HOW THE ARTS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON CAN POSITION ITSELF FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

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Master of Arts

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HOW THE ARTS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON CAN POSITION ITSELF FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

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Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Public funding for higher education, like all budget items in the current economic climate, is under review. The newly created University System of Ohio hopes to streamline funding and differentiate the 13 public universities in the state of Ohio so that Ohio citizens get the best results for the fewest public dollars. The Arts Administration program at The University of Akron is not the highest ranked nor a major producer of graduates. Both the University System of Ohio and the Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study recommend that universities focus their efforts on a few key “Centers of Excellence.” This will guide all public universities in making crucial funding and planning decisions and help the overall quality of education in Ohio, as well as its economy. In light of this, the program must position itself for future success within the University System of Ohio’s funding priorities.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Endless gratification goes to my parents for giving me a lifelong passion for knowledge, learning and education; to my sisters for their unwavering love and support; to Randy for his eternal patience; to Steve for his keen eye; to Tony for being my partner in all things. Thank you.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the arts on a community is a topic of much discussion and in some ways cannot be quantified. The enrichment of individual lives, the inspiration of the next generation, the chronicling of our cultural heritage, and other benefits are too numerous to list. In terms of economics, Americans for the Arts estimate the overall impact of the nonprofit arts industry to be $135.2 billion nationally.¹ And yet the training of future arts administrators may be endangered. Researcher Michael Sikes noted that:

Several arts administrations programs are in trouble and some may be eliminated entirely … American University is facing closure; the program at the State University of New York at Binghamton is closing down; the University of California at Los Angeles’s program has already been eliminated.²

Several factors are a part of this trend. Anemic recovery from the recent recession, scarce funds stretched ever thinner for arts and education, and the current mood of austerity all culminate in some drastic measures and no organization should consider itself immune to scrutiny. The Master of Arts in Arts Administration at The University of Akron is no exception. The correlation between education level and economic prosperity is the key to future success, and Ohio has steadily been declining in national

average of the number of residents holding advanced degrees. The State of Ohio has been studying how to improve higher education with several initiatives through the Ohio Board of Regents, the controlling agency of higher education in Ohio. The 10 Year Strategic Plan for Higher Education is the culmination of these efforts, and was released simultaneously with the Report on the Condition of Higher Education in Ohio: Meeting the State’s Future Goals. These documents contain the rationale supporting several strategies that have the potential to directly influence the Arts Administration program at The University of Akron.

In the current mood of austerity, it is no longer feasible to believe that new goals or programs will come with the requisite funding. As the introduction to the 10 Year Strategic Plan states:

Higher Education Leaders have long argued that these undeniable contributions [the benefits of a vibrant system of higher education] to Ohio’s economic future justify additional investments of state dollars. “If you give us more money,” it is said, “we will produce more.” A better approach, and the one embraced in this plan, is that higher education will organize itself to produce more graduates, create more jobs, and produce more tax dollars. This will, in turn, enable state leadership to invest more in higher education.

The overall goal of the plan is to ensure that the scarce public resources dedicated to higher education are being spent wisely, and with maximum impact on the economy and the future earning potential of Ohio citizens.

Placing even more scrutiny on The University of Akron is its location. Northeast Ohio has five public universities in a fourteen county area, but the statistics of the area do not match such a wealth of educational opportunities. These public universities award

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only 25% of public bachelor’s degrees and 30% of public graduate and professional
degrees in Ohio, while containing 35% of its population aged 18-64. The region must
become more productive if it is to remain competitive in the global economy. The
Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission has looked
into this challenge and reported on its findings.

There are several ways to determine the efficacy of a higher education program.
The national rank and prestige of the program, the association with professional or
educational associations, the direct relationship with the local and regional businesses and
industries, the presence of guidelines established by peer review on the content and
methods of education, and the success of graduates are all indicators of a successful
program. The Association of Arts Administration Educators has addressed some of these
factors with its publication of Standards for Arts Administration Graduate Program
Curricula. AAAE affirms that “individual programs find this support enormously helpful
in making their case within their own colleges and universities, in articulating learning
outcomes as they relate to their own curricula and to the professional development of
their students.” If the Arts Administration program at UA is to remain competitive, it
must ensure that its content and methodology is in line with the best practices.

This study sets out to define the challenges facing the Arts Administration
program at the University of Akron. It will do this in three ways: by examining the
impact of the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Higher Education, by looking into the challenges
and benefits of its location in Northeast Ohio, and by evaluating the content of the

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5 Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission. Collaborate Innovate
6 Association of Arts Administration Educators. Standards for Arts Administration Graduate Program
program within the guidelines of the Association of Arts Administration Educators. It will then give recommendations on how the Arts Administration program can position itself for future success.
CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF OHIO

The economy is inextricably linked to education. A well-educated workforce has higher earning potential, and this correlation is likely to increase in the near future. With technology becoming more pervasive, it is expected that four out of five jobs created in the next 20 years will require education beyond a high school diploma. Ohio needs to make education a priority to stay competitive in the new global economy. Therefore the three goals of Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents Eric Fingerhut’s 10-year Strategic Plan are: 1) Graduate more students; 2) Keep more of Ohio’s graduates in Ohio; 3) Attract more degree holders from out of state.

The Ohio Board of Regents has long overseen higher public education in Ohio, but each school was essentially independent. There was no comprehensive plan in place for the schools. Criticisms leveled at Ohio’s public colleges and universities imply that they have been trying to be all things to all people, rather than focusing their attentions and budget where they excel. With 13 four-year universities and their 24 branch campuses, as well as 23 two-year community and technical colleges, there was no

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universal strategy in place to ensure that Ohio’s higher education is meeting the demands of Ohio’s citizens. This is all set to change with the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Higher Education to create The University System of Ohio.

There are several key strategies to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan that will affect The University of Akron. The most prominent aspect of the plan is the emphasis on “mission differentiation” and the creation of “Centers of Excellence” at each university. A “Center of Excellence” is a flagship program that the university excels at on a national level. While it may be easy to conclude that Ohio simply has too many universities, the truth is that Ohio has an average number of schools per capita, and should focus on having those schools perform at an advanced level.10

Improving Ohio schools’ reputation will attract more students to Ohio, and reducing redundancy will help allocate resources more effectively, therefore lowering the cost of an education in Ohio. Creating the Centers of Excellence will focus efforts in these areas. Once students are in Ohio, the problem becomes keeping them after graduation. As the Ohio Board of Regents recently learned, “within one-half year of graduation… 27% of bachelor’s graduates leave Ohio and 24% of master’s graduates leave Ohio.”11 Ohio produces more bachelor’s degrees per capita than average, but loses them at an alarming rate.12 For example, in the 2004-2005 school year, Ohio lost as many graduates as Illinois, but Ohio had a net loss of 9,000 graduates, whereas Illinois

had a net gain of 9,000 graduates. Ohio is losing graduates, and not attracting graduates from other states. Ohio needs to both recruit more graduates and retain more graduates to meet goals for a more educated population.

Part of the Strategic Plan calls for schools to partner with local businesses to create opportunities for students to expand their educational experiences through internships or co-ops. In addition to the appeal of paid internships offsetting the cost of education, real world experience lures students who are apprehensive about making the transition from school to employment. Furthermore, between 50% and 80% of co-op students land full-time jobs with their co-op employers post-graduation, which helps to increase the retention of graduates by 30% over five years after graduation.

