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## The New Orleans Museum of Art

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**THE NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART**

**An Internship Report**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts  
in  
Arts Administration**

**by  
Katherine Truxillo**

**B.A. University of New Orleans, 2003**

**May 2010**

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## **Abstract**

The New Orleans Museum of Art is New Orleans' oldest art institute and is the premier art institute of the Gulf South. From September through December 2009, I served as an intern in the Development Department at NOMA and then went on to fill the role of Interim Grants Officer from December through the time this document was written. I also have covered for the Special Events Coordinator during her leave of absence beginning January 4, 2010 through the present. NOMA has strengths and weakness internally, and opportunities and threats to functioning exist as well. Through a thorough examination of this institution, a consultant's report was compiled based on examination of NOMA and the best practices of comparable institutions and museum management standards.

## Chapter 1. Organizational Profile

### Introduction

The New Orleans Museum of Art's mission is "to inspire the love of art; to collect, preserve, exhibit and present excellence in the visual arts; to educate, challenge and engage a diverse public" ([noma.org/mission.html](http://noma.org/mission.html)). NOMA is the premier visual arts museum in the Gulf South. NOMA was founded in 1910 by a gift to the city from philanthropist Isaac Delgado, and over the years, NOMA has established itself as a visual arts leader. NOMA's permanent collection numbers over 40,000 objects and spans over 5,000 years ([noma.org/pcol](http://noma.org/pcol)). NOMA is the largest art museum in the Gulf South and New Orleans' principal fine arts attraction. Since the 1970s, NOMA has served as a tourist destination for New Orleans and has hosted blockbuster exhibitions including *Treasures of Tutankhamun* (1978), *The Search for Alexander* (1982), *Faberge in America* (1997), *Degas and New Orleans* (1999), *Jefferson's America*, *Napoleon's France* (2003) *Femme, Femme, Femme: Paintings of Women in French Society from Daumier to Picasso from the Museums of France* (2007), and *Dreams Come True: The Art of the Classic Fairy Tale from the Walt Disney Studios* (2009-2010).

NOMA's website outlines the highlights of its collection: "NOMA's permanent collection is noted for its strengths in French and American art, photography, glass, African, Japanese, and Louisiana art works. Reflecting its rich historic and cultural heritage in New Orleans, NOMA has formed a comprehensive collection of French art as well as a unique Arts of the Americas collection, surveying the cultural heritage of North, Central and South America from the pre-Columbian period through the Spanish Colonial era" ([noma.org/pcol](http://noma.org/pcol)).

NOMA's Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden opened in 2003 and is located on a five-acre site adjacent to the museum. The Sculpture Garden has sixty sculptures by 20th and

21st century European, Latin American, Israeli, Japanese, and American artists. It is one of the most important sculpture installations in the United States, and it is open free of charge seven days a week ([noma.org/pcol](http://noma.org/pcol)).

NOMA serves a diverse audience in the greater New Orleans area (including Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany Parishes); 23 percent of the city's Orleans Parish population lives in poverty, 60.7 percent are African American, 30.7 percent are white, 4.5 percent are Hispanic, and 2.9 percent are Asian (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, <http://www.gnocdc.org/Factsforfeatures/WhoDat/index>). Louisiana has the second largest population of Native Americans in the Southeast. The New Orleans Community Data Center notes that the population has risen to 79 percent of pre-Katrina levels (<http://www.gnocdc.org/Factsforfeatures/WhoDat/index>). The office of the Mayor's Director of Policy states that the 2008 population estimate for New Orleans is 336,644. In 2009, the number of visitors by Louisiana residents to NOMA totaled 79,983, and out-of-state visitors totaled 19,596. NOMA's current membership is 5,087. In-state visitors for 2008 numbered 92,097, and out-of-state visitors totaled 22,334. NOMA's current membership is 5,087.

## **A. General Management Structure**

The New Orleans Museum of Art is a 501(c) (3) corporation. NOMA is governed by a Board of Trustees including a Board President and five officers. The Board is composed of members from its membership, plus three from direct support groups. The remaining eight included three local universities, representatives from City Park, the American Institute of Architects and the City of New Orleans. Thirteen members serve as chairs of various committees of the Board. NOMA is headed by a Director, E. John Bullard III. There is a Deputy Director for Administration and three other Department Heads: Assistant Director for

Art; Assistant Director for Education and Director of Development. The Art Division within the museum includes: Principal Curator of Decorative Arts, African Art, Prints and Drawings, Photography and Contemporary Arts. The Assistant Director for Arts is also the Curator of Asian Art. The Education Department is chaired by a Principal Curator of Education and also includes a Curator of Education, Educator in charge of Docents and School Programs, an Art Therapist and Scheduling Secretary for Tours. The Development Division chaired by the Director includes a Membership Officer, Grants Officer, Membership Secretary, Coordinator of Special Events and NVC Fund Raising Associate along with our Director of Public Relations and Communications who also interfaces with the Director. The Administration Division includes the Controller, Chief of Security, Museum Shop Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Sculpture Garden Manager, IT Manager and many administrative operational staff.

