

**The fine arts in Midwestern community colleges:  
Six case studies portraying a cross-case analysis of sustainability**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to explore the sustainability of the fine arts programs in community colleges. This dissertation research focused on the concept of sustainability in community college fine arts programs to uncover features that aid in the support of these programs. As posited by Hibnere (1998, as cited by Slahova et al., 2007), sustainable fine arts programs “promote the development of a creative, emotionally and intellectually educated personality and also give a personality the strength of creation to be creative and with natural disposition to preserve cultural identity” (p. 142).

The research is a qualitative multi-case study that included a cross-case analysis of sustainable elements in fine arts programs from the experts in the field. The theory of liminality is the theoretical lens I used, which focuses on the evolving changes in a work place and their resulting effects on the employees. I coded the data collected from interviews, retrieved documents and made observations of the fine arts facilities with particular attention to the participants’ understandings and experiences of sustainability in regards to the fine arts. Data were horizontalized and coded based on emerging themes and patterns. Recommendation were made for further research regarding the sustainability of fine arts programs at community colleges.

I conducted this multi-case study employing six Midwestern community colleges and a fine arts leader from each institution. Through interviews, facility observations, equipment observations, data collection and conversations with fine arts leaders, I established each of the six sites as individual case study. After analyzing the sustainability of each site, I cross-analyzed the six sites to uncover over-arching concepts about sustainability.

I positioned myself in this study as a fine arts performer and educator who has observed the shifting nature of sustainability in the fine arts. I have been a part of fine arts programs that have been strong and viable as well as programs that dissipated and were eliminated. My role as a researcher was to discover different perspectives of sustainable fine arts programs from other professionals in the field.

A previous case study that I conducted inspired this dissertation topic. I surveyed community college fine arts directors/leaders and identified elements they claimed were needed to sustain their programs: community support, financial and administrative support from the institution, adequate resources (as well as marketing) for the programs, and better partnerships with the community college and the area K-12 schools' fine arts programs.

The findings of this study raised awareness of the need for strong partnerships between the community college fine arts programs and the community. Varying partnerships help sustain and promote fine arts programs. A future recommendation is to implement partnerships within the community for support.



## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

*I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. After a certain high level of technical skill is achieved, science and art tend to coalesce in esthetics, plasticity, and form. The greatest scientists are artists as well.*

Albert Einstein (Watson & Watson, 2013)

Life and culture benefit with the addition of the fine arts. The fine arts bring intrinsic value to education. In the words of Bruce Fraser, "...how does one define and defend the role of the humanities in an environment committed to measurability, technical skill, and scientific know-how" (CCHA, 2015, p. 6)?

### Background of the Study

This section provides background on the current tensions between workforce development and liberal arts education that affect fine arts programs at community colleges. Advocates for the fine arts in community colleges recognize the need for strong workforce development, but also stress the importance of fine arts for the well-being of individuals, communities, and businesses.

### Fine arts and workforce development

Community colleges have been successful in preparing the nation's workforce to service local businesses...their civic and cultural contributions have been overlooked.

S. Rosenfeld, 2005, p. 2

The notion that occupational studies should be primary has been advanced repeatedly by those who view the community college's main role as helping people prepare for the workplace. They usually neglect to acknowledge that cultural and basic literacy, the ability to communicate in context, understand societal conditions, and similar goals of a liberal arts education are essential for practically every job.

Cohen, Brawer, Kisker, 2014, p. 286

Community colleges have a reputation for being conduits for creative change. Community colleges are vast engines of workforce development; they attract employees to community industries and educate residents of all ages. Many community colleges are becoming places where students can expand their knowledge and learn new trades as well as find creative outlets and cultural activities in which to participate (Rosenfeld, 2005). Cohen agreed with this statement in his explanation of the origins of community colleges: [these institutions] "...often served as the cultural centers for their communities" (2003, p. 23). Although community colleges have been successful in training and, oftentimes, re-training workers, they have undervalued workers' artistic contributions and underestimated their ability to educate students in the fine arts.

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), higher education has supported the fine arts and defined liberal arts education as "...students who are fully engaged on a liberal arts campus perform better and graduate at higher rates than students who do not take advantage of engagement opportunities" (2013, p. 17). Jarvis and Gouthro (2015) advocated arts-based education as an integral part of a person's cognitive development by giving insight into multiple perspectives that are essential to critical engagement with others. Despite these benefits, the demands of new curricula and workforce development in higher education have increased the difficulties of sustaining the fine arts programs. There is both a need and challenge for the students and society to embrace the value of the fine arts in education, i.e., the creativity, imagination and ingenuity taught in the fine arts that will give students new ideas for productive development in the workforce and in their communities.

### **What do fine arts offer to a society?**

Advocates [for teaching the liberal arts] argue that the failure to do so only perpetuates social class divisions and increases the benighted individual's reliance on authority. Any educator with less than a totally cynical view of society would agree.

Cohen, Brawer, Kisker, 2014, p. 288

Arts and cultural organizations can connect different communities to make a more engaging environment (*Culture connects all*, 2013, p. 2). This combination brings to life a merging of creativity and innovation. The development of conceptual skills enables artists to arrive at their own particular interpretations and responses to social, political, cultural and aesthetic ideologies (Conner, 2005, p. 337). The arts, as established by UNESCO (1982), are a "...whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group" (Stupples, 2014, p. 116). Succinctly, the fine arts have always been an essential part of vibrant communities. Slahova posited that "...the formation of a sustainable society depends on the level of competence in all spheres of life" (2007, p. 142).

Fine arts students are invested in their communities. Eight-five to ninety percent of fine arts students stay in their communities upon graduation, according to Corner. Stupples (2014) stated that the cultural sector relies heavily on their industries to maintain creative outlets to advertise their communities. "...arts and cultural organizations have the opportunity to reach out, to increase resources in the community and to engage populations that are at risk for being overlooked" (*Stories for change*, 2013, p. 1) As the demographics of communities embrace community connection, from wide-spread immigration to multi-language broadcasting, a single community has undergone many changes that beckon creative innovations.

Community businesses also benefit from the arts. Expanding the arts in community colleges will open new competitive doors for businesses, educate and partner with artists, attract tourists, improve learning outcomes and increase economic development (Rosenfeld, 2005). Competitive advantages come from the creative culture that the arts bring to the community by attracting venture capital and tourism to the area. In this period of economic globalization, economic matters have been on the forefront whereas cultural cohesion has not. The arts can provide this cohesion. The arts can also contribute to a more creative business workforce, enabling the employment of workers with innovative ideas. Agreeing with this line of thought, “The term community should be defined not only as a region to be served, but also a climate to be created.” (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014, as cited in *AAJC*, 2014, vol. 12, p. 335).

### **Definition of Sustainability in the Fine Arts**

For the purpose of this study, I incorporated Slahova’s (2017) accumulated explanations of sustainable creativity:

Sustainable development is the development in which a characteristic is stability and continuity in a permanent period of time (Blinker, 2000).

Sustaining creativity promotes the development of a creative, emotionally and intellectually educated personality and also give a personality the strength of creation to be creative and with natural disposition to preserve cultural identity. (Hibnere, 1998)

I used this model to define the sustainability of a community college fine arts program using four key characteristics: funding resources, physical institutional resources, program marketing and student advising, and community support for the fine arts. In this section, I will detail how each of these four factors contributes to the overall sustainability of

a community college fine arts program. According to Ziegler (1998), giving money to the individual artists (students) will nurture the programs more and “the personal development of all our people should be the guiding goals of our national arts policy...” (p. 180). Ziegler also stated that there are three cultures within the arts: performance, creative and community. He advocates for the support of all three cultures to maintain a healthy arts community. The Arts in Education Program, which was preceded by the Artists-in-the-Schools Program, strives to “...increase students’ skills, awareness, knowledge, and acceptance of the arts; enhance the skills and support the collaboration of artists, teachers and administrators involved in arts education; and encourage cooperation among the arts and education communities.” (p. 183).

Fine arts programs in community colleges have faced decreasing financial support in recent years, largely from the impact of budgetary constraints related to governmental funding. Governmental and state policies traditionally have delineated funding for fine arts programs in community colleges. Because federal and state funding for four-year institutions is different than funding for two-year institutions, the budgetary allowances to the varying departments in community colleges have created tight constraints for the fine arts. On average, 41% percent of community college revenues now are composed of state and local appropriations (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Zhao, 2014). There are shifts in community college funding, some due to educational leadership, yet others to demographic shifts in the communities and the mentality of the community college’s function (Cohen, 2003). Despite the shifts in leadership and demographics, in 2010 forty-percent of all students starting their post-secondary education were community college students (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014, p.53).

The reduction of arts programs in institutions has forced fine arts advocates to find strategies to assess program strengths, and to validate fine arts budgets. Partnerships that have been important in supplementing community college program offerings, such as community arts alliances, also are struggling to thrive.

Sustainability extends beyond funding issues. Students can excel and succeed in fine arts programs at their institutions if the institutions have strong assets. Adequate physical resources are needed such as excellent content of instruction, qualified instructors, and administrative support (Coldwell, 2005; Shavelson & Towne, 2002).

Sustainability also requires that community colleges provide clear educational benefits for fine arts students. For example, students need opportunities for fine arts classes taken at community colleges to transfer into four-year institutions as arts credits or as electives. Students should also have the opportunity to obtain their associates degree with a fine arts emphasis. Educational opportunities for students interested in the fine arts sustain these programs. Fine arts opportunities for students involve self-discipline and reflectiveness that they might have been exposed to in other areas.

Through marketing strategies, students become more engaged about inquiring more information on the college. Online marketing and websites are often times what brings students to their college of choice. Images, recordings of music artists in residence, and videos of play productions are viable examples of marketing strategies.

Another component of sustainability for community college fine arts programs is the community's support for the fine arts. Communities, local artists, and community college students can unite to magnify the fine arts in their areas, making stakeholders of these programs recognize the cohesion of the arts in their societies. By viewing these mutually

beneficial relationships, the community can build a stronger base of patrons and stakeholders in more creative ways (Culture connects all, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The need for greater accountability among community colleges in financial budgeting, communication of a broad, liberal-arts education, workforce training, and incorporating new technological advances into curricula all weigh heavily on the institutions' leaders (Kanny, 2013). In this milieu, the sustainability of the fine arts programs at community colleges has become more difficult to achieve. Jarvis & Gourthro (2015) posited: "the importance of the arts is its ability to contribute complex concepts, develop new insights, engage professional changes, explore new collegial identities, and build bridges in communities" (p.65). Cohen, Brawer and Kisker cite a 2001 description of what community colleges should teach their students in the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of California: "...appreciation for aesthetics, cultural diversity, ethical principles, creativity..." (2001, p.5; 2014, p.293). The need for a broad education, including the arts, has been observed by many community college leaders, but the funding structures that are in place for these institutions put more emphasis on job preparation than on "soft skills". Supporters of the liberal arts in community colleges depend on accreditation and state requirements to sustain their programs. If the liberal arts weaken, it is because the majority of the funding has gone to occupational programs.

Little research exists to inform us about the insights of community college leaders about how they have sustained the fine arts programs at their institutions. How do

community colleges leaders keep their fine arts programs sustainable in an era when workforce and economic issues are at the forefront of educational policy discussions?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The arts traditionally have been regarded as ornamental or emotional in character. Their connections to epistemological issues, at least in the modern day has not been a strong one. Are the arts merely ornamental aspects of human production and experience or do they have a more significant role to play in enlarging human understanding?

Knowles & Cole (2008, p. 3)

The purpose of this study will be to examine successful elements Midwestern community college fine arts leaders use to sustain their programs. “According to McIsaac and Edwards (1994), the Midwestern region includes: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri.

The following criteria were analyzed from each institution through interviews, documents and observations: (a) educational opportunities for fine arts students at their institutions; (b) budget and other constraints effecting the fine arts programs; (c) administrative and faculty support of the fine arts at these community colleges (the use of marketing tools will be observed); and (d) the connections between fine arts students and their communities. To explore the phenomena, I will conduct semi-structured interviews, collect documents from each institution about grants and scholarships allocated to fine arts students as well as marketing pamphlets of the fine arts, and conduct observations of their fine arts facilities to better understand the sustainable elements of fine arts programs.



### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do fine arts leaders define sustainability of the arts through their experiences?
2. What elements do the fine arts leaders think are needed to sustain their programs?
3. How do community colleges leaders keep their fine arts programs sustainable in an era when workforce and economic issues are at the forefront of educational policy?

### **Significance of the Study**

I focused on six Midwestern community colleges' fine arts programs. I have chosen three urban and three rural community colleges in the Midwest. All six of these programs show sustainability in the following ways: student representation in fine arts programs, adequate marketing of the fine arts, good fine arts funding by the institution and strong community support of these programs.

There is a paucity of data concerning sustainable community college fine arts programs. With varying constraints that community colleges are currently facing, the task of sustaining fine arts programs has become increasingly challenging. The goal of my research is to discover sustainable elements of fine arts programs at six different community colleges.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

According to Creswell, interpretive qualitative research “assumes that reality is socially constructed’ and is constructed differently according to different interpretations of a single event (2009, p.8). The purpose of interpretive qualitative research is to construct the different realities according to the different perspectives of a given event, or in this case, the given program: the fine arts. The methodology that I will use is a multi-case study. “A case

study,” according to Merriam (2013, p.40), “is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system.” The “bounded system” that I am researching is the fine arts programs at community colleges. I will research each of the six fine arts programs as individual “portraits” (Lightfoot, 1983) and then construct a cross-case analysis suggesting generalizations about sustainable fine arts programs at community colleges.

My epistemological framework for this study is social constructivism. According to Creswell, social constructivism is a “...process of interactions among individuals” (2013, p. 25). Participants shared their experiences in the fine arts with me through interviews. By using social constructivism, the participants were able to reflect on their experiences in the fine arts that have aided in the program’s sustainability. As a social constructivist, I realized that I needed to “position myself” in this study using my background as it related to this research (Creswell, 2013).

### **Delimitations and Anticipated Limitations**

An identified delimitation of this study is that only Midwestern community colleges will be researched. Should this study be conducted involving different community colleges and/or different regions, different findings may result. I selected six Midwestern community colleges that have sustainable fine arts programs. Through online investigation, I choose community colleges that marketed their fine arts programs, offered numerous courses in the fine arts and had many opportunities for the students to partake. Within these six sites, I choose three urban community colleges and three rural. A limitation is that there will be only one participant from each of the pre-selected community colleges who will be interviewed.

### **Informed study influencing further research**

The motivation for my dissertation research stemmed from my capstone project, in which I created a quantitative survey for fine arts educators and administrators at Iowa's community colleges. The project was entitled: "A study of the factors contributing to the institutional strengths and weaknesses of fine arts programs in Iowa community colleges." Survey results from the capstone created the idea for my dissertation research by highlighting needs, wants, deficits, and sustainable elements of fine arts programs in Iowa community colleges. The following highlights some of the key findings and recommendations from the Capstone project that were used to inform my dissertation research.

### **Major findings**

Data were extracted for analysis of the survey. The findings were: (a) there is not enough administrative support; (b) stronger financial support is needed by the fine arts programs; and (c) equipment and facility updates are necessary.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made for the Department of Education to pursue to improve community college fine arts programs based on the information gathered through this survey:

1. Involve more administrative and faculty support for fine arts programs and events.
2. Establish better financial support for equipment and facility needs for fine arts programs as well as scholarships and endowments for fine arts students.
3. Recommend ideas for better partnerships between communities, K-12 area schools and community college fine arts programs.

The findings indicated that it is imperative to increase dialogue and collaboration between the Department of Education and the Iowa Community Colleges related to fine arts programming. One recommendation is to involve community college presidents, faculty, and staff in further research about potential improvements to fine arts programs. This may be accomplished through interviews, focus groups, or any other number of qualitative research mechanisms.

A second recommendation is to investigate budgetary allocations employing active participation by faculty and staff. Cooperation among faculty and staff enables both parties to understand current and future needs for each department. With limited funds, this will help to increase awareness of the fine arts programs and facilitate creation of budget parameters that are acceptable among all academic departments.

The development of materials that market and advertise the fine arts programs is another recommendation to the Department of Education. Fostering relationships with student services would help to promote the programs offered in the fine arts.

Another recommendation is to foster relationships between the administration and the fine arts faculty. Providing invitations to fine arts events for administrators, administrators participating in these events as well as to the community are examples of relationship building between the fine arts departments and the administration.

The final recommendation is to develop a partnership between the k-12 area schools and the community college fine arts departments. By developing relationships with area K-12 schools, the community college fine arts departments can advertise their programs and classes, establishing a connection with students who are interested in the fine arts, and building a pipeline into their programs for future students.

### Definition of Terms

The following key terms have been defined in specificity from this study:

***Constructivist.*** A theoretical perspective in which individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 24)

***Fine arts:*** The category of fine art stands for objects and performances that contribute to the enhancement of community and person (Mattick, 2003).

***Midwestern states:*** Include Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri (McIsaac & Edwards, 1994).

***Case study:*** “Empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” (Yin, 2009, p.18).

***Theory of Liminality:*** This framework strives to make sense of interactions between faculty members in response to changes in their workplace, changing political and economical climates, and evolving social constructs of the education realm.

***Sustainability of fine arts:*** A means to “...develop and improve specific methodology and provide guidelines indicating characteristics and determining the use of suggested materials that will allow us to modify educational systems in line with the creative discourse, beginning from primary schooling into higher education” (Figueras et al., 2015, p. 2).

### Dissertation Organization

Chapter 1 provided a background of the study. Chapter 2 examines the literature to provide a landscape for the study. The literature review is comprised of six categories: (1)

history of the fine arts; (2) significance of the fine arts; (3) contribution of the fine arts within communities; (4) educational benefits of the fine arts for community college students; (5) budgeting and funding for the fine arts; and (6) case studies and the fine arts.

Chapter 3 encompasses the philosophical assumptions of this study, the methodological approach, descriptions of participants, data collection methods and analyses and design issues. Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. Finally, Chapter 5 explains the ethical considerations, limitations, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future study.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **History of the Societal Importance of Fine Arts**

I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study...mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children the right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain. John Adams (as cited by Zeigler, 1994, p. 1)

The 1800s marked a time in history when governmental financial support for the fine arts became prominent. James Madison commented that he was "...an enthusiast on the subject for the arts" (as cited by Zeigler, 1994, p. 2). By the mid-1800s, arts connoisseurs were in the forefront of the political scene advocating for financial support for the fine arts. The National Endowment for the Arts is largely indebted to President John Kennedy and his New Frontier program (Ziegler, 1994). Being seen as an asset to democratized society, America forged ahead with plans for supporting and sustaining the fine arts. Schwartz (2008) argued that by encouraging citizens to engage, interpret and evaluate works of art, the government fosters the value of a democratic life.

By the mid-1960s, Congress passed a bill supporting the National Council on the Arts as an advisory board (Ziegler, 1994). New and more controversial art forms emerged and set the scene for a more artistic landscape in America. Arts have traditionally maintained two roles: producing artistic works and performing/exhibiting works (Culture connects all, 2013). Under this premise, the arts pushed the boundaries and reached for more daring approaches. Governmental support and confidence in the fine arts declined at this time in history and budgetary cuts were put into place as well as regulations for a "less modern" approach. The National Endowment for the Arts, which had always fostered

cutting-edge artists and artwork, was forced to stipulate what types of artists and artwork would receive grant money according to the governmental changes in funding. With the Great Depression in the midst of cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts, American moods were depressed and artists faced the reality of changing their artwork in order to sustain income.

In the 1980s and 1990s, controversial artwork by Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano was linked to two grants funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (Shockley, 2011). The NEA had lost some of its stability and governmental support. Thirty-nine percent of the NEA budget was cut in 1996 by the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress (Shockley, 2011). These detrimental cuts involved minimizing fine arts programs and reducing program outlets. Articles such as David Broder's in 1992 reflected the passion of sustaining the fine arts in communities and in the nation: "A nation that cannot afford to finance the arts, even the occasionally tastelessness or offensive variety, is a nation that has lost its perspective, its self-confidence, and probably its soul" (as cited by Zeigler, 1994, p. 175). The significance of articles such as this one is the understanding of the importance of the fine arts to society.

Arts in education have since made their way to the forefront and the National Endowment for the Arts is a great supporter of arts in education in the K-12 realm as well as post-secondary. Their position is that all Americans should receive education in the arts in their school background to enable them to recognize and appreciate the aesthetic dimensions of our lives (Ziegler 1994).

In conjunction with the support for arts education, there is also a political element in addressing arts and artists that stems from the radical cuts to the NEA in the 1960s.



According to Foster (2009), politicians have to be careful when talking about culture because the arts break molds and boundaries and experiments with different ideas, which is a component of a free society. If the government interferes too much it will stifle the creativity and if the government rests on the sidelines, fierce criticism and challenging ideals will emerge.

### **Significance**

While the humanities provide no easy roadmaps or guarantees for helping us with this most important but tragically ignored invitation to enact our deepest and best selves, introducing people, at every age, to the right poem, piece of fiction, film, philosophical essay or anthropological description can help them imagine another life pattern or quell the ego so they can hear a deeper, more soulful drumbeat. (Sessions, 2013, p. 12)

The development of conceptual skills, such as the ability to play a musical instrument, enables artists to arrive at their own particular interpretations and responses to social, political, cultural and aesthetic ideologies (Conner, 2005, p. 337). The humanities, or the fine arts, help us mature in the social and political culture that we have been born into. Sessions (2013) also advocated that the humanities, or fine arts, help us to evolve and to stay authentic in a time period that is very competitive and difficult politically. As our society becomes more interwoven racially and culturally, a “common footing” is essential in the understanding of the many differences. Society needs the fine arts to contribute creativity to our community, engage in entertainment, provide a higher level of aesthetic pleasure, and supply imagination to discover new and uncharted territories. Clowney (2011) agreed that we, as a society, seek to find definitions that are both cross-cultural and trans-historical.

The development of conceptual skills, according to Corner, enables artists to arrive at their own particular interpretation and response to social, political, cultural and aesthetic ideologies (2005, p. 337). By contributing to confidence building and identity forming, the arts help sustain good health and social well-being (Foster, 2009). Enriching our life experiences and creating expressive avenues are also assets the arts give to individuals and communities.

In their article, *The role of the arts in professional education*, Jarvis and Gouthro (2015) posited that the arts stimulate imagination, produce meanings of life and break through our prior conceptions. Oxtoby (2012) asserted: "...my colleagues in music emphasize the importance of aural literacy, the ability to listen well and to use hearing skills to further understanding and interpretive skills. How does performance of music or recitation of poetry enhance aural literacy" (p. 38)?

In the article, "Its own reward: A phenomenological study of artistic creativity," (Nelson & Rawlings, 2007), the focus was on the effectiveness of researching the fine arts. A loose understanding of the arts emerged from the authors' interviews related to the creative process as experienced by artists. The authors used semi-structured interviews to conduct their research and asked the participants to describe a creative experience they partook in that they were pleased with themselves. All of the participants explained that they were in "*the zone*" (p. 239) while creating their art. In the painting shown in Figure 2.1, notice the light on the violinist showcasing the violinist as "being in the zone" while he is performing at a party.



Figure 2.1. Musicians performing at a party.

Researching artists' creative processes and mindset are a prodigious addition to the research literature in this field. "*The zone*" that Nelson and Rawlings discussed happens to all artists and from my past experience, at all different levels of artistic maturity. This phenomenon is almost idolized by non-artists, and the explanation of what it is and how an artist arrives there provides a constant current in the professional art's world. A description of audience members falling "*into the zone*" was shared by Lingis (1998):

We arrive at the concert hall and look at the musicians tuning up, emptying their spittle from their trumpets, pounding on the taut surfaces of their drums, clanging the cymbals, picking at the strings of the harp. Then the music begins- the sounds detach themselves entirely from the substances whose metallic or wood or catgut nature they revealed, and are set free in another dimension, where they link up in rhythms and melodies. p. 64)

In the article, *Aesthetic testimony: What can we learn from others about beauty and art?* Meskin (2004) took a philosophical and phenomenological stance to look at aesthetic beauty in art. The relationship between art and music was researched in a phenomenology. According to Meskin, “The goal here is to translate, transpose, or transcribe Beethoven’s and Bach’s phrases into pictorality” (p. 426). This article provided insight regarding fine arts and phenomenology.

Lingis (1998) wrote another phenomenological article, *Fateful images*, addressing the fine arts. Lingis argued that the fine arts involve a sensuality in humans that is difficult to analyze or from which to collect data. He claimed the fine arts “nourish our energies and restore our movements” (p. 58). Lingis explained the creative aspects of the fine arts as being sometimes unidentifiable and too subjective to research and analyze. He described art as an “expansion of space and time, where the practical world is engulfed in this more sensuous realm of pleasure” (p. 64).

### **Contribution in communities**

Fostering creativity and an appreciation of the arts from an early age is vital to the future cultural prosperity of this country and to the effective education of our children. Michelle Obama, 2009 (as cited by Foster, 2009, p. 259)

Communities utilize the fine arts to demonstrate their community identity. With creativity, innovation and ingenuity communities can structure their environments to attract tourists and out-of-town artists alike, thus stimulating their economic development. Folk music and folk art are current emerging themes in smaller communities that help to advertise towns to outsiders. Bringing cultural enjoyment to communities bonds these communities together and helps marginalize a gap in cultural differences. Slahova et al.

(2007, p. 142) explained that “...all society should be involved in the educational process” ... to insure each person’s personal and professional growth in the community. Attracting fine arts students from the town’s community college(s) to aid in this endeavor not only enhances but also strengthens the cultural bonding. The communities that enjoy the presence of creative artists and cultural avenues are going to be the towns that prove to have more creative enterprises and draw tourists more readily to the area (Rosenfeld, 2005). Creativity and imagination are the marketable assets a community needs for support.

Rural and urban communities alike utilize artistic avenues to bring their communities together. Integrating and incorporating folk traditions are common avenues communities use to market the arts. Artistic outlets are beneficial in bringing youth together as well. Allowing artistic freedom in a community brings creativity and uniqueness. Arts in the community foster creativity and intercultural understanding (Mankin et al., 2001).

Because of the fine arts, we are able to redefine ourselves, our place in our own communities, and learn how to understand different cultures around the world. As globalization brings cultures together, the cultural differences are more highlighted and seen as part of the “bigger picture” (Morley, 2014, p. 101). Ultimately, globalization requires a merger of different traditions, different viewpoints, and different societies. The arts bring all cultures together because the arts use a universal language. Artists are seen as links between society and societal changes. The intersecting of different contexts occurs as art mediates class and ethnic conflict in various realms (Sharman, 2004, p. 345).

The fine arts enable different populations and demographics to merging together creating diverse communities. Engaging these populations in cultural endeavors can unite

different communities and create valuable relationships as well as increase community revenues and donor relations with larger audiences (Culture connects all, 2013).

Accordingly, "...these [artistic] performances record the histories of injustices experienced by the members of oppressed groups (Denzin, as cited by Knowles & Cole, 2003, p. 123).

Others illustrate how members of local groups have struggled to find places of dignity and respect in a violent, racist, and sexist civil society" (2008, p. 78).

### **Educational benefits for community college fine arts students**

Part of the transformative power of the humanities is to begin this dialogue whether verbal or cognitive of cultural meaning. At its best, this leads to actively involving students who are extrinsically motivated and engaged in their own learning process. (Lohr, 2009, p.13)

There is a vast array of educational benefits for students in the fine arts. Creativity and innovation are key components to the fine arts and, in a world of globalization, these two attributes keep the marketplace strong and competitive. Students who have the opportunity to obtain an Associate's degree from the community college with a fine arts emphasis, have a better opportunity to transfer directly to a four-year institution's fine arts program.

By using the technological assets of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, marketing should be relatively faster and easier to maneuver than it was 10 years ago. Because community colleges' prospective clientele lend themselves to adjoining communities surrounding the college, it is imperative to market these programs to solicit students. In an era where students often times base their decisions on the advertisements they see online, community colleges should market their programs accordingly.

