

Master of Arts in Arts Management E-Newsletter

Thinking Sideways, Moving Forward: 2008 Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE) Conference

As you may recall from the newsletter last fall, our Masters of Arts Management program was nominated for approval by the Board of the Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE). During the 2008 conference, held in Madison, Wisconsin April 24-26, we learned that our program was accepted by the board and we are now a full member of the association. Needless to say, we are thrilled to be accepted in our first year of eligibility.

George Mason University joins a group of excellent institutions throughout the world with Arts Management degree programs.

The overall theme of the conference was unique. The intriguing questions posed during the conference included: (1) how might Arts Administration educators encourage their students and their peers to "think sideways" in response -- to adapt the insights of other industries and disciplines toward the advancement of the arts? (2) What can evolving principles of urban planning tell us about building community through culture? (3) How might findings from brain science inform the connection between artist and audience? and (4) How are practitioners incorporating these discoveries in the daily delivery of their mission?

A number of prominent arts educators and arts professionals presented a series of lectures during the conference. I had the opportunity to present "The Pros and Perils of Consulting" along with Alan Yaffe from the University of Cincinnati.

Among the featured speakers was Dr. Richard Davidson, Vilas Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has brought new insight to human emotion, meaning, and connection by drawing on cutting edge research tools and methods from neuroscience and brain imaging. He was featured in Time magazine's 2006 list of the "top 100 most influential people" and he was named Madison Magazine's person of the year award in 2007.

To learn more about the Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE) visit their web site at <http://www.artsadministration.org>.

Richard Kamenitzer
Associate Professor of Arts Management
Executive Director of the Centers for Arts Management

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2008 Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE)

Conference Photos



General Conference Session



Featured speaker Richard Davidson



Professor Kamenitzer learning to Podcast

Arts Consultancy

Arts Consultancy—Is It For You?

By Allison Calhoun

For MAM students, it seems there is an endless array of jobs to be placed in after graduation. For some, the in-house job may be more appealing—job security, regular paychecks, and reliable coworkers are great things. Others, however, may find the flexibility and independent nature of consulting to be a better choice. I had the opportunity to speak to two local consultants that handle nonprofit arts organizations as part of their consulting workload: Maureen Robinson, from The Museum Group, and Hayley Kamin-Flack, founder and president of HKFA Consulting. They were more than happy to offer their advice and experience to MAM students considering consultancy as a career choice.

A typical day in the life of a consultant seems to be a work of fiction. Depending on the work you're doing, your day may be spent writing grant proposals, researching projects and topics to better understand your client's position, meeting with your client's executive staff and board members, or researching potential clients for future projects. "A typical week might be comprised of all these things, but on a day-to-day basis, it really varies," explains Robinson, who added that travel and telephone work are also quite common depending on the locale of your clients.

As far as background is concerned, consultants are a diverse group. This makes sense due to the wide variety of services they provide to nonprofits. Flack started out in advertising, and when that didn't suit her, she began working for a nonprofit health organization. That led her to pursue a Masters degree in Nonprofit Management, and she took a job at a consulting firm during her time in graduate school. "They basically gave me an apprenticeship in consulting," she added. That experience gave her the background she needed to go ahead and open her own business, HKFA Consulting, where she specializes in development consulting.



"For me, it was a pragmatic decision," Robinson says. After working in the museum world for 20 years, Robinson took a job at BoardSource, then called the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. As their founding education director, Robinson was able to work with a wide variety of nonprofit organizations nationwide. Realizing the strength of her own reputation at this time, she chose to begin a career as a governance and management consultant rather than look for an in-house position.

So, thinking about becoming a consultant? My interviewees agree that there are definite positive points to this career path. The ability to maintain a flexible schedule and workload is a definite bonus for Flack, who is married with two children and a third on the way. "I can work from home in my pajamas, three steps from my bedroom!" she jokes. She loves the fact that her job enables her to constantly learn new things from her clients—"I feel like I get an education with every proposal I write." Both agree that working as a consultant makes them feel needed and appreciated. "I get to work with people who are interested in getting better at the things I can help them with," explains Robinson. Flack adds, "Generally when I come in, often the artists at the organization have been writing their own grants, and it's not necessarily their favorite thing to do. It's really nice to be appreciated!"

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However, when considering consultancy as a career, Flack and Robinson do have a few warnings. Be prepared that your workload—and thereby, your cash flow—may not always be consistent. Flack says that some of her favorite clients are those that have trouble paying her on time, so it can be difficult to budget if your household doesn't have any regular income. Additionally, the job requires a certain measure of confidence in your abilities. "It's not a business for people who are shy," offers Robinson. "You have to be able to say, 'I'm good at this.'" Many consultants are self-employed, and with that can often come a certain feeling of isolation. "Your clients, much as you may like them personally, are NOT your friends," cautions Robinson. Because their reputation is on the line, consultants have to project an absolutely professional image to their clients, and that means finding a way to vent your work frustrations away from the job. While working from home can be a major attraction for potential consultants, Flack explains, many also feel that working from home can be overwhelming—"The work is ALWAYS there". For that reason, many consultants still choose to have an office outside of their home, thereby enabling them to keep their work and home lives separate.

