

**MUSEUM STUDIES PROGRAM
ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR 2017-18
NOVEMBER 30, 2018**

1. Identifying Information:

Name of Program: Museum Studies M.A. Program

Type of Program: Graduate (Master of Arts)

Department: Art + Architecture

College of Arts and Sciences Arts)

Submitter: Paula Birnbaum, Professor and Academic Director

Please share copies of response with:

Nathan Dennis, Assistant Professor: ndennis@usfca.edu

Karen Fraser, Assistant Professor: kraser2@usfca.edu

Kate Lusheck, Associate Professor: chlusheck@usfca.edu

Marjorie Schwarzer, Administrative Director: schwarzer@usfca.edu

2. Mission Statement

The mission of the University of San Francisco's **Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Museum Studies** is to shape leaders in museums and cultural organizations of all disciplines. Through a curriculum that emphasizes social justice, community engagement and hands-on experience, students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to strategically transform museums in a constantly changing global context.

This mission statement was revised in AY2016-17.

3. Our Program does not have **Program Goals**
4. In AY2016-17, we also revised our **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)** with feedback from the Dean's Office to the following three points:

Students who complete the M.A. in Museum Studies will be able to:

- 1) Articulate a critical understanding of the histories, challenges and methodologies related to museums as complex public service organizations.
- 2) Analyze institutional practices in light of USF's mission of social justice.
- 3) Apply skills and knowledge essential for successful professional patterns of behavior and practice in all types of museums and like organizations.
- 4) Brief summary of most recent assessment plan: Since we assessed Program Learning Outcome # 2 in Fall 2017, we decided to assess **Program Learning Outcome #3 in Fall**

2018. We assessed this PLO using one assignment from three different required courses that students take as they progress through the program, as we wanted to examine the progression of student learning and acquisition of professional patterns of behavior and practice at the Introductory, Developing and Mastery levels.

5. **Academic Program Review:** the Museum Studies Program will have its very first Academic Program Review in Spring 2019.

The following rubric was developed to assess PLO # 3 in Fall 2018:

| Trait | Introductory (1) | Developing (2) | Competency (3) | Mastery (4) |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Identification of critical issues impacting museums and cultural organizations | Provides little evidence of ability to identify relevant issues impacting museums and cultural organizations | Begins to identify some of the main issues pertaining to a specific national/regional museum and/or cultural organizations | Consistently identifies main issues pertaining to national/regional museums and/or cultural organizations | Shows a deep understanding of the impact of key issues on a variety of museums and other cultural organizations |
| Application of relevant professional skills and practices in regard to specific projects, areas and topics of study within or across different organizations | Demonstrates minimal evidence of ability to apply professional skills to questions and issues relevant to the museum profession. | Applies basic knowledge of museum practices and professional skills that are relevant to a given project or discussion. | Employs consistent knowledge of museum practices and professional skills that are relevant to a given project or discussion | Demonstrates a deep understanding of how to apply relevant museum practices to a project or specific area within an organization. |
| Ability to access and integrate information into a cohesive overview of current knowledge; ability to critically evaluate the meaning, value, and contribution of published literature in the field | Demonstrates minimal evidence of relevant research skills. Knowledge is unrelated to the current research literature in the field. | Exhibits awareness of the research literature in the field. | Relates and understands the current research literature in the field. | Commands an understanding of the current research literature in the field. Integrates mastery of research |
| Verbal and/or written communication | Begins to practice basic communication skills but evidence suggests written and oral communications lack clarity and are challenging for others to understand. | Evidence suggests adequate verbal and written communication of ideas and concepts. | Demonstrates effective verbal and written communication skills | Consistently articulate and professional in verbal and written communication skills, with attention to nuance |
| Interpersonal skills with peers, professionals, and others | Demonstrates minimal knowledge of interpersonal skills in interactions with peers and other professionals. Shows minimal awareness of diverse practices and points of view. | Demonstrates adequate interpersonal skills in interactions with peers and other professionals, including an ability to acknowledge diverse practices and points of view. | Demonstrates effective professional interpersonal skills in interactions with peers and others, including an ability to respond to and engage with diverse points of view. | Demonstrates excellent and sophisticated interpersonal skills in interactions with peers and others, including an ability to respond to and engage at a sophisticated level with diverse points of view. |
| Professionalism: punctuality, reliability, dependability, adaptability | Struggles with punctuality, reliability, and dependability. Has difficulty accommodating to changing situations and variety of complex situations in the museum field. | Usually is punctual, reliable and dependable. Tries to adapt to complex situations in museum field with some flexibility. | Evidence suggests fairly consistent punctuality, reliability and dependability. Responds with flexibility to variety of complex situations in museum field. | Consistently demonstrates excellent punctuality, reliability and dependability. Shows clear willingness to be flexible, creative and adapt to change as well as take on increasing responsibility in the field. |

