

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 13 September 2017, 10:00AM
The Olde Farm, Bristol, VA

Additional posted locations:

Maryland Hall, Suite 200
28 Westhampton Way
University of Richmond
Richmond, Virginia 23173

6315 Three Chopt Rd
Richmond, VA 23226

445 Rivergate Drive
Richmond, VA 23238

4505 Sulgrave Rd.
Richmond, VA 23221

There were present:

Terrell Harrigan, Chair (via conference)
Jil Womack Harris, Vice Chair (via conference)
Dr. Betty Crutcher (via conference)
Lynette Allston
Kenneth M. Dye
Anne Noland Edwards
Michael J. Schewel, Jr., Ex-officio

Absent:

Cindy H. Conner
Rupa Tak

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director
Celeste Fetta
Jody Green
Maggie McGurn (via video conference)
Courtney Morano (via video conference)
Sarah Rasich (via video conference)
Dr. Michael R. Taylor

I. CALL TO ORDER

At 10:25am, President Michael Schewel called the meeting to order.

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion: proposed by Ms. Anne Noland Edwards and seconded by Ms. Lynette Allston to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2017 Education Committee meeting minutes as distributed. Motion approved.

III. EVANS 360° UPDATE

Celeste Fetta, Director of Education, reviewed how Evans 360° was developed and ran through its projected budget for FY18, FY19, and FY20. She noted that the expenditures in FY18 are likely to increase because of staff needs with spending at about \$439,000. This amount includes the salary for a full time In-Gallery Specialist/Curriculum Specialist and a P-14 Gallery Evaluation Specialist/Distance Learning Specialist. Projections for FY19 and FY20 are lower with FY19 running at approximately \$251,448 and FY20 running at \$314,506. Ms. Fetta stated that Education anticipates that technology costs will drop after FY18. Ms. Fetta then stressed that FY19 will mark the end of the grant money to be received by the museum. Ms. Edwards inquired as to whether or not it might be possible to ask the Evans Foundation to extend funding. Director Alex Nyerges noted that it would be possible to ask for this and argue that more funding will allow VMFA to expand its yearly audience reach from 750,000 to 1,000,000. Vice Chair Jil Harris commented that she was pleased to be having this financial discussion so early.

Ms. Fetta then addressed the role of the cart—named Lettie after the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation—which serves as the primary technology source for the distance learning program. She stated that distance learning functions best when students are involved in a group activity, learning in a live and interactive environment. Most distance learning sessions will be 30-50 minutes of facilitated video conference experience focusing on specific themes. She also noted that the primary platform for the video conferencing capabilities is Zoom. Lastly, Ms. Fetta addressed the roll out and timeline for Evans 360°, which is currently slated for fall of 2017 with targets of grade 10 and community college programs. President Schewel asked Ms. Fetta to keep the committee abreast of any changes to the timeline. He urged her that the roll out needs to occur along the timeline as planned.

Next, the model for learning and its primary objectives were discussed by the committee. These three objectives include: 1. Engaging authentically with an object; 2. Exchanging knowledge; and 3. Encouraging ways of thinking. Early test sessions have been done and Ms. Fetta acknowledged that those with a global viewpoint seemed to be the most effective. One test version was a deep-dive into the Greco Roman world using up to 4 objects to promote active looking and dialogue that supports curriculum to better understand time and place. Furthermore, she stated that they plan to have single session and multi-session bookings as well as audiovisual test runs for the education staff and end users. Ms. Allston asked if there are plans to record every session or have a promotional recording to present for others. Ms. Fetta noted that they would look into the possibility but have to be considerate of laws prohibiting the filming of anyone under the age of 18.

Ms. Fetta then connected to the Evans 360° DLP cart, Lettie, to broadcast Courtney Morano, VMFA's Interpretation Manager. Ms. Morano briefly discussed impact development and the need to be able to demonstrate how Evans 360° will work for both teachers and docents. She noted that the in-gallery evaluation specialist will be able to help with this.

Ms. Morano then introduced Sarah Rasich, VMFA's Distance Learning Content Specialist, via video conference. Ms. Rasich discussed the importance of strategic engagement with students to allow for the appropriate time needed for close and engaged looking. She stated that they originally included more objects in the test sessions, but found the sessions more effective when fewer objects with closer looking were involved. This allowed the students to really get a better understanding of each object that they observed.

Finally, Ms. Rasich introduced Maggie McGurn, VMFA's Distance Learning Instructor. Maggie led the committee through a test session using Mary Cassatt's painting titled *Lydia Seated on a Porch*, which was donated by James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin in 2015. The abbreviated demonstration involved an activity to spark close looking and engaged in a dialogue. Ms. Rasich zoomed in on the work of art whilst standing in the galleries and asked committee members to notice where their eye was drawn within the work of art and draw that on a piece of paper. She then asked each committee member to share where their eye was drawn and to discuss openly. The committee engaged in this discussion and shared their drawings with one another. Then, Ms. McGurn noted that this type of session allows for students to engage in a meaningful conversation regarding line and movement and why the viewer's eyes are drawn to certain parts of the image. It allows for a discussion of style, color, texture, line weight, and more. Director Alex Nyerges thanked Ms. McGurn for a fun and engaging conversation, and he congratulated Ms. Fetta on a job well done. The committee discussed a few items that might improve the session such as the possibility of using a still rather than zooming into the image, making adjustments to the lighting of the cart for the video, and having multiple, wireless headsets and mics for the team to use while on video. Those on the phone commented that they were very excited to see the video session and that the experience sounded very engaging.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:17AM.

Recorded by: Jody Green
Administrative Assistant, Director's Office