TEACHING MUSEUM STUDIES IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES, OR, A TALE OF TWO COURSES

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Abstract: This article uses the lens of teaching museum studies to analyze how museums have changed over a nineteen-year period and how university-based teaching has and might continue to respond to these changes. I compare my current class at Penn State Harrisburg to the one I taught from 1996 to 1999 at George Washington University, focusing on changes in museum audience engagement, technology, and pedagogy. Specific content, as well as activities inside and outside of the classroom, were adapted to the needs of varied student bodies and locales to prepare students to participate in the future of history museums.
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In 1996 most museums and historic sites were optimistic about their future; the decline in attendance in many history museums was viewed as repairable through careful choices of exhibitions, programs, and marketing strategies. By 2010, in the aftermath of two economic downturns and larger societal changes, the future of history museums was more uncertain. In the years to come, how can museums (and here I include history museums and

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historic sites) attract and retain audiences in the face of competing options for their leisure time and attention?[1] How can a museum make its historical collections relevant to today's audiences? And how does an institution go about preserving, protecting, and expanding that collection in the face of the public's—and sometimes the museum's leadership—questions about the relevance of history and historic objects?

These questions are addressed virtually every day by museum professionals. But how do universities help train a new generation of museum professionals to respond to pressing issues about collections and audiences? What do these students bring to both the university seminar table and the museum conference room that can help provide answers to these conundrums? One way to begin addressing the issues of a markedly changed and ever-shifting museum world is to examine and reshape the museum studies class, which is increasingly part of undergraduate and graduate curricula.[2] This article uses the lens of teaching museum studies to analyze how museums have changed over a nineteen-year period and how teaching has and might continue to respond to these changes.

Between 1996 and 1999 I taught an undergraduate museum studies course in an adjunct capacity in the art history department at George Washington University, in Washington, DC, while working as a museum curator. I returned to teaching a museum studies course in 2011, at Penn State University's Harrisburg campus, when I took a full-time teaching position. Despite having continued to work in a museum during the interim, I was surprised to discover how much of what I had taught in the late 1990s, particularly in terms of audience engagement and technology, needed to be radically changed. As important, I realized that the university's locale in central Pennsylvania afforded opportunities to focus on historical museums rather than art museums.

Although much has been written about museum studies and public history programs, few works focus on the content of courses directly. Marla Miller provided an excellent summary of the breadth and depth of public history programs in 2004.[3] Noel Stowe, Constance Schulz, and Deborah Welch are among those who address how to create public history programs that include both strong historical preparation and substantive practical experience in undergraduate and graduate programs.[4] Other scholars, such as Elizabeth Belanger and Steven Burg, note the mutual advantages of collaborative efforts among students, faculty, and nonprofits, particularly in developing a broader understanding of one's community.[5] Numerous articles, whether in journals or newsletters, stress the importance of collaboration between university-based scholars and organizations such as the National Park Service

FIGURE 1: Undergraduate and graduate students in Museum Studies class at Penn State, Harrisburg, using PastPerfect museum database software. January 2015. Photo by the author.

to ensure "cutting edge" scholarship and interpretation at historic sites, a long-term goal of the Organization of American Historians.[6] This article looks at the content as well as in-class and out-of-class activities that can be employed to help students respond to the ever-changing environment in museums and historic sites. Comparing experiences in the two classes, data on the changing nature of historical and art museums, information on leisure in the United States, and scholarship on learning in museums, I address changes over time in teaching about, and working in, museums.

The two museum studies courses were offered in different environments in terms of time and space, but also within different curricula. At George Washington University, the Museum Studies class was offered to upper-level undergraduates; it was primarily taken as an elective course by art history majors within the Fine Arts and Art History Department. At Penn State Harrisburg the Museum Studies course is comprised of advanced undergraduate and MA students; the course largely attracts students from the American studies and humanities programs. Since 2013 the American studies program has offered a graduate twelve-credit certificate in heritage and museum practice, for which Museum Studies is one of the required courses. The class consists of much the same mix of students as before the certificate, but the presence of the certificate has increased the number of students who are particularly interested in a museum or archival career. The course is supplemented by a more theoretical public heritage class, offered at the graduate level. These offerings are complemented by one-credit courses in collections management, curation, education, and exhibitions, which expose students to much of the hands-on work undertaken in area historical museums and houses, taught by my colleague Susan Asbury.[7]

Before we discuss the changing nature of museums and teaching, the differences between the two universities need to be addressed. The distinct locales and student bodies required significant modifications that took into account the variety of students, the changing nature of postsecondary education, and regional differences in access to museums and historic sites. George Washington University, where I taught from 1996 to 1999, had a student body that attended college full-time and was of traditional college age, generally lived in dormitories, and had few outside commitments. The wealth of mostly free art museums in Washington, DC, easily accessible by subway, and the students' strong preparation in art history led me to focus the course primarily on art museums. Penn State Harrisburg is located about nine miles south of Harrisburg in the town of Middletown. Most of my upper-level undergraduate and graduate students work while attending college full- or part-time.[8] They range in age from their late teens to their sixties, and some are preparing for second careers; many will remain in the region after graduation. Some students are responsible for children, parents, or even grandparents. A number of students have significant commutes and there is limited public transportation to the largely rural and suburban communities outside of Harrisburg. The majority of the students in Penn State Harrisburg's Museum Studies class are interested in pursuing careers in historical rather than art museums, and most local and regional museums focus on historical materials. Although course offerings are strong in American studies and the humanities broadly, there are limited upper-level art history courses. The students' interests and preparation and the nature of the area museums meant shifting the focus toward history museums and historic sites and away from art museums. The students visit fewer museums than those in Washington did, and the institutions are often small ones with modest budgets. The region's institutions and the nature of the student body, as well as changes in the museum field and society at large, have driven modifications to the course.