Volunteers are a significant part of the museum's operations and include the NOMA Volunteer Committee (NVC) of more than 400, who are the primary fund raising event arm of NOMA. Last year, the NVC raised more than \$500,000 for general operating support. The museum also has an active group of thirty docents who provide school tours on a regular basis and over one hundred Chamberlains who provide additional services in the shop, library, office area and assistance for logistics during major exhibitions.

NOMA currently employs forty full-time staff members, four contracted staff, thirty-four part-time staff, and currently has 300 volunteers.

## **B. Funding**

NOMA is funded through memberships, admission revenue, endowments, capital campaign funds, special events, and other fundraising events as well as through federal, state,

and foundation grants. The following chart shows NOMA's financial information from their 2008 tax return (guidestar.org).

| <b>Revenue</b>                     |   | <b>Prior year (2007)</b> | <b>Current year (2008)</b> |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                    | Contributions and grants                        | \$5,528,999              | \$5,933,293                |
|                                    | Program service revenue                         | 1,835,368                | 466,258                    |
|                                    | Investment income                               | \$572,845                | 285,591                    |
|                                    | Other revenue                                   | 1,673,652                | 368,920                    |
|                                    | <b>Total revenue</b>                            | <b>9,610,864</b>         | <b>7,054,062</b>           |
| <b>Expenses</b>                    | Salaries, other compensation, employee benefits | \$2,084,377              | 2,356,370                  |
|                                    | Other expenses                                  | \$5,006,116              | 5,449,668                  |
|                                    | <b>Total expenses</b>                           | <b>7,090,493</b>         | <b>7,806,038</b>           |
|                                    | Revenue less expenses                           | 2,520,371                | -751,976                   |
| <b>Net Assets or Fund Balances</b> |   | <b>Beginning of Year</b> | <b>End of Year</b>         |
|                                    | Total assets                                    | 56,961,734               | 47,352,917                 |
|                                    | Total liabilities                               | 1,173,493                | 2,242,551                  |
|                                    | <b>Net assets or fund balances</b>              | <b>\$55,788,241</b>      | <b>45,110,366</b>          |

### C. Programs

Through a full range of outreach programs, NOMA has engaged and educated generations of diverse residents in this region. The Education Division is dedicated to awakening the imaginations of children and adults through the visual arts. NOMA, through creative programming, has provided access to educational curricula, teacher training, website content, family art classes, summer camps, lectures, film series, and theatrical and music productions to complement its art programs. Additionally, NOMA has an Art Therapy program. NOMA's website states, "To date over 250 New Orleans public school children at the John Dibert School and Edward Hynes Charter School have received weekly art therapy services with

NOMA's full-time art therapist... as part of the Hyogo-NOMA Art Therapy Initiative. In total, almost 800 children, educators, mental health professionals, and parents from New Orleans have benefited from the program over the past year by learning to use art to process, share, cope with, and express their Hurricane Katrina experiences” ([noma.org/arttherapy](http://noma.org/arttherapy)).

NOMA participates in the Taylor Scholars Program. In this program, NOMA and the Audubon Nature Institute recognize academic accomplishments of high school students during the school year. The New Orleans Museum of Art also has a Teen Advisory Board whose “participants collaborate with NOMA's Education Department to create ideas for new programming for young audiences and think creatively about the Museum's role in their community” ([noma.org/tab.html](http://noma.org/tab.html)).

A primary focus of NOMA’s mission is ‘to educate and engage a diverse public.’ NOMA accomplishes this through the efforts of the Education Division and through exhibition-related programs. NOMA’s Education Department hosts a wide range of programs including docents (training and recruitment), teacher workshops, school tours, and providing art therapy to students in Orleans Parish schools. NOMA’s exhibition-related programming events are scheduled for Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays and include concerts, lectures, artists panels, films, and presentations. New endeavors include NOMA’s Book Club (total 2009 meeting attendance: 431) and a reading program which will support the Beyond the Blues exhibition and will include the public libraries of Jefferson and St. Tammany Parish and Hancock County, MS. Additional outreach efforts include community festivals (Japan, Mexico) geared to expand and diversify our audiences. NOMA’s outreach plan is considered when planning exhibitions which afford the opportunity for partnerships and offer diverse audience appeal. For example, NOMA collaborated with the Amistad Research Center and the Middle American Research Institute at

Tulane University to produce two upcoming exhibitions: *Ancestors & Descendants: Ancient Southwestern America at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century: Selections from the George Pepper Archive at the Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University* and *Beyond the Blues: Reflections of African America in the Fine Arts Collection of the Amistad Research Center*.

