

Professional Development Grant Report

Museum Studies Certificate Program

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(B) The grant funded my completion of the professional development certificate program in museum studies with the Northwestern University School of Professional Studies. The funds paid for the courses and the required reading materials. The training was needed because I took a

position of responsibility at the Tech museum and desired a review of the current scholarship regarding museum administration.

When I was hired as the Public History Program Director here at Arkansas Tech, one of my strongest qualifications was the fact that I had experience with a broad range of public history activities. I had practical experience in oral history, local history, historic preservation, archives, cultural resource management, documentary editing, and freelance history work. While I had read quite a bit about it, and the field is similar to archival work, I did not have practical experience with museums. This has not been a problem as Judith Steward-Abernathy was here to teach museum classes and run the practicum. With Judith's retirement, I was asked by Dr. Woods to step into the museum and take a much more active role in that aspect of the Public History program. While I was capable of taking on the job and figuring it out as I went along, I believed I would be much more effective if I could had some specialized training in museum administration.

I looked into what would be the most cost and time effective way to obtain the training and professional enhancement that I needed. There are no suitable summer programs, nor did I wish to complete a Masters in museum science, since I don't have the time, money, or inclination to complete 30 more graduate credits. My solution was Northwestern University's School of Professional Studies professional development certificate in museum studies. The program has three classes; all taught 100% online by non-adjunct faculty. Each course was only \$1125, which is approximately one-third the cost of comparable programs. The professional development grant allowed me to register for the first class in January 2016. I then took a class each session, finishing the last class 31 August 2016.

(C) There were three required classes for the certificate: Museum Origins & Issues, Successful Museum Management, and Learning in Museums. There was a fourth optional class I declined to take because my time as an archivist informed me about the issues it covers. The classes were taught 100% online, but one required “attendance” at a weekly streamed meeting.

(D) I greatly enjoyed my time taking the required courses. They were taught by people who were in their second career as educators, having spent their first career as museum professionals. In the Successful Museum Management class, we were required to form groups and work with an existing museum on some kind needed project. My group partnered with the Polish American Museum in Chicago and helped them develop a new corporate sponsorship program which was then presented to their board of directors. Some of the elements of our proposal were incorporated into their operations. My timing in taking the Learning in Museums class could not have been better. I was in the process of developing my own version of History 4403 for deployment this fall while I was enrolled in the class. Almost every week I was able to take something away that I will be able to use in my teaching or helped me to feel more comfortable about my readiness to teach.

The best thing about the classes I took is the sheer amount of current information I can now share with my students. Judith did a good job teaching Hist 4403, but she received her training when the museum profession was very different. Much of the class she developed focused on caring for and presenting items for display, as well as all the documentation museum administration requires. Those are very good things, but in the last quarter century, museums have shifted to focus much more on education. To paraphrase one of my professors, they are moving “from being about something to being for someone.” The classes I took allowed me to understand museum education and prepare my students much better for 21st century museum

jobs. It also allowed me to create a large folder of current readings that I can use as a professor or as an Assistant Director at the museum.

We read quite a bit about evaluating our programs and looking for ways to improve them. While I was reading for one class, I had the idea to develop a museum survey to see what the campus community knew about our museum and what we could do to better serve them. Using information gleaned from readings and our museum board, I developed a survey. This survey has been deployed to Tech 1001 students, will shortly go out to our alumni, and is being prepped to go out to the rest of the campus community. The information we gather will be incredibly useful for the new museum director that we are just beginning the search for. Dr Rebecca Wiewel (Behavioral Science) and I have also decided to use the survey results to write an article (or book if there is sufficient cause) about our community's attitudes towards museums and the past in general.

(E) In conclusion, the program was a good deal financially when compared to comparable programs. It gave me the information I was hoping it would when I wrote my grant proposal. My participation has already proved beneficial to my students this semester and will continue to help in semesters to come. It will allow me to function more effectively in the position I have been (willingly) thrust into. It also indirectly led to an interdepartmental plan to produce some scholarly work. I believe that the grant was money well spent.

I will be receiving my certificate in the mail in 3-5 weeks. I can forward a copy of that if I need to. In the meantime, here is a screenshot of Canvas, which is what Northwestern uses instead of Blackboard, showing my enrollment in all three of the classes that the grant paid for. If this is not sufficient as proof that I actually took the classes, please let me know.

The screenshot shows the Canvas LMS interface. The browser address bar displays <https://canvas.northwestern.edu/courses>. The page title is "All Courses". On the left sidebar, there are navigation icons for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, and Help. The main content area is divided into two sections: "All Courses" and "Past Enrollments".

All Courses

Course	Nickname	Term	Enrolled as	Published
☆ 2016SU_MUSEUM_372-DL_SE...		2016 Summer	Student	Yes

Past Enrollments

Course	Nickname	Term	Enrolled as	Published
☆ 2016SP_MUSEUM_371-DL_SE...		2016 Spring	Student	Yes
☆ 2016WI_MUSEUM_370-DL_SE...		2016 Winter	Student	Yes