Social and Economic Change

The course had to be adapted to take into account the dramatic changes in the economic environment for both art and history museums over the last two decades. When I taught at George Washington University in the late 1990s, museums had some success in finding external funding from federal and state agencies, corporations, foundations, and individuals to create exhibitions that were large in scale and scope, to borrow traveling exhibitions, and to sustain multiyear commitments of staff and funds to their exhibition programs. The economic downturn of 2008–9 meant that museums had fewer staff members, smaller budgets, and more limited outside funds. Although the height of the financial collapse has passed, many institutions and their funders are much more conservative in terms of spending. The upshot is fewer exhibitions, longer showings of exhibitions, less external and internal funding for them, more shows that draw on the strengths of permanent collections, and a strong emphasis on attendance.[9] The push to draw in paying visitors by staging exhibitions on popular topics has resulted, in some cases, in exhibitions that are light on content, have limited numbers of objects (and I include art, ephemera, and manuscripts in the definition of objects), and have a marginal connection to the institution's mission.[10]

The larger societal changes in the United States that contribute to museum attendance are familiar to us all. People either perceive that they have, or actually have, less leisure time than in the past.[11] They often weigh the time and cost of an activity seen as educational versus one viewed as entertaining, as well as look for activities that will engage an entire household.[12] A computer, tablet, or other device of one's own is a constant lure for many both outside the museum and within it and has changed the nature of how, how much, and what kind of information is delivered.[13] And last, some have the urge to "cocoon" and not venture out of their immediate environment as a response to external factors such as stressful jobs and readily available entertainment through electronic devices.[14]

Given these societal issues, how do museums attract audiences for a specific exhibition or program and, ideally, for multiple visits? In other words, how does one not only entice people, but also ensure that their expectations are met? The rise of ever more sophisticated audio, video, and imaging means that, for some, the static exhibitions often at the core of museums are not as enticing as they once were. Moreover, meeting the needs of an ethnically diverse country and community is a challenging task for many institutions. School trips, once a gateway to museums for younger visitors from many socioeconomic backgrounds, are declining in the face of constricted budgets and more regimented curricula.[15]

Getting visitors to go to museums and historic sites is the central challenge. In 2006 Cary Carson noted that museum visitation to history museums had continued to decline since the 1990s, and suggested that much of the (largely federal and corporate) funding for exhibitions and programs had not done much to stay this decline.[16] He argued that historic sites need to provide visitors and potential visitors with engaging experiences online and on-site. What these engaging experiences are is the more challenging question. Social media may be part of the solution for communicating what an institution offers, but museums need to provide compelling reasons for visitors to actually come to their sites.[17] How, then, do we prepare a new generation of museum professionals and draw on their creativity to meet the challenges museums face in the twenty-first century?

Audiences and Exhibitions

Recognition of the centrality of visitors' experiences and satisfaction has increased in the last fifteen years, as has the importance of a museum's ability to meet the interests and needs of a whole household, including children. Thus an important objective of the current course is to provide students with the tools to understand visitation beyond attendance statistics and to convey this perspective to staff and board members. Issues related to museum audiences need to be more thoroughly addressed in the course than they were in the 1990s. How staff understand the needs and expectations of existing and potential visitors, as well as how these audiences are changing, are topics that intersect with exhibition planning, strategic planning, and budgeting, among other areas. Perhaps most centrally, the role of exhibitions in museums is far different than it was in the late 1990s. Exhibitions are seen as drivers of attendance, albeit expensive ones. Thus a museum's staff, collectively, is responsible for devising exhibits that will encourage not only short-term visitation, but contribute to a plan of programming and subsequent exhibitions that lead to repeat visitation, increased membership, and other forms of engagement.

Early in the semester, reading assignments and discussions address developing and understanding a museum's current and future audiences. Students are introduced to visitor evaluation through two case studies, as I have yet to find a way to fully incorporate visitor analysis into the course. We discuss the basics of front-end, formative, and summative evaluation, using Boston's USS *Constitution* Museum as a model. The museum, situated near the USS *Constitution* in Boston, "collects, preserves, and interprets the stories of the USS *Constitution* and the people associated with her."[18] In 2004 the museum began its Family Learning Project, using a wide range of evaluation techniques, to better comprehend its core audience: families with children.

The museum then developed a highly interactive exhibition and website, *A Sailor's Life for Me*. Later phases of the project expanded data on family learning, shared it with national audiences, and implemented findings in a permanent exhibit. In class, the museum's website on evaluation and the implementation of their findings is used in conjunction with an academic article on the project.[19] This and other articles ask the class to address how one provides exhibitions and programs that generate new audiences (particularly families), satisfy existing ones, and provide experiences that provide them with new information and ideas about the past.

