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A Case Study of Exhibit Design and Installation Processes in an Illinois State-Funded University Museum

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A CASE STUDY OF EXHIBIT DESIGN AND INSTALLATION PROCESSES IN AN
ILLINOIS STATE-FUNDED UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

by

Nina Marie Fuscaldo

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2009

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Public Administration

Department of Public Administration
in the Graduate School
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Nina Fuscaldo, for completion of the Master of Public Administration degree, presented

on March, 26, 2014 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: A CASE STUDY OF EXHIBIT DESIGN AND INSTALLATION PROCESSES IN AN
ILLINOIS STATE-FUNDED UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr.   John Hamman

The purpose of this paper is to assess the process for exhibition design and installation in a case

study of an Illinois state-funded University Museum. The case study methodology focused on

the administration of a self-administered interview questionnaire to professional staff using a

review of contemporary research and current practices of select US museums within the region

to provide a basis for recommendations and improvements centered around questionnaire results.

This study views different aspects of the exhibit design and installation processes at this

museum, including internal communication, museum hierarchy, budgetary restrictions, and

volunteers. The analysis shows that the state-funded University Museum runs relatively

efficiently with their current verbal design and installation processes. If adopted,

recommendations may potentially further improvement in the efficiency of the exhibition

process. Recommendations include: the use of RFP forms, the formalization of the design

process by appointing a staff member with the authority to make final decisions on design, the

use of available employees more like an assembly line process for exhibitions, and the informing

of all staff as to the current state of the budget at all times. Mainly, staff interviews stress the

importance of formal communication in meeting exhibition process objectives.

INTRODUCTION

Museum staff, volunteers, and benefactors are central to an efficient and effective functioning museum. While some may think every museum is designed the same, in fact they are not, as each museum is unique. To know whether a museum is functioning properly, one must take into account the museum's history, as well as the internal mechanisms that keep it working. The purpose of this research paper is to assess the current processes undertaken for exhibition design and installation at an Illinois state-funded University Museum. The museum in this study is considered to be a small museum based on funding; this also illuminates the importance of this research (Imls.gov, 2014). Much of the current literature on best practices is based on large museums and very little exists on small museums; this paper argues that best practices used by large museums may be adopted effectively by small museums, but no studies have determined whether this is the case. Small museums have minimal staff, monies and display space, so communication is key between the staff, who oversee a small museum's administrative tasks.

Best practices based on examined literature, exhibitions must be well planned to avoid later issues; this can be done by examining the internal and external forces that weigh on any museum before work commences on any exhibition. Within the pre-planning phase this is examined through a series of questions museum personnel must address, such as the cost of the exhibition and the amount of staff required to have an exhibition come to fruition. The pre-design phase comes after the pre-planning phase and addresses five areas unexpected problems could come from these areas include, collection research, community need, fundraising capacity, financial resources or physical framework of the building. The design phase and installation phases move forward from these pre-layed plans in the pre-planning and pre-design phase. Renovation of space musts be addressed when needed to ensure that museum patrons and

artifacts are safe and in a pleasant environment. Though grants may be used to obtain renovation funding they take quite a bit of time and fundraising is a better option when time is a factor. The use of Request for Proposal documentation or RFP has been used in large federally funded museums for years; this type of form is said to streamline budgetary planning. Though this form is mainly used in large museums there is no reason why a small museum would not be able to use these to their advantage. In the interest of the environment it has been suggested to reuse more recyclable items, this case study museum has already begun this process with annual exhibitions showcasing recycled materials. They have also addressed the practice of color scheme to assist in story telling of particular exhibitions; as well as some interactive exhibits to grab the audiences' attention.

The case study for this paper is guided by a self-administered questionnaire given to the professional staff of a small, Illinois state-funded museum to determine the extent to which best practices are currently being followed, as well as to which extent they might further be effectively adopted. The American Museum Alliance (AAM) offers definitions of best practices for American Museums, the section called Standards Regarding Leadership holds key information for communication and processes. They state, "The governance, staff and volunteer structures and processes effectively advance the mission."(aam-us.org, 2013). This best practice particularly applies to the museum used in this case study. Based on the results of the questionnaire and a review of related best practices in the literature as compared to current practices of the cast study museum, suggestions will be given to the staff to improve the efficiency of the exhibition design and installation processes, as well as other exhibition related areas that may need improvement. If adopted, the best practice recommendations may

streamline the exhibition design and installation processes, as well as improve communication, save money, and make all processes more efficient.

For this research paper, the case study University Museum is considered a small museum based on its operating budget. According to the Institute of Museums and Library Services and its Museums for America grant program, the General Museum category identifies museums with a budget of less than $419,741, as a small museum (Apley et al, 2011). The University Museum first opened its doors in 1874, as a science museum, and over the years has been housed in 11 different campus locations (Huffman, 2014). Just as the location has changed over the years, so has the focus, which now includes the arts, humanities and sciences. The current facility housing the museum galleries, opened in 1974. Since then, the state and university have upgraded museum facilities numerous times, in part, to meeting building code requirements and other university teaching and research needs. The multi-storied building is made primarily out of concrete, as was the architectural trend for educational buildings of the time (Jordan, 2010 & Facilities, 2013 and Museum.siu.edu, 2013). These upgrades include routine maintenance of the concrete both inside and out, to more complex upgrades such as asbestos removal in 2008 (Museum.siu.edu, 2013). The museum shares this building with numerous classrooms and various other departments. The area of the building that houses the two museum exhibit halls has an open lobby between them with two sets of doors that open directly to the outside environment. This lobby design has caused temperature and humidity fluctuations that could affect artifacts and art when exposed to them for either short or long periods of time depending on the material. In 2013, the north hall of the museum was upgraded with a self-contained glass entrance, which should greatly reduce the temperature and humidity fluctuations in this space (Museum.siu.edu, 2013). Besides the exhibit halls, the first floor of the museum also houses the

preparation areas, print and document storage area and the Curator of Exhibits' office. The second floor of the museum is where other staff offices and the graphics production areas are located (Facilities, 2013). The museum's permanent collection has been stored off-site, since 1970.

In relation to the current exhibit design process, one of the questionnaire respondents described this as, "Anyone of the staff can propose an exhibition, they usually discuss this then with the Director if she gives the OK, then in a staff meeting the exhibition is discussed, with its parameters how it fits our mission and where and when it can fit in the schedule as well as what resources we have that could work for it. If the staff is supportive then the exhibition goes on the calendar and into planning and organizing." The current installation process, as described by one of the respondents states that "Installation is carried out by the curator of the exhibition, the curator of exhibits and graduate assistant staff as well as volunteers and museum studies student employees. The design aspect depends on the aim of the project and skills of those working with it. Tasks are divided up according to staff availability and abilities of participants to ensure a successful installation, curator of exhibits does the overall overseeing of most installations." In relation to the case study findings, if the current processes for exhibition design and installation appear to be problematic, suggestions will be given based on the "best practices" found in the contemporary literature. When discussing exhibition design, there are many factors that must be taken into account: the space, the artifacts, the visitors, the budget, and the safety of the housing environment (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007). If these factors are not considered, then any number of problems can arise during the installation process. Common exhibit installation problems include: running out of time before an exhibition officially opens, display cases not fitting together properly, the exhibition space being too small or too large for the design, and text

panels and labels having errors, just to name a few (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007).