NOMA membership levels include: General, Champions, Sustaining, Collector's Society, and Delgado Society. The benefits for each membership type are outlined below

(<http://noma.org/joinonline.html>):

|                    |       |   |
|--------------------|-------|---|
| <b>Student</b>     | \$20  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free admission during General Public Hours</li> <li>• 10% discount at the Museum Shop</li> </ul>   |
| <b>General</b>     | \$60  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free admission at all times open to the public for two adults</li> <li>• Subscription to <i>Arts Quarterly</i>,</li> <li>• Invitations to Members' Only Preview receptions</li> <li>• 10% discount in the Museum Shop,</li> <li>• Discount on Art Classes and other educational programs,</li> <li>• First notices of special events at NOMA,</li> <li>• Use of the Dreyfous Art Reference Library</li> <li>• Opportunity to attend the Odyssey Ball, Annual Members' Meeting</li> <li>• Opportunity to participate in volunteer programs</li> <li>• Curatorial Opinion Service</li> </ul> |
| <b>Champions</b>   | \$100 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as General membership privileges</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Sustaining</b>  | \$125 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as General membership privileges</li> <li>• Two year membership</li> <li>• Free Museum admission for two guests when accompanied by the member</li> <li>• Reciprocal membership privileges to numerous major art museums.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Collector's</b> | \$200 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General membership privileges plus free Museum admission for two guests when accompanied by the member</li> <li>• Reciprocal membership privileges to numerous major art museums.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Delgado</b>     | \$500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General membership privileges plus free Museum admission for two guests when accompanied by the member</li> <li>• Reciprocal membership privileges to numerous major art museums</li> <li>• Visits to artists' studios and private collections</li> </ul>  |

|                |        |  |
|----------------|--------|--|
| <b>Fellows</b> | \$1500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General membership privileges plus free Museum admission for two guests when accompanied by the member</li> <li>• Educational and social programs</li> <li>• Special events and trips</li> <li>• Invited to an annual special event held in their honor</li> <li>• Reciprocal membership to numerous major art museums</li> <li>• One free Museum publication (catalogue)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Circles</b> | \$5000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General membership privileges plus free Museum admission for two guests when accompanied by the member</li> <li>• Educational and social programs</li> <li>• Special events and trips</li> <li>• Invited to an annual special event held in their honor</li> <li>• Reciprocal membership to numerous major art museums</li> <li>• One free Museum publication (catalogue)</li> <li>• Name on Circles list in Museum and Sculpture Garden</li> </ul> |

#### D. Goals

NOMA's website outlines its mission, vision, and goals. "The mission of the New Orleans Museum of Art is to inspire the love of art; to collect, preserve, exhibit and present excellence in the visual arts; to educate, challenge and engage a diverse public" ([noma.org/mission.html](http://noma.org/mission.html)). The website also lists NOMA's vision: "The guiding vision of the New Orleans Museum of Art is to advance its position as a premier national visual arts Museum vital to the cultural and educational life of our city, state and region" ([noma.org/mission.html](http://noma.org/mission.html)). Additionally, NOMA's website provides their core values, "NOMA's core values include Quality, Community, Integrity, Stewardship, Diversity, Education, Stability, Creativity, and Collaboration" ([noma.org/mission.html](http://noma.org/mission.html)).

NOMA's strategies to increase and diversify audiences include partnering with a broad variety of organizations. The following are exhibitions and programs that illustrate NOMA partnerships:

•**November 2009 – March 2010:** *Dreams Come True: Art of the Classic Fairy Tale from the Walt Disney Studios*. The broad appeal of this exhibition brought many first-time visitors to the museum. NOMA worked with Disney to fund underwriting for 12,000 schoolchildren from the region to visit the museum free of charge.

•**April 2010:** NOMA collaborated with the Amistad Research Center and organized an exhibition opening in April 2010, *Beyond the Blues: Reflections of African America in the Fine Arts Collection of the Amistad Research Center*. The exhibition is targeted at the majority African American population in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf South. Programming for this exhibition includes lectures, films, panel discussions, book club events, and a partnership with NORD for summer campers.

•**July —October 2010:** *Ancestors & Descendants: Ancient Southwestern America at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century: Selections from the George Pepper Archive at the Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University* is a collaborative exhibition with the Middle American Research Center at Tulane. The exhibition programming will include audio tours and scholarly lectures.

•**2007 – present:** NOMA has established a collaborative relationship with The Historic New Orleans Collection, wherein they present exhibitions relating to the arts of Louisiana. 2010 exhibitions focus on LA women artists and LA photography. Exhibitions to date: *Louisiana: Where Land Meets Water*, *Prints Past and Prints Present: Limited Editions from Louisiana Printmakers*, *Louisiana Women Artists from the Early 19th Century to the Present*, and in 2009-2010, *William Woodward*.

•NOMA partners with the Hispanic (Mexican Independence Day Festival, Hispanic Heritage Foundation), and Japanese (Japanese Embassy)

communities to create community festivals held at NOMA. These public events bring over 4,000 people to the museum each year.