Just as local businesses can help Ohio’s education system improve, Ohio’s schools can help Ohio businesses and promote regional economic development. Many well-documented collaborations between an industry and a university already exist, notably Silicon Valley in California and the Route 128 corridor in Massachusetts. MIT’s impact on the economy is estimated at 5% of the total workforce of the state and 25% of all manufacturing sales. The University of Akron already has some success in this strategy with its College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. Through

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partnerships with area businesses like Goodyear, former rubber companies are now helping to establish the former “rubber capital of the world” as the “Polymer Valley.”

Another key strategy of the Strategic Plan is to create the Ohio Skills Bank, a database of the education and training programs in a given region, and what potential employers can expect to find in the local workforce. Regional economic directors will work with the Ohio Board of Regents to assess what skills exist to lure employers. They will also look at what skills are needed, and work with schools and adult training centers to create or enhance programs to match the needs of a growing economy.

There are too many underperforming programs that create unnecessary competition for students, faculty, and scarce financial resources. This is not the first time that schools have been asked to trim floundering programs:

Several state officials, including former Attorney General Jim Petro and former Chancellor Roderick Chu, urged universities to pare back on mediocre or redundant programs without much success… [In] 1995, the regents asked the University of Cincinnati, Bowling Green, Kent State and the University of Toledo to cut their doctoral history programs and took away their funding. Each of the programs ranked in the bottom third nationally. Akron and Kent combined their programs, but the rest found new sources of money.

The plan is not, however, to begin by cutting programs. Each school was to have turned in a report that outlines their Centers of Excellence to the Chancellor for approval by the end of 2008. The Chancellor will have the final approval of Centers of Excellence with a mind towards academic strength, national ranking, and potential for economic

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stimulation, and will use the Centers of Excellence for future funding recommendations for the universities.  

By encouraging schools to focus on a few key programs, the strengths and weaknesses of each school, and therefore their future direction, should become clear. Chancellor Fingerhut has emphasized that schools should not view this direction as an order to cut programs: “We’ve approached this from the negative in the past – ‘What can we cut?’ – as opposed to, ‘How can we reallocate resources to support excellence?’ What we can no longer do is fund regardless of whether we’re funding the quality of the mission.”  


There is no limit on how many Centers of Excellence a school may have. 

The University of Akron has the fourth highest enrollment of public four-year universities in Ohio. It ranks sixth in research expenditures, with $26,888,000.00 spent on research in 2006. It is listed as one of the urban research schools in the University System of Ohio, and therefore designated as an important part of economic development for the region. An excerpt from the Strategic Plan describes The University of Akron: 

The University of Akron, a STEM-intensive institution, has long focused on the industries that would transform Akron from the “Rubber Capital of

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the World” to a city and region brimming with potential in polymers, advanced materials and engineering. Over the last decade, it has significantly increased its research portfolio and gained national recognition as an exemplary institution for its productivity in technology transfer and commercialization. A continued strong focus on areas that integrate basic and applied research, entrepreneurial education, intellectual property law and technology transfer expertise is critical to the future of the city and Northeast Ohio.25

The University of Akron has two Centers of Excellence in place, both in STEM categories.

The first Center of Excellence is in the Enabling Technologies: Advanced Technologies & Sensors category, in Polymers and Advanced Functional Materials. Listed as the oldest, largest and most active polymer program in the world, this was an obvious choice for the first Center of Excellence at The University of Akron.26 The College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering has a history of being a high-volume producer of papers in the field, and the University’s partnerships with area businesses exemplify what the University System is trying to achieve in tying local business to educational programs for potential interns and future employees.

UA’s second Center of Excellence is the Austen BioInnovation Institute, which is shared with Northeast Ohio Medical University (formerly the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine) in the Biomedicine & Healthcare category. This Center of Excellence is actually a collaboration of five partners: the two universities, as well as Akron Children’s Hospital, Akron General Health System, and Summa Health System, all led by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. This collaboration will have the ability to leverage private funding and venture capital investment in a way each

individual institution could not, and is a significant part of the City of Akron’s plans to create a “Biomedical Corridor” as an economic driver for the city and the region. All of this emphasis on STEM programs does not mean that UA should cease to consider its other options. Some universities have several Centers of Excellence in multiple categories.

The University of Cincinnati has the distinction of receiving the first Center of Excellence in the Cultural and Societal Transformation category. This category focuses on programs that “in significant and innovative ways, study factors that affect the human condition and community welfare and offer solutions leading to the greater social and economic prosperity of individuals and communities.” UC’s College-Conservatory of Music hosts departments of music, musical performance, conducting, composing, drama, dance, musical theatre, theater design and production, and arts administration, among others. The College-Conservatory Program was the first of two Centers of Excellence that University of Cincinnati received in this category. The second was for their Center for Design and Innovation in the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning. To date, there have been 12 programs recognized at ten schools in this category.

In February of 2011, Eric Fingerhut, who was appointed by former Democratic governor Ted Strickland, stepped down as Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. He was the only remaining Democrat in the cabinet of newly-elected Republican Governor

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John Kasich. While Fingerhut was the architect of the 10 Year Strategic Plan, it was passed with “overwhelming bipartisan support” in 2008, so its ultimate fate is unknown.

Board of Regents chair James T. Tuschman suggested that the plan would not be entirely scrapped: “The Kasich administration will scrutinize higher education more closely. After all, the State of Ohio must get a good return on investment.” Tuschman had the opportunity to speak to the presumptive nominee for chancellorship, and went on to say:

The new administration will be very concerned about continuing to eliminate redundant administrative costs and duplicative academic programs. It seems unlikely that a new chancellor would dismantle the entire strategic plan. Whoever is appointed will most certainly focus on the parts of the plan that require efficiency and cost-cutting, rather than, for example, rewarding campuses for meeting benchmarks.

It also stands to reason that any major changes in policy would not happen overnight, and would take into consideration the currently political climate that helped create and pass the University System of Ohio.

Former Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro clinched the appointment to finish Fingerhut’s term from Governor Kasich in early March, and will likely continue on in that capacity when that term is complete. Petro said that he supported many of Fingerhut’s accomplishments, including the creation of the University System of Ohio and the Centers of Excellence. Also supporting Tuschman’s proposition is the creation of an advisory committee established to find ways for Ohio universities to share services.

Petro himself ran for Ohio Governor in 2006 on a platform that included creating “charter” universities, aimed at saving the State of Ohio money on funding higher education, so it’s safe to assume that this remains one of his priorities. Kasich and Petro share a view on government services that prioritizes “reducing inefficiencies,” as evidenced by the Beyond Boundaries report produced jointly by the Office of Budget and Management and the Governor’s Office of 21st Century Education:

The solution is not to just perpetuate these inefficiencies with new or increased sources of revenue. In a state with a very high tax burden already – and recovering from a $7.7 billion state budget shortfall – now is not the time to raise taxes. Rather, it is the time for state and local leaders to think creatively, challenge the status quo, and find new ways to deliver services at the same or reduced costs.

In the current mood of austerity, these kinds of priorities should be expected from the current administration in Ohio government.

