

# McClung Museum

Service Statement 2021-2022

## Introduction

The mission of the McClung Museum is to advance understanding and appreciation of the earth and its peoples through collection, preservation, study, interpretation, and exhibition. The museum supports and provides educational programming for multiple audiences including those in higher education. The museum opened in 1963 and currently has 11 full-time staff and one part-time staff (with three full-time positions to be filled in the next few months), as well as four graduate assistants and four to six undergraduate student employees (another two graduate assistants will be hired in the Spring or Fall of 2022). The museum is part of the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice-Chancellor and its executive director is one of the academic affairs administrators.

Campus museums have long been valued for providing rich experiential learning opportunities, and the McClung's purview is particularly broad and varied. Unlike private museums, teaching, scholarship, and practice are at the center of the museum's vision. The McClung is committed not only to increasing access to education but to improving the lives of Tennesseans through mutually beneficial partnerships. The McClung is the only museum that explores world cultures in Knox County and the surrounding region, and it is one of only 18 museums in Tennessee accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, having achieved the honor in 1990. The McClung is the only Smithsonian affiliate in Knoxville (and one of the seven affiliates in Tennessee).

## Communities

The McClung's focus on service includes university and K-12 students, local schoolteachers, university faculty, homeschool groups, senior citizens, researchers, and families. For many Knoxville community members, the McClung is the first (and possibly, the only) museum they will visit. This makes the museum an important entry-point, responsible for fostering feelings of welcome and belongingness in a museum space.

For the campus community and scholars, the museum provides research opportunities, hands-on learning, a site for programming, and career advancement. These needs mean that museum expertise, resources, and collections must remain accessible on multiple levels. Lastly, when it comes to its service communities, the McClung is a critical conduit—bringing the UT campus and local populations together in a space for dialogue and engagement—as academic museums are uniquely positioned to do.

Other major service needs are to: maintain, work through, and build relationships with student groups and community partners from communities of color; highlight and incorporate traditionally excluded voices through exhibitions and research; provide scientific expertise and access to researchers and foster scientific literacy within the community at large; and to center diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEAI) in organizational goals and mission. These needs were identified by staff based on qualitative feedback and observation as well as quantitative programming survey data.

In its 58-year history, the McClung Museum has welcomed 1.7 million visitors, averaging 40,000–60,000 visitors each year. Before the pandemic, the museum served 7,000–10,000 K-12 students per year. The last full academic calendar served 76 different K-12 schools for a total of 3,497 students. On average, the museum’s free monthly programs (family days, homeschool programs, and toddler tours) welcome 3,000 children and parents annually. On the UTK campus, museum staff also directly serves an average of 23 university units, 93 classes, and 2,904 university students, faculty, and staff annually while directly teaching 63 groups through lectures, gallery tours, or object studies a year.

During the peak of the pandemic, from March 2020 through February 2021, the museum served 4,678 individuals through the museum’s digital and in-person outreach. Additionally, 25 senior assisted living homes, senior community centers, and addiction recovery centers received direct service and materials through COVID-developed outreach programs. Over 1,200 students from 5 Title I schools and 3 afterschool programs at community centers in underserved neighborhoods received hundreds of activity bags with bilingual lessons covering art and science content from the museum’s collections.

Museum education also collaborated with several university classes, but most notably with the Composition Coordinator in the English Department to develop a curatorial exhibition learning module for all of their course sections—serving 196 online classes and over 1200 students directly during remote learning. Since reopening in January 2021, the McClung welcomed 11,322 guests in the building. Onsite, in-person service to university classes, public programs and lectures, stroller tours, K-12 class visits, and family days have resumed in addition to general visitorship.

The museum provides services to a broad mix of university, K-12, adult, researcher, and general public audiences.

