

# VRA Strategic Plan, 2018-2022 **DRAFT**

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## **Strategic Plan Task Force**

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*Suggested action items to be included in final draft*

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## **1. Organization and Governance**

**Goal 1.1: VRA's Strategic Plan is a living document with the inherent flexibility to accommodate developing trends within the Association and the profession, while continuously informing the activities and goals of individuals and groups that carry out the Association's mission.**

### **Outcomes**

1.1.1. VRA implements a strategy in which various reporting individuals and groups consider and report on how their activities relate to the goals and outcomes of the Strategic Plan on an ongoing basis.

1.1.2. VRA's Executive Board, Appointees, Committees, and Chapters continually create, implement, and assess action items that support the Strategic Plan.

**Goal 1.2: The VRA mission statement represents the diversity of professional paths of its members, their core values, and the common threads that form the collective VRA community.**

### **Outcomes**

1.2.1. VRA defines the term "visual resources" and considers its relevancy to current and potential members.

1.2.2. The VRA mission statement broadly identifies the organization through its shared principles and core values.

1.2.3. The Association's culture of strength, diversity, supportive community, and adaptability is embedded in the VRA mission statement.

1.2.4. The VRA brand represents fully the expanded range of roles and responsibilities and shared expertise demonstrated in the positions held by its members.

1.2.5. The work conducted by the Association's Committees, Appointees, Task Forces, Working Groups, and Special Interest Groups (SIGs), as well as the organizations selected for affiliation, aligns with the VRA mission.

1.2.6. The VRA mission statement expands, broadens, and diversifies the organization to continue to remain relevant and vital in the 21st century.

**Goal 1.3: The VRA Executive Board and Leadership Group (Chairs and Appointees) advance and sustain the Association's mission through impactful advocacy, informed professional development and programming, and efficient operational governance.**

**Outcomes**

1.3.1. The leadership model for VRA is flexible and agile in response to the evolving needs of the membership.

1.3.2. Through a redistribution of roles and responsibilities, the VRA Executive Board devotes more of its energy towards visioning and leadership for the organization, as it seeks to clarify the needs and interests of its members.

1.3.3. A greater balance is achieved for the VRA Executive Board responsibilities, between general oversight of operations and alignment of the VRA mission through advocacy and engagement activities.

1.3.4. The leadership of VRA is distributed more evenly across the organization, allowing for innovation and experimentation with new models that foster community-building and leadership skills.

1.3.5. The Leadership Group plays a larger role in advancing VRA's mission and developing the Association's vision.

1.3.6. Provide support and guidance for Committees, Task Forces, and Advisory Groups.

1.3.7. In order to reduce the Executive Board's workload, the VRA membership participates more fully in planning and executing conferences.

1.3.8. VRA convenes a Conference Planning Committee.

1.3.9. The VRA Executive Board expands and redirects functional divisions, experiments with different conference models, and outsources operational functions.

1.3.9. VRA continually evaluates and assesses the tools and technologies used to communicate effectively, deliver services and programs, and operate efficiently.

1.3.10. VRA adopts and regularly assesses guidelines and policies for the long-term retention of and the ongoing access to the Association's business and governance records.

**Goal 1.4: VRA cultivates, trains, and engages leadership within the organization.**

**Outcomes**

1.4.1. VRA leadership collaborates with Committees, Chapters, and the Visual Resources Emerging Professional and Students group (VREPS) to identify and nurture new leaders within the Association.

1.4.2. The Nominating Committee plays an ongoing role in identifying and cultivating Executive Board candidates over the long term.

1.4.3. The Association promotes a healthy critical mass of leadership within VRA by encouraging periodic turnover in leadership positions at the Chapter and Association levels.

1.4.4. VRA offers training, professional development, and onboarding for potential, new, and continuing leaders within the Association.

1.4.5. Committees, Chapters, Appointees, and appropriate contracted consultants maintain manuals with annual timelines, policies, and procedures.

1.4.6. The Executive Board engages effectively with Association leaders, including Chairs of Committees, Task Forces, Chapters, as well as Appointees, VREPS Co-Coordinator, SIG leaders, and appropriate contracted consultants.

1.4.7. VRA promotes communication and collaboration among various committees, appointees, and chapters.

1.4.8. VRA supports the development and sustenance of SIGs as incubators of new leaders, ideas, and directions for the Association.

