

An Assessment of Mentoring Artists for Women's Art: Programs, Operations and Human Resources

Prepared by Vera Lemecha, Executive Director, 2003

Besides the bimonthly studio visits and last minute application writing sessions, I have enjoyed getting together with [my mentor] to attend art openings, go for lunch, talk about art in general and meet all her fabulous artist friends. I have truly felt included in her community, and seen what life might be like as a professional artist. (from Mentee Midterm Report)

INTRODUCTION

As MAWA nears its 20th Anniversary, it is indeed timely that an assessment of the organization be produced. Over the past two decades the world has changed a great deal and thus the context for women artists, art production, display, funding and MAWA. To name but one change, in the mid-80s we didn't have access to email — the communication tool of choice for many now. Nor did very many of us have computers on our desks. The advent of this technological device has created an entirely new methodology of art production, display and dissemination.

During the 80s feminist theory had an enormous impact on the art world: on art production, theory and display. Consider:

De-construction, psychoanalytic theory, film theory,

Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Marguerite Duras, Hélène Cixous, Catherine Clément, Teresa DeLauretis, Judith Butler,

Mary Kelly, Cindy Sherman, Martha Rosler, Sherry Levine, Lisa Steele, Joyce Wieland, Barbra Kruger,

Powerhouse, which has evolved to become LaCentrale, the first feminist gallery in Canada, began in Montreal and WARC, Women's Art Resource Centre in Toronto.

MAWA with its first stirrings in 1984 was in good company. Feminists were vocal, active and influencing the greater art context. In the mid-1980s a group of individuals involved with Plug In Gallery imagined a community in which women artists would have access to the resources that would enable them to pursue their professional goals. Central to that notion of community was the initiating of the Plug In Women's Program, spearheaded by Diane Whitehouse, which was later to become MAWA. MAWA was conceptualized around the idea of creating conditions that would support women in their practices. The model of the mentoring process (the Foundation Advisory Program) -- in which

experienced women artists worked with those less experienced to impart information, encouragement and resources – was crucial and has resulted in a strong network of women, some of whom were once mentored and have since mentored others. The program has expanded to include various mentoring programs and workshops; visiting artists, curators and critics; exhibitions; symposia; a newsletter; a website; a resource centre; a reading group; and the bi-annual publication *inVersions*. Twenty years of educating and networking has brought us several steps closer to that community first imagined by Diane Whitehouse and others.

Twenty years later, MAWA is still unmatched in Canada, and most other countries, as an organization for women that provides support, encouragement and skills training. And do we still need such an organization for women? Yes, clearly we do. MAWA's membership has grown continually over the years. Today, 94 of its total 251 members are nationally based (7 are international). This tells me that the organization is still relevant and of interest to women in Canada. However, after 20 years an examination of any organization from the floorboards to the rafters is wise. For this wisdom I am grateful to MAWA's Board of Directors who charged me the task of producing this Assessment as a priority of my first year as Executive Director of MAWA.

Who are MAWA's Members?

A number of studies relating to human resource issues in the cultural sector have been undertaken in the last 5 years. These consistently point to a number of factors:

1. Workers in the cultural sector, and I would include here self-employed artists, curators and art writers, are for the most part highly-educated
2. Cultural workers are primarily self-employed or employed in low-end jobs with low pay
3. Cultural workers are mobile
4. Attrition within this group is extremely high, with many leaving field shortly after graduation
5. A large proportion of those who leave the province to obtain a graduate degree do not return

A large percentage of MAWA's members reside outside of the province, in fact they come from all across Canada and beyond. Of 251 members, 150 are in Winnipeg, 94 are national and 7 are international. The above factors apply to the national membership as well in most cases with the exception of #5 because Manitoba is one of the few provinces without a graduate program in visual arts.

There are programs that MAWA does very well — the Foundation Advisory Program for example. Members who participate in this program report coming away with many new skills, confidence and often new relationships within the art community. There are some members who we could perhaps serve more effectively — namely our rural and national members. There are also women who we, for the most part, don't serve at all. They are those who are not

members. Who are they and why are they not members? One such group is the Aboriginal women artists and curators — a large segment, after all, of our community. This report looks at the things I think MAWA is doing right, and there are many, and makes recommendations for ways that we might serve our members more effectively. It also suggests meeting with members of the Aboriginal community so we might come to a way of working with this community as well.

Methodology

This Assessment was produced with the benefit of research, consultation and my experience as a member, mentor and having worked on contract in several capacities over the past six year.

I have prepared background information on each section. I have kept this brief so that it serves as an overview with which to approach the material, rather than a detailed history. The Assessment section is my attempt to present the area of concern in its current state (how it currently functions, etc.). My Recommendations follow. Most are recommended short-term actions that I see being in place, if the Board agrees, as soon as the funding can be attained.

The Assessment is, I hope, an annual project providing MAWA with a means of revisiting recommendations and actions that have been effected to consider their value. This annual evaluation will allow MAWA to take chances, knowing that revisions can be made the following year if necessary. It will also ensure that MAWA remains responsive to its membership and its situation.

Vera Lemecha, 2003

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

It has been really great to get together with {my mentor} to talk about ideas and obstacles and how to get from concept to creation. She has lent me books and we have visited art shows. It has been very helpful to discuss the work we've seen and discuss its relevance in general and in relation to my own work.

Her advice and mentorship have helped me form a more concrete vision of the direction I want to take with my art. Having someone with her knowledge and experience as a sounding board has definitely helped me make the transition from the work I was doing in university to exploring new ideas and methods.

The transition from student to artist can be intimidating at best and certainly difficult to navigate. {My mentor} has helped in terms of gaining confidence as well as by offering explanations regarding the real world of functioning as an artist.

The personal support system that comes with an established artist as mentor — someone who takes personal interest in your art practice and transition into the wider art community — has truly been amazing.

(From Mentee Reports)

FOUNDATION ADVISORY PROGRAM

Mentoring, while not a new issue, deserves more attention. A recent documentary analysis of mentoring strategies conducted for the Arts Leadership Network . . . indicated that the cultural sector is lagging considerably behind other sectors in terms of adopting systematic approaches to mentoring and key strategies for human resources training. (CHRC 14)

The success stories in the arts and cultural world: i.e., those who have charted a new path, can be very instructive to others who are struggling to learn a new way of working. Mentorships were identified by both workers and employers as a highly effective way of learning both discipline and business management. (ACI viii)

Mentorships are not only a desired training approach for these [cultural] sectors, but with the proper employee support programs, could lead to employment creation in all sectors. Internships should be developed to serve as the bridge

between formal education and the work world. The “informal” apprenticeship training currently provided by not-for-profit organizations should be recognized and integrated as part of a mentorship/internship training strategy. (ACI ix)

The Cultural Human Resources Council study of human resource issues in Canada’s cultural sector, *Face of the Future*, lists as its second recommendation to: *Increase the capacity of cultural workers to manage and advance their careers, and facilitate transitions from one career stage to another. To reach this objective they recommend, as a short-term action, to develop “links with and support existing networks undertaking innovative approaches in training (e.g. MAWA—Mentoring Artists for Women’s Art).”* (CHRC 2002)

Background

The Foundation Advisory Program was instituted in 1985. Since that time the mentoring philosophy has formed the basis of MAWA’s vision and organization. The *Foundation Advisory Program* is still the primary mentorship program. Over the years the methodology of training artists through mentoring has developed to include guidelines for the mentors, the organization of skill-building workshops for participants (referred to as *mentees*), and sessions in some of the practical aspects of artists’ career management such as *Income Taxes for Artists* and *Photographing Your Work*.

