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## **From Termination to Triumph: Reflecting on the First Ten Years of the University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program**

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### **Introduction**

Anniversaries are opportunities to reflect on past experience and plan for the future. The Arts and Administration (AAD) Program at the University of Oregon admitted its tenth class of graduate students in Fall 2004. In Spring 2006, over 120 students will have successfully completed this two-year master's degree in Arts Management. As part of a series of events designed to celebrate this first decade, I was asked to document the program's initiation, growing confidence, and subsequent success. Like many good stories it began with a crisis.

### **Measure 5 and Higher Education**

Oregon is one of five states (besides Alaska, Delaware, Montana, and New Hampshire) that have no sales tax. Because of this, Oregonians have relatively high state property taxes. In 1990, Oregon Taxpayers United (an anti-tax organization) introduced Ballot Measure 5, which called for a cap on property taxes dedicated to school funding. Its passage was close: 574,833 votes in favor and 522,022 votes against the measure. This marked the beginning of budget uncertainties and subsequent tax measures (Oregon Ballot Measure 5, 1990/2004). Measure 5 cut local, K—12 school funding and dictated that school funding responsibility be transferred from local communities to the state. To

equalize funding, money was shifted out of the state General Fund. This fund had been dedicated to funding prisons, health and welfare, and higher education. The cascading effect on all state services, including higher education, was devastating and continues to this day. For example, toward the end of the decade, the Oregon University System (OUS) received \$153 million less from the General Fund than in 1990 (Frohnmayr, 1998).

All campuses in the OUS scrambled to determine actions to make up for the immediate shortfall of millions of dollars. At the UO, rationales were developed by a faculty task force who, working with upper administration, put forward heavy cuts in targeted areas that hit hardest in Education. Because Western Oregon State University had just been given the nod to be the “teacher prep” campus in Oregon, programs at other institutions, including the UO, became especially vulnerable. The rationale for cuts also supported maintenance of core offerings in liberal arts and sciences.

Between 1991 and 1994, the UO College of Education (COE) lost 39% of its faculty and most elementary and secondary licensing programs (University of Oregon College of Education, n.d.). Words cannot express the pain, anguish, frustration, and sorrow of the faculty, students, staff, and administration as they dealt with these cuts in the months that followed. At the University Assembly, Dennis Pataniczek, Chair of the Graduate Council, read a statement:

The University of Oregon Graduate Council deeply mourns the proposed elimination of a number of graduate programs that are important, valued, and recognized. The loss of 27 graduate majors and 25 graduate degrees will impact 744 presently enrolled graduate students and several hundred additional students who have been admitted, but have not yet completed their degrees. We mourn the loss of internationally and nationally recognized scholars and researchers from our graduate faculty who will depart from our institution following Measure 5 budget cuts. We are and will remain the lesser for it. (Minutes of the University Assembly, UO, February 6, 1991)

The Department of Art Education (ARE) within the School of Architecture and Allied Arts (AAA) was one of the academic programs slated for closure at the UO. This department included an undergraduate major, a certificate program, a master’s program, and a doctoral program.

### **The Department of Art Education in Transition**

The metamorphosis of a plan to completely close the Department of Art Education to one of transitioning into a program in Arts and Administration (AAD) can be attributed to the creative hard work, patience, and dedication of its faculty at the time: Doug Blandy,

Rogena Degge, Linda Ettinger, Beverly Jones, and Jane Maitland-Gholson. To understand this transition, one needs to fully appreciate not only the devastation caused university-wide by Measure 5, but the special circumstances in the department, school, and individual lives that contributed to this “perfect storm.”

Ettinger described the initial announcement of closure of the Department of Art Education:

I’ll never forget that fateful Sunday when I was invited to President Myles Brand’s house. Because I was a member of the Faculty Advisory Council (the campus-wide group of elected faculty who advised the President and Provost), I was granted a professional courtesy of advance notice of the list of campus closures. The “courtesy” process was typical of the administrative process in those days, which was one of “report and approve” rather than “discuss and collaborate.” (University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program, 2004)

Ironically, given the emphasis of program cuts in education, ARE had only six students who were in the teacher certification program. Not only was ARE primarily a graduate program with 67 masters and 18 doctoral students, none of the doctoral student research interests had to do with public schools. ARE did have a legacy of attracting people who wanted to learn and teach about art, but not necessarily in the public school setting. Community arts and cultural services were a strong focus of the program. This focus was attributed to previous well-known faculty, notably June King McFee and Vincent Lanier. Salient features of their work include: acknowledging cultural pluralism; understanding the functions of art within society and how that affects attitudes and values; acknowledging the aesthetic in everyday experience; and moving from familiar cultural artifacts of the student to more unfamiliar items for discussion, critique, and analysis. Programs of this type tend to focus on people first (including often neglected or underrepresented communities) and art products second. As recently as February, 2005 scholars from across the country paid tribute to the influence these two UO educators had on shaping teaching and scholarship in the field (i.e., Paul Bolin, University of Texas at Austin; Kristin Congdon, University of Central Florida; and Laurie Hicks, University of Maine) (Bolin, 2005; Congdon, 2005; Hicks, 2005).

