

# Annual Academic Program Assessment

## Reporting On Continuous Improvement Efforts

### Program Report

#### Program:

##### Primary Program

Arts Management - MA

##### Associated Programs:

none

##### Program Editor Roles:

Program Coordinator - Kevin Leary, krleary@buffalo.edu

#### Mission Statement:

##### Mission:

Arts managers matter because they are the ultimate mediators between the arts and its best audience. Arts leaders must negotiate the increasingly complex cultural, socioeconomic, legal, and political systems that challenge sustainable arts environments. The University at Buffalo's MA in Arts Management prepares students to face these challenges. Through its unique blend of critical inquiry, analysis, and experiential learning, the program builds a student's capacity to identify and solve the problems inherent in the areas of arts management, production, and cultural policymaking.

##### Goals:

The UB Arts Management MA degree program endorses a list of 6 broad learning outcomes meant to outline the developmental progress we expect of our students. The learning outcomes begin by introducing concepts for students to remember and understand. Following familiarity with these concepts, the program expects students to apply the concepts and distinguish qualitative differences between them. Eventually, after students have become equipped with requisite arts management abilities, students will have the capacity to contextualize and implement solutions to the complex, interdisciplinary problems which affect arts management practice. The ultimate goal of the Arts Management curriculum is to create nimble minds capable of the lateral thinking demanded of arts managers.

#### Accreditation Status:

#### Learning Outcomes:

1: Identify, recall, and reproduce elements of critical arts management and cultural policy theory and practice.

##### Assessment Method

- Reading responses on key theoretical literature on sociology, qualitative and quantitative research methods, arts management, and cultural policy
- Financial accounting inputs and report assignments
- Faculty observation in classroom discussion and the quality of interaction with arts management professionals on site visits to arts and cultural institutions, during Program events, and at sponsored lectures
- Feedback from arts and cultural professionals at the conclusion of field projects in the Program.
- Solicited feedback from arts and cultural professionals at Program lectures and events.

##### Success Criteria

- Students will achieve grades B or higher on assessment assignments
- From observation, external arts management professionals believe students are ready for work in the arts management sector.
- From observation, students sustain and extend pertinent conversation with arts management professionals.

##### Assessment Findings

- 100% of students have maintained >3.0 GPA in core courses (equivalent as the seven core courses are part of a new course sequence).
- Students have demonstrated a reluctance to engage in conversation with arts management professionals at program events
- Arts management professionals have shared frustration with students not engaging in

conversation or the critical questions facing arts manager today.

-Exit survey to measure student preparedness not yet constructed for graduating students.

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### Interpretation of Results

While students have maintained >3.0 GPA in core courses, program faculty have discussed that students are not equipped to converse with established arts management professionals at the desired level. The faculty warrants that these results could be due to deficiencies in contextualization and other arts management knowledge. However, given that students perform well in individual and classroom settings, they believe that the poor assessment points to communication deficiency more than a knowledge base deficiency. But, given that "identifying, recalling, and reproducing" arts management knowledge in a verbal setting is a component to proficiency, they offer three improvement areas to achieve better assessment results: 1. increased emphasis on basic terms and contextualization of arts management systems in core courses - particularly terms steeped in institutional jargon, 2. increase of English language proficiency for international students, and 3. helping students in verbal communication techniques.

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2: Comprehend, explain, and discuss critical arts management and cultural policy theory and practice

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3: Interpret, employ, and apply critical arts management and cultural policy theory and practice.

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4: Critically understand and analyze the presuppositions implicit in the arts management and cultural policy models considered

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5: Identify and solve complex, interdisciplinary problems and tensions that are inherent in the areas of arts management and cultural policy making

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6: Develop, contextualize, and implement creative arts management solutions

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7: none

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### Planning:

#### Program Plan:

The program chose to assess the following learning outcome: "LO 1 - Identify, recall, and reproduce elements of critical arts management and cultural policy theory and practice."

Our assessment of this outcome is part of a much wider, program assessment the faculty is in the midst of conducting after a difficult three-year tenure by a former director. In this assessment/reboot, we have solicited feedback from alumni, arts management faculty, and arts management professionals in order to build a curriculum that responds to the needs of the field and prepares students to tackle the inherent tensions in arts management and cultural policy making. The reboot to date has focused on the following:

Fall 2018:

-Self-review and review of peer and aspirant arts management programs to identify competitive baseline. We noted that in skills based, professional courses, our curriculum lags behind. This is of concern on a number of points, but most importantly it does not prepare students for work in the field upon completion. Our program still holds a differentiating edge in "theory" based courses.

Spring 2019:

-Mission adaptation: the faculty revamped language in our mission statement to better reflect where our course of study is at this point in time.

-Curriculum overhaul to ensure that core courses provide competencies expected of an arts management professional. Merged duplicative courses, re-invigorated skills based courses to better prepare/teach students, and added coursework to supply a practical capstone experience.

-Reform program ethos as a student centered program

-Reform program ethos to not theory and/or practice, but as constantly evaluating, in all courses. In other words, how critical inquiry and practice co-exist in real time to inform all decisions and conversations in arts organization.

-Revise program delivery to position skills/baseline learning at the outset of study to strengthen seminar and experiential learning opportunities.

-Reform courses to ensure that assignments relate directly to outcomes and the expectations of arts managers in the field

Fall 2019:

-Curriculum construction continues, focusing on elective courses for second year students.

-Reforming the assessment plan so that it formally represents the informal assessment we do at the conclusion of every program event and end of semester.

-determine English Language proficiency courses/experiences to help international students continue to improve. We have identified a gap between meeting University proficiency standards and fluency.

While we appreciate the qualitative aspects of conversations with faculty and external evaluators, we will continue to try to find quantitative data – past grades – that establish a baseline for arts management knowledge across our learning outcomes.

Update, 4/22/2020

Spring 2020:

- Arts Management faculty revamp curriculum construction in order to spread elective opportunities throughout a student's course of study.
- Faculty revamp assessment and success criteria for its 6 learning outcomes.
- Faculty preparing for assessment cycle to be submitted by Sept. 30, 2020 for outcomes 2-4 (forgoing 5-6 because of a lack of assessment data given the lack of students in AAP 512/513.)

**Budget Plan:**

For the Program to continue to provide opportunities that test student competencies, particularly opportunities to engage with arts management professionals (observing their critical importance in assessing student progress), the Program will need to maintain its current ratio of monetary support to student enrollment. The program currently spends approximately \$2,250/student over a life cycle in the program. As the Program grows its enrollment numbers, the Program may need additional financial support to continue to provide an exceptional student experience.

**Assessment Plan:**

In the next assessment cycle, we will assess learning outcomes 2, 3, and 4. In the meantime, we will provide more substantive assessment criteria for learning outcomes 1-6 as we further reboot the Arts Management Program and its curriculum.

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Documents:

**Supporting Narratives and Evidence**

**Summary Report:** An executive summary of the program plan

**Curriculum Map:** A report of courses that support the methods and criterion of the assessment plan

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