Problems that occur in this phase can affect other aspects of daily work at a museum, as each

museum function relies on others to operate properly, such as exhibition planning, publicity,

advertising, community outreach, fundraising, etc. (Curator of Exhibits, Security Officer and

Faculty Advisor for the Museum Student Group, 2013).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), there are certain functions that should be generally observable in each museum. AAM states that museums are meant to serve the public, are thought to be trustworthy, and are popular within the community; they are also meant to educate communities, partner with schools, and serve every community. They are economic engines, and yet, somehow struggle to meet community needs. These "functions" show the importance of museums as educational institutions, and also that the AAM recognizes the difficulties that many museums face during these times of economic uncertainty that are causing funding cuts and donation reductions around the United States (aam-us.org, 2013). As the Museums Association Code of Ethics states, a main ethical task of a museum is to review, innovate and improve; this is both possible and necessary to keep new exhibitions and visitors coming into the museum (Museumsassociation.org, 2013.).   Why use a British museum association as a guide for ethics as opposed to an American museum association? This is because the American Alliance of Museums does not specifically state, as a section of their ethics code, that museums need to review, innovate and improve, while the Museums Association does.

Contemporary research on planning and decision-making: According to Crimm, Morris and Wharton (2009) exhibit planning needs to be more fluid.   Well-planned exhibits reduce stress and improve likelihood of meeting objectives. Fluid planning encompasses internal and external factors working to minimize threats to an exhibit's success. The authors state that there are four main elements that are typically identified during the planning phase: strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These elements are arranged to form the acronym SWOT, and assist in identifying external and internal threats, as well as opportunities and forces that may have an effect on the overall project. See Figure 1 below (Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009).

Figure 1

Environmental Analysis, or SWOT
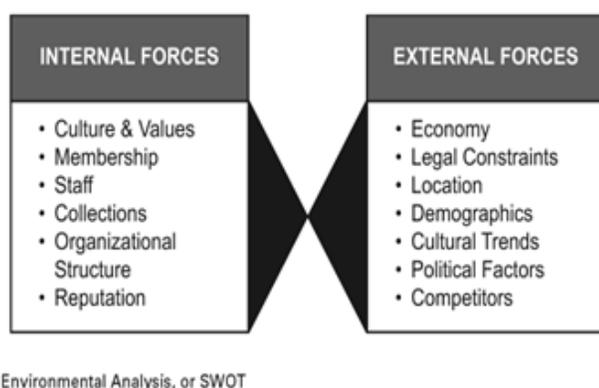
This figure is meant to be a visual representation of any type of strength, weakness, opportunity or threat that could affect museums during any time. It is suggested that this be taken into account whenever planning an exhibition. By noting the internal and external factors, it is hoped that the most feasible path will be illuminated for the planning phase. The authors also suggest undergoing the process of benchmarking; this process involves finding the current best practices from other similarly focused museums and attempting to emulate these practices in your own museum's setting, this could be done by going to conferences, checking the other museums websites, or even visiting other museums. The authors also noted that each museum design should begin with a preplanning phase:

"Each decision becomes the basis for future decisions and project direction.... they become the bedrock for your building.... changing your mind later can involve throwing out the

work of....   groups and design teams potentially delaying the project and adding work and cost as you double back." (Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009 pg.74).

In the preplanning phase (aka: pre-designing phase), there are certain questions that the authors suggest every museum ask before moving forward on a project. They are: "Do we have the staff, collections and finances to do this? How much will it cost and is the funding capability there? What does our audience and community expect? Are sound plans in place for collections, visitor experience, and outreach? Have we assessed our physical framework and space needs? Can the board make a unanimous commitment to this project?" (Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009 pg.26). These questions are of great relevance to the preplanning process, and to better explain these questions and how they relate to the planning and implementation process, see Figure 2 that shows this questioning processes' intended flow.

Figure 2
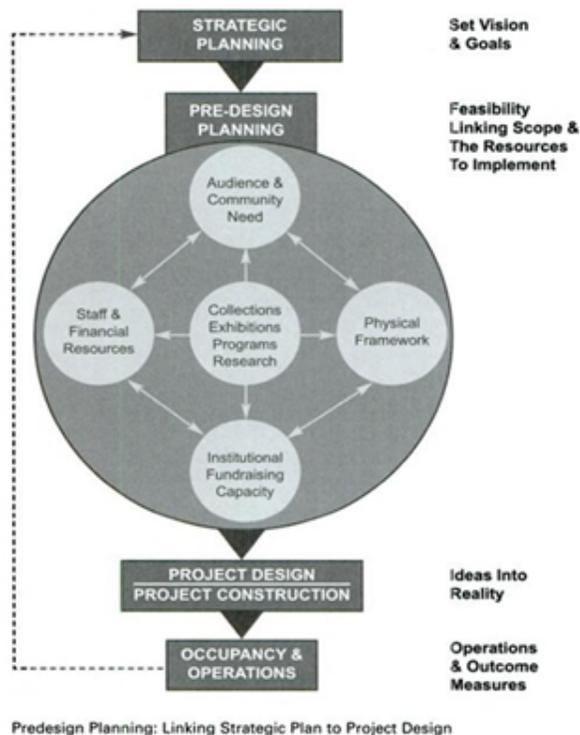
(Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009)

This predesign planning phase takes into account the five important areas that are involved in planning a successful exhibition design, reducing the amount of unexpected problems that could arise from any of the five areas, whether they be collection research, community need, fundraising capacity, financial resources or physical framework of the building. After the predesign planning phase is completed, the design process may begin.

There are a variety of people that can be involved with the design process with each person or group announcing decisions or presenting ideas to the museum "manager," who oversees the total process to avoid costly quick decisions (Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009 pg.76).   Each design process is different and not all require the same level of vigilance against these costly quick decisions. The sample project organizational flow chart in Figure 3 is an excellent example of those who might be included in the process. This particular chart is under the assumption that construction will be taking place, thus the building site design team area has an architect. Most museums do not undergo extensive, extravagant renovations very often. However, if one were to undertake this task, this organizational flow chart example depicts the chain of command during the pre-design, design and installation stages and gives a general idea as to who must report to whom (Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009).

Figure 3

(Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009).

Sample Design Team Organization Chart

In general, small museums do not have the funding to support the amount of staff needed to follow the organizational flow as seen in Figure 2. However, the principle behind the chart remains true, no matter the size of the museum, since everyone should be accountable to someone specific during each phase of the processes. The tasks that must be completed for the planning phase to be successful are <u>choosing the right planning teams</u>, <u>involving leadership in planning and decision making</u>, and <u>preparing the board in advance</u>. Also, to ensure a compelling vision, the planning team must incorporate internal and external viewpoints as noted in Figure 1, and assign responsibility for implementation and oversight of planning. They may also choose to complete a thorough feasibility study allowing sufficient time to truly understand the options, this may not be necessary for all exhibitions as some are installed in a short period of time (Crimm, Morris, & Wharton, 2009 pg.26). When all of these tasks have been addressed, the planning phase has been successfully accomplished.