6. In what follows, we will review the measurement tools used for each of the three courses and their respective assignments (A-C):

A. Measurement Tools for MUSE 603:

Final Collections Policy assignments from the required course MUSE 603, Collections Management/Preservation taught in Fall 2017 were used for evaluating this PLO at the “I” or Introductory level. The Grant Application assignment in the required course MUSE 601, the Cultural & Financial Management, was used to assess this PLO at the "D" or “Developing” level. The Final Portfolio and the Supervisors’ Feedback Reports from the Graduate Internship course (MUSE 610) will be used to assess this PLO at the “M” or Mastery level.

Direct Data for assessing PLO# 3 at the Introductory level in MUSE 603, Collections Management / Preservation: (T=Trait numbered on the Rubric; Note only Traits #1-4 were measured for the individual collections Policy assignment):

T1: M=20%; C= 40%; D=35%; I=5%

T2: M=30%; C= 60%; D= 10%; I=0%

T3: M=40%; C= 30%; D=30%; I=0%

T4: M=60%; C= 30%; D= 10%; I=0%

Analysis for MUSE 603: One of the stated learning outcomes of the Collections Management / Preservation course (MUS 601) that aligns directly to PLO#3 is that students will: *Evaluate the preservation needs of different objects according to their materials, aesthetic intent, and context within a cultural environment.*

Faculty used the written work students completed for the Individual Collections Policy assignment to assess this learning outcome from the Fall 2017 course, MUSE 604, Collections Management / Preservation. In short, this multi-part assignment required the students to *research and develop a strategy for the preservation of a particular object from a Bay Area collection and apply all preventive care methodologies to the various uses (access) for that object (research, display, storage, marketing promotion, etc.)*. The components of this assignment included researching and writing the following documentation: Procedures and Forms offering recommendations for the preservation of a specific work of art from a local museum collection of their choice a General Object Condition Report for their selected object; an Information Sheet on the Artist (if applicable); an Outgoing Loan Agreement; a Policy for Storage and Display Recommendations.

The results of this assignment was assessed in Fall 2018 with the following results:

| | I | D | C | M |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Trait 1: Identify Issues | 5% | 35% | 40% | 20% |
| Trait 2: Apply relevant skills | 0% | 10% | 60% | 30% |
| Trait 3: Access/integrate literature | 0% | 30% | 30% | 40% |
| Trait 4: Communication | 0% | 10% | 30% | 60% |

What aligned with your expectations?

Most students seem to be learning to integrate current literature and professional practice in the field of Collections Management and Preservation into a final project at the end of their first semester of study. Some students' applications of these issues within institutional practices is at a very high level of professionalism, especially in the realm of creating collections management plans that attend to diverse materials that include technology. Yet a few others struggled with how to explain and clearly define how the museum cares for and makes collections available to the public, and some also could better define the roles of the parties responsible for managing the museum's collections. Some of these shortcomings already have been addressed in the Fall 2018 curriculum for the Collections Management course.

What do you understand these results to mean?

We believe these results provide evidence that our students are committed to learning to apply the established standards and practices of collections management and care issued by relevant discipline-specific organizations and reflecting the highest legal, ethical and professional standards. This multi-faceted assignment, although challenging, is an appropriate assignment for assessing PLO #3.

What are the implications of the data?

The required course MUSE 603, Collections Management / Preservation, is taken during the first semester in the graduate program. Students come to the program with varied levels of educational and professional backgrounds and experience, particularly in working directly with collections. This is reflected in the results of the assessment of this assignment. While many of the assignments in this course are completed in teams, we believe it is important to maintain this project as an independent assignment using real objects in a real institutional setting as a means to ensure that each individual student is learning the best professional practices and standards in the field.

