



ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS PASSES RESOLUTION URGING ART MUSEUMS TO PROVIDE PAID INTERNSHIPS

NEW YORK, NY—June 20, 2019—The Board of Trustees of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) has approved a resolution calling on art museums to provide paid internships. The adoption of this resolution follows several years of discussions surrounding labor and equity issues at AAMD, and in particular conversations led by Professional Issues committee Co-Chairs Jill Medvedow (ICA Boston) and Mark Bessire (Portland Museum of Art). The text of the resolution says:

WHEREAS, internships provide critical opportunities for students considering careers in art museums, as well as experience necessary for entering the workforce; and

WHEREAS, paid internships are essential to increasing access and equity for the museum profession;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Trustees of the Association of Art Museum Directors:

RECOMMENDS, that art museums should pay interns, except in special circumstances justifying such an arrangement.¹

“Providing paid internships is an important step for the art museum field in creating and sustaining a diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive set of opportunities, said Jill Medvedow, Co-Chair of AAMD’s Professional Issues committee and director of the ICA Boston. “Internships are an important gateway for those seeking careers in art museums, providing incredible opportunities for hands-on experience in many aspects of an institution’s operations. Yet by failing to pay interns, we ensure that these experiences are only really accessible to those who already financially secure and, often, people who have established career networks available to them.”

This resolution builds on AAMD’s own paid internship program, which launched last year as a pilot initiative with 10 participating museums. At its Annual Meeting in January, members of the Association also heard from economist Richard Reeves, who provided further insights into how unpaid internships hinder economic mobility and perpetuate inequality. Envisioning an opportunity for wider adoption across the field as a whole, the Professional Issues committee developed this resolution, which was then adopted by the Trustees on behalf of the Association.

¹ Students who are receiving academic credit for their internship may not be eligible to be paid in addition to course credit. This language is intended to allow for these circumstances.

AAMD recognizes the different capacities of member museums to implement this change in the near future. However, addressing access and opportunity is essential to creating diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive art museums.

About AAMD

The Association of Art Museum Directors—representing 227 art museum directors in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico—promotes the vital role of art museums throughout North America and advances the profession by cultivating leadership and communicating standards of excellence in museum practice. Further information about AAMD’s professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at aamd.org.

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