Contemporary research on space and safety: Kå;berg (2009) provides information on the process of redesigning a space to make the displayed collection more cohesive and information about the collection easier to absorb by museum patrons. This is a theme that may be found in some museums that have permanent exhibitions, especially when permanent display collections become larger because new materials come in and are assimilated into an existing exhibition space causing the space to be altered. This could be as simple as the addition of a few pedestals to the removal of a wall. On the same subject, Kå;berg (2009) has another article that discusses the need for renovation in their museum's building. It is stated that renovations to museum facilities are necessary to keep museums a safe place for art, artifacts and patrons. In particular, this is a common theme among older museum buildings, as confirmed by Martin (2000), in which he discusses the physical framework of museums. Museums house old objects for safe

keeping and display, but what happens when the building is no longer up to code with current laws? The need for renovations of older museums is a very common theme in this article, since it appears that although renovations are very important, they may become a lower priority during times of economic turmoil. The author goes on to state that many museums are non-profit organizations and are eligible to submit a grant application to seek funding to update their facilities. However, although grants can be obtained, they may take some time, around 9 months to a full year, before they are appropriated (Huffman, 2014). Fundraising is a more viable option to seek renovation funds for museums housed in older buildings (Martin, 2000).

Contemporary research concerning budgetary constraints: Carson (2007) explains the Request for Proposal (RFP) document use at the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC). A RFP must be completed before a new exhibit is designed and installed, which allows the museum to plan a variety of their resources finitely. While this type of form is used among federal government funded museums, the author suggests that its use be applied to a variety of non-federally funded museums. It is noted that this type of form makes the design and installation process go smoother due to the fact that the amount of money needed can be calculated and accounted for before the actual design process is underway (Carson, 2007). On the same subject, Bartlett (2007) discusses the aforementioned RFP process in more detail for a non-federally run facility. This process, although slightly different than the federal approach to compensate for the difference in protocols, is still highly recommended to museums of all size. The RFP process makes planning projects in museums move along faster and assists in budgetary planning, as well. The inclusion of RFP forms into the museums' preplanning process allow for specific plans to be proposed, approved and budgeted for with ample time to spare

before installation; these forms can also be prefaced by those sending them out to include particular concepts or artifacts into the design automatically (Bartlett, 2007).

Contemporary research on visitors: Adrian (2005) makes suggestions about how to design projects in several fields including amusement parks, museums, and family entertainment centers in the United States. Suggestions made for museums involve making exhibits more portable for easier movement, in case of an event featuring artifacts from an exhibit that need to be moved to another area of the museum. Adrian goes on to suggest making parts of exhibitions more recyclable to promote a green environment and cut-back on unnecessary expenses; it is also stated that recycled materials can be used to construct sturdy exhibits. In addition, picking the right colors for an exhibit is very important, since different types of museums will use different types of color schemes to help guide and explain exhibits to patrons. Science museums are more likely to use metallic and glassy colors to appeal to adults and create a futuristic illusion. In contrast, children's museums use a lot of bright colors to appeal to children. Whereas, history or natural history museums (evolution of plants, animals and early human history) are more likely to use more earthy tones to tie the building to the subject matter, while art museums are often absent of color schemes so as not to distract from the art. Setting the scene for an exhibition is important because different colors evoke different emotions and can affect the length of time spent in an exhibition (Lorenc & Skolnick et al., 2007). Creating an inviting environment is key to attracting more visitors, as well as reducing the rigidness often associated with the sales of tickets at events. If tickets are being sold, it is suggested to place the ticket sales area past an open area where people can come in and sit or charge their phones. A museum can also offer free events to bring people in and have a look around, and perhaps to have a free bite to eat to increase visitor rates (Reimagining Museums, 2011). Hands-on activities for patrons to

participate in are also recommended for people "1-100" (Reimagining Museums, 2011).

Targeting every age group is a recommended goal for all museums, which is why promoting the

museum is of the utmost priority, since visitors are wanted and needed by every museum. In the

2009 article, "Design for Participation," Nina Simon addresses an issue that appears to be

occurring to museums of all sizes around the country, in which the patrons of museums seem to

be disengaged and uninterested in the displayed material. This phenomenon is due to the fact

that new technology is becoming part of common exhibition practice although many patrons do

not understand how this new technology works. Simon suggests that this is often not the fault of

the disengaged patrons, but in fact, is linked to the design flaw of the exhibition. Simon goes on

to make suggestions to avoid and to improve this issue, if it has already come to fruition.

Employees should be aware of patrons' frustrations based on observation or comments. The

main solution to this problem is that if there are new exhibits that have interactive capability,

then there should be a museum staff member near the exhibit to explain and guide patrons

through this unfamiliar territory of the museum (Simon, 2009). Technology is becoming a larger

part of the museum world and museum employees must be ready to install and explain these new

technologies without fail. An alternative, is for the museum to come-up with a self-explanatory

program such as the Houston Museum of Natural Science's *Wiess Energy Hall* permanent

exhibition that incorporates dynamic interactive learning methods including computer graphics,

touch screens, holographic video displays, and virtual reality; all of which can be easily

navigated by non-technological savvy peoples without assistance (Bissoon, 2013).

      Conclusions of best practices based within current literature. Planning and pre-planning

phases of exhibit design and installation are of the upmost importance to ensure clear lines of

communication between different levels of staff, as well as a means to protect the exhibit against

internal and external validity threats. Physical infrastructure must be maintained to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for patrons with this maintenance being carried out with financial assistance from grants and fundraising. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process makes planning projects in museums move rapidly and assists in budgetary planning, as well. Also, the RFP form help the museums' preplanning process allowing for specific plans to be proposed, approved and budgeted for with ample time to spare before installation (Bartlett, 2007). There are a number of ways to potentially boost visitor rates, from free food, phone charging stations to new technology. However, if new technology is used it is very important that there be clear instructions posted or a staff member nearby to explain this technology to those patrons that may be confused or bewildered by its use.

CHAPTER 3

DATA AND ANALYSIS

A case study method was used to assess current practices and to determine if there is a basis for improving exhibit design and installation in an Illinois state-funded, University Museum that wished to remain anonymous. In addition, to protect anonymity of this museum's staff as in accordance with the Human Subjects Research Committee, they are referred to as "respondent's" To answer the general research questions, a qualitative method of inquiry was adopted. This was done by conducting the Expert Sampling Method, which is a selected group of people that have experience and expertise in a particular area (Tochrim, 2006) using a semi-structured questionnaire sent by email to the experts (full-time staff/administrators), who work in the case study museum. The employees that were emailed include the Museum Director, Curator of Collections/Development Officer, Museum Education Director, and Curator of Exhibits/Security Officer and Faculty Advisor for the Museum Student Group. These respondents are the only full-time employees at this museum which these questions could be best answered by; each has worked at the museum for over five years and teach classes to undergraduates/graduate students on museum methods from administrative tasks, exhibition design and installation to collection management, and educational tasks. These experts teach future generations of museum employees the proper way of carrying-out museum tasks.

The email questionnaire method was chosen to make the respondents feel relaxed and able to answer the questionnaire on their time. This allowed for firsthand accounts in areas that each respondent has more expertise in and how these experts view the current structure of the museum exhibit process. The questionnaire was formatted using open-ended questions to allow for personal embellishment by the interviewee. The four full-time employees received the

interview questions to assess current practices and to gain a perspective on whether those

employed by the museum see room for improvement. These four staff members were chosen to

answer the questionnaire over graduate assistants/student employees because each full-time

employee has been working at this particular museum for a number of years, collectively having

76 years of experience at this particular museum.   Graduate students/student employees were

not questioned, as their level of knowledge about the intricacies of this museum were not as

comprehensive as necessary to accurately answer the questions in-depth.

      All questions required a professional opinion by each of the museum staff members

selected for the email questionnaire. As each employee is responsible for different areas within

the museum, the variation between answers could bring communication break downs to light.

