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On The Cover: Word cloud created based on the goals and focus areas of AAM's strategic plan, leadership programming at the AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, and results from the Leadership and Management Professional Network survey.



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On Leadership, Risk, and Your Museum's Board

As the mother of an inquisitive four-year-old daughter, I probably hear more questions in a given day than most people hear in a week, or even a month. And I never get tired of hearing them, because I understand the importance of those questions—and the curiosity that underlies them.

The questions of a four-year-old are fresh, honest, and unfiltered. As adults and professionals, however, many of us hesitate or even fear asking—or being asked—good questions. But to be effective leaders and continually improve our organizations, we must keep questioning the status quo, welcoming questions of ourselves and our colleagues, and working together to find answers. Who is asking the tough questions at your museum?

In this issue of *Museum*, we explore the themes of leadership, risk, and financial sustainability in museums. All three subjects raise tough questions and are—or should be—areas where museum directors can tap into a tremendous resource: the experience and expertise of board members. Many have strong business acumen from running their own companies, are not afraid to ask good questions, and are no strangers to risk management.

When discussing board governance with Alliance members, I often highlight the three governance modes from *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of the Nonprofit Boards* by Chait, Ryan, and Taylor:

Fiduciary: The focus is financial and legal oversight, accountability to stakeholders, and spotting problems, asking “What’s wrong?”

Strategic: Focus is performance—direction setting, strategic planning, and problem solving, asking “What’s the plan?”

Generative: Focus is on sense-making, framing problems, and looking at opportunities from a broader perspective, asking “What’s the key question?”

Museum directors and trustees who desire real innovation must strive to work in this generative mode, asking key questions in a way that’s fresh, honest, and unfiltered. And when this happens, the results are exciting. In 2014, the New Museum in the Bowery neighborhood of New York launched a business incubator called New, Inc., to “foster creative cultural production, and reinforce the Bowery as a place of meaningful innovation.”



In a particularly entrepreneurial example, in August 2016, Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand, launched Mahuki, a program to accelerate local startups focused on the cultural sector. Ten teams took part in the four-month residential program to research, develop, and user-test the next generation of experiences for the culture, heritage, and learning sectors. Each company received funding from the museum and its partners—plus access to the museum’s experts, collections, and visitors—in exchange for Te Papa having an option to take a 6 percent equity stake in the businesses.

Wow! One of the Alliance’s strategic focus areas is “changing business models for museums’ financial sustainability.” These are just a few examples of the museums leading in this area.

AAM’s strategic plan also calls for engaging museum trustees and helping museum directors build strong boards that lead museums into the future. Last fall, with the support of BoardSource and Northern Trust, we kicked off our Trustees Initiative with a first-of-its-kind survey on museum governance practices and priorities. We saw an outstanding response, with more than 1,700 museum directors and board chairs completing the survey. It was another chance to hear from you, Alliance members, about what resources, tools, or services would be most useful to you as you engage your trustees in new ways.

We look forward to sharing the survey results in May at the AAM 2017 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in St. Louis, and in this magazine, among other channels. And we want to continue to hear from you. How can we help?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Lott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" and last name "Lott" clearly distinguishable.

Laura L. Lott is the Alliance’s president and CEO. Follow Laura on Twitter at @LottLaura.

Museums and Federal Funding

33,000

The approximate number of US museums.

Source: Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

40%

The percentage of NEA and NEH funding that is distributed to state arts agencies and state humanities councils.

923,000

The number of active-duty military personnel and their families welcomed from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2016, by NEA's Blue Star Museums program, enriching them with new experiences at more than 2,000 museums nationwide.

Source: National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)



\$21.3 million

The amount received by 150 museum-related projects in 2016 from all NEH program divisions.

Source: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

The amount awarded to museum organizations by IMLS for fiscal year 2016.

Source: IMLS

\$31.3 million



Find out how much of the funding from NEA, NEH, and IMLS comes back to your state.

Visit aam-us.org/advocacy/state-snapshots



The amount received by more than 180 NEA museum grant awardees in 2016.

Source: NEA

more than \$5.4 million

What's New at Your Museum?

ICCROM and UNESCO

A free PDF could save objects at risk. *Endangered Heritage: Emergency Evacuation of Heritage Collections* provides a step-by-step approach to identifying and navigating disasters. The publication, a joint effort of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is based on real-life experience in handling extreme situations.

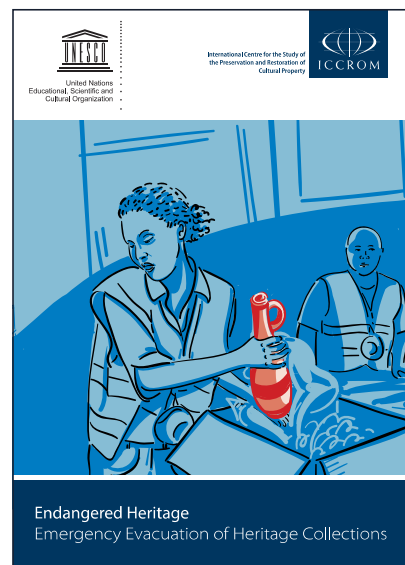
Release date: December 15, 2016

"The easy and adaptable workflow in this handbook makes it an important tool for all cultural heritage institutions. User-friendly diagrams make this a truly unique publication as it streamlines the evacuation process while maintaining professional standards."

—Rebecca Kennedy, preservation specialist and emergency responder,
Smithsonian's National Postal Museum

Languages: English and Arabic (coming soon)

Download: iccrom.org/free-publication-on-emergency-evacuation-of-collections



National Museum of American Jewish History

George Washington's statement of religious liberty has risen in Philadelphia. The National Museum of American Jewish History installed signage quoting a letter that Washington wrote in 1790 to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island. The excerpt reinforces the museum's present-day promise to be a safe space for all.

Announcement date: December 28, 2016

"Happily the Government of the United States...gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." —George Washington

Location: facing Independence Mall

Learn more: religiousfreedom.nmajh.org

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

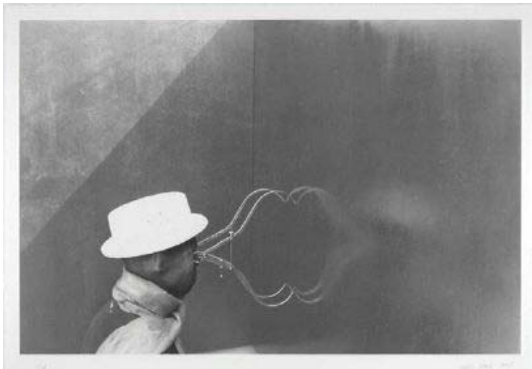
Though he is widely known for his still-life renderings of fruit and flowers, Donald Sultan took on the flip side of the spectrum in his art. His so-called "Disaster Paintings" are ominous visions of industrial fixtures collapsing into catastrophe. As shown in a traveling exhibition now at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Sultan's dark series exposes the vulnerable underbelly of modern culture.

Title: "Donald Sultan: The Disaster Paintings"

Tour: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, February 19–April 23, 2017;
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, May 26–September 4, 2017;
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, September 23–December 31, 2017;
Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, January 24–May 13, 2018

Learn more: themodern.org/exhibitions/upcoming





Baltimore Museum of Art

Visions emerging from Africa today are gathered in the Baltimore Museum of Art. "Shifting Views: People and Politics in Contemporary African Art" is the museum's first exhibition of its collection of contemporary African art. Seven cutting-edge artists each offer a distinct perspective on their homeland and its diaspora.

Dates: December 18, 2016–June 18, 2017

Artists: David Goldblatt, Gavin Jantjes, William Kentridge, Julie Mehretu, Senam Okudzeto, Robin Rhode, and Diane Victor

Media: photographs, prints, and drawings

Learn more: artbma.org/exhibitions/shifting-views



Gadsden Arts Center and Museum

Once lumped in with folk or outsider art, Southern vernacular art takes the spotlight in "FOUND: Vernacular Art and Gee's Bend Quilts." The genre, around since the 1930s, encompasses work created in response to artists' lives and surroundings. In its exhibition, the Gadsden Arts Center and Museum emphasizes Floridians' contributions to this group.

Dates: January 13–March 25, 2017

Location: Quincy, Florida

Partners: Florida Humanities Council, VisitFlorida, Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, Hill Collection, and Collection of William Arnett

Learn more: gadsdenarts.org/exhibitions.aspx



Andy Warhol Museum

A new audio guide allows people across abilities to appreciate the art of Warhol. Out Loud, a free app on the artist's life and work, makes the Andy Warhol Museum more accessible to all. Location-based content and zoomable text are available for those who are blind or with limited vision, complemented by tactile reproductions of select artworks in the galleries.

Launch date: October 25, 2016

Location: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Partner: Innovation Studio, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh

Learn more: warhol.org/connect/mobile



Smart Museum of Art

Defying its definition, the notion of "classicism" has never been fixed or even widely agreed upon. "Classicisms" at the Smart Museum of Art examines the evolution and interpretations of principles linked with ancient Greece and Rome. Seventy works break down a misunderstood concept and often fraught history.

Dates: February 16–June 11, 2017

Location: University of Chicago

Media: paintings, sculpture, plaster replicas, and works on paper

Learn more: smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/classicisms



New Museum Los Gatos

As the result of a US government push in 1952, thousands of American Indians moved from reservations to cities. Today, more than 70 percent of Native Americans live in urban environments. The New Museum Los Gatos explores this seismic shift through documents, ephemera, and personal recollections of those who lived through it.

Dates: November 4, 2016–June 25, 2017

Location: Los Gatos, California

Title: “Cement Prairie: The History and Legacy of the 1952 American Indian Urban Relocation Program”

Partners: San Jose State University’s Anthropology Department, Muwekma Ohlone tribe, National Archives, Bancroft Library, Indian Health Center, photographer Ilka Hartmann, and notable Bay Area American Indian community members



National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum

The motor house and the 120” rolling mill—two historic buildings that once produced steel—are now part of the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum. Long since they contributed to the World War II effort to manufacture ships and submarines, the structures now provide more than four acres of space for the museum’s exhibitions and programming.

Announcement date: November 21, 2016

Location: Coatesville, Pennsylvania

Donor: ArcelorMittal

Learn more: steelmuseum.org/press



Whaling Museum

Two new experiences at the Whaling Museum transport visitors onto the sea and back in time. “If I Were a Whaler” immerses families in life aboard a 19th-century whaling vessel. “Thar She Blows! Whaling History of Long Island” revisits an era when Yankee Whaling was one of the country’s integral commercial industries—and encourages guests to help protect the whales today.

Location: Cold Spring Harbor, New York

Experiences: raise a sail, tie a bowline knot, build a whaleship, and compare harpoon designs

Learn more: cshwhalingmuseum.org/exhibits.html



Glensheen Mansion

Visitors can view the Glensheen Mansion in a new light thanks to Minnesota Power. A grant from the utility company has allowed the historic house to swap its 436 bulbs for Edison LEDs. Along with saving on energy consumption and costs, the replacements enhance the home’s century-old fixtures.

Location: Lake Superior, Duluth, Minnesota

Size: 39 rooms, 27,000 square feet

Energy savings: 75 percent

Learn more: glensheen.org



Los Alamos History Museum

Examinations of the Manhattan Project and the Cold War are among the features of the Los Alamos History Museum since its grand reopening late last year. A multiyear project culminated with all new exhibitions and more space: the museum has expanded into the Hans Bethe House, named for the Nobel Prize-winning astrophysicist who once lived there.

Reopening date: December 30, 2016

Location: Los Alamos, New Mexico

Budget: \$2.1 million

Partner: Quatrefoil Associates

Palm Springs Art Museum

For many, the term “abstract expressionist” may not immediately call female artists to mind. The Palm Springs Art Museum aims to change that with the first exhibition to gather works by 12 women of this movement. More than 50 paintings bring these underappreciated creators to the fore.

Dates: February 18–May 28, 2017

Title: “Women of Abstract Expressionism”

Artists: Mary Abbott, Jay DeFeo, Elaine de Kooning, Perle Fine, Helen Frankenthaler, Sonia Gechtoff, Judith Godwin, Grace Hartigan, Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, Deborah Remington, and Ethel Schwabacher

Partner: curated by Gwen Chanzit, Denver Art Museum



Gibbes Museum of Art

Born in 1955 in Savannah, West Fraser has depicted some of the most exquisite landscapes on the planet—yet he always returns home. The Gibbes Museum of Art celebrates the artist’s ongoing devotion to the American Southeast in “Painting the Southern Coast: The Art of West Fraser.” Some 25 of his paintings reveal his appreciation for the streets and shores of Georgia and South Carolina.

Dates: January 28–April 30, 2017

Location: Charleston, South Carolina

Accompanying publication: *Painting the Southern Coast*, University of South Carolina Press

Learn more: gibbesmuseum.org/exhibitions

In Praise of Empowerment

Tips to inspire, retain, and energize your staff.