Mentees in the *Foundation Advisory Program* include women artists of all ages, recent graduates of the University of Manitoba School of Art, rural women, women new to the area and women wanting to take the next step in developing their art practices. The *Program* supports women artists in building the skills and habits required in the pursuit of a professional art practice. Over a full year they develop both their studio skills and gain the valuable information that generally takes artists years to learn including preparing exhibition proposals and applying for grants. In addition they have opportunities for networking within the community. They make connections with curators, arts administrators and other artists that often form the basis of a new and like-minded community for them. At the end of their year in the program, many participants become active members of the art community with the skill and knowledge to pursue their practices.

The mentors are selected from the senior women artists, curators and cultural workers in the community. They will have the expertise to support the mentees and provide the skill-training they require. Because each mentee is unique and the range of media and activities that they are engaged in are diverse, the mentors must have the maturity, experience and flexibility to develop a program that will be of most benefit to the mentees within the guidelines provided by MAWA.

The Foundation Advisory Program Coordinator supports the mentors and mentees. The Coordinator arranges monthly group meetings, organizes workshops or other training sessions and determines that the program is

functioning to the benefit of all involved. She also coordinates the annual call for submissions to the program and organizes the process whereby the applicants are selected, interviewed and notifies applicants of results. She performs all administrative functions required by this program including the collection of mentor and mentees' evaluative reports. In addition, she provides administrative support as required by the mentors.

Mentors are invited to participate the November of year prior to the program. A call for submissions for applications for the FAP is publicized through the MAWA newsletter each January with the new program beginning in September of each year. After a selection process involving the mentors in consultation with the Program Coordinator and Executive Director, interviews are held for short-listed applicants. This year interview questions were sent out in advance — a process that was reported to have worked very well.

The mentorship programs are the only programs open exclusively to women. The mentees fees for this program have never changed from the original \$200 for the entire year. The mentors' fees were adjusted this past year and are now \$5,000 for working with two mentees for one year.

Assessment

The *Foundation Advisory Program* is as relevant today as when it was begun almost 20 years ago. Each year the number of applicants grows. The environmental reasons for this growth are as follows:

1. There is no existing graduate program in visual arts in Manitoba. This leaves a gap in the educational development of those who graduate from the University of Manitoba, School of Art with a Bachelor of Fine Arts or move here having received the BFA from another province. A graduate program will generally provide for the intellectual and theoretical development essential to an artists' practice and offer guidance in advanced skill development necessary to the artists' methodology. Lastly, although very importantly, a graduate program provides the opportunity for an artist to build a community of one's peers. In the absence of a graduate program for visual artists in the province, MAWA serves a critical function.
2. Although women have more exhibitions than they did 20 years ago, the circumstances for women in the art community remain inadequate:
 - a. Women's works still comprise lower numbers than men's in public art gallery collections.
 - b. Women fill fewer of the Executive jobs within public galleries.
 - c. Women hold fewer tenured positions within university art departments, even though there are larger numbers of women students than men.
 - d. Women still receive fewer public commissions.
 - e. Women are still the primary caregivers for their children and aging family members in most cases.

- f. Women still take responsibility for more of domestic chores.
 - g. Women hold more part-time jobs than men do.
3. Rural women still suffer the consequences of living and working in relative isolation. Although a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Program is in the planning stage at Brandon University (Brandon is the nearest “large” city for many rural women), access to any training remains, at this point, sporadic.
 4. Artists who have “graduated” from the Foundation Advisory Program have spread the word about the benefits of the program.
 5. The CHRC, in its *Face of the Future* study, finds that the cultural sector has a “strong preference for on-the-job learning and mentoring and an integration of learning with work.” (CHRC, 12)
 6. The CHRC also found in its study that women generally have a lower income in the sector than men. (CHRC, 24)

While the Program serves many very well, the situation exists whereby in the last few years the number of applicants has been almost 300% greater than the available positions. The ultimate act of selecting who gets into the program rests with the mentors, with some guidance from the staff. This decision has become increasingly difficult as the numbers grow. In the present year, all three of the mentors voluntarily offered to assist, in some way, an applicant who they felt deserving of a spot but who were unable, because of MAWA’s limitations, to attain one.

Although guidelines exist for the mentors, the philosophy has been that first-time mentors would learn from those that had been in the program previously. Attempts are made, therefore, to combine experienced with inexperienced mentors. However, being a successful mentor is not an intuitive process and as with all situations, when we learn from our peers informally, the bad habits as well as the good practices are sometimes passed on. The Cultural Human Resources Council maintain in their 1999 planning document, regarding the urgent need for quality education to support the cultural sector, that most training occurs (in this sector) through on-the-job experience. The study notes that while “[m]any good practices are passed on from one worker to another. . . many weak or questionable practices are still prevalent.” (CHRC, 1999)

Three years ago the mentees paid to organize a workshop in an area of shared interest. In the 2002 – 2003 year MAWA paid for one workshop that the mentees and mentors would attend together in an area of their choice. The workshop was beneficial as skill-building training and as a bonding experience for the group. Currently funding is in place for one workshop to take place each year to be determined by the mentors, mentees and Program Coordinator.

Balancing the social aspect of the program is important in contributing to the development of relationships within the program.

Recommendations

Basically the Foundation Advisory Program is very good and has proven extremely beneficial for individual women and the community as a whole. Based on the above assessment, I would recommend the following actions:

1. Maintain the Program in its position of importance within MAWA's organization.
2. MAWA to contract one more mentor next year to make the process a more equitable one. The Board has determined that income from the Caroline Dukes Legacy Fund would be used towards the Foundation Advisory Program. In the first few years this income may have to be subsidized through the granting process.
3. Organize Mentors Workshop titled *Orientation to Mentoring*. There are many skills that can be learned to allow for a more satisfying mentoring experience for both the mentors and the mentees, for example:
 - a. Relationship building skills
 - b. Effective communication skills
 - c. Roles and boundaries
 - d. Helping mentees solve problems
 - e. Creating a plan and goals for working together
 - f. Evaluating progress

This training would provide the mentor with a transferable skill and extend MAWA's objectives to *encourage and support the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual* to the mentors as well as the mentees. This training would also be extremely useful to the Foundation Advisory Program Coordinator.

Developing a training segment of the program for the mentors would also serve to legitimate the program and the value of the training provided by the mentors. Offer the program to other cultural workers and organizations at the same time.