These questions can be found in Appendix A, while the original contact email is located in

Appendix B. This questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to experience and behavior,

opinion and values, as well as knowledge and sensory queries. These inquiries were framed in

such a way that allowed for ideal position and interpretive questions. The questionnaire

consisted of fourteen questions, ranging from questions on general practices to changes/updates

of practices over the years, from final say on design approval to budgetary funding per

exhibition, and from previous work experience to community input on exhibitions.   With this

combination of questions, it was thought that there would be a clear multi-person aggregation of

similar opinions on the current state of the museum's exhibition design and installation processes

that could be drawn-upon to provide information for suggestions to restructure these processes.

This is based on the assumption that persons working in the same facility dealing with the same

tasks and processes for years, when confronted with these types of questions, will interpret the

question and formulate a response based on their similar background.   Questionnaires were

transcribed from the electronic email documents into the outline format found in Appendix C, in order to keep the integrity of the quotation and to ensure that the intention of the interviewees' statements remained clear.

The subject of this paper is to review and suggest possible improvements, if it is determined that they are needed based on the questionnaire results, thus the Museums Association fit better with the research method adopted to answer the research question posed. As stated previously: Why use a British museum association as a guide for ethics as opposed to an American museum association? This is because the American Alliance of Museums does not specifically state, as a section of their ethics code, that museums need to review, innovate and improve, while the Museums Association does.

This section of the paper summarizes results from the questions from each of the four respondents with variations between the answers noted and discussed.   Based on any noted differences in the responses, suggestions for an improved method for exhibition design and installation are offered in the following chapter.

The first question the respondents were asked was: What is the current design planning process at the museum? Each of the respondents stated that there is no formal planning process on paper, but that there is a non-formal planning process, which is a collaborative one between the museum's full-time employees.

When asked the next question: What is the current installation process at the museum? Each of the respondents had very different answers that alluded to the museum not having a formal installation process. The commonality between all of the responses is that the museum functions with the assistance of volunteers, University student employees enrolled in classes and part-time University student employees. The installation process is always overseen by the

Curator of Exhibits, although sometimes educators, student employees or volunteers that are interested in exhibition work do have input on the design and flow of an exhibition. The full-time employees see this assistance as positive, in that it allows the museum to continue operating at an acceptable level of efficiency.

When asked the question: Do you see room for improvement in the current processes used at the museum? Some of the respondents agreed that there was room for improvement, while other respondents stated that the current process worked relatively well. One respondent stated that efficiency and improvement would come naturally to the process once the collection resources were uploaded into an electronic database. Another respondent disagrees that improvements to the process could be made and goes on to state that budgetary and staff constraints prevent major elaborate exhibitions, although for the type of exhibitions that are regularly shown, the current process works effectively enough. Among the respondents, who share the belief that the current process has room for improvement, various improvement suggestions were made beginning with the size of the staff, as it is felt that the museum would run more efficiently if there were additional full-time staff. Also, one respondent noted that a museum that trains University student employees how to plan, design and install exhibitions should involve more student employees in each area of the process.

Another question asked each of the respondents was: What their role was in the design phase? As each respondent has a very different job in the overall function of the museum, their personal responsibilities for exhibition design varied per response. However, each respondent did state that during the design phase, they do a lot of discussing of ideas with educators and other museum staff members. The respondents rely on a verbal plan until the person that has suggested the exhibit idea obtains some sort of mutual verbal approval between the Director and

the Curator of Exhibits and then design can begin. This museum does not have an Exhibition Designer, so the design task often falls to the Curator of Exhibits, who also oversees the installation of exhibitions and delegates tasks to student employees, graduate assistants and volunteers. The Curator of Collections is involved in some exhibit design and the installation phase when the exhibition is this curator's idea, in order to insure that the exhibit came to fruition the way it was envisioned.

Respondents were also asked the question: What is your role in the installation phase? In answer to this question, all respondents mentioned that the installation process often falls to the Curator of Exhibits to follow-through, along with his student employees and graduate assistant staff. Other staff members did mention that if time is short and things are not completed as the exhibit opening date nears, they will assist in the installation process if they are available.

When the respondents were asked the question: Have you ever worked at other museums? And, if so how is the process of design and installation different here at the museum? In addition, if so which is more efficient? This question was answered by two of the respondents, who stated that they had either not worked at other museums or they had not worked enough in other museums to have an opinion on the differences or efficiency. Of the other two respondents, one stated that they had worked in a larger museum years ago and it was very relaxed with the amount of time that an exhibit could be planned for and designed before an installation, as compared to the museum under study. It is due to this time-frame difference that the respondent believed that the case study museum is more efficient, since it has to be with the continual changing of exhibits throughout the year. The other respondent, who has also worked at several museums, noted that at one museum years ago their involvement in the exhibit processes was non-existent, while at another museum this respondent worked at, those tasks fell

to the Exhibit Preparator. This respondent goes on to state that in an ideal world the case study museum's Curator of Exhibits would have an official Exhibit Preparator to assist with design and installation alluding that this missing staff member would lead to better efficiency.

The respondents were asked the question: Who has final say on design approval? Each staff member had a different response to this question. One respondent believed the Museum Director has final say on design approval, while another respondent thought final approval belonged to the Curator of Exhibits. Another respondent noted that each exhibit is different and different people are involved in each exhibit in various degrees. This respondent focused on the latter process of installation and states if a museum staff member has designed an exhibit, they will often section-off an exhibition space and ask for assistance from the Curator of Exhibits or his student employee staff. The final respondent believes that no one has final say on design approval, and each staff member makes some design decisions.

The respondents were also asked the question: Who had final approval of when an exhibition is installed? There were once again varying responses to this question. One respondent believed that the Curator of Exhibits had this final say, while another respondent believed that the Museum Director gives final approval. Another respondent believes this is a dual responsibility shared by both the Museum Director and the Curator of Exhibits, as the Museum Director monitors the schedule and the Curator of Exhibits works around this schedule. Other staff members come to the Museum Director to examine this schedule to see when a possible opening in the exhibition schedule is coming up. Along the same lines as this dual responsibility response, one respondent believed that there is no one person who has the final say and that the staff works together to create a feasible schedule for installation.

The respondents were then asked the question: Have the processes changed since you began working at the museum? If so how? Although three respondents confirmed that there had been changes, some minor and some major, one respondent thought that there had been relatively no changes to processes since the beginning of their employment. One respondent that did see some changes mentions that as the staff changes over the years, processes are slightly altered to accommodate the new employee's way of implementing procedures. Another respondent mentioned that the largest change to the exhibit processes that they have seen is electronic access to the collection, as it has made many exhibit processes more efficient. The final respondent to agree that there have been changes mentions that the museum being much busier than when they began their employment. This respondent believes this is due to the altering of two previously permanent gallery spaces into temporary display areas, which has increased the workload for exhibit staff. The respondent goes on to state that this newly available area of display has caused the museum to rely more on outside resources, such as volunteers, to assist with the completion of exhibitions.

When the respondents were asked: What the average cost of an installation was? They had varying answers due to the fact that it is difficult to determine an exact average dollar amount. Some exhibitions cost more to install than others based on size and the cost of paying employees during the installation phase is not included in these responses. One respondent stated a simple it depends, while another mentioned that exhibits, on the average, cost $100 in materials and supplies. One respondent stated that an exhibition can cost up to $400, and the final respondent stated that the cost is around $200.

When asked the question: How many exhibitions are installed per year? The respondents had some agreement as to the number of exhibitions that were installed per year. From the various numbers that were presented, it seemed to average around 30 exhibitions per year.