The close-knit, highly respected group of faculty who worked through Measure 5 was diverse in their interests, prolific in their scholarship, and passionate about sharing their community arts legacy. Degge, who had worked extensively with June King McFee, developed classes in Cultural Policy and Museum Education in the mid 1980s for ARE. Later she developed the foundational ARE class, Art and Society, for a master’s level audience. Blandy, having worked as a doctoral student with Degge in Ohio, came to the UO because the community arts focus related to his research in art and special populations and cultural services. In 1986, Ettinger (along with Jones and faculty in computer science and business) established a self-support Applied Information Management (AIM)

Master's Degree initially based in the Portland metropolitan area that fostered relationships in the technology and business world. (The AIM degree remains in operation today.) She also designed and developed a practicum and internship component that later became a critical part of the AAD curriculum. Building on the earlier work of Lanier, who introduced art criticism classes into the Art Education curriculum, Ettinger established an all-school Criticism in Art and Design course that included faculty throughout AAA, with support from a Getty Foundation grant. Maitland-Gholson contributed expertise in visual aesthetics and evaluation. Her knowledge of pedagogy and experiential learning would prove to be immensely valuable in shaping the curriculum transition process. Jones introduced classes in information management, current technologies, and research design. Blandy, Degge, and Maitland-Gholson developed the 200 level series of classes: Art and Gender, Art and Visual Literacy, and Art and Human Values that were approved as part of an undergraduate Community Arts minor in 1989. The popularity of these courses across campus, sustained the department during transition by providing GTF positions and student credit hours.

Because the department was heavily invested in arts and education beyond the public school classroom, there was never any question that the faculty would challenge the administrative decision for closure (B. Jones, personal communication, August 27, 2005). Ettinger described how the arts management component of the department became a critical new focus:

When I met with President Brand and two of the Provosts, I was told that the Department of Art Education, as a "satellite program" to the College of Education, was targeted for closure. . . .I asked quite a few questions about this decision, and reminded the group that ARE was not housed in COE and that the curriculum was broader than teacher preparation. This notion spurred Provost Wessells to make the statement (which came out more like a question) that the curriculum in ARE also addressed "art management." I seized on this phrase, as one would a lifeline! (University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program, 2004)

Ettinger was able to broker an agreement that the ARE faculty would have the opportunity to appeal the closure decision, with the idea that the department would instead transform into an arts management program. The significant catch was that this appeal was to be heard in three days time.

A national and international constituency of faculty colleagues, business associates, and UO ARE alumni--many with high-ranking jobs in academic, business, government, and technology, as well as arts fields, were quickly called to action. UO faculty had developed and maintained close relationships with these constituents and their "social capital" paid off. The call generated enough documentation to fill five, large notebooks comprised of letters expressing outrage at the proposed closure and detailing the importance of the

community arts legacy of the Department of Art Education. These materials served to educate the administration of the breadth of the program and the far-reaching effects of a closure. Materials also supported the idea and benefits of a transition to an arts management program.

The diversity and rank of the ARE constituents were impressive and included people such as John Frohnmayer, National Endowment for the Arts Chair, 1989-1992; Michael J. Ellsworth, CEO of Electro Scientific Industries; and Leonard DuBoff, a prestigious arts lawyer in Portland, Oregon. The administration did not ignore ARE and its advocates. A meeting was held on Tuesday, February 5, 1991 with President Myles Brand, Vice Provost Norman Wessells, and the Art Education faculty. The administration stated that after reviewing all of the materials received, though they would recommend closing the department as it currently existed, they would suggest—"if appropriate, to consider maintaining the program in Arts Management and see where it fits; i.e., Art History, Fine Arts, etc." (N. Wessells Letter from to President Brand, February 6, 1991). Wessells also requested that a transition plan be developed within 60 days. With this tentative—and challenging—authorization, the Arts and Administration Program was officially sanctioned.