4. An evaluation session be instituted for mentors at the end of the program. At this point, the mentees submit evaluative reports but these are confidential and not seen by the mentors. Mentors could develop their process by being provided with feedback based on the mentees report and on the Coordinator's observations. The Foundation Advisory Program Coordinator and the Executive Director would perform this evaluation.
5. All program guidelines were developed some time ago and need to be examined and redeveloped as necessary.

6. The policy regarding student applicants needs to be clarified in regard to part-time students and other situations where exception might be made.
7. Public funding available for mentees be researched and publicized with the call for submissions.
8. Establish a contingency fund to allow for opportunities that present themselves throughout the year such as visiting artists, workshops, presentations, field trips, etc.
9. Establish hospitality budget for first and last meeting to provide more social setting. This budget should also apply to the larger social event that takes place each year involving prior year group and MAWA staff, Board and others. (discussed above). This budget need not be large.
10. Provide a booklet of photocopies of articles on relevant topics for the mentees. Add a budget line for mentors to make photocopies for their individual mentees with a budget limit. These documents could also be put on the website and accessed through the Internet.

MENTOR BY MAIL PROGRAM

Mentoring is an interactive person-to-person process that guides learning development assuming the participants have qualitatively and quantitatively adequate contacts to allow for this development. (Galbraith and Cohen, 1995)

The Mentor by Mail program was begun in 1993 to provide mentoring to the membership that live outside of Manitoba. The proportion of national members has grown steadily over the years (members outside of Winnipeg number 94 of a total 251 members; 7 members are international). This is largely a result of the symposia such as *First Person Plural* and *Locating Feminism*. Both symposia have involved participants from across Canada. They have also attracted registrants from all parts of the country as well as some from the U.S.

Like the Foundation Advisory Program, the Mentor by Mail Program is a year in duration running from September 1 to August 31 of the following year. The mentors and the mentees reside in various parts of Canada. Each year one mentor works with two mentees whom she selects from the applicants. Successful applicants pay a fee of \$100 for the year-long program for which the mentor is paid a fee of \$1,200. Communication takes place through mail, email and long-distance telephone. The method that mentors have used to communicate with their mentees has been left up to those participating in the program. Although the intention of the program was that communication would occur through the postal system and no provision has been made for telephone contact this has been used by at least one mentor in recent years. The frequency and particular method of communication has

varied from mentor to mentor, some regular and some sporadic. Applicants for the program are few, in recent years as few as two or three at most have applied for a program that accommodates two mentees.

At the end of the year reports from the mentor were required. For the current program, however, the mentor's contract stipulates that progress reports be made quarterly in conjunction with the payment of fee installments and mentees are responsible for submitting mid and end of term reports

Assessment

MAWA is still unique, in the country, in the offering of mentoring programs for women artists. Programs, such as the *First Person Plural* and *Locating Feminism* symposia, involved participants from all areas of Canada and served to expand MAWA's membership. MAWA now has a substantial national membership (at present 94 of a total of 251 members are national with 7 international members). It is important that MAWA consider these members from outside of the immediate locale when developing programs.

The Mentor by Mail program has never had a large number of applicants. In the last few years the mentor has had only two or three applications from which two mentees were selected. While the response to those who have gone through the program has generally been fairly good, there has been some difficulty at times with keeping mentees motivated over long distances. Mentors have chosen various methods of communication because keeping in contact through the mail has proven expensive, cumbersome, and the time lapse has been problematic. They have chosen email and even long-distance telephone as alternative modes of communication. Communications, which were meant to take place monthly, are often more sporadic. MAWA has taken the position that the individual program is developed to suit the specific needs of each mentor and mentee. The end of year reports from the mentor was the only means for assessing how the program was going each year. This year, in order to take a more pro-active role, MAWA has requested quarterly reports from the mentor and mid and end-of-term reports from the mentees. This will enable MAWA staff to become involved if the mentors or mentees appear to require assistance or support of any kind.

Recommendations

While it is essential that MAWA consider the national membership when developing programs, it is my assessment that the Mentor by Mail program is not the best effective way for MAWA to serve these members. I don't believe the Mentor by Mail program has lived up to expectations. It is evident that this program does not provide the same quality of mentorship as MAWA's other programs. The nature of mentorship necessitates a closer relationship than is possible through long-distance communication.

Based on the sizeable portion of MAWA's national membership and the desirability of offering mentoring and other programs to these members, and the above assessment, I would recommend the following actions:

1. The Mentor by Mail program be discontinued after the current program is complete in August 2004.
2. The Mentor in Residence program be expanded to include an additional mentee from outside of the province. A bursary be developed to provide travel and accommodation for the 6-week duration of the residency. The mentee will benefit from her relationship with the Mentor in Residence. Both the local mentees and the mentee who takes part in this special program will derive the networking benefits of working together as a group. The mentee will also become acquainted with MAWA and other artists and community arts organizations during her residency. As the Mentor in Residence has in the past selected to work with 3 rather than 4 mentees, the program would not be substantially more costly if the number of local mentees was determined to be 3 and, with the mentee in residence, the total number would still be 4. The costs therefore would be for travel and accommodation for the 6-week period. After a trial period of 2 years, MAWA should reassess this program and determine whether it would be beneficial to extend it to include 2 Mentors in Residence. This should also be considered in light of the number of applicants for the Foundation Advisory Program, as it could serve the needs of some of the individuals who would otherwise apply to that program.
3. A Rural Mentor in Residence program be developed in consultation with rural members. (see Rural Mentor in Residence Program)
4. Umbrella Programs, such as the symposia, which provide a forum during which members from all parts of the country can participate should continue.
5. The MAWA website must be maintained to serve as a resource for present and new members.
6. The upcoming Cyberfeminism Project (working title only) include an electronic exhibition space for the curated display of works produced for the Internet.

MENTOR IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

The Mentor in Residence Program was initiated in 1993 to provide support for mid-career women artists and curators. Mentors have come from various parts of Canada to stay for periods of three to six weeks to work with three to four women. The brevity of the residency demands an intense level of activity that generally provides for a stimulating and productive period for the participants. The mentor is expected to meet once a week with each individual mentee; to meet once a week with the mentees as a group; present a public lecture in Winnipeg and one in Brandon; conduct four studio visits in Winnipeg and four in Brandon; meet with the Foundation Advisory Program; produce a report outlining her activities during the program.

Assessment

The levels of experience of the artists and curators who have served as

mentors in this program have been exceptional. The program is held in high-regard nationally; because women from so many parts of the country have mentored in this program it is well known beyond Manitoba's. Local artists gain invaluable skills within a relatively short period of time and work with senior artists and curators with well-established careers. Many of the mentors have taught in the post-secondary educational system and appreciate the alternative mentorship approach to training. The mentees often develop ongoing relationships with their mentors as a result of the intensity of this situation.

