



# SESSION REPORT: ABORIGINAL ARTS LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DESIGN SESSION

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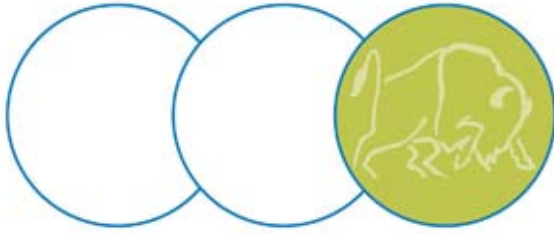
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**France Trepanier**

**Session Report:**

**Aboriginal Arts Leadership & Management  
Program Design Session**

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## 1. WELCOMING WORDS, PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS

The program design session was held March 30th, 31st and April 1st 2009 at the Banff Centre.

Participants were:

Elder Tom Crane Bear , Liz Barron, Denise Bolduc, Brian Calliou, Colin Funk, Diane Gray, Margo Kane, Sandra Laronde, Lindsay Marshall, Don McIntyre, Kathy Morrison, Louise Profeit-Leblanc, Ryan Rice, Janice Tanton, France Trépanier and Anna Wowchuk.



Brian Calliou Program Director of Aboriginal Leadership and Management Development welcomed the group and Elder Tom Crane Bear offered a prayer. Participants introduced themselves. Brian defined the purpose of the session as: “to benefit from the experience, perspectives and expertise of participants to create the foundation of an Aboriginal Arts Leadership and Management Certificate Program at The Banff Centre.”

Brian presented an overview of the agenda and invited participants to speak about their expectations, questions and hopes. Many comments were related to the importance of developing an open, flexible, multidisciplinary, multi-faceted program that will take into account different artistic practices (contemporary and traditional), regional contexts, cultural beliefs and protocols, and a constantly changing arts environment.

The participants discussed the potential outcomes of a certificate. “What do they get? Where do they go?” They agreed that the program will need to be a relationship builder and bring together artists, managers and directors with different levels of training and experience. The program should be part of a continuum, building on the realities of arts managers and organizations. The program should also create internships, practica, work-studies, partnerships and residencies was mentioned repeatedly.

Finally, the matter of language was discussed. Participants feel that it is important to use the appropriate language when defining and describing the future program, i.e. arts leadership and management instead of administration. Artists develop as leaders who can also manage their arts organizations. With this change in wording comes a shift in expectations and value of the work.



## 2. FRAMING THE CONTEXT

Brian framed up some contextual background for the work to be done during the session, mentioning the following highlights:

- Canada Council's focus on Aboriginal arts and artists – CCA's strategic priority, Aboriginal Arts Office, Aboriginal disciplinary officers and dedicated Aboriginal programs. As well as focus and funding on capacity development.
- National Aboriginal Gathering of Arts Administrators and Funders (NAGAAF) now known as the National Aboriginal Network for Arts Administration (NANAA) – seven national gatherings held in communities across the country are giving birth to a national body. They have also discussed a need for capacity development and training.
- Aboriginal Engagement Advisory Circle for the Aboriginal Arts programs at The Banff Centre hosted by Sarah Iley in August 2006 also referred to an arts leadership program.
- Aboriginal Arts Administration Forum organized by the Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program at TBC in February 2008 had a strong focus on leadership and management training governance development for arts organizations.

These programs, forums and gatherings have provided an opportunity for common concerns to be voiced concerning the pressing needs for training and professional development in the field of Aboriginal arts management. Some participants mentioned that the future program should focus on training the curators and directors in position right now, so they don't burn-out, and then address the needs of newer administrators and managers. On the other hand, they recognized the need to train the younger generations and give them the training and experience that they need to be capable of working effectively and efficiently with the funds received to deliver quality programming.

Participants also discussed the importance of getting Aboriginal political leaders to realize how important arts and culture is in our communities. They are linked to health, tourism and economic development. As someone says: "Once all the oil and diamonds are gone, art will still be a way for community to make money and if we start training arts managers now they will be the ones that ensure that the arts continues." Furthermore artists and cultural organizations often document and maintain traditional knowledge and Aboriginal languages.

