

28th Annual
Visitor Studies Association
Conference

July 14-18, 2015
Indianapolis, Indiana

The background of the entire page features four large, stylized hands overlapping each other. The hands are colored orange, yellow, green, and blue, arranged from top-left to bottom-right. The hands are semi-transparent, allowing the colors of the other hands to show through. The overall composition is dynamic and suggests themes of support, growth, and community.

**Taking Action for Improvement,
Growth, and Social Change**

VSA

Visitor Studies Association

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Conference Schedule at a Glance

Monday, July 13

4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Registration Open

Tuesday, July 14

8:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Registration Open

4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Registration Open

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

VSA Board of Directors Meeting

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Pre-Conference Workshops

Wednesday, July 15

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Registration Open

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

VSA Board of Directors Meeting

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Pre-Conference Workshops

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

April Award Celebration

(ticket required)

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Opening Reception at Indiana State Museum & Eiteljorg *(ticket required)*

Thursday, July 16

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Registration Open

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.

Coffee Break

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.

Focused Interest Group Gathering

9:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Welcome from VSA and President's Address

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Opening Keynote

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – One

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

Ambassador Program Lunch

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

Lunch on Your Own

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Committee Meetings

2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Two

3:15 – 4:00 p.m.

Coffee Break

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions - Three

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Dining Discussions

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Evening Event at Indianapolis Museum of Art *(ticket required)*

Friday, July 17

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Registration Open

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Coffee Break

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

VSA Business Meeting

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Keynote Speaker

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Four

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Lunch on Your Own

12:45 – 1:45 p.m.

Committee Meetings

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Five

3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

Coffee Break

3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

VSA Poster Session

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Get to Know VSA Happy Hour

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Dining Discussions

Saturday, July 18

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Committee Meetings

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Six

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Seven

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Closing Luncheon & Keynote *(ticket required)*

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Post-Conference Workshops

Indianapolis photography courtesy of VISIT Indy.





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- Cathy Sigmond, Research Assistant, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.



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WELCOME

Dear Visitor Studies Conference Attendees:

Welcome to Indianapolis for the 28th Annual Conference of the Visitor Studies Association! The theme of *Taking Action for Improvement, Growth, and Social Change* is particularly timely for this year's conference and host city. We want to take this opportunity to reaffirm that VSA welcomes and advocates for all people, and so does Indianapolis. This year's sessions, speakers, and events offer a chance for you to explore new findings and methods, but we hope that you will also find others who share goals of advocating for visitors and social improvements.

Taking Action for Improvement, Growth, and Social Change

The 2015 VSA conference offers a venue for presenting new research, findings, and methods and exploring higher level topics and questions of interest to the field of informal learning. This year, the thematic focus of the keynote and plenaries will emphasize the ways in which we can take action through our work. VSA is dedicated to meeting the growing demand for the tools and the inspiration to better understand informal learning, as well as best-practice strategies for how to attract, educate, and serve diverse communities. To take action, we need to develop ourselves as creative and dynamic leaders, as individuals and within institutions and organizations dedicated to supporting informal learning opportunities; this is the key to fulfilling our potential for public service.

Our Indianapolis Hosts

Welcome to Indy, Nap Town, Data Town, the Crossroads of America—however you like to say it, we're glad you're here! We hope you enjoy getting to know the vibrant sights and sounds of downtown Indianapolis. You can take a ride on a gondola, walk the cultural arts trail, and sample local brews, all within walking distance of our host hotel. Our hosts from the Indianapolis Consortium on Audience Research and Evaluation (ICARE) have planned two evening events at local institutions: the *Gold Star Opening* at the Indiana State Museum and the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art and *Art, Innovation, and Design* at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. We hope you enjoy exploring these local institutions. Please thank our hosts when you see them!

We hope you learn, interact with others, enjoy this conference, and leave inspired. Do feel free to share your suggestions and thoughts with VSA about the 2016 conference that will be in Boston! We hope to see you there!

With warmest regards,
Your Program Co-Chairs and Indy Insiders
Claire Thoma and Elee Wood



What you need to know ...

Registration and Information Desk

Check in at the registration desk, located in the Alexander Ballroom Foyer on the 2nd floor of the Alexander Hotel, for conference materials, badges, tickets, and information.