Recommendations

The Mentor in Residence program be expanded to include an additional mentee from outside of the province. A bursary be developed to provide travel and accommodation for the 6-week duration of the residency. The mentee will benefit from her relationship with the Mentor in Residence. Both the local mentees and the mentee who takes part in this special program will derive the networking benefits of working together as a group. The mentee will also become acquainted with MAWA and other artists and community arts organizations during her residency. As the Mentor in Residence has in the past selected to work with 3 rather than 4 mentees, the program would not be substantially more costly if the number of local mentees was determined to be 3 and, with the mentee in residence, the total number would still be 4. The costs therefore would be for travel and accommodation for the 6-week period. After a trial period of 2 years, MAWA should reassess this program and determine whether it would be beneficial to extend it to include 2 Mentors in Residence. This should also be considered in light of the number of applicants for the Foundation Advisory Program, as it could serve the needs of some of the individuals who would otherwise apply to that program.

It would be beneficial to provide the Mentor in Residence with accommodation that would also serve as office space. In most cases the mentor has a very full schedule during her six-week stay and a full studio is not necessary. However, office space where the mentor can organize her materials, have meetings with individuals if desired, and so on, would be useful. At present the budget allows for accommodation in a bed and breakfast (\$40/night). Most visitors choose not to stay in the bed and breakfast for that length of time and make other arrangements or ask MAWA for help with this. Some have stayed in homes of traveling local artists while others have subsidized their hotel accommodation.

RURAL MENTOR IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

During the 2002 – 2003 year, MAWA sponsored a mentoring program for the southwest corner of Manitoba. Artists and MAWA Board members, Shirley Brown and Barb Flemington, had proposed this program. These two artists

along with Fay Jelly served as mentors for the year-long program that involved 9 mentees from throughout southwestern Manitoba. The program was so successful that the mentees subsidized several additional sessions to extend it. Artists George Glenn and Diane Whitehouse were invited to meet with the mentees. Barb Hunt, MAWA Mentor in Residence, met with the mentees while she was in Brandon.

Recommendations

I would strongly recommend that consultation with artists in rural Manitoba be undertaken to determine how MAWA might work with members in this area to provide support and assistance.

1. A Northern and Rural Coordinator will be hired to conduct research and consultations with artists in those communities and to then, in second phase, make program recommendations.

ABORIGINAL MEMBERSHIP

Winnipeg has a large Aboriginal population that is predicted to reach 15.3% of the city's total by the year 2016. It is incumbent upon cultural organizations to recognize this important segment of our community. As an organization that serves the needs of women artists, it behooves MAWA to determine how we might work with Aboriginal women artists to the benefit of all women and the community in general.

I strongly recommend that an Aboriginal Advisory committee be established to meet with a contingent of MAWA Board members and MAWA staff. The role of this committee would be to discuss how MAWA might most effectively work with this community. A representative of this committee would be invited to sit on the MAWA Board. The objective of this Advisory committee would be to build a climate of trust and work toward understand that will allow MAWA to extend support to Aboriginal women artists.

Collaborations with Urban Shaman have been initiated for the upcoming programming year. Shelly Niro will be invited to do an artist's talk and a screening of her films sponsored by both organizations. She will conduct four studio visits for MAWA members and four for Urban Shaman members. The studio visits are also sponsored and will be administered jointly.

SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMMING

The creator, performer and cultural worker of the new millennium are increasingly in need of multi-disciplinary competencies, i.e. the competencies not directly related to the artistic discipline or to the cultural work, but rather those competencies which round out the 'tool box' of skills possessed by workers in the sector.

To succeed and take an active role in the new economy, creators and cultural workers must develop, parallel to their professional skills, general and career management competencies. These include the ability to understand and negotiate contracts, to actively network, to assess one's progress and review one's goals.
(CHRC)

Programs

An analysis of the Mentoring Programs, specifically the Foundation Advisory Program and the Mentor-in-Residence Program indicates an unmet need for more supportive and training services for MAWA members. When the applications for the most-recent round of submissions to the F.A.P. were examined, it was evident that while most of the applicants required the intensive training provided in the F.A.P., there were many who would benefit from other types of programs, often while they wait to apply to the F.A.P. again next year. Many mentees who've graduated from the program express the let-down that occurs in conjunction with the ending of each year's program. Programs that provide on-going training and provide for networking outside of the parameters of the F.A.P. would be beneficial for many women in the community. Women who move to the city from elsewhere join MAWA for the opportunities the organization affords regarding networking possibilities and the inclusion in an active community.

Recommendations

In consideration of the above: the need for on-going training and networking outside of the F.A.P.; the desire to become involved with MAWA in a less formal situation initially to determine if the F.A.P. program is the right thing for them; the offering of a social situation within which senior, mid and junior artists would meet and dialogue.

In order to meet some of the needs of the members beyond the parameters of the more formal Foundation Advisory Program or Mentor-in-Residence Program, we will be offering the following program:

First Fridays

Taking place on the first Friday of each month in the MAWA office, this program

will begin at 12:00 pm with a Presenter who will be invited to speak on one of a large range and variety of topics; some of which will be concerned with the business of being an artist, other with specific skill-building, others will simply facilitate discussion around a specific issue or topic relevant to contemporary art practices.

The presentation will be 30 minutes in length with 30 minutes for discussion or questions. The balance of the afternoon will be divided into 1/2 hour sessions during which the presenter will meet informally with audience members who will sign up at the end of the presentation for a time-slot.

Because I feel strongly that sometimes the most profound and interesting discussions take place in the social spaces built into events/conferences/symposia, an informal reception will be arranged for the end of the afternoon. This will be open to those who participated during the day sessions as well as anyone else who would like to drop by for refreshments and some engaging discussions. Susan Chafe and I recalled recently how, when we were younger artists, we were very interested in being in situations where older artists or curators were having discussions. Although we might not have felt prepared to join in we learned a lot from watching and listening. This is intended to be a more inclusive alternative to the one in which people head off to a bar after an event. Even if everyone is invited there are those who are too young or inexperienced to feel comfortable joining in. My hope is that we will make everyone feel comfortable for these First Fridays at MAWA and strengthen community bonds at the same time.

Topics that have been considered for First Fridays are as follows:

1. Writing Artist's Statements
2. Painting: A Discussion with Diane Whitehouse
3. Gender Politics in the Art World: Amy Karlinsky
4. The Role of the Artist in Contemporary Society: Sigrid Dahle
5. Writing an artist's statement: what are the important points to consider when writing about your own work.
6. Applying for grants: where to apply and how to do it.
7. What to do when a curator comes to your studio: how to prepare and what you should know about a curator's practice: Vera Lemecha
8. Working with a designer: an overview of the graphic design and printing process: Susan Chafe
9. Tips about slides
10. Working with the Media: Alison Gillmor
11. Issues of Isolation
12. Research: how to do it effectively: Liv Valmstead
13. Internet Research: how to do it effectively
14. Resource Centre: How to find the things you need.
15. Manitoba Crafts Council: how to apply.
16. Manitoba Arts Council: what you need to know to apply for a grant: Marian Butler.
17. Winnipeg Arts Council: what you need to know to apply for a grant:

Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles.