Kanny stated, "The prosperity and security of liberal democracy in America is contingent upon the continued support for liberal arts training among future generations"

(2013, p. 89). Liberal arts in education promote creativity in capitalizing new and innovative ideas in the workforce. Although there had been a shift from the liberal arts in community colleges to a more workforce focus, another shift is evolving that demonstrates the value of the liberal arts to community college students who comprise 40% of America's undergraduates (Dowd & Shieh, 2014). Early in community college history, 70% of students majored in the arts. Today, 40% of community college students major in the arts (Roche, 2013). The arts enable students to challenge ideas, create new possibilities, and hunger for more knowledge. As vital elements to the ever-changing societal pressures, these assets equip students for the workforce. Developing the ability to be flexible and innovative is essential in an environment that is experiencing dramatic shifts in the workforce, technological conquests, cultural contexts, and increasing competitive market forces (Roche, 2013).

Today's community colleges are not only balancing budget restraints, but they are also managing performance-based funding ideals, technological advances, online course offerings, and competitive for-profit sectors (Dowd & Shieh, 2014). Sustaining the fine arts in community colleges prepares students involved in this evolving environment for the competitive workforce that awaits them. Rosenfeld (2005) reinforced this argument by stating that economic developers understand the shift in communities and need to adjust their plans from "incentives to recruit and hold personnel for industries to attracting and keeping creative people and investing in cultural resources" (p. 2). Community colleges need to be versatile and multi-purpose institutions with general education available as well as "terminal-vocational" degree offerings (Katsinas, 2010). Katsinas also remarked that the goal of the

21<sup>st</sup> century for community colleges should be to develop low-cost offerings to students with comprehensive curricula in liberal arts, general education, and technical classes.

Education in all of these areas is required for the workforce in today's marketplace. Students become more stable employees with a more diverse educational background. In a Policy Review entitled: *The value of the arts and creativity*, Foster (2009) stated that we, as a society, should "entrench creative thinking and artistic expression in all areas of our education system so we can ensure the cultural health of future generations" (p. 259). Taking into account that 40% of America's undergraduates are community college students, the ability to enforce this more globalized education can take root on a larger platform. According to their Peer Review, "The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching of 2013 states: engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a content of partnership and reciprocity" (p. 10).

### **Budgeting and funding for the fine arts**

With the NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND Act, there has been widespread concern that with the heightened emphasis on math and reading test scores, students are receiving reduced educational exposure to art, as well as to science and social studies. (Zhao, 2014, p. 245)

According to Carlisle's Art Education Policy Review (2011), policy makers should not turn their backs on arts programs in a time of budgetary difficulties. It is crucial to keep the arts and culture bound together to ensure society's continual growth. In the wake of a recession, budgetary cuts are afforded to stabilize communities. Historically, fine arts programs have been in the minds of many lawmakers and find themselves on the "chopping block" first. Between 1999 and 2003, the country spun out from an unprecedented economic



boom, into a stock market downturn and then landed in a great recession (Renz, 2005). This resulted in large budgetary cuts throughout the nation to stabilize the economic whirlwind. After this era of financial tumult, the country is now experiencing a new awareness and appreciation of the arts.

Currently, federal funding for the arts through organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts amounts to approximately \$150 million per year for each agency, with a vast majority of the funds allotted to museums and performing arts centers (Schwartz, 2014). The purpose of the National Endowment for the Arts is to advance the humanities by local, state, regional and private agencies and reflect the nation's rich cultural heritage through the diverse beliefs and values of all Americans (Zeigler, 1994). Community colleges can reflect this ideal in their programs and graduate students with a more diverse background and grants/scholarships help students achieve this goal, especially when students have a lack of financial resources. Schwartz (2000) posited:

If art subsidies are educational expenditures, consistency requires that subsidy dollars be administered in the same manner as other educational spending in a democracy. In turn, this suggests the appropriate model for administering an art subsidy program is to levy taxes on the national levy but to delegate spending authority to states and localities... (p. 10)

Mercier (2013) noted that support from local, regional and national grants is an imperative source for the school and their fine arts programs. Mercier noted that, "Educating people about the arts is an important mission of the Performing Arts Series..." (p. 1).

Johnson County Community College is located in Johnson County, Kansas, which is an increasingly urbanized area in the outer Western suburbs of Kansas City.

Community colleges differ in their funding according to each state but the "primary impact of fiscal belt tightening in community colleges is similar" for all institutions (Dowd &

Shieh, 2014, p. 54). States have different philosophies in their approaches to higher education access and these differences are anticipated to become even greater in the future (Katsinas, 2010). Typically, community colleges utilize 80-85% of state-provided operational funds for personnel (Dowd & Shieh, 2014). This leaves 15-20% for programs, equipment, etc., and implementing programs that are perceived as “extra-curricular” a difficult decision for policy makers.

Funding for the arts is difficult to justify in democratic education because many citizens fail to look at art, much less benefit from the arts (Shwartz, 2000). Cultural organizations would benefit from incorporating the fine arts into their communities to help people with social and economic pressures.

The role of community colleges should be to provide worker training for constantly changing economies, which, in turn, helps stabilize their communities and expand local economies (Colleges are part of communities’...2013). Smaller towns have a great deal to offer to the economy in terms of artisan crafts. Embedding the arts in this culture can bring in tourists and economic capital for the community, stabilizing the local financial atmosphere.

Deskins and Deskins (2009) posited, “Arts enthusiasts advocate for increases in public arts expenditures because policy makers may consider this a way to enhance the general attractiveness of a community and therefore better enable local businesses to attract the best employees” (p. 253). Foster (2009) agreed, and expanded this premise by explaining the importance of the arts to society and could possibly “...gain huge political traction by demonstrating their instrumental power and that this does not necessarily imply an exercise in box-ticking to demonstrate progress” (p. 259). There needs to be advocacy for the fine

arts, as well as research that investigates their importance and relevance in communities.

Figure 2.2 provides an example of bringing the arts into communities.

Community arts can nurture four different kinds of purposes: to educate and inform us about ourselves and the world, to inspire and mobilize individuals and groups, to nurture and heal people and/or communities, and to build and to improve community capacity. (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Cleveland (2002). Figure 2.2 is a painted mural on a building in Chicago, Illinois. This exemplifies the desire to beautify the community through arts partnerships.



Figure 2.2. Mark Bradford Project in Chicago, Illinois

### CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this multi-case study was to compare and contrast six Midwestern community college fine arts' programs housed at three urban community colleges and three rural community colleges. The goal was to discover what elements have aided in the sustainability of the fine arts programs over the course of the last five years through interviews, observations, and documental retrieval and analysis.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do fine arts leaders define sustainability of the arts through their experiences?
2. What elements do the fine arts leaders think are needed to sustain their programs?
3. How do community colleges leaders keep their fine arts programs sustainable in an era when workforce and economic issues are at the forefront of educational policy?

Actions occur within a context—both historical and social—which affect how they are interpreted by insiders and outsiders, or the researcher (Miles, Huberman, & Saldena, 2014). An advantage of case study research is to study a program in its natural real-life setting and obtain documents that directly reflect the phenomenon. With the potential for rich and thick text, a strong asset for the case study is its complexity. According to Naumes and Naumes (2006), case writing: "... is the ability to analyze these situations in the context of a set of theories and hypotheses which allow case writers to broaden their pedagogical repertoire" (p. 77).

The theory of liminality was applied as a theoretical lens to interpret the data. This framework enables the researcher to make sense of the dynamic interactions between individual faculty members in response to changes in their workplace, changing political

climates, and evolving social constructs of the education realm. Neilsen (1998, p. 273, as cited by Knowles & Cole, 2008) explained liminality as "...a space that invites anomaly, and relishes ambiguity, where we perceive patterns in new ways, find sensuous openings into new understandings, fresh concepts and wild possibilities" (p. 98). Through interviews, document analysis, data collection, and observations, my goal as the researcher was to interpret the sustainable elements of the fine arts programs with the understanding of the changing social climate. I outlined my interview questions as well as my request of documents to reflect the past five years to potentially illustrate change over time.

In a qualitative case study utilizing a social constructivist's lens, the researcher's role is to understand the meaning of the phenomenon being studied with those who are involved (Merriam, 2009). "Meaning is not discovered, but constructed" (Merriam, p. 38). Through each participant's engagement in their own environments, they cultivate their own realities and their fine arts programs which are described differently according to their experiences and interactions with others around them.

Constructivism is not an "...objective perception of reality' but rather each individuals' construction of their own reality" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 43). An argument for using social constructivism in the sciences was posited by Lindholm and Taylor (2011): Can the research gleaned from this epistemology be valid because of the lack of objectivity? I selected this epistemology because my belief is that people construct their realities through their social world and that is considered "real phenomena" (Lindholm & Taylor, p. 46). According to Patton (2002), constructivism adheres to these ideals—realities are socially constructed—there will be multiple realities that each person constructs according to their lives and interactions, and the researcher then gains knowledge from the multiple realities of

the participants. The theory of liminality focuses on changes in the workplace over a span of time. Changes due to politics, financial issues or personnel changes were potential factors that were researched to understand this theory

My research involved interviews and observations in real life workplaces that focused on the fine arts. Social constructivists who utilize the concept of liminality extend their knowledge of the interactions of people in relation to the ongoing changes in the workplace. Liminality focuses on the evolving interactions among co-workers because of changes to their work environments. Social constructivism extracts the multiple realities of the participants forming the basis of knowledge that is not objective, and truth comes out of the consensus of all realities.

By using a timeframe of the last five years as a focus, I also studied possible changes by analyzing documents: (a) budgeting and funding for the fine arts; (b) the number of grants and scholarships awarded to fine arts students; (c) updated facilities and equipment; (d) the number of fine arts course offerings; (e) possible partnerships with the community; (f) and marketing strategies to advertise the fine arts. Observations were made to reflect the condition of the fine arts facilities, equipment, etc.

Case studies were performed to look at a bounded system, in this case, fine arts programs at community colleges. Case study methodology was selected for this study because it focuses on “some process, issue, or concern” (Merriam, 2013, p. 41). Case studies are also utilized to unveil important attributes that are characteristic of a specific phenomenon or program, such as the fine arts.

My study focused on sustainable elements of fine arts programs in community colleges over a period of the last five years. I conducted a study for each of the six

individual community college fine arts programs. By combining fine arts' terminology into this study of the fine arts, my goal was to bring the two together into the same space. In music, a typical classical symphony has four movements, which are like chapters in a book. Each movement has a beginning, middle and an end with a unique flavor of its own, but belongs to the bigger unit—the symphony. When looked at individually, the movements tell their own story, inasmuch as these individual six case studies also portrayed. When the movements are brought together, the assortment of the different pieces blend together to reveal the bigger picture. In this study, the six case studies were termed as “movements” to reflect this musical description. After the essence of each movement was captured, I cross-analyzed them as a multi-case study to understand the full landscape of community college fine arts programs and their sustainability. “The more cases in a study, and the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be.” (Merriam, 2013, p. 49),

Applying a similar vein of musical terminology, maestros in music are the conductors of ensembles. They assist in keeping the group together, cuing solos, adjusting the balance between instrument groups and directing the “musical traffic”. Since I studied fine arts department chairs/directors for this study, I referred to these participants as the “maestros”.

### **Researching the Fine Arts**

If you engage in scientific research and you seem to penetrate the final matrix of matter, it is as if you are listening to a beautiful flute play. But what you hear is the cosmic sound of a flute without a player. The music is melodious, magnificent and mysterious. But you never discover the musician.

Van Manen, 2014, p. 16)

Nelson and Rawlings (2007, p. 218) believed that psychological research has neglected the phenomenology of creativity, or the manner in which creativity is subjectively experienced. How can we measure creativity? The goal of this study was to stretch the boundaries of the current knowledge in the area of sustaining the fine arts, specifically as it pertains to community colleges.

### **Philosophical assumptions**

My philosophical assumptions for this study are that many elements are needed to sustain the fine arts programs at community colleges. As an educator, musician and a researcher, I view these elements as the ones listed in Chapter 1: (a) financing for these programs; (b) grants and scholarships to fine arts students to help them succeed; (c) equipment for the students to use as well as good marketing strategies to advertise the fine arts programs offered; and (d) a supportive relationship between the community college fine arts students and the community itself. The maestros who were studied are well aware of the need to sustain the fine arts because of their experiences and knowledge in the fine arts. They construct their own realities through their experiences with sustaining fine arts programs. Those reading this study should learn about different people's experiences with sustainability in the fine arts at community colleges and can bring their own experiences to the reading regardless of participation in a fine arts programs. I brought to this study my experiences as a musician, educator, and researcher.

### **Purposeful sampling**

Purposeful sampling was the process I utilized for this research study. I selected particular maestros and sites because they are all well-resourced community colleges with



strong fine arts programs. I also selected these community colleges because of their location, the different populations in each community, and the variety of programs offered at each. I conducted interviews as well as retrieved documents and observed their facilities. Three urban and three rural community colleges were purposefully selected for this study. The purpose for including the different demographics in this study was to reveal the different elements of sustainability in different regions. Criteria for selecting the participants included: fine arts leaders who are department chairs/deans of fine arts or other leadership role at the community college; full-time employee in the fine arts at their community college; and maestros who were at their community college for at least five years (the last component enabled me to frame the liminality perspective by looking at possible changes over time).

### **Methodological Approach**

The goal is for art to reflect a methodological commitment through evidence of a principled process, procedural harmony, and attention to aesthetic quality ... musical experience can help reveal important dimensions of qualitative inquiry that have not been explored ... it helps cultivate these sensitivities and takes an active transfer to apply them to social science research.

(Knowles & Cole, 2008, pp. 66, 266)

Qualitative research utilizes subjective and reflexive qualities equally to focus on the “creative meshing of scholarly and aesthetic endeavors” (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p.61). A qualitative methodological approach was utilized for this multi-case study. Qualitative research utilizes an interpretive framework to analyze a shared experience by a group of individuals. After collecting the data from each community college, I analyzed each movement individually with the hopes of unveiling sustainable elements of their fine arts programs. After I analyzed the movements separately, I cross-analyzed all six with the goal of supplying an overarching landscape of community college fine arts programs and their

sustainability. Referring back to the symphony metaphor, the blending of the different flavors of each “movement” enabled me to provide a “symphony” of the entire work.

Qualitative data, with an emphasis on people’s lived experiences, are well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. (Miles, Huberman & Saldena, 2014, p. 11)

The vast amount of data collected in a qualitative study can be an ongoing challenge. Differing perspectives emerged from the different maestros although their experience within the fine arts is shared. Much like the beautiful mosaic picture of the dancer shown in Figure 3.1, fragments of the whole picture emerged individually as the data were collected. The different pieces are collected individually and then put together to create the bigger picture. The same strategy is used in research. It is important for the researcher to put the puzzle together and find the bigger picture.

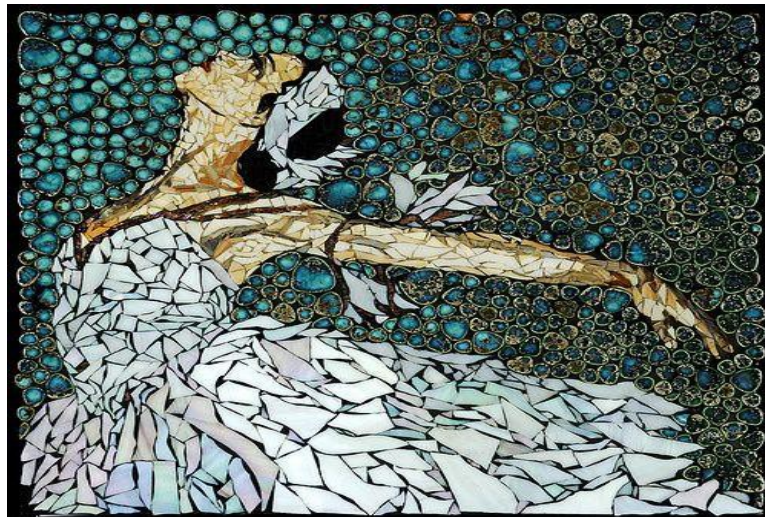


Figure 3.1. Mosaic dancer

### **Multi-case study**

A case study is a “bounded system” that is being researched, in this specific case, community college fine arts programs (Merriam, 2013). The driving force behind this study was to illuminate differing perspectives of sustaining elements that fine arts leaders have experienced at their community colleges. Multiple case sampling adds confidence to the findings because the idea is to look for similarities and differences across the cases. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldena, 2014). There were similar features of sustainability across the six sites but there were also very individual differences.

Case studies are made rich by the acquisition of different data. The ability to probe a situation in depth and series of actions over time add depth to a case study (Miles et al., 2014; Bock, 1970). Because multiple data collection methods were used, the researcher focused on a particular situation of sustainability by studying the aspects and dynamics of the issues. This study was a holistic multi-case study. Yin (2009) explained that this approach to a case study requires the researcher to adapt to unexpected and unanticipated results. The goal was to remain sensitive to the evidence and to be open-minded to its interpretation(s). Stake (2006) utilized the term *quintain* to describe the “...functions or conditions of which we might seek examples to study” (p. 6). The quintain of this study was the sustainability of the fine arts at community colleges. Evidence from each of the individual case studies provided a framework showing the similarities and differences of the quintain.

There are strengths and weaknesses in conducting a case study. Research obtained in real-life situations made this study strong. As suggested by Merriam (2013), I studied the strengths of case studies by observing multiple social units in order to summarize a

phenomenon. By observing multiple cases, there was greater room for variation and implication, strengthening the cross-case analysis. This type of methodology was useful in understanding a particular program, the fine arts.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, case studies have been criticized for their lack of rigor and their small contribution to scientific processes (Yin, 2009). Yin also acknowledged that case studies are criticized because of the substantial amount of time it takes to thoroughly conduct the research. Data collection can be extensive in a case study, and even more overwhelming if it is a multi-case study. As I collected the data, and coded the interviews and made observations, I realized this to be true. Understanding how to organize the data, where to keep it, and how to channel the patterns chronologically was a challenge. Another disadvantage is that generalizations are difficult from the results and it is difficult to replicate the exact circumstances of interviews and observations. Stake noted that the “real business in a case study is particularization, not generalization.” (1995, p.8). Case study researchers can utilize their background and experiences in interpreting the data, but this can open them up to a potential bias. I listened to the interviews, observed the fine arts sites, coded the collected data and made particularizations about the sustainability of the fine arts.

### **Positionality**

Creswell (2013) explained reflexivity as a way for researchers to “position themselves” (p. 47). Researchers should convey their background and experiences in affiliation to the study, how their interpretations may or may not sculpt the data, and what they want to gain from the study.

My background as the researcher is as a practitioner in the fine arts field. I have built a professional career in both the music education and performing fields. Upon graduating with two degrees in music from a Conservatory of Music, I began my career in music education while continuing to perform. Seventeen years later, I am still able to be a part of both worlds.

I was at the same community college for fifteen years teaching music. When I was hired fifteen years ago, I was brought in and told by the administration to “blow the doors off the music program....triple its size.” Within four years, I had doubled the number of courses offered in music as well as the number of music students. Two years after that, the program was large enough to bring in two adjunct music professors to assist in the program’s needs. I taught five music courses, directed the show choir and pep band, and privately taught twenty students a week. I organized and supplied all events at the college that needed music accompaniment (such as graduations, retirements, etc., After ten academic years at this institution, I was summoned to the administration’s office and told that my program was going to be cut into a half-time position because it was not bringing in enough money for the school. The program was cut entirely four years later. Thus, my position in this study has been as a maestro who has observed sustainable elements that made my program strong while it as lacked elements desperately needed to keep going.

Because of my experience with both a thriving and then a struggling program, my idea of a sustainable fine arts program resembles that of a pendulum. Within the same institution, first I was part of a thriving program that flourished and fed the community with fine arts, and then I became an observer of a program that diminished and eventually was deleted. This experience has been bracketed from the study so that I was able to glean from

the participants their views of sustainable programs. My goal in conducting this study was to learn how different community colleges are sustaining their fine arts programs, especially in the face of a work-force dominated mindset.

Different sustainability viewpoints emerged from this study. By viewing rural and urban community colleges, different ideas of what is “sustainable” for the fine arts emerged. Although it was difficult for me as the researcher to embrace epoche in this research, my biases were not imposed upon the participants’ experiences. The act of reflexivity simply conveys to the reader my experiences and background, and any possible influence on the research.

The concept of reflexivity establishes that the researcher/writer is conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative research study (Creswell, 2013, p. 216). As fine artists in the research realm, it is difficult to separate ourselves from the passion we have about the fine arts in order to objectively study them. As the researcher, I thought it would be difficult for me to put aside my own beliefs and biases for the interest of the research, but I know that it was imperative to understand the objectivity of the results. As I explored each site’s fine arts programs, I was able to remain separated from my past experiences and the school’s that I researched.

### **Researcher’s Role**

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to provide a voice for the participants. As the researcher, I embraced these differences, and used emerging themes and patterns to signify the findings. The researcher has to be the *data-collecting instrument* in a

qualitative research study. Member checking was conducted with the participants for accuracy, clarity, and validity.

### **Participants, aka *Maestros***

A conductor, or maestro, directs the musical ensembles to keep everyone together (see Figure 3.2). In this study, the “maestros” were the “directors” and conducted leadership for the fine arts at their community colleges. By utilizing the perspective of purposeful sampling, the participants, or *maestros*, were selected by the researcher based on the following criteria:

1. They are a fine arts department chair/dean/leader at their community college;
2. They have been in that position for a minimum of five years;
3. They are full-time in their position at their community college.

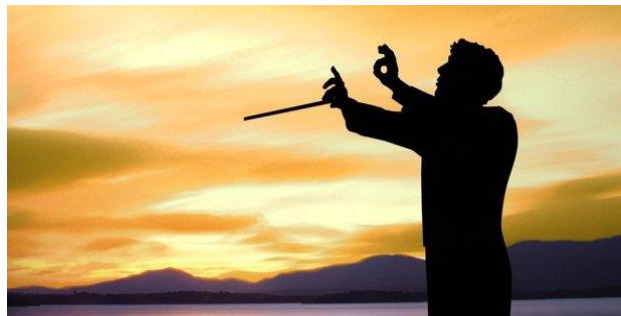


Figure 3.2. A maestro is one who conducts

Six maestros from six different sites were purposefully sampled for this study from Midwestern community colleges. I purposefully choose three rural and three urban community colleges. My rationale for selecting urban and rural community colleges for this study was to unveil possible differing sustainable elements. I wanted to ascertain all of the resources that have aided in sustaining these programs. Because I observed multiple

documents and data from each institution, I chose to interview only one participant from each. If a participant who I had purposefully sampled for the interviews could not or would not participate in this study, I had other possible participants in queue

I engaged in a one-on-one interview with each of the maestros at their community college and was given a tour their fine arts facilities. This enabled me to gain a better understanding of their environment and the environment of their fine arts programs. I organized a semi-structured conversation, or a *duet*. A duet is a musical conversation between two musicians. Through music, the two individuals have a conversation back and forth, in a duet. This duet created engagement between myself and my participants.

### **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval and Informed Consent**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) documents were approved by Iowa State University's IRB committee in March, 2016. Modifications to the study were made during the fall of 2016 and were approved in December, 2016. Both the original IRB and the modification are provided in Appendix A.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

#### **Preparation**

I selected six community colleges to study: three urban community colleges and three rural community colleges located in the Midwestern region. According to McIsaac and Edwards (1994), this area includes: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri.

Urban and rural community colleges were chosen to possibly exemplify the differences in sustainable elements of the diverse fine arts programs. I chose to use Eddy and



Murray's (2007) classifications of rural, suburban and urban community colleges.

Enrollment means were categorized for the year 200-2001 for all types: rural: 3,486; suburban: 9,232; urban: 10,533. For the purposes of this research, I consolidated this into two categories: rural and urban (which constitute urban and suburban schools).

All six schools were selected because of their well-resourced and sustainable fine arts programs. Through online research of the community colleges, communication with Midwestern fine arts leaders, and past experiences with many of these programs myself, I choose the six schools.

I contacted the six maestros before the in-person *duets*. I sent them an informed consent letter to sign and email back as well as the questions. A copy of the consent document and email communication with participants are provided in Appendix B. The documents that I asked each participant to supply were:

1. A list of grants/scholarships that were awarded to fine arts students for the past five academic years;
2. A list of the fine arts courses offered at their institution for the past five academic years;
3. An example of a marketing pamphlet, flyer, brochure, social media tweet, etc. for each year for the past five years.

### **Interviews, aka "*duets*"**

I incorporated musical terminology in this research by using the term "duet" in reference to the conversation-like interviews between the researcher and the maestros. In a duet there are two musicians who carry on a "musical conversation". As shown in the

notation in Figure 3.3, each line represents each musician. Both parts are important to understand the conversation as a whole, mirroring the similarity with a guided, conversation-like interview in a case study. All six participants were interviewed using a semi-structured duet. These duets were recorded and sent to Rev.com to be transcribed. The recordings of the duets as well as the transcriptions were stored in a locked cabinet and on my personal laptop for security.

Yin (2009) explained that the researcher should think of this more as a guided conversation rather than a structured interview. Yin also suggested that researchers should “...follow your own line of inquiry” first and then to “ask your actual conversational questions in an unbiased manner” (p.106). The intent is not only to provide a framework for discussion through the questions but also to let the maestros conduct their version of sustainability as it pertained to the fine arts.

**Allegro for Musical Clock** L.V.Beethoven

Sheet Music from Snotes.com © Copyright 2010 Red Balloon Technology Ltd

Figure 3.3. Musical notation in a duet

I utilized a five-year time frame to situate this study in the liminality theoretical framework. When I interviewed the individual maestros, I addressed the following:

1. Each school's fine arts programs partnering with the community fine arts (if they have) and how (if it has) changed over the past five years;
2. Fund-raising for fine arts programs over the past five years;
3. Marketing strategies for fine arts programs over the past five years.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis is essentially an inductive strategy using codes and patterns to determine commonalities from the interviews (Merriam, 2002). I looked for common patterns and themes throughout the interviews and observations, and when examining documents.

Looking for common themes and patterns, as well as discovering differences, can be challenging. Figure 3.4 provides a visual representation of researchers who are in the process of searching to code numerous amounts of collected data. Notice the large amounts of similarities, not only in the colors but also in the patterns. Now look at this picture and hone in on the differences, albeit subtle, as this picture develops. These kinds of patterns and evolving differences are how researchers analyze the data.

By using different categories to list the common patterns and then matrices showing different categories, I created a “flow chart” of evidence from the different community colleges. Yin (2009) advised to use a tabulation to document the frequency of common themes or patterns in the flow chart showing similarities between the multiple case studies.

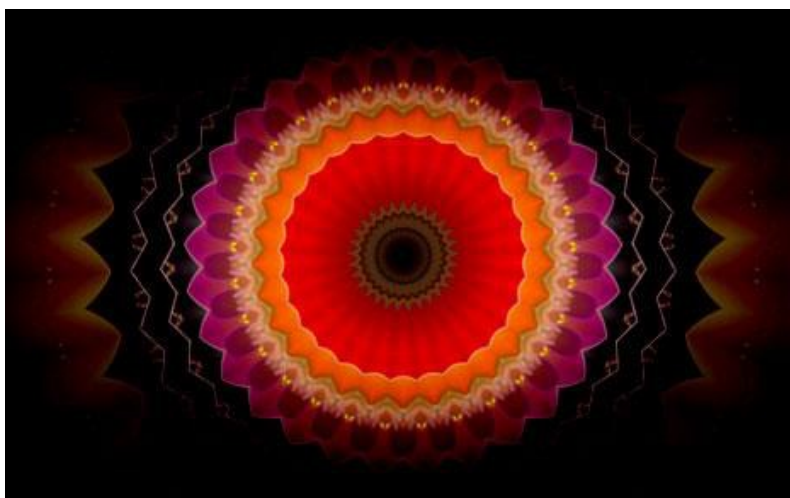


Figure 3.4. Patterns in artwork

I utilized Yin's suggestion, and analyzed the themes and patterns from the six schools. I also used charts that organized the sustainable elements and provided a hierarchy of the elements I researched. This was especially helpful when it came time to cross-analyze the six cases and find overarching themes and patterns.