By Pauline Eversmann

Like anyone else who has taught or mentored young professionals, I have seen them enter the field, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, only to find them standing at my office door a few months or maybe a few years later looking shell-shocked. The realities have not only set in, they have taken a toll. And the toll is so high that these bright, committed, and talented people are reassessing their commitment to a museum career.

The same is true of colleagues who have been in the field for years. When we get together at conferences or via e-mail exchanges or phone calls, they confess to thinking seriously about leaving the field altogether. The fun has gone out of the job; what used to inspire them now seems an awful lot like the sheer drudgery they always associated with the for-profit world. And so, the question inevitably arises: what, if anything, can we do to stem the drain of talent from museums?

I believe that empowerment and mentorship have crucial roles to play in both retaining and energizing staff. I would like to share with you a few principles of empowerment that have stood me in good stead over the years.

Invest in Your Staff

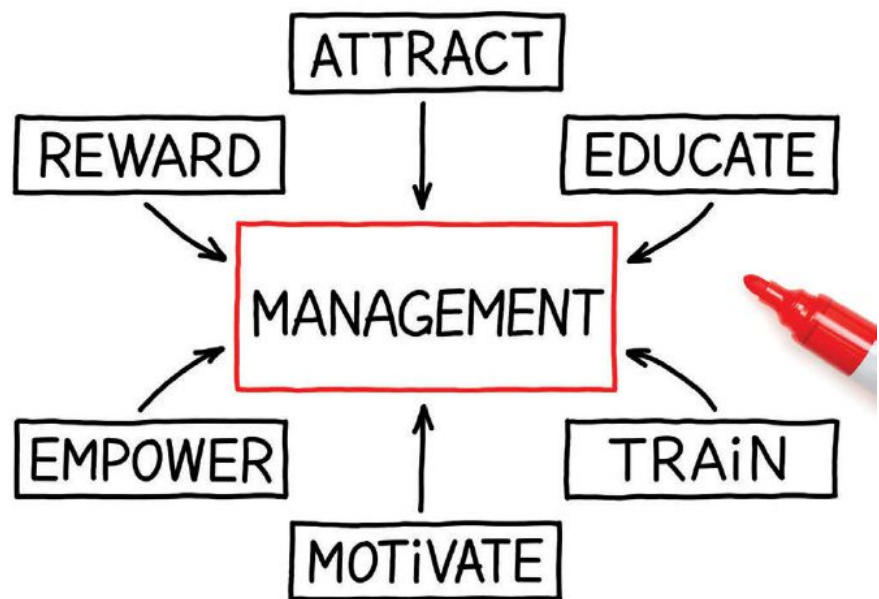
We all know in our heart of hearts, even if we often forget, that any institution's most valuable resources are human. Without dedicated staff, we could not attend to that most important task of any museum, namely, serving the public. And yet, caring for our human resources often falls to the bottom of the pile as we deal with more "pressing issues."

"Invest" does not necessarily mean money. Often, a personal investment of

time is more important. I have always thought that the three most valuable management tools I possess are an electric tea kettle, a box of Kleenex, and an open door. You never know when

did it work? If it did, then so much the better.

Equally important, don't forget to congratulate them when things go well and find something positive to say



taking the time to listen, to brainstorm, to "buck up," or to counsel can make all the difference in a staff member's commitment to the organization.

Trust in Your Colleagues

Whether with a new employee or a new group of colleagues, I have always started with the assumption that these are smart people who have a lot to offer. Until proven otherwise, I will tend to my garden while they tend to theirs.

In other words, don't assume that you can do someone else's job better than they can. They might do it differently than you would, and the results might not be exactly what you would have wanted, but the bottom line is,

when things fall apart. I'm not being Pollyanna-ish here; I'm talking about simple, everyday acts of kindness.

Hire Nice

This mantra was taught to me many years ago by one of the wisest women I know, and it has stood me in good stead time and time again. If you are hiring a staff member or serving on an interview committee, never underestimate the importance of finding someone who sees the good in others, genuinely likes people, and is eager to learn. This applies even if the person's resume is a degree or two short of the ideal.

Train Your People

Having "hired nice," you now need to train. Training takes time, commitment, and patience. But like so many other things in life that take time and patience, it will return rewards to you tenfold.

Much training can be done in-house, utilizing the talents of fellow staff members. At other times, training means getting out of your own institution so you can begin to see the forest instead of just the trees. Attending or sending staff to a conference, a seminar, or another museum to see an exhibition or participate in a program can be one of the most important investments you make.

That kind of training sometimes takes more than time; it may also take money. And money, as we all know, is one of the hardest things to come by in museums. But you can find it if you look carefully. Produce one less brochure, schedule one less guide, double up in hotel rooms, bring food from home to eat on the train, but DON'T cut out funding for staff's continuing education.

Get to Know Your Staff

I'm not talking about "book" knowledge here; I'm talking about people smarts. Take the time to get to know your staff and colleagues. That sounds simple, but in the rush of the workday, people often don't simply stop and talk on a personal level. To do so, of course, is counter to all the management books, which talk about time wasted at water coolers and copy machines. I say, "Three cheers for the copier! Bring back water coolers!"

Casual conversation is how you can learn much of what is worth knowing about your colleagues. You'll come to recognize personality types, learning styles, work habits, preferences, dislikes, etc. If you are a manager, meet

with your staff on a regular basis, and don't always have a full agenda. Leave time for a discussion of that most important question: "How are you doing?"

Feed the Soul

Create a time and place for creativity on a regular basis. Creativity is what drew most of us to this profession in the first place, yet it is often the first thing to be put on hold as schedules become overloaded.

Schedule a bimonthly brown-bag lunch where you can get together and discuss a topic of importance to the field (after all, everyone has to eat, and nowhere is it written that it has to be at

feel good when you can chart your progress. At the next annual retreat, you can begin by celebrating the ways in which you've accomplished last year's plan.

Bring People Together

Two minds are better than one. In fact, multiple minds can equal one great mind.

I am an inveterate believer in the power of teams. No one has a perfect mind, but bring a group of people together and chances are you will have both right- and left-brained people, those who focus on the big picture and those who love the details. Everyone has a unique talent, skill, or perspective they bring to the table. Working together, you can create miracles.

Laugh a Lot


Laughter, like music, soothes the soul and heals the heart. Years ago, I read this inscription over a doorway in my university's library: "He was born with the gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad." I since have learned that the quotation comes from a novel (later made into a movie) called *Scaramouche*. But I have never forgotten that quote,

and I've tried to live by it.

A smile, a laugh, or a quip can break up the tensest situation and restore equilibrium. Being able to laugh at yourself and your foibles is a rare gift and puts others at ease. In the darkest moment, there is always the potential for a smile lurking somewhere in the background; you just have to search around a little bit to find it. A staff member once told me that she knew all was right with the world when she heard my laugh cascading down the hallway.

Stay in Touch with Your Public

Isn't that why most of us got into this work in the first place? If you are a

 I have always thought that the three most valuable management tools I possess are an electric tea kettle, a box of Kleenex, and an open door."

your desk). Volunteer to share an article or book that has resonated with you and been a source of renewal. Devote one staff meeting a month to a relevant topic—a new development, a controversial article—or just catch up on each other's work.

Hold an annual retreat, scheduling it far in advance to make sure calendars are cleared. Choose a topic, develop an agenda, and have someone take notes. Build breaks and fun time into that agenda—a long lunch, an after-hours party. Most importantly, leave with a plan of action. This will allow you to keep your eye on the prize when you're getting pulled in twenty different directions later. It also will make everyone

supervisor, make interacting with the public part of your staff's job descriptions. And whether or not you have people reporting to you, make the public an essential part of your own day.

Schedule regular opportunities to interface with visitors. Lead a tour, spend time listening in the galleries, or personally invite people to fill out a survey. Or, just stand in the reception area to welcome visitors as they enter and engage them in conversation when they leave.

This advice is not rocket science, but we all know how the day-to-day routine can become overwhelming and shoulder everything else aside. However, nothing is more fulfilling than working directly with your public. It reminds you of why you chose this profession.

Renew, Reflect, Recharge

There is within each of us a special talent. It is supremely worth the effort to figure out what that talent is and nurture it. Accept it as a gift and use it. Don't waste time yearning after talents you don't have.

Be kind to yourself. No one is perfect. Every day, we make mistakes, and if we're smart, we'll learn from them and move on.

Finally...

Most important of all, remind yourself and your colleagues on a daily basis that your job and how well you do it can change someone's life for the better. This is true no matter what your job is. That's the power of museums: they offer our visitors, as well as ourselves, the opportunity to renew, reflect, and recharge.

Never take that ability lightly. Use it wisely, and use it well.

Pauline Eversmann retired in 2007 from Winterthur Museum as director of library, conservation, and academic programs. In addition, Eversmann was director of public programs at Winterthur, internship coordinator for the University of Delaware Museum Studies Program, and a former chair of the AAM Committee on Museum Professional Training (COMPT), one of 22 AAM professional networks. In retirement, she focuses on writing, spending lots of time with family, staying as healthy as possible, and occasionally dipping her toe back into the museum world by volunteering and consulting on a limited basis.



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Unpacking “Gravitas”

A museum director reflects on gender inequities in the museum field.

By Kaywin Feldman

Kaywin Feldman's remarks during the general session of the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo were considered by many to be the highlight of the conference.

As I conclude my two-year term as the Alliance's board chair, I want to share a few observations that are very important to me both personally and professionally.

I became a museum director at the age of 28. After I'd been in the job for about three years, I interviewed at a slightly larger museum in Texas. During the meeting, the board chair said to me, “You are far too young and far too female to have a curator ever report to you.”

A few years ago, I related that story to the then-director of this Texas museum, a strapping 63-year-old former football player. Even though I had been director of two larger art museums for many years, when I told him the story, he said, “Well, that's good advice. It's probably true.”

I'd like to speak to you today about power, influence, and responsibilities from a personal perspective...I have encountered “far too young and far too female” for most of my 22-year career as a museum director.

I'm very grateful to the three museum boards that hired me as their director. These boards bucked the trends in hiring me and giving me a chance. I love my job, and I feel so fortunate to have had such a rewarding career.

I've done a fair amount of interviewing to get to where I am, and I heard the exact same concern every time I was not hired. Every time I was hired, this is what they always said: “We're worried that she doesn't have gravitas.”



I'd like to unpack “gravitas” for a moment. It was one of the key Roman virtues, along with “pietas,” “dignitas,” and “virtus” (which, incidentally, comes from “vir,” the Latin word for “man”).

“Gravitas” signifies heft, seriousness, solemnity, and dignity. It is weighty and replete with importance. I have come to realize that it is also subconscious code for “male.”

In fact, the dictionary gives the following two examples of “gravitas” in a sentence:

- A post for which he has the expertise and the gravitas.
- A comic actress who lacks the gravitas for dramatic roles.

Funny that the negative example of “gravitas” is female.

Urban Dictionary defines the word as “a part of the male anatomy,” going on to say, for example, that the few female news anchors who are thought to possess gravitas are often assumed to be lesbians or described as shrill and therefore do not last long in their

positions. Instead, American news anchorwomen are often [described as] “perky.”

Please understand that my beef isn't with the word “gravitas” itself; it is with the cowardly discrimination that hides behind the use of the word. It's this [line of] thinking:

- Women don't have gravitas.
- Leaders must have gravitas.
- Women can't be leaders.

We recently completed a branding process at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, working with the design firm Pentagram. We had been in the fun and engaging process of fully defining and expressing our brand for the previous four years. Pentagram studied us and responded, “Your full name is too long. Luckily, your acronym is pronounceable. You're just saying [it] wrong. Instead of being MIA—Missing in Action or the Miami International Airport—you should be ‘Mia,’ which means ‘mine,’ ‘my own,’ or ‘beloved’ in eight languages.”

That was pretty compelling, but our team was concerned. At first, nobody articulated it. But the discomfort derived from Mia being a female name. Finally, one of our trustees voiced it: he didn't like Mia because "it is not strong. It's not classical or smart. It's just not serious." I pointed out that if our name were spelled "SAM" or "STEW," he wouldn't have had the same reaction. What he was clearly saying was that the name—a female name—didn't have "gravitas."

A recent *New York Times* article noted that when a profession that is largely male transitions to largely female, salaries go down significantly, even after adjusting for education, experience, and geography. The implication is that the job just can't be as serious, challenging, or sophisticated if it can be done by women.

When I read it, I realized that this was one of the main reasons many boards are reluctant to hire women

directors. Deep down, they fear that it would demean and debase their museum—and the profession—if a woman can do it.

In the art museum field, about 45 percent of museum directors are female. That's great. But among the 17 largest encyclopedic art museums, with budgets over \$30 million, there are only two of us. A colleague noted that the Association of Art Museum Directors is replete with foreign accents, noting that art museums are now importing men from abroad.