One critical issue facing The University of Akron is its location in Northeast Ohio, which has four universities in four contiguous counties in Ohio: Cleveland State in Cuyahoga, The University of Akron in Summit, Kent State in Portage, and Youngstown State in Mahoning. The region also is home to one of the last independent medical schools in the country, the Northeastern Ohio Medical University. This region is the only one in Ohio to have this density of public higher education institutions. Population decline in the region has led to fierce competition between the four schools. To investigate this complex situation more fully, The Northeast Ohio Universities

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Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission was created. Its report was published in December of 2007, and Fingerhut embraced the Commission’s recommendations and stated he would oversee their implementation. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

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CHAPTER III

NORTHEAST OHIO UNIVERSITIES COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION STUDY COMMISSION

The Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission actually predates the University System of Ohio. The Commission was formed in 2006 by the 126th General Assembly of the Ohio State Legislature via House Bill 699:

The North East Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission shall develop a plan and may make legislative or other logistical recommendations for the following, with respect to the University of Akron, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine [now Northeast Ohio Medical University], and Youngstown State University:

1. Strategic and purposeful collaboration among the institutions;
2. Partnering among the institutions of both undergraduate and graduate academic programs;
3. Sharing of at least some governance mechanisms, particularly as they relate to common basic functions, among the institutions;
4. Development of a coordinated approach to the academic and administrative roles of public higher education in North East Ohio, while maintaining the separate identities of the institutions.

The goal of the Commission’s recommendations shall be to promote greater access and affordability for students and an overall improved quality of higher education in North East Ohio.42

The Commission made 18 recommendations, which it divided into three categories: student access, affordability and success; educational quality and collaboration; and

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resource efficiency. These recommendations were made with the University System of Ohio in mind, so many of them dovetail with those goals. Some of them have the potential to impact the Arts Administration program at The University of Akron directly.

One recommendation of the Commission is “that the legislature provide targeted, ongoing funding… for economic redevelopment partnerships in urban areas adjacent to campuses.” Most of the universities in Northeast Ohio are located in major metropolitan areas. The Commission notes that students base their choice of schools on many factors outside of academic programs and reputation, and setting is one of those factors. Also, many cities across America are experiencing a renaissance, and it is important for urban universities to be a part of that rebirth. Just as a region is linked to the strength of its education, universities are tied to their location, and both rise or fall together. The success of a city can raise the profile of its university, and attract more and a higher caliber of students and faculty.

The arts are an important part of urban economic development. In his landmark book, The Rise of the Creative Class, Richard Florida notes, “regional economic growth is driven by the location choices of creative people – the holders of creative capital – who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant, and open to new ideas.” This leads to a discussion of “quality of life” issues, which are replacing simple economics as reasons for relocation for individuals. Florida finds many instances of people selecting locations

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based on amenities that support a chosen lifestyle, and then looking for employment, rather than finding a job first and then building a lifestyle in that location. This emphasis on quality of life is supported not only by individuals, but by companies as well. One study found that two quality of life indicators were held to be important by business CEOs, regardless of the type of industry: entertainment (restaurants and cultural amenities) and community image and spirit (festivals and other community events).  

Ohio universities should be a part of this arts-based urban economic development. For example, Cleveland State University collaborated with neighboring PlayhouseSquare, a nonprofit arts and culture presenter, and The Cleveland Play House, a regional theater, to jointly renovate the Allen Theatre inside the PlayhouseSquare complex in downtown Cleveland, which is nearby the CSU campus.

Another recommendation of the Commission is to “develop and facilitate greater mission distinctiveness among the universities.” This recommendation is aligned with the focus of the University System of Ohio’s directive to create Centers of Excellence at each four-year university in Ohio. The Commission suggests not only should the universities become more distinctive, but also that the Centers of Excellence at each school should tie in with the needs of the regional economy. The potential research capabilities of each university will serve to boost their local economies, as demonstrated by other successful university endeavors:

The Commission was struck by data comparing the research funding of public universities in Northeast Ohio with the research funding of public

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universities in other significant metropolitan areas. For example, in the Pittsburgh area, the University of Pittsburgh received about $420 million in federal research dollars in 2005 while Northeast Ohio’s public universities collectively received about $30 million.\textsuperscript{50}

By focusing on Centers of Excellence, funding priorities will be set for each university both at the individual level and the state level.

The natural next step in the process is the also the next recommendation that the Commission makes: after narrowing the focus of each university, they each must “review and justify university programs and enhance those beneficial to the region.”\textsuperscript{51} Rather than look immediately to cut programs, the Commission suggests that the universities could look for opportunities to pilot programs of “academic partnering” in areas where no program is yet ranked at a national level.\textsuperscript{52} Specifically, the Commission recommends that universities “review Board of Regents data and define and identify low-producing and low-demand programs with high regional needs for further review and action.”\textsuperscript{53} For example, there are approximately 2,700 unfilled information technology jobs in the region, suggesting that computer science and electrical engineering might be programs that could benefit from collaboration or consolidation.\textsuperscript{54} Suggested actions include eliminate the program, keep the program but eliminate the major, keep the program at

either the graduate or undergraduate level but not both, strengthen the programs that are
deemed important to the region so that they are no longer low-producing, and consolidate
programs within any or all of the four universities.\textsuperscript{55}

One area targeted by the Commission for future collaboration among the four
Northeast Ohio universities is Fine and Performing Arts:

The Commission recommends that the deans of the Fine and Performing
Arts programs form an ongoing group to share, to the maximum extent
possible, fine and performing arts exhibits and performances across the
institutions in Northeast Ohio. In addition, the group should confer with
professional arts organizations to identify opportunities for shared exhibits
and performances.\textsuperscript{56}

This is one of the most direct recommendations that the Commission makes. In almost
no other program area does the Commission make specific proposals, choosing rather to
leave the details of how the recommendations are carried out up to the universities. As
shown in Table 3.1, the redundancy of fine and performing arts degrees and programs
among the four universities is evident. This overlap among the four universities is fairly
substantial, which may have led to the attention placed on them.

Luiz Proenza, president at The University of Akron, has already issued statements
that he would like to see polymer science, industrial and organizational psychology and
engineering become the main Centers of Excellence for the university.\textsuperscript{57} In his personal
vision for UA in the Commission’s report, Proenza states his goal of UA becoming the
primary public research University for Northeast Ohio and focus on STEM programs,

\textsuperscript{55} Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission. \emph{Collaborate Innovate
Educate: Report of the Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission.}

\textsuperscript{56} Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission. \emph{Collaborate Innovate
Educate: Report of the Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission.}

\textsuperscript{57} Biliczky, Carol. “New Era For Ohio Colleges Urged 10-Year Plan Aims to Raise Number in State With
Table 3.1. Fine and Performing Arts Degrees at Northeast Ohio’s Public Universities

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<td>Music, Performance</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<td>Cleveland State University</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleveland State University</td>
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<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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intellectual property law and technology transfer expertise. In keeping with this goal, as well as following another recommendation of the Commission, UA has successfully chartered the first major collaboration among Northeast Ohio universities since the Commission was formed. UA has agreed to manage “technology, commercialization and intellectual property initiatives by Cleveland State University.”

