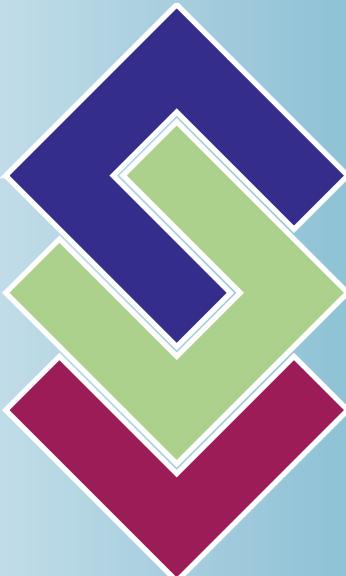# Collective Wisdom:
An Exploration of Library, Archives and Museum Cultures

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An Exploration of Library, Archives and Museum Cultures

The 2016 Collective Wisdom: Library, Archives and Museum Conference Exchange program brought together 18 librarians, archivists and museum professionals to form a cohort charged with exploring cross-sector practices and culture with an eye toward increasing interdisciplinary collaboration and continuing education and professional development.

A project of the Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums

COALITION TO
ADVANCE LEARNING
IN ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

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Executive Summary

Collective Wisdom: An Exploration of Library, Archives and Museum Cultures

The 2016 Collective Wisdom: Library, Archives and Museum (LAM) Conference Exchange program brought together 18 librarians, archivists and museum professionals to form a cohort charged with exploring cross-sector practices and culture with an eye toward increasing interdisciplinary collaborations and continuing education. This white paper presents reflections and provides recommendations based on the cohort experience. Cohort members represented a range of library, archives and museum institutions, academic programs and professional organizations from across the US and the Territory of American Samoa.

The cohort's experience spanned March through December of 2016. Cohort members attended the annual meetings of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), American Library Association (ALA) and the Society of American Archivists (SAA); participated in virtual meetings and discussions over the nine-month program; and gathered for a culminating working retreat in Seattle.

Attending the annual meetings of the major professional organization for each LAM sector allowed cohort members to reflect on the similarities and differences in professional cultures; assess opportunities for cross-sector collaborations; network with allied information and cultural heritage professionals; and reflect on challenges, opportunities and best practices across the LAM sectors.

Although the conference exchange was originally envisioned as a catalyst for collaborative learning and cross-sector continuing education/professional development (CE/PD), it quickly became apparent that the challenges and opportunities across professions surpassed this initial scope. In their reflections, cohort members noted both structural barriers to and multiple opportunities for collaboration, particularly in the arena of professional development and continuing education, but not exclusively so. Salient insights that emerged through the cohort's reflections after attending these conferences include:

- Many information professionals attending each annual meeting genuinely desire to work across sectors, particularly in the area of CE/PD.

- Concerns that cut across all three professions include preservation and conservation; diversity, equity and inclusion; employment and workplace practices; sustainability (financial and environmental); and the need to become better advocates for ourselves as individuals, institutions, sectors and collectively across these sectors in order to secure needed resources and articulate our public value.

- Other common concerns include the development of new technologies and a need for shared standards and best practices. The pressing need to develop and maintain new digital competencies and shared best practices opens up new possibilities for CE/PD across sectors.

- Structural barriers to cross-sector CE/PD and collaboration include the cost of attending national conferences across vast geographic distances, increased specialization within the sectors (silos within silos), as well as the current focus of funding agencies, graduate schools and CE/PD providers on programs targeted to a particular professional field, thereby reinforcing LAM silos and limiting collaboration and experimentation across the sectors.

- AAM, ALA and SAA leadership seem to exhibit varying degrees of support for cross-sector engagement, which

has impacted the reach and effectiveness of the joint Committee on Archives, Libraries, and Museums (CALM), the only long-standing group charged with addressing areas of mutual interest across these organizations.

- Structural differences between AAM, ALA and SAA include fundamentally different approaches to CE/PD, credentialing and accreditation, which present additional challenges to collaboration among these important organizations.

- It may be more fruitful to develop smaller interest groups across sectors and at a more local level (e.g., the state, the county, an urban area) where cross-engagement is already happening or requires an easier set up to bridge traditional divides between sectors.

- Graduate programs in library and information science and museum studies can enable cross-sector collaboration by ensuring that cross-collaboration is required and/or encouraged in their course offerings, assignments and internship programs.

- Opportunities exist to leverage the strengths and successes of other professional organizations such as American Association for State and Local History (AASLH); American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC); Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums (ATALM); and the National Council on Public History (NCPH), all of which are already bringing together LAM sectors to offer training and other collaborative opportunities.

Arguably, LAM organizations are inherently cross-sector, with shared affinities and needs, yet practitioners tend to retreat to their own affinity groups for answers to professional quandaries. In other words, while we face many of the same challenges, we are all too often isolated in our professional practices. A shared need for coordinated advocacy with stakeholders and resource allocators at the national, local and institutional level emerged as a high strategic priority across sectors.

It is important to note once more that the observations made in this white paper are experience-based reflections by cohort members who participated in the 2016 Collective Wisdom: LAM Conference Exchange rather than the results of an exhaustive research process or literature review. The aim of this white paper is to capture cohort members' observations on the general state of libraries, archives and museums; reflect on potential challenges and opportunities for LAM collaboration and shared learning; and to share general lessons learned and outcomes of the cohort experience. In a very short time, the Collective Wisdom cohort not only met, but exceeded, original expectations and provided proof of concept of the value of bringing together professionals with a diverse range of expertise and an interest in cross-sector engagement from each of the LAM sectors. Above all else, the full narrative of this experience is intended as the start of a dynamic conversation rather than a definitive overview of issues or a comprehensive set of recommendations.

Collective Wisdom:
An Exploration of Library, Archives and Museum Cultures

By Sofía Becerra-Licha, M. Alison Eisendrath, Susan Irwin, Elizabeth Joffrion, Melissa Levine, Dr. Mega Subramaniam and Gina Watkinson

1. BACKGROUND OF THE COALITION AND COLLECTIVE WISDOM COHORT

The 2016 Collective Wisdom: LAM Conference Exchange was a program of the Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums (the Coalition), a group established in 2013 with grant funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and administered by OCLC. The Coalition's charge is "to work in deliberate coordination across organizational boundaries to devise and strengthen sustainable continuing education and professional development programs that will transform the library, archives and museum workforce in ways that lead to measureable impact on our nation's communities" (www.coalitiontoadvancelearning.org).

Coalition participants have worked together to build stronger relationships and deepen understanding across the LAM sectors, and to conduct research and pilot initiatives to advance their joint strategy. The Coalition has demonstrated the value of collective action across sectors through multiple efforts. The *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development across Libraries, Archives, and Museums* articulates a broad planning and evaluation framework for the systemic strengthening of CE/PD. The Mapping the Landscapes project has advanced the strategy for data gathering and sharing, producing a shared lexicon and aggregated views of learning needs within and across the sectors. In addition to the Collective Wisdom program, the potential to foster rich cross-sector cultural exchange has been further explored through research and reporting on the feasibility of cross-sector residencies and the status of CE/PD supply across the field.

The 2016 Collective Wisdom: LAM Conference Exchange program brought together 18 librarians, archivists and museum professionals to form a cohort charged with exploring cross-sector practices and culture with an eye toward increasing interdisciplinary collaborations and continuing education. Participants represented a range of institutions within each sector, including public libraries, academic libraries and archives, historical societies, local LAM professional organizations and academic training programs across a broad geographical span.

Given the overwhelming response to the call for applicants, the final cohort was expanded to include 18 individuals rather than the original 12 envisioned. A cross-sector committee reviewed 112 qualified applicants over three rounds. Selection criteria included a demonstrated interest in working across sectors to promote partnerships and collaboration, experience attending LAM conferences, and a willingness to reflect and provide recommendations on cross-sector culture, policies and practices related to advancing learning. The committee also considered applicants' potential to be agents

> *"Sometimes, as much as we try to fight insularity and … tunnel vision, we get stuck in our own worlds. It's often awakening to expose ourselves to new ways of perceiving things from outside perspectives."*
>
> *— Jeff Inscho*

of change and advocates as well as their ability to interact and form relationships in unfamiliar settings. In order to ensure a diverse cohort, deliberations in the second and third rounds centered on forming a cohort that had even representation among all three sectors (libraries, archives, museums) and included a mix of geographic locations, organization types and sizes, length of time in the field, decision-making influence and experience with the Coalition (to bring in new perspectives).

Cohort activities spanned March through December of 2016, with the bulk of the experience centered on attending the annual meetings of a significant professional organization for each LAM sector: the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the American Library Association (ALA) and the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Twelve cohort members received funding for conference travel expenses through IMLS and the Coalition. The additional six cohort members participated virtually in cohort conversations over the lifetime of the project and attended in person (without financial support from the project) as opportunity permitted.

(See **Appendix B** for an overview of conference structures and focus.)

