

Collections Management Policy

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Introduction

A Collections Management Policy is meant to define an institution's practices regarding collections care, handling, and the legal ownership of artworks. This policy establishes guidelines regarding new acquisitions, deaccessions, artwork loans, and conservation, as based on best practices established by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). The Castellani Art Museum intends for this document to specifically provide basic tenets for its artwork collections, including:

- Acquisitions, deacquisitions, and other collections changes align with the Museum's mission, audiences, and future goals
- Collections work withholds the ethical standards set by AAM and best practices in the museum field
- Proper protection, preservation, and care; through this, artwork access is provided and regulated
- Strong, consistent record-keeping for each artwork

Overview and Mission of the Castellani Art Museum

Located on the Niagara University campus, Castellani Art Museum (CAM) is the only visual arts museum in Niagara County.

Our mission is, "With art as the catalyst, CAM brings people together to inspire dialogue, creativity, and learning." Our vision is to lead our region in learning, collaboration, and connecting art to the diverse lived experiences of our communities. We established these statements through a 2022 staff and community process. CAM also established values:

<u>Creative:</u> We seek inspiring ways to connect people to art and artists, fostering the exchange of new ideas and diverse perspectives

<u>Collaborative</u>: We strive to be an active partner that makes art accessible, relevant, and meaningful through community relationships

<u>Person-Oriented:</u> We support and create profound art experiences for our guests and communities

<u>Equitable:</u> We nurture cultural citizenship, where all people are respected and historically excluded voices and artists are uplifted.

The collection is featured in four semi-permanent galleries. We organize 8-10 annual temporary exhibitions in our five additional galleries. Galleries and temporary exhibitions feature local/regional as well as nationally/internationally-recognized artists. The museum is committed to the professional care and preservation of the collection and artworks on display.

Admission is pay-what-you-wish; we are open 5 days a week for public visitors and every day for campus. We offer 100+ free or low-cost programs annually, onsite and in communities.

Audiences

In keeping with Niagara University's Vincentian mission, CAM recognizes and serves the diverse racial, ethnic, and religious communities of the Niagara region through exhibitions which honor and explore established and cultural artistic traditions. In addition to presenting diverse artistic expressions, CAM works in partnerships to explore and redefine the relationship between the museum and its constituencies.

As an integral part of NU, CAM is committed to bringing students direct experience of the visual arts. Working closely with the Art History with Museum Studies Degree program and other programs/classes, the Museum furthers the education objectives of the university by involving students in the hands-on study of original works of art, offering opportunities to engage with contemporary art and artists, training students in museum work, presenting exhibitions and programs that support and enhance the university curriculum, and by working with university faculty to integrate the study of original works of art into their courses.

CAM also serves the educational needs of the community through public programs such as lectures, panel discussions, tours, and hands-on projects. It hosts an in-depth summer camp for children and provides educational programs for families, adults, and K-12 schools and afterschool programs.

CAM History

Founders: Armand and Eleanor Castellani

Armand J. Castellani (1917-2002) was born in Giuliano di Roma, a small village east of Rome, Italy. When Armand was four years old his family immigrated to the United States and settled in Niagara Falls. Armand took over the family business in 1945, expanding the grocery store into the TOPS Friendly Markets and affiliated stores. Together with his wife Eleanor (1919-2008), the couple became known in Western New York for their deep commitment to philanthropy and community service.

Working with Niagara University and major donors, the Castellanis opened the Castellani Art Museum in 1990, originally founded as the Buscaglia-Castellani Gallery in 1978 with Armand's own artwork collection, as a center of arts education for both the campus community and Western New York; and as a place of teaching and learning for all who pass through its doors.

The Castellani Art Museum was designed by architect Thomas Moscati of TRM Architect firm. The building was officially opened to the public on September 23, 1990. Seven individual galleries branch off of the majestic central exhibition gallery. The facility houses nine galleries in total, an art storage preparation area, staff offices, a conference room, and a multi-purpose classroom space.

CAM considers the values and spirit of the Castellanis as it continues its collecting practices.