## **Chapter 2. Internship Description**

### **A. Specific tasks**

The internship in the Development Department at NOMA afforded me the opportunity to experience the real world of arts administration, thereby granting the opportunity to witness theories and discussions from the classroom translated into real life. I was assigned specifically to the Grants Officer yet was given the opportunity to experience other aspects of Development including membership acquisitions, membership renewals, fundraising, special events planning, and grant writing and research. I conducted grant research, wrote letters of inquiry to applicable foundations, wrote grants, and identified lapsed sources of funding. Specifically, I was responsible for the following:

- The Heim Foundation LOI: Art Therapy (awarded \$6,000)
- The MAP Fund: Artist Support Quintron and Miss Pussycat
- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation LOI: Catalogues
- The Charles Lafitte Foundation LOI: Artist Support Quintron and Miss Pussycat
- The Usdin-Weil Foundation LOI: General Operating Expenses
- LCEF Interim Report: NOMA kool kART
- The Lupin Foundation: Art in Bloom awarded \$3,000
- The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation: Art Therapy awarded \$2,500
- Chevron Report: Disney Marketing, Members Day, Educational Programming
- The Arts Council of New Orleans/ARRA Salary Support Reports
- The Edward Wisner Foundation Report: Disney Marketing

- The Getty Foundation final report
- The NEA Conservation Grant final report
- The Ford Foundation final report
- The RosaMary Foundation: Appeal for General Operating Support (\$50,000)
- The Louisiana Division of the Arts: Stabilization Grant (\$45,000)
- The National Endowment for the Humanities: Access to Artistic Excellence Permanent Collection Catalogues (grant resubmission: \$90,000)
- Grant Research: foundations (local and nation-wide); federal and non-federal grant opportunities
- Grant Research Binder: Researched, identified, and compiled all Federal and State grants January through March 2010.
- Grants Spreadsheet: Past and Potential Grants 2008-2010: Compiled a list of all grants applied for 2008-2009 and added grants to be applied for in 2010 to illustrate potential grantor reapplication based on past success, failure, and appropriateness.
- Guide to Grant Binder: Created a chart of all grants stating grant name, deadline, and a one-paragraph description of each grant as an index to the Grant Research Binder.

## B. Responsibilities

Nearing the completion of my internship, the grants officer left NOMA, and I was given her job as Interim Grants Officer. While Interim Grants officer, I identified seventy-four foundations which have a history of giving to New Orleans arts organizations including twenty foundations who had previously given to NOMA but who were not approached for funding within the past two years. I continued grant research on the local, state, and federal levels, LOI

writing, grant writing, identifying potential sources of funding, worked with the Director of Development, Assistant Director for Art, Deputy Director, and Comptroller about matters relating to budgets, suitable grants, and grant reporting.

### Chapter 3. Analysis of Internal and External Issues

The following chart outlines NOMA’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats:

| <b><i>Strengths</i></b>  | <b><i>Weaknesses</i></b>   |
|--|--|
| <b><i>Collection</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> </ul>                |
| <b><i>Opportunities</i></b>  | <b><i>Threats</i></b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New audience diversification/membership opportunities.</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging volunteer population</li> <li>• Economy</li> <li>• Arts District</li> </ul> |

#### A. Strengths

The New Orleans Museum of Art has many strengths. NOMA will celebrate its centennial year 2010-2011, so this longevity is one of its strengths. NOMA’s location in City Park is one of its strengths. The development of a walking path around Big Lake in City Park has increased foot traffic and attendance to City Park, and thus attendance and exposure to NOMA increased. NOMA has superb permanent collections including a leading African art and Spanish Colonial collection. The staff and volunteers at NOMA are dedicated and capable.

The staff at NOMA is dedicated and capable even though their numbers are down from what they were pre-Katrina. As Joelle Seligson in her article in *Museum*, “Now What?: The Upside of Cutting Down” notes, “...while resources have dwindled, responsibilities have not. In the face of closures and cancellations, museums are still tasked with upholding their missions

and preserving the visitor experience. They have thus had to get creative with what's left and reprioritize what's necessary to survive—temporary fixes that, in some cases, are leading to permanent changes” (41-47).

NOMA's volunteer committee is one of its strongest assets. The NVC is responsible for NOMA's big fundraisers, and NOMA has more than 400 volunteers who serve as docents, gift shop workers, and greeters, as well as fill in where NOMA cannot afford to hire permanent staff.

## B. Weaknesses

One of NOMA's major weaknesses is its website. As a marketing and information tool, the website needs major improvements. Below is a screen capture of NOMA's homepage:

The screenshot shows the NOMA website homepage in Internet Explorer. The browser title is "NOMA | New Orleans Museum of Art - Windows Internet Explorer" and the address bar shows "http://noma.org". The page has a green header with navigation links: "NOMA Home", "NOMA Staff", "Press Room", and "Make a Donation to NOMA". Below the header is a banner with six small images of art. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column is a sidebar with a red background and white text, listing various links: "New Orleans Museum of Art", "Mission Statement", "Permanent Collection", "Sculpture Garden", "Membership", "Volunteer", "Exhibitions", "Education", "Special Events", "Arts Quarterly", "Museum Shop", "NOMA Enewsletter", and "Employment Info". The middle column features a large image of the museum building and the text: "Your New Orleans Museum of Art" and "We welcome you to your New Orleans Museum of Art to celebrate art and culture... and life! **The museum is open five days a week, Wednesday, 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Thursday**". The right column contains a newsletter sign-up form with the text: "Sign up for our Email Newsletter. Enter your email address." and a "GO" button. Below the sign-up form is a red-bordered box with the text: "New Orleans Museum of Art We Need Your Support! Click here to find out how to make a donation of cash, stock, art, etc. to NOMA". The bottom of the screen shows the Windows taskbar with the start button, several open applications, and the system tray showing the time as 10:07 AM.