I promise you that boards don't explicitly decide that they want to hire a man; I know they have the best of intentions and are committed to diversity. But they think a director has to exude silver-haired, baritone solemnity, and therefore they unwittingly rule out female applicants. This sort of underlying sexism is so much more insidious even than the trustee who once said directly to me, "Things would go a lot

better if you would do as you're told."

Again, I am deeply grateful for all of the opportunity that I have had in my career, however hard I had to fight for it. I'm one of the lucky ones. Of course, I believe that leadership qualities are equally found in women as in men, even if they can look and sound a bit different. I feel the responsibility, however, to call it out, and I urge all of you to use your influence to make sure that our society's power structures no longer hide behind implicit discrimination and bias.

Kaywin Feldman has been the Nivin and Duncan MacMillan Director and President of the Minneapolis Institute of Art since 2008. She serves on the boards of National Arts Strategies, the Chipstone Foundation, and AAM. She is a past president of the Association of Art Museum Directors and a past chair of AAM's board. You can find Kaywin on Twitter: @kaywinfeldman.

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Greater Impact through Board Advocacy

How one museum's advocacy led to increased funding and community support.

Strong board leadership is not just about checks and balances; it is about creating the circumstances that will allow our missions to be achieved. Advocacy is essential for museums to maintain financial sustainability. This case study is from the pages of *Stand for Your Mission, The Power of Board Advocacy: A Discussion Guide for Museum Trustees*. Produced by AAM in partnership with BoardSource, it provides a discussion guide for trustees on the importance—and impact—of board advocacy.

The Vision

Since 1933, the Massillon Museum (formerly the Baldwin Museum) was envisioned as a place that would bring “immeasurable joy” to the city of Massillon, Ohio, and the region. It has certainly lived up to that promise. The museum is keenly attuned to the needs of and constantly striving to reach deeply into its community.

The museum has a diverse permanent collection of more than 100,000 artworks and artifacts, most of local and regional significance, and it has been accredited by AAM since 1972. The Massillon Museum's mission is to collect, preserve, and exhibit art and artifacts to enrich the Massillon community through education and experience. The museum's strategic plan is threefold: to be the cultural center of the community, a key destination of cultural enrichment, and a respected member of the museum field.

The Opportunity

In 1996, the museum moved to a new location, and the board—recognizing the potential for growth—secured a first



right of refusal on one of the adjacent properties. As an anchor tenant in Massillon's downtown, the museum was credited for much of the city's revitalization.

After consulting with the board, staff, guests, and community

leaders over several years, the board made the decision to enlarge the footprint of the museum to meet the Massillon community's growing needs. The museum envisioned an expansion and renovation to add approximately 15,500 square feet of space to the existing 29,000-square-foot museum. The plan involved a new partnership with the Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club and the Paul E. Brown Museum.

The Strategy

The board and staff are empowered to advocate at the local, state, and national levels. The executive director chairs the advocacy committee for the Ohio Museums Association, and the museum has been represented each year at AAM's Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, DC.

“Board members are advocates in a number of ways, from attending legislative breakfasts and state and regional conferences to soliciting memberships and going door-to-door during our levy campaign,” said Alexandra Nicholis Coon, the Massillon Museum's executive director. “They are truly a working board and an amazing group of leaders.”

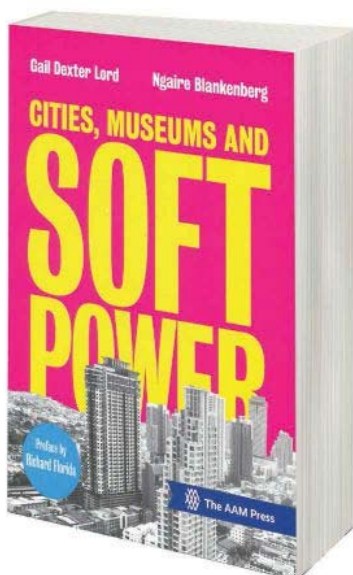
Board members keep their elected officials informed and in tune to the fact that the Massillon Museum is the downtown community's keystone. Public officials—including congressional representatives, state senators, and the Massillon mayor—are frequent visitors of the museum, and the board plays an



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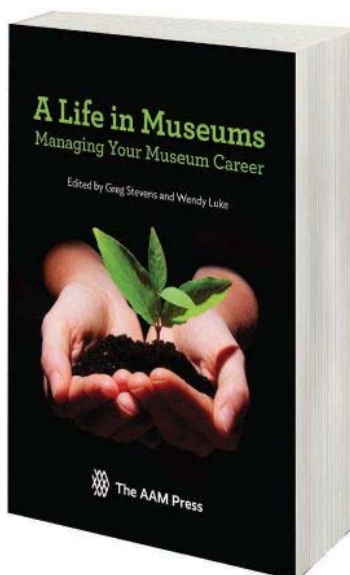
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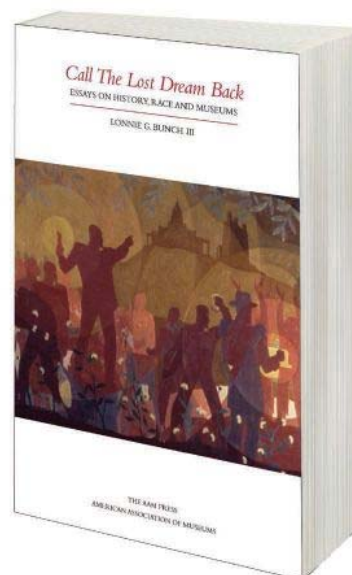
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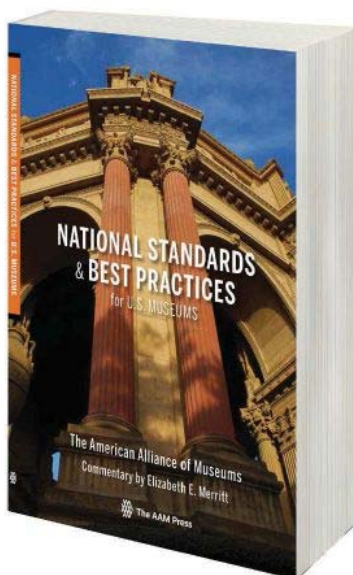
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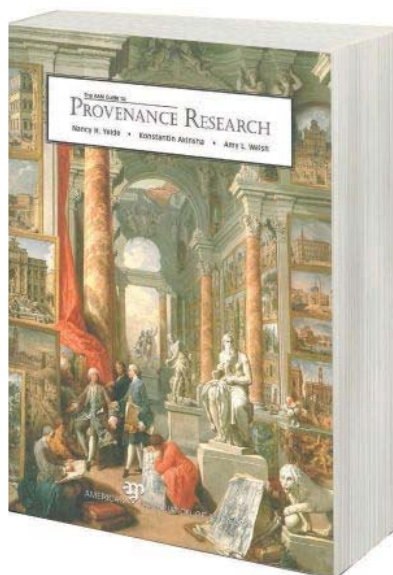
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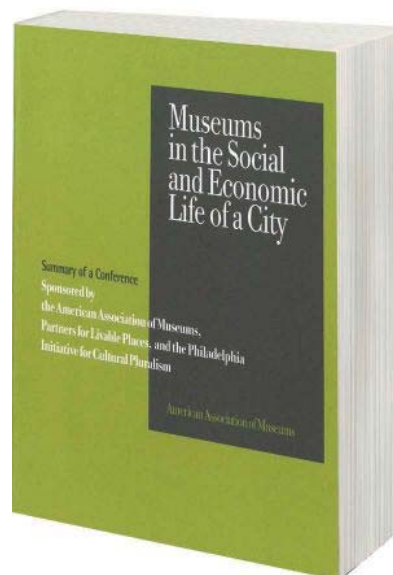
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active role in hosting these visits. The museum works closely with the mayor's office to organize special events and educational programs, and the City of Massillon maintains the museum's landscaping.

The Result

The museum provides free admission to all, and nearly 25,000 visitors are welcomed each year. An additional 8,000 children and adults are served annually through outreach programs. As part of its mission to the people of Massillon, the museum hosts an annual thank you to the community in the form of an island party. This event attracted 2,540 visitors in 2015, including several public officials.

With its stated goal of being the community's cultural center, the museum hosts annual juried shows of Stark County artists and sponsors brown-bag lunch lectures, classes, and workshops.

It also holds the Artful Living program, which immerses 1,000 preschool children weekly in the visual arts, literature, music, drama, and dance.

While it is a community-based and supported museum, the Massillon Museum's reach goes far beyond the city. The museum has gained a reputation for excellence within the professional realm on a number of fronts.

- The museum has secured numerous government grants, with board members playing a key role. One of these grants, funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Ohio's Cultural Facilities Commission, went toward a renovation of the museum's collections storage facility to include state-of-the-art environmental controls and cabinetry.
- Since 1988, Massillon voters have approved an operating levy for the museum—the only one of its kind in Ohio—which provides approximately

60 percent of annual operating funds. Membership has increased steadily since 2010.

- The museum has received an ArtsinStark operating grant since 2008, and the Ohio Arts Council has regularly supported the museum with funding for operations and programming. In addition, for nine consecutive years, the National Endowment for the Arts has awarded the museum a Big Read grant.
- Most recently, the state of Ohio's capital budget included a \$1.5 million allocation for the Massillon Museum's expansion project. Board members played a key role in facilitating the state's endorsement of this effort.

To obtain a copy of *Stand for Your Mission, The Power of Board Advocacy: A Discussion Guide for Museum Trustees*, visit aam-us.org/advocacy/stand-for-your-mission.



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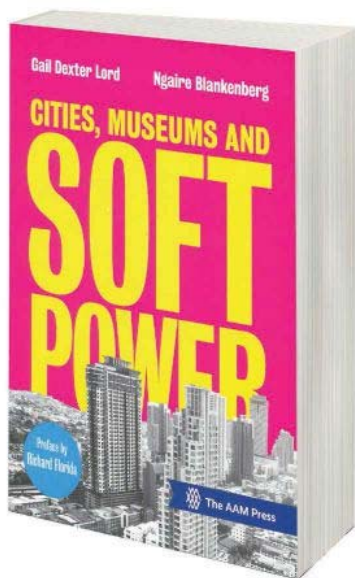
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Museum Leadership, Organizational Readiness, and Institutional Transformation

This case study was a part of a series on museum leadership, developed for the career and leadership management workshop for participants in the International Program, held at the AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in May, 2016. This program was made possible through the generous support of the Getty Foundation.

By Marsha Semmel

The Case

How does a new, untested director transform a static and financially challenged organization into a dynamic and relevant museum? By reshaping organizational culture, emphasizing values, taking risks, connecting to diverse audiences, and reminding all stakeholders about “what it means to be human.”

The Leader

Micah Parzen had never considered a career in museums before becoming the chief executive officer of the San Diego Museum of Man (SDMoM) in August 2010. Although he held a Ph.D. in anthropology from Case Western Reserve University, and had conducted extensive fieldwork in the Navajo Nation, Parzen earned a law degree and pursued a legal career, eventually becoming a partner in a San Diego law firm. Parzen served on the boards of the San Diego Volunteer Lawyers Program and of ElderHelp (an organization serving senior citizens in San Diego), which he led as its president for two years.

Parzen’s law firm had had a longstanding association with SDMoM, with a partner usually occupying a seat on the museum’s board. In 2010, as he was being courted for this position in a meeting with the museum’s interim director and two museum board members, Parzen experienced a career-clarifying “light bulb moment.” “I had a passion for anthropology as a philosophical orientation to the world, and the job [of director] resonated with my values,” said Parzen. “I needed a new path to nurture my soul.” He put himself into the director search. Although he had only a “raw and inchoate vision” for the museum’s

future, it built on his passionate belief in the power of an anthropology museum to build community through increased understanding, and it led the board to offer Parzen the job. This meant leaving a firm where he had just been made partner, a profession he knew well, and a hefty paycheck. He took the helm of an institution whose future success was anything but certain.

The Museum

SDMoM is situated in Balboa Park, site of the Panama-California Exposition, designed to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal in 1915. The central exhibit of the exposition, "The Story of Man through the Ages," was assembled under the direction of noted archaeologist Edgar Lee Hewett, who became the first director of the museum when it was created after the exposition's closing. Following World War II, the museum began to focus its collections on the peoples of the Western Americas. Collections grew substantially over the decades, and today contain nearly two million individual objects, including important ancient Egyptian antiquities and objects representing Mesoamerican civilizations.

In 2010, when Parzen assumed the directorship, the museum was in a period of transition. Its finances had been in deficit mode for many years.

The departure of the previous director had triggered negative press and the resignation of some of the museum's trustees. Under the stewardship of an interim director, the museum was facing a difficult financial situation, no schedule for future exhibitions, and no strategy for sustainability.

