

## NEWSROOM

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HIGHEST NATIONAL RECOGNITION

ACCREDITATION IS 'THE GOLD STANDARD FOR EXCELLENCE.'

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | December 18, 2024*Read time: about 2 min*

The Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center at Christopher Newport University has achieved re-accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition afforded to the nation's museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public, and demonstrates that an institution has met the "gold standard for museum excellence."

AAM accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for over fifty years, the Alliance's museum accreditation program is the field's primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable to provide the best possible service to the public.

Achieving accreditation requires a rigorous process of self-assessment and review by an institution's peers. To earn accreditation, the Torggler spent a year conducting a self-study and producing a number of institutional plans and policies before undergoing a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM's Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, considered the self-study and visiting committee report to determine whether the Torggler should remain accredited.

The Torggler was initially granted accreditation through its absorption of the Peninsula Fine Arts Center, but undertook the demanding re-accreditation process within two years of opening its doors. Accredited museums must undergo a re-accreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status.

AAM is the only organization representing the entire scope of the museum community. Of the nation's estimated 33,000 museums, only about 3% are [currently accredited](#).

"We are honored, grateful and inspired by AAM's endorsement," said Torggler Fine Arts Center Executive Director Holly Koons. "As a young institution, it is rewarding to receive national recognition as we seek to enrich the cultural landscape of Virginia by presenting exceptional visual arts programming that empowers creative expression, critical thinking, and cultural dialogue."

"Accreditation is a monumental achievement," said Marilyn Jackson, AAM president and CEO. "The process demonstrates an institution's commitment to best practice and is flexible enough to be accomplished by museums of any size."

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## ABOUT THE MARY M. TORGGLER FINE ARTS CENTER

The Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center cultivates extraordinary encounters with the visual arts. Whether viewing an exhibition, taking a class, enjoying a special event, or attending a gallery talk, the Torggler invites visitors to explore compelling ideas through the transformative lens of visual art. This remarkable 83,000 square-foot building features a luminous atrium capped by three cascading domes, symbolizing the three ships commanded by the University's namesake, Christopher Newport. Admission to the Torggler is free and open to all.

## ABOUT THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

The [American Alliance of Museums](#) is the only organization representing the entire museum field, from art and history museums to science centers and zoos. Since 1906, it has been championing museums through advocacy and providing museum professionals with the resources, knowledge, inspiration and connections they need to move the field forward.

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