



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL
Notes from Arts Advisory Panel Meeting (#3)
April 23, 2003

Welcome remarks were made by Dr. Judith Flynn, Chair of the Manitoba Arts Council. She updated members on recent events and activities of MAC. The Panel was informed that MAC had recently received an increase in funding of between \$420,000 and \$500,000 (figures uncertain at time of meeting) and there was still some question as to whether the funds were to be directed to specific programming, or if they could be allocated according to Council priorities. Dr. Flynn also clarified MAC's position on support to the WSO and explained the funding situation and where funds had been drawn from to support them to date. She then briefly reviewed the results to date of the policy retreat of November 2002 (retreat notes were distributed to all panel members with meeting agenda).

Douglas Riske, Executive Director, then addressed the group. He discussed the pending review of the peer assessment process; the pending e-grant pilot projects; the Council retreat report; the pending artist-in-the-community program; and the goals of the various working groups to define policies and measurable outcomes for the next three to five years.

He also informed the group that Program Officers would now be called Program Consultants, to better reflect the role they are now playing in the arts community, and that the Council now had a full complement of Consultants hired on three to five year contracts. He also updated the Panel on the ethno-cultural consultations to be held in early May, in partnership with Canadian Heritage.

A roundtable discussion on funding to organizations followed. The following key points were introduced by Panel members:

- Demographics of Manitoba regarding Aboriginal population - Policies and programs must reflect changing population base.
- Ecology of the arts community as a whole and the role individual arts organizations play within the larger community.
- Terminology use – Words such as punishment and reward would be better replaced with more positive, affirming terms.
- The need and value of increased information sharing amongst funders.
- The potential of modeling grant applications after Canada Council's.

- Reviewing funding agreements, concerned status, self-assessment and the nurturing and growth of organizations.

The group was then asked to identify their top priorities in terms of issues. The following emerged (not ranked):

- Addressing historical funding inequities.
- How to deal with emerging arts organizations and artists.
- Commercialization – The issue of being penalized if successful at selling art.
- Definition of artistic excellence – It should come directly from the arts community.
- Addressing the mythology of the aboriginal arts community.
- Definition of Manitoba artist.
- Assessment criteria should be more generic.
- Transparency of the assessment processes.

A number of different funding models (as outlined in retreat notes) were explained and pros/cons discussed. The models included:

- Self-assessment.
- Zone system (a math based system that categorizes organizations)
- Percentage system
- Graded criteria system (one MAC currently uses)

The group was informed an Aboriginal Arts Working Group had been formed, which may eventually lead to an Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee. Douglas Riske also briefly discussed a series of Aboriginal consultations that is being planned for the fall. The Panel discussed some basic ideas concerning funding to Aboriginal artists, but was reluctant to delve too deeply due to their limited personal knowledge. The following ideas emerged:

- The community has been marginalized.
- Definition of art forms.
- How do existing arts organizations currently serve the Aboriginal population?
- Acknowledgement of Winnipeg's large aboriginal population and the unique opportunities it presents.
- Programs and partnerships need to be formed for the benefit of urban and rural/remote Aboriginal communities.
- Should programming be separate or integrated?
- How to reach out to the Aboriginal community?
- How will they be financially supported?

A discussion on arts education included the following:

- Use of the Artists in the School program as a vehicle to spark children's interest in the arts.
- ArtsSmarts program, funded by the McConnell Foundation. MAC is working with the Department of Education to bring this program to Manitoba.
- Alliance for Arts Education spring seminar focusing on the value of an arts education.
- Learning through the Arts program – similar to ArtsSmarts and AIS.
- Training for people in arts professions and the importance of student bursaries and funding of emerging artists.
- Policy changes to the AIS program expected in the fall.
- Cultural management program being developed at the universities.

Douglas Riske wrapped up the meeting by discussing the fall Panel, and focusing on next steps. The Panel will be presented with draft policies for review, and their feedback will be taken to the fall 2003 Council retreat. The Panel was encouraged to talk to people in their communities for feedback and it was decided meeting notes would be posted on the website, and increased communication with the arts community via the website would be explored.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.