All cohort members participated in ongoing web-conferencing meetings facilitated by OCLC staff and in online forum discussions via OCLC's WebJunction platform. Through written reflections, discussions and other activities, participants were challenged to respond to the following framing questions:

1. What are the key differences that you discern between the conference culture of other sectors and your own? How does this extend to general cultural differences? What clues can you gather for breaking through sector silos?

2. What are the key challenges in serving users/visitors in each sector? How is each sector learning about and responding to changing user priorities? What are the implications for staff training and professional development needs?

3. What emerging technologies that impact how LAM institutions serve their communities are being discussed? How are these emerging technologies similar or different across sectors? How is each sector preparing their staff to implement the new technologies?

Explore; photo by Drew Collins on Unsplash

4. Working toward a project goal of building a shared language, it is important to recognize the differences in each sector. What terms are you hearing that are new or unfamiliar? Do you hear words or phrases used by more than one sector that have variations of the meaning? Record anything that sounds to you like sector jargon, buzzwords or memes.

5. What do you perceive about the need to advocate for the value of CE/PD that bridges sectors? Is there already meaningful conversation or action around cross-sector CE/PD? What are the barriers to be addressed through advocacy?

Cohort participants captured their initial impressions of each conference in written reflections and shared observations and insights with one another throughout the Collective Wisdom experience. They also documented their experiences on social media (#LAMcw) and through reflections shared publicly on the Coalition blog. In addition to written reflections on each conference they attended, the members of the cohort

presented a "Conversation Starter" session at the annual meeting of ALA, staffed an informational table at the SAA's annual meeting and attended the meetings of the ALA/SAA/AAM Committee on Archives, Libraries, and Museums (CALM) and the Museum Archives section of the Society of American Archivists (both at the SAA annual meeting).

2. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF THE COLLECTIVE WISDOM PROJECT

Meeting and Exceeding the Goal

Collective Wisdom cohort members were drawn together across their individual sectors by a keenly felt, shared belief in the need for greater collaboration between LAM professionals and support for continuing education and professional development for and among these sectors. Primary objectives of the cohort experience, identified by the Coalition at the outset of the Collective Wisdom project, included: 1) Build stronger cross-sector relationships; 2) Increase understanding of sector cultures; 3) Identify opportunities for collaborative continuing education or professional development. In a very short time, the Collective Wisdom cohort has not only met but exceeded all three of these expectations and provided proof of concept of the value of bringing together a nimble group of professionals from each of the LAM sectors with a diverse range of expertise.

"Our impromptu dinners/ hallways conversations were some of the best parts of my [conference] experience."

— Sofía Becerra-Licha

"I would never have crossed paths with these individuals, especially outside of archives, if not for this experience. Now I have professional relationships and friendships that will endure well beyond this project."

— Susan Irwin

"Ideas, insights and information were flying back and forth at such an incredible rate (particularly, I found, in our informal, smaller group moments) that it was hard to have a linear conversation."

— Alison Eisendrath

Peer-to-peer mentoring, engagement and relationship building: At an individual level, cohort members have enthusiastically expressed the value of the peer-to-peer mentoring, engagement and cross-sector relationship building made possible through the Collective Wisdom experience. The resulting personal connections and network of wisdom created among the group's members are likely to scaffold continued engagement and cross-pollination of ideas and experiences beyond the duration of the Collective Wisdom project. Cohort members able to attend the conferences benefited from having their cohort colleagues serve as translators and guides to foreign sector cultures, jargon and conference structures. Attending the conferences as part of a peer group provided an opportunity for the informal sharing of ideas, resources and insights, which generated a sense of energy and shared excitement through the collaborative learning and exploration process. Consensus among the conference attendees is that the in-person, informal conversations and social opportunities were just as valuable as the more formal, post-conference conversations facilitated by OCLC. In addition, more than one cohort member has reflected on the benefits of connecting with professionals at different stages of their careers—offering each Collective Wisdom representative the opportunity both to mentor and be mentored, regardless of their professional standing.

Bonding between peers across traditional sector divides may not have been as intense for cohort participants unable to attend the three conferences in person; however, even the virtual participants felt that they benefitted from the opportunity to listen to their colleagues' reactions to the meetings with a bird's eye view, which provided fresh perspectives on the LAM sectors and demonstrated the benefits and opportunities for collaborative learning and cross-sector engagement.

Actionable insights and information: Cohort participants as a whole have commented on the value of attending professional meetings outside their normal sector affiliation, in a way that allowed participants to engage with their professional counterparts across traditional sector barriers and gain exposure to new ideas, resources and models that are directly applicable to their own work.

More than one cohort member has expressed astonishment over the number of published resources available through other sectors that would be directly relevant to their jobs and/or workplaces. Cohort members have cited numerous practical insights and conference takeaways, including an example of a museum Collection Manager of Ethnology who was thrilled to attend a session at ALA on the culturally sensitive cataloging of Native American library collections to promote their discovery and use by researchers.

In their conference reflections, a number of cohort members expressed their sense that by exploring commonalities as well as differences between the LAM sectors, they had gained a perspective and knowledge that enabled them to bridge cross-sector differences upon return to their own home institutions, to "have better conversations" with colleagues from different sectors and to "speak from this knowledge to others" outside of their own area of expertise.

Cohort members gained new professional insights and understanding not only through exposure to new LAM perspectives, but also from seeing their own sector through fresh eyes and reexamining long held assumptions, biases and expectations forged through one's own sector affiliations. Cohort members learned to recognize meaningful distinctions between sector best practices while questioning habits and practices that erect unnecessary obstacles to communication and collaboration.

Most, if not all, cohort members described increased commitment to LAM engagement and advocacy as the result of the Collective Wisdom experience. As one member commented, "[This experience] turned me into a LAM advocate on a local level." A number of cohort members have reported that they are now regularly consulting cross-sector resources and sharing LAM-related information with staff, peers and leadership at their home institutions.

Collective Wisdom Impact

Tangible impacts of the cohort experience are many, and all participants in the Collective Wisdom project anticipate they will continue to draw on their network of wisdom as individual practitioners and collectively. As of December 2016—in only nine months since the project launched—the following outcomes have been logged:

- Five cohort members have received promotions, raises and/or new jobs that they attribute, at least in part, to their participation in the project.

- One cohort member from the museum sector directly credits her exposure to language and concepts at ALA for enabling her to successfully articulate the need to eliminate researcher access fees at her home institution.

- Cohort members have presented on their Collective Wisdom experience at the Museum Computer Network annual meeting and State Library Continuing

> *"At each conference we attended, I walked away with a ton of practical ideas and suggestions for implementation at my own institution, gleaned both from sessions and through conversations with my cohort colleagues."*
>
> *— Stephanie Allen*

> *"This [experience] has allowed me to bring library/archive perspectives into conversations with the president [of my museum], who is now very open to looking across sectors for insights."*
>
> *— Jeff Inscho*

> *"My staff has been revitalized by looking at all the materials I've brought back [from the conferences]. My staff has become more aware of the LAM world and the opportunities out there."*
>
> *— James Himphill*

Education Coordinators Summit; proposals for sessions on the project and lessons learned have also been submitted to AAM, AASLH, the Midwest Archives Conference and others.

- One cohort member is in the process of redesigning his institution's website to facilitate searches across LAM holdings, stating that the Collective Wisdom experience "has heightened my awareness that the user doesn't know, doesn't care where content is coming from or how a professional has organized it."

- A cohort member from the museum sector reports, "I now have a relationship with my counterpart at Carnegie Library and we are working together on some joint Library/Museum professional development." The programming, which focuses on technology that can span both sectors, has the "potential to scale and be open to other areas beyond technology."

- Two cohort members responsible for planning CE/PD at the statewide level—one for museums and one for libraries—are now actively looking to all three sectors as models for their own programming. One, who was unable to attend all of the conferences during his Collective Wisdom experience, states, "Looking back on this experience, one of my very first takeaways is that as someone who is involved with the organization and procurement of CE for libraries, [I] should really make an effort to attend these [other] conferences. I am confident that attending SAA or AAM for the first time would be just as valuable—if not more—than going to attend ALA Midwinter for the eighth time. I hope to make this happen in the very near future." The other, who was able to attend all three conferences, has already introduced new session formats to the museum conference she is planning based on her experience attending AAM, ALA and SAA, has reached out to the counterpart library organization in her state to start a conversation about creating joint programming, and has begun partnering on a grant to develop workshops to be promoted across sectors with a hope of engaging "a cross-sector cohort of learners."

Collective Wisdom participants have established informal networks to remain connected to their cohort peers and continue to seek new opportunities—working together and as individuals—to extend their project experience, share lessons learned from their participation in the project and advocate for LAM collaboration and shared learning.

Cohort members at ALA Annual in Orlando, planning for the Conversation Starter session. Clockwise from left: Jim Himphill, Stephanie Allen, Jan Hebbard, Kenn Bicknell, Sofía Becerra-Licha, Jackie Chapman, Jeff Inscho, Darla Wegener and Alison Eisendrath. Photo by Christina Newton.