When the respondents were asked the question: Are all exhibitions budgeted for the previous year or is there was some maneuvering that could be done to add another exhibition into the budget on short notice? The respondents all agreed that there is space in the budget for changes. They also stated that the state budget, as most state budgets are, is based on the previous year's budget. Some exhibit installation expenses cannot be planned for, however, the way their internal state budget is setup allows for modifications. The Curator of Exhibits is responsible for the exhibits aspect of the budget. The museum assumes that each planned exhibition has a $200 expected cost, although the exhibition could cost more or less than $200 with some exhibits costing $100 to install, while others may need $300 to complete the installation. Any monies left-over from one planned exhibit are then used to cover the unexpected costs of others. The respondents mention that this has been hit with budget cuts in the past few years, yet, it has not affected the installation budget even though other aspects of the museum have been affected. One respondent felt that the budget cuts appear to be caused by the success the museum has at fundraising, grant writing and awards. This respondent goes on to mention that these cuts puts the museum in a potentially unstable state, where the budget itself is not enough to continue operations and fund raising becomes more dependent upon.

The respondents were also asked the question: Does the community have any input on what type of exhibitions will be displayed? All respondents concurred that the community has the ability to make suggestions about exhibitions. The respondents each mention different ways that the museum receives this input from the community. Suggestions can come from personal

experiences staff have with community members, the suggestion box inside the museum, educators that schedule school trips to the museum, and through an annual survey sent-out to the local community. Each respondent is very certain that the community has a voice in what the museum is exhibiting. The online catalog of collections is not currently available to the public and as a result, one respondent states that many community members do not know the full extent of the collection, so suggestions are seen in a more generalized nature.

Respondents were also asked: Do you attend conferences to compare the current plans and progress of the museum to other museums and, if so, on what level of equality does this museum sit alongside other museums? Some respondents mention that there is no room in the budget to fund staff attending conferences, although they do attend conferences when they can afford to do so using personal funds. A general consensus among the respondents is that this museum is on par with many other museums and perhaps even exceeding other museum's level of efficiency, especially when the meager numbers of full-time staff and reduced budget is taken into account.

The respondents' answers to the aforementioned questions allow for comparison between them as there are some variations. As each employees works in a different area of the museum their personal/professional opinions are each based out of their niche. Hopefully by discussing these variations that have be discovered a more complete picture can be established and apparent communication issues can be addressed through the discussion and recommendations in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous section of the paper summarizes results from the questions from each of the four respondents with variations between the answers noted and discussed. Based on any noted differences in the responses and deviation from best practices, suggestions for an improved method for exhibition design and installation are offered below.

Based on the related best practices found in the current literature, suggestions for the design process include forming a non-abstract design planning process, promotion of formal communication between staff members, and including an exhibition design approval form. One recommendation for the case study museum, is the use of Request for Proposal (RFP) form to allow for a more formal preplanning process before the design process is even enacted. This type of form has been recommended for use across museums in the United States, and there are a number of templates and instructional pages as to how to make one that can be found on the internet. For example, one instructional page has very helpful tips and lists of what must be taken into account when making an RFP, although the information must be sifted through as it not only applies to museum exhibits, but trade shows, as well. This information can be found at this website: http://www.eswp.com/PDF/ExhibitorsWritingAnRFP.pdf as well as this website: http://www.docstoc.com/docs/4249776/Exhibition-Proposal-Form-Miami-University-Art-Museum (Adams, 2013, and Docstoc.com, 2014). (Note: Although, this information can be found at these websites, it may also be located in different internet locations due to the fact that it is in a PDF format and the information has proliferated; if this web address is typed into a Google search several links appear for the same PDF document.) A template for museum a RFP can be found in Appendix D. The use of the RFP form will allow the museum to budget easier

and transition into the design phase with the beginning of a plan. Along with the addition of the RFP form, a more formal design process is suggested, since the respondents all mentioned that the design process is a verbal process. If this formal design process recommendation is followed, it will assign specific duties to those involved causing a decision to be made as to who is in charge of design approval, so that staff members know who to contact to discuss thoughts on an exhibition's design.   Once this decision is made, a memorandum informing the staff of this person's authority on design approval should be sent out. When all staff members know who has design authority, confusion and redundancy should be easily avoided.   Once any decisions involving an exhibition have been made and approved, a follow up informational memo about said decisions and a copy of the RFP design approval form should be sent out to the staff involved.

The lack of personnel funds to hire additional full-time staff stifles the case study museum's ability to have a more complete full-time exhibits staff, such as the aforementioned missing staff member, the Exhibits Preparator. This shortage of exhibits staff was noted by the respondents and caused them to rely on student employees, graduate assistants and volunteers, who assist throughout the exhibit processes. However, an official Exhibits Preparator would allow for the Curator of Exhibits to focus on other job tasks rather than the installation of exhibits. As the addition of another staff member is not monetarily feasible at this time, a recommendation for improvement of the current installation process involves the adoption of a formal installation process by assigning specific tasks to graduate assistants/student employees and volunteers based on the times they are either scheduled or available to assist. Many of the student employees, who are not being paid to work at the museum, assist in the museum as part of practicum hours associated with museum studies classes, independent studies or internships.

As these people are already required to put in a certain number of hours based on class requirements, it seems logical to give different groups of student employees, different tasks and a time- frame in which it is acceptable for them to be done with these tasks.   For example, if in a semester three groups of student employees are each required to work in the museum for 20 hours, then this augments the exhibits staff.   Each group should be asked what area of the exhibit installation process that they are most comfortable or interested in, and each group should be trained in a different area. If one group prefers to work in the graphics component, then they should be assigned working with the graphics, texts and vinyl used in exhibitions that semester. Another group could then be trained in gallery exhibit preparation and exhibition upkeep such as lighting, painting and pedestal placement and be responsible for the upkeep of this area for the duration of the semester. The third group could be trained in artifact/object handling and their display. This method could also apply to volunteers, who are not enrolled in museum studies classes.   Once the student employees/volunteers have chosen a group, they are not allowed to change groups unless it is absolutely necessary, such as in cases of artifact damage, unduly uneven group sizes or a group member's schedule changing. As most student employees at the case study museum, who are pursuing a Museum Studies Minor or are in the MPA Museum Administration focus, they will be involved with the museum multiple times before they graduate. These groups will be a good way of thoroughly training them in each aspect of exhibition installation; this can be done by making a series of training videos for each group and putting them on YouTube or some website such as that, this makes the videos easy to find, load and learn from. The use of these training videos would also save the Curator of Exhibits time in training each group each semester. These employees should report to the Curator of Exhibits to report progress, and this progress should then be noted and shared with the other museum staff

members to inform those other staff members of the student employees' progress in case of an

unexpected substitute situation or the need for assistance in an installation or deconstruction of

an exhibition (then all staff that may work with the student employees are aware of what tasks

they have been trained in and mastered).

From the respondents' answers that referred to monetary aspects, it appeared to be

evident that communication and knowledge about funding and the budget is lacking. Although

some respondents appear to have an idea about how much money is allocated for specific

exhibits, others had a murkier view. Because of this inconsistency, it is recommended that the

museum keep track of the monies spent and monies still available per exhibition and send out a

memo to all staff members, so as they are aware of the available and spent funds. None of the

respondents mentioned a memorandum or report of this nature in their responses. However,

reports of this type may be in circulation at the museum, but it was not given as an answer, so it

is given as a recommendation based on the information that was gathered. If this research were

to be furthers, some different types of questions would have been asked such as if these

memorandums were in circulation. For the questions asked and responses given by respondents,

the methodology was successful, however, it could have been improved had there been more

knowledge about the inner workings of the museum administration before sending the

questionnaire out.

