

**A participant-oriented evaluative case study of the Wolf Trap  
Foundation for the Performing Arts Internship Program**

**Antonio C. Cuyler, Ph. D.  
Department of Art Education  
1072 WJB-1232  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-1232  
acuylar@fsu.edu  
850.645.0473  
Florida State University**

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### Abstract

For more than forty years, the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts has professionally prepared aspiring arts managers through its premier internship program. Until now, no empirical case study existed on a successful internship program in a cultural organization. Therefore, this participant-oriented evaluative case study answers two questions, (1) what best practices has the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts used to develop a successful internship program? In addition (2), why has the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts internship program been so successful? With answers to these questions, this study contributes to practice and will enhance the conceptualization, design, implementation, management, and planning of internship programs in cultural organizations.

### Key words

Arts Management, best practices, case study, internship program, participant-oriented evaluation, and Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts

## Introduction

As an arts administration educator, the researcher has often advised cultural organizations on a number of challenges related to their internship programs. The most reoccurring problem to emerge in these conversations has been how to design an effective internship program that will attract high quality arts management students. An effective internship provides high quality professional development for emerging arts managers and places and retains them in careers in arts management (Cuyler, 2015).

The internship remains relatively unstudied despite the fact that most graduate and undergraduate arts management degree programs require completion of an internship as a graduation requirement according to the Association of Arts Administration Educators. In addition, extant research on arts management internships (Cuyler & Hodges, 2015; Cuyler, 2015; Cuyler et al., 2013; Brindle, 2011; Channell & Anderson, 2010; Holmes, 2006; Rolston & Herrea, 2000; Thomas, 1977) has not examined the best practices of a successful internship program in a cultural organization. Although some best practices and guidelines exist (Cunningham, 2012; New England Museum Association, 2000), anecdotal evidence primarily serves as their basis.

To address this problem in practice, two research questions guided this participant-oriented evaluative case study, (1) what best practices has the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts used to develop a successful internship program? In addition, (2) why has the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts internship program been so successful? Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify and describe the best practices the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts has used to develop a successful internship program. This study makes a contribution to practice by seeking to enhance the conceptualization, design, implementation, management, and planning of internship programs in cultural organizations (Tracy, 2010).

### Researcher Bias

In the summer of 2005, the researcher interned at the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Human Resources. The internship far exceeded expectations he had based on his previous internships with two other cultural organizations. At Wolf Trap, he designed a strategic diversity plan, drafted a performance evaluation instrument, and wrote a proposal to senior management for compressed workweeks, among other assignments. Most importantly, he felt valued as an integral member of the staff. With this study, he aims to identify and describe the best practices that inspired such a unique internship experience in a cultural organization.

Internships are a critical component of the Arts Management curriculum warranting serious empirical study. By articulating empirically based best practices, he hopes to improve internship programs in cultural organizations. In addition, Cuyler and Hodges (2015) illuminated arts management students' expectations of internships alerting cultural organizations to a need to improve specific aspects of their internship programs. To balance any bias that may have unintentionally influenced this study, he used research tools that reflect both deductive and inductive evidence (Creswell, 2013).

## Method

Case studies are rich, empirical descriptions of a phenomenon based on a variety of data sources with an emphasis on examination of the rich, real-world context in which the phenomenon occurs. To answer the research questions, the researcher used Creswell (2013) and Stake's (1995) approaches to conducting case studies. A benefit of using Stake's (1995) approach is its deep connection with participant-oriented evaluation. In participant-oriented evaluation, researchers use information for practical problem solving, not theory development. Moreover, researchers work in partnership with stakeholders to evaluate the quality of activities and processes.

Assessors of participant-oriented evaluations should judge them solely on their actual use upon completion (Stake, 1995). Participant-oriented evaluations and case studies rely on triangulation to achieve rigor. To achieve triangulation in this case study, the researcher used a multi-vocalic data collection strategy that included document analysis, focus groups, interviews, and an alumni survey supported through the integration of case study methodology and participant-oriented evaluation.

### Rationale for Selection of Case

In case study methodology, researchers use theoretical or purposive sampling, rather than random or stratified sampling because the purpose of the research is not to test theory (Creswell, 2013). The researcher chose Wolf Trap's Internship Program as the unit of analysis because of its reputation and proven record assisting the professional development of emerging arts managers. For example, Bloomberg Businessweek (2009) and Vault Career Intelligence (2011) has ranked Wolf Trap's internship program favorably.

