

# ISSUES IN MUSEUM ADMINISTRATION

**Harvard University Extension CSS E-145**  
**Spring, 2004**  
**Required Text/Outline/Assignments**

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## I. REQUIRED TEXT

Falk, John & Dierking, Lynn, **The Museum Experience**, Paul & Company (1992) – ISBN# 0929590074

Genoways, Hugh H. & Ireland, Lynn M., **Museum Administration, an Introduction**, Alta Mira Press (2003) – ISBN# - 0759102945

*Supplemental reading list will be distributed at class session and will be available at Grossman Library Reserve Desk.*

## II. CLASS OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

***Class #1 (Ellis/King)***  
***February 2, 2004***  
**Introduction**

### **Readings:**

Genoways & Ireland, pp. 1-20.  
Falk & Dierking, pgs. 1x-xv11, 1-24.

This class introduces the course to students. An expanded outline of the course, including information on each class, the readings and why the two texts were selected, the assignments, grading, class participation, etc. are all addressed. The class proceeds to a discussion of what the students believe is included within the concept of administration; lastly, the class discusses briefly the subject of ethics and ways in which museum administration may differ or be similar to administration in other for-profit and not-for-profit entities.

***Class #2 (Ellis)***  
***February 8, 2004***  
**Museum Mission**

### **Readings:**

Genoways & Ireland: pgs 21-24 and Box 2.1

Falk & Dierking: nothing

**NOTE:** *suggest students start reading for class # 3*

The mission of a museum sets the direction and tone of the organization by stating clearly what the purpose of the institution is and it may include how it will go about achieving it. The mission of a museum may appear quite simple to the outsider, but the qualities that make each organization unique result from a careful selection among alternatives and a clear plan designed to achieve the mission, how it was arrived at, alternative missions, and how the museum expects to achieve the selected mission.

***Class #3 & #4 (Ellis)***

***February 23 (Assignment #1 due) & March 1, 2004***

**Audience- Program; Program – Audience**

**Note:** *program here includes for this class how the mission is delivered, including by exhibits, interpretation, courses, web materials and activities, outreach, etc.*

**Readings:**

Falk & Dierking: pgs. 25 – 54, 97 – 160, 273 – 287

Genoways & Ireland: pgs 175 – 193, 273 – 287

These classes address the “heart of the matter” --how the museum delivers its mission and for who; and how the audience affect the program. Discussion will begin with a review of different audience types and the need for understanding those audiences served as well as the importance of diversity. Program administration within a museum is complex and varied. Different goals frequently exist for different program areas such as exhibits, education and public programs (on and off-site), collections, research, finance, operations, community service, etc. Managers for these areas must weigh both the needs of their areas and the needs of the institution as a whole, as well as those of the visitors where appropriate. Senior management must be responsible for the coordination of all areas, as well as have special responsibilities in the areas of fund raising and in representing the museum to the public. In addition technology frequently permits significant new approaches for presentation, learning and feedback/evaluation, and outreach.

***Class #5 (Ellis)***

***March 8, 2004 (Assignment #2 due)***

**Governance, Organization and Ethics**

**Readings:**

Genoways & Ireland: pgs. 24 – 72, 223 – 244

Falk & Dierking: nothing

The legal responsibility for a museum is normally vested in a Board of Trustees or Board of Directors and the distinction between the Board’s role and the director’s role are analyzed through the eyes of Board members and the director of the same museum. The way in which Board responsibilities are changing and the differences between museum

and other not-for-profit boards is also discussed. In addition, an overview of the typical staff functions and positions in a museum and how they relate to the governing board are presented and discussed. Ethical issues are often encountered in museum operations. These can involve board members, the president/executive director, the staff and sometimes-even volunteers. Examples will be presented and discussed.