Beginning the Transformation

Parzen acknowledged he was untested in his new role. Although he had never been a CEO, Parzen's service as board president of ElderHelp had given him significant nonprofit leadership experience. Even more important, from his perspective, was his leadership on various soccer teams, including the Division 1 team at the University of California, Berkeley. Those soccer days taught Parzen such skills as "digging deep into your reserves of energy, even when you think you have no more to give," inspiring the people around you, and functioning as part of an effective team.

At the museum's helm, Parzen's first order of business was to assess the current situation, craft an emergency budget plan, and create a new three-year strategic plan with a revised mission, vision, values, and springboard for future programs and initiatives. He secured the museum's status as an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, linking the museum with the Smithsonian brand and logo,

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some 200 national museum affiliates, and access to new resources, including traveling exhibitions and programs.

The new strategic plan, adopted in January 2012, steered the museum away from traditional artifact-based exhibitions to more relevant themes and experiences, beginning with a targeted focus on the tourists who visit Balboa Park each year. All existing programs were subject to cancellation; if there was no demonstrable ROI (return on investment), the program was eliminated. Parzen began to rebuild the board and form a new staff team, recruiting people with new sets of skills to achieve the new goals.

During 2011–12, two exhibitions provided turning points. In 2011, Parzen leased “Race: Are We So Different,” a traveling exhibition developed by the American Anthropological Association. Parzen found it relatively easy to raise foundation money to support this timely exhibition; it was popular with visitors, and it made a clear impact on visitor understanding. One year later, the museum displayed “Ramp It Up: Skateboard Culture in Native America,” an exhibition that originated at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and was touring via the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service. To make the exhibition more participatory, Parzen challenged his

staff to enhance it with a functioning half-pipe (a skateboard ramp) within the museum. This would serve as the platform for professional skateboarding demonstrations as well as regular public “free skate” sessions. From Parzen’s perspective, this was a pivotal moment: “We learned that we could take risks, even when we didn’t know what would happen.” Other exhibitions exploring women’s empowerment, people with special needs, human rights, and “Beerology” followed. These exhibitions tested—and demonstrated—the museum’s new mission as “inspiring human connections,” bringing the human story up-to-date with explorations of contemporary, relevant, engaging, and often contested, themes. Attendance, revenue, and philanthropic support began to climb.

A New Challenge: *Border Crossing:* Changing the Conversation about Undocumented Immigration

In early 2011, representatives from all Balboa Park institutions, as well as other influential members of the community, held a two-day charrette to plan for the park’s 2015 centennial. In the brainstorming that occurred, Parzen proposed a participatory program that would deal with contemporary immigration. Given San Diego’s proximity to the Mexican border and contemporary national and local debates, the



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people in the room recognized the audacity of the idea. Nonetheless, there was much enthusiasm. The new project, christened *Border Crossing*, was inspired by Parzen's knowledge of (and participation in) *Follow the North Star*, a program developed by Conner Prairie Interactive History Park in Fishers, Indiana. In that program, participants assume the roles of escaped slaves in early 19th century America and must evade their captors in an outdoor experience that uses the various historic structures and setting of the living history park.

Over the next two years, *Border Crossing* began to take shape as a signature program that would take two universal human attributes—migration and boundary creating—and situate them within the context of today's immigration debates. Parzen noted, "We experience this clash of universal impulses in a very particular way here in San Diego, at one of the most-crossed borders in the world." *Border Crossing* would offer various perspectives, and occasion facilitated dialogue and discovery about immigration.

Parzen began working with John Fanestil, who had been involved with Friendship Park (El Parque de la Amistad) for many years. Friendship Park is an historic meeting place on the US/Mexico border. In the United States, Friendship Park is inside California's Border Field State Park; in Mexico, El Parque de la Amistad sits beneath the famous lighthouse ("El Faro") in Playas de Tijuana. As its website notes, "For generations people of good will from both nations have gathered here to visit with family and friends 'across the line.'" Fanestil helped Parzen create an advisory committee of community leaders, scholars, US Border Patrol officials, and others. According to Parzen, "Around the diverse table of this committee, we were creating and holding the space that we wanted the program to inspire: civil, if sometimes heated, conversations and dialogue."

Parzen also forged a partnership with the nearby Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse, "dedicated to advancing theater as an art form and as a vital social, moral, and political platform." One of its successful programs, *Without Walls*, took performance beyond the boundaries of a traditional theater space and out into the community. The theater helped recruit a noted Latino playwright and a Latino director who would create the program script and oversee the experience. Recognizing the need for expertise in facilitating the post-experience participant dialogues, Parzen also partnered with the National Conflict Resolution Center, an organization dedicated to "empowering people and transforming cultures" and specializing in "collaborative dispute resolution and conflict management."

Thus, *Border Crossing* was to be a collaborative, vivid, first-person, "site-specific theater program" that would "immerse people in the experience of



crossing the border illegally from Mexico into the United States." Promotional materials described the experience in which "[a]udiences will encounter actors portraying migrants attempting to cross the US/Mexico border, using the hidden spaces in the Museum of Man and the canyons of Balboa Park as a stage. In their journey, they will interact with migrants, 'coyotes' [In border terminology a coyote is the shadowy figure who guides illegal immigrants, usually for a hefty price, past immigration authorities and into the US], Border Patrol agents, loved ones on both sides of the border, and more." After traveling through this environment, participants would engage in a facilitated 30-minute debriefing session. The museum raised \$125,000 for the project, largely to support the director, playwright, travel, and other developmental costs. This was a well-publicized, highly visible project.

The Decision to Cancel the Program

As project planning proceeded, problems and tensions began to surface. There was no single point person to wrangle the complex and collaborative project. Communication, coordination, schedules, and interpretation posed challenges; and the playwright became involved with other career opportunities that conflicted with the project. There was no existing infrastructure in place to accommodate the effort. The project raised sensitive issues that the museum had never confronted before. The program, initially planned for 2015, had its launch delayed to 2016, with the date change announced at a large stakeholder meeting.

The schedule change created additional challenges, with other key project personnel running into scheduling conflicts and needing to withdraw.



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In addition, debates ensued about how many voices and perspectives could authentically be conveyed in the program. Unlike the Conner Prairie program, which dealt, albeit powerfully, with an episode in the past, *Border Crossing* was wading into current controversial issues. As the project evolved, some of the proposed perspectives were eliminated from the evolving script, creating tensions among some stakeholders. Working together with the program's Latino playwright and Latino director, Parzen and his team decided to shift the emphasis of the program. The original plan was to present a variety of perspectives, including immigrants, Border Patrol agents, and ranchers. Going forward, the program would focus on the diversity of perspectives among immigrants themselves at various stages of the border crossing experience. The team's decision was based on the recognition that the media-dominated narrative about immigration typically minimizes the perspective of immigrants. This reflected the museum's desire to "go deep" rather than "go wide," with a more meaningful result in mind.

In late 2015, these tensions took their toll on the project. Some stakeholders, including some trustees, weren't comfortable with the idea of emphasizing immigrant perspectives over giving equal time to those of non-immigrants. Without a clear path for successfully navigating these mounting tensions, Parzen and his team made the extraordinarily difficult decision to halt production, rather than forcing an institutional implosion. Parzen met individually with the key partners, supporters, and community members before sharing the news more broadly, via a March 18, 2016 e-mail, to some 100 stakeholders. "We realized that we simply lacked the organizational readiness for such an ambitious project at this point in our institutional trajectory."

In this e-mail, Parzen noted, "While *Border Crossing* may not have come to fruition as we had hoped, the work we did on the program invaluable contributed to our understanding of who we are and

what we stand for as a museum. The lessons learned will serve us well as we continue to develop visitor experiences that don't shy away from difficult topics, but rather fully embrace them knowing that this is where our greatest growth always occurs." Parzen shared the e-mail—and many positive community responses to it—in one of his regular "Mission Moment Monday" e-mails to his board, continuing his policy of transparent, candid, and regular communication to staff, board, and community members.

Results and Consequences

Many of the lessons of *Border Crossing* have been incorporated into the museum's new master plan, approved by the board in February 2015. The comprehensive plan uses "contemporary and popular culture as a springboard for exploring the past, present and future of what it means to be human." Its goal is to "make positive change in the world." Its central metaphor is the "visitors' journey," drawing on the immersive experience envisioned in *Border Crossing*.

The plan emphasizes such organizational and individual qualities as "nimbleness, flexibility, innovation, experimentation, and an awareness of how our efforts, day-to-day, connect with our mission, vision, and values." It states that "world peace starts at home," focusing as much on organizational culture (internal transformation) as the museum's outward facing programs and experiences. It posits a "work culture that values calculated risks," and takes seriously the importance of hiring for values, adequate compensation, and financial transparency. The museum has purchased the "Race: Are We So Different" exhibition and frames it within today's national and community debates about racial inequities. The current board chair is Latino. Museum attendance continues to rise dramatically, admissions revenue has quadrupled since 2010, and staff and operating budget have doubled. The new plan emphasizes evaluation, outcome metrics, and targeted marketing to diverse audiences. Major efforts are underway in "de-colonizing the collections" and exploring the implications of the means by which some of the holdings were acquired. Most importantly, Parzen noted, "We're getting better prepared for dealing with these topics. We are better listeners. We can convene conversations; the community tells us how to get there. This [*Border Crossing*] experience has radically changed our efforts on inclusion and diversity, for staff and board."

Marsha Semmel is principal, Marsha Semmel Consulting; senior adviser, National Center for Science and Civic Engagement; faculty in New York's Bank Street College graduate-level Leadership in Museum Education program; and former interim director and deputy, Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).



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Small Frigate (HMS) by Thomas Mifflin, 1781



JOHN PAUL JONES

1747-1792 John Paul Jones is credited as America's first great naval hero. Born in Scotland, he was the son of a weaver. At age 14, he was sent to sea as a cabin boy. A promising career as a merchant sailor was cut short in 1773 when he killed a merchant sailor and was forced to flee to America, where he sailed Jones as his name. John Paul Jones returned to serve in the new Continental Navy as soon as the Revolution began in 1775.

Jones was promoted to the rank of captain and soon captured a number of British vessels and even sailed the English port of Whitby in 1778. His greatest victory came in September 1779 when, as captain of the Bonhomme Richard, he defeated two British warships off the coast of Great Britain. The Continental Navy was disbanded after the end of the Revolution, and Jones eventually ended up in Paris, where he died in 1792.

John Paul Jones
by Thomas Mifflin, 1781

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Case Study Response

By Wyona Lynch-McWhite



Micah Parzen uses his personal and professional experiences to transform his institution. While many skills are used, Parzen seems to model strategic agility, the ability to get personal, and to effectively communicate with various stakeholders. The ultimate decision to cancel the *Border Crossing* project connects with systems leadership. It resonates with any leader who has invested in a project with this type of collective leadership that seems to become uncontrollable. The various elements presented in this case study resonate with my past experiences, as so much of our current work (as museum leaders) is truly collaborative. The transformation of SDMOM's exhibition strategy and ultimately its mission was a process that evolved over several years. Parzen is simultaneously working on developing these new strategies, building collaborative partnerships, and communicating with the museum's internal and external communities.

This connects with my work (on a much smaller scale) to celebrate Fruitlands Centennial in 2014-15 at the Fruitlands Museum, in Harvard,

Massachusetts, where I served as executive director. While I had a museum background to help guide my efforts, Fruitlands had a past scandal and history of bad press, along with little or no future exhibition or strategic planning. Many collaborators wanted to be a part of the centennial. An array of proposals emerged for exhibitions, lectures, theatrical productions, concerts, and community events that were far bigger than the financial resources and planning timelines available when I arrived at the museum in 2012.

Strategic agility is the key for every leader and in that way, previous experience is no substitute for continuous learning. Just as Parzen had to understand his institution's past history while working to shape strategic direction moving forward, I had to quickly understand what my institution needed while working to develop plans. This process is most successful when you are able to communicate your efforts and are willing to engage in dialogue with potential partners.

The many meetings that I had with staff members, community leaders, and board committees did not always lead to a new initiative for the centennial. But the process of having these meetings, infused with an open spirit, helped develop the final twelve months of programming that were ultimately presented. Communication is not always harmonious with agreement, but it is essential for understanding. When we were not able to move forward with an

initiative, there was understanding around the decision. In our case, it was the theatrical productions and community events that focused on literature, which is a historical theme within our museum programming but not the centennial's focus. I found it personally difficult to not be able to move forward with a project that was beloved but impractical.

Our centennial celebration had four key goals. Each project had to support at least two of those goals or it didn't have the ROI (return on investment) we were striving for. Some of the metrics we used to measure the success of our efforts were the number of members, annual visitors, number of donors, and number of programs. These measures were quantifiable, but the overarching metric was a qualitative one around how people "felt" about the institution. A significant amount of work went into these efforts. The result of my leadership and our planning was a more dynamic and nimble institution.

Wyona Lynch-McWhite is vice president at Arts Consulting Group and former executive director of Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Massachusetts. She is the chair of the AAM Leadership and Management Professional Network (LMN) and a graduate of the Getty leadership program.