Scope of the Collection

Grounded in Armand and Eleanor's original private acquisitions, the collection has grown to include over 5,000 works, including paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs: dating from the 1850s to the 1990s. This initial collection illustrates the development of modern art, focused primarily on art from the 1960s to the present. After receiving the foundational collection of the Castellanis, the CAM collection continued to grow in the areas of Modern and Postmodern art.

An additional collecting area emerged through CAM's proximity to Niagara Falls. In 2006, through a generous donation from Dr. Charles Rand Penney and additional funding from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Lytle, CAM accessioned The Charles Rand Penney Historical Niagara Falls Print Collection of 425 objects, utilizing every printmaking technique from 1698 to the early 20th century. CAM has continued to collect many works that depict Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, and the development around this unique and nearby environmental feature.

Since 1987, a series of special projects funded through the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts have enabled CAM to collaborate with a number of local ethnic and minority communities in preserving and presenting their traditional arts. In doing so, CAM decided to add works to its collection to preserve local expressions of traditional art created within the diverse communities of Western New York. Traditions represented in the collection include Tuscarora Beadwork, Puerto Rican vejigante masks, Turkish Paper Marbling (ebru), and more. The Folk Art collection continues to grow through collaboration with artists featured in our folk arts exhibitions. In addition to its physical collection, CAM maintains a digital archive of fieldwork materials.

The Art Committee

The Art Committee advises on matters pertaining to loans, acquisitions, deaccessions, conservation, substantial exhibition loans, and other high-level art-related business. The Art Committee's regular business includes decisions around accessioning works that are appropriate to the collection and important to its development.

The Museum Director and Curator(s) are responsible for presenting works for consideration to the Art Committee. The five to nine-member voting Committee is composed of arts/culture patrons, experienced staff in the arts, and University faculty/staff including an appointee by the University president. The Committee is chaired by the CAM Director. The CAM Curators and Registrar attend Art Committee Meetings to present works for consideration. During Committee collection-related votes, the particular CAM Curator with expertise on the particular work also casts a vote. A quorum of 75% of voting members will be present to vote on collections items. Members can participate remotely and are strongly encouraged to send their votes in advance of the meeting if they cannot attend.

Should a member of the Art Committee have in his or her own private collection a work of art by the artist under consideration for acquisition, he or she shall recuse himself or

herself from voting on the acquisition.

Art Committee members serve two-year terms; they may serve on the Committee for three consecutive terms. Committee members can serve additional terms after taking a year break. There are specific exceptions to the three-term limit: the president's appointee may serve additional terms and a representative from the Castellani Family may serve additional terms. At least one member of the Art Committee also sits on CAM's Advisory Committee, providing continuity between these governing groups. The Director and Art Committee Advisory Member report to the Advisory Board on major decisions of the Art Committee.

The Director is responsible for contacting Committee members and scheduling acquisition meetings, following discussions with the appropriate Curator about the materials for consideration. Meetings shall occur twice a year unless needs dictate otherwise.

The Art Committee's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing staff reports about artwork under consideration.
- Voting on works of art for acquisition.
- Voting on works of art for deaccession.
- Reviewing policies that will strengthen CAM's collections and collection management policies.
- Assisting in obtaining resources to build and advance the collection.

Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy

All members of the Art Committee, whether voting or non-voting, will comply with the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University. These documents define the Museum's guiding principles and core responsibilities, as well as appropriate conduct for members of the Advisory Board and Museum Employees. Specific provisions regarding personal collecting and maintaining the confidentiality of Museum information are addressed in the Code of Conduct. All members of the Art Committee, whether voting or non-voting, shall also comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy. These policies are currently being written and will be released in 2024.

Framework For Acquisitions

The Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University strives to develop and maintain a collection of fine art of national and regional significance and repute. CAM seeks to build on its historic strengths while also wishing to fill significant gaps in the existing collections. As opportunities arise, it moves judiciously to expand the collection carefully to enhance its value as a resource for the University and our communities. CAM will place a particular focus on areas in which the collection can be developed to enlarge its representation of diverse cultural perspectives, thus enhancing its role at the University and its neighbors.