A second case study that the class uses is the Dallas Museum of Art's "Framework for Engaging with Art," an in-depth analysis of museum and online visitors' interests and behaviors. In the series of studies, undertaken between 2003 and 2009, visitors were categorized by their engagement with art: tentative observers, curious participants, discerning independents, and committed enthusiasts. These data were correlated with preferred strategies for looking (such as creating art, using reading areas, and using a computer), demographic information, and frequency of visits to that and other museums.[20] Much from the Dallas Museum's research, while focused on art, can be applied to history museums. The studies at Dallas suggest such fundamental questions as: how do we produce overlapping layers of information when creating exhibits that involve both the latest technology and traditional methods such as labels? Can we provide reflective areas as well as ones that engage multiple senses? How do we ensure that "hands-on" areas are welcoming to visitors of all ages and are engaging, entertaining, and convey information and ideas? In the Penn State Harrisburg classroom, I wondered how the often multi-generation student body, with varied learning styles and abundant creativity, could address the needs of visitors' different levels of interest, knowledge, and engagement styles. In past classes, students have suggested crowd-sourcing for funding and a flash mob for attracting attention to a historic house in a nearby city. When one student suggested using QR codes in an exhibit, I asked him to explain them to a classmate who was unfamiliar with them. This difference in knowledge led to a discussion of individual visitors' varied affinity for, as well as knowledge and use of, technology.

The research conducted by the Dallas Museum of Art and the USS *Constitution* Museum allows the class to understand and apply audience research. To this discussion I add my experiences of learning from the research undertaken by colleagues on several exhibits I curated at Winterthur, and note how we implemented changes in subsequent exhibitions based on our comprehension of visitors' interests and behavior in the galleries over time.[21] For example, in an exhibition borrowed from another institution that had limited information about individual objects, visitors' remarks on comment cards made it clear that, largely based on previous visits, they expected more information about the works on display. Thus midway through the exhibition, we added information to many labels, focusing on the most challenging artworks. By tracking visitors, we learned that they often ignored material on a specific wall; in future installations, we placed less-central objects and information in that location. When visitors were queried about three possible titles for a proposed exhibition, we ascertained which one conveyed the theme of the installation best. These case studies and experiences help the class learn how quantitative and qualitative data can be used to understand visitors and their museum experiences.

Although the three museums discussed here employed or contracted people focused on evaluating and improving the visitor experience, a number of the lessons learned could be applied or modified to an institution without this expertise. Realistically, most students at Penn State Harrisburg will work at smaller, historic museums and sites with very limited funds and staff. By contrast, when I taught in the late 1990s at George Washington University, relatively few institutions had invested in exhibition-related audience research. Yet both the size of institutions at which students might work and the potential for grant and other funding meant that they might have been able to hire an audience research firm to devise, perhaps execute, and analyze the data. By 2010 it became clear that audience research, particularly related to exhibitions, was a powerful tool that students needed to be able to use in any museum, regardless of its size or budget. Thus, explaining to the class that asking visitors to complete the seemingly simple statement, "Before I came to this exhibition, I never knew that _ _ _," measures what the visitor learned and may generate information about satisfaction. Other questions can ascertain information about frequency of visits, demographics, and the effectiveness of various forms of publicity. This segment of the class asks students to consider the advantages of finding the time or funds to survey visitors, looking at changes over time, and integrating visitor input in future exhibitions or programs. Discussions emphasize the importance of recognizing the fluidity of audiences' expectations over time at an individual museum and more broadly. The purpose is not to negate the value of more sophisticated surveys, but to empower students to use a variety of tools to understand museum audiences.

Exposing the students to some of the abundant literature that critiques museums and exhibitions is another way to develop their understanding of museums and historic sites. Some of the literature from the 1990s has remained relevant and timeless, while other sources have not proved to work in a different time and context. Since the late 1990s I have had the class study *Mining the Museum*, curated by Fred Wilson at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore in 1992. We begin with Lisa Corrin's remark, "The idea for *Mining the Museum* grew out of a belief that the American museum as we know it is not merely in a state of transition but in a state of crisis. I believe that by the end of this [twentieth] century the museum population will be greatly reduced and those that do remain will have become very different institutions." She goes on to note that, in their written responses, most of the audience for *Mining the Museum* told us they wanted museum experiences to provoke new ways of thinking, to encourage critical learning, and to reconnect them with the past viscerally. Most of all, they told us that they feel museums still have a part to play in their lives."[22]

Although I would suggest that museum audiences rarely—then or now—state that they want more "critical learning," her comments twenty years ago remain valid. I start the class by addressing the issue of race in Baltimore and the nature of the Maryland Historical Society during the second half of the twentieth century (I worked at the Maryland Historical Society in the late 1990s, when an abbreviated version of the exhibition was in place). We look at images of other exhibitions Mr. Wilson has curated, and then focus on the techniques he used in *Mining the Museum*. We discuss, for example, an image of the silver tea service he juxtaposed with iron shackles of the same period, and one of photographs of Native Americans that he placed near cigar-store Indians. We consider the museum's willingness to mount the exhibition and allow Wilson to choose any object in the collection. It is my hope that Wilson's example of using "traditional" museum objects, juxtaposed and interpreted in novel ways, will encourage students to creatively employ collections. Many older historical museums have a preponderance of objects that represent their earlier elite, white constituents. The legacy from *Mining*, which remains relevant today, is that collections can be used to question the status quo determined by earlier generations of donors, staff, and trustees.

