Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 10:30am

Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Jil Womack Harris, Chair

Betty Neal Crutcher, Vice Chair

Lynette Allston, *via teleconference*

Maura Bisceglia

Carol Ann Bischoff

Kelly Bisogno, Department of Education

Gil Bland

Kenneth Dye

Cherry Gardner

Carolyn Garner, Foundation Liaison

Suzy Szasz Palmer

Jennifer Sisk, Foundation Liaison

Monroe E. Harris, Jr., Ex-Officio

Jim Klaus, Foundation Co-President, Ex-Officio

Absent:

Anne Edwards

Satya Rangarajan

Rupa Tak

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director

Jeffrey Allison

Kay Baker

Caprice Bragg

Cammy Carlton

Celeste Fetta

Jody Green

Tom Gutenberger

Ashley Holdsworth

Deb Love (representing Cynthia Norwood)

Karen McGill

Maggie McGurn

Courtney Morano

Sarah Rasich

Jayne Shaw

Michael Taylor

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 10:30am, Chair Jil Harris called the meeting to order and welcomed Committee members as well as Foundation Board liaisons Jennifer Sisk and Carolyn Garner, Foundation Board Co-President Jim Klaus, and Council President Cammy Carleton.

1. MINUTES APPROVAL

**Motion**: proposed by Ms. Harris and seconded by Suzy Szasz Palmer to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, June 18, 2019 Education Committee meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

1. VMFA ON THE ROAD/STATEWIDE UPDATES

Deputy Director for Art and Education Dr. Michael Taylor noted that Manager of Statewide Programs and Exhibitions Jeffrey Allison is included in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* Person of the Year ceremony. He noted that this honor was bestowed on Board of Trustees President Dr. Monroe Harris, Jr. last year.

Mr. Allison then reported on the *VMFA on the Road*. Since its launch on October 30, 2018 through August 31, 2019, the Artmobile has welcomed 110,131 visitors, appearing in locations from the Tennessee border to the ocean. The program was highlighted in a five-page spread in *A! Magazine for the Arts* in Bristol to coincide with a recent visit. The Artmobile will be at Shenandoah University where a great new partnership has developed to include distance learning programs.

1. EDUCATION UPDATES

Director of Education Celeste Fetta reported on updates in Education. She told of the success of the recent Family Day celebrating Latin American Art of Patagonia. Approximately 2,700 visitors attended, including many first time visitors. The Studio School's first stage of renovations is coming to a close. Stage two (elevators) and stage three (windows and spiral staircase) are up next. Ms. Fetta suggested that the Committee members take a tour at a future meeting after the renovations are complete.

Ms. Fetta also reported on FY19 statistics for Education and Statewide, which included 3,861 programs completed involving over 1 million people. Gilbert Bland asked about comparisons to last year, and discussion followed. Director Alex Nyerges commented that based on visitors, VMFA is among the top 10-12 museums in the country on a per capita basis and a leader in the field for statewide efforts.

VMFA received two grants, one from the Schaberg Fund for early childhood education programs, and one from the Community Foundation for support of the upcoming *Working Together: Louis Draper and the Kamoinge Workshop* exhibit.

She also mentioned her role as the NAEA Southeastern Museum Division Rep-Elect, as well as Interpretation Manager Courtney Morano's role on the Association for Art Museum Interpretation Board. In addition, the AAMI's annual conference will be at VMFA in June of 2020.

The museum is transitioning the title of "Docent" to "Tour Guide" and is recruiting for the next group. Over 100 applications have been received, and the plan is to have the team in place for the *Treasures of Ancient Egypt: Sunken Cities* exhibition. Ms. Fetta explained the process for encouraging diversity in the applicant pool by collaborating with Director of Audience Development and Community Engagement Paula Saylor-Robinson on strategies, as well as targeted emails to surrounding colleges and universities, social media strategies, and work with Kim Frola, Senior Program Manager, Volunteers, Internships and Community Service, to get the word out to volunteers. Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher asked if the term docent could be grandfathered for some, and Ms. Fetta noted that the words are definitely interchangeable and fluid. Jennifer Sisk asked about how many positions we are looking to fill, and Ms. Fetta noted 75 for a three year commitment.

Distance Learning Content Specialist Sarah Rasich introduced Distance Learning Instructor Maggie McGurn. Ms. McGurn discussed the Distance Learning program and its cross-curricular applications. A video of an actual classroom experience was shown. This year VMFA is the "Artist in Residence" for VCU's School of Business and she described her process for integrating art into the business curriculum.

Ms. Rasich discussed the process of implementing the distance learning program, and noted it has reached schools in all eight of Virginia's Department of Education Superintendent's Regions. Current programs funded by the Evans grant focus on grades 6-12 and collegiate levels. Building on the successes of these programs, the program will be expanded to include younger students.

In response to remarks about how programs take place in the galleries, and the need to continually market the program, the committee suggested various ideas. Carol Ann Bischoff asked if this program has been shown to legislators, and Dr. Taylor suggested that we could be in contact with VMFA's Director of Government Relations Katie Payne. Cherry Gardner suggested using the Department of Education to spread the word about this free program. Presenting at the Superintendent's meeting where all eight districts are represented is another option.

There being no further business, Ms. Harris adjourned the meeting at 11:38am for a tour of the Rhythm of Art Teaching Gallery.

Recorded by: Karen McGill

Executive Administrator for the Deputy Director of Advancement