Miles, Huberman, and Saldena (2014) recommended a three-phase approach when handling multiple data in a study. Data condensation is the first phase. This phase condenses the data into summaries that include field notes, transcripts, interviews, etc. I condensed the data collected into summations. Thus, coding began and the emergence of themes evolved. Categorization of these founded themes enabled me to make beginning assertions of the thematic material. Then I focused and organized these ideas. Deciding which material to *accent*. In music, an accented note is one that sticks out from all of the others, or which material to put to the side and which material to drop became the next assignment. The second phase involved various ways of displaying the data. I displayed the data that were collected, analyzed, coded and re-focused in a compressed format which

made it easier for me to understand and view. Flow charts were used, matrices were made for each step of the coding process, and chronological accounts of all revisions were conducted. The third and final phase was drawing and verifying conclusions. Patterns and explanations of the findings were deduced. My data displays were guided by using Stake's (2006) examples of multi-case study matrices. I utilized the following matrices from Stake (2009):

1. Analyst's notes while reading a case report (p. 45);
2. Ratings of expected utility of each case for each theme (p. 49);
3. A matrix for generating theme-based assertions from merged findings rated important (p. 59);
4. A matrix for generating theme-based assertions from important factor clusters (p. 69);
5. Multicase assertions for the final report (p. 73); and
6. Planning the multicase final report (p. 80).

“The main activity of cross-case analysis is reading case reports and applying their findings of the situated experiences to the research questions” (Stake, 2006, p. 47). The actual report is a combination of the research gathered and organized as well as the researcher's intuition (Stake).

Epoche, or bracketing, was used in this qualitative research study to establish the biases and back ground of the researcher. This was practiced in this study to create the awareness to the reader the position of the researcher. The researcher needs to put aside their personal beliefs, attitudes and experiences, according to Merriam (2002), which allows

the researcher to “intuit and see the essence of the phenomenon” (p. 7) being researched from the lenses of the participants.

### **Advocacy for multi-case studies**

Multi-case studies seek evidence to either promote a program or advocate for it. The importance of the phenomenon to the researcher is a large part of a multi-case research study. According to Stake (2006), there is no value-free science in the world. With my interest in the phenomenon being studied, readers can glean the benefits from the data collected as well as my passion for the fine arts. No one reality exists that we as case study researchers can capture. There are multiple realities. If the researcher uses a social constructivist’s lens, then it becomes even more difficult to duplicate the same results. The same data can be collected by different researchers and entered in the same matrices, but each researcher’s interpretation of the data will reveal different assertions.

The interpretations and circumstances are irreproducible, making the organization of data collected imperative. Factors and assertions are the findings of a multi-case study, not generalizations (Stake). Readers can make their own assertions and generalizations from reading the study, but each person’s will be different, depending on how they interpret the information. My goal was to provide valid and accurate information, remove my biases as much as possible, be the microphone for my participants, and let each individual reader interpret the information in their own way.

### **Member checking**

Validating the participants’ responses was an important step in this qualitative research study. I took their answers back to them for validation after the interviews. In

member checking, the researcher should also take the “preliminary analysis back to the participants to make sure it rings true” (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). Member checking, or *respondent validation*, assisted me to validate this study by eliminating questionable responses and/or interpretations. Creswell (2013) advised researchers to include member checking to assist in the validation of the evidence and to give participants the opportunity to make revisions.

## **Design Issues**

### **Trustworthiness**

The researcher’s role through the process of interviewing, transcribing and coding is to represent the participants from their perspective, not from the researcher’s perspective. Once again to exercise a musical metaphor, a microphone is what I was in this study. To amplify and project the voice of the participants was my job, much as the microphone does for the vocalist.

Trustworthiness embraces the notion that “...research participants themselves (like any of us) may be less concerned about being misrepresented than about being represented unfavorably” (Saldena, 1998, as cited by Knowles & Cole, 2008, p.464). In order to ensure trustworthiness, pseudonyms were given to each community college as well as to each maestro to ensure trustworthiness. Initial ID coding took place as soon as the documents were received to de-identify people and institutions. This action aided in a more unbiased analysis of the material.

## **Reliability**

Qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, has struggled to ensure reliability and validity because of the human component that is involved. Because of these characteristics, collected data from many different sources such as interviews, observations and documents assisted in providing reliability. Reliability was safeguarded throughout the process by utilizing the following strategies:

1. Note taking as well as recording during the interviews;
2. Field notes during the observations at the sites;
3. Personal notes about the received documents from each community college; and
4. The use of rev.com software to accurately transcribe the interviews.

Notes from the participants' interviews, observations, documents, etc., were kept in a confidential filing cabinet as well as on the researcher's personal laptop. Tables and matrices were created to analyze common patterns and themes, as well as outlying findings, across the six cases and these were also kept in a confidential locked filing cabinet and on my personal laptop. I was transparent with the maestros about the following: recording device that will be used and its storage, transcription website and its storage, and the storage of field notes and observations.

## **Validity**

Assuring validity in a qualitative study is more challenging than establishing the study's reliability. External validity was secured by establishing *particularization* of the results of the phenomenon being studied. External validity in a multi-case study requires exact replication in all of the case movements. Replication consisted of the same interview



questions for all six of the participants, the same documents asked for from each institution, and observations of each institution's fine arts facilities. "Internal validity requires pattern matching, explanation building, rival explanations and logic methods" (Yin, 2009, p.43). In case studies, the use of multiple data sources also provides validity. Rigor was established in this study through an "audit trail" of procedures, discussions, personal notes and observations, and findings. This indemnifies accuracy and validity and minimizes bias. (Patton, 2002). I followed advice given by Miles et al. (2014) to ensure validity and reliability. One must have familiarity with the phenomenon of the study, take a multi-disciplinary approach, be a good investigator and make participants feel comfortable, be non-judgmental and open-minded, and have a "...heightened sense of empathetic engagements with a balance objective awareness" (p. 42).

### **Triangulation**

Triangulation provides multiple methods of data collection that all point to similar conclusions. Triangulation was observed by utilizing the following methods of data collection from all six sites:

1. Interviews of six maestros from different community colleges;
2. Data analysis of:
  - a. Document of the fine arts' budget for the last five years;
  - b. Document of the fine arts grants and scholarships that were awarded to students in the past five years;
  - c. A documented list of all of the fine arts courses offered at their community college for the past five years; and

- d. A marketing example of the fine arts programs at their community college for the past five years (an example of one per year).
3. Observations:
- a. Facilities: look at the upkeep of facilities, the amount of space for the students to use, areas for performing or showcasing art, acoustical upgrades, all upgrades for the past five years;
  - b. Equipment: look at all of the equipment available to the students, look for new equipment and repaired equipment, updates to texts, musical literature, etc.;
  - c. Marketing: flyers, brochures, social media, etc.; and
  - d. Ensemble: observe a musical ensemble, art class, or drama classes

Triangulation is about looking at multiple sides to ensure the validity of the study. As depicted in Figure 3.5, only when someone is able to see the multiple sides of the figure can they truly understand what it really is. Triangulation in research is the same as looking at this figure. Looking at just one side or angle is not enough evidence. Multiple angles allow the researcher to validate their assumptions. Metaphorically speaking, I researched multiple angles of the figure at each of the six sites to understand the sustainability of their fine arts programs. An example of triangulation artwork: being able to recognize different sides and angles of the structure. Much like this picture, in research, different angles and sides are warranted to discover the “whole picture”.

Important findings from the movements should have three or more confirmations from the participants, as advised by Stake (2006). I kept a personal log that shows my observations from the visits to each site, the interviews, and the documents retrieved. Peer

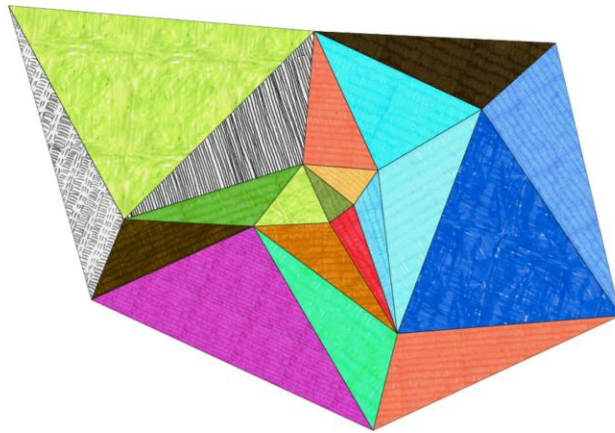


Figure 3.5. Triangulation in artwork

review is part of the triangulation process as well. Once similar themes and patterns started emerging from the data, I took the information to two of my PhD colleagues for verification of the developing leanings.

### **Generalizability and transferability**

In qualitative research, generalizability is more challenging to acquire than in quantitative research in part to the utilization of statistical data and hypotheses to support the analysis. By utilizing a multi-case study, the single movements, or case studies, provided a set of smaller “generalizations” and the cross-analysis of all six gave a larger landscape of the fine arts programs in community colleges. According to Stake (2014), “the real business in a case study is particularization, not generalization.” (p. 8). *Transferability* is the term that I applied when analyzing across the movements. In concurrence with Miles et al. (2014), I looked for the relevance and applicability of my findings to make transferable implications. The goal was to deepen the understanding and explanation of the sustainability of fine arts programs at community colleges.

Transferability, as depicted in Figure 3.6, exploits different ideas of a human brain by means of electronic pictures and filters. Once we observe the pictures on the top line that more realistically look like a human brain, we can transfer that knowledge over to the other pictures that are more difficult to assess. This simplifies, and illustrates, transferability. Discovering the overall “picture” enables one to look at other pictures that utilize the same shape, dimensions, outline, etc.

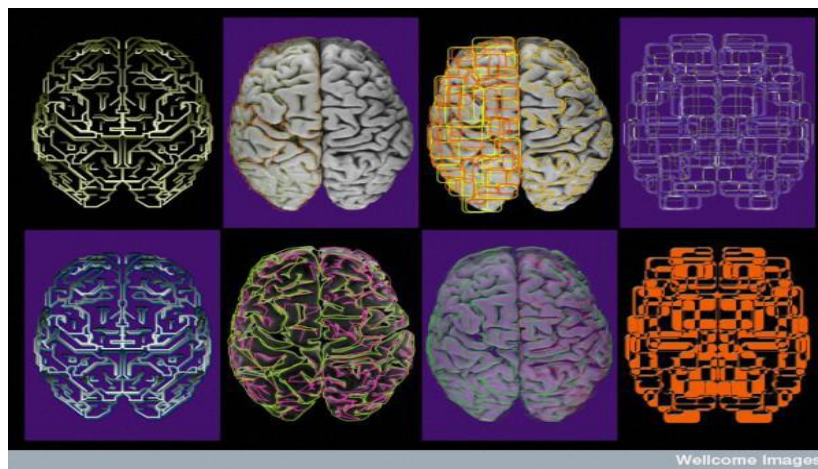


Figure 3.6. Transferability

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This study was conducted in light of the following delimitations and limitations. A delimitation of this study was that only Midwestern community colleges were studied. Utilizing other areas of the country could possibly warrant different results. A second delimitation was that through purposeful sampling, specific maestros for the interviews were selected based on the criteria. These criteria included the maestro was a department chair/dean/leader in the fine arts area at their college, had been in that position for the past

five years, and was a full-time employee. Perhaps using other participants, would describe the sustainability of fine arts programs differently.

If I had adopted a different qualitative method other than the case study, there might have been differing results. I utilized a social constructivists' epistemology to frame this study. Other epistemologies could have been used for this study and proven to be quite effective, but may have secured different results. A final limitation was that, given more time to research this topic, a different level of engagement and depth could have been reached. Perhaps multiple fine arts faculty, both full-time and adjunct, could have been interviewed to look at different perspectives of sustainability. Another idea could be to interview administrators and faculty at the same community college to gain insight from both perspectives about the sustainable elements their fine arts programs. Interviewing students might have given yet another perspective of the fine arts. A difficulty might arise with interviewing students: the average community college student's "stay" is usually two years. With the perspective of liminality, this could potentially not provide enough information because of the limited time frame.

## CHAPTER 4. THE “SYMPHONY”: SIX MOVEMENTS AND THEIR “TUNES”

### Organization of the Chapter

I organized chapter 4 into “movements”. Each movement represents a different research site in this study. Preceding these movements, I included a timeline of my visits, main partnerships and themes at each site, and a brief summary.

### Timeline

I visited the sites in a different order listed in this chapter. Part of my observations at each site involved listening to a musical ensemble. The availability of the musical ensembles’ rehearsals guided the order of the visits. An important factor in my observations was to listen to the students practice in their ensembles at their institutions.

The first site that I visited was Forte Community College, followed by Accent Community College. The third site I observed was campus A of Dolce Community College. Largo Community College followed Dolce Community College. Legato Community was the fifth site. Next, campus B at Dolce Community College as well as the community’s cultural center was observed. The final site that I visited was Fermata Community College.

### Partnerships at each community college

#### *Forte Community College’s main partnerships:*

- Fine arts business professionals as part of their faculty;
- Three foundation lines to the fine arts programs; and
- Marketing department to exemplify fine arts events

***Accent Community Colleges' main partnerships:***

- Recruiting efforts with area high schools;
- Community with differing choral groups; and
- Historical and cultural traditions of the community.

***Dolce Community Colleges' main partnerships:***

- Affiliation with the cultural arts center;
- Area churches for space and equipment; and
- Eight higher education schools in a forty-minute radius of the campus.

***Largo Community Colleges' main partnerships:***

- Accreditation partners to sustain their arts major;
- Community jazz ensembles; and
- "Before-college-cohorts".

***Legato Community Colleges' main partnerships:***

- Community and area theater programs;
- Patrons and philanthropists who donate funds to the fine arts; and
- Working artists in the area who collaborate with the community college.

***Fermata Community Colleges' main partnerships:***

- Five lines of foundation money to the fine arts programs;
- Administrative support physically and financially; and
- National Association of Society of Music accreditation for music students wanting to transfer.

**Summary**

In summation, I visited the sites according to rehearsal schedules of their musical ensembles. I intentionally organized the visits so that I would be able to observe a musical ensemble. Because my visits began the second week of January, which was around the time of the new semester, the beginning of musical rehearsals for some sites were delayed. Along

with the start of the new semester, a few sites were delayed even more because of winter weather conditions. All of these factors contributed to the organization of the visits.

Partnerships were the leading theme of this study. I have outlined the main partnerships from each of the six sites. In summation, the partnerships varied across the sites. Each community college explored partnerships around them that would assist in benefiting their fine arts programs.

### **Cross-case Analysis and Discoveries at Each Site**

“Analysis is the process of labeling and breaking down (or decontextualizing) raw data and then reconstituting them into categories, patterns, themes, concepts, and propositions” (Lindholm & Taylor, 2011, p. 243). The purpose of this study was to illuminate sustainable elements over a period of five years in the fine arts at six Midwestern community colleges. Of particular importance was to note the differences in the sustainable elements in these schools. Three rural and three urban community colleges were purposefully selected for this study to unveil similarities and differences between like regions. In the analysis of the schools, the three rural colleges were described first and the urban schools were analyzed next.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Given changes in higher education funding and increasing accountability, how do community college leaders position their programs for sustainability?
2. How do community college fine arts leaders define sustainability and what do they do to attain it?



3. What is the best practice for sustaining fine arts programs at community colleges no matter what the setting or resources?

I interviewed, made observations and analyzed:

1. Interviews of six fine arts leaders from different community colleges;
2. Data analysis:
  - a. Document of the fine arts' budget for the last five years;
  - b. Document of the fine arts grants and scholarships that were awarded to students in the past five years;
  - c. A documented list of all of the fine arts courses offered at their community college for the past five years;
  - d. A marketing example of the fine arts programs at their community college for the past five years (an example of one per year).
3. Observations:
  - a. Facilities: upkeep of facilities, the amount of space for the students to use, areas for performing or showcasing art, acoustical upgrades, and all upgrades for the past five years;
  - b. Equipment: both new and repaired available to the students, updates to texts, musical literature, etc.;
  - c. Marketing: flyers, brochures, social media, etc.;
  - d. Ensemble: observed a musical ensemble, art class, or drama classes

Chapter 4 is organized symbolically to represent a symphony in music. A symphony is a musical composition that first appeared in history during the 1800s. A multi-movement work, the symphony began in music history, initially utilizing four movements. Each

movement contains three sections: beginning, middle, and end, in which can stand alone as its own unit but belongs to a larger whole, much like a chapter in a book. Because this research study focused on the fine arts, I utilized the symphony framework for this chapter. The chapter is organized into “movements”, where each movement represents a site that was visited, observed, coded, interpreted, and analyzed. The three rural community colleges are the first three movements and the three urban community colleges are the last three. Similarly-sized regions were grouped together to compare regional similarities. A brief description of the area that surrounds each community college begins the movements, providing the reader with an initial background. Because the theoretical perspective for this study was liminality, I looked at data over the span of the last five years at each institution.

“The case studies are a selected group of instances chosen for better understanding of the quintain” (Stake, 2006, p. 83). The quintain of this multi-case study is the sustainability of the fine arts. In a multi-case study, it is the diversity of the different situations that provide for a robust approach. I have described each site from the area that surrounds the community college, according to my observations as I toured the facilities and the conversation I had with each participant to the school’s outstanding sustainable factors. “The multicase study is the observation of that life in multiple situations” (Kemmis, 1908, Stake, 2006, p. 83). I observed and researched the quintain, or sustainability of the arts, at each school. Purposeful sampling was employed in the selection of the six sites that were tailored to this study, which built variety and more diversity in to the study.

The approach that utilized for this cross-case analysis was adapted from *Rethinking case study research; A comparative approach* (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). The approach I used was comparative case study that is process oriented. This view tends “...to see the

world in terms of people, situations, events, and the processes that connect these; explanation is based on an analysis of how some situations and events influence others (Maxwell, 2013, p. 29; Bartlett & Vavrus, p. 38). These are emerging ideas that have evolved over the course of time. This ideal does not look at a bounded idea for all of the sites to revolve around; rather, it focuses on contingent factors such as the factors of each site, participants and other features. The purpose of using this approach is it aims at “...exploring the historical and contemporary processes that have shaped” [a case] (Bartlett & Vavrus, p. 38).

All sites have been renamed using comparative musical terms (safe-guarding each sites’ identity) and all interviewees, or maestros, have been given famous historical jazz musicians’ names to safeguard their identities. The six sites were introduced in a manner similar to that of a musical program for a concert, with the movement number displayed first, the name of the movement listed second, and the performer third. The “performers” in this study were the interviewees who participated in this study. The cross-case analysis followed the individual movements.

### **Movement 1: “Accent Community College” – Maestro “Duke Ellington”**

Accent Community College resides in a Midwestern town of over twenty-five thousand lying on slightly less than thirty square miles of land. In a community that has historically been known for its musical opportunities, Accent Community College follows in its footpath. Accent Community College has a long-lasting reputation of excellence and high achievement. Advertising and achieving their ideals of high-quality education and opportunities, Accent has received many awards. Initial student enrollment at Accent Community College was a few hundred students. Today, Accent is part of multiple

campuses with an overall enrollment of over fifteen-thousand students. From Accent's onset to today, a primary goal of this institution was to train students to enter the community's workforce.

Upon entering the campus, I was immediately greeted and welcomed. I met with maestro Ellington and was led in to a choral ensemble rehearsal for my first observation. A second maestro at this school, Parker, led a private lesson first before the choral ensemble. I was fortunate to listen to both. Parker was a remarkable instructor, musician and leader. Switching between coaching the private student for an audition at a four-year institution, to teaching the full forty-member ensemble, Parker remarkably proved to be a great asset to this program. Figure 4.1 provides a music clip of the large ensemble:



Figure 4.1. Audio of choral rehearsal at Accent

I observed throughout the rehearsal that the ensemble was of a high caliber, the director was very organized and the genres of music that the ensemble sang were diverse. I recorded multiple portions of this rehearsal and honestly had a difficult time deciding on which one to put in this study. The choir was around forty members in size. There were areas for the students to file their music and folders at the front of the classroom for each student. Peering over their brand-new grand piano, I observed Parker playing the multiple parts for the students as they sight-read multiple pieces of music. He incorporated digital accompaniment for multiple pieces as well as played the parts the choir sang. The students

were genuinely engaged in the rehearsal, the music and the director's coaching style. I loved listening to them sing, and ended up recording seven excerpts, excited about the possibility of using any of them. Because they are preparing a showcase spring performance of pops music, much of the rehearsal revolved around those tunes.

After the rehearsal was finished, I reunited with Ellington to tour the fine arts facilities. Figure 4.2 is a picture of the beautiful auditorium at Accent Community College.



Figure 4.2. Auditorium at Accent Community College

During the tour, I was able to observe the music practice rooms (there were four or five), the different choir and band rehearsal rooms, the art room (and storage spaces) and graphic design areas. Figure 4.3 is a picture of the art room and some of its storage areas. Figure 4.4 is a picture of the band room at Accent Community College. There were many percussion instruments along the sides and back of room. Storage cabinets were on the left side of the room for students to store their instruments.



Fig. 4.3. Art supply area



Fig. 4.4. Band room

After the tour of the fine arts area, Ellington and I travelled back to his office for the interview. We discussed the fine arts programs, their sustainability, facilities to accommodate the programs and financial restraints. Of particular note, the impending financial issues came up multiple times in the interview as stated in the following:

Ellington: It really boils down to members because when you talk with administration, it's not that they don't care. It's just that they have to worry about dollars and cents there and to their credit, they've resisted. They've allowed us to continue but as you deal with budget cuts from the state and you deal with low enrollment, there's certainly no guarantee that that will continue. I feel bad for those who are in that position who don't know from year to year how these things are going to go, but so far, we've managed.

Later in the interview:

Ellington: I think that's a question everyone is trying to look at. I think that we have to look at as many different revenue streams as we can. The fact that [one department] makes money from the concerts is helpful. It helps keep things going. I think it covers up for some of the band as well. We put that money in a pot and we can use it. We have to look at different revenue streams to see how we can keep that going. I think that's with any type of art is getting interest in it. That students have to learn that this is a valid thing to do.

The principal sustainable element of Accent Community College that came from my observations and interview is aggressive recruiting. Through aggressive and out-going

recruitment methods, the choral department specifically has been able to not only survive but to persevere. From fundraising for semester concerts, to trips and tours, this group seems to rise to the top of the fine arts at this college. Other areas of the fine arts have not remained as strong as this group. The following excerpt addresses the importance of Accent's aggressive recruiting:

Ellington: I don't want to sound like I'm saying something I don't really mean. It's just that I think "*Tatum*" is really good at what he does and I think that "*Armstrong*" is just not as outgoing, not as high energy so he tries to do things a little more subtle and I think that the easy answer would be, "Well, that's just not working." When I don't know if that's true. He doesn't do as much in those areas. There's no trips, there's not that kind of thing. He tries to get scholarships which I think is nice, but he's not as aggressive in the recruiting. "*Tatum*" is very aggressive and you can watch him work. He works the room, he talks to people, and everywhere we're at.

I think that puts his program front and center for the folks, which I wished "*Armstrong*" did a little more of. He's been pressured to build on it more and I think he has tried but he's just not as good at that aspect of it.

Table 4.1 provides the top four enrolling courses (or groups of like courses) for Accent Community College and the enrollment from one semester to the next. Note the highest numbers are in the choral department.

The second most sustainable element of Accent Community College that was studied is visibility. As a strong fine arts group that performs, tours and fundraises, they are able to stay visible in the community and abroad. With the support of a long tradition of being

Table 4.1. Student enrollment at Accent Community College

Fine Arts Classes	FS16	SS17
All choral groups	89	95
Film courses	68	60
Music appreciation courses	29	48
Instrumental ensembles	16	9

visible, this group has been relied on for yearly events and festivals as part of the community's cultural heritage. In this excerpt from the interview, Ellington discusses the reliance on the expectations of the community to see the fine arts performing groups and repercussions of cutting some of those programs:

Ellington: I think if I or we were to cut [other fine arts areas], I think there would be a big pushback. More along the lines of, not so much donations to music but people who donate to the college in general would blow that.

Researcher: Would pull out maybe.

Ellington: Yeah, because it's just something they've come to expect. I know there's been a lot of discussion along those lines because the numbers have been very low. How to best deal with that without-

Later in the interview, Ellington revisited that same idea of the considerable tradition of community visibility as well as enrollment difficulties:

Ellington: I would think really the biggest change that we're messing with is low enrollment and that's, like I said, that's kind of across the board but it's certainly affecting those areas. It affected theater very badly. It's affected art. It's affected band. I think the only person who's in the fine arts stayed relatively stable has been "*Tatum*" and the choir and I think that's just built on rather long tradition of that doing well.

Partnering with community groups emerged as a sustainable factor for Accent Community College. Community groups will partner with the school's musical ensembles to establish a community-wide relationship, which has become a sustaining factor as well.

When we discussed partnering with other resources, Ellington replied as follows:

Researcher: Do the fine arts at your community college have any partnerships with the community arts?

Ellington: Oh, absolutely.

Yeah. We talked about how the community choir sings with us, the community band plays with us. We do our chromatics class over at the museum with them so we do have quite a few partnerships.

Researcher: Has that relationship changed at all in the past five years?



Ellington: I don't think so. Not to my knowledge. I think it's been pretty consistent. I've been in this position for three years and nothing's changed during those three years. The same people who are partnering with us still are.

There is a concern at Accent Community College about the fine arts programs. If programs want to sustain, they need to look at areas of concern to adjust their tactics. Accent Community College had to eliminate one of its fine arts programs a year ago. Other programs besides the main focused program, struggle with enrollment. From the list of possible fine arts courses in the handbook (which equaled two pages), less than half are taught. There was evident concern about the sustainability of some of the programs in the future. Ellington pressed on about this point in the following statements:

Researcher: Do you think that the theater program will come back?

Ellington: No, I don't. Not any time soon. We would have to have a change and a push for it. We're running through a lot of things like that that's been very hard with faculty. In that area and outside of it. It has to do with interest. Need students to be there.

Researcher: Is it just the fine arts programs that are having trouble or are there a lot of other departments that are struggling too?

Ellington: There are other departments as well. Yeah. Struggling as well. Like I said, our overall numbers are down. Like I said, it's hit and miss in different areas.

Struggles with low enrollment have led Accent to find creative ideas to address this. Copying of the strong recruitment methods of the choral director have been discussed. More connections with the fine arts community are being established in the way of performances and shows. The collaboration of other art groups with the strong choral group has shown sustainability. The use of fund raising money from the strong department to aid in the struggling ones have helped alleviate some of the burden as well.

## **Movement 2: “Dolce Community College” – Maestro “Ella Fitzgerald”**

*“Once you have a nucleus of good students, it’s self-perpetuating...*

*word of mouth is the key.” Fitzgerald*

Dolce Community College is divided into two campuses. Both campuses are known for their great community support. At Campus A, whether you are reading about the town or the community college, one will quickly observe that the two are closely tied together. The town has a population of just under a thousand. Beginning after mid-century, Dolce enrolled under two hundred students. Today, their enrollment is well over five thousand. Basing their education around the communities’ needs, Dolce Campus A offers many technical-based programs such as agriculture, healthcare and dairy. The commitment of the community to the college financially is seen through the several passed community bonds in the last twenty years for renovations and new buildings for the college.