### **Academic Programs**

The establishment of Academic Programs (AP) in 2014 established deeper ties with university partners and increased the number of departments that the museum serves. AP established a model for building programs through focus groups; formalized a successful internship program; created a Student Advisory Board and co-created an interdisciplinary minor in museum studies. AP also develops higher-learning interpretive guides for exhibitions; and provides both in-person and digital object studies, presentations, and instruction for UT faculty. Instruction by

AP staff addresses any number of themes, such as racism, gender issues, colonialism, religion, artistic expression, ecological impact, environmental ethics, nonprofit business models, and more. AP also liaises with the campus to provide college students with opportunities for employment, course work, research access, professional development, and volunteer opportunities.

### **K-12 and Family Activities**

The museum also serves as a conduit for connection with the broader community, particularly through robust monthly family days. Family days involve multiple programmatic partners and draw large crowds. During family days focused on science, UT students from departments like Earth and Planetary Sciences are trained and guided by museum educators so college students can facilitate programming for youth and families.

Museum educators also facilitate K-12 field trips for social studies, science, and art and they provide teacher professional development in subjects that are offered nowhere else in the region—such as archaeology and earth sciences. McClung staff host monthly toddler tours and homeschool programs, and in the summer, they facilitate art and science camps for youth. The McClung also maintains deep partnerships with local Title 1 schools, especially those that serve dense Latino populations. The museum’s innovative *Vamos al Museo* program sends a bus to target schools on Saturdays, providing transit for Spanish-speaking families who would otherwise be unable to visit due to a lack of personal transportation. Once onsite, children and their adults participate in bilingual tours and family activities.

### **Exhibitions**

Since its opening, the McClung has created or hosted over 200 award-winning exhibitions and used them for educational and outreach programs each year. It is worth mentioning that Graduate Assistants from the museum developed the last two exhibitions, both highlighting women artists in the museum’s collections, many of whom have been underrepresented on exhibitions over the years or not fully credited for their work.

### **Research and Collections**

The main research areas and collections are:

- **Archaeology:** The museum houses millions of objects and associated field notes, photographs, and correspondence, in its archaeology collections. The collections are a research base of national significance for studies of the Native American occupation of the South.
- **Paleoethnobotany:** With hundreds of thousands of specimens, the paleoethnobotany collection has archaeologically recovered plant remains and data from 112 sites representing 10 states and 9,000 years of history. The Curator of Paleoethnobotany works on a part-time basis since her main appointment at the University is as a Professor of the Department of Anthropology.
- **Malacology:** The southeastern US is the epicenter of aquatic biodiversity in North America. With 300,000 cataloged and uncatalogued specimens, the malacology

collection is the largest freshwater mollusk collection in Tennessee, and one of the largest in the US.