Still, for the right person, consulting can be a lucrative career, eventually grossing upwards of \$200,000 a year depending on your level of expertise. Flack notes that most consultants she knows charge hourly rates of \$50-\$150 an hour, but that different clients may pay on a per-project basis, or even monthly if you have an ongoing relationship. She also offers that, even with the recent economic downturn, most consultants she knows are very busy, so the demand for capable consultants seems to be fairly high.

If you're thinking about going into consulting, Flack can't say enough about The Foundation Center's workshops in grant writing and other important concepts, many of which are free. She also recommends volunteering with nonprofit organizations, particularly in their development departments, and reading periodicals like *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* or *The Nonprofit Times*. Honing your writing skills, Flack says, is one of the best things you can do to increase your chances of success. Robinson suggests that less experienced graduates get some practice in an in-house position or within a larger consulting firm, giving yourself time to fail (and succeed!) in a safer setting. "Nothing gets you smart like doing something and then realizing you could have done it better," she says. "Your clients don't want to pay for you to learn, they want you to come with a lot of that learning already in place." Flack also says that many consultants she knows would love an intern or apprentice, so that could be a great place to start gaining experience.

For MAM students who like the idea of a flexible work schedule and self-employment, consulting could be a dream job. It is certainly a way to use your specialized knowledge to help nonprofit organizations succeed, and isn't that we're all after, anyway?

Allison Calhoun is a MAM student and can be reached at: acalhoun@gmu.edu

Student News

Film and Video Studies (FAVS) Program

By Ryan Lawrence Braaten

I recently completed an exciting internship in the new undergraduate Film and Video Studies (FAVS) program within the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Headed by Professor Cindy Lont, the FAVS program officially began in Fall 2007 and offers specialized tracks in film production, theory and business. With minimal advertising, there are 75 students enrolled in the program to date, and Lont anticipates 100 students will be enrolled as of Fall 2008.

As a curriculum requirement, students participate in a GMU-TV television series titled Studio A. Similar to the format of Bravo TV's Inside the Actor's Studio, this half-hour program is taped at GMU-TV's facility in Innovation Hall four times per semester, each episode featuring a one-on-one interview with a professional in the film industry. Hosted by MAM Professor Rick Davis, the studio audience is comprised of FAVS students who research the guests and submit questions for Professor Davis to ask. There is also time allotted in each episode for students to ask questions.



To fulfill my Internal Internship requirement, I served as Associate Producer for Studio A. My responsibilities included: researching the four guests and their work; serving as point of contact for each guest; conducting a pre-interview with each guest to gauge their responses to the student-submitted questions; collaborating with the host and production team to write the show intro and formulate the final list of interview questions; and supervising two undergraduate Assistant Producers per episode who provided assistance in conducting the pre-interviews and setting up receptions following each show taping. The spring 2008 guests included:

Christian D' Andrea: A young Ivy League graduate who recently left his post as a Hollywood agent to produce and direct documentaries about the U.S. armed services; Rob Henninger: A one-time aspiring playwright who channeled his talent for storytelling into video editing and eventually built one of the foremost post-production facilities on the east coast, Henninger Media; Ted Leonsis: A widely-known media mogul, owner of the Washington Capitals and visionary philanthropist who recently became involved in film production as producer of the acclaimed documentary Nanking; and Aviva Kempner: A child of a Holocaust survivor who, after failing her bar exam, found her passion in producing documentary films. An award-winning writer, producer and director, she is the founder of the Washington Jewish Film Festival.

Tentatively slated as a guest for the summer 2008 semester of Studio A is acclaimed writer-director and Northern Virginia native Tom Shadyac (Bruce Almighty, Even Almighty, Liar Liar, Nutty Professor).

While these individuals come from different walks in life, they each shared with the students their insights, stories, and struggles as to how they found success in one of the most challenging professions. This well-rounded internship afforded me access to four accomplished film professionals, and I highly recommend it to my fellow MAM students, especially those interested in film, artist management and/or working with students.

For more information about the FAVS program or to view episodes of Studio A, please visit the program's website at <http://www.gmu.edu/cvpa/favs/>.

To learn more about the Studio A Associate Producer internship, please send an email to Professor Cindy Lont at clont@gmu.edu.