3. FINDING CONVERGENCE ACROSS LAMS

Though much research and writing has already been done on the challenges and opportunities of cross-sector LAM collaboration, the cohort's sustained immersion, relationship building and shared inquiry provided a unique lens through which to approach this charge. Attending all three major LAM sector conferences within a single, four-month period served as a window into the pressing challenges and top-of-mind issues within each sector and revealed a number of themes, concerns and points of convergence that present an opportunity for shared CE/PD and engagement.

Advocacy and articulating our value: A common thread of discussion at all three conferences was the need for better metrics, storytelling and advocacy strategies to better articulate our value—as individuals vying for fair and appropriate compensation, as institutions seeking funding and as individual sectors seeking to maintain public and private support in an era of shrinking budgets. Beyond our collective need to leverage required resources, we also have a responsibility as LAM practitioners and sector representatives to speak out on behalf of our common values and role in supporting education, intellectual freedom, democracy, information literacy and community engagement. From this shared imperative, the opportunity emerges to pool marketing and advocacy resources to increase public awareness of our value as knowledge and heritage repositories, public amenities and cultural and educational resources.

"We all believe in celebrating and preserving a wide array of cultures and knowledges; we all believe in safeguarding the things and spaces we steward; we all believe in reaching users/communities/ patrons – people."

– Genna Duplisea

Diversity, equity and inclusion: The topics of diversity, equity and inclusion were front and center at all three major conferences. The cohort observed the urgent and energetic call to tackle these topics head-on as further proof of cohort members' common ground as LAM practitioners and the core values shared as knowledge professionals and stewards of natural and cultural heritage. Work to be done includes transforming collecting and community engagement practices, developing more culturally sensitive cataloging and descriptive protocols, recognizing and eliminating barriers to access, and recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Employment and workplace practices: Intertwined with the issue of diversity is the issue of workplace practices, which was a common thread at all three major conferences. Specific areas of shared interest include equal pay for equal work, living wages, work/life balance, diversity and inclusion, and the need for succession planning and leadership training to support the next generation of LAM professionals.

"There is an imperative here for us to be thinking about CE/PD not just in terms of a shared need for training in cultural sensitivity and inclusivity strategies, but to be thinking about strategies for providing more equitable access to CE/PD opportunities."

– Alison Eisendrath

The convergence of diversity and workplace issues creates a strong mandate to broaden the conversation regarding cross-sector CE/PD beyond its value for nurturing and developing twenty-first century skills; equally important is the need to provide more equitable access to CE/PD opportunities in order to foster and support a more diverse twenty-first century workforce.

Preservation and conservation: Preservation and conservation issues and best practices are a natural point of convergence between libraries, archives and museums. The sectors tend to draw on a shared body of research; work with the same set of vendors, consultants and practitioners; and sometimes even attend the same workshops. Emergency preparedness, disaster response and collections recovery are all topics of mutual interest where CE/PD and collaboration would be of collective benefit. Green

technology and environmentally sustainable preventative preservation practices are another potential area for the sectors to pool their knowledge and resources.

Digital technology: Recent and ongoing innovations in digital technology have created a shared and pressing need for all three sectors to invest in the training of new and current practitioners in order to maximize the potential reach and impact of our collections. Training in shared cataloging and descriptive practices is necessary to (re)connect collections through aggregated portals such as the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and others. The need to nurture the next generation of up-and-coming LAM professionals while ensuring that existing employees have the support necessary to remain current in their field is especially urgent as technological change forces practitioners to develop new competencies, recognize new job functions and continually reinvent themselves as practitioners, both individually and collectively. Topics of shared interest that are ripe for collaborative learning and cross-sector CE/PD include scalable strategies for the assessment and ingest of born digital materials, digitization, digital preservation and access, digital humanities and interpretation, and other technology-based audience engagement strategies. Training in intellectual property law, privacy rights, publicity rights and other issues related to the digital distribution of content is also recognized as a need across all three LAM sectors.

Resource challenges: The need for affordable and accessible CE/PD opportunities reflects the realities of the resource-constrained environments within which many professionals work—yet another shared experience that bridges libraries, archives and museums. In the cohort's conversations among themselves and with colleagues at all three conferences, the need was expressed time and again for CE/PD options that have demonstrable and practical value, focus on the real and immediate needs of individual practitioners and their home institutions, and provide relevant and scalable solutions to shared challenges—in sum, training opportunities that justify the expense and/or time away from the workplace.

"Progress and innovation are more achievable when you can get people in a room together to talk about the ideas and challenges that matter to them."

— Genna Duplisea

Prioritizing cross-sector CE/PD and collaboration: In conversations with colleagues across LAM sectors, cohort members were not surprised to discover a common interest in cross-sector CE/PD and other potential collaborations. Expressions of interest ranged from mildly curious to enthusiastic, from wary to cautiously optimistic. Across sectors, there was a shared perception that obtaining administrative support to attend cross-sector training would be a particularly hard sell. Barriers to convincing institutions of the value of cross-sector training include the inability to clearly articulate the benefits, knowledge and skills that would be gained with this training, as well as loyalty to an association, pure habit and service requirements that already exist. These observations suggest that future LAM collaborations will need to reach beyond the lofty ideal of cross-sector engagement in order to incentivize participation, and that the success of these initiatives will hinge on their ability to provide relevant and applicable solutions to the real-world challenges identified as priorities by individual practitioners and their home institutions.

(See **Appendix A** for more detailed recommendations and ideas related to these areas.)

4. BRIDGING DIFFERENCE

The three conferences reflected the individual traits and cultures of each profession, which present both challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Acknowledging the differences across LAMs facilitates the ability to explore ways to work together.

Stakeholders and services: LAMs differ in the constituencies and stakeholders they serve and in the services they provide. Even the variety of terms used to designate these constituencies (visitor, audience, patron, user, reader and customer, among many others) demonstrates distinctions between the ways the different sectors serve their stakeholders. LAMs differ in the ways their constituents expect to make use of each sector. Fees for access (atypical in the library and archive world) are commonplace in the museum sector, which is a significant divergence in approach to mission and service for libraries and archives. Likewise, academic libraries and archives are less likely to be open to the general public than their museum counterparts. More conversation is necessary to tease out the implications of these differences and to determine the extent to which this divergence may or may not present a barrier to collaboration between LAM entities. Exploring these differences in the ways LAMs serve their audiences may provide each sector with an opportunity to identify and honor meaningful differences between the sectors while also serving as an opportunity for self-reflection and a prompt to challenge longstanding assumptions about relationships to stakeholders at the individual, institutional and sector levels.

Academic training: LAMs differ widely in professional education, discipline (major) and training, as well as the relative age and maturity of each professional discipline. Librarians, generally speaking, obtain a master's degree in library and information science, while those who work in the museum field have a diverse range of backgrounds (e.g., art history, science, history, anthropology) and level of education depending on the type of institution and position in which they work. Likewise, archivists may also have a diverse educational route (e.g., history or library science, with or without additional archival certification). Graduate programs in museum studies, archives and records management, and library and information science offer professional training and/or certification designed to develop and enhance expertise within sectors; however, the curricular focus of these programs often seems to reinforce sector isolation.

Bridge by Matthew Wiebe on
Unsplash

The Collective Wisdom Conversation Starter program at ALA drew a diverse audience from across sectors. Photo by B. Gutsche.

The cohort sees an untapped opportunity to increase LAM collaboration and shared learning by working more closely with existing academic programs to explore partnerships and advocate for cross-curricular LAM training. The field of public history, which offers training in museum and archival practices, may provide a useful model for the development and promotion of cross-sector LAM curricula. Cross-sector learning opportunities at the academic level could produce professionals and paraprofessionals prepared to work across two or more LAM sectors, thereby reducing the need for LAM CE/PD while optimizing the employment potential of recent graduates.

Continuing education and professional development: The diversity of educational routes, curricula and career paths increases the difficulty of ascertaining the types of CE/PD needed that will be both useful and practical for each sector. However, this diversity of knowledge and perspectives can also be beneficial as each sector can assist in filling the knowledge gaps of the other. AAM, ALA and SAA each offer significant opportunities for practical training and dialogue at their annual meetings, but rarely are these sessions targeted to cross-sector audiences. Instead, the big three annual meetings focus on networking, organizational business and sessions that are typically geared to members of their own sector. As new competencies or best practices are developed within the LAMs, each professional organization tends to amplify the impact within their professional practice and rarely reaches out to other sectors. The insular nature of these organizations limits the pursuit of collaborative, cross-sector opportunities. In addition to these high-level structural challenges, silos exist within silos, with numerous sub-sectors and regional and affinity-based organizations abounding within each sector.

Though each LAM sector is affiliated with its own national professional organization (AAM, ALA and SAA), in many cases, individuals are also guided by an additional professional organization based on their area of specialization within the sector. Rather than seeing these groups as a barrier, an opportunity may exist to bring LAM professionals together at the state or regional level or based on their specialization area (e.g., preservation, digitization, cataloging, education and outreach) and to develop cross-sector CE/PD training opportunities that address the shared needs and convergent interests of all three sectors (as identified in section three above).