At Campus B, the quiet rural community is rapidly growing. The amount of growth in this area over the past twenty years is overwhelming. From new businesses, to new K-12 schools, to new and advanced shipping companies, this area has quickly become a mecca of all sorts. As a suburb of a larger city, this community thrives culturally on the relationships with the larger community.

The interview was over a conference call. Calling from one campus to the maestro on the other campus, the interview involved discussions about the fine arts opportunities for students on both campuses. Campus A offered fewer opportunities for fine arts students than Campus B, according to the maestro. We discussed region networks for both campuses, opportunities for the fine arts students, future ideas for the fine arts programs and sustainability.

Campus B has many more fine arts opportunities for students through the nearby community arts center. Only minutes away from a main cultural hub, this campus has the convenience of many close-vicinity opportunities for the students. Although there are just as few offerings in the fine arts on Campus B as there are on Campus A, Campus B has the community arts center that links the area fine artists with the students.

Much of the discussion with Fitzgerald revolved around this center, the opportunities it provides, and the hopeful anticipation of more growth through the partnership. While visiting Campus B, I was able to take pictures of the community cultural center that feeds the community college. Figure 4.5 is a picture of a practice room at the community center, which is available to students at Dolce. In the community center are many paintings by a graduated Campus B student. I was intrigued by the artistry of these paintings and I would like to share a few (see Figure 4.6). The student was a painter during his time at Dolce and loved to paint musicians, even though he was not one.



Fig. 4.5. Community Center practice room

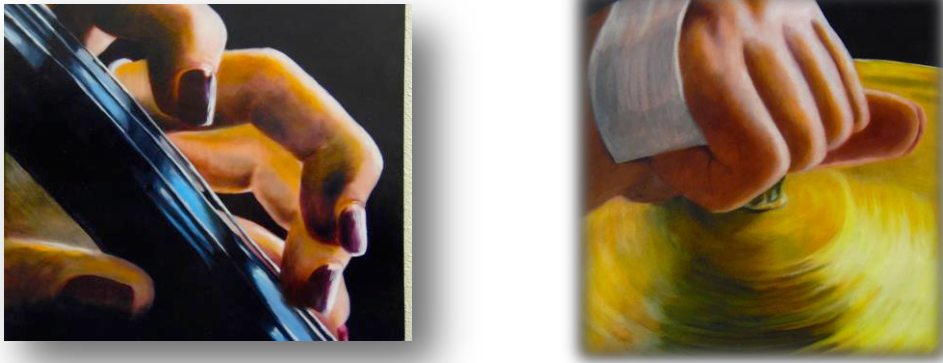


Figure 4. 6. Community Center artwork

These pieces of artwork show the partnership between the cultural center and the community college. Partnerships that we discussed were: access to community programs for all ages, affiliations with eight area higher education institutions, outreaching to area students from K-12, collaborations with area churches for space and equipment. Figure 4.7 is a picture of a class piano room at the cultural center (which can and has been used by Campus B students).

The most sustainable element for the fine arts for Dolce Community College district is the partnership between Campus B and the area's cultural center. Proximity to this cultural center and town hub is a part of this sustainable element. Dolce is fifteen minutes away from



Fig. 4.7. Class piano room

the center. Describing this area, Fitzgerald said: "...it's a vibrant cultural community for everyone." Community and students can engage in various fine arts programs offered here.

Researcher: The facilities, you said you had graphic design lab, music appreciation classes. Do you have practice rooms or studios for the teachers to teach those private lessons in?

Fitzgerald: They do that at their community arts facility downtown. Downtown is about close to here, so it's not far, and a substantial number of our students live there or went to high school there. It is the relatively big city.

Fitzgerald also discussed in the interview about the possibility of renovating vacant buildings downtown, where a lot of their Campus B students lived:

Fitzgerald: The possibility of looking at some point in the future for a facility down there or space in some existing facilities we've got is something that I'm personally and with some support the administration here, upper administration, are interested in looking at.

Researcher: That's a great idea.

Fitzgerald: Then again, it's kind of one of these things where if the right set of circumstances fall in your lap, then you run with it.

The second most sustainable element that I uncovered from this district is the interest and support of faculty and staff on both campuses in growing the fine arts. So many examples were given of faculty/staff that have a past and a passion in the fine arts and are willing to step up and coach or teach course or ensembles. An "open hour" will be tested next year that will be a part of the schedule. The hope was that interested faculty and staff in the arts will aid in the coaching of ensembles during this open hour, bringing more student interest. Following is an example from the interview:

Fitzgerald: There are a number of faculty here who do music either as an amateur sort of way or not. When I was talking to "Ted" at the cultural center. Evidently our microbiology professor is a very accomplished pianist, and actually "Ted" used the name [Rachmaninoff] in the same sentence with this person.

There is interest because this whole common hour thing is the idea that faculty would kind of step out and mentor the student organizations but

not necessarily ... The woman who plays the piano wouldn't necessarily have the microbiology club. She might decide she wants to work with the small instrumental ensembles since that's an interest of hers.

Researcher: How many people, how many faculty do you have teaching the fine arts?

Fitzgerald: None full time, none full time [on either campus]. It's all adjunct at this point. There is some interest as we look at the curriculum and try to broaden in areas. As people retire, we're not necessarily refilling positions as they were. We're looking for other areas to expand in, and the fine arts is an area that's been pointed out as something that would be ripe for expansion, fine arts in general, so it could be, depending on what the situation is.

Faculty and staff are interested in pursuing fine arts opportunities and there are many that have backgrounds in the arts. Partnerships with the staff, Fitzgerald explained, could promote student interest and growth. Following is an excerpt from the interview:

Fitzgerald: Yeah, they can do both if they want to, and they're not directly competing with each other, and you might get students ... There are a lot of small private colleges here in the area... "*Moderato College*" has a reasonably sized music program. I'm not sure what the other ones have, so at some point in the future we might look at having a sort of consortium ensemble where students at [these small institutions] it'll take perhaps a year to kind of sound out what the interest is. It might wind up being an orchestra. Maybe they don't have enough string players and all to spot an orchestra on any one of their campuses, but perhaps with everybody putting their assets together, student-wise, you could come up with an orchestra of some sort, or a big concert band, or whatever. I just haven't been here long enough to know what they've got at all of those places, and I don't know how territorial they all are.

Where you are now, you're real close to "*Vivace College*", which is like music city. I don't know how it is with working with the broader community. I've got a feeling that since they don't have to, they've never really expressed much interest in outreach, but I don't know.

Looking to other community colleges for ideas about sustaining and growing fine arts programs, Fitzgerald is bringing in examples to the administrators that might help their programs. Leaning on the transferring fine arts courses as humanities credits to four-year institutions, he believes this is the foundation for more growth.

The third most sustainable element that I uncovered from the observations was the hopeful anticipation of a partnership between fine arts courses and other disciplines, such as business. For example, a music industry would provide the students with the fine arts background interwoven with a business field. Following is an excerpt from the interview highlighting Fitzgerald's view of this:

Researcher: When you're looking at community colleges, then you go into even more slim pickings.

Fitzgerald: Oh, yeah. It's a tough market, but again, when you look at the broad-based interdisciplinary look that a music industry program or an entertainment industry program offers, at least students then see the potential light at the end of the tunnel, as do their parents.

There were many comments during the interview about the mixing of fine arts disciplines with business industry of sorts in the course of the interview. Following is another example of a portion of the interview that honed in on the importance of a partnership of this kind:

Fitzgerald: Yeah, and again, it might take something like coming up with some sort of music industry idea or whatever you'd want to call it, and you can kind of...

Other partnerships that Fitzgerald would like to tap into for the future are with some of the private colleges that are in close proximity to the campuses. There are many opportunities in the fine arts at these private schools and future partnerships with Dolce students would boost their students' involvement. Fitzgerald did note some concern with this idea, saying that "they haven't reached out to us in the past", but said that she was optimistic that there could be future relationships.

Marketing for the fine arts for Dolce Community College exists only through the cultural center near Campus B. In addition to a few humanities courses at each campus, the

other opportunities come way through the cultural center. Perusing the cultural center's website, I found many pictures of the different groups performing, dates of classes and performances, and connections with local businesses.

Issues materialized in our conversation about the sustainability of the fine arts. The first one Fitzgerald discussed was about the transferability of fine arts courses to four-year institutions. Stating that there were no close-by public four-year colleges, Fitzgerald talked about the difficulties of transferring fine arts courses across state lines because of the different states' community college articulations. Perhaps this has attributed to some of the student attrition in the past five years, Fitzgerald explained. The humanities courses have remained "static and stagnant" for the past five years for both campuses, but the performing ensembles have atrophied. Another concern that Fitzgerald discussed was that was "no guarantee" which students and how many would return the following semester or the following year at a community college. Without a consistent and dependable flow of fine arts students, ensembles and performances are difficult to establish. In this excerpt from the interview, Fitzgerald described the status of the fine arts programs at Dolce for the past five years. She also discussed the implications to musical ensembles of the student atrophy.

Researcher: Yeah, that's true. In summation, how would you characterize changes to your fine arts programs in the last five years?

Fitzgerald: It's been pretty static and kind of stagnant in the last five years. My hopes is that we can add coursework again, the transfers, so good humanities, fine arts coursework, and then start looking at some performing groups. That's perhaps looking at the next five years.

Researcher: What would you like to see?

Fitzgerald: I would like to see based on student interest some sort of instrumental group and some sort of vocal group. The instrumental group could be a jazz combo, could be a small wind ensemble, whatever, whatever the interest dictates.



Researcher: What do you think is one of the biggest struggles of maintaining a fine arts program at a community college?

Fitzgerald: If it's specific to the community college, it's the fact that you don't know who's going to show up from semester to semester.

You think your choir is going to do the Mozart Requiem next semester, and suddenly you don't have any altos, so I guess you're not doing that.

Another concern Fitzgerald brought up was the lack of scholarship/grant funding for fine arts students at Dolce. “Without the rise of student interest though, it is hard to find the money,” Fitzgerald explained. We discussed student atrophy in the fine arts programs for the past five years at Dolce, on both campuses. Table 4.2 illustrates the recession of fine arts student enrollment over the past five years. Notice the only course that is a dual enrollment class with the high school increases in enrollment instead of decreases over the span of the last five years.

Table 4.2. Student enrollment at Dolce Community College

		Total Enrollment									
		Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
MUA-101	Applied Voice	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUA-120	Applied Piano	No sections last five years - last one that ran was Summer 2010									
MUA-147	Applied Instrumental	1	3	1	3	0	0	1	2	2	2
MUA-220	Applied Piano II	No sections ever ran - last offered Spring 2010									
MUS-100	Music Appreciation	21	20	19	12	15	7	21	0	18	11
MUS-100	Music Appreciation W/ High School Enrollment	14	19	42	34	38	44	20	35	14	41

Confronting some of the challenges that Dolce has experienced with the growth of fine arts programs, conversations about how to remedy these are ongoing. The open hour may be one path to involving students in an established and consistent manner. Articulation agreements across state lines were being researched. Looking to faculty and staff who are interested in becoming involved can provide sustainability and growth for future arts programs at Dolce.

### **Movement 3: “Forte Community College” – Maestro “Artie Shaw”**

Forte Community College is perched in a very old Midwestern town with a population today of over 25,000, which includes surrounding areas. Ancestry and history are major components of this area’s makeup, as confirmed by historical museums and villages, frontier days, ancestral music and theatre, as well as state preservation trails. This town has industrial partnerships with businesses associated with animal care, meatpacking, trucking and fuel. Forte Community College promotes economic and cultural opportunities to their students. There is a concentration at Forte Community College on technical training and adult education. Along with three other sites, Forte is a part of a small district that encompasses over twenty-five hundred students. With strong partnerships to certain four-year colleges, Forte has a high transfer rate. Like the community that surrounds it, Forte Community College values tradition and heritage. The Fine Arts auditorium is illustrated in Figure 4.8



Fig. 4.8. Fine Arts auditorium at Forte Community College

My interview with Artie was very enlightening. We started the duet off by discussing enrollment over the past five years, advertising pamphlets and fine arts grants and scholarships for students. Enrollment in the fine arts has been relatively flat for the past five years. We discussed the interview questions pertaining to the sustainability of the fine arts programs. I was impressed by the support of the community for the fine arts in general as well as for the community college. During the interview, I learned that there have been many changes in the fine arts programs over the past five years such as: hiring of many new positions (such as a dance instructor, a third art instructor, an instructor of photography, a drama and a vocal music instructor). Two issues that the fine arts programs struggled with were space conflicts (there is not enough space for each discipline to have their own space) and needed renovations to the forty-year old auditorium. Aside from these few growing pains that Forte Community College, Shaw stated: “I think changes [over the past five years] have been very minor. I don’t see any major changes; however, money for fine arts is always at the whim of a director.”

Then we took a tour of the fine arts facilities. We looked at all of the fine arts classrooms, equipment utilized for each one, rehearsal areas, the auditorium, work areas for the theater department, storage space for students' musical instruments, cameras and art supplies, and student artwork. As we toured the fine arts buildings, this was one of many student pieces of art that I observed and photographed (see Figure 4.9):



Fig.4.9. Student artwork

Student artwork was in many various spaces in the fine arts buildings adding to the creative atmosphere. I asked about each one and was given the purpose and project of each student piece. There were quite a few that were the result of collaborations of Forte Community College students and the community.



Figure 4.10. Audio of choral rehearsal at Forte

Because of a last-minute change in the schedule, I was not able to sit in on the musical ensemble originally chosen, but I did get to sit in on one impromptu. With only a few practices accomplished, this vocal group was just starting the semester. I listened to their rehearsal, took field notes and recorded sections. The piece that they were learning on the recording is a classic Mozart vocal piece that takes a certain level of caliber for singers to perform. The instructor wanted me to introduce myself and explain my research to the class, which I was thrilled to do. The students were very receptive. There was a wonderful rapport between the instructor and the students. There were around forty students there at this rehearsal. The instructor had two student assistants to help out with the music needs of the group, primarily assigning music and folders to everyone. There were plenty of storage spaces for the music and each individual student's music folders. They practiced three different pieces from three different periods in music history and I was impressed by the contrasting genres.

We visited two other classes: a photography class and a ceramics class. I was interested in the immense amount of supplies for the students. A few of my favorite fine arts rooms on our tour were the photography's dark rooms and the kiln room. Figure 4.11 displays a picture of the old kiln and the brand new kiln sitting next to it in the ceramics and pottery area.

Four of the most compelling sustainable elements were revealed from the data I gathered from the documents, interview, tour, observations and field notes. The strongest resource I discovered at Forte Community College is the large number of partnerships the school has with the community, community businesses, community fine arts leaders and area schools. For example, Forte fine arts students host events in the historical museum, the



Figure 4.11. Old and new kiln

nursing homes, area businesses, as well as the area schools, and collaborate with the high school's students on projects. Art students have created murals in the downtown area, partnering with high school art students, to advertise the arts. Collaboration across disciplines of the college was showcased in artwork such as the one below, where the art and science students worked together. Figure 4.12 is piece of work depicting the parts of the brain that are used in creating art. Notice the science-related equations in the background.

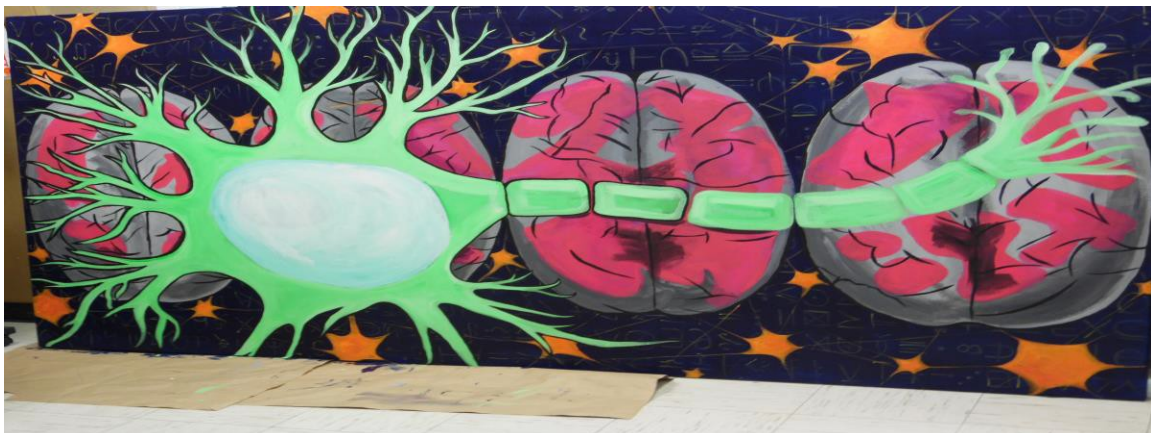


Figure 4.12. Student artwork

Another great partnership asset is that two of the fine arts faculty members are on the historical museum board and two fine arts faculty are professionals in the community. These two examples are strong partnerships ties with the community as they are able to teach and practice their art in the communities. This partnership helps bring students to Forte to study with the art business leaders of the community. Following is a portion of the interview in which we discussed partnerships with the community through the instructors.

Shaw: Two of my art instructors are on the museum board. One is on the foundation board and one is on the active board for that museum, and so they have that involvement there.

I think we do have a pretty good connection. I don't know that there's a key person in town that we're connected with because I think they're already so connected.

Researcher: Sounds like good links between community and community college.

Shaw: Yes, right. Then I think that that will, again, support some of the efforts here. They do help.

Some of our projects and different pieces. I don't think we would have what we have without some of those people. At least we wouldn't be able to offer some of the things we do. It would just limit what those resources are.

Researcher: Probably drawing some students in because of the names of the people and their credentials and experience and exposure.

Researcher: Students want to go to the art program because “Betty’s” there.

Shaw: Correct.

Hiring people that have those connections does make that transition.

Researcher: It brings them in.

Shaw: Currently, bringing in a [community artist] for photography. She has high involvement in the local community, as her past photography business and just her connections with our local groups. Her and her husband are very active in the area’s fine arts association. I see her creating some more of those partnerships. For example, the photography students went down ... We had a new microbrewery open up downtown and she happened to know the owner, and so they created that as a photo opportunity for both a new business coming up and something for the students to consider in

their portfolios. Because of those connections, I see her program really building a lot of those.

(Later in the interview)

...a recent partnership was through art and “Betty”, (who teaches art at the community college). At the downtown bus stop, her art appreciation students worked [with a community group] to show pride in community appearance. They partnered and painted.

The second strongest sustainable element that I discovered was the financial support of the community college’s fine arts. Three separate community foundations give financial contributions to the community college’s fine arts programs. Through the archival data on scholarship money granted specifically to fine arts students, I learned that for the last five years, the average amount each year was eighty thousand dollars (Figure 4.13). In 2011, slightly more than \$70,000 in total was granted to fine arts students. Each year showed a small progression and in 2016, \$80,000 of grant and scholarship money was given to the fine arts students. The average number of students for the past five years that benefited from a scholarship was 150. This is a significant factor in the sustainability of the fine arts. Students are able to be a part of the programs they are interested in through financial support, consequently increasing the numbers of students in fine arts classes.

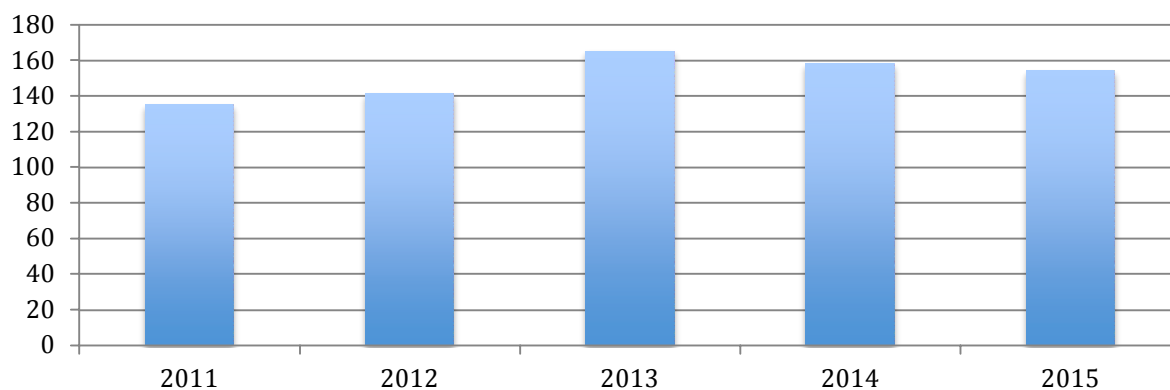


Figure 4.13. Students receiving grants/scholarships at Forte Community College, 2011-2015



The third major sustainable element at Forte Community College from my research of the data retrieved, was an immense abundance in fine arts equipment. I was not expecting all of the equipment that they had and was impressed as we toured from one fine arts room to another. A few examples of the equipment that I observed on my tour included: two kilns, ceramic and pottery rooms with supplies and supply areas, two dark rooms for photography, separate band and choir rooms with music stands and chairs for each (choir room had leveled tiers in the flooring which is very important for a choral group) instrumental storage area (and lockers), marching band uniforms, instruments for the students to use, two large theater dressing rooms, construction area for theater sets, photography “center” (welcome room, two offices, and an administrative assistant’s desk), dance and cheerleading uniforms/shoes, cameras for each photography student to use with lockers to store them securely, and great photography lights and backdrops in the photo area with plentiful storage areas. Figure 4.14 is a picture of a storage area from my tour in the ceramics and pottery area:



Fig. 4.14. Storage areas

The last of the top four sustainable rudiments that I researched was marketing. There were flyers all around the fine arts areas advertising performances, auditions, and shows with times and dates. Another advertisement that I observed on my tour was a flyer for fine arts students marketing a trip to Paris, France in the summer. Reading through this flyer, the itinerary for the trip was included, the initial cost to hold a seat, the fine arts shows/events, and artists the students would be able to meet. The marketing on the flyers and programs were of a professional level. I was given a program of each of their spring musicals/plays for the past five years. Each program had the story of the musical or play, pictures and biographies of all of the cast members, and the director of each musical or play with a short biography as well as the background staff (lighting, marketing, stage crew, etc.). The back of each musical program had the next event's title, performing group, date, time and place.

I also learned that post cards were made by the marketing office for some of the larger shows and sent out to community businesses, community members and schools. The community college's website included six pages devoted to the fine arts programs, events, courses and photos of student participation in the programs. I was fascinated by the photos of the students "in action" and the layout of the information on the website pages. Figure 4.15 is an image of an array of the last five years of musical theater and play programs. It is intentionally blurred to secure the identities of students and the institution. The spread of the multiple programs signifying the amount of performances by this group is what the reader should take away from the picture. I was especially impressed by the different styles, genres and time periods of these shows.

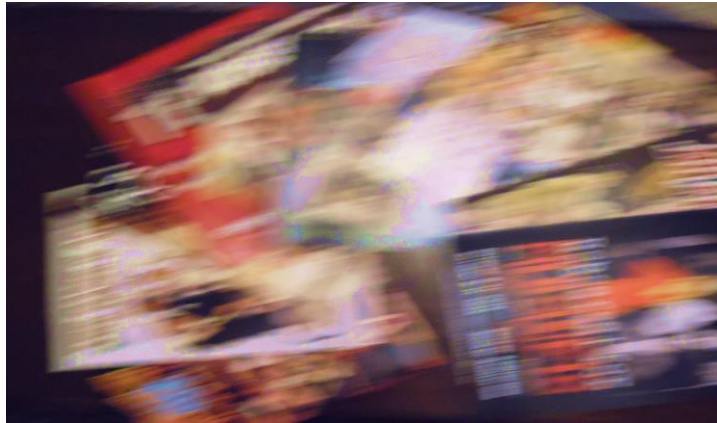


Figure 4.15. Musical theater programs

At the conclusion of our meeting, I asked Shaw what he thought were the sustainable elements for the fine arts at Forte Community College. Following are a portion of his answers from the interview:

Researcher: Anything else you want to add about sustaining? That's what I'm looking at and focusing and researching on is how to sustain the fine arts. Anything that you want to add about-

Shaw: I do think external funding for lots of things ... It's not just fine arts ... Those resources. We do not have a grant writer, so there are probably monies that we're missing that would help offset and support some of these pieces. Luckily, we have the local foundations that I mentioned earlier, and we have those connections. I think that that's something very real. Helping people be resourceful and training them in what does that look like, and purchasing and those pieces, things that we can control and help them understand will also help. Staff turnover can be a great thing and then also a nightmare. That even has impacts that you don't know about. I think I'm comfortable with it. It could always be more, but I also don't, again, fear it disappearing.

Challenges have surfaced for Forte in their fine arts programs. Combatting these challenges with compromises promote a great collaboration among faculty, staff and administrators.

Shaw: Something that also probably gets in our way is the auditorium parking lot. It is an accessibility nightmare in terms of it's full of students all the time. We don't have reserved parking, no overnight parking. Our lots are wide open for anybody any day. We try to offset that with valet parking sometimes, or shuttle services, but when you're doing a performance in March when it's cold and snowy, that can impact attendance, but you have your people that are there every single event that you have.

Sharing space in the multiple fine arts disciplines has proved to be problematic.

Compromises by faculty to have made the use of the same facilities more attainable, but the need for individual space is a challenge that Forte will continue to address. Following is an excerpt from the interview about the shared spaces:

Shaw: Our art department uses the foyer of the auditorium for the art gallery. That gets into schedule issues because theater also uses that for some of their classes and their shows ... Then an art class can't go over and see a guest artist show. Space is just an ongoing huge issue.

Having special space for special things. Currently, exploring music meets in the choir room and so does group communication. We just don't have enough spaces for everybody to have their own space and have it serve the best that it can. That's the same for math and for science, and it's the same for everything. Everything is crowded.

Art is scattered. Art is in four rooms, primarily, in two buildings. We'll go to what is the painting studio, which is a former microbiology and chemistry lab. Drawing is in an old, I think chemistry lab, so you'll see some remnants of chemistry lab amongst all the still-life. There is a ceramics studio and then our fourth room is mostly design. Usually more lecture-type classes will meet in there. They do use the computer lab for graphic design. We have two computer labs. We use professional photography's computer lab or digital mass communication computer lab for some of those electronic-demanding classes. Photography has their computer lab. They have a small reception area to mimic a portrait studio setting and two other classrooms, but that new director is currently redefining how she'll use space and what that is. We can go see that, as well.

The four most sustainable elements described above unveil the main attributes of Forte Community College collected through my data. The overarching common theme I discovered through data collection: collaboration. This word embodies partnerships with

community businesses and schools, their relationships with foundation members, their unit teamwork discussing equipment needs and their partnership with the marketing department to develop professional programs, flyers, brochures, website pages and postcards.

#### **Movement 4: “Largo Community College” – Maestro “Benny Goodman”**

*“Passion and willingness to roll up the sleeves and, number one, go out and get students and then create a program that students will want to be a part of. Whatever it is it has to be of quality, or they’re not going to want to be a part of it. I mean, you have to love it. I love all kinds of music, but jazz is kind of the main thing here and I love it. I live and breathe jazz. I think that’s the kind of passion that you to have. I think students can connect with that.”*  
- Benny Goodman

Largo Community College has been in existence since the early 1900s. Located now in a very urban metropolitan mid-town area with a population of over four-hundred thousand, five campuses make up this district, Largo being one of the five. Starting out with a couple of hundred students and moving to a nearly 20,000 students today, this district has grown alongside its affiliated communities. Large businesses, hospitals, radio stations and fine arts facilities are located in this large area. Largo Community College is a part of a growing and prosperous community that supports art education programs and healthcare programs. One of Largo’s key components in its education is to help students prepare to go into the community.