Mining the Museum thus became a stage to examine audiences, exhibition techniques, institutional change, and interpreting non-dominant cultures and controversial subjects. At a time when museums are trying to make themselves relevant to nontraditional audiences and, simultaneously, are often choosing popular rather than substantive topics to appeal to large numbers of people, *Mining the Museum* serves as an important case study. The exhibit challenged the visitor and the institution to confront contemporary and historical issues of race and class, brought new information and ideas to the fore, attracted new audiences, and relied on permanent collections.

At George Washington University and Penn State Harrisburg, the students critique exhibitions; one of the goals this activity is to hone analytic skills. Each GWU student prepared five-page written critiques of two exhibitions of his or her choice; the PSU students do one such review. Because of the restraints of locale and the students' time, the Penn State Harrisburg students visit far fewer exhibitions overall in preparation for classes and have less opportunity to engage in extended discussions about exhibitions before writing their review. Thus I have developed more detailed questions and guidelines to structure their analysis, for example, "Are there any particular features or techniques that add or detract from the exhibit, such as layout or design features, brochures, audio-visual or computer components, hands-on activities, and related programming?" The review allows students to look for many of the facets of exhibit design and interpretation that we discuss in class, observe visitors in the exhibition, and think about what might have been done better. Students complete the assignment roughly midway through the course, so that they can bring to their formal learning in class to the critique and use the specific museum in later class discussions. Each student makes a short presentation about his or her museum visit, answers classmates' questions, and contributes to a broader discussion on museum installations. In future classes, I will require students to tweet about their museum and historic site visits and report on the responses they generate. I want students to see how social media can be used to engage new audiences and think about how one might use various forms of social media creatively.[23]

Neither class had access to the space or the time to produce an exhibition on-site. The exhibition-related projects in the class have varied. In the late 1990s the GWU students were asked to prepare a grant, using National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grants as a model, for an exhibition. The NEA's comprehensive requirements required the students to provide a well-developed plan for the exhibition, including justification, object selection, and budget. Classes throughout the semester had prepared the students for the project, but it nonetheless required significant time and research. As they were largely full-time students with limited outside commitments, they were able to complete this project admirably. At Penn State Harrisburg I have opted to use exhibitions as a final project and ask students to envision an exhibition that occupies roughly the space of our classroom (about 625 square feet).

Each student chooses his or her topic, selects twelve to fifteen artifacts (often found in museum online catalogs), writes labels, lays out the exhibition on paper, and creates a budget. Relatively early in the semester, each student suggests several ideas for exhibitions, with five tentative objects and a proposed interactive; I provided feedback on the proposals. Components of exhibition development, both related to their projects and more broadly, are covered in different classes. For one class, students prepare four 100-word (or less) object labels. Background reading included selections for Beverly Serrell's *Exhibition Labels*, a tip sheet developed by a former colleague, and examples of award-winning labels from the American Alliance of Museums.[24] In class, students first critique labels I have written for past exhibitions and then write and exchange three draft labels with a classmate for review. The latter activity models reviewing labels with colleagues, regardless of a given institution's formal process for editing. Students continue writing and discussing labels as I circulate the room and coach them. A few weeks later, sometimes in lieu of a class, students meet with me individually to discuss their projects.

Portions of classes are devoted to exhibition development and budget. The topic is challenging to teach, as even similarly sized museums have markedly different processes for selecting and budgeting for exhibitions, whether short-term, long term, or traveling. Moreover, the exhibit process sometimes changes frequently in a given institution, as many museums (of all sizes) have moved to less frequent exhibit rotations, and allocations for exhibitions are closely scrutinized. We also cover exhibition planning requirements that are related to curation, collections management, and interpretation, such as developing a theme and an object list, assessing the object's condition, incorporating interactive components, and preparing supplemental media in the exhibition and online. In their projects, I want students to hone their ideas under a single theme, judiciously choose objects and interactive components that contribute to it, and create labels and other media that are accessible to a general audience at a specific museum. The objective is for the students to understand how to convey information and ideas through objects and other media, as well as to understand the timetables, planning, and funding of exhibitions.

In both courses, creating a level of comfort with budgets and grants among students has been a goal, as it is important for everyone on a museum's staff to have a familiarity with and, to varying degrees, responsibility for an institution's budget. We address the difference between endowments and operating funds; the three-year averaging of endowments that many institutions use; and determining an appropriate draw from the endowment for an annual budget. We also discuss crafting or contributing to a departmental as well as an exhibition budget, understanding the importance of planning for and estimating the costs of future activities, lobbying for one's needs, and fundraising.

The final class is a charette that focuses on the exhibitions as students near completion. Using a format borrowed from the fields of architecture and planning, the charette provides an opportunity for students to present their works in progress to their classmates in small groups. I create three rotations that provide time for presentations and critiques of overall layout, the interactive and its label, and object labels. Students are divided into groups of three or four at each table; the makeup of the groups changes with each topic. The charette allows for diverse feedback and the exchange of ideas in a setting that encourages peer coaching and group work; I rotate among the groups to provide guidance as needed. This process, in addition to providing significant feedback, also gives the students an opportunity to see a range of approaches to creating an exhibition. Just as important, it asks students to model the kind of group interaction that occurs in museums and other workplaces.