Wolf Trap's Internship Program is an exemplar of success in a cultural organization, sustaining its successes during and after the Great Recession. Wolf Trap considers itself a medium-sized organization based on its venue capacity in comparison to other performing arts venues across the U. S. Lastly, as an alumnus of the internship program, the researcher had unusual access to the research site. Wolf Trap may have been reticent to allow a non-alumnus access to the research site. Furthermore, Cunningham (2012) described a successful internship program as:

- Recruitment-oriented
- Displaying continuity from year to year
- Having support from top management
- Having an effective program design
- Having an effective intern-to-full-time conversion process
- Organized and managed by well-trained professionals
- Undergoing continuous evaluation and improvement
- Using a good selection process to recruit high-caliber interns

Notwithstanding its unique organizational model, Wolf Trap's internship program meets all eight of these characteristics. It is recruitment-oriented because it has an expressed concern for the professional development of future arts managers. Wolf Trap's internship program has existed for more than forty years with support from the initial founder, Catherine Filene Shouse, and the current President and CEO. Wolf Trap's internship program has an effective design that includes twelve weeks of systematic education and a continuous evaluation process. Since 2002, Wolf Trap has converted 40

outstanding interns to full-time staff members. Currently, seventeen former interns work full-time at the Foundation. Wolf Trap has also converted interns to full-time staff who pursue careers in arts management with other cultural organizations.

An Assistant Director of Education Outreach at Wolf Trap manages the internship program. To recruit high-caliber interns, Wolf Trap visits career fairs, hosts course site visits, uses a personal network of family members and friends, and maintains an informative website. In 2013 alone, 450 applicants competed for 31 internship positions. Applicants had less than a 1% chance of winning one of the coveted summer internships at Wolf Trap.

### Procedure

The researcher used the following six-step procedure to collect and analyze data in this participant-oriented evaluative case study. First, he surveyed alumni of the program using an instrument modeled on D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel's (2009). In total, 103 alumni who interned between 1989 and 2012 participated in the survey for a response rate of 10%. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, in terms of gender, 81% of alumni identified as female, while only 19% identified as male. Although primarily European American, 52%, alumni reported ethnic and racial diversity including 17% African American, 15% other, 9% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Asian American, and 2% American Native. Those who clarified their ethnic identities did so by listing Asian American/White, Asian American/European American, Bi-racial, Black/Pacific Islander, Haitian-American, and Mexican/Iranian.