Sitting in the heart of a large city, Largo Community College was a beautiful campus to drive to. After weaving my way through a few buildings and many hallways, I finally found my contact, Benny Goodman. He took me on a tour of the fine arts facilities. As we walked, he talked about the fine arts programs at Largo. He explained that the fine arts have been “maintaining” for the last five years, but there really was not a whole of growth. Five years ago there were more full-time faculty in the fine arts department, and now there are less

full-time and more adjuncts. There are fewer ensembles today than five years ago. There is a wonderful partnership for high school students through Largo, called “Early College Academy” where these students can take college courses at Largo while they are finishing their high school degree. According to Goodman, there have been some great students that have been a part of the fine arts programs through the Early College Academy, but that was not a highly sustainable element for the department. On our tour, we looked at many instruments that the school owns for student use, such as this drum set (Figure 4.16). Another important piece of equipment is the piano (Figure 4.17). Goodman recognized that their equipment might not be “top of the line” equipment, but he added they do maintain the upkeep of their instruments so that the students are using quality equipment. In preparation for our visit, Goodman recorded his jazz ensemble’s rehearsal from the previous evening. Figure 4.18 provides a clip from this jazz ensemble.



Figure 4.16. Drum set



Figure 4.17. Grand piano



Figure 4.18. Jazz ensemble rehearsal

The main sustainable fine arts element at Largo is the visual arts program. This program is a possibility as a major at Largo, but the other fine arts programs are not. There are many donors that contribute money to the visual arts program, equipment and art shows in their art gallery. Following is an excerpt from our interview when we discussed the art program:

Goodman: Those were the major donors for that building. “The Art Center”, I don't know how many millions of dollars was raised. I'm sure it was a matching thing. Apparently, one of the donors was upset that they were going to shut down the gallery and raised some noise, made some noise to keep it open.

Later in the interview, the arts program came to up again. This time we talked about money going in to that program and why.

Researcher: Anybody getting new fine arts facilities?

Goodman: No.

Researcher: Or equipment? Well, they got the new kiln.

Goodman: I think they do pretty good over there. I think they get new computers every two years or so, so they do get updated equipment at the arts center.

Researcher: So why is the money going that way?

Goodman: They're a major.

You can graduate with an art major or art degree here but not a music degree or an English degree.

Because Largo has art as a major in a community college, area businesses have contributed financially to the program. With multiple visual arts areas, this program is a

huge sustaining force for the college and for the fine arts. Since transferability of fine arts courses from a community college to a four-year regent is challenging, creating a fine arts degree aids student success in their continuation of that field. Figure 4.19 is a picture of their two kilns in their art area.



Figure 4.19. Two kilns

The other most sustaining element of Largo Community College fine arts programs is their connections with k-12 schools. Following is an excerpt from the interview when Goodman was discussing the opportunities for K-12 students with Largo students:

Goodman: We have programs that involve schools. The Jazz Festival would be one of them. One of our majors, oddly enough, used to be fashion and textile, believe it or not. It's not a major anymore, but we used to have ...

Researcher: That's interesting.

Goodman: ... a show that involved area high schools. We do a Science Olympiad here that involves schools. It's a regional event. We have partnerships like that. Now, I think we are essentially partnered with the [city] school district, because that's the district that we're in, so there are a lot of field trips from those schools to our campus. Then, we also host either a night or a day of very much like recruiting, where we'll all sit at a desk and those students will come by. With the Early College Academy, that's a very strong relationship with the school district.

Researcher: Explain the Early “pre-college cohort”.



Goodman: It's the program-

Researcher: It's the dual enrollment?

Goodman: That's right.

Once they're approved ... They have to apply. Once they're accepted into the "pre-college cohort", everything they do is here on this campus. All the classes they take. They can choose to go back to their high school and play football or basketball, and he goes back to Lincoln to play in the jazz band there. We have three in my jazz program here that are "pre-college cohort" students, and all three of them go back to participate in some of their ensembles. They get to participate. He was in the All-State Jazz Band, so they still get to do those things. Like I said, when they enroll in courses here, it's to get them through our program, get them through our degree program.

Researcher: So he's going to graduate with his diploma and an A.A., right?

Goodman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

We discussed more about the challenges that the school has in the fine arts programs. Ensuring adequate equipment for the students to use is a struggle. Repairing the equipment they do own is about all they can do, as well as accept instruments that the community donates to them. Fund-raisers have assisted in acquiring equipment for Largo. Another challenge was lower enrollment in classes besides the visual arts. An answer to this has been to allow continuing education to add students in to the classes. Partnering with community music ensembles has aided in more visibility for these students and programs which has brought more students in to the programs.

At the end of the interview, Goodman talked about how to ultimately sustain the fine arts:

Researcher: So, what are your tips on how to sustain fine arts?

Goodman: Passion and a willingness to roll up the sleeves and, number one, go out and get students and then create a program that students will want to be a part of. Whatever it is, it has to be of quality, or they're not going to want to be a part of it. I mean, you have to love it. I love all kinds of music, but jazz is kind of the main thing here and I love it. I live and breathe jazz. I

think that's the kind of passion that you have to have. I think students can connect with that.

### **Movement 5: “Fermata Community College” – Maestro “Mary Lou Williams”**

Seven counties supply the enrollment of urban Fermata Community College. With over 120,000 in its surrounding populous, these areas contribute a vast array of educational opportunities for their students. Within a fairly close distance, Fermata has access to two larger Midwestern cities. Cultural diversity is prominent in this area. There are many opportunities for different cultural experiences including museums, focusing on countries' heritage and customs. Fine arts opportunities in this area are plentiful for the tourists to attend as well as for community members to partake. Education plays a significant role in the culture of this area, with many two and four-year institutions to choose from as a student. For the media student, the opportunities in this area seem endless. Fermata Community College prided itself on the area partnerships that it has made. Many businesses and schools are partnered with Fermata Community College in professional development, re-training, dual-enrollment and community services. With a staggering student enrollment of just under 30,000, Fermata Community College plays a vital role in the community and state.

Fermata is a beautiful and spacious campus that is inviting. Less than half-an-hour from a bigger city, Fermata benefits from its own cultural activities as well as those from the bigger city. Driving on to the campus, I was intrigued by the spaciousness of the buildings.

We started with the interview, with Williams describing the fine arts at Fermata Community College. We discussed enrollment patterns over the past five years, funding and scholarship opportunities for fine arts students, budgets for the fine arts programs,

additions/renovations to the fine arts facilities in the past five years, and administrative and faculty support for fine arts events.

As we toured the campus' fine arts facilities, I gazed at student artwork adorning the hallways and open areas. Art students were sitting in many of the art hallways drawing what they were looking at with rulers in hand to justify angles. There was a glass area that is very unique to community colleges. Ceramics and pottery, 2D and 3D art areas, photography room with a dark room, and music practice rooms were a part of our tour. Because of the uniqueness of a blown glass program, I am including a picture of that area (Figure 4.20):



Figure 4.20. Blown glass area

There are two auditoriums at Fermata Community College. The largest auditorium is fairly new with the latest renovations in acoustics and sound employed. While we toured the auditorium, there was a play cast rehearsing on the stage. It was nice to see and hear the effectiveness of the auditorium, both in space for the actors on stage as well as the acoustics of their speaking voices without microphones. Figure 4.21 is a picture of the auditorium.



Fig. 4.21: Large auditorium

There is a “green room” (named for the moment for its color) that is a smaller recital hall (not an actual green room for theater departments) that will be remodeled and “gutted out” this summer to provide more room for performing ensembles. Many practice rooms adorn this campus and, surprisingly to me, every single one of them had a student practicing in it as we walked past. I was able to sit in on three musical ensembles, of which I had the pleasure of hearing the vast talent of the students at Fermata. The first ensemble I observed was a jazz vocal group; these are few and far between at the community college level. With about ten talented students with microphones, the teacher playing the piano and a drum set player, these talented musicians rehearsed for an upcoming gig. Figure 4.22 is a musical clip from their rehearsal:



Figure 4.22. Vocal jazz group

After this rehearsal, I attended a saxophone small ensemble rehearsal. As a saxophone player myself, I was asked for teaching tips and constructive criticisms of this group. I helped a little by talking about equipment and proper posture during playing. They were playing a very difficult piece with complicated rhythms and time signatures. It was satisfying to observe the caliber of musicians playing the caliber of music. Figure 4.23 is a recording of their rehearsal:



Figure 4.23. Saxophone ensemble

The next ensemble I had the privilege of observing was a steel drum band. In all of my thirty-plus years in music, I have never heard a steel drum band outside of a cruise once to the Caribbean, especially in an educational setting. The students learn the music in this ensemble by rote, which means there is no music. They are taught their parts by the instructor who goes around and plays each part for them. The students copy what the instructor plays and there is their part. Then they put it together as an ensemble. It was amazing to watch and hear the learning process without sheet music. The teacher played steel drums with the students. Figure 4.24 is an audio clip and photo from their rehearsal.

After retrieving all of the data from Fermata, touring the facilities, talking with fine arts leaders and conducting the interview, the most prevailing sustainable quality for this school is their partnerships. Whether discussing their new articulation agreements with four-year institutions or administrative support, physically and financially, partnerships for this



Figure 4.24. Audio and photo of steel drum band rehearsal

community college solidified their fine arts programs. Following is an excerpt from the interview revealing this partnership.

Williams: We're pursuing that accreditation (crediting fine arts courses at the community college for transfer to four-year regents as fine arts and not simply electives). This year in March we have a site visit by a consultant from the organization, who will come and tour our campus and give us some ideas about the candidacy process and how to go through doing the self-study, so we're looking forward to that.

That hopefully will help with that as well.

Researcher: Is that partnership in the theater and the art?

Williams: That accreditation is strictly for music.

Researcher: How do the transfer classes for the art and the theater work?

Williams: Do they work similarly to music?

Yes and no. You have to negotiate each one with each institution. We have I think a strong articulation agreement in theater with [other institutions]. Those are the places where our students are most likely to go. We focus most of our efforts on those schools in terms of establishing the articulation agreements. I think in theater, we have students who go to {two of the institutions} and have good articulation agreements in place for there. Art continues to be a little bit of a struggle. The biggest issue with art is the design class.

Following is another example of partnering for Fermata Community College, according to this interview excerpt:

Researcher: Do the fine arts at your community college have any partnerships with community arts? Has that relationship changed in the past five years? If so, how? Are there any specific community members that are key?

Williams: Sure. I would say to start with, one of the big changes has been with continuing education. I know it's not officially a community partner, but our non-credit side is in a lot of ways very separate from our credit side. We've been doing a lot more to try and partner with them in terms of the offerings that they have in the arts, so for example we have started having some mirroring options, where we will have a continuing ed section of a credit class, so that particularly if it's a class where we don't think we'll get enough students to fill the class, we can offer it as both a credit class and a continuing ed class, so then we can get some continuing ed students to fill the empty slots, and therefore have a more full, robust class, and-or in some cases get enough students to let the class run, so that part has worked out well.

More recently, we've been working on just having more of our full time and part time credit side instructors teach classes in continuing ed, and most recently we have hired a studio technician, half from department funds, half from continuing ed funds, who can serve as a liaison between those two parts of the college and facilitate studio use for both groups. I think that's one change. We've had for a long time a partnership with the [community] Museum of Art.

That partnership allows any student to attend the museum for free. It also has meant in the past, their head curator has juried our student art show, or we try to have that partnership going.

They are a good partner. The [area] "cultural alliance" is also a good partner. We pay a fee to belong to that organization, and all of our fine and performing arts events are advertised on their website, in their calendar, and then we get invited to workshop things that they do on grant writing in the arts and that sort of thing. That's been a good partnership for us.

We've had members of our faculty and the staff serve on the city's "visual arts council", so our visual arts ...who are responsible for sort of the placement of public art in the city, so we've had a couple of our folks sit on that commission to talk about collaboration with them. We do lots of local school outreach, so we have a, for example, workplace learning connections group, where middle school students come to [our] campus and they have a day of exploring the arts, and what career fields are available to them if that's something that they want to pursue.

We've developed a new partnership with [area orchestra], which has led to some kind of fun things. Most recently, our concert choir performed with "video games", which was a big show at [the area orchestra stage]. We were the only choir featured in their symphony performance, so that was

awesome. We were able to participate in the grand opening of the new music building at the [local regent].

Williams: ... and we were one of those three, so that was a good experience. The other one in terms of community partnerships I would say is we have a really good relationship with “Fermata Music Store”. [The owner] has sat on our foundation board for a long time, and is aware of what [our] role is in the community, and he obviously is particularly interested in the arts. The Foundation has donated money now to [our] Foundation to establish a scholarship for music education students, so students who are going to transfer to [either of two regents] and study music education are eligible to apply for a scholarship. It’s also helped with acquisition of instruments as well. We are able to negotiate a long term purchasing agreement with them, so it’s not uncommon, but schools will often be able to get multiple, say, pianos. We’ve had this agreement for a long time. It’s long past expired, and now we’re going to start on it again, where if you’re outfitting multiple pianos at the same time, you can get all of them and agree to pay for a certain percentage of them every year until you’ve purchased them all. That, when the music program here first started a long time ago, that’s how we were able to outfit all of our studios, practice rooms ...

... and the like with pianos from the start, and then were able to sort of purchase them as we went along, and so that’s been a good partnership for us as well.

Researcher: The relationship has increased?

Williams: Yeah.

The second-most viable element of sustainability for Fermata Community College is the financial support for their fine arts programs. According to Williams in the interview, “thirty-five thousand dollars” is given to the fine arts programs each year, by the administration, some of which is designated to acquire new art to showcase around the campus. Scholarships and grants for the fine arts students are plentiful. There are five lines within the school’s foundation that directly go in to the fine arts programs. There is also a sales tax that goes to new equipment for the fine arts (tax that automatically goes to the schools, but a certain percentage of that tax goes directly into the fine arts programs).



Researcher: How do faculty and administrators support the fine arts programs, if they do, and has the support changed at all in the last five years?

Williams: I would say the support probably hasn't changed. It's always been strong. As an example, we have an art acquisition committee on campus. The president recognizes the importance of art on campus, so he, when he first started here, so it's been ... I don't know. Fifteen years, set aside \$35,000 a year for the purchase of new art on campus. That has been a big help obviously towards ensuring that not only ... That's in addition to the new building projects, so that we're able to continue to stay current in our collection, and ...

Every year we have \$35,000 to spend on new art on campus, which is fantastic.

So that's something that we're very fortunate to have. We continue to have equipment money available to us. We use equipment levee, which is a local sales tax, for purchasing equipment on campus. It's not limited just to the arts, but we've utilized that consistently and been awarded a percentage of that amount. Nearly everything that we purchase equipment-wise comes from that fund, and we've purchased everything from ... I don't know, tubas and pianos and whatever, to easels to replace in the art studio, kilns for the ceramics area, new technology and lighting stuff for our theater, so we get to utilize that fairly consistently.

Researcher: You said that's a percentage that comes from taxpayers?

Williams: Right.

Researcher: Is it from their homes?

Williams: Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

The third most sustainable factor for Fermata Community College is available scholarship money for fine arts students. There are many streams from which this money is raised. Following is an excerpt from our conversation that illustrated that:

Williams: We'll see how that goes. I will say, we've gotten additional scholarship dollars for students in the arts during those five years, so that's a plus.

Researcher: From where?

Williams: From our foundation, so donors who have given money to the ...

Researcher: Do you have multiple foundations? For the fine arts?

Williams: The Foundation, so the one foundation handles all scholarship moneys for the college as a whole, and then we have five-ish lines of endowment for the fine arts within the foundation. We have several pots of money that sort of work together to provide scholarship money for students.

Researcher: That's wonderful.

At another point in the interview, we revisited scholarship money for students.

Williams explained more about the strong scholarships there at Fermata:

Williams: I think that finding ways to make sure that you have a strong scholarship foundation is important. Particularly as you think about students who both are going to study music full time, but also those who aren't, finding ways to help support that passion, so that they can do both of those things. When I think about music students and the number of credit hours that they have to complete as part of their degree, particularly at the community college level, they can't work. They can't afford to work. The same is true of theater students, you know? If they're in a production, they're working every evening on rehearsal, and it makes working very difficult. And yet we know that our community college students often need to work in order to sustain themselves, and so making sure that you continue to build a scholarship foundation so that you can provide students with enough financial support that maybe even if they can't stop working altogether, they can work less.

So that they can have time to actually be successful. I would say that's something that's important in terms of sustainability.

I researched the documents that highlighted scholarship trends for the fine arts students. Figure 4.25 is a bar graph depicting the fine arts scholarships (for all of the fine arts programs) during the past five years.

Sustainable elements at Fermata in regards to partnerships were plentiful. From tax and levee money for the fine arts programs, to strong foundation donors, to community art patrons' contributions, equipment and facilities have been able to be modernized. Stronger articulation agreements for the fine arts programs between Fermata and area regents have aided in the sustainability of their programs. Professional fine artists are invited to perform at Fermata, involving the community and the students with performance and shows.

Educating faculty, staff, students and the community about the benefits of the fine arts at Fermata has facilitated in the programs' sustainability and success. Educating the area

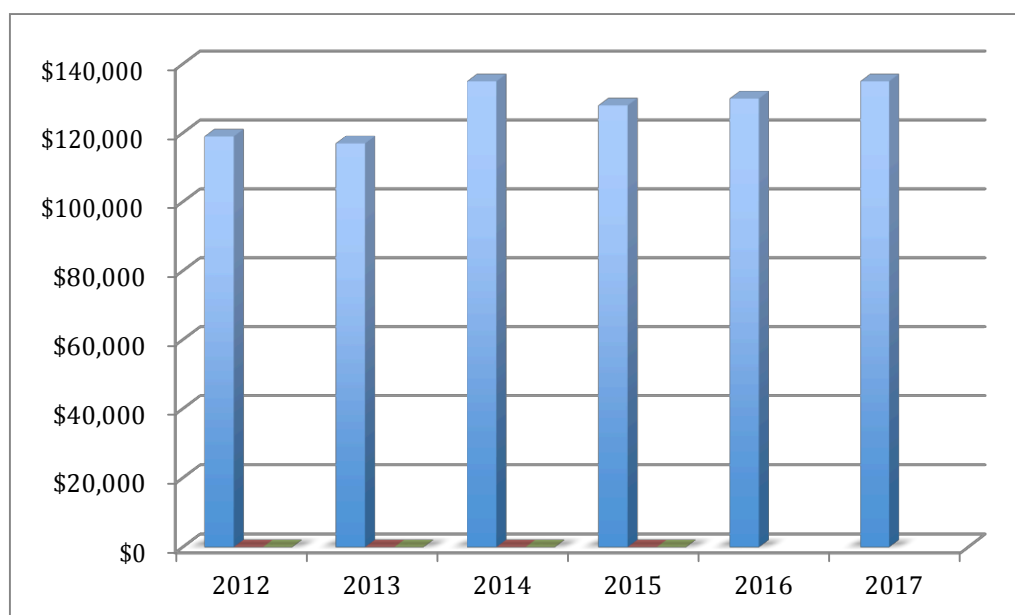


Figure 4.25. Total scholarship money for fine arts students

high school students about financial benefits in attending a community college has been an effective avenue for Fermata. Employing full-time fine arts recruiters has also contributed to the education of their programs as well as marketing these programs.

#### **Movement 6: “Legato Community College” – Maestro “Regina Carter”**

Legato Community College is located in a prosperous urban Midwestern town. This town radiates prosperity in its economic development, low crime rates, high quality education, cultural meccas, and low unemployment rates. With four K-12 school districts and seven higher education institutions, this community holds many awards for its quality of education.

Legato Community College set down its roots before the turn of the 20 century, but took a little longer to establish its governing infrastructure. With a beginning student enrollment of slightly over a thousand, Legato has grown to its current size of over 20,000,

employing many thousands of workers. Legato Community College is known for its vast amount of partnerships with area businesses. Over the many years of its continual growth, Legato has seen many renovations, additions, and community support through bonds.

My visit to Legato Community College started with a tour of the magnificent facilities. Four recital/performance auditoriums exist on the campus of Legato: two main performance auditoriums, a recital hall (Figure 4.26) and a black box for theater performances. Along with many green rooms and changing rooms, there was also a costume shop and a stage prop repair room. Because it was so unusual to see both of these last rooms, especially at a community college, I included a picture of both (Figure 4.27 and 4.28). From this beautiful auditorium area, we journeyed to the arts area. Student artwork was showcased in most open areas of the campus, illustrated in Figure 4.29.



Figure 4.26. Recital hall at Legato



Figure 4.27. Costume shop



Figure 4.28. Set and prop repair shop



Figure 4.29. Student artwork

Four kilns stood in the large ceramics room along with plentiful storage space. There was also an outside area adjacent to the room that is used for better ventilation. Two art rooms with plentiful storage areas and equipment also are a part of this school. Graphic design areas with up-to-date equipment for the students were available. Photography areas included a studio, two dark rooms, photography printers (there were about five of these) and framed student photography adorning the area.

The music facilities included a band and choir room, about five practice rooms, faculty offices, classrooms, music equipment and repertoire storage areas. I was privileged to be able to sit in on a choral ensemble rehearsal. Following are some of the comments that I put in my field note journal while listening to this group: “Used a grand piano;” “Conversation about how to sing multiple genres;” “The teacher would sing each of the lines with the groups to help them;” “Sight-read a new piece using sol-fege”(sol-fege syllables are do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti which help vocal students learn the notes of a scale); “A lot of enthusiasm from the teacher;” “The students were extremely engaged and excited;” and “I’d hire this group for a gig!” They were wonderful. Figure 4.30 is a clip from that rehearsal:



Figure 4.30. Audio of chamber ensemble

After sitting in on the vocal ensemble, we listened to a presentation at the campus’s museum. The lecture was given by the criminal justice instructor from Legato who was giving the presentation about a local artist’s painting that was showcased. He wanted us to look at a painting and soak up the details much like a criminal investigator has to do at a crime scene. With questions to the group about the painting’s details, we looked objectively and subjectively at the painting. After the presentation, we toured the museum. Local artists are showcased as well as world-renown artists. Figures 4.31 – 4.33 are three photos taken during the tour.



Figure 4.31. Dog-tag armor



Figure 4.32. Painting



Figure 4.33. Wood sculpture

Our interview followed the tour of the museum and lunch at the museum's café. We discussed sustainable elements of Legato's fine arts programs. Carter explained the building project of a new fine arts building by 2018 that would house sculpture, ceramics, painting, photography, film and the graphic design program. The building these programs were currently housed in what would become the home to the career and technical education center for automotive, HVAC, metal fabrication, electrics, and electronics. The new fine arts building will reside next to the museum, the center will house the four auditoria, and the culinary academy building so that "...all of the arts will be in that quadrant of the campus".

When I asked Carter about the changes that the fine arts have undergone in the last five years, she explained that the biggest change was faculty turnover due to retirements.

Researcher: How have the fine arts programs changed, if they have, at your institution over the past five years?

Carter: There's been a small decrease in enrollment, which is equal to the decrease in enrollment at the overall college. It's more or less parallel what the enrollment decline has been at the college in general as the economy has gotten better over the last three years. The biggest change in the fine arts here is that we've had a huge turnover in faculty. I have retirements in photography and fine arts, in two-dimensional fine arts, in theater, two in humanities, one in art history, most of which I haven't been able to replace just until this coming year. Last year, I was able to hire a new filmmaker/photography full-timer.

This coming year, I'll be able to hire a new theater person and a new fine arts person, which makes me very happy. Those are the biggest changes. That is even expanded beyond the fine arts areas. The whole campus has lost an awful lot of full-time faculty members that they've been very selective about who gets replaced, and that's all in an effort to keep what we call a sustainable salary and benefit line.

Researcher: When you have a turnover, it's people retiring and not people leaving?

Carter: That is true. Without sounding ... Nobody leaves here for a better job. You get here, you meet the people, you see the facilities, you get stuck.

We talked about more changes in the fine arts programs over the past five years.

Discussions about the theater program commenced. The theater program seemed to be the biggest program of the school. Following is an excerpt about the theater program.

Researcher: Over the past five years, have fine arts classes increased or decreased, and what are reasons?

Carter: Decreased, for the most of the parts, and it's unique to each area. Actually, theater is pretty much maintained because they do an awful lot of recruiting. They have a very good reputation amongst all the local theater, high school theater programs. There's a lot of word of mouth, and a lot of folks know that if you want to get a good theater education and have a lot of experience early in your college travels, you come here first for two years, you're going to get to act in shows, you're going to get to work on crews, whereas if you go to a four-year school, you might sit a year or two before you got enough cred, to actually get working or get cast in a show. We do very well in theater.

It also helps that we're adding some online sections of interest, and that program's been fairly strong. Music has dropped a little bit, except for the recording arts program, which I can't find enough seats for. You can look through the schedule, those classes typically, and a lot of them have waiting lists. That seems to be a very interesting topic to any member of this youth who are going into a variety of fields, from filmmaking to, if they have a band or they fancy themselves a rapper or they want to create YouTube videos, if they want to play an instrument of some sort, it seems like recording arts tends to be the best way for them to market themselves.

There was a large amount of discussion about partnerships Legato Community College has with different groups and companies. Carter described some of the abundant collaborations in the following excerpt.



Researcher: Do the fine arts at your community college have any partnerships with the community?

Carter: We're immersed so heavily, not only with the internal partnerships we have with places and the "auditorium center", but also externally with all the arts organizations around town, starting with the "large art museum" the "Shakespearean festival", "the jazz orchestra", the "community choral group". It goes on and on.

We have, in the graphic design program, we have partnerships with almost every one of the major industries, advertising, graphic design, creative industries in town, which is a benefit for our students because they either get internships there or they get to get taught by an employee that works there as an adjunct for us. They hear guest lectures from those areas. Last semester, we had "Sam" who is the CEO of a "professional digital company" here in town, and they're a digital graphic design firm. They had just finished their "project" [a major campaign].

Further into the interview, I asked about the repercussions of the elimination of any of these partnerships.

Researcher: If you took away your community partners, what would happen to your fine arts?

Carter: They would still exist, but they would be a shell. It really does ... The guest speakers we bring, the out-of-classroom experiences we provide, they're invaluable. You then, at that point, you're just pretty much relegated to the fine work the teachers do in the classroom, which I'm not taking anything away.

Film experiences like theater events that you saw that you remember. Did you work backstage on a thing? Were you cast in a show? You might not learn anything you learned in an acting class, but you remember every performance or every night that you were in a chorus or had a lead in a play or something like that or that summer that you worked at this internship in this place.

Those are the kind of things that are remembered and those are the takeaways where you could go apply everything you're learning in a class, but you do that in a much more memorable or retainable way. If they went away, it wouldn't make it as near as much fun. The students wouldn't get near as much out of it, so we're very blessed that this is, indeed, the case.

Because many community colleges partake in fund-raisers to support some or all of their fine arts programs, I asked if there were any at Legato. Carter replied:

Carter: Only through donations that are strictly voluntary as people come and go into events. There might be an envelope in the program that says, "If you feel so inclined," or there'll be a box at the end of the ... There's no active or concerted effort at fundraising. One, the Foundation's not a big fan of that. Two, we haven't really needed to do that.

The principal sustaining element of the fine arts programs at Legato Community College is the numerous partnerships they have. Whether partnering with the cultural hub's fine arts programs, area K-12 schools, philanthropists, art collectors, or political state representatives, this school has an abundance of partnerships in which they collaborate. Local artists showcase their artwork in the museum as well as host workshops to the art students. Graphic designers from all over the country bring ideas and seminars to the students at Legato. Professional theater companies come and give workshops to the theater students as well as engage in a performance with the students. As we were in the middle of the interview, a prospective client called asking if they could use Legato Community College as a site for a film later this year. Throughout the tour, I saw numerous advertisements for partnership opportunities for the fine arts students with different clients.

In the course of our conversation, Carter described some of the many partnerships that Legato Community College had with many different groups. Here is an excerpt explaining a few of these partnerships:

Researcher: Do the fine arts at your community college have any partnerships with the community?

Carter: We're immersed so heavily, not only with the internal partnerships we have with places like the and the [art center], but also externally with all the arts organizations around town, starting with the [downtown art museum], the Shakespearean festival, the [city's] jazz Orchestra, the

[county's] community chorus. It goes on and on. Each adjunct member has ...