State and regional library, archives and museum associations and organizations in some ways may share closer affinities than the three major national organizations (e.g., the shared need to develop and support emergency preparedness in a hurricane-prone area) and may therefore have stronger impetus for cross-sector collaboration, including multi-institutional grant projects, expertise exchange, shared training, and outreach and advocacy.

Regional and national CE/PD providers such as LYRASIS, WebJunction and conservation organizations such as the Northeast Document Conservation Center, Conservation Center for Art and Historical Artifacts, Image Permanence Institute, and others are uniquely positioned to create specialized professional development and continuing education opportunities targeted to LAM audiences, although they may not be equally known across sectors. Many affinity-based organizations are already working across sectors and understand the needs and challenges of the LAMs, including the American Association of State and Local History, American Institute of Conservation, Association of

"When we say 'libraries, museums, and archives' we have in our mind what each of these institutions represents. But we know that each has quite a large spectrum itself, and various silos within each. Within libraries we have publics, academics, schools and specials … In talking to colleagues about the sessions they attended, invariably I will hear remarks such as this one from a public librarian 'The topic sounded good to me, but it was presented by an academic librarian, so much of it really didn't apply to me.'"

– Jeff Inscho

Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums, and National Council for Public History.

Structural and strategic obstacles to collaboration: Though AAM, ALA and SAA are all member-based professional organizations, they are each structured quite differently, have developed different strategies and business models to support CE/PD within their sectors, and may place a different emphasis on the importance of supporting LAM collaboration and shared learning. SAA and the archives profession may have the easiest time bridging the three sectors as archivists focus both on unique materials (like museums) and on information and access (like libraries). Cohort members clearly heard more acknowledgement of all three LAM sectors at SAA than at either of the other two conferences.

The "big three" LAM organizations also take a fundamentally different approach to promulgating best practices through their accreditation programs. While AAM accredits institutions, ALA accredits academic training programs, and SAA (through the Academy of Certified Archivists) certifies individual practitioners. This divergence of practice poses a challenge in regard to collaboration and coordination among the three organizations—a challenge that is magnified by the business and budgeting realities of managing these independent organizations and their responsibility to prioritize the needs of their members over other constituencies, which are understandably sector-based. It is unclear to what degree this situation may be causing a sense of competition among the three organizations. These differences notwithstanding, the three professional associations have some overlap in goals and agendas and have the potential to assist in bridging the professions.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge that the three national organizations have recognized the importance of cross-sector collaboration and education through the establishment of the ALA/SAA/AAM joint Committee on Archives, Libraries and Museums (CALM). Originally formed in 1974, the Committee expanded to include AAM in 2003, with the following charge:

> It is the function of the committee to: (1) foster and develop ways and means of effecting closer cooperation among the organizations; (2) encourage the establishment of common standards; (3) undertake such activities as are assigned to the committee by either of its parent bodies; (4) initiate programs of a relevant and timely nature at the annual meetings of one or more parent bodies either through direct Combined Committee sponsorship or by forwarding particular program plans to the appropriate unit of one or more parent bodies for action; and (5) refer matters of common concern to appropriate committees of ALA, SAA or AAM.

Despite the longevity of the CALM joint committee, however, cohort members observed that CALM seems to have lost momentum across the major professional organizations, with each supporting the work of CALM to various degrees. This disparity in support has reinforced the challenges inherent in joint and collaborative cross-sector engagement, particularly in regard to the development of shared understandings of professional development and continuing education needs across sectors. Moreover, the diminished influence of CALM has limited the opportunities for substantive presentations and workshops that foster in-depth collaboration and shared practice across sectors. If the

joint CALM committee is not reinvigorated, the Coalition may offer a viable alternative forum for collaborative and sustainable approaches to LAM CE/PD. If CALM is reinvigorated (and there is evidence of a resurgence of interest in this regard), the Coalition may be a natural partner to this committee in advancing its mission.

Jargon and other language barriers: Our professions are further divided by the vocabulary, jargon, acronyms, etc., which can be highly discipline-specific, even within the individual sectors. Terms, phrases and acronyms that may be common in one sector may be unfamiliar in another, or may have a different meaning.

Discipline-specific language creates barriers that can segregate participants of a collaborative effort or even give the false impression of comprehension. When professionals are unable to communicate effectively among fields, it is challenging to collaborate. Likewise, a LAM CE/PD offering or initiative will not attract a diverse participant base if the language only appeals to one sector.

Although jargon and language differences pose obstacles to cross-sector communication, they also provide a window through which it may be possible to surface some of our differences in practices across the LAMS. Working together to better understand each other's terminology can also provide a framework to build cross-discipline bridges, thus turning a barrier into an opportunity.

Descriptive standards and best practices: The library and archives sectors (whose cataloging practices developed primarily to provide information discovery and access to patrons) have emerged as leaders in developing descriptive best practices (e.g., controlled vocabulary and content standards) that provide a strong foundation for data sharing—with more recent developments such as linked data opening up new possibilities for online resources. More work needs to be done to create an awareness of these practices and adapt them for use within the museum sector, where cataloging practices developed primarily in support of the registrar's responsibility to establish and maintain physical and administrative control over the collections. All three LAM sectors have a collective

"We assume we're on the same page when using a word, but it's often not the case."

— Christina Newton

"Learning to orient oneself in another sector's vocabulary is not as much of a barrier as learning to orient oneself to another sector's key principles or worldview. The former can lead to the latter, but the former is not the thing over which we should obsess."

— Genna Duplisea

Following the meeting of the Committee for Archives, Libraries and Museums at the SAA 2016 annual conference, members of the Collective Wisdom cohort stay to talk with committee members about their project and the potential for expanded collaboration. Photo by Christina Newton.

responsibility to develop and promulgate shared best practices and descriptive standards for both large and small institutions to broaden discoverability and access to their collections.

Funders: While it is outside of the scope of the Collective Wisdom project to assess funding sources, it is important to note that barriers to cross-sector collaboration may be reinforced by the current practice of large funding agencies that create grant programs targeted to a particular field, thereby fortifying existing LAM structures rather than encouraging collaboration and experimentation across the three professions. Governmental LAM institutions within the same city, county, or state often exist under differently funded departments vying for the same limited pool of resources; in some instances this may inadvertently foster a culture of competition rather than collaboration. The National Endowment for the Humanities, National Historical Publications and Records Commission and Institute of Museum and Library Services have all developed programs that encourage collaboration, but it is unclear whether this emphasis will continue. Small libraries, museums and archives have significant resource needs and yet, due to their size, are not always competitive in national funding programs. By working collaboratively, these institutions may be able to qualify for grants for which they might not otherwise be eligible.

(See **Appendix A** for more detailed recommendations and ideas related to these areas.)

5. ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Collective Wisdom experience was layered and dense, spurring working groups within the cohort to provide a more in-depth look at key aspects of their unique shared opportunity to explore the intersections across LAM sectors. The following project outputs supplement and expand on the white paper.

APPENDIX A: Recommendations, Ideas and Actions for LAM Cross-Sector Connection
Informed by their experiences and dialogues about work, education and values during the three national 2016 LAM sector conferences, the Collective Wisdom cohort created a number of recommendations to improve, innovate and direct the future of CE/PD and other connections across LAM sectors. Inspired by Nexus LAB's recent "Layers of Leadership" framework, these recommendations are organized via three levels of engagement: Self (individual learning and networking), Institution (within an institution or collaboration between institutions) and Professional (through professional organizations or committees). The recommendations, ideas and suggested actions are divided into categories that align, for the most part, with the categories in sections three and four of the white paper.

Authors: Stephanie Allen, Jacqueline Chapman, Genna Duplisea, James Himphill, Elizabeth Joffrion

APPENDIX B: Enhancing the Conference Experience – A Guide for Conference Organizers and Attendees
The cohort produced recommendations and best practices focused on building a more robust, cross-sector conference experience. Based on the observations and reflections from the Collective Wisdom cohort, as well as surveying the landscape of both national and local conferences, this appendix offers practitioners and organizations across LAM sectors a conference planning resource with both tangible and theoretical goals centered on cross-sector CE/PD.
Appendix B includes three sections:

- General descriptions of the "big three" national conferences (AAM, ALA and SAA), with observations of structure, logistics and focus
- Recommendations for conference hosts and organizers that could improve the attendee experience
- Recommendations for conference attendees to enhance their individual conference experience

With state and local conferences still being a primary source for delivering CE/PD across LAMs, the cohort challenges

professionals to go beyond the status quo and consider the benefits of cross-sector CE/PD conference opportunities.

Authors: Joe Filapek, Jan L. Hebbard, Christina Newton, Darla Wegener

Points of Entry for Cross-Sector Projects: A Collective Wisdom Blog Series: This forthcoming series of blog posts will examine three recurring cross-sector themes that emerged from the 2016 Collective Wisdom LAM Conference Exchange cohort experience: sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and emerging technologies. These reflections are intended to provide a point of entry to collaborations across the LAM professions by focusing on existing models of projects, programs or activities that already feature stakeholders from more than one LAM sector, as well as single-sector projects, programs or activities that would translate well to another sector. Look for this blog series on the Coalition to Advance Learning's website: www.coalitiontoadvancelearning.org.

