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Abigail Holloway
Dallas Museum of Art
Summer 2014

My summer internship in Adult Programming, Evaluation, and Interpretation at the Dallas Museum of Art was full of unexpected experiences. The whirlwind began with a phone interview, my first, with six people on the other line and ended right around midnight on August 15th. Between those times, I had so many great experiences and was given so many opportunities that I won't be able to describe them all here.

The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is situated in downtown Dallas and houses a large number of galleries devoted to a range of genres: from ancient Greek and African cultures to Impressionism and Contemporary art. The Adult Programming department at the DMA is responsible for weekly gallery talks by experts, jazz performances every Thursday evening, Late Night events which take place once a month and create a buzz of events throughout the museum from 6pm until midnight, and Arts and Letters Live, a series of literary and performing arts.

At the DMA, I was responsible for a couple of projects and collaborated on many others. One of my first responsibilities was to create a Murder Mystery game for the July Late Night event. This involved getting to know the galleries at the DMA, learning about 7 specific pieces of art in which the "suspected" were found, establishing alibi and motives for these suspects, and ultimately planning a murder! The event was a huge success and we had the museum packed with "detectives" for the July Late Night.

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The other large project that I eventually took responsibility for at the DMA was the Texas Bound events in the Arts and Letters Live program. Texas Bound is a series of events in which Texas actors read Texas short stories. In working on Texas Bound, I solicited authors, managed the Texas Bound email account, organized all of the stories, read nearly all the submitted stories, evaluated and analyzed each story, decided which stories to bring to "table reading sessions" with an actor, and ultimately helped to organize selected stories into events. In working on Texas Bound, I was largely unsupervised due to a change in the Arts and Letters Live staff. This allowed me to have a lot of freedom and, in many ways, shape the program. I was surprised to have as much responsibility over Texas Bound, but this added responsibility pushed me to work harder and get as much as I could out the internship. It turned out to be a great experience.

In addition to these two projects over which I had a lot of control, I assisted the Adult Programming staff with many other projects and events. Each week I helped one of the Adult Programming Managers facilitate Gallery Talks by experts focusing on a particular aspect of the museum. On my last Late Night, I was put in charge of both facilitating and running sound for three Tours given by curators and professors. I was also fortunate enough to get to work behind the scenes on all the Arts and Letters Live events that took place during my internship. The most notable of these events was a Diana Gabaldon book signing which was attended by 1,200 people and proved to be quite a challenge logistically due to its size. I also worked

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on evaluation projects on the DMA Friends program and the Pop-up Art Spot

program, assisted the Interpreter and Adult Programming staff in background research for the some upcoming exhibits, and created spreadsheets and graphs of the previous year's Arts and Letters Live events to get demographic data on the attendees.

During my internship I learned an array of skills that I think will be beneficial in the future. I learned how to work efficiently and towards specific goals in an office space. This, I found, was quite different than working in a school environment where grades tend to be the driving motivation. I also learned to communicate and navigate a professional atmosphere. I was able to keep a detailed to-do list while having four supervisors giving me tasks, prioritize the tasks I was given, and learn my physical and mental limits. Working mostly alone on the Texas Bound series, I learned to work in a creative manner without the extrinsic motivation of school. Through working on Texas Bound, I also discovered the limits of my creative stamina. I think learning when to take a break was one of the most important, and probably surprising, skills I learned at the DMA. All of these skills will be applicable in whatever career path I ultimately choose and will definitely be beneficial during my senior year at Sewanee.

In addition to the practical things I learned at the DMA, I learned a few things about my own abilities. I found that I am comfortable with and get a great deal of enjoyment from heading up projects. I also realized that I like to work around large

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groups of people and can feed off of the energy of a crowd.

Before my internship, I hadn't really considered a career in a museum. Now it seems like a real option. I enjoyed the variety of working in a museum. I like the opportunity to perform some quantitative analysis, work with smart, professional people, use creative skills to create events, as well as deal with the customer service aspect of the job. I think I could be very happy and successful in a museum environment or someplace similar.