Critiquing and creating exhibitions encourage students to think about the balance among provocative exhibitions, popular exhibits that may have a limited connection to a museum's mission but draw in visitors, and less broadly appealing topics that focus on the collection and draw on the institution's staff (and, perhaps, consultants') strengths. I want to encourage students to help develop exhibitions and programs that generate repeat visitation, word-of-mouth recommendations, and membership. We have all learned that immensely popular (and sometimes expensive) exhibits, perhaps not closely related to an institution's mission, may reap only short-term benefits for the organization. At the other extreme, when discussing a specialized exhibition that would likely draw limited numbers of ticket-buyers, we consider its other benefits to an organization, such as cultivating audiences or donors, or generating ancillary revenue through shop sales or rentals. The goal is to provide students with the tools not only to create better exhibits, but to understand and perhaps shape a museum's program, regardless of their position. Over time, the Museum Studies course has tried to better integrate exhibition planning into the areas of institutional planning and budgeting, and emphasized the importance of incorporating visitor evaluation findings into large institutional strategies.

Collections Management

Most museum studies courses or programs provide traditional training regarding the policies, practices, and ethics of collections management, and my course is no exception. Readings and discussions about collections management have always included staff members' roles, the importance of climate (temperature and relative humidity) in storage and exhibitions, and preservation and conservation practices. Over time, I have placed more emphasis on issues of ethics, particularly those related to deaccessioning; the development of policies; and the choice and use of collections management software. In an effort to provide more "hands-on" activities, we use collections management software in one class. Analytical skills are developed by examining and discussing critical sections of collections management policies and deaccessioning case studies.

Virtually all museums use databases to make information available about collections, whether internally, externally, or both. Thus, prior to one class, I ask students to download a free trial version of PastPerfect museum software and use it to catalog a small object that they bring into class. Why cataloging? In many positions in a museum or as an object-centered researcher, one needs to employ collections databases. I chose PastPerfect as a model because it often used by the small to mid-sized museums in which our students are most likely to be employed. The software is intuitive, one of the least expensive, and readily learned by new staff and volunteers. Projecting the software from a laptop, I walk the class though the different fields before they create their own catalog records. I then discuss the pros and cons of various museum databases, including ongoing costs, add-on products, upgrades, platforms, and Web-based access. As one of the most basic tasks in a museum is cataloging objects and using databases to manage collections, students have found that even this rudimentary familiarity with collections databases has served them well in job interviews. By contrast, in the late 1990s, most museum databases were used almost exclusively internally; a large number of firms provided programs with very varied fields and formats, and some institutions relied on databases developed in-house. Since then, software firms have consolidated and there is a more widespread understanding of the needs, limits, and possibilities of museum databases.

The cataloging activity provides an introduction to accessioning and creating records for acquisitions. Two later classes address the legal, practical, and ethical aspects of collections management. For these classes, students do extensive reading in Marie Malaro and Ildiko deAngelis's *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*.[25] The book, like the earlier edition I used when teaching in the late 1990s, tends to fascinate students. They are intrigued by the case studies that accompany the descriptions of best practices and many realize that the book will be a useful reference throughout their careers. I add specific, albeit anonymous, instances of ethical "gray areas" that I have encountered in my career. We discuss examples of ethics- and policy-related documents in Malaro and De Angelis, as well as those created by individual institutions. I then project the collections management policy, developed by the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia, and highlight points for discussion. This thorough policy serves as a model—it regularly makes reference to the institution's mission and provides specific guidance for virtually all collections-related issues.[26] Through the analysis of this and other policies, students are made aware of the importance of having carefully worded collections management plans and other documents that guide staff, volunteers, and board members.

Perhaps the most changed component of collections management in the last fifteen years is deaccessioning (removing artifacts from a museum's collection permanently).[27] In 1996, when I began teaching museum studies, deaccessioning often happened without publicity (and sometimes without transparency); the New-York Historical Society's sale of collections in 1994 was one of the few instances that made headlines. More recently, the Delaware Art Museum, Detroit Institute of the Arts, Fisk University, Randolph College, Brandeis University, and Philadelphia's Atwater Kent Museum garnered regional and national news coverage when they sold or considered selling museum collections to address financial problems. These and other institutions' desires to monetize a collection to provide support for non-collections-related activities have made the issue of deaccessioning more public and have caused outcry. The limited, if any, sanctions placed on these institutions (the Delaware Art Museum excepted) may, I fear, normalize the practice. Other circumstances, such as crowded storage, a change in mission, or the need for acquisition funds, have precipitated deaccessioning. Thus a class session about collections management was expanded to include the highly varied deaccessioning policies of different museum professional associations; the question of whether a university, library, or historical museum that owns fine arts collections should consider these materials as assets unrelated to its mission; and such problematic tactics as changing an institution's mission statement to validate deaccessions.[28]

Readings for the day include portions of *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections* that address the importance of collections-related policies (deaccessioning and other) and current ethical issues, and another lawyer's essay on recent deaccessioning cases.[29] Before class, students are asked to find online newspaper articles about one of the recent deaccessioning controversies to spark discussion. We then cover the best practices for deaccessioning: under what conditions deaccessioning is appropriate, the criteria for selecting objects, how to research objects and correspond with donors and their descendants, and how to obtain bids and negotiate terms with auction houses. This discussion of how to conduct deaccessioning in a transparent manner includes the need to provide board and committee members with detailed information well in advance of meetings where decisions will be made.

The changes in the sections on collections management reflect the updates to standards and practices in recent years. Students are also exposed to the complex legal and ethical issues related to collections. The central importance of clear policies and practices, and the need for red flags if an institution is considering changing them dramatically, is made clear. Perhaps most centrally, students are made aware of both legitimate and surreptitious ways that staff and board members may modify policies and practices, sometimes toward controversial ends.