There is a symmetrical awareness and learning that we must focus on: Aboriginal artists need to learn about the importance of being good leaders and managers of their own businesses and arts organizations, while Aboriginal political leaders need to recognize Aboriginal artists as leaders in their own right who contribute to local community and that arts process can teach leaders much.

1. The Report of the last gathering held in Fort Simpson, NWT is presented in Appendix I  
2. The report from that circle is presented in Appendix II  
3. The Forum's Report is available in French and English at: <http://www.banffcentre.ca/departments/leadership/aboriginal/library/>



### 3. WHAT WOULD AN ABORIGINAL ARTS LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ADDRESS?

Through a visual explorer exercise, participants were asked to find an image that could answer the following questions: On the highest level what does this program need to address and what does it look like? Who is it going to serve? Here are some of the answers attached to an image participants chose as a metaphor for the following ideas:



People come together and build power through training and sharing



Building blocks to get stability



Arts and leaders coming together to build community - built upon traditions and stories



Foundation or pillar - honoring ancient pasts but tied to modern times - longevity



Power is forcing movement in the same direction. Sets vibrancy and momentum



Rings of tree are memories of what happened. There is connection. Vision is at the core, values around.



Abundance - there is lots for everyone, offerings from generations to generations



Need an audience, need to attract people to have sustainability



A force is coming. It's larger than one - we're all connected and we create huge change together. Build hope as we gather energy



See from both perspectives - artists are leaders - leaders are artists. Building leaders. Looking at ourselves differently

Some of the general discussion noted that some arts organizations handle a large amount of funding and should have formal structure with a Board, a CEO and managers, and all these levels need development and training. Even many senior artists have no formal leadership or management training and just learned as they went. There was a strong feeling that links or connections should occur between senior artists and young, emerging artists. They also raised the issue of how do artists get paid while training. Discussion then moved to need for community to realize arts are strong and important renewable resources. It can be tied to community economic development to draw tourists and others to our communities.



#### **4. CREATING A PROGRAM FRAMEWORK**

Participants were invited to step outdoors and create, in small groups, a visual representation of a program framework out of natural products such as stone, wood, and leaves. Each group presented the concepts illustrated in their ‘sculptures/installations’. Some of those concepts were:

- Challenge the past - How can we take what has been used in the past and what is the new way of operating? Our arts Boards are struggling and only have volunteers. There are two levels of artists who need this training: mid-level career artists and emerging artists. These skills are necessary to get funding.
- Openness, flexibility and adaptability – When we are creating something we need to leave room for change and flexibility. This sector is changing constantly. Also we must account for the many different practices that make up the arts. The arts must be integrated into other forms of leadership. The arts need to get national understanding and recognition. They are a strong and renewable resource.
- Inspiration and creativity - Some artists just want to be artists, but artists need to lead. They need to be seen as leaders. We need communities to see the inspiration and legacy that these people create. Community can come together and see that we need artists and art in our lives. Artists inspire and can bring creativity to other community organizations, that is, introduce new ways or models to governance and operations of Aboriginal organizations. Respect and responsibility for artists is important. Investing and feeling invested in the success of a community should be part of an artists career.
- Build capacity - It’s only been 10 years that Aboriginal arts organizations have been getting funded. Look at how far we have come in 10 years. Where can we be in the next 10 years? This is a time of opportunity. We need to build capacity for our non-profit arts boards and our commercial arts initiatives.

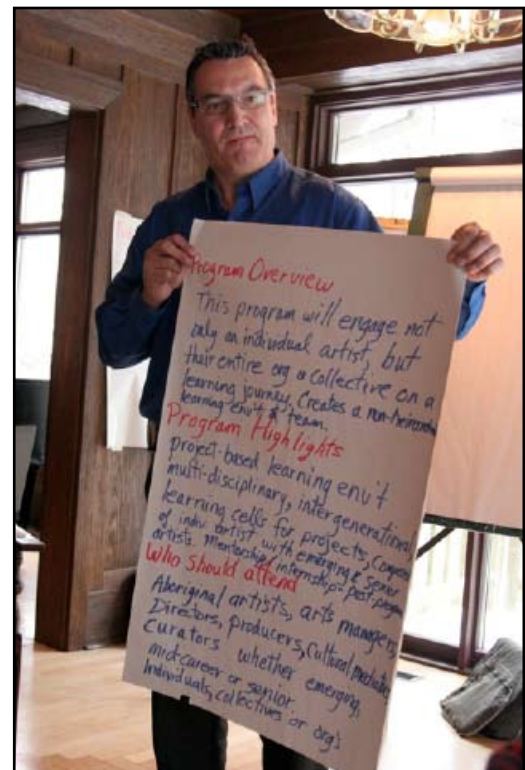
#### **5. MAPPING OUT A PROGRAM AGENDA**