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Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Montgomery, Alabama



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Museum Directors on Mentorship and Their Professional Journeys

By Michael E. Shapiro

All museum directors started off as young people trying to find their way. Recently, in a series of interviews conducted for the book *Eleven Museums / Eleven Directors: Conversations on Art & Leadership*, art museum directors spoke candidly about their individual professional journeys. One consistent theme was the importance of mentorship and advice to young people. The following pages excerpt six of the directors' interviews.



THELMA GOLDEN

Director and Chief Curator, Studio Museum of Harlem

What are your thoughts about the field of art museum directors and women of color looking forward?

TG: This is a field that has really taken a look at itself to acknowledge that it does not look the way that those of us committed to this field, committed to its centrality in our culture, think it should look. The museum field generally—not just directors, but senior leadership—does not reflect the diversity of our culture. The museum field does not benefit from what it means to truly be diverse. I feel that for museums to fully exist and to actualize themselves in the 21st-century, they have to embrace diversity in its most complex and beautiful ways. That will only come with the commitment to both the idea and the practice. I know as a museum director who is a woman, and who is a person of color, that I can exist in this world with an incredible amount of support and perhaps some success because I was and am so profoundly mentored, advised, and supported throughout my career.

How would you counsel a young person to find her own path?

TG: The first thing I tell young people who want to do this work is to truly answer the question, “Why do you want to do this work?” The path will not be clear. It will not be easy. It will not follow a straight line. The why you want to do this work will inform your steps along the way. I often say that it is much more important to think about whom you are working for than where you are working. I say that I have worked at great institutions, but my relationships with the great institutions have been with the people at those institutions. Whom you work for has an incredible amount to do with your career and how it might progress.



MICHAEL GOVAN

Chief Executive Officer and Wallis Annenberg Director, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Who were your most important mentors?

MG: I have had so many mentors—I think about how many people it takes to teach one of us human beings. The amount of intelligence and experience poured inside a developing individual is endless. When I think of the people in art who poured ideas and caring into me, so many stand out. I think of Ed Epping, an artist and my most influential professor at Williams College Museum of Art, and of course Tom Krens...No one else could have exposed me to the world so quickly; he was a powerful influence especially because of his contrariness and his openness to new ideas.

There are philanthropists and business leaders who helped me along in forming an approach to work and life...art dealers have taught me...but artists always come to the top of the list. Walter De Maria, Lawrence Weiner, Fred Sandback, and architect Frank Gehry.

...Anne d'Harnoncourt made it safe to be a museum director—she knew how to run a great show and how to deal with all the politics around her and still do the beautiful Brancusi or Barnett Newman exhibitions, to keep the quality high and keep it all in balance. One of my huge mentors today, in the last ten years, has been Thelma Golden, director of the Studio Museum; she's a friend I'm always learning from....

What advice would you give to young people?

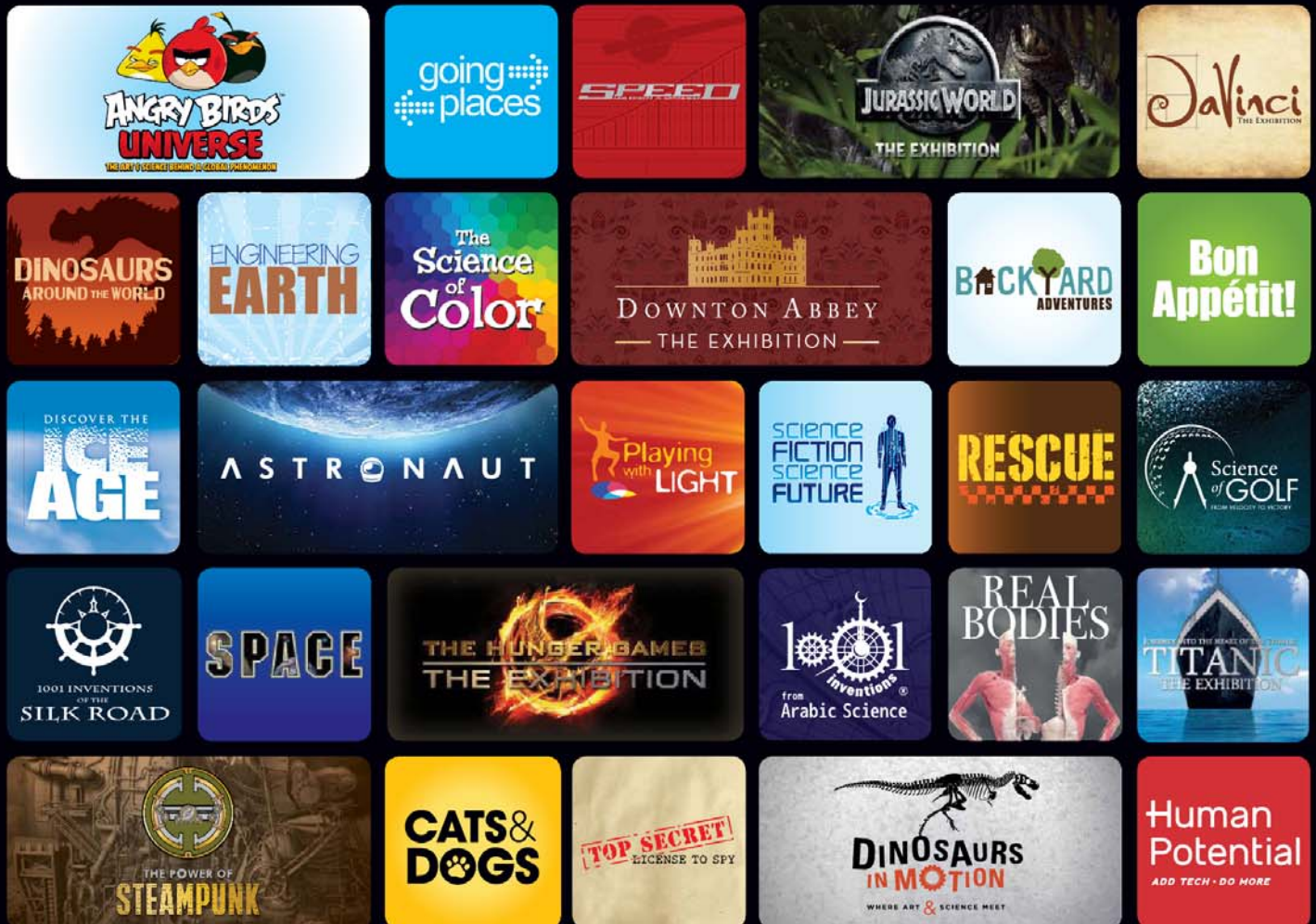
MG: The only advice I ever have is: just keep your eyes, ears, and senses wide open and absorb every single thing. That is the only advice I ever have. You never get too old to have mentors.

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GLENN LOWRY

Director, Museum of Modern Art

Who have been the key mentors for you and why?

GL: Milo Beach, who turned me on to art history, and Lane Faison, who was a legendary teacher at Williams College Museum of Art, were important mentors. When I got to know Lane, he was the director of the Williams College Museum of Art. He made me aware of the pleasures of working in a museum and maybe even some of the strategies involved in working with donors and learning how to engage people. Also George Hamilton who went from being just Ricky Hamilton's father, to being a teacher and ultimately one of the most distinguished museum directors in the country, and from whom I learned a great deal about how to think and how to apply the knowledge you get looking at art toward thinking about how to organize an institution.

Another was Frank Robinson, for whom I worked when I was a graduate student while he was the director of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design. Frank was the greatest possible mentor for a young curator, always full of energy, full of ideas. I am still very close to him....Frank made being a museum director exciting.

Oleg Grabar was my teacher at Harvard. He was such a deep intellect and taught me the value and the pleasure of research: how to ask questions. Once you learn how to ask questions, it doesn't really matter what the subject is. You can learn something from anything if you know what questions to ask. Those were the people who had the most impact, other than my mother, whose presence is always felt. In the best possible sense, she is an endlessly curious human being, and I think that curiosity is an important aspect of being an art historian or a director.

If you were giving counsel to a young person who would like to become an art museum director, what would you say?

GL: I don't think that becoming a director is the right goal: the goal is to become a great art historian, and along the way you either end up teaching, which is great. I would have been thrilled to end up as a teacher—or something else...The quest is to become a great art historian, and if you have the right temperament and skill set, maybe you get drawn into museum work, you get drawn to institutional leadership, but I would never recommend beginning by thinking you want to be a museum director.



ANN PHILBIN

Director, Hammer Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles

As a leading female museum director, what do you see in terms of more women becoming museum directors and artistic leaders in our country?

AP: I was so happy to hear of Anne Pasternak's appointment at the Brooklyn Museum. That is a major institution, and it made me so happy. I think it is inevitable that more women will become directors. That will happen. I think it comes down to the boards figuring out that women can be great leaders too—if not even better ones! Watch out, boys.

Have you mentored others?

AP: Maybe I have mentored people the way that Kathy Halbreich mentored me—without knowing it. Many people who have worked with me at the Hammer have gone on to big jobs and have thanked me for the things they have learned. They usually say something about the notion of embracing risk and going the creative route instead of the sure one. Those are the things that the Hammer tries to do and the lessons that I hope to share.

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**MATTHEW
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**Ann and Graham
Gund Director,
Museum of Fine
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**JULIÁN
ZUGAZAGOITIA**

**Director and CEO,
Nelson-Atkins
Museum of Art**

If you met a young person who wanted to become a museum director, what advice would you give?

MT: My first question would be, “Why? Why do you want to be a museum director?” I want to know if they understand they have to work really hard and connect the “why” to what they want to actually achieve in an ever-changing world. If they say it’s because they love art, then my answer is, become a university professor. If you love art, great! I love that answer. Go work in a university. Teach art. But if you want to work in an art museum, then the “why” is about that public space, meeting the public, creating civic value. If you can articulate that, then I would get into the conversation, “Do you know what the trends are? Are you prepared to engage some of those trends, like more user generated content?” I would get into that with them.

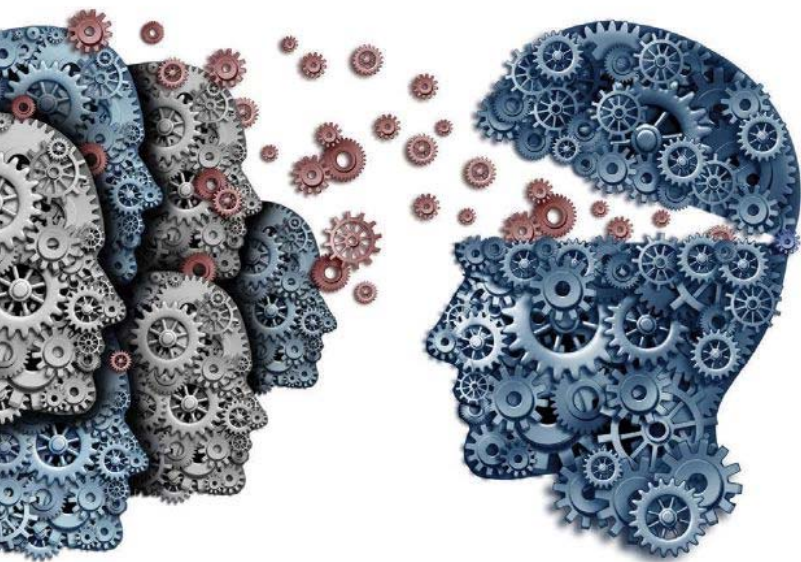
What advice would you give to a young person?

JZ: I was discussing this the other day with the fellows of the Mellon Summer Academy. I was encouraging them to do internships in all the fields that nurture the ecosystem of the arts. I never did the internships I would have liked because I started teaching—you have to earn money somehow or another, and for me it was teaching. So I never did what some of my friends at the Ecole du Louvre did—an internship in an art gallery or an auction house—but I think those would have been very important experiences too.

Like in a commercial gallery?

JZ: Yes, because that would have rounded out my experience. And it would be more meaningful today when the lines are more porous between the commercial galleries and the nonprofit museum... Or to spend one summer in an artist’s studio, being the assistant to the artist, and see it from the artist’s perspective. Even if you want to work in a museum, experiencing the different sides of the art world can be enriching.

Michael E. Shapiro is the director emeritus of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, where he worked from 1995–2015. He worked previously at the St. Louis Art Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He served as the general chair at AAM’s Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo in Atlanta in 2015. Eleven Museum/ Eleven Directors: Conversations on Art & Leadership ©2015 is available at museumshop.high.org/collections/books-media.



Richard E. Peeler Art Center, DePauw University Greencastle, Indiana

MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

"Since 2013, the gallery staff has been working through a series of external reviews in preparation for accreditation by AAM. The reviews, part of AAM's Museum Assessment Program (MAP), have yielded significant benefits for the galleries and collections in just a few short years. The reviews have been an excellent use of staffing hours and operating funds, with each review requiring just 50 staff hours and less than \$500. Most notably, the MAP reports have assisted staff with obtaining external funding for both exhibitions and collection care. Overall, 11 external grants totaling nearly \$100,000 have been secured to date (2014–16), thanks to recommendations made by the peer reviewers who evaluated our museum. These recommendations were cited in the external grant applications and significantly increased our competitiveness for funding.