Career Guidance

Formal and informal career guidance has become more important over time, particularly in the wake of the drastic changes in the job market for recent graduates. One of my current goals is for students to think about museum careers in areas other than education and curatorial work. When I taught in the 1990s, it was possible for a committed student to launch a museum career in those areas. In the 2010s, those positions have become sharply constricted, and the only silver lining that I can see for the students is that there will be more entry-level, rather than mid-career, positions opening. As the Association of Art Museum Curators noted in 2006, salaries have been rising faster in areas such as fundraising and publicity than curatorial ones.[30] Development positions generally pay better, require less experience and education at each level, and have greater opportunities for advancement within a particular community as well as nationally. The challenging fundraising environment has also meant that the standards for grant writing have risen; I would argue that many humanities-based students with museum and subject-matter preparation are well positioned to write grants to a high standard. Moreover, in development and marketing, one has access to jobs in a wider range of organizations if one is looking to climb a career ladder or wants to stay in a given community.

Some students are unfamiliar with positions such as collections manager or registrar that allow them to work directly with objects, use a very wide array of knowledge and skills, and take advantage of superior organizational abilities. I convey to students that the range of skills and knowledge to be a collections manager (knowledge of subject matter, preservation, the law, and computers, to name a few) reflects the diversity of the position. Collections managers typically process legal documents for gifts, bequests, and loans; oversee databases and files related to the collection; and manage projects and grants associated with collections storage and preservation. I also mention that people in these positions often have the opportunity to spend more time with the objects themselves than other staff members, even curators. Collections management is an area that can engage an object-focused person and, arguably, has a better career ladder than curatorial or educations jobs.

Internships have long been a hallmark of museum training, and I encouraged internships as not only a source of experience but a "foot in the door" in the field. As before, internships are an essential way to learn how museums operate on a day-to-day basis. Many tasks are best learned by observing and doing: moving artworks, leading a school group, and so on. Watching how people in related functions interact, how decisions are made, and how individuals prioritize time and funds can benefit interns as well. I now add a few cautions regarding students and internships, as many nonprofits and for-profits are employing paid or unpaid interns in lieu of hiring staff members, and few individuals have the time to devote to training and supervising interns. The traditional path of completing an internship or two and then gaining full-time museum employment no longer seems to be a reliable one. Moreover, some millennials (the generation of most college students) expect degrees of learning and mentoring in their internships that do not dovetail with what even the most conscientious supervisor can provide. Striking a balance between getting meaningful experience and completing some of the less glamorous tasks that need to be done can be a challenging one for both interns and their supervisors.

I also want students to develop the skills to assess and understand an institution before applying for a job or an internship. Each student brings a recent IRS return (Form 990) for a museum or historic site of his or her choice to class; in the 1990s this tool was neither as readily available nor as widely discussed as it is now. Often, students will choose an institution where they have volunteered or are otherwise affiliated. In small groups in class, students compare and analyze information in an institution's annual report (often available online) and its recent IRS Form 990 (available online free through the Guidestar.org).[31] We then compare assessments as a class. The project seeks to demystify numeric data—we examine and discuss endowments, debts, and fundraising costs and outcomes. We cover using the forms as a research tool before approaching foundations—one can readily see the mission and criteria, as well as learn who the decision-makers are, the amount of the average grant, and the foundation's giving preferences. I also use this opportunity to discuss boards and issues such as qualifications, expectations, the desire for diverse skills, the need for broad representation of the community, and term limits. Particularly when combined with newspaper-based research, this exercise shows how one can gain a sense of not only an institution's financial health, but also the slippage between rhetoric and reality regarding leadership, diversity, and community engagement. This activity provides students with another opportunity to develop critical thinking skills. Moreover, students develop a tool for researching many facets of an institution, including salaries, when applying for jobs.

We also discuss the mechanics of job hunting and application. Penn State Harrisburg has a fine career office, but I find that many students do not take full advantage of it. For one class, students are required to prepare a résumé and cover letter for a specific museum-related position that is currently advertised. I provide materials such as a list of job boards and examples of résumés and letters beforehand. As a class, we review examples of cover letters and résumés, including one or two students' voluntary submissions; students then trade their materials with a partner. I also offer to review an individual's revised materials and offer lifetime résumé and cover letter coaching. We then discuss techniques for online and in-person networking throughout one's career, as well as interviewing techniques and salary negotiation. The methods of job hunting and networking—such as maintaining an online presence through LinkedIn and social networking sites—have changed since the 1990s. Personal contacts for hearing about and securing positions and consulting opportunities remain as, or even more, important than before. Yet the reality of teaching museum studies is that most of the students from both universities do not embark on museum careers. Many students have found other fields enticing. Others have chosen jobs or careers that had more openings, were more remunerative, or fit geographic needs.

Museum studies classes can and will continue to provide students with opportunities to see museums as sites for learning, creativity, and fun, and, in turn, will allow them to help shape museum visitors' experiences. Those of us who teach museum studies and work with museums will likely be changing our syllabi frequently in response to the myriad changes in museums, developments in technology, and evolving expectations of museum audiences on site and online. We will be updating our teaching to match and occasionally get ahead of trends in delivering information and ideas in an engaging—and sometimes entertaining—way. Yet just as important, we can develop courses that ask our students to analyze and question the status quo and work within these sometimes conservative institutional settings to affect change.