Registration Desk Hours:

Monday, July 13

4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14

8:00 – 11:00 a.m.; 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 15

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 16

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Friday, July 17

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Conference Abstracts

The 2015 VSA Conference Abstracts introduce the presentations, panels, and posters at this year's conference. Additionally, they act as a lasting record of the topics discussed here in Indianapolis as we take action. In keeping with our commitment to environmental stewardship, VSA now publishes the abstracts exclusively in electronic format. Visit www.visitorstudies.org and click on the Conference page to view or download the abstracts in PDF format.

CONFERENCE EVENTS

(Pre-registration is REQUIRED for ALL events. Some tickets may still be available at the information desk during registration)

CONFERENCE EVENTS

19th Annual April Award Celebration

Wednesday, July 15, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

\$25 minimum

Tastings, A Wine Experience

Tastings is a 0.6 mile walk north on Delaware, where you pick up the Cultural Trail at Virginia and head west.

Focused Interests Group Gathering

Thursday, July 16, 8:30-9:15 a.m.

Alexander Ballroom

Ambassador Program Lunch

Thursday, July 16, 12:15 – 1:45 p.m.

Meet at Registration Table

Dining Discussions

Thursday, July 16, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Friday, July 17, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Meet at the Registration Table



Get to Know VSA Happy Hour

Friday, July 17, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Free

The Slippery Noodle Inn

The Slippery Noodle Inn is a 0.2 mile walk due west from the Alexander Hotel on West South Street.

Closing Luncheon

Saturday, July 18, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Alexander Ballroom

2nd Annual Artist Raffle

Closes Saturday, July 18, 12:00 p.m.

\$10 per ticket (3 for \$25)

Alexander Ballroom

2nd Annual Artist Raffle

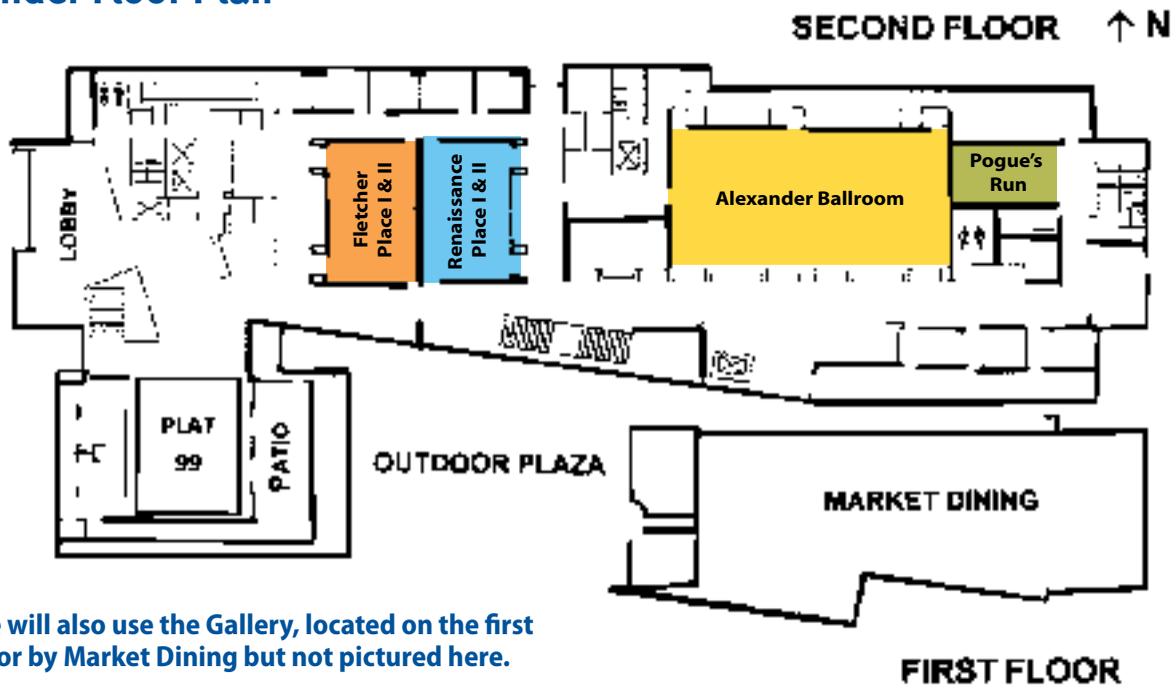
Closes Saturday, July 18, 12:00 p.m.