B. Measurement Tools for assessing PLO# 3 at the Developing level in MUSE 601, Cultural & Financial Management:

One of the stated learning outcomes of the Museum Studies Cultural and Financial Management course (MUS 601) that aligns directly to PLO#3 is that students will: *Articulate core concepts of fundraising and marketing and how they relate to museums' business models through participating in class discussions and drafting a hypothetical grant proposal for a real museum to a real funder and then analyzing this proposal with the class.*

Faculty used the written work students completed for the grant proposal assignment to assess this learning outcome for Spring 2018. In short, the assignment required the students to conceive of, draft and present in writing an original project for a real museum and write a full grant proposal to the Andrew Mellon Foundation, following the foundation's written guidelines. The results of this assignment, including 24 students' confidential written assessments of their own learning and growth, was assessed in Fall 2018 with the following results:

Direct Data for assessing PLO# 3 at the Developing level in MUSE 601:

| | I | D | C | M |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Trait 1: Identify Issues | | | 20 (83%) | 4 (17%) |
| Trait 2: Apply relevant skills | | 4 (17%) | 16 (66%) | 4 (17%) |
| Trait 3: Access/integrate literature | | | 16 (66%) | 8 (34%) |
| Trait 4: Communication | 1 (4%) | 3 (13%) | 16 (66%) | 4(17%) |
| Trait 5: Interpersonal | 2 (8%) | 2 (8%) | 12 (50%) | 8 (34%) |
| Trait 6: Professionalism | 2 (8%) | | | 22 (92%) |

(T = Trait numbered on the Rubric)

T1: M=17% C= 83%; D=0%; I=0%

T2: M=17%; C= 66%; D= 20%; I=0%

T3: M=34%; C= 66%; D=0%; I=0%

T4: M=20%; C= 60%; D= 15%; I=5%

T5: M=40%; C= 20%; D= 10% I=10%

T6: M=90%; C=0%; D= 0%; I = 10%

What aligned with your expectations?

Faculty was generally pleased by these results but feel that we could better encourage students to seek feedback on their writing and tools for improving inter-personal interactions on team assignments. All students were able to correctly apply and integrate some current issues and literature in the field to a proposed project within an institution. Most demonstrated competency (and in many cases mastery) of professional communication, interpersonal skills and professionalism, although not all were punctual with their assignment and in regard to their interactions with their classmates at the team level.

The students seem to be learning to integrate current literature and professional practice into a final project at the end of their first year of study. Some students' applications of these issues within institutional practices is remarkably sophisticated, especially in the realm of creating collections management plans and access to collections for marginalized communities (given their prior experience in MUSE 603 as described above). Yet a few others were not able to articulate a strong argument for funding on behalf of an institution because they lacked of knowledge about museum education practices (which are in fact introduced in their first semester course, MUSE 600) or, in one case, knowledge of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA, which is covered extensively in the following first semester required courses: MUSE 600 and 603; and in the elective MUSE 607, Museums & the Law, also taken by many first semester students). The first lack of knowledge suggests reinstating the program's course focused on museum education (MUSE 609). The second lack of knowledge has already been addressed in the Fall 2018 curriculum by reinstating the annual workshop on NAGPRA and reinforcing curricular assignments in response.

What do you understand these results to mean?

We believe these results provide evidence that our students are committed to learning to apply needs in the field to practical products such as a grant proposal for funding and that the grantwriting assignment, although challenging, is an appropriate assignment for assessing PLO #3.

What are the implications of the data?

There has been discussion as to whether to make this assignment more fictitious in order to all the students more creative license. The data, however, implies are that we should continue to use real world case studies and funders in order to help apply skills in a real world setting.

C. Measurement Tools for assessing PLO# 3 at the Mastery level in MUSE 610: Internship Class:

Review MUSE 610/Internship course (required) - final portfolios & supervisors' feedback – as ‘M.’

After they complete their first year of coursework, students enroll in an internship course that helps them track their progress and learning at a host site. Faculty assessed the student portfolios of their internship work, in addition to feedback provided in writing by site supervisors for 24 students (some sites hosted more than one student and thus these results only reflect 20 sites).