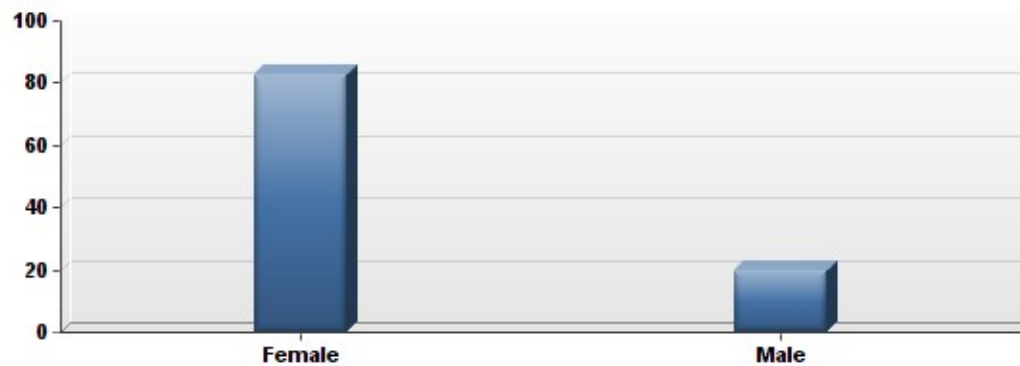


FIGURE 1

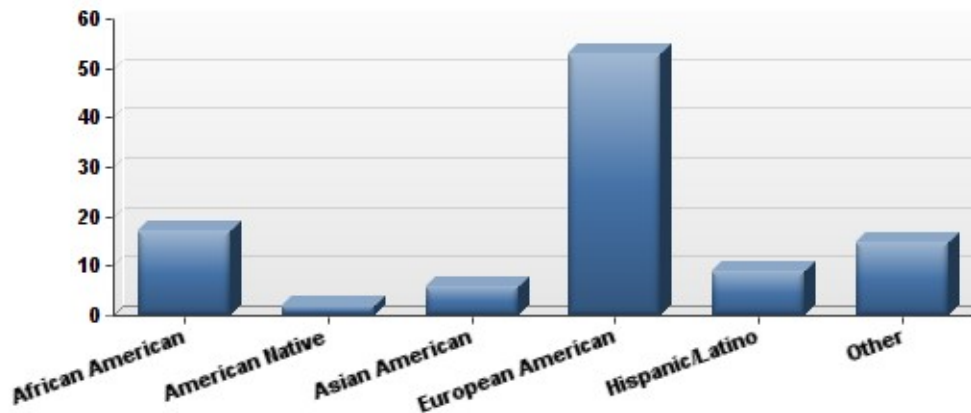


FIGURE 2

Figure 3 shows that 58% of alumni earned a bachelor's degree, 41% earned master's degrees, and only 1% earned a doctoral degree in arts management, business, communications/marketing, dance, education, music business, and theatre, among other areas. Alumni earned their degrees after completing their internships. However, only 25% of alumni reported currently working in arts management. As shown in Figure 4, most alumni, 70%, interned at Wolf Trap during the summer, while only 23% interned in the spring, and 7% interned in the fall.



FIGURE 3

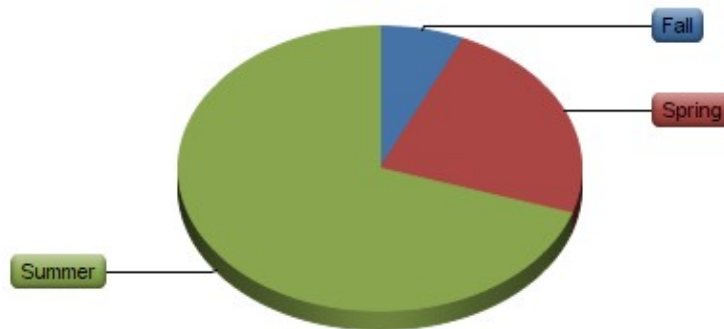


FIGURE 4

Alumni in the survey interned in a variety of areas at Wolf Trap including accounting, communications/marketing, development & fundraising, education, human resources, information systems, planning & initiatives, production & sound, programming & production, ticket services, and the Wolf Trap Opera company. Nearly 76% of alumni strongly agreed with the statement, “I am very satisfied with the internship I had at Wolf Trap.” As a final test of alumni’s affinity for the internship program at Wolf Trap, Figure 5 shows that 73% stated that they would give a charitable gift to specifically support the internship program at Wolf Trap. In the focus group with the class of 2013 interns, the researcher asked if they would give a charitable gift to support the internship program. Most said “yes,” but one said the following:

“I would say no. When I give a gift to an organization, I prefer to give it to their general discretion as to what program is the most needed at the time. But if there is some other program that is in critical need at the time, I would prefer it go to that.”

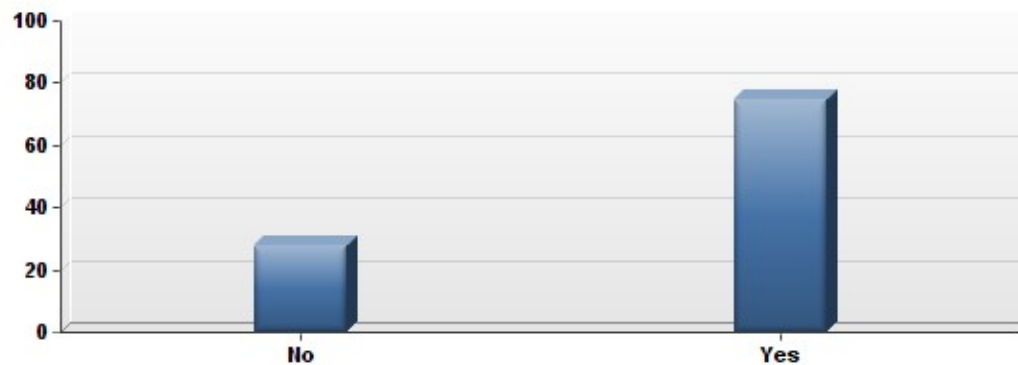


FIGURE 5

The researcher used the alumni survey's results and Cunningham's (2012) best practices to develop a focus group protocol for the 2013 summer interns, and currently employed full-time staff members who previously interned at Wolf Trap. Each focus group included 5-7 participants. He also interviewed approximately three staff members representing three levels of management at Wolf Trap. Interviewing staff provided a historical perspective of the internship program because the former Vice President for Performing Arts and Education, whose career at Wolf Trap spans nearly forty years, has played a role in the internship program's development since its inception.