Authors: Sofía Becerra-Licha, Kenn Bicknell, Jeffrey Inscho, Susan Irwin, Stephanie Kom

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated by the cohort outcomes and outputs outlined in this paper, there is a strong need and potential for collaboration across LAM sectors. There is room to expand future exploration beyond the current scope of the Collective Wisdom project, such as connecting with gallery and records management practitioners, who have many common interests and complementary skill sets that are worthy of consideration for potential collaboration.

Now, in a time of challenging political discourse and change, it is even more important for cultural heritage institutions to reexamine and reaffirm their role as safe community spaces, as custodians and advocates for cultural heritage, and as providers of quality education. We hope the success of the Collective Wisdom LAM Conference Exchange in meeting and exceeding expectations provides renewed energy to these efforts and serves as a call to further action.

Several cohort members gathered in Seattle in November for a final retreat. From left, front row: Sofía Becerra-Licha, Jackie Chapman, Stephanie Allen, Christina Newton, Susan Irwin, Jim Himphill; back row: Steph Kom, Kenn Bicknell, Elizabeth Joffrion, Darla Wegener, Alison Eisendrath, Joe Filapek. Photo by Dale Musselman.

APPENDIX A: Recommendations, Ideas and Actions for LAM Cross-Sector Connection

By Stephanie Allen, Jacqueline Chapman, Genna Duplisea, James Himphill and Elizabeth Joffrion

Informed by our experiences and dialogues about work, education and values during the three national 2016 Library, Archives and Museum (LAM) sector conferences, the Collective Wisdom cohort offers several recommendations and suggestions to improve, innovate and direct the future of continuing education and professional development (CE/PD) across the national LAM sectors. As our thoughts coalesced into several separate topic areas, we were inspired by Nexus LAB's recent "Layers of Leadership" framework to organize our proposals via its three levels of engagement: Self (individual learning and networking); Institution (within an institution or collaboration between institutions); and Professional (through professional organizations or committees). We believe that this structure will allow individuals and organizations to see our ideas more clearly and will enable them to engage LAMs in actionable ways appropriate to their professional situations.

The categories in this framework of recommendations correspond (approximately) to these sections in the white paper:

> 3. FINDING CONVERGENCE ACROSS LAMS, pages 13 – 14

> 4. BRIDGING DIFFERENCE, pages 16 – 19

	Self	Institution	Profession
Advocacy & Articulating Our Value	• Develop an "elevator" speech to summarize to interested people what LAM institutions do and their importance and impact on the community • Take MOOCs or participate in workshops related to storytelling or advocacy • Be willing to engage in one-on-one conversations with colleagues of different backgrounds, training or perspectives to attempt to break through barriers that exist in understanding between sectors • Directly communicate professional best cross-sector practices to specific funders, board members and administrators • Develop opportunities for employees from outside LAMs but within organizations to participate in or to shadow LAM work	• Provide training for staff on the institutional missions, goal and vision to better inform and advance public advocacy efforts on behalf of the institution through a LAM lens • Institute hiring policies, orientations and internal training opportunities to attract and retain people with a diversity of backgrounds and levels of training, which will develop more advocates in the institution • Communicate with funders, politicians and other stakeholders on shared values, professional best practices and institutional contributions to the community to create advocates for the institution to the public • Organize joint workshops on developing storytelling skills	• Provide training on basic advocacy techniques and different methods of reaching the public • Provide opportunities for staff of varying levels of an organization as well as professionals from across different types of organizations to gather together in safe spaces (in-person or online) to communicate as equals on advocacy efforts • Communicate LAM professional best practices and shared values to funders, board members and administrators to enhance advocacy initiatives • Develop outreach and advocacy campaigns across sectors, with committee members or creators from multiple professional organizations • Delineate protocols for proposing joint advocacy statements across organizational boundaries
Cross-sector Outreach	• Look beyond own profession for social media conversations to participate in and accounts to follow and read • Meet and converse with LAM practitioners from all sectors in your community, formally or informally • Join a cross-sector committee, like the Committee for Archives, Libraries and Museums (CALM), and urge more relevance, visibility and consciousness of LAM students' & workers' needs	• Collaborate on outreach and promotional materials with other LAMs related to similar topics or in the same area, such as social media campaigns highlighting collections • Assemble departments from different specialty areas to address needs across the organization. • Support employees serving on cross-sector committees - either with direct funding or allowing them to serve during paid work time; help them maintain work/life balances and encourage professional education and service	• Expand CALM membership to all LAM individuals (not based on memberships or degrees or workplaces, but on self-affiliation with LAMs) • Expand CALM meetings, discussions and projects beyond in-person meetings at three conferences to include virtual participation • Increase cross-LAM visioning, planning and action, and prioritize cross-sector collaboration across the professions • Invite similar committees at other organizations to participate in your committee meetings and roundtables

	Self	Institution	Profession
Cross-organizational Communication	• Find the counterpart of a committee on which you serve in another organization and keep in touch by attending each other's events and sharing ideas • Join and/or follow LAM social media groups, blogs, listservs and websites • Join a cross-sector committee, like the Committee for Archives, Libraries and Museums (CALM), and urge more relevance, visibility and consciousness of LAM students' and workers' needs • Give the *National Agenda* and *Collective Wisdom: Exploration of LAM Cultures* to colleagues, friends and other stakeholders	• Promote employees' professional cross-sector service to board members, funders, the public and other stakeholders to foster and encourage enthusiasm for this kind of work • Cross-train staff to improve communication across skill sets and generations, and to address internal disputes among staff over credentials • Distribute field documents like the *National Agenda* and *Collective Wisdom: Exploration of LAM Cultures* to staff members and departments	• Reach out to allied professions to offer and encourage promotion of opportunities of interest to your members via listservs, TV, radio, newsletters and other media communications • Reserve space in publications to showcase cross-sector LAM collaboration and skills to help broaden the horizons of your members • Create an exchange between LAM publications for stories that are centered on one field but might be of interest to others; help expose your members to other perspectives • Facilitate non-member access to ideas, communications and documents created by your committees • Develop communication and dissemination strategies for cross-sector committees and projects that ensure that professionals in multiple fields have access to this work • Disseminate CE/PD field documents like the *National Agenda* and *Collective Wisdom: Exploration of LAM Cultures* to sub-committees, listservs and members • Showcase opportunities outside your professional organization that promote cross-disciplinary exchange • Invite and encourage active participation in shared CE/PD from a wide variety of practitioners
Subject-focused Collaboration	• Seek out professional organizations and people with interests, research, or work similar to your own, regardless of the profession they primarily serve • Get involved with allied organizations' literature, events and/or CE/PD • Start conversations about your common work and goals with professionals in other fields	• Send staff to subject-focused conferences to foster engagement with a broader network of professionals around topics of shared interest • Encourage connections and collaboration locally • Pursue local, small-scale, institution-specific cross-sector collaborations • Partner with institutions with similar collections/subjects; focus on portals/access, exhibits or events (either physical or digital)	• Collaborate to create and curate digital materials • Place more emphasis on trust and collaboration between LAM sectors in training opportunities. • Initiate more collaborative projects between LAM institutions, such as disaster response training (e.g., New Jersey Cultural Alliance for Response post-Hurricane Sandy), reciprocal tours or staff exchange programs, and/or regional outreach

	Self	Institution	Profession
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	• Apply to and help increase awareness of diversity focused scholarships and opportunities for graduate education and conference attendance (e.g., SAA's Mosaic and ALA's Spectrum programs) • Reference diverse LAM websites (e.g., Museum Hue, Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums, or the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM)	• Encourage employees of diverse backgrounds or differently abled who are under-represented among mainstream administrators and managers to seek and develop leadership skills through CE/PD • Actively seek employees from a variety of backgrounds, particularly to address gaps in knowledge or experience as compared with the larger community and/or workforce • Actively seek to build with, not for, communities, constituents and stakeholders by including them in decision-making and planning processes • Encourage and provide time for employees to participate in mentoring programs that aim to create paths for people who are underrepresented in the LAM workforce	• Support and create scholarships for diverse minority populations and expand support beyond paying for graduate credits • In addition to focusing on recruiting college students or young college graduates, create recruitment or early exposure programs at the middle or high school level, introducing a broader range of individuals to LAM fields to encourage under-represented groups to pursue such career paths • Enrich existing mentorship programs between LAM professionals and graduate students, particularly for under-represented groups
Cultural Sensitivity	• Participate in or follow conversations on social media led by people of color, the LGBTQIA+ community, individuals who are differently abled, and all less commonly heard voices within the LAM sectors • Encourage professionals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to participate in conversations to ensure that everyone's perspectives are invited and welcome at the table; be inclusive • Be open to new ideas from your colleagues of diverse backgrounds/languages and listen to their perspectives • Attend conference sessions or workshops about cultural competence and cultural relevance, especially related to communities you are not serving or may not be familiar with • Pursue CE/PD on culturally relevant descriptive practices that are traditional or innovative	• Strengthen hiring policies and practices that encourage cultural diversity, equity and inclusion (including diversity of perspectives) • Conduct cultural sensitivity trainings to educate students and workers about societal issues of race, sexuality, equality, etc., and how the informational and cultural work of a LAM organization can support more diverse populations	• Support trainings in cultural sensitivity on a broad scale • Spread best practices used by big organizations to applicable institutions of varying sizes and types • Foster supporting mechanisms for more diverse professionals to get into and stay with the profession • Recognize affiliated and relevant ethnic groups and LAMs at the national and international level • Design new approaches to descriptive practices that incorporate culturally diverse perspectives, terms, languages and ideas • Generate new models and ideas about ownership, stewardship and laws about traditional cultural information and knowledge