Direct Data for assessing PLO# 3 at the Mastery level in MUSE 610:

T1: M=50%; C= 50%; D=0%; I=0%

T2: M=50%; C= 50%; D= 0%; I=0%

T3: M=100%; C= 0%; D=0%; I=0%

T4: M=96%; C= 0%; D= 4%; I=0%

T5: M=100%; C= 0%; D= 0%; I=0%

T6: M=100%; C=0%; D= 0%; I=0%

| | I | D | C | M |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---|----------|-----------|
| Trait 1: Identify Issues | | | 12 (50%) | 12 (50%) |
| Trait 2: Apply relevant skills | | | 12 (50%) | 12 (50%) |
| Trait 3: Access/integrate literature | | | | 24 (100%) |
| Trait 4: Communication | 1 (4%) | | | 23 (96%) |
| Trait 5: Interpersonal | | | | 24 (100%) |
| Trait 6: Professionalism | | | | 24 (100%) |

What aligned with your expectations?

The students performed an impressive amount of work at their internship sites, as demonstrated by their portfolios and they were able to analyze their work at their host institution in regard to larger issues about the field covered during their first year of study in the program. Even more impressively, the supervisors uniformly rated the students very highly in regard to their communications, punctuality and professionalism as well as knowledge of current literature. Nearly every host institution (with only three exceptions) offered students either extensions of their internships or paid work after the completion of their internships. We were very pleased by these results even though we were also challenged in that only 50% of the supervisors assessed students' skills and ability to identify issues relevant to a specific workplace at the mastery level.

What do you understand these results to mean?

We believe these results provide evidence that our students are mastering skills essential for professional behavior in a way that helps them succeed in internships with the very positive result of attaining either paid employment or a continued relationship with the organization-at-hand.

What are the implications of the data?

The fact that half of the supervisors did not rate the students' skills to be at a mastery level indicates that the internship is an essential stepping-stone to advancing classroom learning into professional mastery.

1. **Final Results of AY 2017-18 Assessment:** The assessment of PLO# 3 across the three courses taken in progression in the program (Semester 1, Semester 2, and Semester 3) shows that the students are effectively being introduced to professional patterns of behavior and practice in all types of museums in their first semester in the program, and that they build upon these skills from the “developing” to the “mastery” levels in diverse curricular settings and skills-based course as they progress through the sixteen-month program curriculum. While the majority of our students enter the M.A. program with substantial professional experience in the museum field, 33% come directly from their undergraduate degrees and have less professional experience, and this differential was apparent in assessing PLO#3 given its focus on professional patterns of behavior and practice. In certain cases, we were reminded of the value of particular elective courses that should be reinstated (such as MUSE 609, Museum Education Practicum) to ensure competency in students' understanding of professional practices in the field of Museum Education. Our required foundational course MUSE 600 (Museum Studies: History/Theory), for which we did not assess for PLO#3 (but it is taken in their first semester of the program and also introduces professional skills), already includes a full session of readings from Museum Education theory and practice along with a site visit with an extensive meeting with a variety of staff members in Museum Education. We might reconsider how that course curriculum, which also introduces students to a variety of museum careers and professional practice, could include a measurable assignment for PLO#3.
2. **Closing the Loop:** In AY2019-20, MUSE faculty will continue to refine the curriculum after we have had a chance to process the recommendations from our very first Academic Program Review in Spring 2019. We plan to meet as a faculty, and also meet with the Dean's office, to discuss the reviewer's recommendations on possible changes to our Curriculum. Following this discussion, we will revise our Curricular Map and possibly the progression of courses taken throughout the sixteen month program to ensure that the students have ample opportunities in all of their courses to develop professional skills. We will also make a plan to assess PLO#1, which we have not yet done, in next year's report for AY2018-19. Finally, following the Academic Program Review we will reassess our assessment methodology. We would like to consider new strategies for assessment that include online rubrics embedded in Canvas, which many of our faculty use in their courses, as they may be more effective for measuring our PLOs for courses taught by multiple faculty members. This will allow us to incorporate assessment more directly into existing course assignments so that we can capture more data with less effort.