STEM programs have received a lot of attention in recent years, especially since former President G.W. Bush included the importance of STEM programs in his State of the Union Address in January 2006. Bush proposed increasing both the emphasis on STEM programs in public schools and the funding levels for those programs, which no doubt is attractive to universities that participate in research programs. With The University of Akron successfully cementing its place in STEM programs, it seems that fine and performing arts may not be a priority. Cleveland State University, however, could be primed to take over that area. The personal vision for CSU in the Commission’s report says that CSU has the highest concentration of graduate and professional students in all of Ohio, and that CSU programs focus on producing leaders in business, government and nonprofit organizations. Taking into account the new partnership with PlayhouseSquare and The Cleveland Play House, it seems that CSU is in a great position to make fine and performing arts one of its Centers of Excellence.


CHAPTER IV

THEORIES OF ARTS ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AND AAAE GUIDELINES

The field of Arts Administration Education is a relatively new one, and as such it is still asserting itself in the broader education field. Formal education in the field started in the mid 1960s, and the Association of Arts Administration Educators was founded in 1975. In 1991 AAAE held a meeting in Los Angeles where members came together to discuss problems in the field. Many people voiced similar concerns of lack of funding, lack of permanent faculty, a dearth of research and case studies, and generally not being accepted as a serious field of study by both business and art schools. Charles Dorn, in his landmark article “Arts Administration: A Field of Dreams?” questioned if it was a valid academic field. Part of the problem was that the field of study was not clearly defined, as each program had its own curriculum and focus. There were as many approaches to the study of arts administration as there were programs. A set of standards and a body of research needed to be developed.

A 1998 study set out to identify what arts organizations required from their managers, and what they expected potential employees to have learned from education programs in arts administration. A survey was sent to arts organizations of various sizes

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and programming focuses asking organization leaders to identify skills needed, and how they though those skills should be learned. The overall top ten skills identified, ranked by importance, were: leadership, budgeting, team building, fund raising, communication/writing, marketing/audience development, financial management, aesthetics, trustee/volunteer relations, and strategic management. There was little variation in the skills identified, or their order of importance. Some variations were easy to explain. For example, arts presenters identified marketing/audience development as the most important skill. These types of organizations are more market-driven, so such a distinction makes sense. Smaller budgeted organizations listed grantsmanship and public relations higher than trustee/volunteer relations and strategic management.

Given their size, immediate funding may take precedence over future planning, whereas larger, more established organizations would be more likely to have endowments, and have a mind towards long-term success.

Of the top ten skills identified by the organizations that participated in the survey, only four were described as best learned in the classroom: budgeting, communication/writing, financial management and strategic management. Other skills best learned in the classroom included: statistical analysis, accounting, computer programming, contract law, information management and collective bargaining. So while most organizations put a premium on skills such as leadership, fundraising and

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marketing, the survey results indicate that those same organizations would rather those skills are learned on the job or in practical experience such as internships. This is further underscored in a 2007 study by Anthony S. Rhine. A survey sent to decision-makers at theaters across the country asked respondents to rank the specific types of learning. In order of importance, they were ranked: internships, theater management coursework, supervised work experience at a university, and case study.\(^7^0\)

Michael Sikes redressed Charles Dorn’s fatalistic view of Arts Administration Education in an article in 2000 where he further expanded on what skills were necessary for arts administrators to succeed in modern times:

This article is not intended as a reply to Dorn’s inquiry but instead as an update that views the field in the light of vast changes that drastically alter the context of Dorn’s perspective. Such changes include the downsizing of federal agencies and programs and the loss of funding, increased competition among cultural organizations and entities outside the field, significant changes in audience demographics, multiculturalism, and the culture wars.\(^7^1\)

In addition to the skills identified in the Martin and Rich study, Sikes talks about other topics that are increasingly important to arts administrators. As evidenced by the fact that NEA funding has fallen drastically in recent years, arts administrators must learn to make the preservation and growth of our artistic heritage a public concern while avoiding antagonizing the culture wars again. Sikes suggests, “Programs need to teach skills in politics and government, advocacy and the legal system”\(^7^2\) in order for arts organizations to position themselves for future success:


Training programs must provide their students with a rich knowledge of American institutions through studies of history and political science. Not only must administrators understand how formalistic electoral, governmental, legislative, and legal processes work but they also must understand the more informal processes of influence, lobbying, and advocacy that often have the greatest influence on policy outcomes.73

Only by bringing the importance of arts organizations to the forefront of the American conscience can their funding get priority.

The mission of AAAE is “to represent college and university graduate and undergraduate programs in arts administration, encompassing training in the management of visual, performing, literary, media, cultural and arts service organizations”74 and to foster communication between such organizations while promoting research and development of arts management issues. Arts management, cultural management, arts administration, undergraduate degree, graduate degree, certificate program, discipline-specific, broad-based, non profit or for profit are all forms and focuses of education in this field which share common goals of preparing students for careers in the oversight and facilitation of arts and cultural organizations. And while the uniqueness of each program brings to the table a valuable point of view, the need for some sort of consensus in the criterion of education was apparent.

In response to these concerns, AAAE created the Standards for Arts Administration Graduate Program Curricula. These standards were designed under the belief that students are “entitled to certain outcomes from their education, regardless of the specific emphasis of the program.” The standards are presented in ten categories, with suggestions for foundational, developing, and best practices levels of study. The

categories are: Production and Distribution of Art, Financial Analysis/Budget Management, Income Generation: Marketing and Fundraising, Strategic Planning, Legal and Ethical Environments for the Arts, Policy for the Arts, Institutional Leadership and Management, International Environment for the Arts, Research Methodology, and Technology Management/Training.\(^75\)

Production and distribution of art does not necessarily refer to the idea that the student will be the artist, but rather that the student should have an understanding of the process of the creation, production, dissemination and stewardship of art in the field in which they wish to practice. Each decision that an arts management professional makes should be made in the context of how it best serves the underlying mission of the organization. To that end, students should be able to understand and identify the best environment for producing art, the way audiences interact with and respond to art, and how to maximize both of these potentials in planning and managing the organization.\(^76\)

Financial analysis and budget management is a key component for any business endeavor. A nonprofit’s board of directors has fiscal oversight and fiduciary responsibility for the organization, but employees of the organization are responsible for gathering and presenting information on the current and projected budget to the board. Students should have the ability to read financial documents, interpret them in the context of the fiscal environment, and make recommendations for budgets and strategic plans, as well as advocate on behalf of the organization when seeking funding.\(^77\)

Few things are as important to an arts nonprofit than income generation. Earned income (raised through marketing) and contributed income are essential and often codependent revenue streams that must be carefully projected and then fully realized. Students must be aware of current trends and technology in order to create and execute successful plans for fundraising and marketing. At the graduate level, it is expected that the student can research, create, execute and evaluate marketing plans and fundraising plans, including writing grants and proposals for major gifts.78

Strategic planning is defined by AAEE as “the intentional and reasoned alignment of resources toward the fulfillment of organizational mission.”79 This broad topic can be considered the summation of acquired skills in nonprofit management and is rarely presented as a stand-alone class, but rather is integrated into the education process, encouraging students to learn to constantly evaluate and reconsider what best practices are, how they are applied, how they can be modified along the way, and how best to track progress towards strategic goals. Best practices should include in-depth case studies with recommendations and/or practical experience through internships or assistantships.80

