

LA County Arts Internship Program

2019 Highlights

With the support of the LA County Department of Arts and Culture, 203 college students interned at 125 performing, presenting, film, media, literary, and municipal arts organizations in Summer 2019.

"Nothing could have prepared me for the deep, profound joy and fulfillment this internship provided me with..."

—2019 intern at a multidisciplinary organization

"This summer has truly been one of the most transformative and educational experiences of my life."

—2019 intern at a music organization

"I am so grateful for this experience and think that this specific program is so important in fostering a community for young professionals interested in the arts."

—2019 intern at a dance organization

Los Angeles
County
**Arts &
Culture**



The Numbers

- 203 students | 125 organizations
- 76% female | 22% male | 2% nonbinary
- 38% White | 30% Latino/Hispanic | 20% Asian or Pacific Islander | 14% Mixed Ethnicity | 12% Black or African American
- 12% recent graduates | 38% rising seniors | 25% rising juniors
- Nearly 25% city college students | 15% recent transfers from a city college
- Colleges with highest representation: UCLA (24) | USC (21) | Pasadena CC (10) | CalArts (9) | Cal State Long Beach and Santa Monica College (8)
- 33% attend school outside of LA County

Survey Responses

- 91% of supervisors reported that their interns had the necessary skills and experience to qualify for an entry-level job in arts production or administration at the end of this program
- On a scale of one to five, 94% of students rated their experience at their host organization as a four or higher
- 100% of 2019 participants would recommend the program to a friend

Arts Summit & Peer Groups

In addition to working at their host organizations, students participated in educational events coordinated by the County.

At the full-day Arts Summit in Downtown LA, interns heard from LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Arts Commission President Helen Hernandez, Arts and Culture Director Kristin Sakoda, and Music Center CEO Rachel Moore. They also visited the Music Center, the Broad, the Colburn School, and REDCAT, and chose between the following workshops:

What Happens Next? | Getting Your Act Together | Navigating the Gig Economy | Art & Activism | From Austerity to Abundance: Achieving Scale and Equity in Arts Education | Art Without Borders | Civic Art: Creating Spaces for Equity and Inclusion | Bunker Hill's Grand Avenue: The Razing of a Neighborhood & the Birth of the Future LA | Sharing the Path, Advancing the Future

Participation in two Peer Group sessions was a requirement of the 2019 program. Interns submitted preferences to be placed in groups of 10 to 15 students that focused on the following themes:

Theater | A Career as an Artist | Art and Social Justice: Cross-Sector Work | Art and Social Justice: Art in the Community | Workforce Readiness

80% of students found Peer Groups beneficial | 80% also felt they should continue to be mandatory

2019 Arts Internship Program Final Report

November 2019



Background and Program Overview

The Los Angeles County Arts Internship Program (AIP) supports and strengthens the cultural sector of LA County by providing access to high quality opportunities for college students of all backgrounds to gain experience, understanding, and transferable skills relevant to careers in the arts, the creative economy, and engagement in public life. Established in 2000 as a companion to the Getty Foundation's Marrow Undergraduate Internship Program, which funds 10 week, full-time internships in visual arts organizations and museums for college students, AIP allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the work involved in nonprofit arts administration, better understand the role of the arts in communities and develop skills that can be put to use in their future careers. It does this by providing grants to nonprofit performing, presenting, film, media, literary, and municipal arts organizations to hire students to engage in specific projects over the summer. It also facilitates educational and networking opportunities for the interns to get a broader view of the arts ecosystem outside of the context of the day-to-day work within their organizations.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' investment in AIP began with a commitment to fund approximately 120 positions, on par with the Getty's program. The program quickly became a mainstay with a ripple effect across the region, with many interns remaining in the field and going on to supervise other interns. While the program's structure has remained relatively unchanged over the years, its focus has shifted to reflect the changing needs of both organizations and students in the County. Most

notably, Los Angeles County's Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII) highlighted the need to more intentionally support diverse students of all backgrounds to be able to take advantage of internship opportunities. As a result of a CEII Community College expansion, AIP now allows students the flexibility to complete their 400-hours internships over the course of 12 weeks, rather than mandating that all participants work full time. Department of Arts and Culture staff have also focused on strengthening relationships with local community colleges and encouraging grantee organizations to consider community college students in their hiring. As a result, the number of participating community college students has risen from 7 in 2017 to 48 in 2019, an increase of over 500%.

The success of the program is reflected in the Board of Supervisors' championing of its growth. Despite reductions in the program's scale during the Great Recession, AIP has steadily expanded in the last few years. 203 positions were funded in summer 2019 – the highest number in the program's history. Demand for the program remains strong, over 240 organizations applied to host interns, and those selected to host interns received over 3,600 applications combined.