In conclusion, the research question posed for this paper and the information gathered

through the respondents, "Is there a way for, an Illinois state-funded museum facility to improve

their exhibition design and installation processes?" shows that there was a need for improvement.

Even though the state-funded University Museum runs relatively efficiently with their current

verbal design and installation processes, this level of efficiency could be improved through the

implementation of these few recommendations: begin using an RFP exhibit process form (which addresses the preplanning phase, planning phase and design phase), formalize the design process by appointing a staff member with the authority to make final decisions on design, use the employees that are available more like an assembly line for exhibitions, and inform all staff as to the current state of the budget at all times. As a suggested addendum to these recommendations implement the aforementioned recommendations for a trial period of time, perhaps for one or two semesters, (to see true effectiveness I recommend a full year) at the discretion of the staff members. In addition, if some of the recommendations are not conducive to positive change, then remove or revise those which are not meshing with the existing processes and further stream-line those which are helpful.   Mainly, what this author has taken from the respondents' answers is that formal communication between staff members is of the utmost importance and the main area that could use improvement.

This study viewed different aspects of the exhibit design and installation processes at this museum including: internal communication, museum hierarchy, budgetary restrictions, and student support staff and volunteers. The result of these respondents' questionnaires has shown that there is room for improvement in the current exhibit development processes. The questions that were asked were essentially surface questions as opposed to extensive questioning. One additional recommendation for continuing this study includes the need to add additional questions to the questionnaire to find out more in-depth information about the exhibition process, as noted above. As well as, specifically questioning the exhibitors as they are often those affected by the informal process at this small museum (Huffman, 2014). One more recommendation for future study is to have graduate assistance and student workers fill out the survey as they have not been engrossed in the subject matter for years such as the full time staff.

This may give a more complete picture as to how the student workers feel the museum functions. Another survey of the staff with more in-depth questions could also benefit this research in the future. An evaluation from an outside source such as the AAM's Assessment Program may benefit this museum and uncover solutions to problems that are not apparent in these results (aam-us.org, 2013).[1] However, the results that were found based on these surface questions and the recommendations made could assist this Illinois state-funded University Museum in streamlining their exhibition development processes to be more efficient and/or effective maximizing the limited resources available.

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[1]AAM ASSESMENTS WHICH COULD BE HELPFUL CONTINUES ON FOLLOWING PAGE

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT: REVIEW ALL AREAS OF YOUR MUSEUM'S OPERATIONS, EMPHASIZING STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ALIGNING OPERATIONS AND RESOURCES WITH MISSION.

COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP ASSESSMENT: REVIEW YOUR COLLECTIONS POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT, FOCUSING ON CARE AND USE, ACQUISITIONS AND DEACCESSIONING, LEGAL/ETHICAL/SAFETY ISSUES, DOCUMENTATION, INVENTORY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT: ASSESS YOUR MUSEUM'S UNDERSTANDING OF AND RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS VARIOUS COMMUNITIES AND EXAMINES THE COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTION OF AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE MUSEUM TO INFORM PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL DECISIONS.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questions that were asked include:

What is the current design planning process at SIUC Museum?

What is the current installation process at SIUC Museum?

Do you see room for improvement in the current processes used at SIUC museum?

What is your role in the design phase?

What is your role in the installation phase?

Have you ever worked at other museums if so how is the process of design and installation different here at SIUC Museum? If so which is more efficient?

Who has the final say on design approval?

Who has the final say on when an exhibition will be installed?

Have the processes changed since you began working at the SIUC Museum? If so how?

What is the average cost of an installation?

How many exhibitions are installed per year?

Are all exhibitions budgeted for the previous year or is there some wiggle room if an opportunity arises?
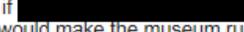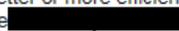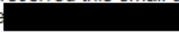
Does the community have any input on what type of exhibitions will be displayed?

Do you attend conferences to compare the current plans and progress of SIUC Museum to other museums? If so on what level of equality does SIUC Museum sit alongside other museums?

APPENDIX B

Email of contact:

Nina Fuscaldo <nfuscaldo13@siu.edu>   Aug 26 ☆   ↰   ▾
to ███████████████████████████ ▾

I am a graduate student at Southern Illinois University in the Public Administration Program
focusing on Museum Administration. During this study participants have received this email
that contains general questions on how the ███████████████ operates. The purpose of
this is to find out if ██████████████████ could be operating under different
parameters that would make the museum run better or more efficiently. Participants are
asked to answer the general questions about the ███████████████ operations to the best
of their ability; participation in the study should take no longer than 30 mins at max. Those
of you that have received this email due to your occupation (official museum staff) and
affiliation with the ██████████████ Participation in this study if fully optional, though it
would greatly assist my research and possibly the museum down the line. Completion and
return of the survey questions indicate your consent to participate in the study. All steps to
protect your identity will be taken within reason. If you have any further questions about this
research you can contact either myself : Nina Fuscaldo Phone: (815)762-7760 or via Email
Nfuscaldo13@siu.edu Or : Professor John Hamman Office: Faner 3132 Phone: (618) 453-
3171 Email: hamman@siu.edu.

Your email address was acquired through the University website. Though you may choose
to opt. out of this research request I would greatly appreciate if you participated in this for it
is the basis for my thesis/research paper. Also I am only asking four people these
questions, so your feedback will directly affect the results of my research. if you choose to
not opt. out of this research request and I have not received an email back from you in two
weeks I shall send a follow up email.

"This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning
your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office of Sponsored
Projects Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail
siuhsc@siu.edu"

APPENDIX C

- **What is the current design planning process at the Museum?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- o We do not have a formalized, written design planning process for exhibits at the Museum that has set policies and procedures to follow.

- o Our informal process is more than likely a result of the limited staff exhibit staff (only one full-time, and 1/2 time graduate assistant--occasionally using the gallery attendants as assistants) and the large number of exhibits that we do each year with an exhibit occurring from as short a period of time as being up for 1-2 weeks, to long-term exhibits that may be up for a year or more.

- o The limited staff and time constraint really impacts the ability to formally design each exhibit using specialized software, evaluation of proposed design, etc.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o The suggestions can come from staff members, artists, members of the University, including students, and members of the community.
- o Usually, a single staff member follows through on the proposed exhibit, but given the smallness of the staff, other staff members are often involved, as our student employees, students in Museum Studies classes, and those involved in proposing the exhibit.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o The design of the projects is based on a series of collaborations between the Museum Education Director and cooperating educators from southern Illinois schools.
- o These collaborations result in learning objectives for the projects.
- o Displays in Museum exhibits resulting from the projects are set up to reveal the ways in which students in the project met project learning objectives.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o Anyone of the staff can propose an exhibition, they usually discuss this then with the Director if she gives the OK, then in a staff meeting the exhibition is discussed, with its parameters how it fits our mission and where and when it can fit in the schedule as well as what resources we have that could work for it.
- o If the staff is supportive then the exhibition goes on the calendar and into planning and organizing.

- **What is the current installation process at the museum?**

  Respondent A had this to say:

  - o Fast-paced would probably define the current installation process because of the number of changing exhibits we have annually. There is no down-time for exhibit staff to really do any planning.