The legal and ethical environments for the arts are a fluid environment. Arts administrators must be fastidious in their decision-making and in the current political climate of austerity in the face of economic challenges will be under increasing levels of scrutiny. Whether it pertains to contract negotiations, copyright laws, maintaining 501(c)3 nonprofit status, or local, state, federal or international regulations, nonprofit

managers are responsible for guiding their organizations safely through day-to-day and long-term planning. Students should be able to use knowledge to identify current issues, foresee potential conflict situations, and apply theoretical situations to practical solutions.\textsuperscript{81}

Policy for the arts comes from many places. Government at all levels is a primary source, but policy can come from a variety of other sources, including foundations, media corporations, unions, trade and professional associations, and even private sector agreements. Arts administrators need to be able to not just understand and follow current policy, but how to advocate for their organization, and the arts in general, in creating future policy.\textsuperscript{82}

Institutional leadership and management is a crucial skill for future nonprofit leaders to develop. Even if a student has no desire to ever achieve a position like president or CEO, leadership is performed at all levels of a successful organization. Collaboration, alliances and partnerships are increasingly valuable where a constituency has more power than individuals, and building and encouraging these coalitions is important to the health and growth of arts administration as a whole, as well as at the individual organizational level. Also, understanding the role of the board, and how to work with that board, is a skill any nonprofit manager will need.\textsuperscript{83}

That we now live in a global community is an undeniable fact. Technology and communication advances shrink our globe and expose us to new and different cultural

environments, and students must be aware of the international environment for the arts. Collaboration and partnerships in the international community will expose us to best practices in a variety of situations, which can hopefully be employed in a variety of applications. Whether it’s in the capacity of travel, marketing, copyright law, forming partnerships, or cultural tourism, students should be able to understand the legal and logistical issues in international settings pertaining to their chosen field of practice.  

Research methodology is essential to any topic of higher education, but is possibly more important in a growing field of study. As the field of arts administration grows, so will the number of case studies and research projects whose absence initially sparked the conversation among AAAE members in 1991. New research and ideas will bolster the field, and create a path for more rigorous study and applications of findings. We are essentially securing our own future by furthering the success of current and future arts administrators. Students who wish to see the perpetuity of the arts in society must be prepared to argue the case for the arts. Best practices include “the ability to distinguish and appropriately select methodologies and questions in both applied and academic research.”

Technology management and training is an essential component for arts administrators. Technology and its applications serve not to replace current means of production, but enhance their ability to target efforts and maximize success. Limited resources of time, money and personnel can be better directed with the successful use of

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technology, but that does not mean that the best answer is to always do everything “in house.” One need not have the tools or training to redesign a website one’s self, but the ability to understand what the function of the website is, and to communicate the needs of the constituents, clients and supporters of the organization to the web designer is vital. The ability to evaluate, manage and implement IT strategy in an arts organization is crucial to its success.\(^8\)

Arts administration education is constantly evolving. The many topics covered in, and components required for, attaining a degree shift with the advancement of technology, the change of the political climate, and the expanding international influence of an increasingly global society. Whatever those trends may be, the goal of Arts Administration Education should be to produce the next generation of leaders in the world of arts and culture, and prepare them for jobs in that arena.

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, there are two other Arts Administration programs at public universities in the state of Ohio: an MA/MBA business-focused program at The University of Cincinnati, which also includes an MA-only track, and an MA policy-based program at The Ohio State University. The MA/MBA program at UC is a business program that does not necessarily require, but absolutely recommends the dual-degree option. Its core mission is “to prepare and train students to become successful CEOs and senior managers of nonprofit arts and cultural institutions.”\(^88\) It’s much lauded partnership with the Carl H. Linder College of Business is at the core of its identity, further illustrated by its mission statement:

> The philosophy and structure of the program reflects the understanding that sound business training and practical, real-world exposure to the field are both essential qualities of a successful arts administrator. The program further recognizes that the successful arts administrator has the leadership capacity to adapt classical theories and practices to the management of complex and changing arts environment.\(^89\)

The program has received favorable appraisal from such organizations as The Princeton Review\(^90\), and its home in the prestigious Conservatory-College of Music gives it a pedigree that UA cannot compete with. However, as it is primarily focused on the

\(^88\) Arts Administration. The University of Cincinnati. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
\(^89\) Arts Administration. The University of Cincinnati. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
\(^90\) Arts Administration. The University of Cincinnati. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
business end of Arts Administration Education, it is focused on educating future CEOs more than general practitioners, the focus of the program at UA.

As evidenced by its name, the Master of Arts in Arts Policy and Administration at The Ohio State University is a uniquely focused program that “is one of the first in the country to dedicate itself to serious research and advanced training in arts policy and administration”\(^91\). Working in collaboration with the John Glenn School of Public Affairs, the department also includes a PhD level degree in Arts Administration, Education and Policy, as well as specialized tracks in Museum Education and Cultural Policy. The course curriculum has three focuses: public policy and the arts and culture; arts management; and arts education policy and program management\(^92\). The goal of the program is to educate cultural policy makers and administrators who can:

1. Critically assess the value and impact of arts-related legislation and public arts programming
2. Recognize conflicts of policy and practice and seek solutions to these problems
3. Understand the concept and importance of comprehensive arts education as it relates to cultural policy and public education
4. Participate fully and effectively in the public policy arena, whether at the federal, state or local level.
5. Educate arts leaders who are prepared to develop new genres of arts programming and more inclusive, interactive relationships between the public and the arts\(^93\).

The program’s heavy emphasis on the relationship between the arts and government and public policy has its benefits. Its setting at the largest university in Ohio and its location

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\(^{91}\) Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy. The Ohio State University. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.

\(^{92}\) Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy. The Ohio State University. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.

\(^{93}\) Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy. The Ohio State University. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
in the state capital of Columbus makes it an attractive program for students interested in this type of education or career path.

In contrast to these two programs, The Arts Administration program at The University of Akron is a practice-based program. According to current program coordinator Durand Pope, “we serve students who have [first] shown a commitment to the arts after completing an undergraduate degree, and second are training to be administrators.”94 The relationship between artist/creator and administrator is one of utmost importance in this approach.

As stated in the AAAE guidelines, “the capacity to be open to artistic creators and their creations and to encourage and facilitate their introduction into the world is a risk-taking endeavor, often challenging the tenets of traditional management.”95 A business-focused degree program will prioritize financial planning and sound business decisions. A policy-based degree program will teach its students how to use the intrinsic and economic values of the arts to influence public policy and government relationship with the arts. But a practical degree program will see the artistic and creative processes as nearly sacred, and respect the role of the audience’s interaction with the artistic experience.

All three viewpoints are valid and necessary; there is not a value system that gives one more importance or relevance than the other. But a combination of all three makes certain that students seeking Arts Administration Education in Ohio will find the program that best suits them.

94 Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
When any large institution is considering making major changes, it is natural to assume that external factors were the initiation of that change. Changes in the community or environment surrounding that institution can often have the power to stimulate these changes, and shape conversations about the future. If The University of Akron decides to make any changes to their programming or degree offerings, the single largest factor in those decisions is undoubtedly related to the formation of The University System of Ohio, and changes in governmental oversight and funding of public universities in Ohio. But internal factors cannot be dismissed, nor can their influence be diminished. As the coordinator of the Arts Administration Program at UA for the last eighteen years,\textsuperscript{96} Pope is in a unique position to speak about the growth and sustainability of the program.