The website's layout is not eye-catching. The picture of the museum, which is supposed to be the main focus of the homepage, shows NOMA from a great distance, thus portraying the institution as distant, cold, and off-putting. Information contained on the homepage is scattered, and the images on the homepage should be better since NOMA is a visual arts organization.

The website is the place that many people begin the museum-visiting process, and NOMA's website does not make a good first impression. Caroline Lang et al., authors of *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* writes, "an examination of a large number of museum websites has led me to believe that it is helpful to consider museums' use of the Web as following a sort of evolutionary scale: no web presence, marking website—visitor services information, etc, access to collections—online catalogues, digital images, etc., interpretation of collections—resources for formal and informal learning, etc., increasing exploitation of Web technology—interactivity, audiences contributing to the content, website constituting additional museum site" (103).

Perhaps one of the reasons for NOMA's poor use of current technology is its tech department. As Nina Simon, in her article "Bait and Switch" in the July/August 2009 issue of *Museum* states, "In most museums, technologists are still seen as service providers, not experience developers... They are called in late in the exhibition or program development process to provide technical solutions rather than being included on design teams from the start" (34).

NOMA is located in City Park, and visitors to NOMA park for free along its various roadways. While this may be good for some, others complain that NOMA lacks parking close to the museum, and visitors are often forced to walk great distances to enter the museum. Neil Kotler points out the best practices of two Chicago museums, "The Museum of Science &

Industry in Chicago is building underground parking to allow visitors to move comfortably and securely between their cars and the museum in all season. The National Museum of American History is undertaking a major redesign of its entrances to furnish greater orientation and information and provide adequate and comfortable seating and rest areas” (44-45). NOMA could adapt both of these best practices by offering shuttle services to visitors and by having more information about the Museum available to visitors in a welcoming area.

NOMA lacks benches in its permanent and temporary exhibition galleries. The lack of benches in temporary exhibition galleries is designed to make traffic flow faster through the exhibition, but it also takes away from the visitor’s enjoyment of that exhibition. Steve Tokar suggests in his article in *Museum*, “Benches and chairs should be placed in galleries and elsewhere—with attention to traffic patterns to avoid trip hazards. Visitors will be happier, more receptive, and less tired” (75).

Tokar also writes about visitor accessibility in terms of wall labels. NOMA’s wall labels are industry standard, but they are printed in small, black print onto labels the same color as the walls. They are designed to provide information without detracting from the art, but they tend to be hard to read. Tokar says, “Labels should be in high-contrast, large type, well-illuminated, at an easy angle to read. There is no need to sacrifice design for legibility” (Tokar 75).

### C. Opportunities

One place where NOMA could easily improve is its website. Adding social networking features to the website would make it a powerful marketing tool. The website could serve as an online brochure, calendar, and library of the museum’s permanent collection. Caroline Lang’s book, *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* states,

“The Web is undoubtedly the key to the evolution of the museum’s role in the public realm and how the museum manages its relationship with its audiences” (109). NOMA must get a fully-interactive, educational website.

A new NOMA website could also help make the museum-going experience more tailored to individual needs. The *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* report gives as an example, “For a glimpse of the future, an intriguing example of the emerging you-as-the-protagonist concept can already be seen at Conner Prairie Living History Museum’s ‘Follow the North Star’ program, where participants play the role of a fugitive slave on the Underground Railroad over the course of a mile of rough terrain at night, constantly confronted by friend or foe...this kind of immersive, interactive programming will be more of the norm than the exception as the generation coming of age now brings its own children to museums.”

Caroline Lang outlines the value of a good website, “As far as targeting audiences is concerned, the reasoning behind defining target audiences for web-based resources is unsurprisingly much the same as that for defining target audiences for actual visits. In many cases, the museum starts by providing an online catalogue, which is useful for researchers, and then moves on to developing richer resources that are aimed at the general user. There is also a strong focus on providing curriculum-based resources. With regard to the issue of website visits versus actual visits, although the power of the Internet to reach remote users is understood, and is exploited where appropriate, it seems that the vast majority of web-based resources produced by the museum sector are intended to enhance, and not replace, actual visits to the museum”(103-104).

Another benefit of a good website is that it will make the collection available to all at all times. Currently, NOMA does not have room to display all the works in its collection. The

NOMA website could provide online “storage” and accessibility for all. Joelle Seligson interviewed Barry Mintz, the curator of Asian Art at the Waters Art Museum. Her article posits, “A heightened focus on e-communication also benefits visitors who can no longer afford a trip to the brick-and-mortar museum. ‘We’ve put a lot of effort into upgrading our online presence in terms of museum education and outreach to schools, to groups that may not have the money to come and see us,’ Mintz explains.” Even if visitors cannot come to NOMA, they can still experience NOMA, which is an important component of NOMA’s mission.