### **Goal 1.5: VRA and the Visual Resources Association Foundation (VRAF) work together to fulfill both organizations' missions.**

#### **Outcomes**

1.5.1. VRA and VRAF increase the frequency of communications about the two organizations' respective activities and goals.

1.5.2. VRA and VRAF foster the exchange of ideas between the two organizations.

1.5.3. VRA and VRAF continue to define, refine, integrate, and communicate to members and others about the relationship between the two organizations.

1.5.4. VRA collaborates with VRAF to advocate for the profession, and promote VRA's standards, best practices guidelines, and policy positions.

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## **2. Programs and Services**

### **Goal 2.1: VRA supports the education and professional development of visual resources professionals.**

#### **Outcomes**

2.1.1. Programming informs the membership on broad areas and best practices related to imaging, standards, intellectual property issues, innovation and technology, data management, digital humanities, visual and media literacies, leadership, changes to the profession, and various other professional competencies.

2.1.2. VRA's programming reflects the Association's diversity goals (see also Goal 4.2).

2.1.3. VRA conferences and conference proceedings continue to be important components of the Association's support for the professional development of members, and convey the expertise of the Association to external audiences.

2.1.4. The VRA website serves as a central hub for the seamless dissemination of educational and professional development resources for members and non-members alike.

- 2.1.5. Opportunities to provide online learning, including workshops and networking forums, continue to be explored.
- 2.1.6. VRA promotes and supports Chapter programming in various ways.
- 2.1.7. VRA encourages year-round activities of SIGs and SUGs (Special User Groups, or communities of practice) to enhance networking and professional development among the membership in organic ways, and build the Association's knowledge base.
- 2.1.8. VRA assesses and evaluates the effectiveness of its educational and professional development programming.

**Goal 2.2: VRA's Annual and regional conferences meet the professional development needs of visual resources professionals as defined by our mission statement.**

**Outcomes**

- 2.2.1. VRA conference programming includes broader areas of professional practice in order to reach a wider audience.
- 2.2.2. VRA considers different conference models and programming ideas in order to better meet the professional development needs of its members.
- 2.2.3. VRA coordinates with Chapters or groups of Chapters to build a regional conference program that complements the Association's Annual Conferences.

**Goal 2.3: VRA supports a dynamic publication program to advance professional knowledge and best practices in the field.**

**Outcomes**

- 2.3.1. The *Visual Resources Bulletin (eVRAB)* increases exposure and visibility of VRA as an open access journal.
- 2.3.2. A double-blind peer review option is available for authors submitting to the *eVRAB*.
- 2.3.3. The editors of *eVRAB* ensure that the content is timely, relevant, and keeps pace with technological change.
- 2.3.4. Professional publishing support is offered through conference workshops, SIG meetings, and mentor relationships.
- 2.3.5. The *Bulletin* editors continue to solicit content from VRA conference session and workshop presenters, and expand their outreach to non-members.

**Goal 2.4: The VRA Awards and professional recognition program aligns with the vision and core organizational values of VRA.**

**Outcomes**

- 2.4.1. The Awards programs is expanded to recognize student, emerging, mid-career, and underrepresented professionals, in addition to members who have made significant and impactful contributions to the profession throughout their careers (see also Goals 4.1 and 4.2).
- 2.4.2. A review of the VRA award schedule and criteria is regularly conducted.

2.4.3. Sponsors are targeted for travel and special achievement awards.

**Goal 2.5: VRA and VRAF coordinate programs and services to ensure complementary content and scheduling.**

**Outcomes**

2.5.1. VRA and VRAF communicate about and coordinate programs and services.

2.5.2. VRA and VRAF promote each other's programs and services.

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### **3. Financial Structure**

**Goal 3.1: VRA promotes responsible stewardship of the Association's resources in order to safeguard our financial stability and sustainability.**

**Outcomes**

3.1.1. VRA adopts a business model that integrates financial sustainability, guaranteeing that operating and administrative costs are kept low and maintained in healthy proportion to the revenue generated through conferences and membership dues.

3.1.2. VRA's annual and regional conferences are financially sustainable.

3.1.3. An inclusive and transparent budgeting process includes various stakeholders during each budget cycle.

3.1.4. VRA's Financial Advisory Committee (FAC), appointed by the Executive Board, continues to serve the Association by providing regular investment reports and projections of the financial health of the organization.