Carter: We have, in the graphic design program, we have partnerships with almost every one of the major industries, advertising, graphic design, creative industries in town, which is a benefit for our students because they either get internships there or they get to get taught by an employee that works there as an adjunct for us. They hear guest lectures from those areas.

All of the digital media, the television commercials, and everything they had produced, and he brought in and showed us all of those things for that and for the [a food chain] campaign and showed us how they started, where they started with the campaign it took to get to that point, and it was pretty fantastic just seeing that and knowing that came from here.

The second most sustainable element for this community college is the top-of-the-line equipment and performance areas for the students. I mentioned quite a few of these at the beginning of my description of the tour. For example, Figure 4.34 is a picture of the brand new recording studio at the school. Figure 4.35 shows the classroom attached to this recording studio, with an instructor area sanctioned off separately.

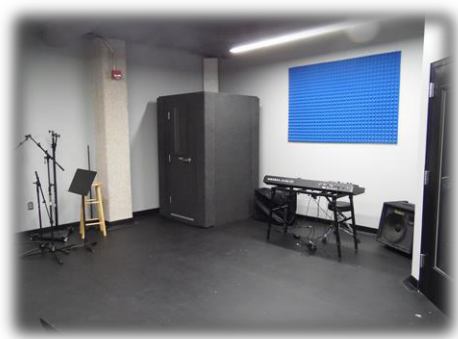


Figure 4.34. Recording studio



Figure 4.35. Two adjacent classrooms

In our conversation about new equipment and performance areas, we discussed the ongoing work toward a new fine arts building that will be built within the next two years. We also discussed staying ahead with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities of the area high school's new equipment and facilities. Following is an excerpt regarding our discussion.

Carter: The division is going to have a design division now where we can share resources and opportunities for the students and also a filmmaking program that we're very excited about, which frankly is too long in coming. We should have had one 10 years ago. Because like I said, because we're where we're at, we're very fortunate that we have the property tax, the values that we have and the money that we have, but it also starts in the high schools. If you've ever been to any of the high schools in [this area], they're all wealthy too and it really is kind of an arms race in terms of facilities. If I go to their advisory board meetings and I look at the facilities they have and I go oh my God, you have better facilities than I have. Better equipment than I have and I'm the next level up supposedly. As they build their high schools and they remodel their spaces we do everything we can just to stay up with-

Researcher: Because they're your feeders.

The third most viable sustaining factor of Legato were the many financial streams that support their fine arts programs. Through these financial resources, Legato Community College has been able to upgrade with new equipment, new buildings and lucrative renovations. Modernizing equipment and facilities advertise their arts programs to perspective students as an up-to-date campus. Levees, bonds, house taxes, private donors, philanthropists, politicians, and alumni have contributed specifically to the fine arts programs at Legato. Following is an excerpt from the interview when Carter discussed financial resources:

Carter: We're hoping that they'll (community donors) even pony up some money to remodel the ATB building. The funding for all of this is coming from bonds, it's coming from any revenues that we take in after all the bills are

paid at the end of the year and whatever private donations we can secure, but for Grant Tech Ed, for the welding labs, and then we know we have patrons interested in the fine arts studio. We'll have an architect hired. I don't have a design yet, but I have people that have contributed to the museum, have contributed to the colleges public art collection, our large philanthropist for the center have all expressed a raised eyebrow and interest when they've heard there's a new fine arts building committee.

Yeah, you know the [donors] have been large philanthropists, they buy a lot of art work for us. They have been large donators to the [museum], the college for years. They are running a ... Without saying too much, they've been asked to maintain a trust for a relative or somebody that has ... They have to spend two million dollars a year.

You got to give away two million dollars a year as part of this deceased man's last wishes. You know, I don't know for how many years.

A short time later in the interview, we discussed the financial situation surrounding the new fine arts building and the support for it. Following is an excerpt of that discussion.

Researcher: Where's the money coming from for this?

Carter: They're going to sell bonds. It's funny because the total project, they're projecting for all 10 of the initiatives is somewhere between 80 and 123 million dollars. To do all of them, they would have to sell bonds for that much and then they also look and see what our revenues going to be. Our extra money is going to be every year that we would put in reserve. They will spend ... Reserve has to be there, enough in the reserve fund to be able to pay salaries and benefits for six months in the event a tornado hit the campus and we had to close down classes.

Beyond that, anything that's there can be used however we see fit. Whether it's from new positions or new buildings. Once they get to that 75 percent of the salaries and benefits of that will sit there in the side. Everything else after that, and we're back to about that. The previous president spent a reserve, holy damn. This president has got it back up to where we're there. Anything we make going forward over the next 10 years is going to be really kind of up to whatever we do. They're thinking if we get four to seven million dollars a year over the next 10 years we can pay back our bonds awful quick, it's cheap to borrow money right now, unless bonding selling bonds in less than 2% interest. They were thinking now is the best time to do it.

Between our reserve funds, between our general capital funds, that's the other way we always donate. In the budget the build in capital improvement funds, which can also be used for that. That's a little bit, you also have to put new roofs in, fix the buildings as they break. They're spending 10 million right now before we even got to this point to replace all the HVAC in all the older buildings because you'll sit here all day and when a motor kicks on or a damper closes it just makes a God awful squeak, sounds like the building's haunted. And they're not electronic, they're not very efficient in terms of the motor, so all that's kind of ... That's all being updated. That's all part of the campus is 50 years old, we really get to the point where we do all that.

That's a separate pile of money. That's what the capital expenditure fund goes towards. If there's extra money in that every year, that could be shifted to this too. Then there will be a fundraising campaign. We'll reach out to these folks that are generally philanthropists, all these folks that have generally been very generous to us in the past and we'll get money from them. Whether it's for the career tech education facilities, I don't know how they're going to do that yet. That plan hasn't been formulated other than they're starting to leak that we're doing it.

The fourth sustainable element for Legato Community College is the fine arts student scholarships. Figure 4.36 is a bar chart that illustrates the allotment of scholarship money for the four fine arts areas at Legato for Fall and Spring semester, 2016-2017. Scholarship money helps students pursue their degrees without more pressure on them to carry full-time jobs at the same time.

As shown Figure 4.36, the theater program is the largest program at Legato, and greater scholarship money is available for those students than for the other three categories of the fine arts. Challenges seem minimal at Legato Community College for their fine arts programs. Renovations of older facilities and modernization of fine arts equipment keep them in the “evolutionary phase” that Carter explained. The continuation of partnerships prospers more growth for Legato in the future.

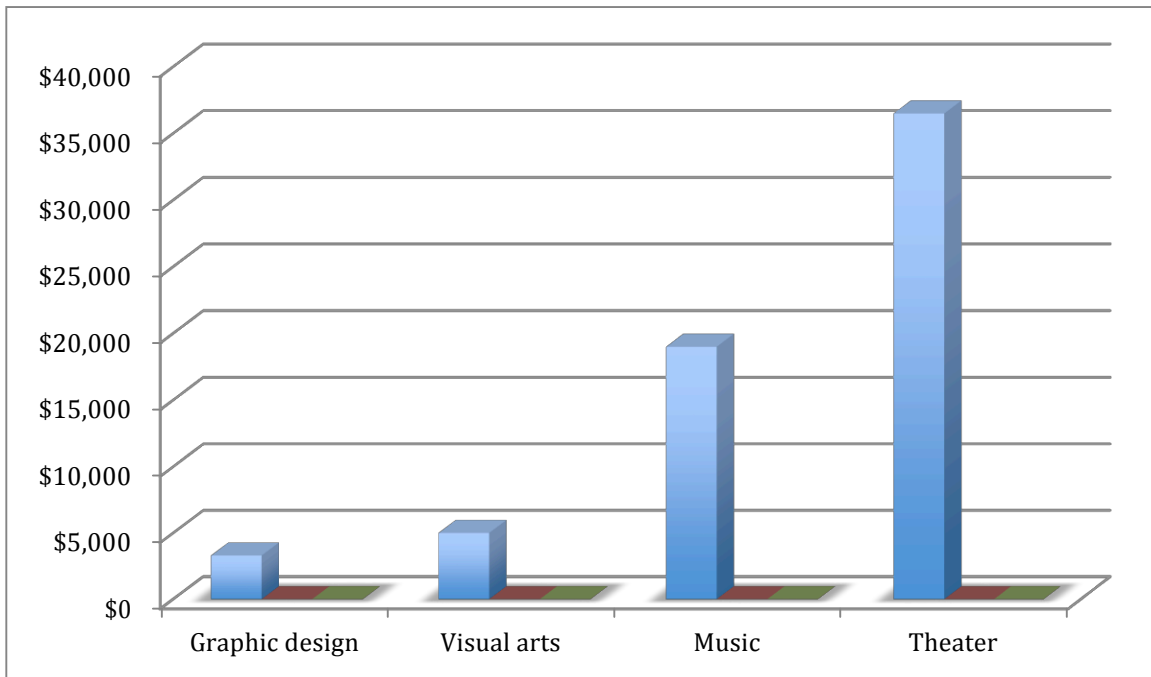


Figure 4.35. Scholarship money for fine arts students at Legato

The environment around Legato reacts to their needs for their fine arts programs. Financial supporters come to the front line when facilities and/or equipment are needed. The addition of new programs, such as the music media program, shows the community the efforts the community college is making to stay modern. Stronger marketing, especially through more digital avenues, advertise the programs and events in multiple ways. The desire of the community is for the community college to utilize paper-less marketing in the future, which the college is initiating now through the use of more digital monitors around the campus. The community arts patrons want more visibility of professional fine artists on the community college's campus, so the school invites professionals quite a few times a year to perform and bring art shows.

### **Cross-case Analysis**

Through the cross-case analysis, I discovered that the predominant sustainable theme was partnerships. There were many sub-themes to partnership theme that emerged as well.

The first sub-theme of partnerships was financial resources. Data revealed that financial resources were sought after by the community colleges through multiple facets, including fund-raisers where the community collaborated with the fine arts programs to bring money into the programs. Partnerships with local businesses have brought financial resources to the programs aiding in student scholarship money and repairs of equipment. Donors and foundation members were key financial contributors to all of the colleges, supplying a money stream to support the fine arts. In most cases, the donors and foundations helped to equip the fine arts programs with more modern equipment. Administrators also have allocated funds specifically to these programs. Levee and bond money from the community added to the programs' support of new buildings and equipment. Grant writers employed at the community colleges added to the financial support by applying for specific fine arts grants. With these financial assets, equipment has been updated and repaired, facilities have been renovated, new fine arts buildings have been erected, and student scholarship money has been awarded.

Another sub-theme of the main theme of partnerships, was community resources. All six of the sites utilized community assets to sustain and promote their fine arts. The sharing of community space in the form of equipment and facilities was a shared experience. Churches, community centers, nursing homes and museums were used for practice and/or performance for the students. Cultural centers' equipment and facilities allowed for the students to have more opportunities that might not have been available at the community



college. Collaboration with community artists in shows and projects allowed students more performance opportunities and exposure in their community. Creative artwork in downtown areas through a collaboration of fine arts teachers, students and community members was a common thread among the schools.

Collaboration with professional, high-quality fine artists was another significant partnership. Whether it was alumni from the community colleges coming back to bring their arts to their schools or professionals from a different area, this partnership provided a strong connection. These professional fine artists would come to perform enhancing the partnership between the professionals and the “up-and-coming” fine art students. This fostered a great relationship in the community of the coalition between fine artists, young and old, novices and professionals. These professional artists would conduct workshops, host seminars and give performances allowing the fine art students to inquire about fine arts careers, better ways of crafting their art and ultimately showcase a higher level of artistry to the students.

Within the community colleges, partnerships were explored to support the fine arts students’ success in their education. Recruiting efforts were used to showcase the students and their talents to the area high schools. This advertised the fine arts programs at the community college, the talented students in these areas, and offered exposure of possible fine arts career choices. Stronger articulation agreements between the community college fine arts programs and the regents were also a connection that has increasingly become stronger over the past five years. Community college fine arts programs have difficulty transferring their courses to four-year institutions as anything but electives. This results in lost credits or an extension of the degree for transferring fine art students. All of the sites in this study were

working on making this process more successful for the fine arts students so they can transfer these fine arts credits rather than taking multiple steps back to regain footage.

A second sub-theme that emerged was how the environment in and around the community college interacted with the gradient of need for the fine arts. Community college fine arts leaders are trying new courses to gain more interest in the fine arts. Some are creating courses to support the technologically-savvy generation of students, such as a music media and digital photography. Performances and shows have become a requirement at some of the schools to emphasize the importance of taking what they learn in the classroom and utilizing it in a real fine arts setting. More advanced marketing techniques are being employed. Fine arts shows and performances are put on faculty and staff's web campus calendars. Digital advertising on monitors around the campus of upcoming shows and performances catch the eyes of the students and visitor alike. Competitions are organized to promote a higher quality of artwork with award incentives for the student winners. The schools are educating their communities more about the importance of the fine arts and supplying the fine arts students with options of mixing their arts discipline with another discipline such as business.

Communities showed their support for the fine arts by renting building spaces to fine arts programs. Community churches were donating their spaces and equipment to student musicians. Future ideas of using vacant buildings in the downtown area for fine arts students are building, which would enable students to practice their art in a different setting. This support would increase the visibility of campus students in downtown areas, and help to market the community college's fine arts programs to area businesses. Coalitions of the community college fine arts programs with the community's fine arts programs have gained

great momentum and formed strong partnerships for both schools and communities. Community businesses are seeking out fine artists for parties, celebrations and retirements, often coming to the community college for recommendations. Professional fine artists are brought in by the community's "cultural alliance" group to showcase a professional level of artistry for the students and community.

Another theme that emerged from the study was how the community colleges are overcoming difficulties in sustaining their fine arts programs. Challenges in supporting the fine arts programs at the community colleges were discussed at each site. The community colleges were adjusting to these challenges and making changes to keep their programs sustaining.

Transferability of the fine arts courses to the four-year schools was a challenge. Articulation agreements and communication with the four-year schools are being explored to assist with this challenge. The community colleges were creating better pathways for their fine arts students to aid in their success. Stronger communication with universities would solidify smoother transitions for the students.

The decrease in full-time faculty and an increase in adjuncts at community colleges has become a challenge. With large percentages of non-traditional students and commuting students, community colleges have faced decreased interest in their fine arts. An outcome of this has been fewer full-time faculty in the arts and more adjuncts. A response to this challenging circumstance has been to bring in community artists to teach the courses at the community college showing the students their involvement in their professional artistic career and the education of it. Some of the schools were spreading their sights to find the extremely talented fine artists to teach the adjunct fine arts classes and this has made a huge

difference. Students would take the photography class with the professional photographer who owns their own business downtown, for example.

State financial allocations as well as other financial streams that support the community college have been challenging because of their inconsistencies. Bonds, levee money and home taxes have combatted some of the financial strain, yet many of the community college leaders are still looking to the community for arts patrons to fund their programs. The added strain of the financial burden has affected the allocation of adequate and up-to-date equipment and facilities for the students. Discussions with the administration and the Board of Trustees were frequent to voice the importance of support. Fund-raisers have assisted in many of the programs as a means of bringing in new equipment.

Dual-enrollment had its benefits and costs for the community college. Aiding the high school student, who can take courses that apply to their diploma as well as their associate of arts degree at the community college, dual enrollment was popular. Generally, students who took dual enrollment courses are enrolled in core courses at the community college, not enrichment courses such as the fine arts. Recruiting efforts to the high schools and marketing of fine arts opportunities aided in the dually-enrolled students to show other avenues they might pursue, as well as core courses they may take while are on the campus. Some of these efforts have been successful and some have just begun. All of the participants discussed that more communication with these students in the future would be beneficial.

A need and desire at all of the sites that participated in this study was for more contemporary and updated equipment and facilities for fine arts students. A difficulty the community colleges were experiencing was financing equipment because of its expense. Community donors and arts patrons have helped alleviate this challenge for some of the

schools. Other schools were starting to tap into possible financial streams that might assist with this need in the future.

Alongside this challenge has been the constraint of shared spaces among different fine arts disciplines. This has proven not to be an ideal and conducive environment for the students. With shared spaces there are shared problems with each discipline's equipment. Looking to community buildings, cultural centers and churches has been a creative answer to some of these challenges giving the disciplines their own areas.

The last challenge that arose from this study was a decline in student interest in the fine arts. At the same community college, there were strong and thriving art programs as well as programs that were barely sustaining. With a decrease in student enrollment over the past five years, classes for some of the fine arts were sparse. Fine arts students were being encouraged to participate in plays, shows, performances and recitals that gravitate to evenings and weekends. Some of the participants explained that, with a large commuter campus, the students go to school and then leave for their jobs, which decreases student involvement. Answers to these challenges were more difficult to find. A few schools were utilizing an "open hour" in the middle of a few school days to try to organize a common meeting time for ensembles, rehearsals, lessons, etc. Others were looking into internships within the fine arts community to give the students more experience and knowledge.

Since the varying partnerships were the prominent theme for sustainability in this study, I address this issue in each site utilizing excerpts from the interviews. Whether partnering with foundation members, community members, local artists, K-12 schools, community arts programs or close proximity cultural meccas, these schools have prospered because of the collaborations and partnerships that they have made and nurtured over the

years. Interestingly, some partnerships were based on historical norms and traditions of the school and dated back to when people could not remember, yet others were based on contemporary collaborations. Workshops, seminars and summer art camps with K-12 area students were common answers from my participants. Most of the sites that I studied had a partnership with the area's cultural center, increasing the school's visibility and marketability and giving the students further opportunities.

Accent Community College is a very historical and traditional icon in the community, with historical partnerships older than anyone could remember. Partnerships with community members provide opportunities for the school's band and choir programs, bringing in people of all ages to make music. Following is an excerpt from the interview about partnerships:

Researcher: Good. Is there any one person in the community that is a huge fine arts ... What am I trying to say? Partner, I guess between your school and the community?

Ellington: Different areas for different people. The community choir is a separate entity who runs a separate director who we also pay a little bit who partners with us as same as there is somebody in the band position who we work with and there's people over in the art area that we work with. Music is really big in this town. Lots of support here for music and one of the reasons why I think music, particularly the band hasn't faced the cuts that it might have faced otherwise is because it would cause a community uproar.

Dolce Community College collaborated with many different groups including: the community's cultural music center, eight other higher education institutions within a forty-mile radius, area churches for space, and area schools for outreaching opportunities. There was a large summer music festival that has been a fundraiser bringing in past students who have gone on to be professional musicians. Tickets were sold and many stellar musicians have come to perform and give workshops to area musicians. This community center that

Dolce utilizes for their music program, employed seventeen part-time music teachers and two full-time staff. About two hundred students are enrolled at this community center, some of which are Dolce students. Recitals were organized for performing opportunities through this center. Following is an excerpt from my interview with Fitzgerald about the relationship between Dolce (Campus B) and the community cultural center:

Fitzgerald: That said, we do have applied instrumental lessons offered here, which are taught in conjunction with the [community music center]...I work with [the director], and what we've got is when students come in and express an interest in doing applied music, they tell our advisors here, and they line them up with the appropriate faculty over at [at the community center], and then they pay an applied music fee, which we then forward to the instructor there. Those instructors have to meet the Higher Learning Commission faculty credentialing standards.

Forte Community College utilized partnerships in some of the same ways as the first two, but with a different angle. Forte partnered with area schools to bring the fine arts students together in a single setting. Forte Community College employed faculty members that are also on the area's museum board and on fine arts' boards for the community, which increased the partnerships between the school and the community. Fine arts projects were collaborated and produced between Forte students and other community fine artists.

Other projects that Forte was involved with are: art murals in the downtown area that the art students paint, jazz festival that incorporates the high school jazz students, art shows and workshops as well as summer art camps. In our interview, Shaw highlighted many beneficial partnerships that Forte Community College nurtures. Following is an excerpt from the interview where he describes a few of the relationships:

Researcher: Does the community college have any partnerships with the community arts? Has that relationship changed in the past year?

Shaw: A recent partnership project was through Art and [art professor]. At the downtown bus stop, her art appreciation students worked with I believe it

was our community appearance group. They partnered and they painted ... They did “A Starry Night”, but they used [area] buildings to create the scene inside the bus stop downtown. That project just finished up late last summer. I think they were done in the summer. We have those partnerships.

Usually our choir director, is great about writing local grants to get additional projects funded by the Foundations.

We did an [downtown art] project a few years in a row. The college owns a golf course. It's where we have some programs. Our culinary arts students do their practice out there, our hospitality management program is out there, also, our turf grass management program. [This downtown project] was a January opportunity since it's kind of cold and there's very little to do.

The three years the project was strongest, we had some different fine arts piece every night of the week for a week in late January. There would be maybe a photography show. There might be poetry or other type of reading. A cabaret-type night. Then the major production, we bring a small crew out from New York City to do a couple of weekend performances and just create that opportunity for a full ten days.

Largo Community College offered an art major to its community college students.

They partnered with local artists as well as a famous art museum in the area. Largo had a band that students and community members alike could partake in, which brought in partnerships with collaboration. Largo also had a “pre-college cohort” program for high school students. This program assisted high school students taking college credit courses at Largo while they are finishing their high school diploma. This program has brought in a lot of talented musicians and artists to Largo's programs. In our interview, Goodman revealed important partnerships that Largo has. Following is an excerpt of our conversation:

Goodman: We have programs that involve schools. The Jazz Festival would be one of them.

Goodman: ... a show that involved area high schools. We do a Science Olympiad here that involves schools. It's a regional event. We have partnerships like that. Now, I think we are essentially partnered with [the area's] school district, because that's the district that we're in, so there are a lot of field trips from those schools to our campus. Then, we also host either a night or a day of very much like recruiting, where we'll all sit at a desk and those students



will come by. With the Early College Academy, that's a very strong relationship with the school district.

Fermata Community College thrived on the immense amounts of partnerships..

Articulation agreements with four-year regents were made to ensure fine arts credits transfer directly. Transfer partnerships with other area four-year institutions were beneficial.

Fermata collaborated with their continuing education department to fill fine arts classes with students first, and then with community members that want to join these classes. There were partnerships with the area's museum as well as the visual arts council. Fermata collaborated with the state's cultural corridor alliance. A local music store's owner partnered with Fermata to aid in the addition of equipment for the school as well as to donate scholarship money for fine arts students. A partnership with the National Accredited Society of Music ensured the credibility of Fermata's music courses.

During the course of our conversation, Williams described many partnerships that Fermata Community College has made through the years. Following is an excerpt from our conversation that highlights several of them:

Williams: They are a good partner. The "cultural alliance" is also a good partner. They are more of a media and activism presence in the corridor area. We pay a fee to belong to that organization, and all of our fine and performing arts events are advertised on their website, in their calendar, and then we get invited to workshop things that they do on grant writing in the arts and that sort of thing. That's been a good partnership for us.

We've had members of our faculty and the staff serve on the city's "visual arts council" who are responsible for sort of the placement of public art in the city, so we've had a couple of our folks sit on that commission to talk about collaboration with them. We do lots of local school outreach, so we have a, for example, workplace learning connections group, where middle school students come to our campus and they have a day of exploring the arts, and what career fields are available to them if that's something that they want to pursue.

Legato Community College was quoted to be in their “evolutionary phase” in regards to their fine arts programs. With the prospect of their new fine arts building, which will be erected in 2018, partnerships are bountiful with community members and donors. There are good relationships with the area’s fine arts community in the area. Working professional fine artists are teachers at Legato, perpetuating the collaboration between students and professionals. Film companies have partnered with Legato to use their campus for films. There is also a railroad partnership at Legato (not dealing with the fine arts, but still a huge partnership) that brings in at least twelve hundred students a year to study railroad engineering. This program utilizes a sixty-million-dollar facility on the campus, supplied by the community to educate the railroad engineer students. Following is an excerpt from the interview that deals with the railroad partnership with Legato:

Carter: ...and we have a very lucrative, very successful partnership with [prominent railroad company] railroad here on campus. They have an-almost-60-million-dollar facility in our ITC building

Where they train every one of their engineers, technicians right here on this campus.

Part of their training also is all the welding that they do for their rails-

And all the different kind of ways they do that. They have all the training facilities and everything over there. They're quite fantastic. They need to expand also. Those welding labs, those areas will be expanded and updated and redone in the new ATB building once they get that built. We have to move out first.

They're bringing almost 1200 people a year through here doing training.

They have offices, they have staff, they share the ITC building, which is over just west of ATB, we didn't go through there. They share kind of a common plod, so when we move out of the ATB it will be real simple to remodel that and create connections between those two buildings that will allow them to come step out of their offices and walk down the court yard to the welding labs that would support that. In addition to our own welding labs that we would offer for training certification here and for the community.

The theater department was the largest and most prominent fine arts program at Legato Community College. The theater program partnered with many community theater groups for collaborative creation and production of plays and programs.

Legato's museum showcases area artists' works. Faculty members can sign up on a monthly rotational basis to talk about the artist of the month and their work, integrating faculty members and community artists to educate the public about new artwork. Following is an excerpt from our interview describing the partnerships:

Carter: The [art center] affords us really nice facilities for the theater, and that's one of the biggest selling points to get students in the door. We do a lot of workshops, seminars, invite high school programs to see our shows, show the quality of the work, and that really gets the students excited about our program. When they meet the faculty, they're even more blown away, so that really helps. The faculty is very nurturing, very friendly, very good, high standards, so that helps. The music area, we're expanding in the digital areas, but the choir and the instrumental areas are sufficient for the enrollment that we have, for the students that we have. We continue to provide new equipment for them.

### **Coda – Conclusion of the “Symphony”**

The following section is conclusion of the “symphony” of this chapter. Each movement represented a researched site and each maestro is the participant that I interacted with about the fine arts programs. The context of each site was established through the use of a description of the community surrounding the college. My visit was described in detail, and the sustaining factors for each school have been outlined.

A coda in music is the ending of a movement or a multi-movement work, such as a symphony. Literally translated it means “a tail” and serves that function in music, ending the piece of music. Since the predominating sustainable factor for all of the schools was the

plethora of partnerships each utilized, I have chosen an excerpt from each interview regarding each school's partnerships.

Accent Community College was a very historical and traditional icon in the community with partnerships that went back in history farther than anyone could remember. Partnerships with community members provided opportunities for the school's band and choir programs, bringing in people of all ages to make music.

Following is an excerpt from the interview about partnerships:

Researcher: Good. Is there any one person in the community that is a huge fine arts ... What am I trying to say? Partner, I guess between your school and the community?

Ellington: Different areas for different people. The community choir is a separate entity who runs a separate director who we also pay a little bit who partners with us as same as there is somebody in the band position who we work with and there's people over in the art area that we work with. Music is really big in this town. Lots of support here for music and one of the reasons why I think music, particularly the band hasn't faced the cuts that it might have faced otherwise is because it would cause a community uproar.

Dolce Community College collaborated with many different groups including: the community's cultural music center, eight other higher education institutions within a forty-mile radius, area churches for space, and area schools for outreaching opportunities. There was also a large summer music festival that was a fundraiser bringing in past students who have gone on to be professional musicians. Tickets were sold and many stellar musicians would perform and give workshops to area musicians. This community center that Dolce utilized for their music program employed seventeen part-time music teachers and two full-time staff. About two hundred students took lessons at this community center, some of which are Dolce students. Recitals were organized for performing opportunities through this center.

Following is an excerpt from my interview with Fitzgerald about the relationship between Dolce (Campus B) and the community cultural center:

Fitzgerald: That said, we do have applied instrumental lessons offered here, which are taught in conjunction with the [community music center].. I work with [the director], and what we've got is when students come in and express an interest in doing applied music, they tell our advisors here, and they line them up with the appropriate faculty over at [at the community center], and then they pay an applied music fee, which we then forward to the instructor there. Those instructors have to meet the Higher Learning Commission faculty credentialing standards.