Major hurdles quickly emerged. Research was needed to examine how existing arts management programs were structured and how faculty units were composed to support programs. Sorting out how best to preserve and evolve classes from the closed undergraduate and graduate programs into an arts management perspective and master's level audience required extensive curricular review and reform. At the same time that the administration requested the curriculum proposal, the UO Graduate School requested a program review of the program that had just closed. Though ARE faculty were advised to review the old curriculum in relation to the proposed new program, this program review process placed added time demands on the faculty. A 56-page Program Review was completed September 1992--April 1993 for the Graduate School and outside reviewers. One of the valuable insights that this exercise revealed was confirmation of the importance of the community arts and cultural services emphasis in the program.

During the transition, critical administrative positions were vacated in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts and new players introduced to the process. For example, the Dean of the School, Wilmot Gilland, stepped down from his position in June 1991 and Jerry Finrow was appointed. Considerable energies were required to orient Finrow to the transition process and goals. Additionally, as the initial transition process unfolded, confusion and frustration ensued due to differing expectations from the President, Provosts, and Dean of the Graduate School. Administrators conveyed expectations that ranged from a simple renaming of the department to proposing an entirely new curriculum. Faculty were uncertain as to their collective fate--whether they would stay together as a unit, be dispersed across campus, be "adopted" by a larger department within the school, or remain as an independent program.

Faculty met these uncertainties by creating a carefully designed and documented transitional process, which included developing rationales and finding precedents for their own preferred configurations. During this time, faculty continued their teaching, research, writing, advising, and publication. All UO graduate students who were affected by closures were informed by the administration that they had to finish their work by the summer of 1993. In ARE, 52 master's students and 13 doctoral students continued their work, sometimes at an accelerated pace. Concern for these students was evident, as faculty guided students to completion of their theses and projects and helped them begin their professional careers.

In March 1991, Ettinger read a Notice of Motion to establish the master's program in arts management at the School of AAA faculty meeting. The vote was favorable. The proposal for the new degree was then shepherded through The Graduate Council, Council of Deans, Faculty Advisory Council, Curriculum Committees and eventually the State Board of Higher Education. President Myles Brand congratulated the ARE faculty in a letter dated May 25, 1993:

Please accept my congratulations on a job superbly done developing the M. A./M.S. degree programs in Arts Management. In the face of severe budget limitations and during a time that must have brought each of you personal distress, you have developed a new program that is likely to set the direction and act as a model for the discipline for many years to come, I have heard much about your hard work and diligence and your dedication to the goal of developing a high quality and distinctive program that is well within the University's missions. This is planning of the highest art.

### **The Arts and Administration Program**

By spring of 1993 the faculty were ready to recruit the first Arts and Administration (AAD) class for the following fall. Ettinger became the program's first director. Drawing from ARE's community arts legacy, a strong commitment to a multicultural and socio-political orientation to art and culture was maintained. Directed by Blandy, the resurrection of the idle UO Institute for Community Arts Studies (ICAS), a research and public service organization of AAA, provided means for dissemination of community arts and cultural policy research. The ICAS Archive houses abstracts of research done by the graduates of AAD.

AAD leadership in electronic communication and Internet opportunities was evident with the launch of the first website in the School of AAA in 1996. In 1997, *CultureWork: A Periodic Broadside for Arts and Culture Workers*, an electronic journal of ICAS, was published. The first on-line classes in AAA were developed and deployed in 1998. Also in

1998, Gaylene Carpenter joined the faculty from the UO Leisure Studies Program, another casualty of Measure 5 cuts. Her expertise in events management evolved into an important and unique concentration to the program.

Doug Blandy served as the second AAD Program director, from 1998—2004. His careful consideration in selection and mentorship of new faculty as well as leadership in electronic opportunities for communication and curriculum development ensured continuity with program goals while at the same time introducing new areas of interest. As faculty retired or focused their skills in other areas, new faculty with diverse strengths joined the Arts and Administration team. Janice Rutherford furthered the focus for museum and public history when she joined the program in 2002. The additions of Patricia Dewey (2003) and Lori Hager (2005) helped to identify the special needs of music, dance, and theater in support of the performing arts and community arts concentrations. Talented adjunct faculty including Eric Schiff and Kassia Dellabough continued long-term associations with the AAD Program to provide support in the areas of information technology and professional arts management career development, respectively.