  Respondent B had this to say:

- o The Curator of Exhibits supervises most exhibits. He does the work himself or directs the work of others, usually student employees or Museum Studies students.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o The installation process in education division based exhibits is based on providing student's creative work with an environment that gives the visitor an idea of the strategies employed by students to attain creative objectives.
  - Several recent exhibit installations, for example, were based on projects with a strong cross-curricular component between English and art.
  - The curator of collections and curator of exhibits were consulted on availability of "props" from collections and exhibit resources. Banners were then created to give an overview of the educational project and the exhibit and individual labels were created for student work.
  - Note: Most of the text in education project exhibits is written by students themselves reflecting on their work and their creative process.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o Installation is carried out by the curator of the exhibition, the curator of exhibits and graduate assistant staff as well as volunteers and museum studies students.
  - The design aspect depends on the aim of the project and skills of those working with it.

- Tasks are divided up according to staff availability and abilities of participants to ensure a successful installation, curator of exhibits does the overall overseeing of most installations.

- **Do you see room for improvement in the current processes used at the museum?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- o Yes, as a museum who trains Museum Studies students, we need to work to be a model for exhibitions from the ideation stage to planning, design and installation.
- o Installations are often hindered by loaned collections/exhibitors, as works arrive late causing a rushed installation with the exhibit commonly not opening on the designated opening date.
- o However, more needs to be done on creating proper mounts in case exhibits to give life to flat/small objects, as flat objects/small objects lie there horizontally with no way to see down into the case if you are not tall enough to do so and it also gives a feeling of the object not being special, but another piece in a row of other flat objects.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o What would be most helpful would be a larger staff.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o The current process works relatively efficiently.

o The process will improve as electronic catalog resources for the collection (in process) are completed - this will make ascertaining what collection resources are available for projects and exhibits much quicker and easier.

Respondent D had this to say:

o Not much other than as a museum we need to be careful to not overextend our budget and staff on too many or too elaborate of exhibitions, right now our discussion approval process works fairly well for overseeing this.

o The staff stays very focused on serving the museum mission and keeping the exhibitions at a high level of prestige and purpose.

- **What is your role in the design phase?**

Respondent A had this to say:

o Depending on the exhibit, sometimes the exhibits staff installs and sometimes my teaching assistant and class install.

o In each case, I have vision as to how I want my exhibit to presented based on subject-matter, historic or cultural context from logical flow with objects to paint color, text panel presentations, photographs, graphic design elements, mounts...all that is involved to make it visually and historically/culturally correct.

Respondent B had this to say:

o The Curator of Exhibits may run ideas past other staff members, and other staff members share their ideas with him.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o My role is coordinating and summarizing the input from southern Illinois

    educators. This guides educational projects and the exhibits that result from them.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o It varies by project, some projects I am the curator, designer and preparator,

    other projects I just do the design and oversee the installation.

- o I am responsible for making sure the exhibitions are installed well and on

    time so given our small staff and rigorous schedule of exhibits, I delegate any

    job that I can to anyone that is willing and able to do that task.

    - ▪ Whether they are volunteering, part of our staff, or our

        students. I utilize anyone's time and talents that I can to

        ensure that the museum is productive as it possibly can be.

- **What is your role in the installation phase?**

    Respondent A had this to say:

- o For exhibits that I curate, I lay-out the objects as I want them and assist with the

    physical installation, if needed.

- o I do make sure that objects are secured properly, protected from raw paint

    surfaces to prevent damage, I do have the final say in an exhibit I create on any

    eliminations that might need made.

- o After it is completed, I make sure it has the visual, historic-cultural context that I envisioned, and that the textual information is acceptable for our first audience, the University.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o Depending on the schedule, most of the work is done by the Curator of Exhibit and his graduate assistants.
- o I like to think that others are available to him if he needs help. On occasion I will prepare the labels for an exhibit to save him time.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o I coordinate work with the Museum's curator of exhibits, graduate assistants from the Museum's education division, and students assigned to installations by the curator of exhibits.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o It varies by project, often I am overseeing everyone working on an exhibition and 90 percent of the time I am active in the installation.

- **Have you ever worked at other museums if so how is the process of design and installation different here at the museum? If so which is more efficient?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- I have worked at another museum many years ago, whose changing exhibit schedule was less demanding than ours.

- There was the luxury to do more thinking about the design and a larger window for installation than our Museum has.

- Our museum's design/installation may seem more efficient because there is no choice to be so in terms of the small window of installation one normally has. However, being too efficient sometimes stifles the creativity needed to make the exhibit visually successful and the presentation of the work, be it art or non-art, often appears too homogenous and formula-based.

- Just did not have enough time or don't have enough time is a common expression to do special design. In reality, they really do not have time.

Respondent B had this to say:

- I have worked in other museums and for the most part the work is left to the Curator of Exhibits and his staff.
    - Ideally, the Curator of Exhibits should have a full-time exhibits preparator.

Respondent C had this to say:

- I have not worked at other museums.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o Not enough to be relevant to this situation.

- **Who has the final say on design approval?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- o It depends on who is installing the exhibit. If the exhibits staff is doing so, they work with the curator or artist to see how they want the objects and artifacts to flow. The choice of color, graphics, etc. is usually a mutual decision between all parties involved. If another Museum staff member is installing, they usually take control of the exhibit unless they as the exhibit staff for assistance or input.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o The Curator of Exhibits.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o The Museum Director.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o No one has final say, each of the staff members make some design decisions.

- **Who has the final say on when an exhibition will be installed?**

Respondent A had this to say:

  - The Curator of Exhibits works with the Museum Director, who monitors the
    schedule, to setup exhibits that he is working with.   Other Museum staff work
    with the Director to see where an exhibit gallery opening might be, then a time is
    set.

Respondent B had this to say:

  - The Curator of Exhibits.

Respondent C had this to say:

  - The Museum Director.

Respondent D had this to say:

  - No one has final say, we work together as a staff to decide on installation dates.

- **Have the processes changed since you began working at the museum? If so how?**

Respondent A had this to say:

  - Yes, they have changed as we have had several exhibit designers/curator of
    exhibits each with his own perspective.

- ▪ Some were controlling and installed all exhibits with little or no input from the content curator, while others were all encompassing working with the curator and/or artist to make sure their vision was fulfilled.

- ▪ Some were more organized than others and others were more creative in presentation no matter the time-frame between exhibits and the number of exhibits produced. Because the exhibit process is not a formalized process, but changes with each exhibit type, whether it is art, anthropology, history, science, <u>there is no set prescribed set of rules about what or how things are done</u>. Whether this is positive or negative, I am not sure.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o No

Respondent C had this to say:

- o The primary change in the process is related to electronic access to collection resources used in exhibits. This has made searching the collection quicker and more efficient.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o A little bit, the schedule and extra museum events have become slightly busier today than when I started 8 years ago.

o   This has affected the exhibition workload making it essential to utilize the entire museum staff for more of the exhibition design and installation.

  ▪ The museum has changed two of its gallery spaces from permanent display to changing exhibitions, so this has put more pressure on staff as well.

  ▪   The added exhibition have forced us to look at more involvement from outside sources to complete exhibitions.

- **What is the average cost of an installation?**

Respondent A had this to say:

o   With approximately 40 changing exhibits a year, the cost for non-grant or specially funded exhibits averages about $100/each for materials/supplies. This does not factor in personnel costs for the Curator of Exhibits, 1/2 time GA (@9 months), 1/4 time GA (@3 months).