Program Structure

The Arts Internship Program functions both as a grant program for organizations and a professional development program for participants. Each fall, eligible organizations submit applications to the County Department of Arts and Culture ("Arts and Culture") requesting one, two or three (depending on organizational budget size) student interns. Applications require that organizations describe a specific, arts-rooted project with associated learning objectives for each intern. Applications are reviewed by a panel, with particular attention paid to the quality of proposed projects and the capacity of each organization to successfully oversee and mentor newcomers to the field. Once awards are approved, organizations are responsible for recruiting and selecting their own interns, provided they meet certain eligibility requirements. Internships run from June through August, with Arts and Culture facilitating three educational opportunities – one full-day Arts Summit gathering and two smaller Peer Group events – during that time.

During summer 2019, organizations received grants ranging from \$4,700 to \$6,200 per student, depending on budget size. Students, meanwhile, were paid \$5,700 for 400 hours, or \$14.25 per hour, over the course of twelve weeks. Interns' day-to-day work was as varied as the more than 120 organizations participating in the program. One student produced a jazz concert series; another archived and documented a collection of historical costumes; yet another created a "Grant Application Guide" to assist their organization in all grantwriting efforts moving forward.

Program Outreach

All 203 funded positions were posted to the Arts and Culture website at the end of March 2019. Once positions were live, staff notified a comprehensive list of staff and faculty at various LA County colleges and universities via eblast, and communicated with all Board offices and Commissioners. As in previous years, the Arts and Culture website experienced an unusually high volume of traffic on the day the positions went live, as many students eagerly await the posted positions and



made the Arts Internship page the most visited section of the site.

Arts and Culture staff convened community college host organizations in summer 2018 to determine how to better support recruitment among local community college students. As a result of that feedback, staff coordinated an Info Session series at four LA County community colleges. These info sessions were comprised of a short overview of the program with an accompanying Q&A with an internship alumnus (and current student) and local host organization. They allowed Arts and Culture staff to share the county wide scope of the program alongside alumni, while introducing community college students to a local arts nonprofit in their area. Additionally, coordinating these info sessions allowed staff to create meaningful relationships with the community colleges that can be further developed in future years. Feedback from college faculty and students was overwhelmingly positive, and all four sessions were well attended.

School	# of students attended
Santa Monica College	~90
LA Mission College in Sylmar	~30
Pasadena City College	~80
East Los Angeles College	~50

In addition to the above schools, the following community colleges received flyer drop-offs of approximately 100 flyers each.

School	City
West Los Angeles College	Culver City
Compton College	Compton
Cerritos College	Cerritos
Los Angeles Harbor College	Wilmington
Rio Hondo College	Whittier

As evidenced by the strong turnout of students at the community colleges, these outreach strategies appear to be working and will be continued next year.

Program Highlights

Intern and Supervisor Relationships

Supervisor and Intern relations are an integral component of the summer experience, and the program has traditionally yielded high marks in this area. 2019 was no different: 76% of students rated their relationship with their supervisor as “excellent,” with 72% of supervisors saying the same of their interns.

Educational Components

Over the course of the summer, Arts and Culture coordinated three educational events for interns that were meant to complement their experiences within their organizations: Arts Summit, which brought all interns together for a full day of activity, and two Peer Group meetings.

Arts Summit

Arts and Culture worked with Community Arts Resources to produce Arts Summit, which was hosted by The Music Center at the end of June. Students gathered in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in the morning to be welcomed by the Director of the Department of Arts and Culture, Kristin Sakoda; LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis; and President and CEO of The Music Center, Rachel Moore.

After the welcome, each student chose two of eight panels:

- *What Happens Next? Getting Your Act Together* moderated by Elena Muslar*, Assistant Director of Entertainment and Fine Arts Professions at Loyola Marymount University joined by Camille Schenkkan*, Next Generation Initiatives Director at Center Theatre Group and Jonathan Muñoz-Proulx*, Director of Cultural Programming at A Noise Within Theatre.
- *Navigating the Gig Economy* presented by Marlon Fuentes*, multidisciplinary designer, researcher, entrepreneur and Marcus Kuiland-Nazario, artist curator, educator, performing artist, founder of Viva!
- *Art & Activism* presented by Jheanelle Brown, film curator/programmer, arts educator and Sonny Abegaze, cultural programmer and DJ.
- *From Austerity to Abundance: Achieving Scale and Equity in Arts Education* presented by Abe Ahn, Development Coordinator and Deb Morales, Arts Education Coordinator, LA County Department of Arts and Culture.
- *Art Without Borders* presented by Victor Payan, Founder & Director of Media Arts Santa Ana and Yosimar Reyes, poet, educator, performance artist, public speaker, and co-founder of La Maricolectiva.
- *Civic Art: Creating Spaces for Equity and Inclusion* presented by Laleña Vellanoweth, Collections Manager and Brianna MacGillivray, Civic Art Program Assistant with the Los Angeles Department of Arts and Culture.
- *Bunker Hill's Grand Avenue: The Razing of a Neighborhood & the Birth of the Future LA* presented by Martha Welborne, Architect and city planner and John Kaliski, Principal Architect for the LA Community Redevelopment Agency
- *Sharing the Path, Advancing the Future* presented by Leticia Buckley Senior Civic Strategist at The Music Center and fellow Music Center staff.



