



The Getty Foundation

## **Executive Summary**

### **2008 Evaluation of Multicultural Undergraduate Internship Program**

#### ***Background***

Established in 1993 to increase diversity in the professions related to museums and the visual arts, the Multicultural Undergraduate Internship program has provided support to Los Angeles area organizations for sixteen summers to host paid undergraduate interns. The internship positions are intended specifically for students who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in the staffs of museums and visual arts organizations: those of African-American, Asian, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander descent. Since 1993, grants totaling more than \$7 million to some 150 museums and visual arts organizations have supported more than 2,200 undergraduate interns.

The Getty Foundation hired consulting firm BTW *informing change* to conduct an evaluation of the internship program to assess its impact on interns, specifically the extent to which the internship experience influenced long-term career choices. Approximately 25% of former interns completed the survey designed by BTW, with responses spread across participating classes, assuring a representative sample of the total alumni pool. The evaluation was further informed by qualitative findings from follow-up telephone interviews with former interns, along with focus groups with long-time intern supervisors and discussion leaders (arts professionals who serve as secondary mentors during the summer).

We were pleased to learn that overall, the program has had a positive impact on alumni's career choices and commitment to museums and non-profit arts organizations. Key findings from the survey include:

#### ***Impact on Interns***

- 32% of interns who had graduated from college at the time of the survey report that they are currently pursuing a career in museums and the visual arts. Examples of local museums and visual-arts organizations employing alumni include the Fowler Museum at the University of California Los Angeles, the Hammer Museum, the Japanese American National Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the various programs of the J. Paul Getty Trust.
- 81% of these alumni credit the internship as helping them decide to pursue a career in the arts.

- The majority of alumni currently working in the arts had an undergraduate arts-related major, although a demonstrated commitment to the arts was not a requirement for participation in the program.
- The career pathways of interns who are currently working in the arts demonstrate steady progress and advancement.
- 45% of alumni went on to graduate school; of those, 17% pursued a graduate degree that would help them pursue a career in museums or visual arts organizations.
- Alumni report higher levels of commitment to and involvement with museums and visual arts organizations, regardless of whether or not they are currently pursuing careers in the field. 81% report that they visit museums more often since completing their internship, 34% join museums as members, and 24% volunteer at museums.

### ***Interns Perceptions of the Program***

- Interns were extremely satisfied with the quality of their internship experience, reporting an increase in arts-related knowledge and skills as well as an enhanced commitment to the field.
- Alumni gave high marks to their supervisors for providing them with guidance and support during their internships and identified this relationship as a key to pursuing a career in the arts.
- 77% of interns have maintained an ongoing relationship with the organization or supervisor where they interned.
- 54% of interns sought additional internship experiences upon completing the program.

### ***Considerations for the Future***

- Alumni would like a greater sense of connection to the Getty once their internships end, and suggested the Getty facilitate alumni events, networking, and professional development opportunities.
- Some supervisors, discussion leaders, and interns commented on varying definitions of multiculturalism, and suggested the Getty consider shifting definitions in its programming.

We are pleased that the Multicultural Undergraduate Internship program has exposed so many interns to the breadth of careers in museums and visual arts, and has provided them with on-the-job experience that can help them make long-term career choices. The evaluation has also reinforced a widely held assumption that mentorship – particularly as manifested in the intern-supervisor relationship – is such an important factor in creating a successful internship experience. As we restructure programming for the upcoming summer, we are mindful of this important relationship and will work to strengthen it.

The results suggest an opportunity for the Getty Foundation to foster a greater sense of community among alumni through networking and professional development opportunities. In the coming months, we will look at ways we can provide additional support to alumni pursuing careers in museums and non-profit arts organizations. If you are an alumnus of the program, we want to hear from you. Please email us at [summerinterns@getty.edu](mailto:summerinterns@getty.edu).