***Class #6 (Ellis)***

***March 15, 2004***

**Strategic Planning and Organizational Change**

**Readings:**

Genoways & Ireland: pgs 75 – 89

Falk & Dierking: nothing

Strategic planning is also vital to assure success in meeting the mission of the museum. The class will review and discuss planning models and how they might best be applied to a museum. Museums, like any organization, are constantly in a state of change. Sometimes change happens in small steps; other times institutions may suffer trauma which can come with the opening of a new facility or major staff reorganization. Change can be either positively energizing or a disaster for the organization. The class will focus on how change in a museum can impact staff, visitors, donors, and community perception and the key elements of managing change.

***Class #7 (Ellis)***

***March 22, 2004 (Assignment #3 due)***

**Fund Raising (Development)**

**Readings:**

Genoways & Ireland: pgs. 121-158

Falk & Dierking: nothing

Fund raising is an essential part of the museum operation and in many cases the institution's survival may depend on it. Whether the museum be large or small, in all likelihood the institution must raise funds for purposes such as general operations, construction of new exhibits, acquisitions, programs, facility renewal, new construction, endowment, etc. Planning and implementation of efforts such as annual fund drives, capital campaigns, sponsorship programs, and focused one-time unusual type efforts will be discussed; the class will be asked to share their experiences as well.

***Class #8 (King)***

***April 5, 2004***

**Finances**

**Readings**

Genoways & Ireland, pgs. 91-119.

Falk & Dierking: nothing

Students are introduced to the vocabulary of non-profit accounting statements and their use. The class will include a discussion on budget development, who is typically involved, the data needed and the type of issues that are usually encountered. Financial control and oversight activities are also explained. Typical financial reports, which are used in actual museums, are presented to illustrate real life situations. The class will also review revenue sources generally found in museums including endowments, earned income and contributions.

***Class #9 (King)***

***April 12, 2004 (Assignment #4 due)***

**Human Resources/Personnel**

**Readings**

Genoways & Ireland, pgs. 161-173 & pgs. 223 – 245.

Falk & Dierking: nothing

Issues of personnel/human resource management have become more complex over the last 10 years, with many museums professionalizing human resource or personnel departments. The class will include a discussion of the importance of a diverse workforce within the museum. It will also address recruitment, training, setting performance objectives, evaluation, professional development, discipline and legal requirements, which have become increasingly in the day-to-day administration of a museum. Ethical issues, which are also becoming more prominent in shaping museum human resource decisions, will also be discussed. The responsibilities of trustees, directors, and senior administrators in maintaining a highly professional and motivated staff will be reviewed. Sample organizational models and management strategies will be discussed.

***Class #10 (King)***

***April 19, 2004***

**Marketing/Community Relations/Advocacy**

**Readings**

Genoways & Ireland, pgs. 247-272.

Falk & Dierking, pgs. 11-24.

Museums must know their audiences if they are to serve them well. This class will define the role of marketing in a museum environment. How marketing is used to develop audience and programs. Key elements of a marketing plan and the role of promotion and advertising in a museum will be discussed. Strategies for building and maintaining strong community relations programs will also be reviewed. Advocacy on the local, regional and national level will be discussed during this class.

***Class #11 (King)***

***April 26, 2004 (Assignment #5 due)***

**Visitor Services**

**Readings**

Genoways & Ireland, pgs. 313-326 & 197-221.

Falk & Dierking, pgs. 97-160.

Visitor Services is one of the fastest growing aspects of museums. The class will define the Visitor Service functions within a museum with an emphasis on providing service to the visitor. Students will have the opportunity to view recent data on the changing nature of Visitor Services in museums throughout New England. The key elements of a Visitor Services Plan will be discussed, as will possible methods for measuring success in such programs. The role of staff training and promoting a more accessible and diverse institution will also be discussed

***Class #12 (King)***

***May 3, 2004***

**Facilities/Security**

**Readings**

Genoways & Ireland, pgs. 197-221

Falk & Dierking, pgs. 55-66.