The coordinator of The University of Akron graduate program has a myriad of responsibilities. Currently, he teaches or supervises all but four of the required courses in the two-year program, carrying a course load of no fewer than six credit hours per semester. The other six credit hours are dedicated to administrative responsibilities and the supervision of graduate assistants, and chairing thesis committees. He also recruits, evaluates and recommends candidates for admittance to the program, selects the recipients of the graduate assistantship, and serves as advisor for all students in the program.\textsuperscript{97} As with any tenure-track position, there is also the responsibility to do research or creative work. In the case of this particular program, that responsibility can be met by practical involvement in the field outside the university. One of the major activities is to be involved in an active way in the Association of Arts Administration

\textsuperscript{96} School of Dance, Theatre, and Arts Administration. The University of Akron. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
\textsuperscript{97} Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
Educators, an international association that determines standards for the field of arts administration education, in addition to serving on various committees for the University of Akron.

Having been instrumental in shaping the program as it exists today, Pope has quite a few thoughts about its potential for future success. One of the key pieces of evidence of support for the program from the University that he cites is the existence of the Graduate Assistantship program.\(^98\) This ability to provide full tuition waivers for up to 15 credit hours per semester, and a cash stipend of $6,800 for the school year\(^99\) is a substantial recruitment tool. To date, up to ten students receive the assistantship, and in spite of budget cuts at the state and university level, it remains fully funded by the University. Because there is no undergraduate program in arts administration, these are not teaching assistantships. The students who receive them are involved providing twenty hours a week supporting academic arts programs that have demanding performance or exhibition components.\(^100\) This assistantship program is essential to recruiting top students who might choose other schools and programs without this incentive. It is also critical to the university as it provides much needed support in the School of Dance, Theatre, and Arts Administration; the School of Music; and the Myers School of Art. The interdisciplinary nature of this program is in line with the university initiatives to create symbiotic relationships within the university and to encourage collaborative initiatives.\(^101\)

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\(^98\) Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
\(^99\) School of Dance, Theatre, and Arts Administration. The University of Akron. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
\(^100\) School of Dance, Theatre, and Arts Administration. The University of Akron. n.d. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
\(^101\) Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
Further support from the University for the Arts Administration program is evident in the University’s commitment to searching for two critical faculty and support staff positions.\footnote{Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.} First and foremost, the University has embarked on a national search for a tenure track replacement for the coordinator of Arts Administration. As a one-person department, the search for the right candidate is an exceptionally difficult challenge. Candidates must possess experience in the field as well as experience in teaching at the graduate level in order to sustain the program, and ultimately be awarded tenure. Furthermore, the candidate must have the visionary disposition that can oversee a program in transition, and can nurture and guide it towards future success. An understanding of the field of Arts Administration Education is essential, along with the ability to stay current with progress and innovations in the field. And finally, the coordinator’s role in maintaining a national profile which aids the securing of exceptional internship opportunities for students and providing career development support is essential.\footnote{Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.} Finding the best-qualified successor to the current coordinator will have possibly the single largest effect on the future of the program.

The second position for which the University has approved a search is for a Director of the galleries in the Myers School of Art. This professional staff member is primarily to function as coordinator and curator of the galleries of the University. There may be some teaching responsibilities as well. The person who fills this position also will supervise Arts Administration graduate assistants who have a particular interest in visual arts and museum management. This role will be critical to the multidisciplinary
Though in recent years the success of the arts administration program has been increasingly due to its multidisciplinary approach, it is still a component of the theatre program. Opportunities that may be available with a change in personnel should certainly be considered in this time of transition.

Finally, the coordinator cites the program’s uniqueness within the University System of Ohio as one of its defining characteristics that makes it deserving of a prominent place at The University of Akron. The program at UA is considered to be a practical program. Compared to the two other Arts Administration programs at public universities in the state of Ohio, the business-focused MA/MBA program at The University of Cincinnati, and the policy-based MA program at The Ohio State University, the Arts Administration program at UA will be recruiting students of a different scope and mindset that compliments the other existing programs. Pope says, “We do a good job of teaching strategic thinking and the essential elements of good business practice, as does any good business program. But we also have committed ourselves particularly to, and have the most success with students who arrive with a passion for the arts and an understanding of what it means to be an artist in the world today. That is the unique quality of students, and we try to nurture that passion while preparing them for successful careers in arts administration.”

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104 Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
105 Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
106 Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Arts Administration program at The University of Akron is not the largest program in the university, nor does it have the highest visibility. With 78 Master’s Degree programs at UA, and non-law graduate students representing nearly 10% of the total student body, every program must be sure to have a purpose within the greater plan of UA’s impact on the region, and how the symbiotic relationship between the university and the city continues to thrive in the information age. Where the program goes from here will largely depend on how the University sees its future. UA has two clear choices: retain the program and improve its standing and effectiveness, or seek to discontinue or merge it with another university in Northeast Ohio.

If UA wishes to retain the Master of Arts in Arts Administration degree program, it must grow it into a more significant program. As the only practical Arts Administration program in the state, UA already has brand identity to capitalize on. The lack of visibility of the program could be related to the relatively small number of graduates the program yields. The program was founded in 1980, but has only produced a little over 80 graduates. Even taking into account the fact that in its infancy the program would not have had had a high yield that is still less than 3 graduates per year on

average, far fewer than the 12 students currently admitted to the program each year.\textsuperscript{108} However, according to the program coordinator, the program has improved its graduation rate dramatically in recent years, and he further emphasizes that the program boasts one of the highest graduation rates in the College of Arts and Sciences.\textsuperscript{109} Increasing the number of graduates can only improve the program’s standing within the University.

A structural change the University could enact to strengthen the program would be to separate the MA Arts Administration program from the MA Theatre program. Currently there is only one overlapping course between the two curriculums.\textsuperscript{110} It no longer makes sense to keep the two tied together. Especially in light of the program’s move to the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences, when the former Fine and Professional Arts College was disbanded, there now is an opportunity to become a truly interdisciplinary program that was previously unattainable. Students from all artistic backgrounds have always been admitted to the program, but there were few opportunities for students from a visual arts or music background to take electives in their discipline.\textsuperscript{111} With the hiring of a new Meyers School of Art Galleries Director, that has the potential to change. Additionally, since Graduate Assistants are being placed not just in the Art department and Theatre and Dance departments, but also are being placed in the Music Department\textsuperscript{112}, this further demonstrates collaboration among the disciplines, and coincides with the University’s collaboration initiatives.

The program courses themselves are fairly strong, and cover a wide array of topics. The current required courses are: Research and Writing Techniques, Colloquium

\textsuperscript{108} Arts Administration. The University of Akron. 2010. Web. 1 Dec 2012.
\textsuperscript{109} Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
\textsuperscript{110} Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
\textsuperscript{111} Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
\textsuperscript{112} Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
in the Arts, Audience Development, Principles of Arts Administration, Fundraising and Grantsmanship in the Arts, Arts Administration Practices and Policies, Legal Aspects of Arts Administration, Special Topics in Accounting, Management and Organizational Behavior, and either Marketing Topics or Consumer Relationship Management. The first seven courses are made available through the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences, while the last four are offered in the College of Business Administration, which shows willingness of the University to employ cross-disciplinary study. In addition to these courses are a required internship (3-6 credit hours) and an oral defense of a written thesis (6 credit hours), and one or more elective courses.113

There has been a history of difficulty in getting Arts Administration students into required business courses, or finding a professor for a topic that can teach the class in a way that relates to the arts. Indeed, the Special Topics in Accounting course has not had a consistent professor for the last six years.114 The University should demonstrate a greater commitment to getting basic, graduate-level business courses that are geared towards arts administration into the rotation of course offerings.

