality of student life on campus. Blaffer seeks to be a place on campus where students can discover new passions, meet new people, and create meaningful college memories. By offering tours through dormitories, students who may not be aware that there is a museum on campus or who may be aware but are nonetheless intimidated by contemporary art or the act of museum-going, can experience art in a fun, relaxed manner. In addition to seeing the exhibitions on view, following the tours students will be able to enjoy refreshments in the museum while they have a chance to discuss what they saw and get to know one another.

These tours are just the first step in a more sustained partnership between Blaffer and Student Housing and Residential Life. In the short term, Blaffer's expanded tour program will provides Senior RAs highly customizable but pre-existing programming that they can incorporate into their dorm floor activities. In 2014-2015 this collaboration would grow to include a Blaffer "themed" floor for second-year students interested in art. Students opting to live on the Blaffer-themed floor would not only live with students who share their interests, but would have access to a fun hands-on art-making workshop in the museum's art studio and direct connection to Blaffer's student organization, the Blaffer Student Association, and a plethora of arts-related resources. Blaffer is also working with Assistant Director Dean Kennedy and his colleague Lin Crowson to develop programs that would address the different needs of first and second year students. Underlying all of these initiatives is Blaffer's desire to help students create stronger connections with the university and its offerings.

Measures of success for this tour program will be two-fold: quantitative (how many students sign up for how many tours?) and qualitative (how do the students rate their experience?) To that end Blaffer will track tour sign-ups and attendance and develop a brief survey for students to fill out at the conclusion of their tour. Blaffer Curator of Education Katherine Veneman will be in regular contact with Dean Kennedy and Lin Crowson to discuss the effectiveness of the program and tweak it as needed.

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes from your last SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them.

Please see Blaffer's SFAC 2014 base support request for response to this question as it regards Blaffer's SFAC 2013 request.

While the tour program already exists at Blaffer, expanding it to serve the residents of Moody Towers, Cougar Village and Cougar Village 2 will take additional resources. Blaffer would offer one tour a week on Thursday evenings when the museum is open late. Tours would be offered to one or two floors at a time in each dormitory (there are a total of 46 floors among the three dormitories), with a cap of 40 students per tour. There will be one docent for every 13 students and following the tour, Blaffer will offer the students refreshments in the museum. The total budget for the program is \$6,000, and **Blaffer Art Museum respectfully requests a \$2,500 base-funding augmentation for the coming fiscal year to partially support this expanded student tour program.** This budget is based on two docent guides per tour (\$50/per docent per tour or \$100 total) and an additional \$100 for light refreshments following each tour. Blaffer plans to hold one tour per week (30 in total) during Fall and Spring Semesters 2013-2014. Final costs will depend on demand.

6. Please list your FY 14 strategic initiatives and action steps.

When Blaffer Art Museum recently crafted a new strategic plan, it identified as one of its top three priorities making Blaffer an engaging, experiential social venue that enhances the quality of student life on campus. Providing tours for first and second year students living on campus is a first step for achieving that goal. To that end, Blaffer will:

- Work with Associate Director of Student Housing and Residential Life Dean Kennedy, Director of First Year Programming Lin Crowson, and Senior RAs to develop a calendar and process for dorm-floor sign-ups.
- Meet with Hall Councils and Senior RAs of the relevant floors to introduce them to the program.
- Create flyers and an eblast that Blaffer and Senior RAs can distribute prior to tours.
- Track attendance, gather names and hand out surveys at each tour to track success of program.
- Follow up on tours with invitations to join Blaffer Student Association as well as to upcoming exhibition openings, special events and student-oriented programming.

7. What are other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them?

Blaffer Art Museum raises 100% of funds required to cover exhibitions, publications, education, and programming costs, with University support limited to indirect facility and partial salary support. Grants from public agencies, corporations, foundations, and individuals are solicited and received for specific programs and exhibitions on an as-needed basis. These funding sources are often earmarked as restricted use funds, unavailable for student programs. Student Housing and Residential Life has no direct fundraising staff and is unable to contribute any financial support for much of the student programming it offers, especially as it looks to grow the on-campus population. Blaffer recognizes the importance of the student experience on campus and would greatly appreciate support from the Student Fees Advisory Committee, which would be vital in ensuring the success of this programmatic expansion.

8. List any overlap between the Blaffer Art Museum and other units providing services to students.

Blaffer Art Museum is the sole professional art museum on the main campus of the University of Houston and the only public university museum in the region. Blaffer presents programs and exhibitions that are relevant and intellectually stimulating to the university community. Blaffer works diligently to provide cultural programs of the highest quality for all the student body, and our exhibitions and programs are not merely attended by students, but they are often integrated into their curriculum. These year-round offerings are unique to Blaffer in that no other unit has the professional staff, fundraising ability, or secured facility to present professional art exhibitions of this sort on campus.

Blaffer regularly collaborates with other campus departments to create stimulating programs that maximize our impact on campus and the community. In the past, Blaffer Art Museum has collaborated with the School of Art; the School of Theatre and Dance; the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts; the College of Education; the College of Law; the Bauer College of Business; Honors College; Student Program Board; Office of Human Resources, among many other departments. In the upcoming months, Blaffer will be pleased to add the College of Optometry, the Hilton College, the LGBT Center, and the Council of Ethnic Organizations to that list.

Blaffer Art Museum is proud of its success in fulfilling its mission of serving as an educational resource for all UH students, and is excited about the continued growth of campus interest in the visual arts via the Tier One message of student success.