

ATA 465: Final Internship Reflection

My internship at the Chapman Cultural Center gave me the opportunity to understand what it means to work in an arts organization. By working closely with Melissa I was able to learn from what she told me, but also from observation. Something unique about this experience was witnessing how a local non-profit was approaching the current and long-term effects of the COVID pandemic. The collaborative effort of the staff was and is certainly inspiring and a reminder that large undertakings are better faced together. It is encouraging to know that when funding is low or uncertain that the first priority of the CCC is still the community. I believe that witnessing some of the decision making on how grant-giving may change if major funding is unavailable has prepared me to make my own decisions if faced with similar issues in the future. Instead of having to learn by experience the difficulties of managing an art organization during difficult times, I am able to witness firsthand how they make choices to best suit the community and their organization.

Another important aspect to my time at the CCC is that I started interning at a time in which the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining traction and companies and communities were being called to action to be in support of the message. One of the first issues I discussed with Melissa was how the CCC was planning to show support (and had shown support) for the movement and she quickly told me about an exhibit that the staff had come up with to showcase the lives and art of black people in the community. When she contacted people about the possibly being a part of the exhibit, she understandably faced some kickback where intentions and timing were questioned. This most definitely relates to my major in politics as we have to question if our insight and support are performative or if they are actually applicable to the issue at hand. In this case, the Chapman Cultural Center has a track record of collaborating with and

supporting black artists in the community. This is a reminder of how important it is in both arts management and politics to build trust and support into your community so that no one goes unheard.

My main task was to complete the general operating support grant spreadsheets for the last three fiscal years. Through completing this task, I gained more knowledge of what goes into the grant-giving process and how important it is to ask applicable questions. Some of the questions that held a column on the spreadsheet were not quantifiable, but most definitely important for consideration for grants. Condensing the spreadsheet reminded me of how crucial it is to have local organizations that provide grants to other community organizations. I know that in-state and national grants are helpful in providing financial support for non-profit organizations, but I also see the comfort that local organizations take in applying for grants with an organization also in in the community.

Interning at the Chapman Cultural Center granted me access to the interworkings of an arts organization. My access to the general operating support grant applications was where I feel that I gained the most knowledge of arts management as I was able to see how you have to consider both the quantitative, such as sponsors and 990s as well as the qualitative, such as community outreach in education and collaborations. Melissa and Jenn also reminded me of the importance of team-work and effective decision making. Our weekly outreach meetings were very insightful as they showcased how important communication with artists in the community are. My biggest takeaway from this experience is that arts management is considering all aspects, both social and financial to have effective decision making.