	Self	Institution	Profession
Digital Technology	• Learn about a digital technology subject related to the LAM field, such as digitization or linked data • Experiment with different apps, software, languages, etc. to learn about continual changes in different technologies • Explore online technology courses to enhance a LAM skill or degree, to learn about a new software or to investigate a new development in technology • Investigate cross-sector LAM standardization of descriptive practices that will enhance the ability of LAM institutions to share data (e.g., through large portals such as Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) or iDigBio) and implement these practices where possible • Read relevant LAM literature about new and innovative technological developments that could apply to your position or institution • Choose modern, innovative communication devices and platforms to discuss and share information with colleagues	• Ensure LAM IT personnel regularly attend workshops and conferences, giving them the foundation to innovate within their institutions and establish LAMs as vital organizations to 21st century society • Train and equip students and workers to perform LAM technology tasks, e.g. digitization of papers or books, use of museum measurement tools, etc., using appropriate software and equipment • Encourage staff to explore new technologies related to the LAM field and ways to incorporate them into everyday work • Support education and awareness about cross-sector LAM standardization of descriptive practices that will enhance the ability of LAM institutions to share data (e.g., through large portals such as DPLA or iDigBio) • Reach out to other LAM organizations when training staff on new technologies • Seek opportunities to partner with other institutions to utilize or develop shared technologies	• Strengthen the role of LAMs in the public's understanding of copyright by ensuring all digital content complies with copyright laws and clearly explaining licensing and use options • Create and propagate shared standards and best practices for typical LAM devices, tools and equipment used in daily work • Support cross-sector LAM standardization of descriptive practices that will enhance the ability of LAM institutions to share data (e.g., through large portals such as DPLA or iDigBio). • Create a space for LAM organizations and professionals to come together to learn about new technologies in hands-on, practical ways • Encourage collaborative projects between LAM organizations that utilize new technologies in innovative ways
Resource Challenges	• Seek scholarships outside of your field • Seek cross-sector scholarships and opportunities (e.g., Digital Library Federation's cross-pollinator fellowships) • Attend regional and local conferences outside of your field • LAM students: take advantage of any membership discounts in allied professional organizations • Donate to scholarship funds through professional organizations or programs (e.g., ArchivesNext Spontaneous Scholarships for SAA Annual Meetings)	• Encourage employees to explore and partake of a variety of opportunities across allied sectors • Adopt policies that provide employees with the time allowance and flexible financial support needed to pursue LAM CE/PD opportunities • Provide letters of support to employees who wish to pursue scholarships • Consider the benefits of hosting no-cost CE/PD opportunities that appeal to a local LAM audience	• Examine opportunities for joint membership or shared benefits, such as shared access to professional literature • Provide conference scholarships for allied professions, and funded opportunities aimed at cross-sector engagement • LAM organizations: work with cross-sector vendors to offer less costly CE/PD products, services and opportunities • Conference organizers: aim for transparency regarding annual CE/PD budgets, aim to reduce content redundancy across LAMs, and delegate funds toward content areas of convergence • Create and distribute a funders and funding list of groups and opportunities that support LAM projects

	Self	Institution	Profession
Educational Opportunities	*Academic Training* • LAM students: blaze a trail for other professionals by seeking educational opportunities outside of own program or track to help create connections between diverse departments and/or fields • LAM student, alumni and professionals: ask questions about joint programs and cross-listings, inter- and intra- institutional offerings and exchanges, and actively influence programs *Continuing Education/Professional Development* • Seek education outside of own field, and bring it back to the classroom or workplace • Read and use different professional journals to inform research • Expand your network to include practitioners from other LAM areas • Seek and share CE/PD opportunities from LAM organizations not directly related to your work via publications, online resources, contacts or potential LAM clearinghouses	*Academic Training* • Partner with allied departments and show what their courses can do to help students and staff, and vice versa • Cross-list courses whenever possible • Advertise courses through allied regional professional organizations • Enable students to take a course through an allied department to meet needs for subject expertise (for example, with a lecture series or a lab portion that focuses on a particular field) • Integrate professional and non-traditional perspectives from other sectors into courses • Support and award credit for internships in other sectors *Continuing Education/Professional Development* • Hire staff with a wide range of professional backgrounds • Embrace flexibility in course or work requirements and support staff who seek CE/PD opportunities outside of own field • When hosting training sessions or workshops, invite LAM professionals from a variety of institutions to share ideas across sector boundaries • Ensure that all staff, no matter their length of tenure, have the necessary basic skills and training in any technologies related to the LAM field and required by their position	*Academic Training* • Review and innovate new effective teaching and presentation methods • Promote or develop internships that cross LAM sector boundaries *Continuing Education/Professional Development* • National conference organizers: to maximize benefits and return on investment to attendees, unite to upgrade educational offerings by utilizing educational accreditation organizations (e.g., IACET) • Provide available LAM resources and information to member institutions for dissemination to multiple staff, students and stakeholders • Recognize and overcome LAM cross-sector educational stereotypes to combat misconceptions • Address the needs of institutions that span sectors, such as libraries that have archival and object collections or museums that have archives, etc. • Encourage cross-sector hiring and the inclusion of professionals with a range of backgrounds in professional organizations and initiatives • Offer more free virtual CE/PD opportunities on cross-sector topics • Collaborate on a LAM clearinghouse of CE/PD opportunities and conferences suited to cross-sector participation; this could also include listings of current scholarship opportunities across all LAM fields • Consider second career LAM professionals newly employed in the field when creating CE/PD opportunities, including conferences • Incorporate educational methods of smaller professional organizations • Create continuing education opportunities to explore topics of shared relevance and make them available to a variety of LAM professionals

	Self	Institution	Profession
Jargon & Language Barriers	• Recognize terms and acronyms that could be confusing to colleagues, especially if they are from different professions; take time to describe them, whether the conversation takes place in daily life, at workshops or at conferences • Be aware that alternative definitions of commonly used terminology or phrases might exist, and be open to them • Talk to people outside of your profession about your work to see where you have any confusion • Expose yourself to other professional languages/terms through available resources (e.g., SAA's Word of the Week)	• Create and incorporate an institutional style guide, glossary and/or dictionary link, to standardize clear ways of talking about concepts that are often abbreviated in the field • Provide resources to new hires on terminologies and jargon • Be mindful of language. Are you using the word the way the rest of the profession uses the word? How do you know? If not, why? • Consider changing preferred language and terms and names of things to ease communication with other institutions and allied professionals, if possible • Expose students, employees and colleagues to cross-sector definitions of terms, or how terms differ across sectors	• Publish publicly available sector glossaries that help make terms and acronyms accessible and easy to absorb for everyone, regardless of their personal or professional backgrounds • Create cross-sector glossaries to address jargon barriers, particularly for terms relating to overlapping/similar work areas • Encourage conversations around different jargons • Create and enforce an acronym policy that ensures that acronyms are spelled out and defined so that presentations at conferences are understandable to new/allied professionals
Sustainability, Environment & Labor	• Participate in events or groups related to sustainability, environmental and labor issues through your professional organizations • Start groups that do not yet exist and reach out to similar groups in other fields. (e.g., Archivists Responding to Climate Change). • Read the literature of other LAM fields on these topics	• Support and provide informational, cultural or other resources (such as event or communications space) to events or groups related to sustainability, environmental and labor issues at your institution or in your community • Develop partnerships with LAMs with similar subject foci to examine sustainability, environmental and labor issues as they relate to your organizations	• Develop formal relationships between similar organizational roundtables or sections related to shared values across sector boundaries • Encourage collaborative projects between LAM organizations that address issues of sustainability, the environment or labor at institutions or within communities

APPENDIX B: Enhancing the Conference Experience – A Guide for Conference Organizers and Attendees

By Joe Filapek, Jan L. Hebbard, Christina Newton and Darla Wegener

Professional associations—and the conferences they organize—exist to support and enrich practitioners within a given field, with a primary purpose to provide continuing education and professional development (CE/PD). Traditionally, those affiliated with the library, archives and museum (LAM) sectors find support nationally through their respective national organizations, including the American Alliance of Museums, American Library Association and Society of American Archivists, as well as those on the regional, state or local level. Increasingly, research and trends signal the need and interest in improving understanding and communication among the sectors. By working together, LAMs can benefit from expanding their networks, fostering an exchange of ideas and learning transferable skills. The following guide can assist you and your organization with becoming an advocate for conferences, as a vehicle for working across sectors and building an empowered case for support for collaboration.