Grant funds secured as a result of the MAP reviews have focused entirely on enhancing our ability to deliver first-rate programming central to our mission: the student experience. In past years, limited resources had not allowed us to utilize the collection of 3,500 artworks to its full potential. Today, the collection is leveraged on a weekly basis to enhance the curricular needs of students, faculty, and the community. Students from anthropology/sociology, art and art history, Asian studies, chemistry, English, political science, and a number of other departments regularly visit the collections and galleries to translate inscriptions, write poetry, dissect objects through visual analysis, and debate the ethics of museum display and preservation. In the coming years, we plan to expand our interdisciplinary efforts to students studying everything from business and economics to communications."

—**Craig Hadley**, director and curator of exhibitions and university collections

MAP ASSESSMENTS

Collections Stewardship2014

Organizational.....2015–16

Core Documents Verified.....2015

Budget..... \$257,674

Staff Size3 [full-time paid]





Strategizing Me:

Making a Personal Career Plan

Effective leaders create mission statements to shape their museum careers.

By Anne W. Ackerson

The one thing that can be said universally about people who work in the museum profession is that they're here by choice. Nobody really twisted anybody's arm to work among beautiful objects or bewildering specimens, with fascinating or curious stories, or in interesting, even unique spaces. We're here because we've been drawn to this work. And many of us have come from a dizzying array of backgrounds to call a museum our professional home.

But once you're in the profession, what then? Whether you're just starting out or you've been around for a while, there are career crossroads to be navigated, some sooner rather than later, some by choice, others not. What's the career prize you have your eye on, and have you figured out the directions you can take to eventually grab it? How important is it to have your career all planned out? And don't we negate the serendipity, the excitement, and sometimes the fear of the unknown by being overly prescriptive? Besides, how can anybody plan like that in a time when looking ahead even six months is a futile business?





Creating a Mission Statement

It wasn't until I had been in the field a couple of decades that I created my first professional and personal mission

statements, and drafted a timeline noting past turning points and future desires. I was so happy to have an interesting and demanding job, my own income, and place of my own that I didn't think I needed anything more than that. I'd been on a pretty satisfying career trajectory, I felt, but little did I realize until much later that I had been mostly on autopilot, except for the job changes that I made primarily for more money. I wasn't even thinking about skill development!

External forces, as it turned out, brought me to thinking about "my career" as something I could, in fact, steer, shape, or even throw over.

It's those crazy, sometimes unforeseen, external forces that can provide a launching pad or knock you for a loop. Planning of any type, whether it's

about a career, an institution's future, or just going to the grocery store, is difficult and often fruitless if it's done without taking external forces into account. In fact, people and organizations best weather storms when they've already given some thought to how they would respond to any number of variables, good and bad. Called "scenario planning," although "discovery-driven planning" is perhaps more apropos, it is imperative to do now when few jobs are lifetime locks, when museums may choose contract labor instead of salaried staff as a way to contain costs, and when many institutions are looking to be more nimble in developing and delivering programs and services.

People get together all the time to share information, network, and help sort out career questions. Our families and friends often are our sounding boards, mostly because they're convenient, they care about us and are, therefore, likely (or required) to listen. But they may not be as helpful as colleagues or mentors who bring the worldview of our respective professions, as well as some critical distance, to our seeking.

So where might you start in creating your own personal strategic plan?



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Put Together a Career Planning Posse

Sure, you can create a plan on your own. But if you're really after some critical distance, then it makes sense to enlist trusted colleagues

or mentors (who may be going through this, also) to help you bring yourself into focus. So think of this as a 360-degree evaluation—now that's something that's almost impossible to do alone! You'll be the beneficiary of insights from people who see you in a variety of situations and from a variety of angles (just think about a three-way mirror in a clothing store dressing room).



Take Stock

Every solid planning effort begins with an unvarnished inventory of internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and challenges (or

threats). What are the skills and attributes you've got going for you? What needs work? How might you play to your strengths and mitigate those weaknesses? Do you have growth opportunities in your current job or will you need to move on to gain skills and experience? Are you in an organization where the career ladder has been stunted by staff reductions, or has an increasing workload brought opportunities to learn new skills? Does small-bore thinking pervade leadership or are you able to lead effectively from where you are?

It's tough to do this type of inventory by yourself, although you certainly can. However, this is a great activity to do with your posse. Remember, your posse is here to help you evaluate yourself, not decide on your value.

Assess where your career has been and where it is now, using a format that is most comfortable for you: a narrative, a flow chart, a mind map, story boards, charts or graphs and the like can all help (take a look at mindtools.com). Once you've completed your assessment, can you discern any patterns in your choices, successes and pitfalls? Do any preferences emerge? Situations you want to stay away from in the future? In your past, can you see preludes to future directions?



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Create Your Vision

What is your vision for your work? Your life? Take some time to play with these questions. In order for you to break free of the stories you might be inclined

to tell, it can be quite helpful to work with images or other creative activities that can help move you to where you want to go. Always start with a prompting question like the first one in this paragraph. Other useful prompting questions might be: What do I offer a group or team? What am I passionate about? What motivates me at work? The new insights and ideas that emerge by weaving the visual and the verbal can be truly enlightening and energizing!

Now write your vision statement. Keep it short and powerful. Show it to your posse and ask for feedback.



Build Your Plan

You are now armed with the knowledge about your strengths and weaknesses, an understanding of where your career has been, and where it could go, and why it's

important to aim in certain directions and not others. You're ready to plot out the next steps in more depth. This is the most difficult piece for most people, because it requires that you weave together a number of seemingly disparate strands into one very strong tapestry. Your goal in building your plan is to play to your strengths by aiming them at opportunities that will support your vision for your work.

You may not be successful at this personal planning stuff on your first try. That's to be expected. You must build a plan that you, and only you, are most comfortable with. This plan must encourage you to follow it, to make changes to it, and to otherwise keep it as a constant companion for as long as you need it.

For some, getting a handle on the next six months or year is plenty. A piece of poster board with your vision at the top and a month-by-month grid of six or twelve boxes might be all that's needed to organize a handful of tasks that will start the process of refocusing your career goals. For others, a plan that articulates goals, strategies, and tasks might make more sense. The key: all must flow from your vision and all must have some kind of time frame attached

(otherwise—you know the drill—all that good stuff is likely to slip by).

Ask your posse to rip it apart and help you weave it back together.



Work It

There's an old saying that goes, "Plan the work and work the plan." No plan can be helpful if it never sees the light of day. It's now time to start completing

those tasks. Put them on your calendar and start ticking them off. Did you say that you wanted to contact six people and ask for an informational interview or a "pick your brains over a cup of coffee" conversation? Methodically reach out and ask for those appointments. Need more information about putting your skills to work as a consultant? Block out that research time on your calendar and keep that date with yourself and your search engine. Want to add a new skill to your toolbox? Take on a volunteer assignment that will expand your skill set and your network.

Here's where your posse can keep you honest. There's nothing like a periodic check-in with them to motivate you.

And last, but not least, particularly for you mid-career types and museum veterans:



Disrupt Yourself

When I read these sentences by a former Wall Street analyst-turned-entrepreneur, I found myself nodding in agreement: "Nearly everyone hits a point

in their life where they examine their trajectory and consider a pivot. We typically label this mid-life crisis, but isn't it more often a re-thinking as to which performance attributes matter? Perhaps earlier in your career the metric was money or fame, but now you want more autonomy, flexibility, authority, or to make a positive dent in the world." (Whitney Johnson, "Disrupt Yourself," *Harvard Business Review* Blog Network, August 22, 2011).

I had the good fortune to make a little bit of a disruption in my career trajectory that included some time off to recharge my batteries and re-enter the field as a servant to the museum profession rather than to a single institution. It's a type of disruption not many think they can take, for any number of

reasons (or excuses), but I can't tell you the number of colleagues who whispered to me, "I wish I could do that!" or "You're so brave!"

Bravery had nothing to do with it. I was completely motivated by my need to "align my ladder to a new wall," as Marc Freedman so aptly described it in his article, "A Gap Year for Grown-ups" (*Harvard Business Review Blog Network*, July 14, 2011). It was scary, and I didn't know where my "gap year" would take me or how hard I would land. But few people knew that I had spent the previous 12 months planning my gap year.

I developed my first personal mission statement and timeline during that year. I recently returned to that work, now almost 15 years old, to help inform my new personal strategic plan.

Of course, a year off is not practical for most of us. Some would consider it professional suicide, not to mention a fast track to financial ruin. But there's a great deal to be said for the periodic "step back," which we routinely associate with academia as the sabbatical. The opportunity to disrupt ourselves, even for a few weeks, is beneficial. I'm heartened to see that some institutions and nonprofit funders are offering support for short-term sabbaticals, but there's not enough of it going on in our part of the sector. There needs to be.

As each generation lives longer, many will keep working longer, too. As Freedman implores employers in his post, "help us forge a new map of life, one that builds in breaks more sensibly along a much longer trajectory, that is fitted to the new lifespans of the 21st century—and not just for all those flagging boomers approaching the big six-oh. After all, half the children born since 2000 in the developed world are projected to see their 100th birthdays. Let's pass on to them a life course that's sustaining and sustainable, that pays off on the promise of the longevity revolution, for now and for generations to come."

What would you do if you walked into work tomorrow to learn that you'd been given a four-week break to focus on your career? Whether the impetus comes from your institution or from that little voice deep inside yourself, one thing is certain: you'd better get planning.

Anne W. Ackerson is an independent consultant and director, Museum Association of New York (MANY). This article is adapted from a chapter in A Life in Museums: Managing Your Museum Career (Greg Stevens and Wendy Luke, ed., 2012, AAM Press), available in the AAM Bookstore online through our partners Rowman & Littlefield.

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Alexander Calder, *Untitled*, 1976. Sheet metal, bolts, and paint, 17'10" x 6'8" x 12'6".
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Photo: Calder Foundation, New York / Art Resource, New York.

Lighting Fergus McCaffrey Gallery

Fergus McCaffrey, a gallery in the heart of New York City's Chelsea Arts District, has been a pioneer of post-war and contemporary art for over a decade. Its beautiful art is displayed throughout two stories of exhibition space illuminated with ERCO LED technology.

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of post-war Japanese artists, as well as a quality roster of select contemporary European and American artists, such as Richard Nonas, whose work was featured in the eponymous exhibition seen on these pages.

The core lighting concept for the gallery was focused on wallwashing, which is a form of light distribution that applies complete, uniform illumination to a wall. Wallwashing provides a neutral backdrop for exhibitions and presents artwork in an objective manner, which is ideal for rotating gallery spaces. This method particularly benefits artwork of a large format, such as those often seen at Fergus McCaffrey.

ERCO

In addition to wallwashing, ERCO offers a total of seven distinct light distributions. These light distributions can easily be changed from a spotlight to an extra wide flood by simply replacing the distribution lens, which is accomplished easily without tools to simplify the process when commissioning exhibitions. Light intensity can also be adjusted via a potentiometer built into the fixture, or with a remotely located phase dimmer.

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Failing Toward Success:

The ascendance
of agile design

By Elizabeth Merritt

“If you’re creating things, you’re doing things that have a high potential for failure, especially if you’re doing things that haven’t been done before. And you learn from those things...failure is another word for experience.” –*George Lucas*

Both for-profit and nonprofit organizations increasingly recognize that failure is a necessary part of a successful design process. It isn’t easy to adopt this approach when “failing” is conflated with “being a failure,” but we are coming to realize that blanket negative characterizations of failure damage us as learners, workers, organizations, and as a culture. In a time of rapid social, technological, and economic change, organizations have to try new things in order to succeed, and such innovation requires a tolerance for risk. Given that museums’ business models are experiencing profound disruptions, this field in particular needs to be comfortable with positive failure, but museums need encouragement, tools, and positive feedback if they are to buck the long tradition of perfectionism that has characterized the sector.

Given all the hoopla in the past decade—as evidenced by the proliferation of catch phrases like “fail fast,” “fail forward,” “fail smart”—the concept of failure is in danger of being labeled a fad. Searching “failure” on Amazon identifies more than 24,000 books on the subject, and Astro Teller’s recent TED Talk on the “Unexpected Benefit of Celebrating Failure” has already racked up more than 2 million views. But underlying the hype is a profound shift away from traditional business practices and toward lean, nimble, adaptive organizations. In times of change and uncertainty, rapid prototyping and iterative design—trying small, fast experiments, testing

their success, and adjusting accordingly—entail less risk in the long run than investing huge amounts of resources implementing one, theoretically perfect plan. Learning productive methods of failure has become an important strategy for businesses of all sizes, from big established companies that don’t want to become dinosaurs to small startups hungering for success.