The required coursework does an excellent job of covering the topics suggested both by the Association of Arts Administration Educators as well as those deemed valuable by various studies. While technology management and international environment for the arts are not presented as stand-alone courses, these topics are covered in the other classes. Technology management should be given more emphasis. Technology no longer refers merely to having a website. Social and digital media are on the rise and will only become more prominent, as evidenced by the fact that there now is

114 Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.
a proper MLA citation form for tweets.\textsuperscript{115} Social media and networking have created a whole new platform for audiences to connect with the arts, and arts administrators must be prepared to use technology to their advantage to disseminate their artistic product to the widest possible audience, and engage that audience at their level. Part of the role of the Arts Administrator is to increase the visibility and accessibility of their organization and through technology and the internet, the arts are poised to be more accessible than ever before.

The internship requirement is an important one, given how highly regarded real-world experience and hands-on learning are in this field. This is also an important opportunity for UA to build stronger ties between the University and area arts organizations. The Martin and Rich study noted that several organizations “called on arts administration training programs to develop deep relationships with professional arts organizations – beyond internships – in order to strengthen both the quality of the training and the synergy that could exist between academic and arts institutions.”\textsuperscript{116} Having established relationships with area arts organizations would undoubtedly have positive results for the program, the University and the local arts and culture community.

Promoting partnerships with local organizations allows students to network with area professionals, and increase their likelihood of finding employment after graduation. Over half of students who have an internship or co-op opportunity find employment with their host organization, and retention rates are 30% higher for students who had such

\textsuperscript{115} The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2013. Web. 27 Mar 2013.
opportunities. While it is not conceivable that local arts organizations could absorb that many new employees, it is likely that the overall impact on retention rates would be positive. Area arts organizations would benefit from having inexpensive or free labor from students, as well as an influx of new and innovative ideas.

The thesis requirement for the Arts Administration program grew out of the fact that an M.A. in Theatre has traditionally been a research/writing degree leading to the terminal Ph.D. in that field. The terminal degree for students preparing for careers in theatre performance, design, or production has long been the M.F.A., for which there is an alternative to a traditional thesis.\(^\text{118}\)

Currently, the thesis is described as “the culminating project of every student graduating from the Arts Administration program at The University of Akron. Thesis topics may be historical, theoretical, analytical, or, in some, cases, project-oriented.”\(^\text{119}\)

However, this program is a practical program, not a research program. Creating an alternative culmination project to replace the thesis component would make more sense. A “capstone” project could be tied to the internship requirement. Students could document their internship experience, combining the theoretical classroom learning with the practical experience in the field, and simultaneously freeing up some credit hours for other needed classes, such as technology management or a discipline-specific course of study. The Research and Writing Techniques course that is currently designed to prepare students to write a thesis could be retooled into a course that prepares students for the


\(^{118}\) Pope, Durand. Personal interview. 28 Mar 2013.

various types of research and writing they may encounter in the field, such as writing for
web content.

If the University is inclined to discontinue or merge the program, it’s not hard to
surmise why: it is a low-visibility program in an area not highlighted by the University’s
two Centers of Excellence, both of which are in STEM departments. On more than one
occasion, University of Akron president Luis Proenza has declared his support for
STEM-focused programs. His Vision 2020 strategic plan for the University seeks to
capitalize on these programs in hopes of creating more partnerships with area businesses
and growing the research funding and patents produced through them.\(^{120}\) And
considering the pressure from the Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and
Innovation Study Commission to “share, to the maximum extent possible, fine and
performing arts exhibits and performances,”\(^{121}\) there is every reason to consider merging
or sharing programs across Northeast Ohio.

All four universities in Northeast Ohio have robust arts degree programs, both at
the undergraduate and the graduate level. There is variation in the size and number of
majors/degrees, as well as national prestige or rank, but all four universities have a
variety of visual and performing arts programs, as well as clubs, student interest groups,
and non-major courses. It is impossible to conceive of a liberal arts education that would
not require at least a few credit hours of art or art appreciation for graduation, regardless
of the degree being sought. It is therefore hard to imagine that any of these universities
are interested in abandoning their arts programs in their entirety. It is more likely that

\(^{121}\) Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission. Collaborate Innovate
programs will be evaluated for potential merging, allowing the universities to combine their efforts such as when Kent State University and The University of Akron combined their History Doctoral programs:

The University of Akron and Kent State University have formed a consortium to promote doctoral study of history in northeast Ohio. The two universities, located less than 15 miles apart, boast between them an excellent faculty with the expertise to supervise doctoral training in most aspects of history. Students apply to and enroll in one or the other university, but are encouraged to take seminars on both campuses and to have faculty members from both departments serve on their dissertation committees.  

The formation of this consortium allows both programs to continue, and for students to enroll at and graduate from the university of their choice. This seems like an ideal path for the universities to pursue, as it allows each university to retain their arts and culture departments, hopefully allowing them to form partnerships within their own communities. For the Arts Administration program, however, there currently is no other program with which it can be merged.

While Kent State University has a bachelor’s degree program in Theatre Management in its infancy, there are not yet any graduates under that degree program. The program is listed as a concentration of the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies, and is hardly ideal for a student looking for a graduate level of study or an in-depth look at arts administration as most of the coursework is focused on practical theatre applications such as scenic, lighting and costume design in addition to a few business courses.

Cleveland State University has a 16-credit hour certificate program in Arts Management that is housed in its College of Business under the Bachelor of Business Administration:

Marketing umbrella, and is similarly a grouping of undergraduate level courses in various arts disciplines and a few entry-level business courses, none of which actually focus on arts management. Youngstown State University has a Bachelor of Arts in Dance Management, which “is designed to provide skills applicable to teaching dance, with an understanding of basic practices related to creating or managing a small business.” It is an interdisciplinary degree comprised of mostly dance classes (54%, according to the website) with a few theatre and business classes. None of these departments or programs is ready to merge with the University of Akron’s Master of Art degree in Arts Administration. But groundwork could be laid with any, or all, of these universities. The most likely candidate is Cleveland State University.

Cleveland State University does have a Master of Nonprofit Administration and Leadership through the College of Urban Affairs, as well as a fast-track program that allows undergraduate students to combine a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Services Administration and the MNAL in five years. The coursework for the MNAL is similar to the MA Arts Administration at The University of Akron, with classes such as:

- Fundamentals of Nonprofit Administration and Leadership
- Research Design and Program Evaluation
- Organizational Behavior
- Fundraising and External Relations for Nonprofit Organizations
- Financial Administration and Control of Nonprofit Organizations, as well as recommended electives from various other disciplines such as communications, marketing, public administration and social work.

