



Seasoned and Emerging Leaders pair up in new mentorship program

Report-Out: Year One of Emerging Arts Leaders/Los Angeles' Arts Professional Advisors Link (APAL) Program

“Lack of mentorship and support from incumbent executives in helping to pave a career path are serious frustrations for many next generation leaders.” – *Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out, 2007* (CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Meyer Foundation and Idealist.org)

“The [arts] sector is not attracting sufficient numbers of capable young people to replace the generation of cultural leaders that will retire in the next 10-15 years.” – *Critical Issues Facing the Arts in California: A Working Paper from The James Irvine Foundation, 2006* (The James Irvine Foundation and AEA Consulting)

These are some of the issues that prompted a group of Emerging Arts Leaders to conceive and implement a mentorship program called Arts Professionals Advisors Link (APAL). During the pilot year (2008-09), APAL matched eight emerging to mid-career arts leaders with eight established professionals for one-on-one meetings and consultations.

Pilot Year Program Format:

- Each advisee identified goals and specific objectives relating to career and higher education planning, stress management, networking, and training in areas such as marketing and board relations.
- Advisees found and requested their advisors or were recommended a match by trusted arts executives.
- APAL launched on November 8, 2008 with a mixer during which advisors and advisees became acquainted and discussed the program's expectations.
- Advisor/Advisee pairs met an average of four times during the year.
- Three events allowed participants to network as an entire group: one kick-off event in November 2008, one mixer in May 2009 which included tickets to LA Opera's "La Traviata", and one culmination event in November 2009.
- A peer-mentoring circle via a private online Google Group allowed advisees to share topics discussed with their advisors and monitor the program's effectiveness.
- Advisees completed a pre, mid and post-evaluation of the program; advisors completed a post-evaluation.

Quotable Findings from the Advisee's Evaluation of the Program:

"My adviser was so willing to connect me with other people. She set me up with two people I had wanted to meet, and who had greater expertise in an area than she could offer. It was a great unexpected benefit of the program."

"The program helps support individuals during difficult times and transitions, which may make them more likely to stay in the field, which benefits the field at large."

"Talking consistently with my adviser has helped me build confidence in ideas for on-the-job tasks."

"My advisor encouraged me to open up conversations about leadership in my own workplace that were not previously pertinent."

Each advisee began the year with a set of objectives she hoped to achieve with the help of an adviser. By the program's end, many had found new ways to re-engage with their work, such as working with new departments, expanding the scope of their job duties, transitioning to new positions, or taking on projects that increased the advisee's capacity for leadership. Most participants found (and are continuing to find) ways to achieve their objectives in their current jobs. Others have sought outside activities, including volunteer work and board membership, to further their professional skills. These findings are significant because they indicate the program's direct benefit to each advisee's workplace; by extension, mentorship is helping to build and sustain the field of arts management by guiding qualified and motivated arts professionals.

Based on the final program evaluation and feedback shared at the culminating event, participating advisers were impressed with the program's organization and the advisee-driven approach to addressing the need for mentorship. One advisor wrote in his/her evaluation, "I was pleased to see so many bright young people in the field." Another stated that APAL's format allowed the advisee to be a leader by setting the goals, agenda and tone of the relationship.

Key Benefits and Looking Forward

Each member of the first advisee class has garnered new skills and new ways of looking at their work as a result of this process. Assets include:

- Lasting connections made among advisees and with advisers
- A valuable peer-mentoring dynamic among advisees
- Continual resources that are available for support, advice, and inspiration
- A program that can be shared nationally through a tool-kit

In the next year, members of this year's graduating class seek to expand APAL, with the

goal of matching as many as 20 Emerging Arts Leaders and advisers and incorporating changes based on lessons learned from the first year of implementation. The group is also interested in eventually developing an online platform for matches, where advisers and advisees could find each other as needed. An information session will be held on March 15, 2010 for prospective advisee participants. Attendees should RSVP to artsleadersla@gmail.com.

APAL Administration and Acknowledgments

APAL was conceived and is administered by Emerging Arts Leaders/Los Angeles participants, and is therefore not only a professional development resource, but a platform for leadership and project coordination experience for young professionals.

Emerging Arts Leaders/Los Angeles (EAL/LA) is a network of leaders in the field of arts administration whose purpose is to grow and support the next generation of creative leaders in Los Angeles County. Members conceive of programs designed to expand their network, share resources, and enhance their professional development.

EAL/LA members are in their early career (under 35 and/or with less than five years experience in arts management) and share a desire to deepen their leadership capacity by developing innovative, effective, and responsible management practices. They represent organizations from all arts disciplines in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors and include artists, administrative coordinators, managers and directors, arts funders, patrons, and consultants.

The APAL originators and first advisee class are: Jennifer Babcock, Associate Director of Education and Community Programs, LA Opera; Addie deHilster, Director of Individual and Planned Giving, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; Stephanie Duarte, Institutional Giving Coordinator, LA Opera; Letitia Fernandez Ivins, Civic Art Program Associate, Los Angeles County Arts Commission; Cybele Garcia Kohel, Owner, Creative Conversations Consulting; Anne Huyck, Director of Arts Learning, Arts Council for Long Beach; Priscilla Jaworski, Productions Marketing Manager, Los Angeles County Arts Commission; and Kerri Stoughton-Jackson, Director of Operations, Outfest.

APAL extends sincere thanks to the advisers: Nathan Birnbaum, Cultural Affairs Supervisor, City of Santa Monica; Leni Boorstin, Director of Community Affairs, Los Angeles Philharmonic Association; Rochelle Branch, Manager, Pasadena Cultural Affairs; Diane Brigham, Executive Director, Ryman Arts; Andrew Campbell, Cultural Affairs Manager, City of West Hollywood; Cynthia Campoy-Brophy, Executive Director, The HeART Project; Rachel Fine, Executive Director, Los Angeles Children's Chorus; Arvind Manocha, Chief Operating Officer, Los Angeles Philharmonic Association.

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For general questions regarding EAL/LA, email artsleadersla@gmail.com.

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