Creating a climate of productive failure requires a workplace culture that values individual experimentation and input, but the characteristics of innovative organizational culture are often at odds with traditional, command-and-control management structures. Organizations, particularly those with entrenched hierarchical structures, are finding they need to adopt frameworks that support experimentation and risk taking. Recent decades have seen the proliferation of a wide variety of systems, methodologies, and approaches that support taking small, productive risks and learning from small, rapid failures. Peter Sims documents how large established organizations like Amazon, Pixar, Google, Hewlett Packard, and the US Army succeed via making “little bets”—low-risk actions to discover, develop, and test an idea—in support of ambitious long-term goals. At the other end of the spectrum, the Lean Startup Movement is designed to help new businesses find their market niche via continual testing. The principles of Scrum—an iterative, incremental approach to software development designed to deal with the

This article is an excerpt from TrendsWatch 2017, published by the Center for the Future of Museums. The report explores five trends of significance to museums and their communities. It is available as a free PDF from the Alliance web site and in print, later this spring, from the AAM bookstore.

unpredictable, shifting needs of the end user—spread within organizations as other departments emulate the successful practices of their IT staff. And the Scrum approach has diffused to other fields as people with technology backgrounds become core staff and leaders in a variety of sectors.

What This Means for Society

To prepare learners for the 21st-century workplace, education is shifting to privilege critical thinking, research skills, creativity, perseverance, adaptability, and teamwork over rote memorization of facts. This transition will require a cultural shift in education toward fostering exploration, curiosity, and experimentation, all of which inevitably involve “failing” as a productive part of learning new things. In the future, a good student’s report card may be sprinkled with Fs that laud little failures.

Even as society struggles over the downside of excess screen time for kids and assesses the potential for video games to foster violent or antisocial behavior, we increasingly recognize that games, particularly digital games, are a means of giving continuous feedback, helping kids see failure as an inevitable and unremarkable part of “leveling up.” And we are realizing that the characteristics of productive failure in games could be grafted onto other areas of

endeavor: giving continuous feedback; making failure private; normalizing failure as an expected part of a process; and immediately presenting a “player” with the chance to try again.

A bias against failure in the publication of research findings is holding back progress in a variety of fields. Not sharing the results of thousands of experiments that “fail” —i.e., generate negative results—obscures important findings, creates bias in metadata studies, and wastes the time of researchers who replicate experiments they didn’t know had already taken place. That may mean, for example, repeating medical trials that subject volunteers to treatments that are already known (by someone) to be ineffective. Individual journals and professional societies are trying to crack down on publication bias, but there is no simple fix. One study conducted in 1987 found that suppression of negative results isn’t primarily due to editorial decisions: it’s a result of self-censorship by researchers who didn’t even write up and submit papers describing their work. In other words, bias against failure is itself a failing of academic culture.

Valuing failure can amplify or counteract concurrent social trends. User-centered design creates a meaningful role for the public at a time when participation is increasingly valued as part of a



The Levine Museum created the iNUEVOlution! Latinos and the New South exhibit using multiple rounds of community input from inception through installation. Exhibit designers and developers worked with Latino and non-Latino community members to establish the key points of learning for the exhibit, select stories, and create interactives. Even the logo and exhibit title were crowdsourced. Staff changed early “big ideas” after community members suggested the museum take a different direction. Even after the exhibit opened to the public, staff continued to redesign sections, create new content for panels, and add activities in response to community input.

cultural experience. And learning to accept failure as part of a mutual process of learning what works and what doesn't work in our complex society can help to counteract increasing cultural and political polarization.

What This Means for Museums

Museums, as a sector, share a culture of perfection that places large bets on getting a product—whether an exhibit, program, or building—right the first time. This culture is often rooted in traditional, hierarchical management structures that evolved in a time that valued authority and control over collaboration and creativity. Museums that decide to move away from dysfunctional perfectionism have to work consciously to change an organizational culture that discourages risk taking. A culture of continuous improvement can't simply be isolated in a new department or grafted onto traditional structures—it requires fundamental shifts in a museum's ethos, including new forms of leadership and management.

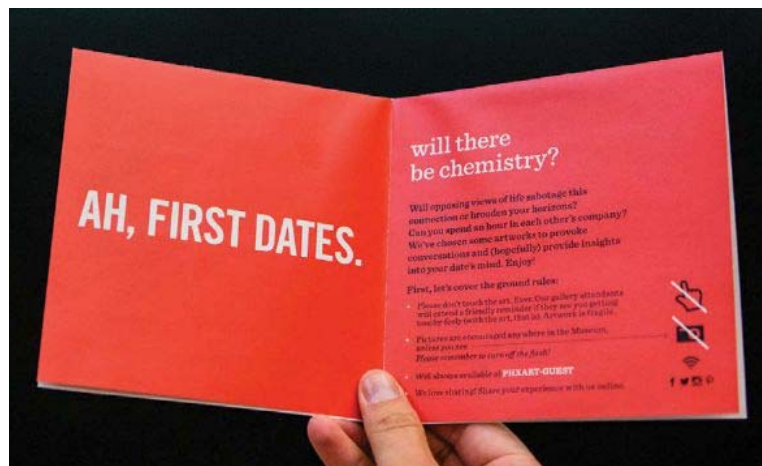
Museums are at risk of lagging dangerously far behind the rapid changes shaping audience, culture, and technology. The traditional time frame for major projects is too long for truly responsive design. If exhibits and publications take five to ten years to produce, and if institutions take another one to three years to collect evaluation data, operations will only improve on decadal cycles.

"Failure-based" design processes incorporate early input from the end-user. For example, one methodology being widely adopted in the cultural sector is design thinking: a set of principles that include empathy with end-users, rapid prototyping, and a tolerance for failure. This is a welcome counterbalance in organizations such as museums, orchestras, or opera companies that have a long history of producing performances, exhibits, and programs that seem perfect to the staff or funders, but may not resonate with audiences. Recruiting the public to test prototypes is not just a way to improve the final design—it is itself a valuable form of engagement that can humanize the museum and make the audience feel invested in the outcome.

Museum funders are beginning to recognize the strength of "small bets" as a path toward innovation. In 2011, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) started offering Sparks! Ignition Grants to support one-year, rapid prototyping projects with grants of \$5,000 to \$25,000. This program has now been rolled into IMLS's National Leadership Grants for Museums, and the maximum award increased to \$50,000.

Museums Might Want to...

- Try small, controlled experiments to introduce innovative design within the existing culture. Learn from projects like the San Francisco Opera



Phoenix Art Museum staff used design sprints to create a new series of gallery guides that speak to visitors with a fresh voice. One of the resulting guides—I'm here...on a date—encourages visiting couples to use art to spark conversation and, possibly, chemistry.

(SFO)'s Barely Opera, in which two students from Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design introduced the SFO to new ways of thinking. That experiment, which started with staff bouncing ideas off random strangers at the Ferry Building, resulted in a wildly popular event at a bar that encouraged audience members to don costumes, spin a game-style wheel to select songs, and listen to members of the opera company deliver laid-back, humorous interpretations of classic works. Barely Opera pushed SFO staff to work outside their comfort levels and celebrate failures in the process, and resulted in the creation of a new production department called "SF Opera Lab" dedicated to producing low-cost, low-risk events pitched at specific new audiences.

- Adopt design thinking or another established model as the museum's usual methodology for developing new exhibits, programs, and services. There are many excellent programs and resources, including IDEO's ExperienceInnovation: A Workshop for Teams; the Harvard Extension School's Design Thinking Workshop; and Stanford University's d.school's Virtual Crash Course in Design Thinking. It is also increasingly common to find sessions and workshops on design thinking and related topics at museum conferences or in online training designed for museum professionals.
- Review their own organizational cultures and find ways to encourage productive risk taking. This approach may include budgeting "mad money" to encourage small risks in the interest of R&D

or creating an experimental “lab” dedicated to taking supported risks. Or museums could build recognition and reward for risk taking into systems for performance review and compensation. However, the mixed record of such experiments demonstrates that successful innovation projects need to be supported at the leadership level and embedded in the organizational culture, rather than depending on charismatic, talented individuals or small groups.

- Help reshape cultural attitudes toward failure by incorporating positive narratives into their exhibits and programs. Museums can help society see failure as a normal and valued part of the learning process.
- Join the growing number of museums willing to share their failures, as well as what they learned from these “unsuccessful” experiments, in public forums—in print, on blogs, or in conference sessions. Museum professionals can reward their colleagues’ candor with praise and appreciation. Museum associations can examine their own practices for accepting papers and sessions, and address any institutionalized bias against failure that may be suppressing useful information.

Museum Examples

In the past decade or so, a number of museums have created “labs” that carve out a place for staff to mess around: Cooper-Hewitt Labs, the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s MediaLab, IMA Labs at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Louvre-DNP Museum Lab, and the Carnegie Museums’ Innovation Studio, to name a few. As Philbrook Museum of Art Director Scott Stulen (formerly of the Indianapolis Museum of Art) said, “Failure is such a big part of creativity. Most R&D labs are built on that. But it’s not just failing—it’s having learning as a creative outcome.” However, the mixed track record of these startups demonstrates how hard it can be for the culture of innovation to take hold.

At the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), a “failure-friendly” approach that began as an effort to deliver improved digital content wound up redefining project management for the entire organization. Staff moved away from detailed project plans, strict timelines, and fixed deliverables in favor of rapid iteration and direct public engagement throughout the design process. They found that by educating senior executives in the practice of agility—particularly the concept of self-organized teams—decisions could be made without waiting for traditional, hierarchical approval chains. And teams found they could enhance trust in this process by demonstrating how results of public testing lead directly to improvements. For example, using this agile approach, a dedicated team of Mia staff published more than

100 ArtStories and created a website that uses direct feedback to make continuous improvements in short iterative cycles.

Some museums are using “design sprints” to drive rapid development of content, experiences, services, or digital tools. The Phoenix Art Museum sent a team of education staff off-site for a blitz session to create a set of “I’m Here” visitor guides. Starting with a brain dump on everything they knew about visitor motivations, by the end of the day they had content their designer could use to create the working prototypes. Staff from the Digital Product Group at the British Museum ran a design sprint focused on improving wayfinding. Working in two half-days, and incorporating visitor interviews, they used the process to educate their colleagues about the strength of user-centered design and to break down silos within museum departments.

Starting in 2012, with a break in 2015, a rotating cast of museum professionals led by Sean Kelley of the Eastern State Penitentiary has populated a session titled Mistakes Were Made at the AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo. By sharing funny, honest accounts of things that went radically wrong, the panelists help destigmatize failure as well as ensure that some broader benefit comes from their unfortunate experiences. This session culminates in the audience awarding the “AAM Epic Failure Trophy” to the best mistake, celebrating “sharing as the first step in learning.” This national session is so popular that it has spawned local versions as well.

Further Reading

At Museums and the Web 2016, Douglas Hegley, Meaghan Tongen, and Andrew David presented “The Agile Museum” (mw2016.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/the-agile-museum/)—a paper describing how the Minneapolis Institute of Art is creating an agile work environment. This case study emphasizes the need to change leadership and management practices in order to support a culture of rapid iteration and experimentation.

The website Design Thinking for Museums, (design-thinkingformuseums.net) edited by Dana Mitroff Silvers, shares case studies, blog posts, and resources. It grew out of a 2012 partnership between the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Stanford University’s Plattner Institute of Design, and offers a compendium of links to free online toolkits.

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Correction: From the article "Museums Need Shared Definitions," which ran in November/December 2016, the Cultural Data Project, now DataArts, commissioned the 2013 analysis from Slover Linett Audience Research's principals Sarah Lee and Peter Linett.

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Smithsonian
National Museum of African Art
africa.si.edu/50years/oman

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE SHIVERS

AAM MuseumExpo Product Preview Guide

The 2017 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo takes place May 7-10, 2017 in St. Louis.

Register today to meet over 200 exhibitor organizations and companies working with museums—in the MuseumExpo. A few are featured on these pages.



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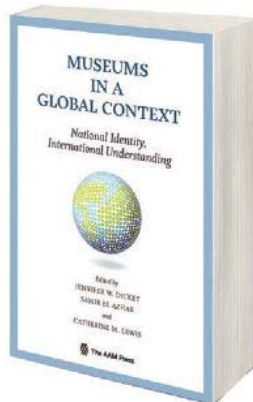
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Museums Advocacy Day: The Stakes Have Never Been Higher

In February, hundreds of museum supporters gathered in Washington, DC, for the 9th annual Museums Advocacy Day. Advocates heard from congressional and nonprofit policy experts, got breaking updates on funding and education issues affecting museums, and went to Capitol Hill to make the case for museums directly to their legislators and staff, including dozens of new members of Congress.