Working in three groups, participants were invited to map out an agenda for the new program. Discussions covered a wide range of issues and possibilities. The results were presented to the group. They are reassembled under the following headings:

- Creating a fertile learning space – Importance of creating a learning space, a collaborative space, a multicultural space respecting the power of place, the sacred spaces. Learning is self-work, an instrument of change. The best learning space is when you are in a project that you have passion for. Learning is a co-journey. It is also about sharing your knowledge.



- Notions of leadership and power – Core values are the foundation of leadership. In the past, leaders had a vision and people would follow that vision. Now leaders tend to follow money and tweak their dreams, resulting in a mission drift. It is crucial to understanding notions of power, how systems of power work. Also, the power of relationships – with funders, partners, media and communities. The power to create. There must be an understanding of how power is exercised by a Board and by a CEO or managers of an organization.
- Program structure – The program should be an intergenerational, multicultural, cross-disciplinary, cyclical, project-based program. Include practicums and internships. Need to create different levels of training– might be sessions where people break out – different breakout groups that have different focus points. Include tours of all the arts programs at TBC.
- Program Content – The program could contain an historical perspective on Aboriginal Arts; Canadian arts system; Governance models and protocols; Organizational structure including legal status; Relationship with funders / partners; Grant writing/reporting; Negotiation, lobby and advocacy; Legal issues; Human resources; Finance; Outreach and marketing; Communications and Media; governance; leadership; management and managing risks.
- Program delivery – Identify strong mentors, both individuals and organizations. Create opportunities for organization-to-organization mentorships. Have some discipline specific programming modules. Encourage conversation with faculty as experts who guide participants through their project. Create arts managers tool kit – ‘how-to’ guides for things that have been learned in the program.
- Program outcomes - Each artist will be on a learning journey, will gain knowledge and skills to lead their arts projects and organizations more effectively. The learning will be impactful and relevant. How we define success for our organizations and ourselves? How do we support success? Aboriginal artists and organizations go through processes – it is hard to quantify the quality of a process. Share research on good practices.





## 6. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS DIALOGUE

For this exercise, participants worked in four groups with the mandate to discuss the content and process highlights, thinking of the groups of people for whom this program would be appropriate. Results were presented to the group and are summarized as follows:

- The program should be designed for artists and arts organizations with a view of engaging with corporate partners, band managers, chiefs and councils and guest resident Elders. Participants in the program should be encouraged to maintain a connection with their home team/community so that they can also benefit from the training. This can be done via i-chat, email, or video streaming in real time. They could also do presentations to share some of the new knowledge and skills. This would allow for learning opportunities on both sides.
- The program could start at grass roots levels with real projects - individual or collective, and build from there. Youth (emerging administrators) and Elders come together with faculty. There should be linking to community. During the learning, participants are solving real problems that help a group or community of people. Intergeneration and multidisciplinary learning recognizes the importance of honoring senior artists as faculty or mentors.
- Focus on building a team of teachers and mentors to a specific program based on needs of the individuals, organizations, communities or collectives. Create solidarity. Make sure that these first artist participants succeed or their organization succeeds, as this will prove the impact and relevance of the program.
- Artist participants will get an upgrade in management, business, marketing, governance and leadership. The program could start with professional development for senior managers as a pilot to get the feedback to see what needs to be changed before you get in others. Senior artists can then go back and educate their younger arts administrators. From there a cycle begins in professional development. Attention should be given to how to make the program uniquely Aboriginal and culturally appropriate.
- A first 2-day pilot program could be launched so artists can better understand the business side of things. This could be the attraction piece for them to take a longer 5 day program. This pilot program could come out of the Banff Centre and travel to different territories to attract strategic people. The 3 day program could be tied to existing programs that artists leaders would most benefit from to form a certificate in Aboriginal Arts Leadership and Management and could include the design of a 5 day long program focused on Aboriginal arts leadership.