\$10 per ticket (3 for \$25)

Alexander Ballroom

Kathleen McLean, artist, designer, author, and past VSA president, has put history, memory, and pen to paper in this original one of a kind piece for our Artist Raffle. Purchase as many tickets as you like! Raffle tickets will be sold onsite and online (<http://bit.ly/1Hk9JZ1>) until 12:00 p.m. Saturday, July 18. The winner will be announced at the Closing Luncheon (You do not need to be present to win).

Alexander Floor Plan



We will also use the Gallery, located on the first floor by Market Dining but not pictured here.

Location Map



- 1. The Alexander Hotel
- 2. Slippery Noodle Inn
- 3. Tastings
- 4. Eiteljorg Museum
- 5. Indiana State Museum

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The Museum Studies Program offers undergraduate and graduate degrees.

The SurveyGizmo logo is located in the top left corner of the advertisement. It features the word "surveygizmo" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. "survey" is in orange and "gizmo" is in blue. The logo is set against a white cloud-like shape.

surveygizmo

The background of the advertisement is a vibrant, cartoon-style illustration. It shows a bright blue sky with a few birds. In the foreground, there are rolling green hills. On the left, a large tree with bright orange autumn leaves stands on a hill. Two small, boxy robots, one pink and one white, are standing on a grassy slope, looking at a map. In the distance, there are more green hills, a blue winding river, and several snow-capped mountains. The overall scene is bright and cheerful.

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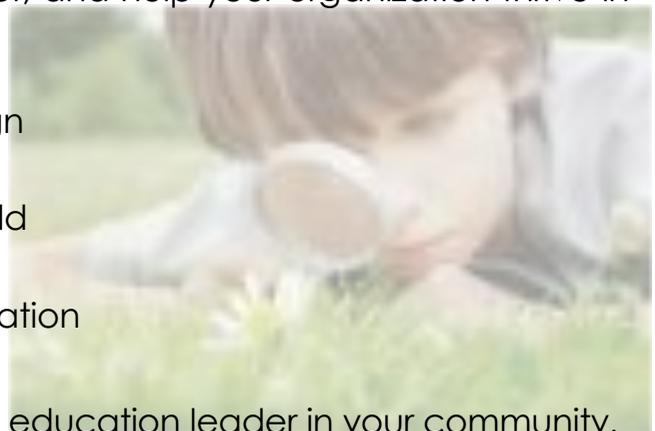
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Conference Workshops

Tuesday, July 14, Wednesday, July 15 and Saturday, July 18

Registration is required. All workshops are within 1.5 miles from the hotel, unless otherwise noted. Attendees are responsible for transportation to and from the workshop locations. Please check the Registration Desk for transportation information, including the names of participants seeking to share taxis to and from the workshop locations.

VSA presents two days of professional development workshops in conjunction with the conference. Conference workshops provide an important opportunity for professional development and are attended by students, evaluators, exhibit and program designers, and museum directors. Leaders of these lively half and full day workshops come from a broad range of fields and professions.

LEVEL 101 We offer a slate of workshops for those who may be new to visitor studies but want to add evaluation to their skill set. These “get started fast” workshops are labeled “Level 101.”

LEVEL 301 For experienced evaluators, we also have a robust slate of “Level 301” advanced workshops.

FULL DAY Full Day Workshops -
\$170 VSA Member
\$200 Non-Member
\$145 Student Member

HALF DAY Half Day Workshops -
\$95 VSA Member
\$110 Non-Member
\$85 Student Member

VSA supports the ongoing professional development of all evaluators across the informal learning field. With the support of a planning grant from the Informal Science Education Program of the National Science Foundation, VSA developed the Evaluator Competencies for Professional Development Assessment (visitorstudies.org/professional-development). Since individuals are attracted to the field of visitor studies from a variety of backgrounds, these guidelines are to aid in the identification of transferable skills and knowledge from previous experiences as well as areas that are considered specific to the field of visitor studies. VSA has identified the competencies most relevant for each conference workshop. Below is a description of each of the major competencies:

Competency A: Principles and Practices of Visitor Studies

A All professionals involved in the practice of visitor research and evaluation should be familiar with the history, terminology, past and current developments, key current and historic publications, and major contributions of the field. Visitor studies professionals should also be familiar with major areas that have relevance to visitor studies, including evaluation, educational theory, environmental design, developmental psychology, communication theory, leisure studies, and marketing research.

Competency B: Principles and Practices of Informal Learning Environments

B All individuals who engage in visitor research and evaluation must understand the principles and practices of learning in informal environments, the characteristics that define informal learning settings, and an understanding of how learning occurs in informal settings. An understanding of the principles, practices, and processes by which these experiences are designed or created is required in order to make intelligent study interpretations and recommendations.