18. Canada Council for the Arts: what you need to know to apply for a grant
19. Manitoba Arts and Cultural Management Programs
20. Marketing & Media: Deborah Bowers

Please note: these are recommendations and all of the individuals named are recommended. None have been contacted regarding their interest in or availability to participate in this program.

WORKSHOPS

The development of post-graduate degree training specific to the various disciplines should be explored. In the interim, short courses and workshops in new materials, techniques, equipment, and integrating new technology should be offered involving instructors who are highly regarded within their field of expertise. (ACI, 42)

MAWA offers a range of workshops, generally offering practical skill development training. In the past these have included a long list of topics such as:

1. bookbinding
2. embroidery
3. critical writing
4. photography
5. computer

Assessment

In the absence of a graduate program, MAWA plays a critical role in providing technical training for artists that go beyond what is taught at the University of Manitoba. Instructors are contracted from all parts of the country to provide the best instruction possible. In addition, these workshops allow a situation in which artists with similar interests get to know each other.

The workshops cover technical skill-building primarily and build on training offered within the School of Art, University of Manitoba or are designed to meet specific needs within the community or take advantage of unique training opportunities available to MAWA.

While workshops have been offered in new technologies, these have occurred in conjunction with the availability of an artist with expertise in an area being in the city, either for a MAWA event or by invitation of another organization.

The impact of technological developments on the visual art sector are enormous. Completely new methods of producing, displaying and promoting work have seemingly sprung up in the last two decades. Even for artists whose practices are rooted in the more traditional genres, communications and research have changed significantly. There is no doubt that artists who do not have access to the skills and tools required to function to some degree in the electronic world are at a distinct disadvantage. In fact, some galleries now accept only electronic submissions for exhibition proposals and some have their newsletters on-line only.

MAWA is planning to organize a series of workshops to introduce the skills needed by women who want to produce electronic works for the Internet. A website that will curate works developed specifically for the Internet will provide a venue for this work. A computer has been purchased for the Resource

Centre to provide members with access to the equipment and software required to produce this work as well as to do research.

The most appropriate location for each workshop is determined and MAWA either rents the space required, collaborates with another organization to use their space, is given the use of the space as a gesture of community-mindedness or as an acknowledged donation.

MAWA subsidizes the cost of all workshops so that participants pay minimal registration fees. All workshop leaders are paid standard CARFAC fees. In addition, in many cases a coordinator, with relevant skills, is contracted to assist the workshop leader as is required. Workshops are organized in Winnipeg and in Brandon whenever possible.

The workshops that MAWA has organized have been well received. They have in most cases filled-up in advance of the registration deadline.

Recommendations

1. Workshops that provide the skills to develop computer literacy among our members are critical in providing them with a level playing field in our technological context. Workshops that focus on the skill required for those women who choose to produce work specifically for this new electronic arena as well as for women who simply want to use the technology to do research should be offered at several stages of complexity and repeated during consecutive years to allow as many members as wish to, to gain these skills. These should be followed up with collaborations and exchanges with other organizations involved in similar activities to provide networking opportunities for MAWA members and to provide additional skill-building opportunities. (Studio XX in Montreal, Soil Digital Studio in Regina, Paved in Saskatoon, to name a few)

These recommendations are in keeping with the recommendation in the Cultural Human Resource Council's *Face of the Future: A Study of Human Resource Issues in Canada's Cultural Sector* which suggests that cultural workers be equipped "to take advantage of technological change." In order to reach this goal they recommend the following:

- *Provide access to state-of-the-art tools in cultural production and computers.*
- *Provide access to banks of hours in training and experimentation for creators and cultural workers.*
- *Provide initial training and sessions with experts in production, management and distribution.*
- *Provide a forum for exchange, experimentation, documentation, reception and research.*
- *Allow exchanges and collaboration with partners outside the region and internationally.*

2. Develop more discipline-based workshops to provide introductory and advanced level skills training in all areas of art production. Offer workshops in Winnipeg and, whenever possible, repeat in locations around Manitoba in recognition of community beyond the perimeter.
3. Hire part-time program coordinator for workshops to provide administrative and practical support for instructors. The coordinator would travel with the instructor when workshops occur outside of Winnipeg.
4. Develop a chat room or list-serve to deal with the topics of presentation after each First Friday.

RESOURCE CENTRE

Background

The Resource Centre was begun in 1990. It's development was initiated by the donation of a collection of art magazines and books. Valerie Dewson was asked to produce a cataloguing system and to organize and maintain a Resource Centre.

In the third year, a movie night was organized to raise funds for a small bookshelf and filing cabinet. Dewson continued to work with the Resource Centre as Volunteer Coordinator for the nominal honorarium of \$100 per month until MAWA moved in 2002. An exchange program with art galleries, magazines and institutions has been the main source of new additions to the Centre. Donations by members have been on-going. Members' artist files have also been established.

The mandate established in 1996 is to focus on artists' exhibition catalogues.

Assessment

The Resource Centre is currently in a state of disorganization. The Volunteer Coordinator position has been on hold for the past 18 months to allow MAWA to evaluate this program.

The Resource Centre has the potential to be beneficial to artists, curators, instructors, and researchers both local and visiting. Building members artists' files would be particularly useful to local and visiting researchers, students, curators, and instructors.

The cataloguing system is complex and difficult to use. Many of the books in the collection are outdated and should be removed. An adequate method for retrieving over-due materials is not established.

Recommendations

I would recommend that the Resource Centre be revitalized as follows:

1. A new cataloguing system be developed by a professional librarian.(for example, Liv Valmstead, Librarian at the University of Manitoba Fine Arts Library) This system to be entered in the computer, which will be located in the Resource Centre. This will allow members to locate materials more easily and for a method of tracking materials be maintained. Hire student to work on re-cataloguing materials under Librarian's direction.
2. Purge the existing materials.
3. Repair existing shelving or obtain more substantial shelving.

4. Re-locate artists' files for easier access by members. Obtain lateral file for this purpose. A student be contracted to prepare files, gather materials, and generally organize this resource.

5. Strike committee to oversee the revitalization of this area:

- a. to purge the stacks
- b. research opportunities to hire students for artists' files and book/catalogue catalogue collection
- c. expand publication exchange program
- d. obtain bookshelves or make recommendations
- e. assess mandate of Resource Centre
- f. catalogue digital resources (websites, etc.)

CRITICAL READING GROUP

The Critical Reading Group meets to discuss texts that are of interest to the group. A Volunteer Coordinator, has been paid a nominal honorarium of \$100 for each session. Her responsibility is to call meetings, select and photocopy articles and have them available for group members in the MAWA office. The meetings took place in various locations including restaurants and members' studios. Group members paid an annual fee of \$15. This program has not functioned for approximately 18 months.

Recommendation

I would recommend that this group be revitalized. It is important that MAWA provide the *ongoing forum for critical dialogue and information* as stated in the mandate. In the absence of a graduate program for visual arts in Manitoba, the ability to read texts critically and have access to current critical discussion is essential.