Collecting Plan

CAM strives to build on its strengths by acquiring, through gift and purchase, significant works of art by artists of national and international reputation as well as artists of regional recognition. CAM will be alert to new areas in which the collection can be developed in order to enlarge its representation of diverse cultural artistic perspectives and historical periods, and enhance its role in the academic life of Niagara University. To do this, CAM will maintain and annually review a collecting plan that sets forth in writing the museum's priorities for acquisition, especially pertaining to purchases from unrestricted funds. This plan will be prepared by the Director and Curators in consultation with the Registrar and Art Committee.

<u>Acquisition</u>

Acquisition means to take ownership of an object or group of objects, through purchase, gift, bequest, exchange, or any other formal process, by which legal title to an object is transferred, unrestricted, to the Museum. Acquisitions may or may not be accessioned.

Accessioning is the formal process by which objects are accepted and recorded as property of the Museum's Collection, thus becoming part of its care and trust. Accessions require a three-fourths majority vote from the Art Committee.

Limitations in staff size, physical space, and financial resources make it neither feasible nor ethical for the CAM to collect indiscriminately. Selection for purchase should reflect the best possible use of current available funds. The CAM therefore subscribes to a policy of selective acquisition. In determining whether an object is to be acquisitioned and/or accessioned, the following criteria apply:

- Relevance: It is consistent with the Museum's Mission and Vision.
- Quality: It is of significant aesthetic quality and artistic merit, possesses potential for research and scholarship, or has historical cultural significance.
- Collection Enhancement: It will strengthen the Collection, whether by building existing holdings or by filling an important gap. Consideration should be made if the artist is already adequately represented in our collection.
- Origin: Its authenticity and provenance is satisfactory.
- Care and Upkeep: Its condition is such that it can be appropriately preserved by the Museum or can be returned to an acceptable state. Accessioned works should be in reasonably good condition or else should be supplemented with sufficient funds for immediate conservation treatment.
- Storage: The Museum has the resources available to appropriately store and maintain the object and can make the work available for future display and study.

• Special Considerations: Any extenuating circumstances or conditions that affect the decision to acquire or not acquire the work for the collections.

It is the responsibility of the Director and the Curators, subject to Director approval, to present objects to the Art Committee for acquisition consideration. Objects that are approved by the Art Committee should be appropriate to the nature of the Collection and be of such quality that it is enhanced by the work's accession. After appropriate discussion by the Committee, a recommendation to accession a given work or body of works will be ratified by the favorable vote of three-fourths majority of the Art Committee's voting members.

Niagara University insures collection works and the Registrar provides all recently acquired artwork values, provided by donors and/or their appraisers, to University administrative offices to be added to the museum's policy of insured objects.

Means of Acquisition

Gifts and Bequests: Such gifts will be works donated by artists, collectors, or reputable commercial galleries and are contingent upon approval of the Art Committee. Niagara University will refer all gift offers of works of art to the Castellani Art Museum's Director for consideration. Gifts to the collection will be encouraged, provided such gifts are within the Accession Policy guidelines. The Art Committee shall consider offers of art as they occur. The committee will solicit the advice of other scholars as necessary. The NU Advancement Department will be informed by the director of CAM of all major gifts or bequests. Federal law stipulates that it is the responsibility of the donor to secure appraisals of objects being donated to CAM and furnishing information for government agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service rests with the donor. All acquisitions are accepted as unrestricted gifts only.

Promised Gifts & Partial Gifts: Promised gifts may be made by a donor in written form expressing their intent to give a specific work(s) of art to CAM at a specific future time, outlined in a written agreement reviewed with the donor. A promised gift may also be held in the custody of the Museum, and, if so, should be treated with the same care as the collection. A promised gift is subject to the same accession process as an outright gift to the Museum.

In the case of partial gifts to the Collection, whereby a donor gives to the Museum undivided co-ownership interest in works of art over a period of years, the Museum and the donor share possession of the work until the agreed upon time period has passed and the progression of gifting the work to the Museum is complete.

Direct Purchase: Only the Director and Curator(s) of the Castellani Art Museum have the right to reserve works and/or make an offer to purchase art works for acquisition to the CAM collection. Any work recommended for purchase by the Director and/or Curator will be presented to the Art Committee for consideration for accession. With the approval of this committee, the Director Curator can proceed with the acquisition. Since much

successful collecting is to a large degree opportunistic and often requires on-the-spot decisions and commitments that preclude time-consuming referral back to a committee, upon special occasions (such as auctions) the Director/Curator will request pre approval for the purchase with a dollar amount cap. The Director/Curator will make every effort to seek approval for a potential accession from the Art Committee prior to purchase, with consideration of Acquisition Funds available. When purchasing works of art, the CAM should seek representations and warranties from the seller that the seller has valid title and the work of art is free from any claims.