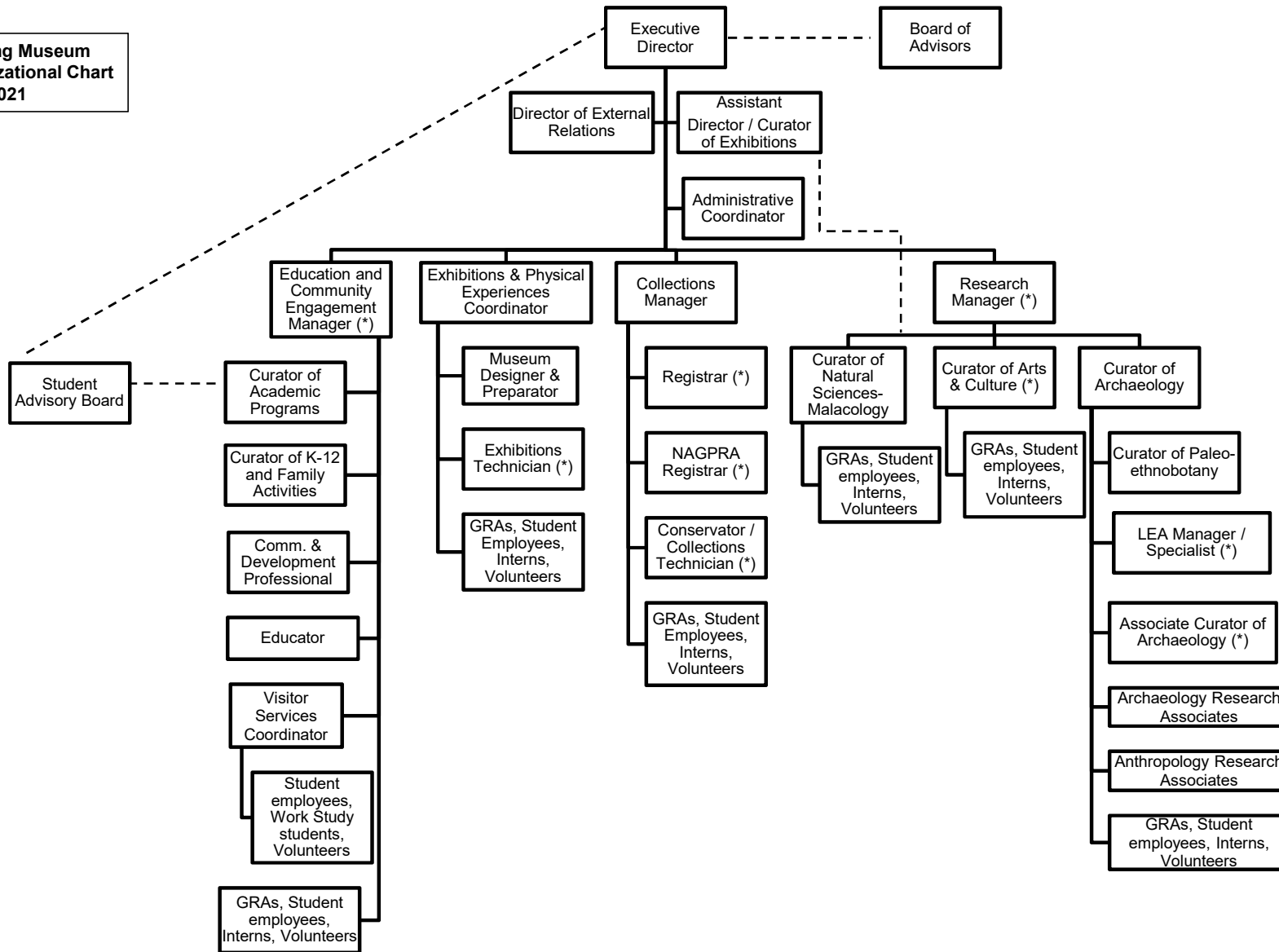
- Arts & Culture: There are over 27,000 objects from around the world in the museum's eclectic arts and culture collections, with strengths in natural history prints and maps, Chinese art, decorative arts, travel photography, and Native American material culture.

As a steward of the existing and future collections, the museum is committed to providing care and access to them in the best possible way by adhering to current standards in museum practice. Collections have been used in thousands of student theses and dissertations, and are the basis of many cross-departmental and institutional research collaborations and publications.

Museum research staff also collaborate with and provide key services to researchers but also to state and national organizations, such as TVA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to name a few. These services also include high quality analytical services, equipment access, training, and laboratory support by the Laboratory of Environmental Archaeology (LEA)—a multidisciplinary core facility housed in the museum serving academic, governmental, and industry users. LEA provides a practical institutional mechanism for faculty collaboration, student experiential learning, and continuing education.

The museum has a Collections Management Policy and a Collections Committee, coordinated by the Collections Manager, that includes members from the University and the McClung, as well as from other museums and community representatives. Representatives of the museum also serve on the University's Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Committee in the Office of the Provost.

**McClung Museum  
Organizational Chart  
10/29/2021**



This organizational chart has not been reviewed or approved by the Office of the Provost.  
**Please, do no circulate.**

(\*) Proposed new positions or potential dual roles