Forte Community College forged partnerships in some of the same ways as the first two, but also with differing approaches. Forte, as well, partnered with area schools to bring the fine arts students together in a single setting. Forte Community College had faculty members that are also on the area's museum board and are on fine arts boards for the community which increased the partnerships between the school and the community. Fine arts projects are collaborated between Forte students and other community fine artists.

Other projects that Forte participated in were: art murals in the downtown area that the art students paint, jazz festival that incorporates the high school jazz students, art shows and workshops as well as summer art camps. In our interview, Shaw highlighted many beneficial partnerships that Forte Community College nurtures. Following is an excerpt from the interview where he describes quite a few of those relationships.

Researcher: Does the community college have any partnerships with the community arts? Has that relationship changed in the past year?

Shaw: A recent partnership project was through Art and [art professor]. At the downtown bus stop, her art appreciation students worked with I believe it was our PICA group, P-I-C-A, Pride in Community Appearance. They partnered and they painted ... They did "A Starry Night," but they used [area] buildings to create the scene inside the bus stop downtown. That project just finished up late last summer. I think they were done in the summer. We have those partnerships.

Usually our choir director, is great about writing local grants to get additional projects funded by the Foundations.

We did an “arts downtown” project a few years in a row. The college owns a golf course. It's where we have some programs. Our culinary arts students do their practice out there, our hospitality management program is out there, also, our turf grass management program. “Arts downtown” was a January opportunity since it's kind of cold and there's very little to do.

The three years the project was strongest, we had some different fine arts piece every night of the week for a week in late January. There would be maybe a photography show. There might be poetry or other type of reading. A cabaret-type night. Then the major production, we bring a small crew out from New York City to do a couple of weekend performances and just create that opportunity for a full ten days.

Largo Community College offered an art major to its community college students.

They partnered with an infamous art museum in the area helps advocate for the visual arts at this school. Largo had a band that students and community members alike could partake in, which brought in partnerships with collaboration. Largo also had an Early College Academy program for high school students. This program helped high school students to take college credit courses at Largo while they were finishing their high school diploma. This program brought in a lot of talented musicians and artists to Largo's programs.

In our interview, Goodman revealed important partnerships that Largo has.

Following is an excerpt discussing partnerships.

Goodman: We have programs that involve schools. The Jazz Festival would be one of them.

Researcher: That's interesting.

Goodman: ... a show that involved area high schools. We do a Science Olympiad here that involves schools. It's a regional event. We have partnerships like that. Now, I think we are essentially partnered with [the area's] school district, because that's the district that we're in, so there are a lot of field trips from those schools to our campus. Then, we also host either a night or a day of very much like recruiting, where we'll all sit at a desk and those students

will come by. With the “Pre-College Experience” that's a very strong relationship with the school district.

Fermata Community College thrived on the immense amounts of partnerships they have. Articulation agreements with four-year regents have been made so that fine arts credits transfer directly. Transfer partnerships with other area four-year institutions have helped as well. Fermata collaborated with their continuing education department to fill fine arts classes with students first, and then with community members that want to join these classes. There were partnerships with the area's museum as well as the visual arts council. Fermata collaborated with the state's cultural corridor alliance. A local music store's owner partnered with Fermata through their foundation to aid in the addition of equipment for the school, as well as donated scholarship money for fine arts students. A partnership with the National Accredited Society of Music ensured the credibility of Fermata's music courses.

During the course of our conversation, Williams described many partnerships that Fermata Community College has made through the years. Following is an excerpt from our conversation that highlighted several of their partnerships:

Williams: They are a good partner. The Cultural Corridor Alliance is also a good partner. They are more of a media and activism presence in the corridor area. We pay a fee to belong to that organization, and all of our fine and performing arts events are advertised on their website, in their calendar, and then we get invited to workshop things that they do on grant writing in the arts and that sort of thing. That's been a good partnership for us.

We've had members of our faculty and the staff serve on the city's Visual Arts Council, so our visual arts ... It's Commission. I'm sorry. Visual Arts Commission, who are responsible for sort of the placement of public art in the city, so we've had a couple of our folks sit on that commission to talk about collaboration with them. We do lots of local school outreach, so we have a, for example, workplace learning connections group, where middle school students come to our campus and they have a day of exploring the arts, and what career fields are available to them if that's something that they want to pursue.

Legato Community College was quoted to be in the “evolutionary phase” of fine arts programming. With the prospect of a new fine arts building, which will be erected in 2018, partnerships were bountiful with community members and donors. There were good relationships with the area’s fine arts community. Working professional fine artists are teachers at Legato, perpetuating the collaboration between students and professionals. Film companies have partnered with Legato to use their campus for films. There is also an industry partnership at Legato that brings in approximately 1200 students per year to study railroad engineering. This program utilized a sixty-million-dollar facility on the campus, supplied by the community to educate railroad engineer students. Following is an excerpt from the interview that discussed the railroad partnership with Legato:

Carter: and we have a very lucrative, very successful partnership with [prominent railroad company] railroad here on campus. They have a almost 60 million dollar facility [on our campus].

Where they train every one of their engineers, technicians right here on this campus.

Part of their training also is all the welding that they do for their rails-

And all the different kind of ways they do that. They have all the training facilities and everything over there. They're quite fantastic. They need to expand also. Those welding labs, those areas will be expanded and updated and redone in the new building once they get that built. We have to move out first.

Carter: They're bringing almost 1200 people a year through here doing training.

Yeah. They have offices, they have staff, they share the buildings, which is over just west [on campus], we didn't go through there. They share kind of a common plod, so when we move out of the ATB it will be real simple to remodel that and create connections between those two buildings that will allow them to come step out of their offices and walk down the courtyard to the welding labs that would support that. In addition to our own welding labs that we would offer for training certification here and for the community.



The theater department was the largest and most prominent fine arts program at Legato Community College. The theater program partnered with many community theater groups to collaborate on plays and programs.

Legato's museum showcased area artists' works. Faculty members signed up on a monthly rotational basis to talk about an artist their work, integrating faculty members and community expertise to educate the public about new artwork. Following is an excerpt from our interview describing the partnerships:

Carter: The [art center] affords us really nice facilities for the theater, and that's one of the biggest selling points to get students in the door. We do a lot of workshops, seminars, invite high school programs to see our shows, show the quality of the work, and that really gets the students excited about our program. When they meet the faculty, they're even more blown away, so that really helps. The faculty is very nurturing, very friendly, very good, high standards, so that helps. The music area, we're expanding in the digital areas, but the choir and the instrumental areas are sufficient for the enrollment that we have, for the students that we have. We continue to provide new equipment for them.

### **Summary**

In summation, each of the six sites had their own “tune” to their fine arts programs’ sustainability. With partnerships being the foremost sustaining factor, each school utilized partnerships in their own ways. Sub-themes of the partnerships included: those with community businesses, with community fine artists, with community resources, with legislators regarding tax levee and bond money, with K-12 schools and their fine arts programs, with four year regents in regards to articulation agreements, with foundations and private donors, with marketing departments to increase awareness and visibility, with other disciplines in their community colleges to increase collaborations, with administrators at their schools to articulate their needs, and with professional artists to collaborate talents.

Environmental factors interacted with the gradient of need for the fine arts. Collaborations with the fine arts students at the community colleges and community artists increased visibility for the colleges and added to the students' experiences. Stronger marketing tactics such as social media provided further exposure for the programs in a more modernized avenue. Community buildings and equipment were utilized to aid the students' needs to sustain their programs. New ideas for more modern fine arts courses were communicated to administrators to supply more contemporary avenues for students. Beautifying the communities with artwork has led to collaborations between the students and community artists.

Stronger articulation agreements between the community college fine arts programs and four-year regents have ensued smoother transitions for the transferring students. Professional fine artists have been brought in to the community to unite with the community college students on projects, performances and shows. This has given the students opportunities to work with professionals in their field of study. An increase in education about the fine arts disciplines of the community colleges to the community, students and administrators has given more insight in to the programs. Competitive opportunities for the students have resulted in a higher standard of artistry. Opportunities for area high schools students to work with community college students in summer fine arts workshops and festivals has helped in recruiting for the programs.

The community colleges have addressed challenges in their fine arts programs with creative answers. Strong alliances have been made between area artists and students. These actions have demonstrated to the community the collaborative efforts of the fine arts as well as provided exposure to the arts for students.

Cuts in some of the fine arts programs have resulted in the strengthening of the remaining programs and more aggressive recruiting. Smaller class sizes have resulted in utilizing the school's continuing education department to bring in more students. The consistent push for STEM courses have led the fine arts leaders to look for ways in combining projects across disciplines to illustrate the importance of all of the programs. The lack of adequate facilities and equipment for the students has resulted in shared spaces and equipment in community areas, such as cultural arts centers and churches.

Difficulties in the transferability of fine arts courses to four-year institutions have pushed fine arts leaders to re-assess articulation agreements to better serve their students. The increase of adjuncts and decrease of full-time professors in the fine arts has led colleges to seek community professionals in distinct fine arts disciplines to teach courses. Low attendance at fine arts performances and shows has resulted in complimentary tickets for students, faculty and staff to promote physical support. Fund-raisers have been an advantage to assist in equipment needs and repairs for the programs. Observing other community college fine arts programs has helped to demonstrate differing perspectives of sustainability.

All three of the themes that emerged from the research have assisted in the sustainability of these programs. Albeit in different ways, these six schools have creatively demonstrated ways in which their fine arts program have remained sustaining. In an era of increased importance of vocational and technical education, the fine arts have adapted to their environments to remain visible. Overcoming financial hardships to their programs as well as greater accountability in higher education, these leaders have looked to their communities for partnerships and resources, collaborations with other fine artists, and to each other for further creative ideas that will sustain the arts.

The community colleges have also handled challenges in their fine arts programs with creative answers. Strong alliances have been made between area artists and students. This demonstrates to the community the collaborative efforts of the fine arts as well as provides exposure for the students.

Cuts in some of the fine arts programs have resulted in the strengthening of the remaining programs and more aggressive recruiting. Smaller class sizes have resulted in utilizing the school's continuing education department to bring in more students. The consistent push for STEM courses have led the fine arts leaders to look for ways in combining projects across disciplines to illustrate the importance of all of the programs. The lack of adequate facilities and equipment for the students has resulted in shared spaces and equipment in community areas, such as cultural arts centers and churches.

Difficulties in the transferability of fine arts courses to four-year institutions have pushed fine arts leaders to re-assess articulation agreements to better serve their fine arts students. The increase of adjuncts and decrease of full-time professors in the fine arts has led colleges to seek community professionals in the fine arts to teach courses providing the students with experts in their field. Low attendance at fine arts performances has resulted in complimentary tickets for students, faculty and staff to promote physical support. Fund-raisers have been an advantage to assist in equipment needs and repairs for the programs. Observing other community college fine arts programs has helped demonstrate differing perspectives of sustainability and success.

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increased importance of vocational and technical education, the fine arts have adapted to their environments to remain visible. Overcoming financial hardships to their programs as well as greater accountability in higher education, these leaders have looked to their community for partnerships and resources, collaborations with other fine artists, and to each other for further creative ideas for sustainability.

## **CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter contains the following: epistemology and theoretical framework, summary of the study, conclusions, implications, recommendations for community college fine arts practice, future research, policy implications, reflexivity statement, and final thoughts. The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to understand six different fine arts programs in community colleges in the Midwest region, and to discover their sustainability over a period of time.

### **Social Constructivism and the Theory of Liminality**

In a qualitative case study utilizing a social constructivist's lens, the researcher's role is to understand the meaning of the phenomenon being studied with those who are involved (Merriam, 2009). "Meaning is not discovered, but constructed" (Merriam, p. 38). Through each participant's engagement in their own environments, they cultivate their own realities of their fine arts programs. These are described differently, according to the participants' experiences and interactions with others around them. Constructivism is a perspective in which individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work, and develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 24).

Along with the theoretical perspective of constructivism, the theory of liminality focused the lens of my research even more acutely. This framework enables the researcher to make sense of the dynamic interactions between individuals in response to changes in their workplace, changing political climates, and evolving social constructs of the education realm. This framework sought to make sense of interactions between faculty members in response

to changes in their workplace, changing political and economical climates, and evolving social constructs of the education realm over a period of time.

Utilizing the social constructivist epistemology and the theory of liminality enabled me to extract and synthesize meanings from the data from each institution. The documents that I collected from each institution (scholarships for fine arts students, enrollment in fine arts courses, and fine arts program budgets including resources leveraged through partnerships) encompassed the last five years. Discussing changes in their fine arts environments over the past five years with the participants, resulted in further understanding of the theory of liminality. I searched in the documents and interview transcriptions for examples of changes in the fine arts programs over the past five years.

Employing a social constructivists' epistemology aided in the discovering of how each participant described their own fine arts programs. As a social constructivist, people construct their own realities. These participants constructed their own realities of their respective fine arts programs and communicated those realities to me. Exercising the social constructivist epistemology, I understood each fine arts experience as different and unique from the other five according to how it was presented to me by the participants.

Identifying changes in personnel dynamics due to economic issues, financial burdens, changing partnerships, and educational requirements, brought the theory of liminality to the forefront of this study. I recognized these examples in the data and found representations of each. There were budget cuts, program cuts, decreases in state financial allocations, administrative turnover, partnership turnovers, and cuts to equipment budgets that impacted the interactions of personnel in the fine arts programs.

Yin (2009) described a multi-case study as one that follows a replication design for all of the studies involved. Each study should be treated as its own experiment. In this study, each case study was treated as its own individual experiment with observations, interviews, tours, and data collection replicated in the same way for each site. By replicating the format for all six sites, similar as well as contrasting evidence was discovered. Yin suggests 6-10 sites for a multi-case study (Yin). This study utilized six sites using the replication approach.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Given changes in higher education funding and increasing accountability, how do community college leaders position their programs for sustainability?
2. How do community college fine arts leaders define sustainability and what do they do to attain it?
3. What is the best practice for sustaining fine arts programs at community colleges no matter what the setting or resources?

I used the following resources to frame this study:

1. Interviews of six fine arts leaders from different community colleges;
2. Data analysis of:
  - a. Document of the fine arts' budget for the last five years;
  - b. Document of the fine arts grants and scholarships that were awarded to students in the past five years;
  - c. A documented list of all of the fine arts courses offered at their community college for the past five years;



- d. A marketing example of the fine arts programs at their community college for the past five years (an example of one per year).
3. Observations:
- a. Facilities: look at the upkeep of facilities, the amount of space for the students to use, areas for performing or showcasing art, acoustical upgrades, all upgrades for the past five years;
  - b. Equipment: look at all of the equipment available to the students, look for new equipment and repaired equipment, updates to texts, musical literature, etc.;
  - c. Marketing: flyers, brochures, social media, etc.;
  - d. Ensemble: observe a musical ensemble, art class, or drama classes

### **Summary**

The purpose of this multi-case study was to illuminate six Midwestern community college fine arts' programs, housed in three urban community colleges and three rural community colleges. Urban and rural community colleges were chosen to understand the differences in sustainable elements of the diverse fine arts programs. I chose to use Eddy and Murray's (2007) classifications of rural, suburban and urban community colleges.

Enrollment means were categorized for the year 2000-2001 for all types: rural: 3,486; suburban: 9,232; urban: 10,533. For the purposes of this research, I consolidated this into two categories: rural and urban (which constitute urban and suburban schools).

Through interviews, document retrieval, document analysis and observations, the goal was to discover what elements have aided in the sustainability of the fine arts programs over

the course of the last five years according to each participant. I utilized Slahova's (2007) explanations of sustainable creativity for this research:

Sustainable development is the development in which a characteristic has stability and continuity in a permanent period of time (Blinker, 2000).

Sustaining creativity promotes the development of a creative, emotionally and intellectually educated personality and also gives a personality the strength of creation to be creative and with natural disposition to preserve cultural identity. (Hibnere, 1998)

I spent a day at each of the sites gathering data from their fine arts programs. I was taken on tours of the all of the fine arts facilities at each campus. On these tours, I was able to meet and talk to other fine arts leaders about my research as well as take photographs of facilities and equipment. I observed a music appreciation class, multiple ceramics classes, a photography class, a theater skit in progress, three vocal ensembles, a steel drum band, a jazz rehearsal and a saxophone quartet rehearsal. Engaging in a one-on-one interview with each of my participants, I spent about an hour discussing sustaining elements of their fine arts programs. Documents were collected about each school's student enrollment, marketing strategies, and fine arts scholarships for the past five years.

All six sites were chosen for this study because of their sustaining fine arts programs. Three urban and three rural sites were chosen to observe possible differences in sustainability due to differing community populations. Data collection was replicated at each site: interview of a fine arts leader, tour of the fine arts facilities and photographs taken, observation of a musical ensemble in a rehearsal, and retrieval of documents about their fine arts courses, student enrollment, scholarships awarded and marketing strategies. Both the outcomes of the individual cases as well as the cross-case analysis were the focus of this report ultimately making this study a holistic multi-case study. Literal replications emerged

from this study. Each case consisted of its own story and emerging data that then resulted in the converging ideas from all six cases.

This study utilized an exploratory linear-analytic structure. The issue that was studied was the sustainability of fine arts programs in community colleges. A review of relevant literature was supplied in Chapter 2 that provided a context for the importance of the fine arts, the challenges that the fine arts have undergone and the position fine arts have in community colleges. Sub-topics emerged from the methods of collecting data, findings from the data were analyzed and then conclusions and implications were employed. (Yin, 2009)

### Conclusions

*“An aesthetic experience, the work of art in its actuality, is perception...Perception is more than just looking and recognizing, it is a way to make sense of what one senses, to partake of its meaning...What is perceived are meanings rather than just events or circumstances.”* (Jackson, 1998, p.57; Knowles & Cole, 2009, p. 569)

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3. What is the best practice for sustaining fine arts programs at community colleges no matter what the setting or resources?

With partnerships being the most prominent sustainable theme, each site had vastly different types of partnerships aiding in their sustainability. The sub-themes of the partnerships were:

- Relationships with community arts patrons to promote cohesion of the arts.

- Collaboration with the community for the use of the community's facilities and/or equipment.
- Collaboration with the community in fund-raisers for the fine arts students.
- Affiliations with legislators in regards to tax, bond and levee money for the fine arts programs at the community colleges.
- Relationships across different disciplines at the community colleges to enhance teamwork.
- Collaborations with professional fine artists on shows and performances providing leadership to the students and a higher level of artistry.
- Unions between community businesses and the community colleges for financial support and an increased visibility of the fine arts students in the community.
- Relationships with area high school fine arts programs on projects and shows for recruiting purposes as well as fine arts partnerships.
- Alliances with foundation members and private donors to assist in financial support of the fine arts programs in the way of added facilities and equipment.
- Communication with the administrators at the community colleges about the needs and wants of the fine arts programs.
- Partnerships with fine arts accrediting agencies to promote the success in the transferability of fine arts courses to the regents.
- Collaborations with other fine arts programs in the area to promote teamwork in the arts as well as exposure to the programs.

- Partnerships with fine arts alumni from the community college on projects and performances strengthening relationships between past and present students.
- Partnerships with area regents with regards to the successful transferability of fine arts courses for the students.

The interaction of the environment around and in the community colleges with the gradient of need for the fine arts played a significant role in this study. Some examples of these were:

- Experimenting with new classes to engage in further student interest.
- Collaborating of community fine artists and students for further exposure of the programs.
- Increasing physical support to fine arts shows by the community through complimentary tickets.
- Pairing high school fine arts students with the community college fine arts students in projects and performances to assist in stronger recruiting.
- Increasing education about the fine arts programs to the community and perspective students to illustrate attainability.
- Sharing of community facilities and resources for the fine arts students to benefit the programs without these.
- Adding of fine arts dual-enrollment courses to bring in more students to campus.
- Marketing fine arts events through more modern avenues such as facebook, twitter and other social media.
- Seeking professional fine artists to enhance the education of the fine arts students.

- Seeking further fine arts donors in the community for financial support of the programs.

Another theme that emerged was how the community colleges are overcoming challenges in their fine arts programs. Here are examples of how the community colleges are handling challenges to their fine arts programs:

- Utilizing continuing education to increase enrollment in fine arts courses.
- Finding professional fine artists to teach courses.
- Educating high school students and their parents of the financial benefits of attending the community college.
- Researching other community college fine arts programs for ideas.
- Utilizing community space and resources to enhance their fine arts programs.
- Communicating with four-year institutions about different possibilities for transferring fine arts credits.
- Partnering between the community college students and the community in bands and choirs to demonstrate fine arts collaboration.
- Utilizing old rooms and buildings in the school for needed fine arts spaces.
- Encouraging students to intern in community fine arts businesses to enhance their education and experiences.
- Encouraging the prosperity of all fine arts programs is largely dependent upon the differing levels of sustainability, distinguished by the particular fine arts discipline and its wider community presence.

All three of the themes that emerged from the research have assisted in these programs' sustainability. Albeit in different ways, these six schools have creatively demonstrated ways in which their fine arts programs remain sustaining. In an era of increased importance of vocational and technical education, the fine arts have adapted to their environments to remain visible. Overcoming financial hardships to their programs as well as greater accountability in higher education, these leaders have looked to their community for partnerships and resources, collaborations with other fine artists, and to each other for further creative ideas for sustainability.

The quintain of this study was the sustainability of the fine arts. At the onset of this study, I was not sure what would emerge from these very different six schools. I knew that they all had sustainable fine arts (by the standards articulated for this study) but what factor(s) that assisted in their sustainability was unbeknownst to me. Each case involved different sustainable factors unique to their own school. Partnerships did emerge as the most advantageous sustainable element for all six sites, but each school's idea of partnership was very different. As a result of this study, the quintain was indeed one significant factor, but with different variances of the same word: partnerships. Multi-case studies are not set up to compare cases, but look for the commonalities among the cases, which was what surfaced in this cases.

According to Stake (2006), a primary focus within the case studies that make up the multi-case study is the phenomenon being studied. However, all of the cases are different and utilized different (albeit some similar) methods of sustainability for their fine arts programs. A great asset to my research was the interaction with faculty and students at each site and learning first hand and in person what their programs were all about. Thick

descriptions were given about each community as well as my tour of the facilities in Chapter 4. Stake (2006) explained that in a multi-case study the researcher “lets his or her mind and eye scan a large number of happenings, variables, and contexts” (p. 28). The observations and on-campus days at each site assisted in the context building for each case study.

In a multi-case study, according to Yin (2009), it is more advantageous not to adhere to a strict organizational plan when planning the sites’ visits. Too much organization makes for too tight a constraint, and in a multi-case study, emerging themes erect themselves at all different stages of the interpretation process. As I read and coded the documents from all six sites, themes and patterns emerged.

To assure validity and reliability, I triangulated the data in the following ways:

- Kept a field journal with all of my observations from each site.
- Gathered different forms of data: observations, field notes, photographs, interviews, marketing examples and information about fine arts scholarships.
- Kept the data in multiple places for security.
- Coded all data as it was received.
- Collaborated with colleagues on codes and patterns.
- Engaged in member checking with the participants.

### **Implications**

Analysis of the data was accomplished through interpretation of the individual cases and then ultimately as a cross case analysis of the six fine arts programs. The emphasis was on identifying site-specific themes first. A cross-case analysis of the six sites was employed afterwards. Stake suggests that in order to make a multi-case study robust, the researcher



needs to read and re-read the individual case study reports and apply the findings to the research questions that revolve around the quintain (2006).

Implications from this study are suggestions and conclusions that are the result of this study. The understanding of how the data surfaced answers to the research questions composed the emergent themes.

With the challenges in higher education funding and an increase in accountability, the community college leaders in this study positioned themselves very differently for sustainability in their fine arts programs. Through multiple avenues of partnerships, the data revealed the importance of collaborations. A significant amount of data revealed the importance and benefits for both the community college and the community in collaborations. Supporting the programs and students, the community was a significant factor in sustainability. Through facilities, equipment, personnel, fine artists, patrons and donors, and financial revenues, the community was an important asset for these programs. The communities engaged in assisting the fine arts programs when the schools faced challenges. Stronger alliances were made to ensure the fine arts' sustainability.

Each community college leader defined sustainability in their fine arts programs differently. All six described sustainability in accordance with their supportive communities. The communities have broken through many barriers to protect the fine arts programs at the community colleges. Creative solutions to difficult challenges in their arts programs were described. Leaning on community fine artists for advice and expertise, the leaders explained the importance of cohesion between their fine arts students and the community's professionals. Financial support for the fine arts programs was a necessary factor in the sustainability, whether from private donors, foundations, administrators, levee and bond

money or fund-raisers. Each school's fine arts programs relied on financial support in different ways.

Best practices for sustaining the community college's fine arts programs came in different forms. Regardless of the setting for each school or its own resources, the institutions have sustained their programs through creative and innovative approaches. Although challenges exist in their programs, they are searching for better ways to improve. Multiple perspectives from different fine arts leaders (both in the community and at the community colleges) have benefited the programs' sustainability.

If the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities organizations become extinct, the policy implications of this would affect the lower socioeconomic status communities that rely on such funds to promote emerging artists and arts communities. This funding is not as crucial for the institutions involved in this study. The lack of federal funding, however, is a policy implication that should be addressed in a further study of fine arts programming. This lack of funding would result in social justice issues, such as encouraging exclusion of lower socioeconomic status students from fine arts programming. This would limit the exposure of the arts to these communities.

### **Recommendations for Community College Fine Arts Practice**

Recommendations from this research study are defined according to the three emerging themes that were uncovered in this study. Partnerships were the primary contributing factor for all six of the schools. Through an abundance of sub-themes of partnerships, further investigation revealed other types of partnerships. The study's recommendations to community college fine arts leaders are listed as follows:

- Identify area fine arts performers who can collaborate with the community colleges to raise the profile of the programs in their respective programs.
- Investigate possibilities for complimenting existing fine arts facilities and equipment with other spaces throughout the community such as churches or cultural centers.
- Research emerging technologies and techniques for fine arts students, including digital composition and sound design, in an effort to deepen student engagement.
- Create new ways of promoting and marketing the fine arts programs and events, possibly through social media.
- Explore creative approaches for partnering the community college fine arts students with area high school students for recruitment and building camaraderie around learning and practice.
- Implement accreditation memberships such as the National Association of the School of Music (NASM) to aid in transferability of fine arts courses.
- Credential instructors with broader guidelines that accommodate additional emphasis on skills, practice and experience, and not simply on graduate credits accumulated.
- Foster additional partnerships with corporations and industry in the community as critical components of sustainability.

- Develop program assessments that provide additional data about fine arts outcomes in community colleges and their communities.
- Continue research about the critical role of articulation agreements between four-year institutions and community college fine arts programs. Students need to see a pathway to a four-year degree in the fine arts. The students should be able to transfer their fine arts credits from the community college to the four-year institutions as arts major credits, and not simply electives.
- Communicate with regularly and intentionally with high school instructors, counselors and dually enrolled students about the benefits of fine arts courses and education.
- Curate collaborative marketing materials and possibilities for shared faculty appointments in order to strengthen articulation agreements.
- Foster relationships between science-based concepts, design thinking, musicianship, in the teaching of community college fine arts programs. Leverage these activities to grow partnerships with STEM-related industry partners. Soft skill should be taught by the fine arts through innovation, teamwork, design thinking and creative thinking and would leverage these skills towards expanded industry partnerships and student employability.
- Increase partnerships with business industry, non-profits, and government agencies at the state, local and regional levels. Such efforts are crucial to sustain fine arts programs.

- Encourage faculty and administrator membership in organizations such as the Americans for the Arts and/or the Community College Humanities Association. This would nurture in the sharing of creative ideas.
- Create an informal consortium or professional group to discuss resources, challenges and efforts toward excellence in fine arts programs at their community colleges. That organization could be either regional or national in composition.

Recommendations are also given regarding the interaction of the environment and the varying needs of the community college fine arts programs. One should look beyond the community college's walls for ideas to support the students in the fine arts. There might be buildings downtown that are vacant that could be utilized for the programs, or other spaces that are willing to house fine arts programs.