- Focus on organizational development as well as leader development. Understanding your own organization first allows you to be more creative. Building the collective capacity of the organization, how it governs and operates are important. The role of leaders and managers in running successful organization is also important.



## 7. OVERVIEW OF ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Brian Calliou gave an overview of the programs that are currently offered to give participants a better sense of what programs will make up the Aboriginal Arts Leadership and Management Certificate. Speaking of the Principles and Practices of Good Governance program, he mentioned that the language may need to change in order to attract the Aboriginal arts community. For example, artists don't use "good governance" in the same way that political figures would use this. Language is a huge part of creating and selling this new certificate. The program needs to be accessible to a variety of people by offering one more tool in the toolbox, by filling a gap. The certificate would be built as a series of workshop/ programs that build the capacity of artists as competent leaders and managers.



Participants stress the fact that artists need a connection to the art system, even if it is not to have a career as an arts manager. Artists have to interact with this system. They have to learn the language of grant writing and reporting. Another side of being an arts manager is to be knowledgeable about the legal side of Aboriginal art practices. For example, status of the artist, copyright, fees and rates need to be explored. The new certificate should not only focus on Aboriginal artists going back to reserves but should also offer elements for those going back to urban settings.





## 8. THE BANFF CENTRE DESIGN SIGNATURE

Colin Funk described for participants the main features of the program design signature. He described the integrative program design that uses both right and left-brain thinking in a complementary fashion: the horizontal programming components (enchantment, invoking the imagination, crafting and life world sensibility) and the vertical programming components (morning to evening flow). He spoke of the portal that allows people to see different aspects of the program, content, faculty, sound bites, etc. He mentioned the webinars, which provide additional information that participants can access prior to the program.

## 9. REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a last exercise, participants formulated individual requests and recommendations. Here is a summary:

- Make news when program begins and when participants graduate.
- Utilize the strengths of the participants (i.e.) present at workshops, lectures, etc.
- Could the certificate be equal to a BA or 2 year MBA?
- Create Studio time into the week.
- Strategically plan end of week content based on participants' skill sets.
- Program should attempt to avoid polarization and therefore find balance between rural – urban; emerging – established; traditional – contemporary; individual – organizations; and commercial – not-for-profit.
- Do not try to be everything to everyone.
- Nurture the Aboriginal presence on campus (also artists of color) not just the people but also the art forms.
- Evaluate the advantages of a multi-layered approach - initial short 2-day session and 1-week program combined with existing programs for a total of one 2-day and four 5-day programs and mentoring and practica.
- Need to identify funds to support the Aboriginal artists to take this program.
- Find the right faculty then orient and train them as facilitators.
- What is the role of other institutions and organizations in this movement?
- Start small first and build incrementally?
- Need for our own definitions and terminology, eg: Systems thinking/spider web thinking.
- Need for copyright, intellectual property, traditional knowledge – ethics.
- Dissemination/touring strategies for organizations, individuals.
- Finding balance (explore, be flexible to the needs and diversity).
- Uniquely “Aboriginal” (slow food, walks and Indigenous food).
- Inclusion of guest speakers, artists, arts leaders, etc...to inspire and exchange learning.



- Respect for the existing structure.
- Develop an advocacy type team (1-2) person to introduce program to Aboriginal political leadership.
- Elders as teachers must be ongoing dialogue between Elder Artists and program participants.
- Conflict or dispute resolution should be developed not copied from existing Eurocentric models.
- Stay true to the intent of providing a uniquely Aboriginal learning environment.
- Start each day in quiet reflection and prayer.
- Program participants should bring forth their own work from their area of interest or place of work.
- Complement other programs such as: Arts Management Program Diploma: University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, Brandon University.