Alumni News

Arts Management Program Can Lead to Success

By Loretta Thompson, MAM Graduate 2007

It would be an understatement to say that the MAM program contributed to my success as an Arts Manager. Before entering the program, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life, and I definitely didn't know what an Arts Manager was. What I did know was that I wanted to be involved in the arts and be a conduit for others to learn about the arts.

One of the most important aspects of the program for me was its professors. These people are actively working in the arts world, and have a great deal of experience to offer. The information was concrete and practical and related to real life problems and their solutions. The professors were always willing to listen to me during difficult times. They encouraged my strengths and made the academic process a pleasant experience. By creating internships, employment opportunities, and recommending specific classes, they were there to make my dreams and aspirations a reality.



The MAM program provided me with opportunities outside of the classroom in ways that I never imagined. After my first semester, I was able to volunteer at the Performing Arts Presenters Conference in New York. This experience transformed my entire outlook. Being a part of the art world, seeing the passion of the performers and the involvement of people from across the country was inspiring. I wanted to jump up, dance, sing, and move with them! It became my mission to understand how I could provide opportunities for others to experience what I had during this short time.

The internship experience through MAM was particularly life-changing. This was the step in the ladder that I needed. Unlike some students in the program, I had no arts management experience, and was starting from the bottom.

My external internship was at Sitar Arts Center, a non-profit arts organization that provides arts classes to low-income families and youth in Washington, DC. I was able to use a lot of the things I had learned in class to help me succeed in my internship. After my internship was completed, the Executive Director extended an offer to me to stay on at the center, with pay, for the rest of the summer. I completed the MAM program in May 2007. In November I was hired full time. I have continued to move up the ladder and I am currently the Programs and Office Coordinator at the Sitar Arts Center.

One of the greatest benefits of the program is networking. I have met many people who have either taught or know someone who taught in the MAM program. I have also had the opportunity to work with fellow Arts Management graduates. It is definitely important to connect with people while you are studying, because you never know who you may meet or whose assistance you may need in the future.

I would recommend the Master of Arts Management Program at George Mason University to anyone who is interested in growing in the field of the arts. From the inexperienced to the well-seasoned Arts Manager, it's definitely worth the effort.

Loretta Thompson is the Programs and Office Coordinator at the Sitar Arts Center. She can be reached at (202) 797-2145 X113 or via email at loretta@sitarartscenter.org

Graduation News

The Master of Arts in Arts Management Program Convocation was held on Friday, May 16, 2008. Dean Reeder presented the graduates with their diplomas as their names were read. Professor Kamenitzer greeted each graduate to congratulate them on their achievement.

Following the Convocation the graduates attended a reception. Professor Kamenitzer presented five students with awards during the reception. The following awards were presented:

Amy Wong - Graduate of the Year
 Kathryn Lynch - Director's Award
 Elizabeth Cullins - Outstanding Achievement
 Laura Giroux - Outstanding Achievement
 Karim Seikaly - Outstanding Achievement

Professor Kamentizer Honored

Professor Kamenitzer was the recipient of several awards during the month of May. With great distinction he has earned the following awards:

May 7, 2008, elected Chairman "Pro-Tem" of the College of Visual & Performing Arts faculty

May 7, 2008, presented the Congressional Reception Award at the U.S. Capitol for ten years of leadership to the Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund.

May 16, 2008, the Arts Management students presented a plaque for being selected by the students as "Faculty Member of the Year" in recognition of teaching excellence



2008 Arts Management Graduates

January 2008

Anthony Allen
 Si Chen
 Jennifer Galante
 Deborah Paez
 Amy Wong

Spring 2008

Katherine Beyer
 Erin Black
 Marvin Burton
 Elizabeth Cullins
 Burma Gates
 Laura Giroux
 Kathryn Lynch
 Karim Seikaly

Summer 2008

Michael Thomas Markley
 Rachel Patton
 Shannon Siemens

Congratulations to the Class of 2008!

Graduate Arts Management Society (GAMS) News

Thank you to all who participated in the Forum and Fun event last month. We received great feedback and we look forward to working with everyone throughout the next academic year. All of the Graduate Arts Management Society (GAMS) student leaders are dedicated to open communication between faculty and students. Please look for similar events in the future. As always, please contact GAMS leaders with any issues, concerns, or questions that may arise regarding the arts management program.

As we prepare for the next academic year, we encourage as many people as possible to get involved in GAMS. Students, alumni, faculty, and community members are all invited to join the society. Please contact **Whitney Gray** to express interest in GAMS (wgray2@gmu.edu).

Thanks to everyone for a wonderful academic year. For those graduating this semester, we send you our best wishes for the future.

Laura Giroux, President

Elizabeth Cullins, Vice-President

Karim Seikaly, Treasurer

Whitney Gray, Secretary

Laura Benson, Student Representative to University Life

Courtney Basich

Mike Hooke

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