Most importantly, to this day students have continued to shape the curriculum as they move through the program and leave their mark through their master's topics and suggestions for curriculum. As Rogena Degge stated recently: "Everyone who came to this program taught us something" (University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program, 2004). Student choices for master's topics have exemplified how arts education and arts management extend beyond classroom experience to include museums, exhibitions, tourist attractions, festivals, events, and celebrations. People of diverse age, heritage, and experience including indigenous people, Internet users, people with disabilities, volunteers, prisoners, transgendered individuals, and nonprofit managers have been represented. Topics have included everything from mobile, hands-on activities for small museums (Yoder, 1996), to a manual for Dia de Los Muertos (Dominguez, 1998) to understanding deep ecology through visual inquiry (Thomas, 1998), to an analysis of the perceptions of Korean-American parents regarding the cultural identity of their children (Kim-Chung, 2004). Graduates have found a variety of employment opportunities in diverse locations. Examples include: Public Relations Manager, Seattle Art Museum; Donor Relations Manager, OMSI, Portland, OR; Director of Education, Frederic Remington Museum, Ogdensburg, NY; Executive Director, Altoona Symphony Orchestra, PA; and Program Coordinator, Van of Enchantment, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, NM.

In ten years, the AAD Program has gained national and international recognition. Applications for admission exceed the number of slots available for new students. Curricular offerings, symposia, and placement opportunities continue to expand. In 2001, the Festival & Event Management Certificate program was added, followed by a Museum Studies Certificate in 2004. AAD combined efforts with the University of Oregon

Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management to offer AAD graduate students a Certificate in Not-for-Profit Management in 2003. In Fall 2004, AAD partnered with the School of Music and Dance to offer the Doctoral Supporting Area of Study in Arts and Administration. In fall, 2005, AAD will host the Social Theory, Politics, and the Arts conference, which will feature 130 presenters from 20 states in the U. S. and 14 additional countries.

### **Summary: Recommendations for Future Arts and Culture Workers**

Future arts administrators may wonder what enabled the founders of the AAD program to direct the program to its current success. One of the questions I asked as facilitator of the Ten Year Anniversary Founder's Panel, November 19, 2004 was "What advice would you give future arts administrators related to your experiences at UO?" From the wealth of information these founders shared, the following list of recommendations was gleaned:

1. **Know and document your goals and strengths.** Every organization should have a clear mission statement and a name that reflects what they do. Each member of the group should share a vita that details their expertise, skills, ongoing professional activities, and how they think they can contribute to the organization's mission. Share this information often with others outside of your group.
2. **Develop a diverse team of professionals.** As you build an organization select cooperative people with complementary skills and who have a passion for the mission of the organization. Balance expertise, experience, and personalities of group members. Diversity is a strength.
3. **Know how you fit into the larger picture.** Have a clear conception of how your program connects to other organizations or levels of operation. Think about duplication of positions and/or programs. Understand the bureaucratic puzzle. Think locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.
4. **Know and honor your founders.** Track your roots, document why and how the organization was formed and how it has evolved. Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of past members as well as be cognizant of the direction current members may be taking the organization.
5. **Develop your social capital.** Identify, support, and share information with constituent populations. Work cooperatively. Respect and connect with people in other organizations. Within your group, track staff as well as alumni. Have contact information readily available.
6. **Be flexible.** Work towards a "change-ready" organization by staging "what if?" scenarios (e.g., funding loss, reduction in staff). Identify vulnerabilities. Think about change in terms of opportunity rather than sacrifice.
7. **Be passionate about what you do.** It is important for others to experience your passion, it can be the impetus for their own actions. Identify your heroes. Act on your beliefs.
8. **Track the money flow.** Create a detailed budget. How is the money within your



group “earned” and spent? How diverse is your funding base? To sustain an organization, what new constituencies should you be developing? Again, think locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

9. **Nurture newcomers.** Besides building social capital, mentoring can bring unexpected rewards. Those we teach may become our teachers in the future. Employees may become administrators. Hierarchies shift as organizations evolve.
  10. **Take care of yourself.** Working in the arts world can be stressful. Every individual needs to know what activities help provide balance in their lives emotionally and spiritually. Make a point to participate in these endeavors regardless of external pressures. Mental stress can also do serious damage to your physical body. Have a plan for taking care of your self
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Elizabeth Hoffman was a doctoral student in the Department of Art Education when Ballot Measure 5 cuts were announced. She remains in awe of the UO faculty as she experienced first-hand their courageous fight for survival as they took on the University of Oregon administration and won. Today, she serves on the Advisory Council for UO AAD. She has taught at the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Humboldt State University, CA and the University of Maine. She has also served on the Oregon Council of the Humanities in the Chautauqua Program. She is passionate about the arts and about Oregon.



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