



AMERICAN
QUILT STUDY
GROUP

Strategic Plan

2026 - 2028

Approved October 15, 2025

Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan was approved at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of American Quilt Study Group on October 15, 2025. Members of the Board of Directors at the time of approval include:

Nancy Bavor, President
Debra Dahab, First Vice President
Sharon Pinka, Second Vice President
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Selina Toedter

Carrie Dell, Executive Director

Special thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee, which included:

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Mission & Vision Statement

Mission Statement:

The American Quilt Study Group welcomes a diverse global community of learners and researchers, fosters excellence in interdisciplinary quilt-related scholarship, and elevates quilts as a creative medium of the past and present.

Vision Statement:

We envision a world where quilts are recognized and cherished as vital expressions of culture, creativity, and art—and where quilt scholarship expands knowledge and deepens our shared understanding of quilts and their makers.

Long-term Vision 2035

In 2035, the American Quilt Study Group promotes the cultural significance of quilts while maintaining and creating standards of quilt scholarship. We show the world how quilts intersect with art, identity, memory, creative expression, and so much more.

Visitors, readers, and members know that ours is a welcoming space to be curious, ask questions, and discover new layers to the stories quilts tell. Our members join from different continents and generations, finding a home and community among other enthusiasts, makers, educators, researchers, and lifelong learners in a dynamic, interdisciplinary community.

AQSG's publications and digital resources are the go-to destination for everyone from curious quilt owners to accomplished academics. Our annual Seminar remains an important and unique opportunity to discover and connect. Longstanding publications and events are part of a full-year calendar of digital programming, mentorship circles, and collaborative projects. Together our members expand their knowledge, gain inspiration, and discover themes of both tradition and innovation within every event.

Our organization is strong and prepared for the future, supported by diversified revenue, active fundraising, and dedicated volunteers whose leadership sustains and evolves its mission. Growing relationships with other organizations form a more robust network of partners that uplifts the status of quilt and quilt-related studies as our members benefit from their diverse perspectives. We actively seek out and attract new voices that continue to support and energize our mission.

AQSG continues to champion the status of quilts as vital expressions of human experience and important documents of understanding. Our work ensures that the study and appreciation of quilts remain inclusive, vibrant, and impactful for decades to come.

Current Landscape

During a retreat held April 4-5, 2025, the Strategic Planning Committee considered community input (gathered via survey) and conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis as summarized below.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No government support; no strings attached. ● We are scrappy and nimble. ● We are good at keeping up with trends in social media. ● Younger, newer members bring high energy. ● Initiatives are member-led. ● Viewed as a respected connector and disseminator of existing knowledge and resources. ● <i>Uncoverings</i> and <i>Blanket Statements</i> are respected publications. ● Reputation for solid scholarship. ● Membership is geographically diverse, including international. ● Longevity – 45+ years in existence. ● Strong board with strategic skill sets. ● Ties with some museums and regional quilt study groups. ● ED skilled in building relationships. ● Commitment to diversity initiatives. ● Endowment fund. ● Membership numbers are increasing after sustained decline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Membership lacks age, racial, ethnic and income diversity. ● Majority of members are aged 60 and over. ● Large gaps in programming schedule during the year impact visibility. ● Volunteers are not being held accountable. ● Artificial framing of roles for volunteers and members. ● Ineffective transfer of organizational knowledge. ● Some members are perceived as resistant/not open to new ideas. ● Some members feel that their voices are not represented within the organization. ● Current structure does not promote growth. ● Information sharing needs improvement. ● <i>Uncoverings</i> is not recognized as a tenure-qualifying journal. ● "America" in the name isn't representative of our membership community. ● Membership attrition. ● Increasing Seminar expenses have reduced contribution to revenue for operations/current revenue streams may be unsustainable. ● Reliance on volunteers for some tasks may lead to gaps in execution or programming. ● Small staff (2 positions).

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest in quilts and quilt study is growing worldwide. ● People are seeking more digital/virtual experiences. ● Monetizing digital content/online revenue streams. ● More museums and textile-related organizations are seeking programming partnerships. ● Quilt making is a steady/growing industry worldwide. ● Makers want to learn more about the craft and its history. ● International audiences and quilt study groups offer opportunities for growth. ● Crises can provide opportunities for innovation. ● Baby boomers and other cohorts are ripe for planned-giving. ● Multiple virtual platforms for connecting people with shared interests (outside of Facebook). ● Explosion in digital communities. ● Rapid growth in artificial intelligence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic downturn/uncertainty. ● The entire nonprofit ecosystem is under pressure. ● Landscape of quilt communities is changing greatly. ● Concerns about continued relevance in a changing landscape. ● Geography is becoming less important for organizations - risk of being left behind if we don't boldly move to a non-geographical basis. ● External reputation and public perception of AQSG (negative for some). ● Increasing prices of goods and services may force some members to limit spending on memberships, travel and donations. ● Reduced federal funding for arts and culture may increase competition for dollars from other sources. ● More competition in the digital quilt programming space. ● Digital programming must change quickly to meet consumer demand. ● Rapid growth in artificial intelligence.