The *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* report states, “The trend of near-zero variable cost for storage and distribution has bypassed some museums, many of which continually race to catch up with technology. But this trend has already enabled companies such as Google and You Tube to emerge as dominant repositories for digital assets. As a result, we have witnessed a dramatic structural shift in the expectations of the public, which now expects anything that can be digitized to be digital—and usually free” (14). The hope of putting the collection on view online is to attract viewers to the actual museum to experience these works in person. The *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* report predicts, “In 2034...as the world continues to go digital (and progressively virtual)—and as the cost of storage, distribution and processing power continues to plummet—people find themselves further divorced from the real. The prevalence of the digital, virtual world raises public awareness of the increasingly rare world of non-digital assets that help tell the story of how humans got where we are. Museums play a more critical role than ever as purveyors of the authentic, addressing a human desire for the real as the wonders of technology march s towards the opposite path” (15). The report also predicts, “In 2034, The collective experience is more fragmented than ever. But museums provide common experiences for diverse audiences, serving

as safe public spaces for civic dialogue. As one of the most trusted sources of information, museums help people navigate the vast new world of information by filtering and validating credible content.” Because NOMA is entering its second century of institutional existence, it is easily considered an authority in the community and could continue that roll well into the future.

The internet is also a good place to engage a viewer before that viewer ever comes to your institution. Herminia Din writes, “Beyond increasing visitation to the museum, what you may also find is that these learners, having been immersed in an online experience with the museum beforehand, arrive at your institution as different types of visitors, creating the blended approach to online learning” (49). Visitors can come up with a “plan” for their viewings based on what they have discovered online. From that first step, visitors are more likely to enjoy their visit and find it to be worthwhile and engaging.

NOMA should also develop and use social media, especially as a means of diversifying their audience. Jane McGonigal writes, “Museums have all this pent-up knowledge and expertise, and all of these collections that are designed to inspire and bring people together. The museum community has an ethical responsibility to unleash this and to inspire visitors into action. I foresee museums becoming key hubs within ‘global super structures.’” (53). NOMA curators and staff could interact with others in the community not just on topics related to NOMA, and that could increase visitors to the museum and awareness of NOMA.

Visits to NOMA could be more participatory. Susie Wilkening and James Chung discuss this in their article, “The Mall over the Museum: Into the Mind of the Fascinating, Maddening, Uncensored, Thoughtful, Challenging, Engaging, Tech-savvy, Social, and Fun Tween.” They state, “Museum experiences need to be primarily social. They are all about their friends at this age, and they want museums to concentrate on activities that friends or teams can do together.

Mysteries or puzzles to solve, games to play—anything that they can do with friends (or even things a family could have fun doing together) is more likely to hit the mark” (50). If NOMA had more activities that students could participate in, it would help audience diversification. Wilkening and Chung also state, “The idea that museums were ‘big’ came up a number of times. It became clear that larger museums were a bit overwhelming to these not-yet-adults who are in a hurry to grow up. For larger museums, breaking down the experience into smaller, more manageable pieces is key” (50).

NOMA has Mid-week in Mid-City events most Wednesday events. These events are designed to attract a local crowd to the museum for some special event such as musician, gallery walkthrough, or artist talk. Neil Kotler, in his book *Museum Strategy and Marketing: Designing Missions, Building Audiences, Generating Revenue, and Resources*, writes that “creating events and programs during weekday evening hours has proved to be an effective means of attracting visitor segments such as young professionals who might not otherwise have time or inclination to visit.” (43). NOMA’s Mid-week in Mid-City events have been occurring irregularly for over a year.

NOMA’s temporary exhibitions represent ways to attract new members. For example, many families joined NOMA for the *Dreams Come True* exhibition because it was cheaper to buy a General membership than it was to buy individual tickets. Also, field trips to this exhibition brought in students from many difference socio-economic levels, so it was a good opportunity for audience diversification. The challenge will be to retain these members.

Susie Wilkening and James Chung emphasize that consistent visitors to museums started at a young age. They report, “Survey data also revealed signs of some museum advocates in the making. These blossoming museum advocates also had a markedly higher incidence of

participation in arts-and-crafts and remote-control activities, exhibiting a higher level of creative engagement typically found in older museum advocates. Most important, these young museum advocates were significantly more likely than their peers to enjoy art, science, and history museums” (46). NOMA could build an audience based on the visits of school children who undergo formative experiences at the Museum.

NOMA has a strong base of volunteers already a strong base, and they need to build on that base. The *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* report states, “Perhaps one of the most important things to consider is how museums can reinvent the role of the post-retirement volunteer, simply because this is a generation that has rarely followed in lock-step with the preceding generations. The Boomers constitute a large talent pool working its way towards the golden years of volunteerism, at least among those who can afford to do that” (5). Many of NOMA’s volunteers are senior citizens, and a volunteer recruitment program could be implemented to attract younger volunteers so that there is always a strong pool.