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125 Department of Theater and Dance. Youngstown State University. n.d. Web. 1 Dec 2012.
designed to be completed in two years, and has an optional internship for elective credit and a “capstone” course in place of a thesis.\textsuperscript{127}

While the programs are different in their scope and their aim, it is possible that a partner program with The University of Akron could exist by adding a few classes that are more arts-focused. As the program is already inter-disciplinary, it is conceivable to add a course track that would allow students to pursue the MNAL degree focused on arts-based nonprofits. The basic skill sets being taught to students in the MNAL program are virtually the same as those being taught to the MA students at UA, such as fundraising, marketing, leadership, and financial and legal aspects of managing a nonprofit organization, and 501c(3) nonprofit status is given to religious, scientific, public safety, literary, and educational organizations as well as charitable ones including arts organizations.\textsuperscript{128} However, it is important to note that the MNAL cannot replace the Arts Administration program. As noted by Aleskandar Brkic in his study of arts management education:

\begin{quote}
Arts Management students should always be taught within the same environment as art students. That is because in the professional life of arts managers – though their closest partners will be politicians and business managers – their closest affinity will always be to artists, their fellow creators. In the case of arts managers, they are the creators of institutional and project programs, but they are creators nonetheless.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

The community that surrounds and supports an arts organization is its own life blood, and arts administrators cannot separate themselves from it, or they risk losing sight of their mission. While it stands to reason that one could have a successful career in arts

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administration with a degree in nonprofit management, the specific nuances and history of arts organizations deserve their own courses of study.

In addition to having a program suitable for academic partnership, CSU is in a prime location for forging alliances with arts organizations. Cleveland is home to some of the oldest and most prestigious arts organizations in the nation. The Cleveland Museum of Art is on the brink of completing an eight-year, 350 million dollar expansion and renovation.\textsuperscript{130} The world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra is set to break ticket sales records this year at their home in Severance Hall,\textsuperscript{131} much of which likely results from their efforts to lure younger audiences with performances in schools and other locations.\textsuperscript{132} The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland opened their new building last year, anchoring the Uptown neighborhood on the east side of town. The new building was completed in partnership with Westlake Reed Leskosky, the same architecture firm responsible for the renovations of the theaters in the PlayhouseSquare complex.\textsuperscript{133} PlayhouseSquare has resident companies as varied as Great Lakes Theater, which focuses on classic works, DANCECleveland, Tri-C JazzFest, and the oldest regional theater in the country, The Cleveland Play House.\textsuperscript{134} All of this, plus the dozens of community arts organizations, galleries, and semi-professional theaters make Cleveland an arts rich community that could be well served by graduate students eager for real world experience.

\textsuperscript{133} Litt, Steven. “New MOCA Cleveland Opens to the Public Today from 1 to 6 p.m.” \textit{The Plain Dealer} 8 Oct. 2012. Web. 14 Feb 2012.
The partnership between Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, PlayhouseSquare and The Cleveland Play House and to renovate the Allen Theatre complex has received national recognition from publications such as The Wall Street Journal and American Theatre Magazine. PlayhouseSquare has been called an example of “arts management at its best”\(^\text{135}\) in reference to its pioneering of leveraging alternative sources of income through urban real estate development, property management and partnerships, impressing the likes of National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Rocco Landesman.\(^\text{136}\) This business model has been so successful for PlayhouseSquare, the second largest performing arts complex in the nation, that it is being replicated by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.\(^\text{137}\)

The partnership undoubtedly saved The Cleveland Play House from succumbing to bankruptcy, as they were drowning in debt and the cost of maintenance on their own facilities.\(^\text{138}\) The partnership also is a major part of the vision for the future of the Department of Theater and Dance at Cleveland State University. Michael Mauldin, head of the department, has grand plans for continuing to grow the department. He has already more than tripled the number of theatre majors during his tenure,\(^\text{139}\) and he boasts that 95% of graduates are either employed in the field or pursuing graduate studies in related

fields. Mauldin even hopes to someday host the prestigious American College Theater Festival since the PlayhouseSquare campus could support such an event with theater facilities, the nearby PlayhouseSquare-owned Wyndham Hotel, and other amenities and restaurants nearby.

“I hope this doesn’t sound like hubris, but this places us in a position of promise to become one of the destination programs in the U.S” says Mauldin, who hopes that the environment of professional theatre artists and administrators will serve as an inspiration to students. The students share workspace with professionals: the PlayhouseSquare-owned Middough building is home to the administrative offices of The Cleveland Play House, classrooms, costume and scene shops, and rehearsal space for the Department of Theater and Dance, and also hosts the Fine Arts department for CSU with art and photography studios. CSU is poised to continue expanding their fine and performing arts departments, and has taken steps to be competitive on a national level, making it a likely contender for future Center of Excellence.

The path seems clear to consider a partner program between The University of Akron and Cleveland State University. The resources already exist within CSU to create an Arts Administration program, and CSU continues to grow their arts departments. This type of partnership will not happen overnight; the partnership between CSU, The Cleveland Playhouse and PlayhouseSquare was years in the making, and universities are

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infamous for bureaucracy and slow decision making. Whether UA chooses to retain its Masters of Arts in Arts Administration program or seeks to merge it, what is clear is that Northeast Ohio has a healthy and vibrant arts and culture environment that supports an Arts Administration program. Ultimately, UA must make a decision about where it will focus its efforts in order for the Arts Administration program to position itself for future success. As such, recommendations for the program fall into two categories: recommendations for cementing its place within The University of Akron, and recommendations for securing a partner program with CSU.

Recommendations for retaining the program

- Separate the Arts Administration program from the Theatre program so that the Arts Administration program is truly inter-disciplinary and no longer tied to one medium.
- While considering candidates for the coordinator of the Arts Administration program, focus on finding an applicant with the experience and leadership skills to steer the program through this transitional period.
- While considering candidates for the Director of the Myers School of Art galleries seek out an applicant who has previous graduate-level teaching experience and can help create visual arts-based elective courses.
- Add a course focused on technology management, and emphasize incorporating technology into all classes.
- Petition the University to create graduate-level business courses that are more geared towards arts administration and nonprofit management.
- Continue to strengthen ties between the University and area arts organizations through internship opportunities for students.
• Document internship placement statistics, underlining the commitment between the University and the city of Akron, as well as Northeast Ohio.

• Eliminate the thesis component, and replace it with a capstone requirement tied to the internship experience.

• Retool the Research and Writing Techniques course to be less focused on thesis-level research and more geared towards professional writing and project-based research.

• Continue to grow the program through strong graduates, and begin tracking statistics of their placement in the field upon graduation as demonstration of the program’s success.

Recommendations for merging the program

• Create a committee to explore the merging of UA’s Art Administration program with Cleveland State University.

• Examine the Master of Nonprofit Administration and Leadership program at CSU; identify existing similarities between it and the Arts Administration Program at UA, and what the MNAL lacks that would make it a partner program for the Arts Administration program.

• Examine the various arts departments at CSU to determine what graduate-level courses of study exist that could compliment a merged Arts Administration program.

• Produce a study that details how the program at UA could benefit from a merged program, highlighting CSU’s location in downtown Cleveland and existing partnership with PlayhouseSquare and The Cleveland Play House.

• Develop a relationship with the head of the Theatre and Dance department at CSU to determine how the growth of that department could be tied to the creation of a
graduate-level Arts Administration program or the addition of graduate-level Arts Administration classes to the existing MNAL program.

- Explore the possibility of partnerships and enhanced internship opportunities with the various arts organizations in Cleveland, especially those in close proximity to CSU.
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