In addition, several strategies were suggested during SWOT discussion:

- Offer virtual components to Seminar.
- Promote lectures on YouTube.
- Host virtual quilt exhibitions.
- Increase social media presence and improve visibility.
- Do more in the digital world.
- Link to the Quilt Index.
- Support makers who want to learn more about the craft and its history.
- Publish in multiple formats to expand the knowledge base.
- Consider broadening the scope of our publications to expand and diversify future offerings by:
 - Creating a parallel journal focused on narrative (in addition to the scholarly one, *Uncoverings*), and/or

- Expanding the criteria for submissions to *Uncoverings* and *Blanket Statements*.
- Explore global expansion opportunities.
- Pursue partnerships and collaborations.
- Create more sponsorship opportunities.
- Add more staff capacity.
- Leverage member-led initiatives.
- Open up the annual Seminar to a wider audience.
- Offer more merchandise.
- Promote planned giving and legacy giving opportunities.
- Raise awareness to help people discover the organization.

These suggested strategies inform the Strategic Priorities discussed following in Section 6.

Strategic Priorities: 2026-2028

In order to stay on track to meet our vision of 2035, AQSG will focus on the following Institutional Strategic Priorities for the coming three years.

Strategic Priority I: Grow, Diversify, and Foster Connection Within the AQSG Community

Attract and engage members across generations, geographies, and identities by fostering belonging, dialogue, and shared purpose. Create pathways for connection, mentorship, and wisdom transfer—honoring the experience of seasoned members while supporting the curiosity and energy of new ones.

Objectives

- Design a member orientation and welcome process that highlight AQSG's inclusive values and programs.
- Launch a mentorship initiative connecting long-time members with newcomers.
- Host member-led small groups or forums organized around shared interests or identities.
- Cultivate new membership by encouraging existing members to share personal invitations, storytelling, and informal pathways into the AQSG community.
- Survey members annually on their sense of connection and engagement, and adjust offerings accordingly.

Strategic Priority II: Advance Quilt Scholarship and the Community That Sustains It

Promote high standards for quilt-related study by curating research, publishing significant work, and fostering interdisciplinary learning. Strengthen the community of scholars, curators, makers, and educators who drive the field forward.

Objectives

- Develop a structured process to identify and elevate emerging voices in the quilt research field.

- Expand collaboration with academic and museum-based scholars on exhibitions, articles, and public programs.
- Expand the scope of *Uncoverings* to highlight diverse and interdisciplinary perspectives on quilt study.

Strategic Priority III: Develop and Deliver Year-Round Learning Opportunities

Build a suite of digital programs that engage members and the public beyond the annual Seminar—extending AQSG’s role as a center for quilt scholarship and shared learning. Look for opportunities to engage people in person.

Objectives

- Launch a series of digital learning events (e.g. lectures, workshops, discussions)
- Develop stronger in-person connection from AQSG to members by supporting area representatives as they promote AQSG.
- Expand the use of the website and email to promote on-demand learning (e.g., recordings, member spotlights)
- Experiment with an annual learning thread or theme to connect various AQSG activities.

Strategic Priority IV: Champion AQSG’s Identity, Value, and Role

Promote a clear, compelling identity for AQSG that aligns mission, programs, and public voice. Strengthen messaging, visual branding, and strategic partnerships to raise awareness, amplify credibility, and position AQSG as a leading voice—and connector—in quilt and quilt-related studies, with pride and without apology.

Objectives

- Evaluate AQSG’s visual identity and key messaging for alignment with mission and brand promise.
- Encourage AQSG members to amplify their affiliation with AQSG in their speaking and writing opportunities in cultural, arts, and academic forums.
- Increase social media reach and engagement.
- Design and implement a membership marketing pipeline that attracts, educates, and converts prospective members using digital outreach, storytelling, and automated engagement tools.

- Develop partnerships with allied organizations in fiber arts, material culture, and creative research.

Strategic Priority V: Strengthen AQSG's Infrastructure, Volunteer Leadership, and Financial Sustainability

Invest in the people, systems, and revenue strategies that sustain AQSG's mission. Expand philanthropic giving and diversify income through intentional fundraising, planned giving, and earned revenue. Support and develop volunteer leadership to reduce burnout, improve continuity, and power AQSG's future.

Objectives

- Grow annual fundraising revenue through expanded donor cultivation.
- Revitalize planned giving program with at least 10 members pledging legacy gifts by 2027.
- Redesign committee structures.
- Redesign volunteer orientation to increase participation and satisfaction.
- More intentionally and consistently recognize and thank volunteers.
- Complete a financial review.
- Begin planning to leverage 50th anniversary for donor cultivation.