The *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* report states, “Some museums serve as ambassadors to the rest of the world not just through overseas outposts but through traveling exhibits and more directed Web presence, helping interpreting U.S. culture to countries of growing influence.” NOMA could serve as an ambassador for the City of New Orleans and help nurture New Orleans’ continual regrowth. The *Museums & Society 2034:Trends and Potential Futures* report predicts of museums, “As incubators of creative expression, museums flourish as facilitators of the ongoing creative renaissance. They play a vital role in nurturing, documenting, organizing, interpreting and making accessible the new realm of creative output. Museums play an even greater role as economic engines in their communities, helping harness the value generated by the emerging wave of creative-driven

commerce and exchange. They are repositories of knowledge about traditional craft, sources of inspiration for new designs and processes, and through their collections and exhibitions, validators of new artists and new art forms.” NOMA could be on the front lines of creative expression in New Orleans, serving as both a repository for art and a nurturer of new artistic expression.

#### D. Threats

External threats of functioning exist. The threat most closely hurting NOMA and many arts organizations is the economy. Donations, grant awards, and upper level memberships have all dropped. Additionally, admissions numbers are not what NOMA would like them to be.

The economy and Hurricane Katrina have reduced number of staff from 95 to 55. Although there was a significant decrease in personnel, there was a pay increase of 20-40%, so salaries expenses at NOMA are still the same.

Additionally, NOMA has competition in the New Orleans art scene. NOMA is not located in the Arts District which attracts a younger audience. NOMA’s location is somewhat remote from the New Orleans downtown area, although the museum can be reached by public transportation. Neil Kotler, in his book *Museum Strategy and Marketing: Designing Missions, Building Audiences, Generating Revenue, and Resources*, states “Museums serve diverse audiences, multiple constituencies, and visitors who have disparate interests, intentions, and expectations. Museums are expected to give special attention to young people, although older adults often form the core of their support....if a museum fails to reach and attract sufficient audiences, it is not likely to survive” (38). This failure to diversify their audiences could hurt NOMA in the long run because funding from diverse audiences is needed.

NOMA's volunteers, though there are many, are almost entirely retired, senior citizens. Because of today's job market, many people not retiring, so there might be less volunteers in the future. This lack of retirees also effects museum personnel. Elizabeth Merritt and Erik Ledbetter, in their article "The Future is Now" state, "What are the risks of losing a generation or more of talented individuals from employment in museums? This dilemma is particularly acute when the existing, largely Caucasian museum workforce is cross-indexed against an increasingly diverse society. If things continue along this path, museums will be even more out of step with our audiences—in addition to blocking the career path of the next wave of museum professionals." (*Museum*. May/June 2009. p. 29-31, 64; p. 29). NOMA already suffers the stigma of being an institution for old, rich, white people. Attempts to diversify audiences should also apply to museum personnel.

The AAM report: *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures*. *Center for the Future of Museums an initiative of the American Association of Museums* predicts that rising energy costs will strongly effect museums, "Volatile energy prices will have a major effect on museum operating budgets, heightening the tension between conservation and historic preservation standards and energy use. It could play a larger role in decisions about museum expansion" (10). The report further predicts that the economic downfall will further hurt museum revenues if museums do not lower admission prices "Admissions revenue would be at risk if museums aren't able to provide greater value amidst declining household budgets. Donations, pledges, endowments and government support would be in jeopardy as well. School field trips are already being eliminated in states hit hard by the current fiscal crisis, and this could become the norm rather than a temporary round of budget cutting."

The proliferation of technology is also a threat to NOMA. *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* states, “According to research by the institute for Museum and Library Services, 43% of museum visits in 2006 were remote, predominately via museum websites. This percentage is likely to rise, and the content of remote visits to museums will continue to shift from basic information gathering to more complicated forms of engagement.” (15).

Technology is also a threat because it allows for a pool of experts instead of a single authority. *Museums & Society 2034 Trends and Potential Futures* reports, “Profound structural shifts can be seen in a little-noticed Facebook byproduct. In Facebook’s quest to serve as the operating system for a new generation, it has created a tool that generate the first truly personalized newspaper, with almost perfect editorial decisions, edited by a cloud of the members’ peers and personal affiliations” (16). Further, “The role of the expert that has existed for decades or centuries is quickly eroding and has been supplanted in many fields: sometimes by a network of peers (Facebook news instead of newspaper editors), sometimes by the digital masses (Yelp instead of the published Zagat guide), sometimes by a new set of collective experts (Wikipedia instead of the Encyclopedia Britannica).” The report goes on to ponder, “Will curators become irrelevant, like many of the other public expert roles? Or can museums rethink how they curate and interpret their collections, how they make those collections more accessible and how they involve diverse audiences in the meaningful work of museums?”