Acquisition Fund

CAM has a very modest Acquisition Fund for purchases of artwork. With increasing prices, the ability to purchase has declined, making gifts of art crucial in building the collection. This requires strategic and careful cultivation of donors so the collection can grow in a coherent fashion. Over time, the Museum should seek to build endowments for acquisition in order to enable strategic commissions and purchases of art.

Non-Accessioned Works

On occasion, the Museum may accept a work of art but not accession it into the Collection. These works will also be recorded by the Registrar and given a non-accessioned object number. Generally, such objects are donated with a donor's express purpose to raise funds for the purchase of works of art for the Collection or for alternate reasons that the Museum agrees to accommodate. Except when a donor expressly states otherwise, the proceeds of the sale of any object donated, but not accessioned, to the Collection will be used to acquire other fine art objects, for direct collection care, and the administrative costs of collection care.

Deaccession

Deaccession approval requires a three-fourths majority vote of the Art Committee. Should a member of the Art Committee have in his or her own private collection a work by the artist under consideration, he/she shall recuse themselves from voting on the deaccession. After approval is granted, the Registrar then completes a deaccession record, filing one copy in the appropriate inventory file and one copy in a deaccession file. The official record is then changed in the online inventory system.

Before any item is considered for deaccession, it will be determined, through the instrument of gift, that the Castellani Art Museum is legally able to deaccession it.

- All proceeds from deaccession sale are to be used to benefit the collection or collections care and deposited in the appropriate account(s) for accessioning of new works or for the conservation, administration, and maintenance of works in the collection.
- There may be no destruction of deaccessioned works by living artists unless agreement by the artist is received in writing, as per dictated by New York State Law and the American Alliance of Museum's policy. Further details in Abandoned Property.

- Documentation of all trade and sales transactions is maintained by the Registrar.
- All deaccessioned material will be recommended by the staff or Director/Curators/Registrar and have the approval of the Director and the Art Committee.

Disposal

The disposal of a deaccessioned work can be accomplished in a number of ways; through exchange with another museum; through exchange with a commercial gallery; or through an open public sale. In rare cases, when the condition of a work is such that it has little or no monetary value and cannot be used for teaching or cannot be donated, that work could be destroyed. The manner of disposition chosen shall represent the best interests of CAM, Niagara University, the public they serve, the public trust they represent in maintaining and preserving the collections, and the scholarly and cultural communities they represent. Special consideration will be given to placing removed objects, through gift, exchange, or sale to another tax-exempt public or private institution with collections policies comparable to those of CAM, wherein they may serve a valid purpose in research, education, exhibition, or public service. If sale to, or exchange with, a comparable museum is not desirable or feasible, the item may be sent to public auction with a suitable reserve on it where full disclosure of the objects history and provenance will be made. All auctions shall be public and be as well publicized as possible.

When disposing of a deaccessioned object that has been found to be falsely attributed, or documented or proved to be fake or forgery, the work shall be clearly marked and identified to prevent future misrepresentation. After reviewing the circumstances surrounding the acquisition the museum may consider the following options:

- Evaluating possible legal resources against the vendor of the object.
- Depositing the object in a scholarly archive where such material is studied.
- Destroying fakes and forgeries.
- Selling objects at public auction or private sales as long as errors in documentation or attribution are not permitted.

Physical destruction of the work may be considered if its physical condition is severely deteriorated. The approval of both the Director and the Art Committee is required for this method of disposal. If the work is by a living artist, the museum shall make every attempt to notify him/her of its intent to destroy the work.