It is worth reiterating the skills any student, whether interested in a museum career or not, can develop in a museum studies class. Although both employers and professors value critical thinking, including the ability to analyze, synthesize, and critique, it can be challenging to move students from habits of simply repeating information they have learned. Museum studies classes can develop students' ability to analyze not only the information that is presented—whether it is found in an exhibition label or on an IRS form—but how it has been shaped for consumption. Analyzing IRS Form 990s, whether in the context of other institutional information or not, need not be confined to museum studies and other nonprofit-related courses, but can be used in accounting and other classes. Exhibit analyses can be undertaken in art, science, and history museum and sites and thus be applied to almost any part of the undergraduate curriculum. Writing skills can be practiced and honed in such a course. Last, museum studies courses can respond to both the current academic environment, which encourages active learning and group work, and the students' desire for "hands-on" skills that can be easily transferred to the workplace. My hope is that, regardless of their chosen profession, the museum studies course, combined with their other classwork and experiences, will make students more analytic thinkers, better writers, active museum goers and, perhaps, future staff, volunteers, or board members.

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NOTES

1. One study noted that the "amount of leisure time for all Americans is decreasing," and it is "available in smaller unrestricted segments." Donald Bates, Sal Kukalis, and John Dillard. "The Impact of Structural Changes in Leisure Time on the Perceptions of Recreational Activities: A United States Survey," *International Journal of Management* 23, no. 1 (December 2006): 93.
2. For a critique of the rapidly expanding programs in public history and museum studies, see Nina Villa Bryk, "Too Much of a Good Thing?: An Abundance of New Museum Studies Programs Could be Hurting Graduates," *Museum* (May/June 2013): 31.
3. Marla R. Miller, "Playing to Strength: Teaching Public History at the Turn of the 21st Century," *American Studies International* 42, nos. 2/3 (June–October 2004): 174–212.
4. Noel J. Stowe, "Public History Curriculum: Illustrating Reflective Practice," *Public Historian* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 39–65; Deborah Welch, "Teaching Public History: Strategies for Undergraduate Program Development," *Public Historian* 25, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 71–82; Constance B. Schulz, "An Academic Balancing Act: Public History Education Today," *Public Historian* 21, no. 3 (Winter 2003): 143–54.
5. Elizabeth Belanger, "Public History and Liberal Learning: Making the Case for the Undergraduate Practicum Experience," *Public Historian* 34, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 30–51. Steven B. Burg, "'From Troubled Ground to Common Ground': The Locust Grove African-American Cemetery Restoration Project: A Case Study of Service-Learning and Community History," *Public Historian* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 51–82.
6. For an example, see Edward T. Linethal, "The National Park Service and Civic Engagement," *Public Historian* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 123–29.
7. Museum Studies and Public Heritage are two of the required courses for the Museum Studies and Public Heritage certificate, as are three of the four one-credit Public Heritage courses. Electives include seminars in local and regional history, American decorative arts, historic preservation, and folklore, as well as nonprofit-related courses offered by the university's Public Administration program. Most students elect to complete the certificate as they earn an MA in American studies; exceptional undergraduates can complete a combined BA/MA in American studies in five years. http://harrisburg.psu.edu/programs/graduate-certificate-heritage-and-museum-practice (accessed March 5, 2014).

8. On the history of the program, see Charles Kupfer, "Public Heritage as Program Strength: How Cross-Institutional Partnerships Enhance Penn State Harrisburg's American Studies Program," *Pennsylvania History* 74, no. 4 (Autumn 2007): 551–62.
9. On the Metropolitan Museum of Art's decision to reduce the frequency of large-scale exhibitions in 2009, see http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Metropolitan-cuts-major-loan-shows-by-a-quarter/18702 (accessed August 8, 2013); US Department of Commerce, Office of Tourism and Travel Industries, "2010 Cultural Heritage Traveler," http://www.tinet.ita. doc. gov/outreachpages/download_data_table/2010-cultural-heritage-profile.pdf (accessed August 8, 2013); Rosemary McCormick, "The Cultural and Heritage Traveler Study: A White Paper," produced by Mandala Research, Shop America Alliance, and the US Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council (Mandala Research, 2010), http://www.uscht.com/content/Cultural%20&%20Heritage%20Traveler%20Research%20White%20Paper%20MSA-WP7.pdf (accessed September 20, 2013). For an earlier article that raises important issues about exhibition funding, see Victoria D. Alexander, "Pictures at an Exhibition: Conflicting Pressures in Museums and the Display of Art," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 4 (January 1996): 797–839.
10. One example is the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, which featured shows on Princess Diana (2009–2010) and Bruce Springsteen (2012); it has since returned to more mission-focused exhibitions.
11. For an excellent summary of trends that affect museums, see Center for the Future of Museums, "Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures," American Association of Museums, Washington, DC, 2008), http://www.aam-us.org/docs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/museumssociety2034.pdf (accessed September 26, 2013). John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012), 41–42.
12. On Gen X parents' interest in family activities and insights about Gen Y, see http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2007/11/ (accessed September 26, 2013). For an insightful analysis of the value of a museum's ability to entertain, see http://colleendilen.com/2013/07/31/entertainment-vs-education-how-your-audience-really-rates-the-museum-experience-data/ (accessed September 26, 2013). See also http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/22/travel/opinion-why-i-hate-museums/index.html (accessed September 27, 2013).
13. Falk and Dierking, *Museum Experience Revisited*, 120–23. On museums as an escape from technology for some visitors, see Scott Wands, Erica Donnis, and Susie Wilkening, "Do Guided Tours and Technology Drive Visitors Away?" *History News* 65 (Spring 2010): 22.
14. A 2012 analysis of credit card spending showed less spending outside the home (on hotels, restaurants, and car rentals, for example) and an increase in expenditures on large televisions and other electronics from the previous year. These figures correspond with very modest growth in tourism and declining prices for electronics in 2012. Researchers found that the heaviest cocooners were a racially mixed, relatively affluent group. Perhaps most distressing for museums in terms of attendance and membership, the study found that those in the 25–34-year-old age bracket showed the highest tendency toward cocooning. http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/personal/2013/02/15/internet-tv-super-cocoons/1880473/. (accessed August 15, 2013).
15. On the educational effects of school visits to museums, see http://educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/ (accessed September 26, 2013).

