Fine and Decorative Arts
Inventory System

Request – The Fine and Decorative Arts team is requesting the identification of the owner(s) for the Fine and Decorative Arts process and inventory tracking system and the funding of a part-time Fine and Decorative Arts collection manager/administrator to manage and administer the process.

Background - The Audit
May 2011: The Internal Audit Department conducted an audit and developed a report entitled, Audit Observations in Planning for Fine and Decorative Arts, identifying a Process Simplification team to “determine how this function should be handled at the University.”

Findings from the Audit Report
- No one unit was designated responsible for fine and decorative art on Grounds.
- A comprehensive inventory of fine and decorative art does not exist.
- The University has a fine and decorative art policy, but it is not being followed.

Conclusion - Unidentified fine and decorative art items could be stolen, lost/misplaced, or mishandled. This could result in loss of assets, bad publicity, and potentially unhappy donors. In addition, the items could be improperly managed and maintained.

Definition - Fine and decorative art includes paintings, prints, sculptures, furniture, photography and other decorative objects that are not the property of the University Art Museum, Alderman Special Collections, or the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection. Much of this art is identified as having historical significance and value to the University. Some units (e.g., the Office of the Architect) have cataloged their collections, but no comprehensive inventory of these non-museum pieces exists.

Team – A cross-functional team was developed which was led by the Vice Provost of the Arts and managed by Process Simplification / Organizational Excellence. The team is comprised of representatives from the following areas of the University: Art Museums, Office of the Architecture, Gift Accounting, Development, College of Arts & Sciences, Fixed Assets, Risk Management, and Procurement.

Redesigned Process - The redesigned process was endorsed by the Process Simplification Advisory Committee in June 2012, and recommends a Fine and Decorative Art Advisory Board chaired by the Vice Provost of the Arts act as the governing body responsible for the tracking of the University fine and decorative arts collections.

The Board coordinates with Development, Gift Accounting and University art experts to ensure donor gifts and purchases of Fine and Decorative Art are:
- Evaluated for appropriateness, authentication and art condition
- Assessed regarding ongoing costs of maintenance and art conservation of the gift
- Recommended for acceptance, transfer or disposal as needed
- Re-evaluated if needed for transfer or disposal of the art
The Fine and Decorative Arts Collection Manager/Administrator coordinates with Museums, Special Collections, Office of Architect, Academic and Administration units to ensure Fine and Decorative Art is:

- Managed and conserved in accordance with Fine & Decorative Art policies
- Inventoried in the University Fine and Decorative arts inventory application

Accomplishments to Date:

1. Conducted a current state assessment – interviewed key stakeholders to understand the issues and developed current state process maps to identify areas for improvement.
2. Surveyed best practices in Higher Education – identified that most large universities had developed a home grown system for inventory management of fine arts. In the universities we surveyed, the Fine and Decorative Arts collection manager reported into the Museum.
3. Redesigned the process - includes streamlined workflows and electronic inventory of fine and decorative art from acquisition, to maintenance and tracking of art inventory collections.
4. Conducted focus groups - of representatives from the colleges and development organizations to obtain their feedback and acceptance of the redesigned process.
5. Developed roles and responsibilities – for clarity throughout the process including the need for the Fine and Decorative Art Advisory Board, Fine and Decorative Art conservator / administrator, inventory coordinators for each collection, and art experts.
6. Developed detailed inventory system requirements and a UVA Inventory tracking system – requirements were reviewed and revised by the focus groups and the system is now in the process of being tested.
7. Created a draft Fine and Decorative Arts Policy - to be implemented once the inventory system is available.

Request Details

In order to maintain stewardship over the University’s Fine and Decorative Arts, the ownership of the process must be identified and a collection manager / administrator is needed to provide a comprehensive inventory and tracking system for artwork that is either acquired through gift donation or by the purchase of art. The application with its associated workflows and artwork images will be used in acquiring, evaluating, recording, maintaining, and disposing of all such artwork.

The Vice Provost of the Arts and the Vice President for Management and Budget, sponsors of this project, collaborated on the expense of the inventory system and are now in discussion regarding the ownership of the Fine and Decorative Arts collection and process.

Jody Kielbasa, Vice Provost of the Arts, has agreed to sponsor the Fine and Decorative Arts Advisory Board and will select a chair to head the board.

However, the implementation will also require the hire of a part-time collection manager / administrator that will be responsible for ongoing management of the collection, administration of the web-based application, manage adherence to the policy as well as coordinate the activities, decisions and reporting of the Fine and Decorative Arts Advisory Board. Where should this position reside and report into?
Our survey of higher education suggests that universities tend to have the collection manager report into the Museum and often use a different inventory system for the tracking of Fine and Decorative Art than the museum quality items.

**Timing** - Once ownership is determined, the team will finalize the policy, develop the implementation plan and train the users. However, without the ownership issue resolved and a collection manager identified, the units will continue as today but with an F&DA collection and inventory system that is voluntary and not coordinated. This will not satisfy the concerns as stated in the previous Internal Audit.