Participating in such a group with those more experienced in reading and discussing critical texts is a significant learning process.

I recommend the revitalization of the Critical Reading Group as follows:

1. develop a new title, new structure and new location — the MAWA office
2. provide advance information on topics to be discussed in the newsletter
3. contract Coordinator with strong skills in facilitation to call meetings, locate and photocopy materials, set up on meeting date, research topics for suggested readings when required, collect drop-in fees and facilitate sessions
4. topics and suggested reading to come from the group
5. consistent drop-in fee charged at each meeting — keep low to encourage participation, possibly \$2 per session.
6. scan readings and make available on MAWA website.
7. Educational Resource Committee be formed to oversee the Resource Centre and the Reading Group

WEBSITE

MAWA's website provides information on programs, upcoming events, contacts, membership, publications, MAWA's history, an archive of past projects and symposia, and links to other websites deemed to be of interest to members. Funding for the website has been minimal and sporadic. It has been maintained most consistently with volunteer labour.

Assessment

The website has had a well-intentioned history with spurts of maintenance activity generally occurring around an event that required its specific use. For example, the website would be updated in preparation for symposium registration with the following:

1. registration information and forms
2. schedule and presenters' biographies
3. accommodation and travel information
4. local restaurants, bookstores and toy stores
5. local gallery listings

In between events, however, the website tended to be neglected for long periods resulting in outdated and often misleading information (publicity for upcoming events that had already occurred).

Liv Valmstead and Jen Loewen have contributed many hours to maintain the website but this has not been a priority of MAWA's.

Recommendations

It is essential that the website be re-designed to more appropriately represent MAWA as the dynamic, visual arts organization that it is. The website is the first point of contact that most individuals will have with MAWA and for many around the world it will remain the *only* point.

Information on the website must be updated in a timely fashion. There is nothing more frustrating than considering attending an exciting event to realize that that event took place a year ago. If we want people to return to MAWA's site it has to be both attractive and functional.

The website has the potential to expand MAWA's abilities to provide support well beyond our current boundaries. The website can be a resource providing information on a wide-range of information needed by artists at all stages of their careers.

The international Cyberfeminism Symposium (working title only) planned for fall 2004 will provide a forum for women to participate in a weekend of discussion around issues involving the various ways that women represent themselves on the Web. This forum will extend to the MAWA website through

the publishing of texts by symposium presenters and others. An exhibition of curated works produced specifically for this digital venue will include local and international artists. A Resource section will be developed on the website to provide information and links to information for women interested in the Internet as a site of practice. These activities will extend MAWA's activities well beyond the borders of Winnipeg.

The website will be re-designed this fall to give it a new look and allow information to be updated bi-monthly with each newsletter. MAWA staff will also be trained to update information in-between as required. The Canada Council for the Arts has provided funds for this to be completed.

The new website will:

1. be colourful and dynamic
2. professionally designed
3. updated regularly
4. incorporate new Board members bios
5. change *current events* to *upcoming events*
6. incorporate more information on individual artists and their work
7. determine which MAWA logo version to use and use it consistently
8. feature more art
9. feature members' bios and images of work

MAWA VOLUNTEERS

MAWA, like most cultural organizations, relies on volunteers to supplement its staff complement. Volunteers perform various duties including but not limited to:

1. setting up and tidying for artists' talks and lectures
2. selling tickets at events
3. bartending
4. assisting with the newsletter distribution
5. serving on the MAWA Board of Directors
6. serving on MAWA committees
7. airport transport for visitors
8. transport for artists conducting studio visits

Volunteerism in the cultural sector is commonly the way that artists gain the experience required to apply for positions within the art community. It is also the way that artists who are in the developmental stages of their careers network with other artists, meet and work with artists from across the country, and generally learn about and become part of the art community.

MAWA has volunteers in Winnipeg as well as in the rural communities. Volunteers in the areas around Brandon are often called upon when MAWA organizes lectures by visiting artists in that city.

FUNDRAISING

There is no sign that there is going to be significant growth in either public- or private-sector support. The pressure to provide funds for higher education and health care is overwhelming. . . In my opinion, the best hope lies in building relationships with individuals who care about the art form and who can be persuaded to come to the aid of the organization. People give to people.
(Hobday, p. 8)

MAWA has and continues to receive operating funding from The Manitoba Arts Council, The Winnipeg Arts Council (City of Winnipeg) and The Canada Council for the Arts. It has also received support for specific projects from The Winnipeg Foundation, the W.H. and S.E. Loewen Family Foundation and various other donors as appropriate. MAWA's members, in addition to paying membership fees, donate funds each year.

The Board participates in a number of fundraising activities each year:

1. High-End Campaign: Each Board member identifies individuals who might donate \$200 each. The chair gathers names from other board members and drafts a letter which is produced on appropriate stationery. The letter is signed by the chair and mailed with a return card. Donors become Donor Members for one year and receive a tax receipt.
2. Year-End Campaign: Chair and staff prepare a letter and staff have a card designed (by Susan Chafe). Board members sign letters, address envelopes and prepare for mailing. These are sent to all members.
3. Business Campaign: Board members ask business for a \$250 donation for which they receive a 1/2 page ad in MAWA's newsletter.
4. MAWA Garage Sale take place bi-annually. Members also donate large amounts of volunteer time to this initiative.

The Administrative Coordinator prepares all donation-related tax receipts.

In 2001 a group of individuals approached MAWA with a proposal to collaborate on the development of a fund administered by The Winnipeg Foundation as a memorial to MAWA member and Winnipeg artist, Wendy Wersch. The Wendy Wersch Committee organizes a lecture each fall in Wendy's memory. Proceeds from the fund finance this lecture series. MAWA's role is to assist with specific tasks as outlined in the agreement regarding the administration of this event. A MAWA Board member represents MAWA on the Wendy Wersch Memorial Committee.

When Caroline Dukes, a senior member of the Winnipeg art community and a long-time MAWA member, died in 2003, several MAWA members suggested that they would like to donate funds to MAWA in her memory. Because the Board and staff recognized that MAWA should be prepared for such contingencies in our community, MAWA approached The Winnipeg Foundation to discuss the setting-up of an umbrella fund. With the helpful guidance of The Winnipeg Foundation, the organization was able to establish the MAWA Legacy Fund. Proceeds from this fund will be used for MAWA programs. In order to recognize Caroline Dukes, the Caroline Dukes Legacy Fund was established

under the umbrella fund. Because Caroline was a mentor in the second year of the Mentorship Program and was keenly supportive of it, proceeds from this fund will be directed to the Foundation Advisory Program.

Assessment

Since the economic fragility of the 90s, art organizations seeking long-term stability are wise to not rely solely on government funding. While a large segment of MAWA's funding continues to come from public funders,

Funds are pursued through the public granting system, with applications prepared by the Executive Director. The Executive Director also researches and prepares applications to foundations and corporations as appropriate. Contract grantwriters are hired on occasion by the Director to assist in the preparation of grant applications for specific projects.