3.1.5. The FAC employs investment best practices to balance potential gains and risks.

3.1.6. VRA regularly collects and utilizes data about its operations to inform financial decisions.

3.1.7. VRA and VRAF seek opportunities for cost sharing whenever possible.

**Goal 3.2: VRA focuses its fundraising efforts on the solicitation of sponsors and donors throughout the year.**

**Outcomes:**

3.2.1. VRA fundraising and development will be expanded through the cultivation of deeper relationships with existing and new sponsors, including the pursuit of potential year-round advertising and publicity revenue.

3.2.2. The pool of potential vendors solicited for support is expanded to reflect the greater diversity of the professional interests of the VRA membership.

**Goal 3.3: The fundraising model of VRA is aligned with VRAF.**

## **Outcomes**

3.3.1. VRA and VRAF plan and coordinate fundraising activities throughout each year.

3.3.2. VRA fundraising focuses on developing a broader pool of vendors, leaving solicitation of individual donors to VRAF.

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## **4. Membership, Communications, and Marketing**

### **Goal 4.1: VRA builds, maintains, and engages its membership.**

#### **Outcomes**

4.1.1. VRA increases regular, student, institutional, retiree, and unemployed memberships.

4.1.2. The Association retains more continuing members.

4.1.3. VRA supports members, including students, emerging professionals, mid- and late-career professionals, retirees, and unemployed individuals.

4.1.4. The Association supports members at regional, national, and international levels.

4.1.5. VRA promotes broad member engagement in the Association's activities, and removes structural or perceived barriers to such member participation.

4.1.6. Association members understand the value of professional engagement and participation in VRA throughout their careers.

4.1.7. VRA more actively leverages Visual Resources Emerging Professionals and Students (VREPS) in the recruitment, retention, and engagement of student members.

4.1.8. VRA more actively leverages Chapters in the recruitment, retention, and engagement of members.

### **Goal 4.2: VRA builds and maintains an inclusive and diverse membership.**

#### **Outcomes**

4.2.1. VRA encourages professional, socioeconomic, racial and ethnic, gender, age, and geographic diversity among the membership.

4.2.2. VRA promotes respectful participation among all members.

### **Goal 4.3: VRA meets members' needs through tangible and intangible benefits.**

#### **Outcomes**

4.3.1. The Association evaluates members' needs on an ongoing basis.

4.3.2. VRA delivers new tangible benefits and services to members, including enhanced professional guidance and mentorship.

4.3.3. VRA develops intangible benefits through building and promoting a network of support, a culture of problem solving, and VRA's reputation.

**Goal 4.4: VRA refines and improve its communication with and among members and external audiences.**

**Outcomes**

- 4.4.1. VRA seeks input regarding members' preferred communication methods with other members and with VRA leadership.
- 4.4.2. To facilitate communications and access to members-only information, VRA takes full advantage of the features and functions of its Association Management Software (currently MemberClicks) .
- 4.4.3. VRA reviews and assesses its communication strategy across platforms, including social media, listserv, website, and external communication outlets.
- 4.4.4. The Association solicits ongoing member input to inform VRA about members' concerns.
- 4.4.5. The Chapter Liaison facilitates regular information sharing among Chapter Chairs, and ensures that the Chapter Chairs Guide is regularly updated.

**Goal 4.5: VRA adopts a proactive and holistic approach to marketing, the website, and external communications.**

**Outcomes**

- 4.5.1. VRA branding is consistent across all publishing venues and outlets.
- 4.5.2. VRA consistently asserts its status as a leading authority in the areas of data standards and intellectual property rights, and clearly articulates the value of membership to external audiences.
- 4.5.3. VRA takes an integrated marketing approach to the News section of the website, press releases, VRA-L announcements, social media, printed materials, and other forms of external communication.
- 4.5.4. VRA's website is kept up to date and organized for an optimal user experience.
- 4.5.5. The News section on VRA's website is continuously updated.
- 4.5.6. VRA increases conference attendance through both broad and targeted marketing and outreach.
- 4.5.7. The website, printed materials, and various other communications channels employ a variety of frequently rotating images to convey the Association's emphasis on visual content and express the diversity of the collections our members manage and use.