16. Cary Carson, "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?" *Public Historian* 30, no. 4 (Fall 2008): 9–27. On declining museum attendance, see also Anne Lindsay, "#VirtualTourist: Embracing Our Audience through Public History Web Experience," *Public Historian* 35, no. 1 (February 2013): 74.
17. On the composition of audiences and why they come to museums, see Marianna Adams and Judy Koke, "Roundtable Comprehensive Interpretive Plans: A Framework of Questions," *Journal of Museum Education* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 294–96. The use of Twitter and other social media to engage visitors and potential visitors is worth exploring. "Connecting Beyond the Museum Walls: Innovation in Online Museum Engagement," American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, May 22, 2013. For a summary, see http://www.newmuseum.org/blog/view/on-building-virtual-museums (accessed September 5, 2013).
18. For the mission statement, see http://www.ussconstitutionmuseum.org/about-us/mission-history/ (accessed March 5, 2014). The museum complements the work done of the US Navy, which owns and operates the vessel.
19. On the museum's use of evaluation and implementation of the results, see http://www.familylearningforum.org/evaluation/types-of-evaluation/index.htm (accessed August 15, 2013). Jeffrey Patchen and Ann Grimes Rand, "Fostering Effective Free-Choice Learning Institutions," in *In Principle, in Practice: Museums as Learning Institutions*, ed. John H. Falk, Lynn D. Dierking and Susan Foutz (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 2007), 167–80. The class also incorporates the work of Falk, Dierking, and their colleagues, most recently *The Museum Experience Revisited*.
20. http://dallasmuseumofart.org/AboutUs/Frameworkforengagingwithart/index.htm (accessed August 25, 2013).
21. Winterthur is comprised of a museum, garden, and library founded by Henry Francis du Pont (1880–1969) and opened to the public in 1951. Du Pont collected decorative and fine arts, as well as architectural elements, installing them in his house from the late 1920s onward with a view toward eventually opening Winterthur to the public. A gallery with permanent and changing exhibitions was added in 1992. I am indebted to Mary Jane Taylor and Anna Schnug for their evaluation work at Winterthur, particularly between 2003 and 2006, and to Taylor for extended discussions on visitor behavior.
22. Lisa Corrin, ed., *Mining the Museum* (Baltimore: The Contemporary, 1994), lxx.
23. Pew Research Center, "The State of the News Media 2013," http://stateofthemedia.org/2013/overview-5/key-findings/, 9–10 (accessed August 19, 2013). Lindsay, "#VirtualTourist," 67–86. Dirk vom Lehn and Christian Heath, "Management Accounting for New Technology in Museum Exhibitions," *International Journal of Arts Management* 7, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 11–21.
24. Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996). Mary Jane Taylor, "Writing Good Exhibition Labels," staff handout, Winterthur Museum, May, 2004. For the AAM award-winning labels, http://aam-us.org/about-us/grants-awards-and-competitions/excellence-in-label-writing (accessed July 28, 2015).
25. Marie Malaro and Ildiko deAngelis, *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2012).
26. http://www.marinersmuseum.org/sites/default/files/mariners_museum-_collections_management_policy.pdf (accessed March 5, 2014).

27. Instances of deaccessioning that have garnered the most attention are those that have been sold, generally at public auction, but occasionally as a private sale. Other means of deaccessioning include giving, trading, or selling an object to another institution or destroying an object that has been compromised by extensive damage. Under ideal conditions, deaccessioning is an orderly, open process that targets duplicate or damaged objects, or ones for which there are better examples in the collection.
28. The American Association for State and Local History, the American Alliance of Museums, and the Association of Art Museum Directors have very different guidelines for how proceeds from deaccessioning should be used.
29. Christian H. Brill, "Art or Assets: University Museums and the Future of Deaccessioning," http://www.cooley.edu/lawreview/_docs/Brill.pdf (accessed May 13, 2013). On library deaccessioning, see Samuel Streit, "Going, Going, Gone: Case Studies in Library Deaccessioning," http://rbm.acrl.org/content/rbml/12/1/21.full.pdf (accessed May 13, 2013).
30. Association of Art Museum Curators with Adrian Ellis/AEA Consulting, *Compensation Review* (New York: AAMC, 2006).
31. Guidestar collects the IRS form 990s from all nonprofit organizations and makes the most recent ones accessible via Guidestar.org at no cost. Guidestar also provides additional search capabilities and archived forms for a fee.