Lend Your Voice Today:

- See highlights and materials from Museums Advocacy Day 2017 at aam-us.org/advocacy/museums-advocacy-day.
- Join the online chorus using hash tags #museumsadvocacy and #museumsadvocacy2017.
- Resolve to make the case for museums in 2017—our advocacy resources (aam-us.org/advocacy/resources) make it easy to get involved throughout the year. —Ember Farber



Accreditation Commissioner Appointed

The AAM Board has ratified the appointment of Jill Hartz as a new accreditation commissioner. Hartz is the executive director of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) at the University of Oregon in Eugene, a position she's held since 2008. Hartz began her five-year term as accreditation commissioner in January 2017.

"The Alliance has a steady flow of academic art museums in the pipeline for accreditation and re-accreditation, so it's important to have that expertise on the Accreditation Commission. Jill brings that expertise, and so much more," said AAM Board Member and Nominating Committee Chair Kippen de Alba Chu, executive director of the Iolani Palace in Honolulu.

The Accreditation Commission is the body responsible for making independent decisions regarding accredited status. It meets three times per year and is made up of museum professionals that collectively bring a wide range of experience and expertise in the museum field. Commissioners serve in a volunteer capacity. Learn more about the Accreditation Commission at bit.ly/AAMAC2017 —Joseph Klem



Directors of 57 US Army museums take the Pledge of Excellence at the First Annual Department of the Army Continuing Museum Training Course in November 2016.

US Army Museum Enterprise Joins AAM and Continuum of Excellence

The Alliance recently welcomed the US Army Museum Enterprise—more than 100 Army and National Guard museums in the US and abroad—as AAM members and into the Continuum of Excellence, beginning with

the Pledge of Excellence.

The pledge is the first step along AAM's Continuum of Excellence, which culminates in accreditation, the gold standard of museum excellence for more than 40 years. Five US Army museums

are currently accredited by AAM.

"The Army Museum Enterprise aims for the highest level of excellence, and we hold ourselves to the highest standards," said Dr. Charles Cureton,

chief curator of the army (acting). "We're excited to join the Alliance excellence programs, which will be impactful for us across the enterprise." —Julie Hart

AAM Delegation Meets with Chinese Counterparts

In December, a team of 14 education leaders from US museums and AAM's Senior Manager of Global Partnerships, Megan Lantz visited China. They met with counterparts from Chinese institutions in a first-of-its-kind program titled, "Connection—Engagement: A US-China Museum Education Forum."

Presented by the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and AAM, this forum, represented the largest-ever delegation of US museum educators to visit China. It brought together the US team with education professionals from



Chinese museums for panel presentations, roundtable discussions, and a study tour of museums and artists' studios in Beijing and Shanghai. More than 200 Chinese museum educators joined the academic forum in Beijing as audience members, taking part in question-and-answer

sessions and networking events. The American delegation also had a chance to visit and meet with education staff at the National Museum of China, the National Art Museum of China and the Forbidden City in Beijing, and the K11 Art Museum, the Long

Museum, and the Power Station of Art in Shanghai.

To read more about the meetings in China, visit aam-us.org/about-us/media-room/2016/fourteen-us-museum-educators-to-visit-china-for-professional-exchange-of-ideas.

—Megan Lantz

Strengthening Museum Governance

A first-of-its-kind survey and report on museum trustees is among the many parts of a new initiative by Northern Trust Corporation, BoardSource, and AAM.

A national survey of directors and museum board chairs was conducted last fall. It received an outstanding response, with 1,700 museum directors and board chairs completing the survey. The results will help museum leaders benchmark themselves against other museums and other nonprofits. Based

on a biennial BoardSource survey of nonprofit leaders, the survey will help us understand the demographics, operations, and effectiveness of museum boards.

The survey results and report will be released at the Trustee Summit—open to all trustees and CEOs—planned for Monday, May 8, 2017, as part of the AAM Annual Meeting in St. Louis. Leadership from Board Source and AAM will share the results and their importance to the museum field. This presentation will

be followed by trustee and CEO panels to discuss the results and explore their impact on best practices for

museum governance within institutions and communities.

—Joseph Klem



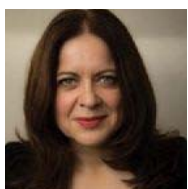
Tom Collins and Dave Cyganiak from Northern Trust launched the Trustee Initiative and the national survey at the Annual Meeting Leadership Luncheon in St. Louis on November 4.

NEW JOBS

California



Katharine DeShaw, managing director, advancement and external relations, Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, Los Angeles.



Carolyn Marsden-Smith, associate director for exhibitions, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



Amanda Riley, director of development, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.



Nancy Sackson, chief philanthropy officer, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.



Andrea Saenz Williams, director of education and civic engagement, di Rosa, Napa.

Connecticut



Valerie Garlick, executive director, Institute Library, New Haven.

Delaware



Heather Campbell Coyle, chief curator, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington.

District of Columbia



Lisa Sasaki, director, Smithsonian's Asian Pacific American Center.



Samantha Snell, collections management specialist and preparedness and response in collections emergencies chair, Smithsonian's National Collections Program.

Florida



Kristen Shepherd, director, Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg.

Maryland



Amy Landau, director of curatorial affairs and curator of Islamic and South and Southeast Asian art, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Massachusetts



Nathaniel Silver, associate curator, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.

Minnesota



Joe D. Horse Capture, director of American Indian initiatives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Missouri



Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Louis L. and Adelaide C. Ward Senior Curator of European Art, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.



Philip Hu, curator of Asian art, Saint Louis Art Museum.

New York



Alice Greenwald, president and CEO, National September 11 Memorial and Museum, New York City.



Rick Kinsel, president, Vilcek Foundation, New York City.



Nancy Richner, director, Hofstra University Museum, Hempstead.



Joseph Shatoff, deputy director and chief operating officer, Frick Collection, New York City.



Brian Lee Whisenhunt, executive director, Rockwell Museum, Corning.

North Carolina

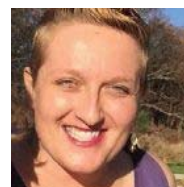


Franklin Vagnone, president, Old Salem Museums and Gardens, Winston-Salem.

Ohio

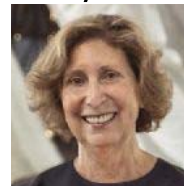


Frederic Bertley, president and CEO, Center of Science and Industry, Columbus.



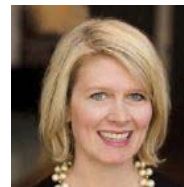
Bethany Kivela Joyave, scout and family programs coordinator, Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Pennsylvania



Susan Lubowsky Talbott, executive director, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia.

Tennessee



Angie Weeks, assistant director of membership and visitor experience, Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville.

Texas



Victoria Ramirez, director, El Paso Museum of Art.



Doug Roberts, chief technology officer, Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

Utah

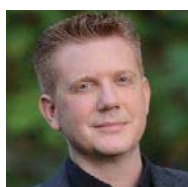


Sarah B. George, executive director, Natural History Museum of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Virginia



Kimberly Gant, McKinnon curator of modern and contemporary art, Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk.



Matthew McLendon, director and chief curator, Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Washington



Geneva Griswold, associate objects conservator, Seattle Art Museum.

Wyoming



Steven D. Seamons, director, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson.

KUDOS

In December and January, President Obama made additional nominations to the National Museum and Library Services Board: **Lynne M. Ireland**, deputy director, Nebraska State Historical Society and AAM peer reviewer; **Sylvia Orozco**, co-founder and executive director, Mexic-Arte Museum; **Mort Sajadian**, founder, president, and CEO, Amazement Square, Rightmire Children's Museum; **Kenneth J. Schutz**, Dr. William Huizingh Executive Director, Desert Botanical Garden and member of AAM's Accreditation Committee; **Annette Evans Smith**, president and CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center; **Deborah Taylor**, coordinator of school and student services, Enoch Pratt Free Library; and **Jonathan L. Zittrain**, professor of computer science, Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and George Bemis Professor of International Law, Harvard Law School.



Sarah Zimmerman, superintendent of First State Heritage Park in Dover, Delaware, was named Tourism Person of the Year by Kent County Tourism.



Jenny Taubman, a longtime friend and benefactor of the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, Virginia, was honored with the Ann Fralin Award. Taubman is known throughout the country for her advocacy and philanthropy in the arts. The Fralin Award honors a woman for her vision, commitment, and support of the arts, education, and quality of life in the community.

The Long Island Museum in Stony Brook, New York, won a 2016 *SmartCEO Magazine* Corporate Culture Award. The Corporate Culture Awards program honors companies that foster creative, collaborative workplace cultures to enhance performance and sustain a competitive advantage.

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities presented the 2016 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards to several AAM members: **Mexic-Arte Museum** in Austin, Texas, for Screen It!; **New York Transit Museum** in Brooklyn for Subway Sleuths; and **California Indian Museum and Cultural Center** in Santa Rosa for Tribal Youth Ambassadors. Winners exemplify how arts and humanities programs outside of the regular school day enrich the lives of young people throughout the country by teaching new skills, nurturing creativity, and building self-confidence.

RETIRING



David E. Chesebrough, retired as president and CEO of Columbus' Center of Science and Industry (COSI) on December 31, Chesebrough will serve as president emeritus through December 31, 2017. Chesebrough started March 2006 as COSI's fourth president. During his tenure, COSI experienced extensive growth built around a "center of science" approach. He most recently received the Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for Leadership in the Field at the 2016 Association for Science Technology Centers (ASTC) conference in Tampa, Florida.



National Museum of African Art Director **Johnnetta B. Cole** will retire in March after eight years.

"Johnnetta is known across the Smithsonian for her spirit of collaboration, collegiality and passion for the arts," Smithsonian Secretary David J. Skorton said in a memo to the Smithsonian staff announcing Cole's retirement. "Throughout her tenure, she has worked with her colleagues to raise the profile of the African Art Museum as the nation's premier museum focusing on the visual arts of Africa."

Cole has enjoyed a long and successful career in both museums and academia. With a Ph.D. in anthropology, Cole was a college professor for decades before being recruited as president of Spelman Col-

lege in Atlanta. She was also president of Bennett College for women in North Carolina. She served as president of the Association of Art Museum Directors and as a member of the scholarly advisory council of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Beth E. Levinthal retired in January as executive director, Hofstra University Museum in Hempstead, New York. Previously she was executive director (2000–2006); director of education/public programs (1996–2000); and school, youth, and family program coordinator (1994–96) for the Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, New York. Among other honors, Levinthal received the Anne Ackerson Innovation in Museum Leadership Award in 2015 from the Museum Association of New York. She continues as a peer reviewer for AAM and on the boards of MANY and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums.



John Baule, executive director of the Yakima Valley Museum in Washington, retired December 31. During his long tenure, the museum added the Children's Underground and Soda Fountain, and completed a capital campaign and an endowment campaign totaling \$7.3 million. Baule's efforts led to the museum receiving AAM accreditation, state-wide recognition, and peer acknowledgement for special exhibits. Baule also increased museum reserves to more than \$5 million.

Edward Harrison Able Jr. 1944–2016



Ed Able (left) with Nancy Reagan and former AAM President, Joel N. Bloom, in 1988, when the White House collection was first accredited.

The museum field was saddened to hear of the passing of Ed Able Jr., AAM's president and CEO from 1986–2006. Under Able's leadership, AAM completed two initiatives that transformed the field: *Excellence and Equity*, a landmark report that affirms museums' contributions to the nation's educational needs, and *Museums and Community*, a toolkit designed to help museums plan successful dialogues with their communities. Able also oversaw the passage of the *Code of Ethics for Museums* and transformed the AAM board from a group of 75 to today's governing body of 24 members.

Able was recognized for his years of service as a nonprofit professional and volunteer. The *NonProfit Times* named him as one of the 50 most powerful and influential leaders in the field nine years in a row. He was

a founder and board member of the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (now BoardSource), and he served on the boards of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), National Humanities Alliance, National Cultural Alliance, and Independent Sector. An ASAE fellow, Able earned the society's highest honor, the Key Award, for outstanding performance and contribution to the field of association management. In addition, he was presented with lifetime achievement awards by several regional museum associations, as well as the Chairman's Medal by the National Endowment for the Arts and numerous other recognitions. Able also was appointed by the US Secretary of State to serve as a member of the US Commission on the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

AAM has been heartened by the outpouring of condolences from the field. Here's a sample:

"Under Ed's leadership, AAM grew dramatically and is now the largest museum association in the world."

—Laura L. Lott, AAM
president and CEO

"I always respected Ed's integrity in putting the organization first and focusing on the most important and not the trendiest of trends."

—Arthur H. Wolf, principal, WOLF
Consulting, and former AAM
board member

"Mr. Able will be remembered by many colleagues and friends in the US and abroad as an enthusiastic supporter of the museum cause."

—Suay Aksoy, president, International
Council of Museums

"I believe he was one of the most significant contributors to the museum field in the past century. A great man and leader."

—Douglass W. McDonald, founder,
NGOgro, LLC, and former AAM
board member

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