Sale or Exchange

Deaccessioned objects may be disposed of by means of public sale with an established auction house, by private sale, or by an exchange for another work of art with artists, nonprofit institutions, reputable dealers, or collections, with approval of sale venue by the Art Committee. The CAM Registrar, and/or related Curator, will propose options for sale and make travel/pick up arrangements, following the approval of the Director and Art Committee. If it is decided not to sell to or exchange with another museum,

preference shall be given to disposing of deaccessioned objects in public sales but other methods may be selected after the advantages and yields of the different methods and the best interests of CAM have been examined. In appropriate instances, appraisals from outside sources will be sought and evaluated. If the deaccessioned object is exchanged for another work, the CAM's general policy on acquisitions will be followed for the new object.

Provenance

Provenance means the history of ownership of an object or work of art.

CAM will not acquire or exhibit any work of art if it has knowledge or good reason to believe that it is of questionable provenance, stolen, or was sold under duress. Any recommendation for acquisition or loan will also consider the work's documentation and make all reasonable inquiries to determine (a) that the Museum can obtain a clear provenance and title if an acquisition or gift is under consideration or (b) that a proposed lender has cleared provenance and title at the time the loan is made. If it appears that a work of art offered to the Museum for purchase, gift, or loan is of questionable origin, may be stolen property, or has been brought into the U.S. illegally, the Curators will promptly report these findings to the Director for further investigation.

Foreign Cultural Patrimony, Looted Objects, and NAGPRA

Objects can enter the art market and museums that have histories of unlawful confiscation from their countries or owners of origin, obtained by looting, war, trafficking, and unethical practices against Native American and indigenous peoples. CAM will display only those objects found to have adequate provenance according to the highest ethical standards of museum practice, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

CAM commits to promptly answering inquiries and claims of title to specific works in its collections and properly reviewing the provenance of artworks entering the collection for such issues. With any inquiry, CAM commits to reviewing, reporting, and researching the issue, respecting the dignity of all parties and the complexity of the issue. Each claim presents a unique situation that will be thoroughly reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

CAM works in partnership with local community groups when considering cultural art for its collection. Discussions, and in some circumstances, agreements between CAM and these institutions will assist in composing a legitimate framework for the custody of such objects. Such partnerships provide flexibility for the appropriate dissemination of knowledge for museum visitors as well.

Conservation And Direct Collection Care

Conservation refers to the process by which objects or the environment in which they are housed are dealt with or treated in order to preserve, protect, or maintain their integrity and condition. *Direct Collection Care* refers to costs incurred for collection care including maintenance and staffing costs necessitated thereby, and structural and facilities costs incurred to transport, store, and preserve the Collection in

accordance with best practices.

Maintaining professional standards for the overall conservation, care and handling of the Collection is a core institutional priority. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Collection is overseen by the Registrar's Office. Guidelines for these professional standards in this area are:

- 1. Exhibition spaces and storage facilities shall be secure and climate controlled. The parameters for maintaining consistent temperature and humidity are as follows: o Temperature in exhibition spaces and storage facilities shall be maintained at 70°±2°F with fluctuations of no more than 2°F within a 24-hour period. o Relative humidity in exhibition spaces and storage facilities shall be maintained at 50%±5% with fluctuations no more than 5% within a 24-hour period.
- 2. Lights in storage facilities should only be on when there is a need to access the Collection. For exhibition, works of art that are especially sensitive to light exposure will only be displayed for a limited amount of time in order to avoid cumulative light damage. The light levels for works of art will be maintained as follows:
 - o 5-7 footcandles (50-70 lux) for works on paper and textiles;
 - o 5-10 footcandles (50-100 lux) for photographic works;
 - o 25 footcandles (250 lux) for paintings or any object with a painted surface;
 - o light levels for mixed media objects will be adjusted to the most light sensitive material present.
- 3. The Museum recognizes the value of regular conservation surveys of the Collection and makes collections care an institutional priority.
- 4. A priority list for objects needing treatment is continually maintained, updated, and reassessed. This ensures that treatment is carried out on a preventive rather than a reactive basis. Funds will be pursued or allocated from the Artwork Purchase or Conservation Funds to support critical conservation needs.