The need for adequate facilities and equipment is essential for the fine arts students, and may not arrive at the community college with the equipment they need to further their education. Discovering other performance opportunities for the fine arts students at the community college and within the community would enhance their visibility and experience. Performances, recitals and shows are all part of a fine artist's experiences, and putting practice in to performances is imperative for the student. If there are multiple higher education institutions in the surrounding area, which was the case for a few of the sites in this study, communication across the schools among the fine arts leaders can strengthen the programs as well as share sustainable ideas across the institutions. Contracting professional fine artists to come to the community as well as the community college will bring a higher level of artistry that will raise the standards of the fine arts.

Recommendations for creatively reducing challenges in the fine arts programs are the final category of recommendations. A decrease in student enrollment in the fine arts programs was a product of this study. I recommend increasing marketing for the programs, more aggressive recruiting from the fine arts leaders, possibilities of utilizing continuing education to bring more students in to the programs and more fully engaging the dual-enrollment students. Creating opportunities, such as the “open hour”, for students that are interested but can only participate if the rehearsals or meetings are during the day, might provide more student interest. Catering to the average community college student, who works and goes to school, this “open hour” idea could alleviate those issues.

Transferability of fine arts courses to four-year institutions is a challenge for community college. Communication with these institutions and with accrediting agencies will alleviate struggles and should be investigated. Partnering with organizations such as NASM, which is a music accrediting organization, aid in the transferability of music courses from the community college to the four-year institution. A smoother and more collaborative partnership between the community colleges and four-year colleges would make this situation less stressful for the student, and could promote an increase in student involvement in the programs.

Another challenge was the increase in the number of adjuncts in the fine arts and a decrease in full-time professors in the field. While adjuncts brought varying resources and perspectives to their classes, they lack the day-to-day presence in these programs. A recommendation for this challenge is to find strong community fine arts leaders to teach courses at the community college. The knowledge, experience and business professionalism that they would bring in to the programs would enhance the students’ success.

### **Future Research**

Future research into the sustainability of fine arts programs at the community college level is recommended. Further research on this topic could be accomplished by widening the region for study, and researching a more varied demographic. Challenges in different regions could be vast, providing more discussion surrounding sustainability. For example, a study looking at the impacts of NEA funding on various community fine arts programs could illuminate sustainable elements in rural and lower socioeconomic status communities.

A possible future study could involve the students. This study concentrated on fine arts leaders at the community colleges. By involving the students in defining sustainability in the fine arts, varying perspectives could appear, separate from the ones that emerged from this study.

Studies about the importance of patrons and foundations to the community college fine arts programs would yield a robust study. Partnerships emerged in this study as essential, and the relationship between community college leaders and patrons/donors was captured. A future study about the magnitude of these contributions to the fine arts programs would be beneficial.

Research in to the accreditation process for students in the fine arts at community colleges would be a beneficial study. The articulation agreements between the fine arts programs in community colleges and four-year institutions should be explored for smoother transferability of these courses.

## **Implications**

Throughout this study, the importance of the community to the community college and vice versa has materialized many times. As strong relationships are built between the two, the strength individually grows as well. Whether partnering with the community on projects to beautify the area or financially working together for shared equipment, these partnerships are instrumental in the development and sustainability of the fine arts programs at community colleges.

Future implications of this research study involve developing more partnerships within the communities for fine arts leaders. No matter the size of the community college in this study or the breadth of its fine arts programs, pathways for providing sustainability for these programs exist and are being exercised. The implications of these stronger partnerships would be mutually beneficial for the community and the community college.

Connecting the fine arts to the other disciplines to show they are interwoven is another future implication. As Knowles and Cole (2008) described, "...art-based research can be of use to others and how it connects to practices in the discipline. This standard of "usefulness" again corresponds to the values of science, and it protects against self-indulgence that can threaten art-based inquiries" (p. 34). The arts exude spontaneity and creativity that benefits the other disciplines. Where the sciences tend to grow from objectivity, the arts embody a more nuanced spectrum.

## **Policy**

In response to the new administration, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities are on the brink of extinction. A feud that has



lasted off and on for the past thirty years, the NEA and NEH have fought to remain federally represented to enhance communities with the arts. “For these fields, this is a lifeline,” explained Suzanne Nossel, the executive director of a literary organization called PEN America (as cited by Hesse, 2017, n.p). These will affect the lower socioeconomic communities across the country. In addition to serving all communities with arts opportunities, the NEA serves returning military veterans, aids state arts agencies, and works with state and federal groups to build fine arts partnerships. Robert Lynch, Americans for the Arts director and CEO, said the following about the NEA: “The NEA works for veterans and the military, benefits the economy and job development and community development” (as cited by McGlone, 2017, n.p). To demonstrate the gap between public opinion and that of the present administration, in 2016 a public poll was conducted by the Americans for the Arts. The poll inquired whether Americans would be in favor of increasing the NEA budget, decreasing or remaining the same. Fifty-five percent of the respondents replied that they wished the government would double the NEA budget (Gioia, 2017, n.p.).

Implications for fine arts programs should this cut take place will start at the federal level and have a trickle-down effect into the states and communities. States and communities who rely on organizations such as NEA to enhance their fine arts will have minimal exposure. Solo performers who are trying to forge ahead as performers will be forced to select other alternatives for making a living. The NEA has supported individual fine artists by assisting in showcasing their artwork or performances. At the time this study, artists were rebelling against these cuts by protesting in Washington, DC in front of the White House. What is to happen if and when these cuts would take place? I posit that the partnerships that I have uncovered in this research study will require increases for communities to support

their fine arts opportunities. Without federal money to assist the arts' exposure, communities will be left to support their own local fine arts with local funds.

### **Reflexivity Statement**

I looked back at my journey through this degree upon completion of my research. I have been a fine arts educator, leader and performer for the past twenty years. I looked at fine arts cuts first hand, but also was fortunate to be a part of growing, prosperous programs. For both types of experiences, I was thankful, because they enabled me to empathize with the participants in this study. I could also communicate to them about things that I have done in my past to grow my own fine arts programs, and the resulting exchanges that we had were priceless.

I learned far more from my participants in this study than I had dreamed possible. All different angles of the fine arts programs were scrutinized in this study, as we searched for the key elements of sustainability. The result was an assortment of sustainable ideas, albeit of vastly differing sizes and scopes. In an era that emphasizes work-force development and vocational education at the community college level, the significance of the fine arts programs has shifted. Partnerships with the community would keep these programs vital and strong. Partnerships between fine arts leaders, such as my new relationships with the six participants, would create resources through new contacts, new ideas, and future possibilities.

According to Knowles and Cole (2009), the artist involved in the research must be actively involved in both the artistic realm as well as the research realm for the study to yield the most productive results. In this study, I have had the privilege of being on both sides of this equation. I was a better researcher because I knew about what I was studying, and I

became a better artist because I studied my art form from many different angles. “As researchers, artists are attuned to the self-knowing reflective practice. The artist as researcher creates meaning” (Knowles & Cole, p. 551). My goal is to find opportunities for publication of this research to aid fine arts programs in community colleges.

### **Final Thoughts and Personal Reflection**

There are many personal reflections that I have garnered through this journey. For example, the large equipment for the fine arts in some schools, the constant performing of others, the publicity and marketing for some and the large range of partnerships with the community for others. To be able to fully analyze six different settings and observe all different varieties of sustainability, each with its own signature, was the greatest reflection of all. Another reflection was the kind and welcoming attitude of the participants, other arts leaders, and students throughout my journey. I was intrigued and amazed by each one of these sites and their differences in sustainability with regard to the fine arts. Truly, I am very humbled and honored to have been able to share their programs with them. Whether it was touring their facilities, watching and listening their musical ensembles, observing the great collaboration between the teachers and the students, interviewing the participants, or photographing the many different kinds of equipment, I was honored to have had the opportunity to participate in all of their fine arts programs.

Throughout all of these research sites, visits and journeys, copious amounts of information were collected, analyzed, coded and interpreted. My mindset was as a musician and a music educator before this degree. I have taught music at five higher education institutions in the last fifteen years. I have also had experience teaching, using new

technology in the classroom, adjusting to new generations of students and providing collaboration and equality in the classroom. Nevertheless, I have not endured a journey quite like this. Through this journey while completing my doctoral study, I learned how to analyze the arts as a researcher, which was different and at times uncomfortable for me.

I have also had a personal journey throughout this degree as well. A portion of my past is offered for context. Seven years ago I was confronted with a difficult divorce. I worked many “part-time” jobs during these last seven years. A friend cautioned me one day about the possibility of a permanent termination of my position at the community college (I taught music) and advised me to further educate myself. As a single parent with a recently cut job, the last thing I was looking for was more education. Despite my anxiety, I enrolled in the PhD program in Educational Leadership and embarked on the journey in August of 2013. My first two degrees were as a single female, and then with a spouse, but both were completed without a child, which understandably was easier. Both degrees had been in music. This degree was much different. It meant time away from my daughter—missed soccer games, missed dance pictures, etc.

I told myself it would pay off in the end. I have known only music for over twenty years, so this degree in educational leadership and research was different. I couldn’t express myself creatively, in the ways that were familiar to me. I had always picked up my saxophone and created language musically. Somehow, through my journey from one research site to the next, I learned about the importance of the fine arts to the participants I had been privileged to interview. I also met other educators at their institutions and the wonderful students who wanted to know more about why I was conducting the research.

After all six sites were coded, analyzed and reported, I learned a very important lesson. When I held up the mirror to show the reflection of the six sites' sustainability, I was able to see them, and I was also able to see my own. As I looked deeper, the image in the reflection was the same image for the six sites. This image has been my sustaining element throughout this tumultuous time in my life. Whether we were discussing financial cuts, personnel cuts, program cuts, scholarship building, foundation support or equipment needs, those sites reflected my own personal battles and turmoil for the past seven years.

The reflection explained why we stay in the fine arts. It is why we look for foundation money to support our programs, why we partner with businesses and other schools to collaborate, why we utilize hand-me-down equipment just to keep our doors open, why we plead at the capital steps for more funding from our leading politicians. I have survived this time in my life because I could go to my saxophone, pick it up, play it, and forget the turmoil I was encountering at that time. Without the arts to sustain me, I feel I would not have endured. As a researcher, a musician and an educator, when I looked in the mirror to see the reflection of the six fine arts programs and of myself, I saw the same reflection—a love and passion for the arts.

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## APPENDIX A. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office for Responsible Research  
Vice President for Research  
2420 Lincoln Way, Suite 202  
Ames, Iowa 50014  
515 294-4566

**Date:** 12/21/2016

**To:** Meghan R Schumacker  
1709 South 3rd St.  
Marshalltown, IA 50158

**CC:** Dr. Constance Beecher  
1555A Lagomarcino Hall  
Dr. Lyn Brodersen  
11110 Extension 4H Building

**From:** Office for Responsible Research

**Title:** The fine arts in midwestern community colleges: Six case studies portraying a cross-case analysis of sustainability

**IRB ID:** 15-536

**Approval Date:** 12/19/2016      **Date for Continuing Review:** 11/2/2017

**Submission Type:** Modification      **Review Type:** Full Committee

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- Use only the approved study materials in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.
- Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study, when documented consent is required.
- Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.
- Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) any other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
- Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- Complete a new continuing review form at least three to four weeks prior to the date for continuing review as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. Approval from other entities may also be needed. For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 202 Kingland, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

## APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT COMMUNICATION AND CONSENT DOCUMENT

### *Recruitment Letter to Fine Arts Participants:*

#### ABOUT THE STUDY:

This letter is to explain my research study as a PhD student at Iowa State University in the Education Leadership and Policy Studies program. My dissertation title is: *The fine arts in Midwestern community colleges: six case studies portraying a cross-case analysis of sustainability*. The purpose of this research study is to unveil sustainable elements as identified in six Midwestern community college fine arts programs.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a fine arts educator/administrator at a community college. You were identified to participate because of your leadership in sustaining fine arts programs.

The purpose of this study is to examine elements Midwestern community college fine arts leaders use to sustain their programs. According to McIsaac & Edwards (1994), the Midwestern region includes: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri. Six schools in this region will be purposefully chosen for this study.

Through observations, one interview, document collection, and one audio recording, sustainable elements of the fine arts will be identified and documented by the researcher.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY MEASURES:

Confidentiality measures will be taken to de-identify participants and their institutions. Pseudonyms will be given to participants as well as their institutions for the dissertation. All audio recordings of the interviews, transcriptions of the interviews, and email member checking will be uploaded to Iowa State University's secure and encrypted cloud-based storage area, Cybox. One audio recording (not video) will be done of a musical ensemble on the device of the researcher. There will be a separate consent form for the audio recording for the students to sign. After the recordings are uploaded to Cybox, they will be deleted from my personal device. After the transcriptions have been received by rev.com, they will be uploaded to Cybox. Participants will be allowed to revise and/or redact their transcripts and provide feedback. Data will be aggregated and de-identified and only generalized findings from these documents will be presented. Due to the nature of the research and the small number of participants in the study, your identity may become known when results of the study are shared.

#### PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY:

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to allow me to interview you and to tour your campus. I would like to tour the fine arts facilities while I am there so that I can gain a better understanding of the programs. The goal is to uncover sustainable elements of the fine arts programs at your institution. I anticipate the interview lasting approximately 90 minutes and the touring and observations of the fine arts facilities lasting approximately 90-120 minutes, totaling an approximate time of 180-210 minutes. Along with the interview, I will collect specific documents about your institution's fine arts programs: fine arts grants and scholarships awarded to students from 2011-2016, the number of students enrolled in fine arts classes from 2011-2016, the number and names of fine arts classes offered at your institution from 2011-2016, and a fine arts pamphlet/flyer/or other marketing piece related to your institution's fine arts programming for each year from 2011-2016. I ask that you have a room available for me to utilize during my stay if there will be wait time of greater than 15 minutes between the interview and the observations. The following will be a part of my study:

Interview: one in-person interview lasting approximately 90 minutes;

Audio recording: one audio (not video) recording of a musical ensemble; audio recordings will be used in the final dissertation paper and will be de-identified (I will use a 10-minute audio clip of the musical ensemble);

Observations: tour and observe the fine arts facilities and equipment (photographs will be taken only of facilities and equipment, no personnel); photos and observations will be used in the study; this will portion of the study will last approximately 90-120 minutes;

Documents to give me by or at our visit for the study:

- Fine arts grants and scholarships awarded to students from 2011-2016,
- Number of students enrolled in fine arts courses at your institution from 2011-2016,
- Number and names of fine arts courses offered at your institution from 2011-2016,
- One example of a fine arts pamphlet/flyer or other marketing piece related to you institution's fine arts programming for each year from 2011-2016.

Written transcriptions of the interviews will be completed by rev.com, an online transcription service.

#### BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY:

The benefit of participating in this study is to inform scholarly literature about sustainability in community college fine arts programs. Currently, there is a paucity of research in this area. All participants will receive a bound copy of the final version of the dissertation research.

*Sincerely,*

*Meghan Schumacker*

MeghanS@iastate.edu

*Cell phone: 515-745-4466*

*PhD candidate*

*Meghan Schumacker*

*Meghans@iastate.edu*

*Major Professor*

*Dr. Connie Beecher*

*cbeeche@iastate.edu*

*Co-Major Professor*

*Dr. Lyn Brodersen*

*lbro@iastate.edu*

**AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT FORM**

CONSENT TO AUDIO RECORDING

*Education Leadership and Administration Studies PhD Study:*

*The fine arts in Midwestern community colleges: six case studies and a cross-case analysis of sustainability*

*Meghan R. Schumacker, PhD Student  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa*

This study involves the audio recording of one of your musical ensembles at your institution. Neither your name, or any other musicians' names, nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording. The audio recording will only be used to illustrate fine arts' sustainability at your institution without any identifiers associated with your school. Clips of a musical ensemble playing at your institution may be included in this dissertation study about the sustainability of the fine arts in Midwestern community colleges.

Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study. Pseudonyms will be used for all schools utilized in this study to protect anonymity.

All musicians that are represented in this recording must sign underneath the main participants' signature.

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of all musicians performing:



## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Title of Study:** The fine arts in Midwestern community colleges: Six case studies portraying a cross-case analysis of sustainability.

**Investigators:** Meghan Schumacker, PhD student at Iowa State University

This form describes a research project. It has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is completely voluntary. Please discuss any questions you have about the study or about this form with the project staff before deciding to participate.

This research study is in partial fulfillment of a PhD in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University.

### Introduction

The purpose of this study will be to examine elements Midwestern community college fine arts leaders use to sustain their programs. According to McIsaac & Edwards (1994), the Midwestern region includes: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri. Six schools in this region will be purposefully chosen for this study.

Through observations, one interview, document collection, and one audio recording, sustainable elements of the fine arts will be identified and documented by the researcher. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a fine arts educator/administrator who works in a community college.

### Description of Procedures

***Interview: one audio recorded in-person interview lasting approximately 90 minutes.***

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to allow me to interview you and to tour your campus. I would like to tour the fine arts facilities while I am there so that I can gain a better understanding of the programs. The goal is to uncover sustainable elements of the fine arts programs at your institution. I anticipate the interview lasting approximately 90 minutes and the touring and observations of the fine arts facilities lasting approximately 90-120 minutes, totaling an approximate time of 180-210 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded. Along with the interview, I will collect specific documents about your institution's fine arts programs: fine arts grants and scholarships awarded to students from 2011-2016, the number of students enrolled in fine arts classes from 2011-2016, the number and names of fine arts classes offered at your institution from 2011-2016, and a fine arts pamphlet/flyer/or other marketing piece related to your institution's fine arts programming for each year from 2011-2016. I ask that you have a room available for me to utilize during my stay if there will be wait time of greater than 15 minutes between the interview and the observations. The following will be a part of my study:

Interview: one in-person interview that will be audio recorded lasting approximately 90 minutes;

Audio recording: one audio (not video) recording of a musical ensemble; audio recordings will be used in the final dissertation paper and will be de-identified (I will use a 10-minute audio clip of the musical ensemble);

Observations: tour and observe the fine arts facilities and equipment (photographs will be taken only of facilities and equipment, no personnel); photos and observations will be used in the study; this will portion of the study will last approximately 90-120 minutes;

Documents to give me by or at our visit for the study:

- Fine arts grants and scholarships awarded to students from 2011-2016,
- Number of students enrolled in fine arts courses at your institution from 2011-2016,
- Number and names of fine arts courses offered at your institution from 2011-2016,
- One example of a fine arts pamphlet/flyer/or other marketing piece related to your institution's fine arts programming for each year from 2011-2016.

Written transcriptions of the interviews will be completed by rev.com, an online transcription service.

### **Risks or Discomforts**

There is minimal risk associated with participating in this study. Due to the nature of the research and the small number of participants in the study, your identity may become known when results of the study are shared.

### **Benefits**

If you decide to participate in this study, there are no direct benefits to the individual. The benefit of participating in this study is to inform scholarly literature about sustainability in community college fine arts programs. Currently, there is a paucity of research in this area. All participants will receive a bound copy of the final version of the dissertation research.

### **Costs and Compensation**

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

### **Participant Rights**

The purpose of this study will be to examine elements Midwestern community college fine arts leaders use to sustain their programs. According to McIsaac & Edwards (1994), the Midwestern region includes: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri. Six schools in this region will be purposefully chosen to participate in this study.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. The researcher will grant access to participants to review their transcripts on Cybox (the Iowa State University version of Dropbox) to give feedback, withdraw answers, revise answers or redact.

If you have any questions *about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury*, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

### Confidentiality

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken:

- Interview material as well as transcriptions will be kept in the researcher's Cybox, an encrypted protected data storage area for Iowa State University students.
- Audio recordings of the interviews will be saved on to the researcher's iPad and uploaded to Cybox. After uploading, the audio on the iPad will be deleted. Audio interviews will be sent to rev.com directly from the researcher's Cybox. Audio recordings of musical ensembles will be kept in Cybox. There will **not** be photographs of students and/or staff **nor** video recordings.
- Transcriptions will be performed by rev.com and will be sent to the researcher. Transcriptions will be saved in Cybox.
- Pseudonyms for all participants and institutions will be allocated. The researcher only will have the pseudonyms for each participant and institution and will keep the key in a separate file in Cybox.
- According to McIsaac & Edwards (1994), the Midwestern region includes: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and eastern portions of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri. Six schools in this region will be purposefully chosen for this study.
- Data will be aggregated and de-identified and only generalized findings from these documents will be presented.

### Questions

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information **about the study**, contact Meghan Schumacker at: [meghans@iastate.edu](mailto:meghans@iastate.edu). The two supervising faculty members for this study are Connie Beecher and her contact information is [cbeecher@iastate.edu](mailto:cbeecher@iastate.edu), office phone number is 515-294-4512, and Lyn Brodersen, [lbro@iastate.edu](mailto:lbro@iastate.edu), office number 515-294-1517.

### Consent and Authorization Provisions

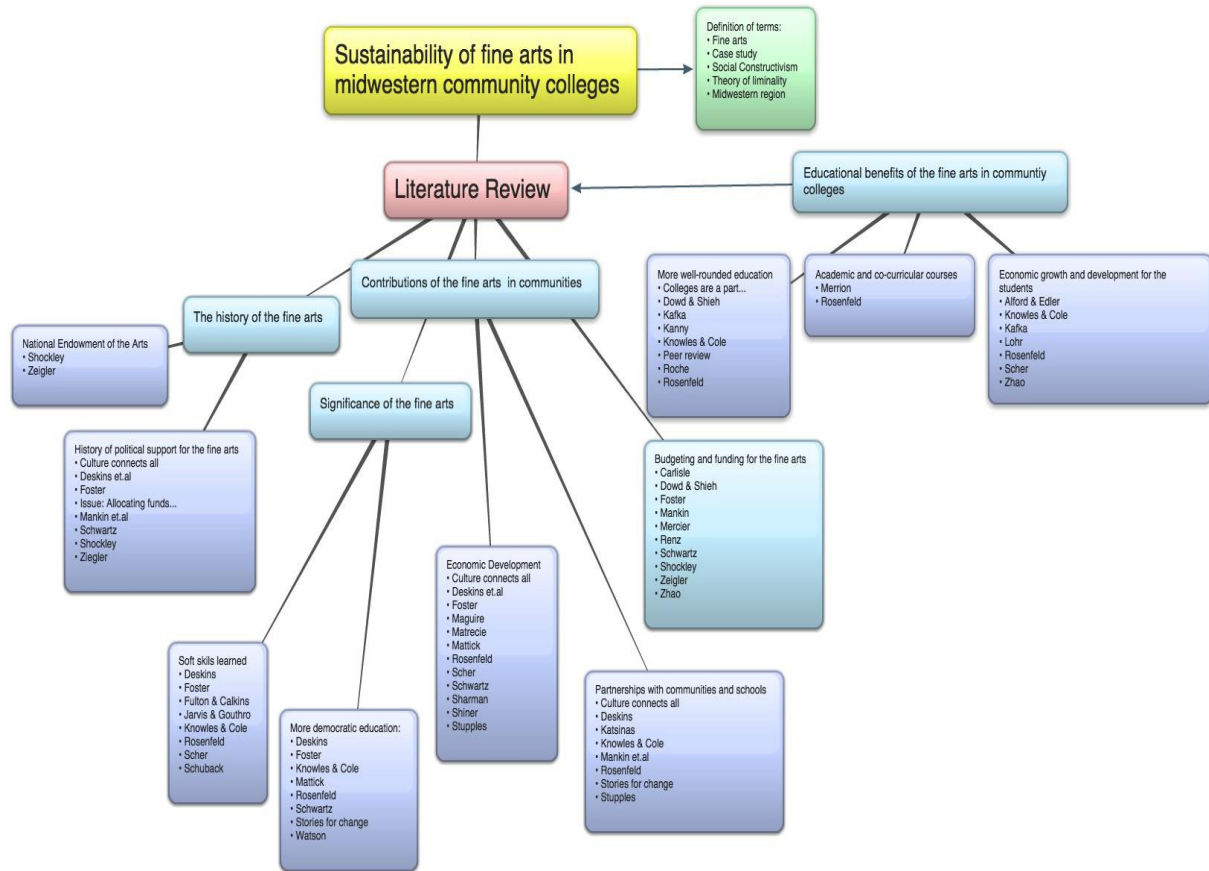
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

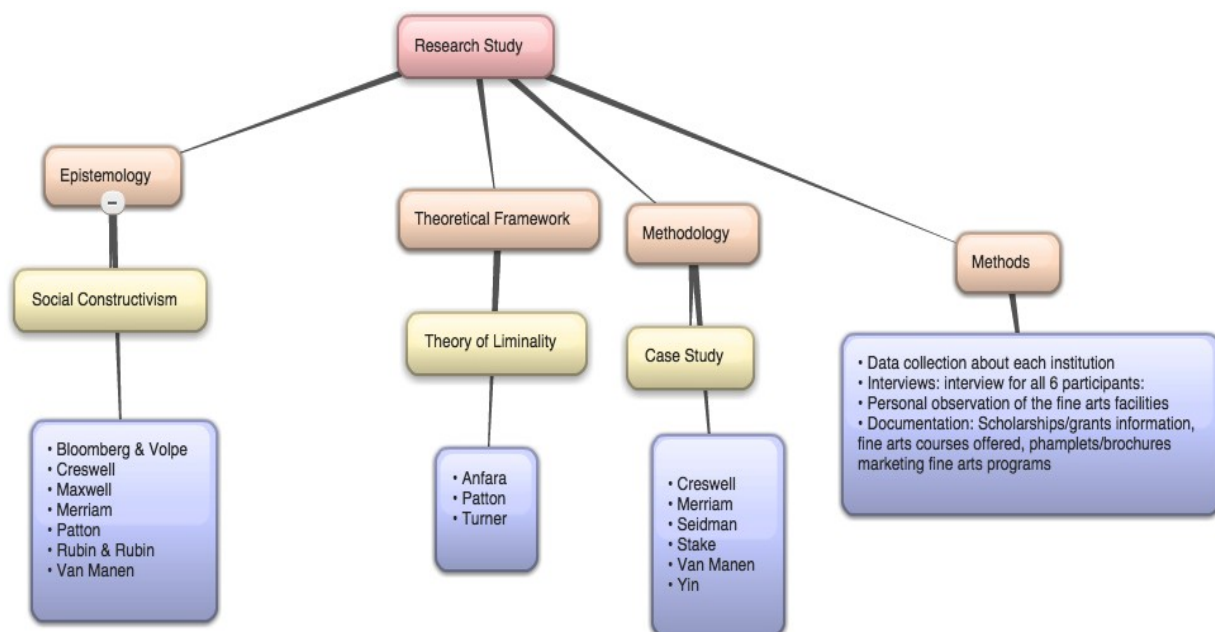
\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C. CONCEPT MAP OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW



# APPENDIX D. CONCEPT MAP OF THE METHODOLOGY



## **APPENDIX E. RESEARCH TIMELINE**

For each site, the following process was utilized for this research study. The following was the process I used for each site:

- Introduction to the participant;
- Tour of the fine arts facilities and equipment storage areas;
- Observation through field notes and photography of these areas;
- Introduction to other fine arts leaders at each site;
- Observation of a musical ensemble (at five of the six sites);
- Observations of other fine arts courses taking place;
- Interview with the participant (each lasted about an hour);
- Collection of all data during the interview;
- Transcriptions were made of each interview within twenty-four hours of the interviews;
- Analysis of all data including field note observations;
- Coding of material began for each site immediately after each visit;
- Levels of coding took place;
- Overall emerging themes for each site were documented using all of the data;
- Cross-case analysis began incorporating all six sites;
- Patterns and emerging themes were extracted from the cross-case analysis;
- Written conclusions were documented;
- Recommendations were formed for future research;
- Policy implications were elicited;
- Final report of the study was concluded.