## Chapter 4 The Intern's Suggestions

### A. Management

To assess the management of NOMA, I used *The Manual of Museum Management* by Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord which outlines a series of questions to help organizations realize their mission. NOMA hired the consulting services of the Lord group, so this seems like a good standard to base my management assessment. The first of Lord's questions is, "Is the museum's management facilitating decisions that lead to the achievement of its mission, mandate, goals, and objectives for all of its functions?" (Lord 2). NOMA's management does exactly this: through careful planning in both exhibition scheduling and programming. NOMA strives for audience outreach, development, and retention.

The next question is, "Does management inspire staff, volunteers, supporters, visitors, and others with a sense of the museum's mission?" (Lord 6). This answer, again, is yes. NOMA has a dedicated team of over 300 volunteers. NOMA staff are present at all museum functions. Visitors to the museum often ask staff members at all levels for directions or information about the museum and its holdings, and if that person is not sure of the answer, he/she quickly finds someone that does. It is advantageous that many staff and volunteers have been involved at NOMA for a number of years, and that dedication to NOMA is apparent.

The third question of Lord is, "Is management effectively leading the museum toward long-range goals articulated in plans that are consistent with the museum's mission, policies, and mandate?" (9). NOMA has a long range plan that is constantly referenced. Lord's next question is, "Are long-range goals being translated into short-range measurable objectives? Is the attainment of annual objectives controlled by the monitoring of the budget and other resource allocation plans? Is this attainment on schedule?" (10) Because of the economic climate of the

past two years, the long range plan and its goals need to be adjusted, and the attainment of these objectives have not been as predicted.

Another point of Lord's is, "Does management facilitate interdepartmental cooperation and teamwork to conduct museum functions and create programs such as exhibitions?" (Lord 30). The answer to this question is, again, yes. The Art, Development, and Education departments work together to provide financial and programming support for all exhibitions. The departments regularly meet to discuss upcoming openings and what programs can be done to supplement the curatorial offerings. Additionally, the Grants Officer meets with the other departments to see what their grant needs are and to discuss possible grant pursuits.

## B. Marketing

NOMA advertises major exhibitions in a variety of ways. For example, media coverage for the *Dreams Come True* exhibition included newspaper ads, brochures, marketing through social media, a Press Preview Day, news releases, e-mail marketing, direct marketing, billboards, RTA advertisements, airport banners, radio ads, local magazine and newspaper reviews, national newspaper reviews, and internet banner adverts. NOMA also puts out a weekly e-newsletter to all e-news subscribers.

NOMA makes an effort to appeal to wider audiences through its programming choices. For example, the *Dreams Come True* show appealed to schools and families. Additional programming choices to get a younger crowd include: *Skylar Fein, Quintron and Miss Pussycat: Live at City Park*. These shows succeeded in drawing large crowds for their opening parties, but few became members. Other attempts at diversification include two current exhibitions: *Si, Cuba!* and *Swimming to Havana: Luis Cruz Azaceta* which are geared to appeal to Hispanic audiences.

Part of NOMA's re-branding efforts should include updating the logo and icon. If people refer to The New Orleans Museum of Art as NOMA, there should be a catchy logo to go with that. NOMA's current icon is referred to by some NOMA staff members as "the NOMA shell," yet it is actually an image based on the architecture that runs around the top of the original building. NOMA needs to get a new icon, one that incorporates the name NOMA.

An integral part of NOMA's marketing should include technology. NOMA's website must be revamped. Compared to websites of similar, local institutions (The National World War II Museum, The New Orleans Opera, The New Orleans Ballet Association), NOMA's website is dated, un compelling, and lacks ease of navigation. NOMA has a Facebook page, but most people do not know that. A link to become a "fan" of NOMA should be included on all email blasts, all e-newsletters, and on the museum's website.

### C. Development

The development staff at NOMA consists of the Director of Development, Membership Secretary, Development Associate, Special Events Coordinator, and Grants Officer. The development staff is dedicated to broadening NOMA's membership and raising money for the museum through Special Event rentals, grants, memberships, and sponsorships. NOMA also rents the auditorium and board room for smaller functions such as movie premieres and conferences.

Recent efforts to expand membership include sending out a mailer to over 32,000 households as part of a membership drive. However, only enough new NOMA joined the museum to cover the cost of the mailer, so although new members joined, the museum only broke even. If those members who joined because of the mailer renew their memberships next year, the mailer could prove successful in the long run.

The Development Department meets quarterly with the Development Committee of the Board of Trustees. By working under the direction of the Board, the Development Staff receives guidance and assistance from Board members.

#### D. Legal applications

NOMA's Registrars handle all legal aspects involved in acquiring or loaning art. The registrars are also responsible for licensing. NOMA has contracts for all special events which include catering guidelines, use of facility, etc. NOMA's insurance requires that all caterers have insurance.

Photography is not allowed in temporary exhibitions, such as the *Dreams Come True* Disney exhibition, because Disney holds the rights to all of the works featured. However, photography of all other artwork is permitted throughout the museum.

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**Vita**

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