Once the researcher collected the data, he had the interviews and focus groups transcribed by REV, a transcribing company, to maintain objectivity. As an initial analysis of the data, he read the transcripts for accuracy and made corrections to the transcripts. He then read the transcripts in search of themes that matched Cunningham's (2012) best practices. Finally, he vetted the best practices with the data to confirm two best practices unique to Wolf Trap.

To promote an inclusive dialogue, he submitted a draft of this report to the Assistant Director of Education Outreach who manages the internship program and the Senior Director of Education. Member checking in this way, sustained the trustworthiness and equitable relationship developed with Wolf Trap as a non-funding partner in this participant-oriented evaluative case study. As posited in Tracy (2010), member checking also increased the believability and credibility of the proposed best practices discovered through this case study.

### **Context**

Nestled in the beautiful natural scenery of northern Virginia, twenty minutes from the nation's capital, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts is a nonprofit organization founded in 1971 by Catherine Filene Shouse. Wolf Trap offers year round performances at the Filene Center, Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods, and the Barns. As the United States' only National Park for the Performing Arts, Wolf Trap plays a valuable leadership role in both the local and national performing arts communities. Through a wide range of artistic and education programs, Wolf Trap enhances the nation's cultural life and ensures that the arts remain accessible and affordable to the broadest possible audience (Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 2012).

In fact, Wolf Trap's mission "is to present and create excellent and innovative performing arts programs for the enrichment, education, and enjoyment of diverse audiences and participants." Accordingly, Wolf Trap's vision statement contends that Wolf Trap "will harness the power of the performing arts to enrich and change lives by extending the Wolf Trap experience to millions of people worldwide (Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 2014)." Given Mrs. Shouse's personal biography as the first woman to earn a Master's degree in education from Harvard University (Wolf Trap, 2014) and her unwavering commitment to education, Wolf Trap provides innovative arts-in-education programs for learners of all ages, a premier residency-training program for young opera singers through the Wolf Trap Opera Company, and an award-winning internship program.



## **Internship Program**

According to the former Senior Vice President for Performing Arts and Education, the internship program at Wolf Trap started as a partnership with American University. In its current iteration, the internship program is an intensive 12-week program that provides invaluable hands-on experience. Interns become integral members of the staff working on meaningful projects while interacting with board members, patrons, and business leaders who add to interns' unique experiences. Summer interns work full-time (40+ hours per week), while fall and spring interns work part-time (20-24 hours per week).

All interns receive compensation of \$7.25 per hour. Although Wolf Trap does not provide housing for interns, due to the generosity of individual donors, interns who participate in the *Diversity Initiatives* receive housing and transportation to and from Wolf Trap during their summer internships. All interns receive several benefits including career development workshops, guest speaker seminars with Wolf Trap senior staff, free tickets to select performances, tours of Wolf Trap's performance venues, discounts at Wolf Trap concessions and gift shop, free master class participation and observation, field trips to local performing arts venues, and networking events with other D. C. area interns.

In addition, interns can receive college credit through their university by completing an internship at Wolf Trap. Interns can specialize in advertising/group sales, creative copywriting, graphic design, marketing, multimedia, photography, public relations, web communications, annual fund, donor relations, major gifts, special events, planning & initiatives, program & production, human resources, ticket services, information systems, education, accounting, production & sound; and administrative, videography, directing, stage management, technical theatre, scenic/prop painting, costuming all for the opera company.

Wolf Trap accepts internship applications from undergraduate students who have completed a minimum of one year of study, graduate students, and recent graduates (up to two years out of school), career-changers currently enrolled in a degree program, and international students with J-1 or F-1 visas. Wolf Trap's internship program has played a key role in shaping the professional success of approximately a thousand interns since 1980.