**denotes program alumnus*

Interns then walked over to Grand Park for lunch where they met with their Peer Group leaders and groupmates for the first time. After lunch, they viewed performances and cultural assets in downtown LA with:



- A visit to The Broad Museum for *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*
- A spoken word performance from Yosimar Reyes and Danyeli at Spiral Court curated by Grand Performances
- A performance from violinist Blake Pouliot at The Colburn School

Students ended their day at REDCAT with a performance of *Myth and Infrastructure* by artist Miwa Matreyek.

Peer Groups

This year, the 203 interns were grouped into 20 different peer groups spread throughout LA County. In addition to the expanded number of groups offered, for the first-time, peer groups were “themed” and interns were given the option to rank their preferences. The themes were derived from previous intern suggestions and can be adjusted each year given intern feedback and the evolution of the sector. The six themes identified for 2019 were:

- A Career as an Artist
- Arts and Social Justice: Art in Community
- Arts and Social Justice: Cross Sector Work
- Arts Education
- Theatre
- Work Readiness

With multiple groups focused on each theme, Peer Group leaders were given the freedom to interpret the assignment in their unique way. Examples of Peer Group events include:

- A tour of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) facilities in Pasadena
- Facilitating a workshop of arts activities at the Edelman Children’s Court in East Los Angeles
- Resume and CV workshop in Glendale
- Meeting with LA Metro staff in downtown Los Angeles
- Printmaking 101 workshop in Boyle Heights
- Roundtable with poets from all over LA County in a Highland Park bookstore

What Worked

Each year of the Arts Internship program is an opportunity to build on the success of the past while making adjustments to improve the experience of host organizations and the interns. In 2019, several such changes were quite successful.

Changes to the Peer Groups

Providing interns the opportunity to choose their Peer Groups, rather than grouping students solely based on geography, allowed participants to take more ownership of their experience and pick a Peer Group that complemented what they learned within their organization. 80% of interns reported that the theme of their Peer Group was interesting and relevant. The themes were not only helpful to the interns; a majority of Peer Group leaders also reported enjoying the new thematic format. For new leaders, the theme helped to provide a starting place for planning events and activities. For veteran leaders, the themes added a new perspective on their work.



Arts Summit Performances

Visits to various art institutions during Arts Summit is always a highlight for interns. This year, a renewed focus on performances that were diverse in discipline as well as content provoked positive feedback from the interns. The juxtaposition of classical music with poetry, visual art and mixed media performance art highlighted the breadth of talent that Los Angeles has to offer and allowed the interns to experience artforms and places previously unknown to them.

Areas for Growth

As the program grows and welcomes more interns and organizations into the fold, staff continue to reflect on ways the program can be improved in future years. The following areas have been identified for 2020:

Support for Supervisors

As the program seeks to balance the work contribution of interns and the mentorship provided by supervisors, the latter require additional training on how to best support students. This is even more crucial as shifting demographics and expanded outreach efforts are changing the needs of internship participants. As staff capacity remains constrained while AIP continues to grow, building networks of support between and among the supervisors (perhaps similar to the Peer Groups provided to interns) will benefit the host organizations as well as the overall intern experience. Staff is currently planning a minimum of three additional professional development opportunities for supervisors to take place before summer 2020.

Need for Networking

Asked what barriers they perceive to entering the arts and culture field, interns identified a lack of networking skills and a desire to better leverage their professional connections, with many citing the need for additional mentors. As Peer Groups are networks in and of themselves, staff is exploring how the Peer Group model can be improved to address these needs. Investing more in Peer Group Leaders as mentors, rather than relying on them primarily as educational event coordinators, is one promising

avenue. Staff will also prioritize incorporating more explicit networking opportunities and activities into next summer's Arts Summit.

Looking Ahead



In 2020, staff will continue to ensure that AIP is accessible to students of all backgrounds from across the County. Building on partnerships developed this year, staff will seek to expand the number of on-campus info sessions at community colleges, and continue to look for partnerships in new and relevant areas. It will also increase professional development support to internship supervisors and Peer Group leaders, continuing to monitor the results for future improvements.

As 2020 also marks the 20th anniversary of AIP, staff is exploring how to best document and assess the legacy of the program through the years. With additional funding, a comprehensive evaluation that includes surveys and focus group with alumni and supervisors would be welcomed.

Applications for the summer of 2020 were accepted from September 11th, 2019 to October 23rd, 2019. Positions for interested interns will be available on the Arts and Culture website in March 2020. Department staff look forward to reviewing all submitted applications and working towards another successful summer.