OVERVIEW OF THE BIG THREE LAM CONFERENCES

Attending the annual conference of a significant professional organization in each LAM sector served as the primary vehicle for the Collective Wisdom cohort's cross-sector cultural exploration. This overview of the "big three" professional organizations and their conferences is culled from the cohort's reflections and discussions of their shared experience.

American Alliance of Museums (AAM)

Snapshot of AAM

- Mission: To champion museums and nurture excellence in partnership with our members and allies.
- Membership: Representing more than 30,000 individual museum professionals and volunteers, institutions and corporate partners serving the museum field, the Alliance stands for the broad scope of the museum community.
- AAM offers 22 Professional Networks for those who wish to engage with others of similar interests or professional roles.
- Conference: Average attendance of 6,000 at an annual spring conference at a rotating location around the country.

Cohort experience at the 2016 AAM Conference & MuseumExpo in Washington, D.C.

- Robust content on outreach, programs, collections care, membership and philanthropy
- Diversity of session formats offered with opportunities for engagement
- Large footprint in a major conference facility, with manageable feel
- Numerous evening and off-site events at local museums or heritage and cultural organizations; tickets must be purchased in advance for an additional fee
- Large exhibit hall featuring diverse range of vendors and service providers to museums, with many focused on exhibition design
- Keynote speech and awards ceremony recognizing leadership in the field
- Overview session for first timers and new members with networking games
- Bookstore selling AAM museum-specific publications
- Features a Reinforcement Crew community service opportunity geared toward helping local museums through volunteer projects
- Registered attendees receive links to archived recordings of sessions, such as the keynote and select presentations, for future viewing

American Library Association (ALA)

Snapshot of ALA

- Mission: To provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

- Membership: Representing over 60,000 libraries and corporate supporters plus individual librarians, volunteers, board and friends group members, ALA is a multi-type library organization that promotes library services and librarianship across the spectrum of its membership.

- ALA features 11 membership Divisions, each with a type-of-library or type-of-library-function specialization, and 20 Round Tables (membership groups) as well as member communities that offer opportunities for in-depth involvement based on interests and professional roles.

- Conference: Average attendance of 25,000 at the annual summer conference and 10,000 at the mid-winter conference, both at rotating locations around the country.

Cohort experience at 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, FL

- Robust content on technology, cataloging, programs, community engagement and diversity/equity/inclusion

- Sprawling footprint over multiple locations

- Exhaustive list of meetings of the roundtables, divisions and committees, all noted by acronyms

- Evening events mainly dedicated to awards ceremonies or group meetings and receptions, some of which are invitation only or ticketed

- Large exhibit hall with an extensive array of vendors, including publishers and authors that provide discounted and/or free products, plus showcases for cooking demos to book signings

- Opening and closing keynotes, with awards presentations, as well as numerous presentations by notable authors, entertainers, politicians or tastemakers

- Traditional session presentation format (presenter or panel delivered from podium)

- Interactive areas, such as makerspaces and magazine (zine) making tables, as well as quiet spaces and service booths

- Extensive shop selling everything from handmade jewelry and t-shirts to books and posters

- Features a community service day in the conference host city

- Strong level of advocacy for the profession and brand awareness of libraries as necessities, plus focus on social justice, and diversity and inclusion

- Registered attendees receive links to recordings of selected conference proceedings and archived sessions for future viewing

- Offers conference accommodations that are responsive to the varying levels of accessibility needed

- A culture of flexible attendance at sessions

Society of American Archivists (SAA)

Snapshot of SAA

- Mission: To promote the values and diversity of archives and archivists. The preeminent source of professional resources and the principal communication hub for American archivists.

- Membership: SAA represents more than 6,200 professional archivists employed by governments, universities, businesses, libraries and historical organizations nationally, as well as students and institutions.

- SAA includes numerous opportunities for engagement by its members and enthusiasts, including committees, working groups, sections, roundtables and affiliate groups.

- Conference: Average attendance of 1,000 at a late summer conference at a rotating location around the country.

Cohort experience at Archives*Records, the 2016 Joint Meeting of SAA and CoSA (Council of State Archivists) in Atlanta, GA

- Robust content on data management, community engagement and sessions of shared interest to the LAM fields, such as diversity and inclusion or heritage preservation

- Friendly atmosphere, which is in one location and easy to navigate

- Numerous meetings of the roundtables, committees, sections and working groups

- Small exhibit hall with a solid diversity of vendors and service providers

- Food and evening events included in registration fee

- Featured keynote and sessions of traditional panel format

- Intimate welcome reception for first timers and new members

- Small bookstore selling a wide range of SAA and related publications

- Features a community service day in the conference host city

- Registered attendees receive links to archived sessions for future viewing

- Strong social media culture, thanks in part to the conference program's numbering system that offers ease of communication and ability to follow session-specific conversations

From left: Sofía Becerra-Licha, Stephanie Allen and Alison Eisendrath check out the literature at the SAA Conference bookstore. Photo by Christina Newton.

Conference Attendance: Why People Do and Do Not Go To Conferences

Reasons for attending a conference

- To network and advance personal and professional learning and skillsets
- To serve as a representative at meetings of roundtables, committees and interest groups
- To present a session or professional paper
- To explore exhibit hall vendors and service providers
- To learn about latest trends in the field through sessions, keynote addresses, author talks and more

Types of conference attendees

- Staff of libraries, archives and museums
- Board members and trustees
- Volunteers
- Students
- Businesses and service providers
- Nonprofits and government agencies
- Elected officials

Barriers to attending conferences

- Lack of financial resources
- Time
- Geographic barriers
- The interests of the employer or focus of a position
- Numerous options (state, regional, national, specialized)

Additional barriers to attending conferences in other sectors

- Loyalty to specific associations/conferences
- Lack of resources for attendance
- Lack of interest/curiosity from leadership or organization in trying something unfamiliar
- Increased specialization, i.e., as a professional becomes focused on a particular set of tasks and functions within their position, they may feel compelled to explore only professional development opportunities that build those skills rather than taking in broader topics for their field or related professional fields.

HOST A CONFERENCE: Conference Organizer's Guide to Enhancements for Cross-Sector Engagement

All of the Collective Wisdom cohort members had previously attended their own sector's major annual conference. As they explored the less familiar territory of another sector's conference, it was natural to make comparisons and exchange ideas about what worked well and where there was room for improvement. The fresh eyes of the sector "outsiders" contributes to this guide of recommendations for enhancing the user's conference experience in general, and the cross-sector connection in particular. The ideas come from all three conferences.

Enhance the User Experience

Create a memorable experience

- Experiment with session formats that provide engaging experiences and interactions, such as audience participation formats and hands-on activities.

- Offer room setups with round tables to introduce flexibility for more engaging experiences and interaction. Let the speakers move chairs and tables to fit their presentations if you can't arrange the space in advance; be prepared with volunteers to help put the space back in place.

- Offer "pop-up" sessions that are chosen by the membership/attendees, feature current trends, and encourage interactive and flexible formats. For example, SAA solicits sessions proposals that have "popped up" after the earlier proposal deadline; selection is based on popular vote by those who will be attending the conference.

- Explore ways to limit the amount of time between proposal submission deadlines and the conference to minimize changes to the program and assure participation by originally published speakers.

- Ensure that session titles and descriptions match the content so that attendees know what to expect.

- Guide session presenters to deliver presentations that provide inspiration and tangible skills.

- Limit number of committee meetings that compete with educational program participation, or consider incorporating an education aspect as part these meetings.

- Offer informal, interactive opportunities, such as "makerspace," "play" areas, research or genealogy center, or "pop-up" topic tables.

- Offer recordings of specific sessions in lieu of in-person attendance and/or for later distribution, which can be an additional revenue stream or member benefit.

- Provide a convenient registration process online and on-site, as well as knowledgeable and helpful customer service.

- Include food and drinks in registration costs, or provide easy access to affordable food nearby, such as via food trucks.

- Create manageable floor layouts and post clear directional signage. Keep conference as intimate as possible by keeping sessions and programs as close to the main area as possible.

- Become a sustainable/green event by providing online brochure and registration in advance and on-site services such as an event app, recycling and water stations.

- Provide internet service that works, especially if offering a downloadable event app. Just because your attendees are at a conference doesn't mean that they are off the grid. In fact, they want to talk about their

participation—and you want them to.

- Find ideas/inspirations from those on all levels whether local, state, regional or national.

- Keep the conference inclusive for people no matter their background, position, ethnicity, gender, etc.

- Bigger isn't always better.

Promote LAM-friendly opportunities

- Co-host an event or program with another organization outside your sector or typical circle of partners or invite them to present at your conference (or other CE/PD program) to offer an alternative view or training technique.

- Develop a Library, Archives and Museum track/focus as part of the conference program.

- Incorporate cross-sector focus in the conference session proposals process (RFP) and distribute outside the routine circles to broaden the audience.

- Engage LAM advocates from across the sectors in developing conference program/topics, serving as presenters, and in the distribution of conference publicity to expand audience.

