



Yale College
Center for International and Professional Experience

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Greenwich, CT

YACSF Fellow – Education Intern at the Bruce Museum of Arts and Science

Section One: Objective Narrative

With the Education Department at the Bruce Museum, I spent the summer teaching multiple museum programs, working public events, and organizing my own research project. I reported directly to Kathleen Holko, Manager of School and Tour Services, Corinne Flax, Manager of School and Community Partnerships, and Laura Stricker, Manager of Youth and Family Programs.

The museum would have at least one in-house education program each day. These programs could be anything from classes for school groups and private tours, to hands-on workshops with art or science projects. At the beginning of my internship, I helped prepare for these programs and assisted the instructors who led them. But after a week of training and observing, I was allowed to run my own art gallery tours and school science programs based on the Bruce's natural history collections. The last month of my internship, I became more involved with the Education Department's "Brucemobile" programming; these classes are off-site, bringing resources from the museum's collections to teach students in their own classrooms. Once a week for the last five weeks of my internship, I drove to a nearby daycare center to teach preschool and pre-K students about different kinds of animals and ecosystems.

The Bruce had fantastic family programming; every Sunday, there would be a family gallery tour and a science or art related project in the museum's workshop. I had the chance to lead a few tours, and also worked closely with my supervisor, Laura Stricker, to run the Sunday workshops. Every quarter, the museum hosts a gallery day with activities tailored to young children and families. I ran a printmaking activity in the workshop for the museum's recent Andy Warhol-inspired gallery day, teaching children and families about screen-printing techniques. My supervisors at the museum also gave me the opportunity to run my own public programs event - a screening of an Andy Warhol documentary that accompanied the museum's exhibit. I introduced the film and led a discussion with the patrons in attendance about the documentary's major themes.

My biggest contribution during my internship was conducting my own research about visitor interaction in the Bruce's permanent science exhibit, "Changes in Our Land." This exhibit has been in place for several decades but with the museum's upcoming renovations, the Collections, Science, and Education Departments wanted more concrete data on how visitors utilized the current exhibit. I designed my own experiment, making a unique sheet for observers to "track" visitors in the gallery and creating an Excel spreadsheet that organized data for efficiency and relevant statistics. At the end of my internship, I wrote a progress report about my research that will be used by the museum's departments and their third-party exhibitions team to rethink the design and layout of the future "Changes in our Land" exhibit.

Section Two: Professional Reflection - Learning Objectives

Coming into this internship, I wanted to gain concrete experience designing curriculum and leading my own educational museum programs. My supervisors guided and trusted me to run my own programs, whether it was through my “Bruce-mobile” adventures in Greenwich classrooms, or with gallery tours for schools and families on-site. I was able to experiment with my lesson plans and curriculum, learning what works efficiently, what does not, and how to best incorporate state standards in engaging programs. I worked with a variety of students, age groups, and visitors at the museum on a daily basis, and I feel more confident in my ability to teach and engage with a diverse museum population.

I did not know I would be conducting my own visitor observation study until I began my internship, but I was so incredibly grateful for the opportunity. It was my first professional research project that required me to communicate with multiple museum departments, program my own Excel data sheets, research a variety of museum surveys and studies, and conduct my own in-house observations. I not only feel capable of conducting a study like this in the future, but it opened my eyes to the ways visitors interact with museum spaces, a valuable skill I will be able to put into use as I finish my art history degree, continue my work with the Yale University Art Gallery conservation lab, or even bring friends and families into new museum spaces.

Section Three: Personal Reflection – Individual Growth

I have worked in office spaces before as an assistant or front desk staff. But this was my first summer where I felt integrated in the office space, working with my supervisors and actively contributing to the museum’s ongoing programs. I learned to collaborate with different interns and different museum departments, especially for my visitor observation study. I feel much more comfortable operating within office dynamics and working with my fellow interns, supervisors, museum patrons, and museum staff. This internship made me feel like I made a difference, not just in my department or at the Bruce, but also within the community. I had the chance to teach and interact with students and residents all around the Greenwich area. I’m going to miss my time at the Bruce but I’m excited to utilize the skills and experiences I’ve gained to continue my work in museum education, wherever that may be.

I would like to thank the Yale Alumni Association of Greenwich for funding my internship and making me feel a part of the Greenwich community this summer. I think a large part of the reason I felt connected to the museum and its patrons, ties back to the generosity and openness I experienced with YAAG. I’d especially like to thank Lisa Beth Savitz and John Kim for inviting me to YAAG events throughout the summer and taking me out to lunch. Thank you for your hospitality, your support, and your willingness to share your time and experiences with me!