**Goal 4.6: VRA coordinates with VRAF on membership outreach, communications, and marketing.**

**Outcomes**

- 4.6.1. VRA and VRAF coordinate to expose both organizations to a wider audience with a goal of building VRA's membership and enhancing both organizations' reputations.
- 4.6.2. VRA and VRAF share and coordinate outreach and marketing strategies to keep each other informed and share knowledge about best practices.

4.6.3. VRA routinely includes VRAF news and announcements in its various communications channels, and ensures that VRAF's mission, links, and donation opportunities are prominent on the website.

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## **5. Leadership and Advocacy in the Field**

**Goal 5.1: VRA advocates for the profession across allied fields within library, museum, archive, and commercial environments.**

### **Outcomes**

- 5.1.1. The Association advocates for members and the profession to employers, administrators, and other stakeholders in the broader community.
- 5.1.2. VRA advocates for the importance of visual resources and visual and media literacies, which are emergent in 21st-century education.
- 5.1.3. VRA develops and maintains advocacy resources on various topics that can be used for communications and publicity by the Association, members, and the media to advance the reputation of the Association and promote its work to a broader audience.
- 5.1.4. VRA encourages, facilitates, and disseminates research by professionals working with visual resources.
- 5.1.5. VRA establishes professional competencies and standards in order to define and advocate for the visual resources profession.
- 5.1.6. VRA supports open access, which is the free and online availability of research, scholarship, and creative output.

**Goal 5.2: VRA continually assesses the need for new and updated data standards, guidelines, best practices, and tools in visual resources management; leads and participates in their development with other standards-creating organizations; and disseminates them to the membership and beyond.**

### **Outcomes**

- 5.2.1 The Data Standards Committee (DSC)\*\* determines the areas in which data standards, guidelines, best practices, and tools are most needed by professionals working with visual resources.
- 5.2.2. The DSC communicates regularly with VRA groups and members, as well as professionals outside the Association to assess needs for data standards development and dissemination in their topic areas.
- 5.2.3. The DSC monitors, endorses, and disseminates data standards that are complementary to those it creates and maintains primarily for images of cultural objects.
- 5.2.4. VRA promotes VRA Core, *Cataloging Cultural Objects*, and other data standards and tools it creates for members and the broader profession.



\*\* The Data Standards Committee is merging with the VRA Core Oversight Committee and the *Cataloging Cultural Objects* group into one larger Committee; the strategic plan will be edited accordingly.

**Goal 5.3: VRA provides leadership and engagement with copyright and intellectual property advocacy, education, and tools to support the needs of the profession and its patrons.**

**Outcomes**

5.3.1. VRA continues to study and monitor intellectual property and copyright issues, develop and promote the Association's position on intellectual property rights matters, and educate the membership on these topics.

**Goal 5.4: VRA continually assesses the need for new or updated digital imaging standards, guidelines, and best practices; leads, participates in, or monitors their development with other standards-creating organizations; and disseminates them to the membership and beyond.**

**Outcomes**

5.4.1. VRA promotes the creation and/or dissemination of standards relating to the creation, management, and preservation of digital images.

5.4.2. VRA communicates regularly with VRA groups and members, as well as professionals outside the Association to assess needs for digital imaging standards development and dissemination.

5.4.3. VRA monitors, endorses, and disseminates digital imaging standards.

**Goal 5.5: VRA strengthens alliances and collaborations nationally and internationally with the library, museum, archive, and commercial communities working with visual materials.**

**Outcomes**

5.5.1. VRA provides opportunities for the exchange of information through joint or overlapping conferences, meetings, projects, and other fora.

5.5.2. The Association communicates and collaborates with stakeholders and others in allied professions, such as scholars, curators, archivists, reference and instruction librarians, and digital humanists.

5.5.3. VRA capitalizes and builds upon existing relationships through communications with affiliated and related organizations, and seeks new connections with other professional groups

**Goal 5.6: VRA coordinates with VRAF to advocate for the profession across allied fields within library, museum, archive, and commercial environments.**

**Outcomes**

5.6.1. VRA and VRAF collaborate to advocate for the importance of visual resources and visual literacy in educational and professional settings.

5.6.2. VRA and VRAF collaborate to disseminate VRA's advocacy resources on various topics that can be used for communications and publicity by the Association, members, and the media to promote its work to a broader audience and advance the reputation of the Association.

5.6.3. VRA and VRAF work together to encourage, facilitate, and disseminate research by professionals working with visual resources.