The physical facility in which a museum functions is important as it sets a tone for the museum and affects significantly the experience of the visitor and staff. Safety and security of both the objects museums display and the visitors they serve must be uppermost in the minds of architects and staff of the museum. The class will focus on these concerns and a guest lecturer will provide an overview of what an architect takes into account when developing a project for a museum.

***Class #13 (King)***

***May 10, 2004 (Assignment #6 due)***

**Technology**

**Readings**

Ledbetter, Erik, "The Nazi-Era Provenance Internet Portal", Museum News, May/June 2003, pp. 29 to 33, 72.

Steinbach, Leonard, "Civic Engagement in a Digital Age", Museum News, May/June 2003, pp 27, 48 to 57.

"Digital Visionary", Museum News, March/April, 2000, pp. 35-41, 72-74.

Muller, Klaus, "Reaching Out for the Online Visitor", Museum News, Sept/Oct 2002, pp. 46 – 53.

The Digital and Technological Age has fully integrated itself into the workings of museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This class will provide an overview of the uses of technology within a museum and the evolving strategies for managing it. The

audience/user role in developing micro- test sites for building web programs will be discussed. The use of e-commerce, technology in exhibitions and education programs, and the opportunity for technology programming to enhance access and diversity within the museum will be discussed during this class.

***Class 14 (Ellis/King)***

***May 17, 2004***

**The Museum in the Future/Class Review**

This final regular class will provide students with an opportunity to discuss and tie together the topics reviewed throughout the semester in the context of future trends and challenges in the museum field. The Instructors will also revisit topics from previous classes about which students may have additional interest or questions.

***Class 15 (Ellis/King)***

***May 24, 2004***

**Final Exam** - Administered in class. Final Exam accounts for 25% of student's final grade.

**III. ASSIGNMENTS** – Assignments account for 60% of the student's final grade.

**Assignment #1: (due February 23, the same date as Class # 3)**

Visit a non-Harvard museum (you may wish to use the web to identify possibilities). Obtain a copy of the museum's mission statement. Briefly answer the following questions:

- a. Describe how well the museum serves the community through its mission. (To put it differently, what need does the museum aim to fulfill?)
- b. How well do the exhibits and other program elements of the museum fulfill the mission? and
- c. Suggest how you believe the museum could enhance its mission.

**Hand in your answers with the mission statement of the museum you visited.**

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**Assignment #2: ( due March 8, same date as class # 5)**

Genoways & Ireland: p. 284 *Exercise: Evaluation of Exhibits---Box 12.1*

**In addition to the assignment in the Box—answer the following question: “How does the exhibit contribute to meeting the museum's mission?”**

*Two copies of this assignment are to be handed in to Ellis. One copy will be marked and returned to the student. The other copy will be forwarded to the museum.*

**Assignment # 3 (due March 22, same date as class # 7)**

In no more than 4 pages, double-spaced, answer ONE of the following two questions:

- (1) Describe objectively an organization change, which you have experienced. Then using what you have read and learned in class, analyze the organizational change in terms of why the change was undertaken, how it was implemented, successes and failures in achieving the ends desired. State what you would have done differently.

**OR**

- (2) Describe a strategic plan—either one you experienced through your work or one you identify in a local museum. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic plan in terms of the mission and goals of the institution. Suggest, in detail, what one thing you believe could be improved and why you suggest it, what it would consist of, how you would implement it, and how would you evaluate success (knowing the institution had achieved its goal).

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**Assignment #4 (due April 12, same day as Class #9) – Genoways/Ireland page 115 - max 4 double-spaced pages.**

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**Assignment #5 (due April 26, same day as Class #11)– Genoways/Ireland page 259 – max 4 double-spaced pages.**

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**Assignment #6 (due May 10, same day as Class #13) – Genoways/Ireland page 217 – Submit two copies. A copy will be sent to the Museum you visit. Do not visit a Harvard U Museum.**

**IV. CLASS PARTICIPATION** – Class participation accounts for 15% of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to attend each class and actively participate in discussions.