The Board's fundraising activities include the High End Campaign, the Year-End Campaign and the Business Campaign as well as the bi-annual garage sale. The High-End and Year-End Campaigns have met with some degree of success. The Business Campaign, initiated in 2002 for the first time, was not successful. The garage sale was highly successful the first year and less so each time. There is the possibility that the membership cannot support a garage sale this frequently.

Recommendations

MAWA would do well to establish an on-going Fundraising Committee. This initiative is under consideration by the Garage Sale committee as I write this. This would allow MAWA to participate in opportunities that may arise throughout the year and to develop new fundraising ideas and plans. This committee could initiate a fundraising workshop to develop their skills in this area. There are a number of women in the city who have worked in the development field for years and would have many skills to pass on. (for example, Betty Ann Watt, Development Officer for the Women's Health Clinic) Considering seeking a Board member with experience and well-developed skills in the area of fundraising.

MAWA's unique role in the arts community, as women's organization, training facility, and so on, opens up doors to funding sources outside of the usual public funding bodies. Researching and pursuing new funding possibilities is the Executive Director's responsibility. This activity is limited by the time restrictions imposed by the part-time hours of this position. While most organizations now hire some contract grantwriters to assist with the arduous task of preparing applications, the job of developing relationships with funders is best done by the Executive Director. As John Hobday remarks in the quote heading this section, "the best hope lies in building relationships with individuals." Relationship building takes time and it is not humanly possible to network adequately with potential funders and sponsors within the hours currently worked by MAWA staff.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The ethical obligation to respect and treat artists appropriately is one of the hard-won achievements of Canadian cultural policy and a goal which has been internalized in the organizational values and behaviour of arts organizations and public sector funding agencies. As yet, such a transformation in policy has not occurred regarding management personnel. (Canadian Conference of the Arts, 8)

Traditionally, compensation in the not-for-profit cultural sector (whether for artists, managers or technical staff) is low, sometimes very low, in comparison with positions in other sectors requiring similar education, training or experience. In many arts organizations and museums, current rates of pay and benefits, exhausting working conditions and limited career development opportunities are driving managers out of the work force and making it difficult to replace them. (Canadian Conference of the Arts 10)

For individuals in the cultural sector—whether contractual or full-time employees and whether working in the for-profit or not-for-profit sectors—working conditions appear to be very difficult, characterized to a large degree by:

- *Poverty level pay;*
- *Excessively heavy workloads;*
- *Lack of full-time work;*
- *Overwork;*
- *High performance expectations despite insufficient training and support;*
- *The requirement to multi-function, leading to poorer quality work and crises management;*
- *Lack of opportunities for advancement;*
- *Lack of security and benefits;*
- *Devaluation by Boards, employers, government and the general public. (CHRC)*

Background

MAWA has sustained a minimal administrative structure throughout its history with various models including full-time Program Coordinator, part-time Director and part-time Program Coordinator, Directors that job-shared the position, and the innovative “virtual directorship” in which 3 directors shared the Director position and a part-time Program Director was hired. The current structure consists of Vera Lemecha as Executive Director and Sarah Crawley as Administrative Coordinator. The virtual directorship has extended to provide an Acting Director during times of leave or other extended absence of the Executive Director. The Virtual Directors are Reva Stone, Susan Chafe and Grace Nickel, all of who made up the tri-partite virtual directorship in 1995.

MAWA also hires contract staff to provide numerous services. These have included on an on-going basis: Coordinator of the Foundation Advisory Program (Sarah Crawley) and newsletter designer (Susan Chafe). In addition contracts have been issued to artists, curators, writers, editors of *Inversions*,

workshop leaders, coordinators of workshops, grant writers, copyeditors and others. Each year contracts positions are filled for the Mentors in the Foundation Advisory Program, the Mentor in Residence and the Mentor by Mail.

Additionally, MAWA has always relied heavily on a volunteer component for various tasks including newsletter mailing, set up for artists' talks and lectures, transportation for visitors and Mentors. The volunteer positions of Resource Centre Coordinator and Critical Reading Group Coordinator have been paid a small honorarium in acknowledgment of the on-going commitment made by these individuals.

Assessment

In 2004 MAWA will celebrate its 20-year anniversary. MAWA is recognized throughout Canada and beyond its borders for its unique position within the Canadian visual art context. There exists no other organization in Canada that provides on-going mentoring programs in the visual arts. MAWA's success and longevity has had in large part to do with its responsiveness and flexibility. Its programs combine practical skill-building workshops as well as critical forums. The organization's determination to not have its own gallery, screening room etc., have much to do with its success. This situation has allowed and perhaps required that the organization consider a range of programming activities from the journal *inVersions*, to exhibitions, to workshops, to postcard projects, to symposia, to screenings, and so on. It has also encouraged collaborative relations with other community organizations including aceartinc, Plug In ICA, Video Pool, Manitoba Printmakers Association, Urban Shaman, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, the Art Gallery of South Western Manitoba as well as others. These collaborations extend MAWA's audience and provide valuable networking opportunities for MAWA members.

MAWA has, through the hiring of contractual workers, allowed for many voices and perspectives to create diverse public programs that serve a range of publics. As an institution that receives public funding, the Organization is obliged to reach beyond a narrowly defined membership base. However, beyond this requirement MAWA's philosophy and mandate demand that a broad public be served by MAWA's programs. In fact MAWA's membership represents individuals with a diverse range of practices, levels of education, economic conditions, and other intellectual and practical concerns.

As I've examined and evaluated each area of MAWA's programming, it is clear that on the eve of the Organization's 20-year anniversary, growth in many areas is indicated. MAWA's reputation and membership has grown exponentially over the years. Along with this growth so to have the needs Mawa's members. While many of the conditions that surround the development of women's art practices have improved, many have not. As society has developed in direct relation to our technological context so to have the realm of artmaking methodologies, theories and practices. Women have fewer opportunities for access to equipment, training and jobs in this realm. There is still no visual arts graduate

program in the province. Women, even within the cultural community, earn less than men. Women are still the primary caregivers of their children. In other words, conditions for practicing women artists are still such that MAWA's support is critical to many of them.

As I discuss in the section on Mentoring programs, applications for the Foundation Advisory Program have consistently recently numbered in the area of 16 – 17 while the available positions remain at 6. Weekly, we receive calls from women seeking training, support, advice on various aspects of developing and sustaining their art practices. The recommendations I have made in that area acknowledge this critical need. By adding a Mentor in the Foundation Advisory Program, developing a Rural Mentor Program, subsidizing a Mentee in Residence, organizing the First Fridays program, re-organizing the Resource Centre, developing a strategy for the website, and having a computer, and training to use it, for Members, MAWA will be better able to serve its membership and turn away fewer women who need assistance and support. By inviting an Aboriginal Advisory Committee to discuss ways that MAWA might work with Aboriginal artists in the community and to consult with rural artists regarding the needs of this group of women, we will be able to move forward in a way that is inclusive and takes into account the make-up of the community of women artists both locally and provincially.

