

## **OVERVIEW OF ARTS ADMINISTRATION AND THE ROLES OF ARTS ADMINISTRATORS**

The following text is an excerpt from the Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE) *Standards for Arts Administration Graduate Program Curricula*, November 2014. ([www.artsadministration.org](http://www.artsadministration.org)) *Used with permission.* The Standards document is described as a “living document” and is subject to revision and updating.

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### **Community Engagement**

Arts organizations can support vibrant communities by identifying, connecting with, and allying themselves with existing community assets, and seeking opportunities to use those assets to adapt to changing community dynamics, including ongoing shifts in the larger social, political, economic and environmental forces impacting all areas of society, including the arts. To have the greatest impact, arts organizations will learn to be active members of their local, regional and national civic environment. [AAAE, p. 11]

### **Financial Management**

Financial management is a core function within the management of cultural organizations, and is the framework through which resources – human, physical and financial –are maintained and monitored. In the not-for-profit sector, the balance between mission and money is a key factor in maintaining a sustainable, vibrant and successful organization, and needs to be clearly understood by arts administration students.

Managers must be able to deal with the numbers in a much more complex way than just tallying revenues and expenses. Financial analysis is an essential requisite for sound strategic planning and governance, and managers of non-for-profit arts organizations are the source of financial information for their boards of directors. Therefore, managers must be equipped to clearly and effectively communicate the financial realities of their organizations in terms that are expert but accessible. [AAAE, p. 16]

### **Institutional Leadership and Management**

The arts enterprise is inherently collaborative; students need to understand concepts of leadership, group dynamics, and team management in order to understand how to adapt to the ever-changing environments in which they will work. The field demands the capacity for a breadth of leadership styles in a single leader and our students must understand how to utilize leadership capacities through a variety of formal and informal roles. Students need to be cognizant of multiple disciplines within and outside of the arts, and their relationship to them. They should have the capacity to communicate organizational vision to multiple disciplines and constituents. Arts administration students must be effective communicators internally and externally and in written and oral forms. [AAAE, p. 23]

### **International Environment for the Arts**

Whether planning to work in cultural management on an international scale or within a very localized context, graduate arts management students must face the inevitable realization that their work in the 21st century is likely to be globalized to varying degrees. Consequentially, arts administrators must develop sensitivities to cultural differences, be attuned to worldwide current events, and understand the basic dynamics of international and intercultural relations. [AAAE, p. 27]

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### **Legal and Ethical Environments for the Arts**

Arts organizations are operating in an ever-evolving legal and ethical environment—an environment of increased public scrutiny. Managers are legally and ethically accountable to multiple constituencies (e.g. board, staff, artists, and donors). Increased scrutiny from governmental agencies and donors leads to the need for arts managers to enter their field prepared to understand and apply legal and ethical standards within their organizations. [AAAE, p. 32]

### **Marketing and Audience Development**

Most not-for-profit [arts] organizations are dependent on both earned and contributed income as a part of the income mix, but both not-for-profit and commercial businesses must consider that, at their heart, both marketing and fundraising are about developing relationships with our current and future patrons and audiences. Not-for-profits may have non-paying audiences and free events for which contributed income is important but which still must be marketed with as much sophistication as earned income generating events. [AAAE, p. 35]

Marketing is an organizational function and set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to arts audiences and for managing relationships in ways that benefit the cultural organization and its stakeholders. Marketing may sell merchandise, attract donors, build awareness in a community, or attract paying and non-paying audiences. Marketing may be integrated into virtually all areas of a cultural organization, and thus interfaces with the curricula for other functional areas. [AAAE, p. 35]

### **Fundraising**

Marketing and fundraising are integrally related, yet entirely distinct, elements of arts administration. Most not-for-profit organizations are dependent on both earned and contributed income as a part of the income mix and must consider that, at their heart, both marketing and fundraising are about developing relationships with our current and future patrons and audiences.

Recent years have brought significant changes to the environment of the fundraising process. Today's arts administrators may need to manage a combination of social media and online fundraising operations as well as more traditional avenues like grant writing, major donor solicitation and annual fund and special campaigns. Organizations also rely on arts administration graduates to be able to understand the complex legal and ethical environment surrounding contributed income. [AAAE, p. 40]

### **Policy for the Arts**

All artists and arts organizations exist within a particular policy environment. It is essential that arts administrators understand arts and cultural policy in order to ensure the well-being of their organizations, play a role in improving the quality of life in their communities to be active participants in civil society, and to be effective speakers for the place of the arts in society. [AAAE, p. 44]

### **Production and Distribution of Art**

Arts management and administration are fundamentally concerned with the creation, production, dissemination, and stewardship of creative expression. While the daily activities of an arts organization may focus on “managing” that process – through systems, controls, resources, and directed action –

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the larger purpose of the organization is to encourage the flourishing of artistic expression and experience for both private and public benefit. Regardless of their art form or sector – commercial, not for-profit, public, and voluntary – arts managers must keep art at the core of their endeavor. [AAAE, p.48]

### **Research Methodology**

The growing need for effective understanding, use and creation of reliable and rigorous research in arts administration has been prompted by shifting economic conditions, rapid technological innovations, globalization, the increasing hybridization of organizational forms in the arts and culture, the rise of interdisciplinary approaches to investigating the arts and their social impacts, and the growing sophistication of arts administration as a professional practice.

Further, arts organizations are increasingly called upon to account for the effectiveness of their programs, the composition of their workforce and audiences, and their community and economic impacts in ways that demand research capacity. To work effectively, arts managers must be able to use evidence to guide their decision-making. They must be educated consumers of research, including the nature and limits of data collection and the various ways that data can be analyzed and interpreted. [AAAE, p. 54]

### **Strategic Planning**

Strategy within not-for-profit organizations is the intentional and reasoned alignment and application of resources toward the creation of public value. Since these resources include a full range of elements – from financial resources like cash and economic capital to human resources like staff, leadership, volunteers, and governance to physical resources like buildings and equipment – the discipline of strategic planning spans every element of education in arts and cultural management. It is therefore common to see strategic planning embedded and integrated into curricula for most of the functional areas – programming, development, management, education, marketing, facility management, human resources, and so on. Strategic planning is also taught separately as a process of analysis and decision-making about the future priorities of the organization. [AAAE, p 59]

### **Technology Management and Training**

This program standard . . . focuses more narrowly on digital, information, and communications technology comprising computer hardware, software, networks, connectivity, information, and training involved in advancing an organization's mission.

This form of technology has become all pervasive in contemporary society, from daily interactions with computers and mobile devices, through the sophisticated manipulation of data for research and analysis, to the development of unique software solutions for entire organizations. Technology has changed, and continues to change, the ways that art can be created; the ways that various publics access, interact with, and experience that art; and the ways that artists and organizations communicate with and interact with their constituencies. New organizational structures are creating boundary-less organizations where virtual team meetings are conducted across the world through the use of technology. [AAAE, p 63]