### **Best Practices**

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2012), a best practice is a practice that has produced outstanding results for a group that others can adopt and adapt to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their work. A major strength of a best practice is its replicability to other organizations despite type and size. In 2012, Cunningham developed fifteen best practices to develop a premier internship program based on her personal experience managing a large, global internship and co-op program. She also spoke to employers who had good programs, and used student focus groups to find out what students like. The fifteen best practices included:

1. Provide interns with real work assignments
2. Hold orientations for all involved
3. Provide interns with a handbook and/or website
4. Provide housing and relocation assistance
5. Offer scholarships

6. Offer flextime and/or unusual work arrangements
7. Have an intern manager
8. Encourage team involvement
9. Invite career center staff and faculty to visit interns on site
10. Hold new-hire panels
11. Bring speakers from your company's executive ranks
12. Offer training/encourage outside classes
13. Conduct focus groups/surveys
14. Showcase interns' work through presentation and expo
15. Conduct exit interviews.

Based on an analysis of the data, this case study found that Wolf Trap uses twelve of Cunningham's (2012) best practices, plus two additional best practices to develop a successful internship program. The two additional best practices explicitly emerged from the data. Wolf Trap *provides interns with real work assignments* by approaching the internship as a curriculum. In fact, supervisors must apply internally detailing the potential intern's assignments. Two interns confirmed this best practice by stating:

"There's an amount of work that needs to be done but they expect that the interns will do it. I'm not just sitting, reading old files, doing data entry from 10 years ago that someone might need to look at later. I'm doing things like planning events that are happening in two days."

"If it weren't for the fact that this is called an internship, I would basically call this my job because I don't feel like an intern. They don't look down on me; they don't give me busy work."

Related to work assignments, 89% of alumni agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I used a number of high-level skills during my internship at Wolf Trap." D'Abate et al. (2009) defined high-level skills as requiring interns to do many different things using a variety of skills and talents. Nearly 87% of alumni agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "The work I completed affected how well other staff members completed their work during my internship at Wolf Trap." Astonishingly, 96% of alumni agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I completed projects from beginning to end during my internship at Wolf Trap."

According to the Assistant Director of Education Outreach, Wolf Trap *holds orientations for all involved*. She stated:

"For the supervisors, it's more of a touch-base prior to the application process and then again touching base before anybody makes any decisions. For the new intern supervisors, we definitely do have orientations and walk them through what's expected of them, and just what to expect for the program, in general. For the interns, they get an hour long orientation on the first day at nine o'clock in the morning, which includes an overview of what they can expect, HR stuff, a little bit of history about the organization, building effective communication with your supervisor from the get-go."

The Assistant Director of Education Outreach confirmed that Wolf Trap *provides interns with a handbook* at the same time they send out contract materials. The handbook discusses Wolf Trap's location, the dress code, weapons policies, social media policy, and other HR related content. Wolf Trap also *provides housing and relocation assistance* in the form of a listing of websites interns can visit. However, most interns do not need it.

Cunningham (2012) *encouraged offering scholarships* particularly if the organization has had difficulty attracting a particular demographic of student. Although Wolf Trap does not offer scholarships, they offer two diversity initiatives for multicultural and socio-economically disadvantaged interns. Interns in these programs receive the same benefits as interns in the general internship program, but they also receive housing and transportation, which alumni of these programs and the class of 2013 diversity initiatives interns found critical to their ability to accept the internship offer. In addition, Wolf Trap recently added a year-long fellowship designed to give a young person of color, further in their career trajectory, an in-depth experience with the organization.

Wolf Trap *offers flextime* for the interns working events or shows, the Assistant Director of Education Outreach assured:

“If they're here until late at night because of a Filene Center show, then, yes, they get the flextime to take the morning of the next day or the Friday off or a weekend.”

Wolf Trap *has an intern manager* whose official title is Assistant Director of Education Outreach. In addition to the internship program, the intern manager serves as a member of a team of three who manages the operations of four other education programs. Wolf Trap *encourages team involvement* in a few ways, one of which through weekly seminars held for interns on Wednesdays. Wolf Trap's organizational culture also encourages interns to work together on projects. Interns can request informational meetings to learn about the nature of the work in other departments, and interns may volunteer for donor events. For example, the Senior Director for Education said:

” We have an intra-office relationship so that education is constantly working with communications and marketing, development, finance, and the opera. The interns get an experience of that while they're here.”