- Provide reduced registration fees to members of other LAM associations.

- Provide a discounted membership rate to members of other LAM associations.

- Provide access to professional literature to members of other LAM associations.

- Tie educational offerings to the academic arena so that they are academically applicable towards a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree, or provide certificate credit for attendance.

- Incorporate informal LAM gatherings such as a reception or educational meet-up to create comfortable atmosphere for cross-sector introductions.

- Share how your sector is tackling an issue of relevance to other sectors (e.g., collections management, disaster preparedness, programs, community outreach, management, fundraising).

Foster cross-sector connection on topics of shared interest

- Diversity, equity and inclusion

- Advocacy and philanthropy, in order to better articulate our value in an era of shrinking resources

- Staff compensation, retention and diversification

- Digitization, digital access, database management and metadata

- Conservation and emergency preparedness and response

- Sustainability (environmental to financial)

- Training opportunities that address the needs of institutions that cut across sectors (e.g., libraries that have archival materials or object collections)

- A space of trust and communication to nourish collaboration between sectors, especially for training opportunities

Expand Your Reach to the Public

The following ideas for promotion and outreach are most pertinent to specific sectors. With a cross-sector mindset, they may provide inspiration for adaptation to another sector.

Libraries:

- Coordinate book fairs and/or author talks/signings around your conference that are open to the public.
- Host a Book Read-Out event, in which local celebrities highlight banned books, local issues or other current topics by reading aloud favorite book passages.
- Create a walk/run event for a local literacy agency or for the hosting library association to raise funds for advocacy.

Archives:

- Host an open house and explain archives procedures to break down barriers to admittance.
- Coordinate an oral history project.
- Invite the community to take part in crowd-sourced projects such as identifying photographs or transcribing collection materials.

Museums:

- Develop "museum week/month" in partnership with host location that coincides with the conference.
- Host behind-the-scene events at local museums for the public to also attend.
- Offer free admission to the conference keynote speech or other special programs of relevance to a wider audience.

Universal recommendations:

- Write and distribute a press release about your conference/other events and invite the media to attend.
- Work with the host convention and visitors' bureau (CVB) to assist with conference site selection and additionally with the media to develop advertorials focused on cultural and heritage tourism marketing.
- Invite local officials and policy makers to speak at your conference (e.g., presentations, keynote, welcome remarks, award presentations, evening events, ribbon-cutting).

ATTEND A CONFERENCE: Conference Attendee's Guide to the Cross-Sector Experience

Library, archives and museum (LAM) sectors often overlap. Libraries, archives and museums all curate exhibits; museums and archives have library collections; and archives feature object collections. Cross-sector collaboration can be a powerful tool to break down barriers between allies that share beliefs in preservation and the stewardship of historical and cultural treasures and spaces, and that serve a broad spectrum of the public. By learning and working together, professionals in the LAM sectors can benefit from expanding networks, fostering an exchange of ideas and learning transferable skills.

The following guide can assist you with becoming a savvy conference goer and advocate for connecting across sectors. The recommendations are derived from the Collective Wisdom cohort's experience attending the "big three" national conferences: American Alliance of Museums, American Library Association and Society of American Archivists.

Reasons to consider attending a conference outside your field

- Explore cross-sector collaboration opportunities for your institution (e.g., digitization projects, collaborative programming, etc.)
- Discover how another sector may be addressing a similar problem or leveraging a particular resource
- Expand your professional network
- Find presenters/trainers who may be able to offer a different perspective on a common theme
- For professionals who may jump between LAMs during their career, conferences provide a window into the type of work that they do, and how it might vary across sectors
- Find ideas/inspiration for your own organization's conferences on a local, state or national level
- Gain information and expertise about an aspect of your organization or position that is found in another conference

Barriers to seeking cross-sector conference opportunities

- Loyalty to specific associations/conferences
- Lack of additional resources for attendance
- Lack of interest/curiosity from leadership or organization in trying something unfamiliar
- Increased specialization, i.e., as a professional becomes focused on a particular set of tasks and functions within their position, they may feel compelled to explore only professional development opportunities that develop those skills rather than taking in broader topics for their field or related professional fields.

Gaining support

The barriers noted above are common and often entrenched. Across the field, practitioners are at a tipping point of increased connection and collaboration between sectors, but it's going to take a lot of persuasion to really tip the balance. The Collective Wisdom cohort had a unanimously positive experience as a result of associating with peers in other sectors, whose paths would not have crossed if not for this deliberate intention to stir up the mix. Take their wisdom and turn it into talking points to persuade your instution to support your own cross-sector conference exploration.

Articulate the value of expanding your horizons

- Do your homework: conference organizers post suggestions on their websites on how to make a case for attending, providing templates for how to develop a plan of attendance or how to write a letter of request to your supervisor. You may be able to adapt these suggestions to fit your needs. (e.g., ALA 2017 Making the Case to Attend)
- Determine how the program will relate to and benefit your work and the organization's goals.
- Draw inspiration from the *Collective Wisdom: An Exploration of LAM Cultures* white paper.
  - The section on Outcomes and Impact (pages 10-12) describes the numerous ways in which cohort members benefited personally and professionally, including cross-sector mentoring, new perspectives on their work, and even promotions as a result of their participation.
  - The section on Finding Convergence Across LAMs (pages 13-14) may help you identify your own points of convergence.
- Look for conferences outside of the "big three" that are inherently more cross-sector or focused on your area of expertise; for example Digital Library Federation for digitization issues, Museum Computer Network for emerging technologies, or Cultural Heritage and Social Change Summit for issues of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Seek and establish relationships with your counterparts in other sectors to demonstrate your intent to build cross-sector connections.
  - In Appendix A of the Collective Wisdom white paper, the sections on Cross-sector Outreach (p A2) and Cross-organizational Communication (p A3) have good ideas for where and how to make those connections.

Boost your resources

- Determine your professional development budget and ask for support early on.
- Research and apply for volunteer and/or scholarship opportunities from the conference organizer.
- Research CE/PD support from organizations outside your sector and from government agencies that provide technical support through grant funding.

Planning your travel

Your institution will appreciate any effort you can make to manage travel expenses.

- Take advantage of Early Bird rates on conference registration and make hotel reservations using group discounts and early booking.
- Check flight schedules to look for affordable fares; book at least 21 days in advance or sign up for emails from your favorite carriers to be informed of sales.

- Share expenses with colleagues/friends, such as sharing a hotel room or carpooling.

- Schedule transportation to and from and during the conference; look for shared options and affordable public transportation.

- Plan your wardrobe for a professional yet comfortable appearance. Items that compliment mean less to pack, which will help avoid baggage check fees. Pack layers as temperatures can fluctuate inside and out. Don't forget to check the weather forecast!

- Pack comfortable shoes. For large conferences, such as ALA Annual, be aware that you may do a lot of walking between session locations.

- Determine what tech you might take: smart phone, tablet, laptop, other (especially if you are presenting). Research travel guidelines and Internet availability (and any potential costs).

Enhance Your Experience

Planning your conference schedule

- Review the conference schedule in advance to determine what you want to experience, noting dates and times to determine your travel schedule. Do you want to add on additional days to attend pre- or post-conference activities or for sightseeing?

- Identify sessions and events that look likely to have general cross-sector interest or application to your particular areas of interest.

- Look for meetings or sessions sponsored by the Committee on Archives, Libraries and Museums (CALM) to get involved in a national cross-sector effort.

- Plan ahead and note deadlines, especially on event tickets, if applicable.

- Download the conference event app, if available, and review the online schedule. Many such apps allow for creating a custom schedule or saving sessions of interest.

- Remember to schedule "me" time whether a quiet meal, time for workout or meeting friends.

- Pack business cards as well as any brochures or other items you wish to share, depending on weight and necessity.

At the conference

- Depending on the size and nature of the conference, you may feel like a bit like a "stranger in a strange land." Remember that others may be just as curious about you as you are about them.

- Be bold—start conversations with anyone, including presenters and conference officials. Anything you would say to break the ice with a new connection within your own field can be used with people from other LAM disciplines.

- Letting people know that you are from a different sector is a good conversation starter. They are likely to be intrigued that you are there to explore and learn from their sector.

- If the person you're talking to works in a field you know little about, ask follow-up questions about things that aren't familiar to you. For example:
  - Person: Yeah, I work at a public library.
  - You: Oh, really? What do you do there? And what does your job entail? Have you had any interesting

public programs or community-based projects recently? or What do you most like about working in a public library?

- Be aware that practitioners from other LAM sectors may not understand specialized jargon or have the same types of experiences as you.

- Tell people about the projects you work on; it may spark a conversation about the differences and similarities with their own projects.

- Approach all sessions and events with openness. Even when the topic seems not to apply to your work, you may find a kernel of an idea or some strategy that you can adopt or adapt to your purpose.

- Visiting the exhibition hall will give you more insight into the products and services that are of high interest to the sector.

- Check out the bookstore—you might be surprised how many books or literature are on topics of interest to you.

- Participate in conference social events for an added exposure to the sector culture.

We hope to see you at a conference!