As a women's organization, MAWA would do well to take a leadership role in advocating against the poverty-level wages women are paid in the cultural sector by beginning at home with its own staff.

Recommendations

These additional programs require a new staffing strategy both in terms of organizing these programs and in fundraising for them.

Administrative Coordinator

The job description of the Administrative Coordinator has been revised in the last year to reflect the actual responsibilities of this position. Several of the duties regularly performed by the A.C. have been considered "extra administration" and paid as overtime hours. As these are in fact performed on a *regular* basis, they should be incorporated into the job description. This will allow for a more realistic understanding of the regular responsibilities of the position and those that are indeed extra and paid as overtime. The responsibilities that had come under the heading of "extra admin" but can be recognized as a regular part of the A.C. job include coordination of:

1. Distribution of newsletter and other publications
2. Members News and Around Town sections of newsletter
3. Volunteers and volunteer activities

When I began in the position of Executive Director, I changed the title of this position from Administrative Assistant to Administrative Coordinator to more accurately reflect the level of responsibility this position entails. Further, in incorporating the above duties into the Administrative Coordinator's job description an appropriate pay raise should be initiated. In researching positions in the Winnipeg cultural community that reflect a similar degree of responsibility and require a similar level of experience and skill, I would recommend the Administrative Coordinator's compensation be adjusted as follows:

The position to be 21 hours per week, to be completed in the MAWA office unless agreed upon by the Executive Director in advance. The pay rate, which is now \$13.50 per hour, to increase to \$16.50 per hour. Time worked over and above the 21 hours to be paid at \$16.50 per hour to a maximum of 35 hours per week. Hours worked in excess of 35 hours per week to be paid at 1.5 times regular rate, or \$24 per hour, or taken as lieu time.

Vacation time to be established at 4 weeks per year.

Executive Director

The job description of the Executive Director was revised upon my hiring, but the workweek remains at three-days per week. The addition of new programs will require a subsequent increase in administrative responsibilities including program development and administration. An increase in programming activity requires additional researching and pursuing of new funding possibilities. Essential to this activity is the development of relationships with those from whom MAWA receives or hope to receive funding. As John Hobday, Director of the Canada Council for the Arts remarks, "*the best hope lies in building relationships with individuals who care about the art form and who can be persuaded to come to the aid of the organization. People give to people.*" (Hobday, p. 8)

MAWA's recently established MAWA Legacy Fund has the potential to provide support for the organization into the future. Funds such as this require time to administer and to publicize.

It is important that the Executive Director be actively involved on the Program committees and those others that necessitate considerable MAWA staff time to administer and the deployment of substantial resources. The Executive Director is a considerable resource to members, both in the development of programs that reflect the needs of members and other numerous informal and formal situations.

MAWA's collaborations with local and national organizations provide valuable opportunities for members and are well-worth developing. These also take time to develop and administer.

MAWA's newsletter has expanded in the last few issues to include a new format and more information for members.

In researching positions in the Winnipeg cultural community that reflect a similar degree of responsibility and require a similar level of experience and skill, I would recommend the Executive Director's compensation be adjusted as follows:

The position to be 35 hours per week, two days a week to be worked in the MAWA office. The pay rate, which is now \$21 per hour, to increase to \$24 per hour. As this is a management position, hours worked above and beyond the regular 35 hour week are to be expected and will be compensated by lieu time rather than financial compensation.

Vacation time to be established at 4 weeks per year.

Contract Positions

Artists, curators, writers, grantwriters, researchers and editors are hired by MAWA on a contract basis throughout the year in conjunction with various programs and fundraising activities. These are essential positions that allow for additional voices in the programming and needed assistance given the minimal staff size and large programming needs.

Several contractual positions are on-going. These are:

Foundation Advisory Program Coordinator arranges monthly group meetings, organizes workshops or other training sessions and determines that the program is functioning to the benefit of all involved. She also coordinates the annual call for submissions to the program and organizes the process whereby the applicants are selected, interviewed and notifies applicants of results. She performs all administrative functions required by this program including the collection of mentor and mentees' evaluative reports. In addition, she provides administrative support as required by the mentors.

Resource Centre Coordinator: see Resource Centre

Critical Reading Group: see Critical Reading Group

Website Coordinator: see Website

Professional Development

Professional development is a recognized essential benefit to staff at all levels from introductory levels to senior management. The benefits occur at the level of the individual staff member *and* at the level of the organization. This is clearly the case most directly when the training relates specifically to the responsibilities of the position of the individual. The organization benefits as the staff member improves her competency level in her regular or newly developed activities. The organization also benefits because the staff member approaches her job with

more confidence. The organization is more likely to retain staff who have a regular professional development plan that is supported by the organization. Even in a small organization where career advancement is limited, personal and professional advancement can take the place in many instances of upward movement.

MAWA has a nominal professional development budget line of \$300. Realistically this may allow one staff member to take advantage of a training opportunity.

Recommendations

I would recommend that MAWA attempt to raise this standard to allow both staff members to consider professional development each year. The Employee Review should take place annually in January or February. At this time, in addition to a discussion of employee performance, personal and professional (organizational) goals should be set by the employee in discussion with the Director. Professional development is then considered in relation to these goals. Each year the goals and the professional development for the previous year are reviewed.

The Director's goals would likewise be discussed with the Board representative determined to handle the director's review. Professional Development objectives would also be discussed at this time.

These reviews should take place in January or February of each year so that appropriate professional development opportunities can be researched and plans taken into consideration in the Manitoba Arts Council Operating grant application due in April or other relevant funding sources.

The CHRC sponsored study, *Faces*, advocates that "employers across cultural sector commit to increase professional development opportunities for all workers, at least to accepted benchmark levels of 1.5% of total payroll." (CHRC 21)

CONCLUSION

In this analysis of MAWA that I have undertaken, I find an organization that is healthy and stable. It has developed on a slow and steady footing over the past 19 years. There have been changes in directors, boards and contract staff that have been reflected in the programming but the overall philosophy has remained little changed from its founding moments. MAWA's mandate remains to *encourage and support the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual arts by providing an ongoing forum for critical dialogue and information* and its programming remains true to that driving philosophy. As I spoke to numerous individuals over the brief, but intense period in which I developed this assessment, I was overwhelmed with the consistency of response to this organization. The most common refrain was "I love MAWA." The response is an emotional one built on the many relationships developed over the history of the organization as visitors, as Mentors, lecturers, exhibitors, researchers and others have come in contact with MAWA in various ways. MAWA's responsiveness to its membership and its fluidity of programming has had much to do with its longevity. Its membership has grown through the participation of artists and curators from all areas of the country in its symposia, Mentor-in-Residence programs, visiting artists series and *inVersions*. The membership statistics lay claim to the national status of this organization.

The recommendations I have made are a result of my discussions with MAWA's Board of Directors; Sarah Crawley, MAWA's Administrative Coordinator; and numerous members; and are informed by my experience of more than 20 years as a curator, writer and arts administrator.

Notes

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