Wolf Trap *brings in speakers from their executive ranks* during weekly seminars on Wednesdays. Past guests have included the President and CEO, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Performing Arts and Education, and the Senior Director of Education, among others. Wolf Trap *offers training for interns* on cover letter & resume writing, and interviewing during the internship. Wolf Trap *conducts focus groups* to evaluate the interns' responses to the internship program. The Assistant Director of Education Outreach confirmed that these evaluations ask interns how do you feel your internship is going thus far, what is the work that you're doing, what do you still want to work on? Wolf Trap designed these questions as prompts to initiate the conversation between intern and supervisor.

As an evaluative mechanism, Wolf Trap *conducts exit interviews* at the last intern weekly seminar. The Assistant Director of Education Outreach discusses the following three questions with the interns, what did you like most about the internship, what did

you like least about the internship, how can Wolf Trap improve its internship program, do you have any suggestions. Some cultural organizations house interns in specialized departments, however Wolf Trap's *education department manages the internship program*.

D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009) supported this choice, and it is rational given the Department of Labor's (2010) refined test that clearly stated in its number one criteria, "the internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment." When the researcher asked the former Vice President for Performing Arts and Education why Wolf Trap decided to house the internship program in the education department, she stated, "I think it started with Mrs. Shouse who was first and foremost committed to education."

Wolf Trap *compensates all of its interns \$7.25 per hour* because the pay validates the work that interns do. When the researcher asked why Wolf Trap compensates interns the former Vice President of Performing Arts Education indicated:

"I think it was grounded in a founder who believed so strongly in giving young people a leg up, but making them earn it and that her feeling that if you were doing meaningful work, you ought to get something in return."

Two interns further expressed their views on the issue of paid and unpaid internships by stating:

"Coming from five internships, I don't really think it's fair in general how internships work a lot of the time. I've been reading some lately too where it's like internships are only for rich kids, because it's kind of true. You pay for it; you're paying to get experience."

"A paid internship increases the level of accountability more on the interns, but also the organization. I think the accountability is a critical piece that's introduced when you start paying interns."

In a recent discussion regarding paid vs. unpaid internships, a colleague suggested that cultural organizations who do not compensate interns should at least provide a scholarship to the host college/university for the intern (A. Hodges, personal communication, September 4, 2013). This would decrease the tax burden of the intern, and incentivize quality work from the intern at the same time. Nevertheless, for-profit and non-profit cultural organizations should think more creatively about how they can provide some remuneration for interns who will likely join their ranks after graduation.

### **Why has Wolf Trap's Internship Program Been So Successful?**

Wolf Trap's organizational culture is the primary reason for the internship program's success. BusinessDictionary.com (2014) defined organizational culture as the values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. This includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. A communications & marketing intern gave an indication of Wolf Trap's organizational culture by stating:

“Wolf Trap, the way they run things here and the way that the meetings work, everybody might not agree with everybody else, but they’re still going to sit down and talk about it and they’re going through all the options to sell a show. They truly work together.”

Indicators of Wolf Trap’s organizational culture, not discussed in the best practices, include the recruitment process, the open door policy, internship supervision, diversity, growth, and opportunities. The following quotes depict each of these indicators.

### **The Recruitment Process**

“You pick people who you want to be working with in the next 5, 10, 15 years. You’re training people not to be really good interns but to be good co-workers.”

### **The Open Door policy**

“I can just step into any office and say, “Hey, my name is Stan and I’m the multimedia intern.” Can I set up a day to talk to you or go to lunch with you to just ask you some questions? ”You never really get a, “No,” you get like a, “Well, let’s find a day.”

“You can ask anyone for an informational meeting because I want to learn more about development and I think there aren’t a lot of companies that would say okay, take an hour from the work that you’re doing to go learn about something that you’re not doing this summer. I didn’t know that you could do that, but what a cool opportunity that they allow you and really want you to do that.”

### **Internship Supervision**

“It’s hard to supervise an intern because that’s a whole extra job on top of the work they’re already doing especially during the summer. Their commitment to the students’ success is really just heartwarming. They take them in and teach them everything they can.”

### **Diversity**

“I really like that this is a corporate place, but the representation of women is incredible and for me that’s really important.”