<u>Loans</u>

Outgoing Loans

The activity of lending Collection objects to other institutions is a fundamental aspect of museum practice. Loan requests will be vetted by the Director and Curatorial staff and then approved or denied by the Art Committee. Loans from the CAM are defined in a loan agreement and are insured in writing by the borrowing institution. While all loans are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the following guidelines are taken into consideration whenever the Museum lends an object from the Collection:

- 1. All loans requests are evaluated in light of the art historical and scholarly value of the exhibition for which they are requested.
- 2. The object will not already be committed to any other exhibition at another institution.
- 3. The Museum has no conflicting need to incorporate the object into its own exhibition programming.

- 4. The object is stable enough to travel and does not have any outstanding conservation issues. If such issues are present, the Museum will work with the borrower to conserve the object prior to its release.
- 5. Objects of unique character, great importance, unusual size, extreme fragility, or compromising installation characteristics, should only be lent in exceptional circumstances, if at all.
- 6. The borrowing institution has provided a current facilities report that meets the required standards and ensures safety of the loan.

The procedures for outgoing loans are found in the Collection Procedure Manual.

Loans to Commercial Galleries

Loans shall only be made to dealers or commercial galleries for scholarly exhibitions. Such loans are subject to the approvals required for other outgoing loans, with additional consideration as to whether the exhibition will include artworks for sale or whether a scholarly publication is being produced.

Long Term Loans

Long-term loans will be granted only if they allow a work to be viewed within an appropriate context for a period of time deemed beneficial to the public. CAM will take every precaution to ensure that the appropriate registrations, conservation, and security measures are maintained with respect to such loans. The loan period for long-term loans will be established by a written agreement, with renewals or extensions contingent upon additional approval.

Incoming Loans

CAM exercises the same standard of care for borrowed works of art as it exercises for its own Collection, unless otherwise specified by the lender.

Abandoned Property

Loans to the Museum should be periodically monitored, which includes maintaining contact with lenders. Loan forms specify that artworks become the property of the Museum after 90 days of the end of loan period. In rare circumstances, in the event that the specified terms of a loan have ended and contact cannot be made with a lender (despite exhaustive measures), the object will be considered abandoned property. Additionally, works that are discovered on the Museum's premises that have no records associated with their disposition to the Museum and/or identification will also be treated as abandoned property.

In all such cases, the Curatorial staff will work with the Registrar to identify the object in question and determine if it is to be retained or disposed of. If it is decided that the abandoned property is not of a requisite caliber and does not warrant accession into the Collection, the disposition of said property can be realized in resolutions such as placement in a study collection, transfer to Museum retail sector for sale, or placement within employee offices for décor. On rare occasions, abandoned property may be destroyed. In all instances, the process will be recorded and documented through the Art Committee; acquisitions procedures will be followed if applicable.

Artwork Records

The Museum will maintain accurate, up-to-date records on the identification, location, and condition of all objects in the Collection as well as appropriate records of deaccessioned works. Furthermore, the Museum will maintain records of exhibitions, outgoing loans, research, and correspondence with donors, artists, and scholars, as they pertain to these works of art. These records should include the following information:

- The name, address, and phone number of the person or institution from whom a work was acquired or to whom it was deaccessioned or loaned.
- A basic description of the work, including artist(s) name, title, date, media, and dimensions.
- The work's current location.
- The terms and any other material facts regarding the acquisition, deaccession, or loan of a work.
- Original and/or copies of documents that support the transfer of the object into the possession of the Museum.

In addition, CAM will maintain files that include an object's accession number or other registration number, legal status, activity and history of the object within the Museum, loan history, exhibition history, and the assigned credit line.

All records that pertain to the Collection and deaccessioned objects are the property of the Museum. The Registrar will review inactive records and will, as appropriate, transfer those of continuing interest to CAM storage. CAM will make available to researchers and scholars any materials relating to the Collection, barring confidential information such as financial matters pertaining to the purchase of a work of art.

The Collection will be inventoried under the supervision of the Registrar. The resulting inventories will be maintained, corrected, and updated on a continuing basis, with a thorough inventory conducted every five years.

Policy Distribution and Review

This document has been prepared by CAM's Director, Curators, and Registrar in consultation with the Museum's Art Committee, Advisory Committee, which includes University faculty members, and other stakeholders. It was reviewed by outside arts collection professionals. It was developed over the course of 2022-2023 and will be reviewed for edits annually. A thorough review of the Collections Policy should occur every five years.