Respondent B had this to say:

o   It depends.

Respondent C had this to say:

o   The average cost of an education exhibit installation is $400

Respondent D had this to say:

- o   On average it is $200

- **How many exhibitions are installed per year?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- o   On the average there are about 40 of various sizes (some in smaller galleries) and
    varying lengths of time (from 1 to 2-weeks for MFA shows to 1-year for other
    inhouse created exhibits)

Respondent B had this to say:

- o   25-30

Respondent C had this to say:

- o   Two to three exhibits are installed per year.   (It is assumed this interviewee was
    responding for his personal area of experience.)

Respondent D had this to say:

- o   Around 30 exhibitions

- **Are all exhibitions budgeted for the previous year or is there some wiggle room if an
  opportunity arises?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- o The state budget, which funds most of our exhibits, is usually based on the amount of funds from the year before.
- o Recent budget cuts has held the exhibits installation budget relatively stable over the past couple years because it is the public component of the Museum, other areas have taken the budget hit.
  - ▪ Grant-funded and special project-funded exhibits usually have more funds available for exhibit supplies than our state-funded exhibits.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o There is definitely wiggle room. Some expenses cannot be anticipated until the exhibit is underway.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o Education exhibit budgets are tied to the education budget and money received through grants, but there is wiggle room.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o There are budget lines for certain aspects of exhibition materials and special budget lines for special exhibition projects, but not every exhibition has its own budget line.

- o They are all considered to cost the average $200 of materials that is figured into the budget, this results in some exhibitions using only $100 of this and some $300.

- o We have been successful increasing our funding through grants and awards, this has resulted in the ability to take on better exhibitions and better promote these events, our increased funding efforts though have a reduced impact given that our budgets have been decreased while our costs of services and materials have increased.

  - ▪ So this leaves the museum in an unstable condition, where we are dependent on our continued fundraising and grant work to sustain our future operations.

- **Does the community have any input on what type of exhibitions will be displayed?**

  Respondent A had this to say:

  - o Through our Comments Box and a survey that often accompanies our Annual Report sent to about 1500 University, community and beyond, the Museum does ask their opinion on the type of exhibits they would like to see or not see.

  - o Also, through informal comments by visitors and others at receptions, we often hear about what we should exhibit and not exhibit.

    - ▪ But, since many do not know what collections we hold, their responses are more in a generalized nature and not necessarily tied-into our collections,

for which we as a museum should feel obligated to exhibit as part of our

mission.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o The community plays an active role in suggesting exhibit or exhibit subjects.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o Yes - since cooperating educators represent various southern Illinois

  communities.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o They have a lot of input any community member that approaches the museum

  about an exhibition idea will be listened to. The staff will evaluate a proposal and

  decide if it is an exhibition the museum wants to take on.

- o If funding were more stable then more educators would be able to curate

  exhibitions on a regular basis, outside funding is necessary for this to happen.

- **Do you attend conferences to compare the current plans and progress of the

  museum to other museums? If so on what level of equality does this museum sit

  alongside other museums?**

Respondent A had this to say:

- o In regards to exhibits, as a non-exhibits staff member I have not attended conferences specific to exhibits, so I have no means of comparison based on this.

- o However, over the years in other areas, the Museum has been seen as a model museum, as staff have presented at conferences on distance learning/collection digitization, social studies and arts education in the schools, and use of collections in schools, to name a few.

  - ▪ Limited funds prohibit exhibits staff or other staff from attending conferences that might either focus on exhibits or have sessions on exhibits. The only means that we have to compare is perhaps through publications, visiting other museums--which really only focuses on the product not the process.

Respondent B had this to say:

- o I attend conferences when I can afford to attend on my own dime. There is little or no money for staff travel or conference attendance.

- o

- o Despite the much too small staff and the limited financial resources, our museum is one of the most dynamic and interesting museums in the state and, perhaps, the country. The variety of exhibits is outstanding and the exhibits are produced with care and artistry.   We are somewhat behind in technology and exhibit furniture, but superior in imagination, realization and outreach to our communities.

Respondent C had this to say:

- o Yes.

- o The Museum is easily the equal in quality of other museums seen at various conferences, from the AAM to IAM to IAEA.

Respondent D had this to say:

- o I don't attend any museum conferences but do attend other professional art organization conferences.

- o These conference give me opportunities to see museums and special presentations.

- o Our museum is exceeding most other institutions that would be equal on our level of funding and staff.   Our staff has devoted their lives to making the Museum the best it can be and it shows in our programming, collecting and exhibitions.

  - ▪ Some areas we could improve are: Publishing museum catalogs, we often do not have printed materials other than our overall newsletter to document and show the exhibitions.   Given our funding though it is virtually impossible to have support for catalogs.

APPENDIX D

Exhibition Proposal Form   *Miami University Art Museum*

1.   Proposer(s)_____

2.   Title of Exhibition _____

3.   Exhibition Details: a. Theme; b. Description; c. Rationale for Exhibition.   Please attach no more than 1
     page double-spaced.

4.   Proposed Date of Exhibition _____

5.   Description/Summary of Exhibition (150-200 words)   Please attach sheet.

6.   Detailed supplementary information available and enclosed: Yes [ ]   No [ ]

7.   Approximate linear feet of exhibition _____

8.   Budgetary Information

     a. Rental Fee _____

     b. Transportation cost_____

     c. Description and approximate cost of any special installation materials _____
         _____

     d. Total insurance value of exhibition _____

     e. Potential funding source(s) _____

     f. Confirmed funding _____

9.   Exhibition availability: month(s) and year(s) _____

10. Restrictions, if any _____

11. Locations with dates at which works may be viewed
     _____
     _____

12. Contact people and/or special resources
     _____

13. Publications

     a. Available with exhibition: Yes [ ]   No [ ]
         If Yes, specify number of copies available free to Museum _____
         And cost for addition copies _____

     b. Proposer desires a publication to be initiated by the Miami University Art Museum Yes [ ] No [ ]
         If Yes, estimate the cost of publication _____
         *Please attach a detailed budget breakdown of expenses.

    c. Supplementary funding sources for publication: _____ Confirmed: Yes [ ] No [ ]

The Art Museum endorses collaborative efforts with other funding sources for publications, and letters of interest and/or acknowledgement from proposed funding sources are strongly recommended. The Art Museum will not be able to produce catalogues for all exhibitions.

14. Checklist: (Support materials enclosed)

    [ ] Installation shots and/or reproductions from past publications

    [ ] 35 MM slides   [ ] CD-Rom

    [ ] Tentative list of works

    [ ] Background material on exhibition and/or artist(s)

    [ ] SASE for return of materials

Optional

    [ ] Reviews and/or articles associated with exhibition and/or artist(s)

    [ ] Letters of recommendation/support

Signature of Contact Person

_____

Printed Name and Title of Contact Person _____

Address _____

Work Phone (_____) _____ Home Phone   (_____) _____

Email_____

Website_____

Return to: Curator of Exhibitions, 801 S. Patterson Avenue, Oxford, OH   45056

(513)529-2232, Fax (513)529-6555, www.muohio.edu/artmuseum

Revised 2/08

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Nina Marie Fuscaldo

Nfuscaldo13@Gmail.com

Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Bachelor of Science, Anthropology, 2009

Research Paper Title:
A CASE STUDY OF EXHIBIT DESIGN AND INTALLATION PROCESSES IN AN
ILLINOIS STATE-FUNDED UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Major Professor: John Hamman