### **Growth**

“You realize that you’re capable of way more than you ever thought you were and it’s just being a really powerful experience.”

### **Opportunities**

“You’re not going to have that kind of disposable income to actually buy tickets after you leave here. There are so many art forms that you probably have never been exposed to and probably don’t think you would ever like, so try it.”

Wolf Trap’s shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules regarding the internship program have made it successful. The Senior Education Director discussed Wolf Trap’s custom of hiring interns as full-time staff in this quote:

“The fact that when you have interns working with you who are completely engaged into the operations of the organization, then when there is an opening, you have the experienced bodies right there to say, “wow, this person really could do this job and work with us effectively,” because you’ve experienced them in that position. We’ve had that in education, development, finance, planning & initiatives, across the board. We’ve seen that, and that’s because we have the opportunity to work with them and we know what they can do. It’s a win-win for everyone involved.”

The former Vice President of Performing Arts and Education illustrated a core belief that permeates through the organizational culture regarding the internship program by stating:

“There is a huge concern about where the next generation is coming from at least with us. The Wolf Trap culture is there to provide those strong underpinnings for people who are just starting their careers. You get one person who’s a zealot. They pass on their passion and more and more people embraced it. It just becomes ingrained in the organization. I think our belief in the future generation and the future of arts administration is contingent upon us laying a good foundation.”

It is not clear if Wolf Trap or the best practices came first. Still, the internship program’s reputation in the cultural sector and continued success producing excellent arts managers should garner it attention as a pioneering professional development program for emerging arts managers.

### **Conclusions**

This study answered two research questions, (1) what best practices has the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts used to develop a successful internship program? In addition (2), why has the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts internship program been so successful? By answering these questions, this study identified and described the best practices Wolf Trap has used to develop a successful internship program. In addition, this study discovered that Wolf Trap’s organizational culture has been the primary reason for the internship program’s success.

#### **Recommendations**

While this study focused on the numerous strengths of Wolf Trap’s internship program, this study uncovered an area that could enhance the internship program. The internship program’s greatest challenge is scheduling. Scheduling prevents Wolf Trap from practicing three of Cunningham’s (2012) best practices. Wolf Trap does not invite Faculty or Career Center Staff for site visits, hold new hire panels, nor showcase interns’ work through presentations or expos.

In fact, the Senior Director of Education raised the question, “How do you balance giving interns so much exposure to so many things and get the work done?” She further articulated that she wanted interns to take full advantage of performance opportunities in this quote:

“We have major performances practically every night over the summertime. It’s not required that our interns go, and, certainly, the reason why we do that is because of the labor laws. If we required them to go, we would have to pay them

for everything that they went to see. Having said that, they should take advantage of the fact that they can go to many of our concerts for free.”

In addition, the need for more networking opportunities came up in interviews with staff, all of the focus groups, and the alumni survey. Some interns found it very difficult to network with other interns due to their schedules.

With this in mind, Wolf Trap should consolidate the guest speakers for weekly seminars. Instead of individual guest speakers, it may help to have a panel of executives speak to the interns. This change would allow Wolf Trap to substitute a new hire panel for a panel of full-time staff who interned at Wolf Trap. From this panel, Wolf Trap could develop a structured mentorship program where in addition to the mentoring gained from intern supervisors, interns would also receive mentoring from those full-time staff who interned at Wolf Trap. These staff members could use group mentorship to mentor three interns simultaneously over lunch or a professional happy hour. This might also encourage networking among interns based on a shared mentor.

Showcasing all interns’ work would provide another educational opportunity that could help interns improve their public speaking skills, particularly by encouraging competition through a 1-minute presentation. The Assistant Director of Education Outreach could schedule the showcase in week eleven and invite Wolf Trap staff, career center staff, and faculty to attend. These changes to the schedule would allow Wolf Trap to add the best practices by Cunningham (2012) they currently do not practice.

Although this participant-oriented evaluative case study details in-depth study of a unique case of success in a cultural organization, future comparative studies of less successful internship programs’ use of the identified best practices will verify their utility. The best practices identified and described are a great way for cultural organizations to begin assessing the best practices they use in the conceptualization, design, implementation, management, and planning of their internship programs. In adopting and adapting these best practices, cultural organizations should think creatively and boldly about ways to invest in the professional development of future arts managers by improving their internship programs.

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