Competency C: Knowledge of and Practices with Social Science Research and Evaluation Methods and Analysis

C Visitor studies professionals must not only understand but also demonstrate the appropriate practice of social science research and evaluation methods and analysis. These include: Research design; Instrument/protocol design; Measurement techniques; Sampling; Data analysis; Data interpretation; Report writing and oral communication; Human subjects research ethics; and Research design, measurement, and analysis that shows sensitivity to diversity and diversity issues.

Competency D: Business Practices, Project Planning, and Resource Management

D Visitor studies professionals must possess appropriate skills for designing, conducting, and reporting visitor studies and evaluation research. Professionals should demonstrate their ability to conceptualize a visitor studies or evaluation research project in a context of informal learning institution management and administration (i.e., scheduling, budgeting, personnel, contracting).

Competency E: Professional Commitment

E Visitor studies professionals should commit to the pursuit, dissemination, and critical assessment of theories, studies, activities, and approaches utilized in and relevant to visitor studies. Through conference attendance and presentations, board service, journals and publications, and other formal and informal forums of communication, visitor studies professionals should support the continued development of visitor research and evaluation.

Conference Workshops Tuesday, July 14, Wednesday, July 15 and Saturday, July 18

Registration is required

Tuesday, July 14

Full Day Workshops 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

What Makes Learning Fun? (and Why We Should Care)

Deborah Perry, Director, Selinda Research Associates



[Renaissance Place II](#)

Developing Rubrics: Authentic Measures of Informal Learning

Stephanie Downey, Managing Director, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.; Amanda Krantz, Senior Associate, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.



[Fletcher Place II](#)

Full Day Workshop 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Timing and Tracking 101: Planning and Carrying out a Timing and Tracking Study

Allison Cosbey, Evaluation Coordinator, Conner Prairie Interactive History Park; Beverly Serrell, Director, Serrell & Associates



[Conner Prairie Interactive History Park – Transportation will be provided](#)

Half Day Workshop 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Evaluability Assessment: Its Practicality and Utility for Meaningful and Useful Evaluations

Thomas Grayson, Evaluation Consultant, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; John Evans, Assistant Vice President for the University Office for Planning & Budgeting, University of Illinois



[Fletcher Place I](#)

Wednesday, July 15

Full Day Workshops 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

A New Method for Analyzing Data From Visual Artwork

Donna DiBartolomeo, Director of Exhibits, Sciencenter; Zachary Clark, Director of Early Learning, Sitar Arts Center



[Fletcher Place I](#)

The Life Cycle of an Evaluation Project: Effective Strategies for Evaluation Design, Project Management, and Communicating Findings

Elizabeth Bolander, Director of Research and Evaluation, The Cleveland Museum of Art; Meghan Stockdale, Research Analyst, The Cleveland Museum of Art



[Fletcher Place II](#)

Flexible Methods for Exhibit Formative Evaluation

Anna Lindgren-Streicher, Manager of Research and Evaluation, Museum of Science Boston; Elizabeth Kollmann, Senior Project Manager for Research and Evaluation, Museum of Science Boston



[Indiana State Museum – Museum Conference Room](#)

Half Day Workshops 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Frequently Utilized Statistical Techniques: Conceptual Frameworks and Strategies for Application

Amy Cota-McKinley, Professor, Worcester State University



[Renaissance Place I](#)

Data Visualization in Excel 101

Claire Quimby, Research Assistant, Rockman Et Al; Alison Allen, Research Assistant, Rockman Et Al



[Renaissance Place II](#)

Half Day Workshops 1 – 4 p.m.

Advanced Statistical Techniques: Conceptual Frameworks and Strategies for Application

Amy Cota-McKinley, Professor, Worcester State University



[Renaissance Place I](#)

Diving Deeper Into Data Visualization in Excel

Claire Quimby, Research Assistant, Rockman Et Al; Alison Allen, Research Assistant, Rockman Et Al



[Renaissance Place II](#)

Saturday, July 18

Half Day Workshop 2 – 5 p.m.

Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Research and Evaluation Volunteers

Fran Mast, Researcher/Analyst, Manager of Audience Research and Evaluation, Shedd Aquarium



[Fletcher Place](#)

Wednesday, July 15 Evening Events

Registration is required



19th Annual April Award Celebration Wednesday, July 15 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

\$25 minimum

Tastings, a Wine Experience

Join us! Kick off your 2015 VSA conference in Indianapolis with a celebration to remember. Each year, the April Award honors one outstanding new professional and welcomes them to the visitor studies field. Come toast this year's award recipient, Joseph Schantz from the Science Museum of Minnesota, meet friends and colleagues old and new, and support a longstanding VSA tradition. All ticket levels include admission, appetizers, a drink, and a contribution to the April Award fund. The \$35 and \$45 ticket levels include extra perks at the event as well as an extra contribution to the April Award fund. This is a fundraiser to help the April Award fund continue to thrive, so please give generously if you can! Please note, the event is conveniently located between the conference hotel and the opening event.

Tastings, a Wine Experience is centrally located between the Alexander Hotel and the Indiana State Museum.

Entry ticket is required. There will be ability to purchase admittance at the door, for a minimum of \$25.

Congratulations to the Recipients of the April Award and Student Scholarships

The April Award and Student Scholarship programs help bring new talent to the field of visitor studies and the Visitor Studies Association.

VSA is pleased to welcome the following recipients to their first Visitor Studies Conference:

19th Annual April Award:

Joseph Schantz, Science Museum of Minnesota

Meet Joe at the April Award Celebration on Wednesday, July 15. The April Award commends an outstanding emerging professional in the field. It was established by Dr. Marilyn (Molly) Hood to honor the memory of her longtime research assistant April Lahm.

2015 Student Scholarships:

Jason Allen, Michigan State University

Sarah May, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Catherine Dornfeld, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Student Scholarship program supports conference attendance for active students interested in the field of visitor studies.



the entertainment with more music and fun. Try your luck at gold-panning in the museum's latest exhibit: *Gold! Riches and Ruin*. Who knows, you might just strike it rich!

The Indiana State Museum is a 1.1 mile walk northwest. Buses will begin circulating from the hotel lobby at 5:45 p.m.

Event hosted by the Indianapolis State Museum and Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western

A Gold Star Opening Reception at the Indiana State Museum and Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art

Wednesday, July 15 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

\$50

Join VSA for a traveling conference kick-off event. Starting at the Indiana State Museum, begin your discovery while dining bathed in blue and gold - our state flag colors. The 19th state to join the union, Hoosier history unfolds in the museum's Natural and Cultural History galleries. But leave room for dessert and be prepared to roll up your sleeves!

The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art will continue





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Contact:

Pat Villeneuve, Ph.D., Professor and Director of Arts Administration,
Doctoral and Masters Advisor, pvilleneuve@fsu.edu
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Session Streams

This year, we provide a variety of streams of discussion for attendees to navigate. Each session's stream is depicted with the following icons:



Evaluation 101 Introductory concepts, how-to, information relevant for those new to the field



Methodology Strategies and concepts related to data collection, analysis, and reporting



Reporting Findings Presenting the findings from a discrete research or evaluation project



Research to Practice Cycle Applied use of evaluation in informal learning settings, emphasizes use of findings and strategies, role of partnerships



Big Questions and Field-wide Issues Wrestles with a big question in the field and/or poses a problem or question for a group to discuss/solve. This could be work continued from a previous convening.



Taking Action Addresses the conference theme directly

Session Formats

This year's conference features a variety of presentation formats. Please review the list below to learn more about the kinds of presentations you can attend:



Individual Project/Paper Presentations These sessions include 3 presentations on separate, but related, topics. Each speaker gives a 15 minute presentation about his/her project. Presenters reserve time for audience discussion about the topic.



Panel Presentations The session includes several panelists who examine an issue, topic, problem, or theme from a variety of perspectives. Panel discussions reserve sufficient time in their sessions for audience discussion about the topic.



Roundtable Discussion An individual presenter facilitates an informal small group discussion around a key topic or area of interest in the field. Multiple presenters will lead these discussions in the same room during a 75-minute session. Attendees will be allowed but not required to rotate between conversations.



Working Group An individual or group of presenters facilitates action-focused discussion to generate ideas or plans to move towards data visualization, white papers, publications, and/or policies. These sessions are highly collaborative and intended to result in new directions or products.



Hands-on Workshop Demonstrations or applied practice where participants experience or take part in active learning.



Poster Presentations Individual presenters provide graphic displays and are present for one-on-one discussions about specific studies or projects. All posters will be presented during a single session that will take place in the Alexander Ballroom on Friday, July 17 from 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.

Coffee Break

[Alexander Foyer](#)

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.

Focused Interest Group Gathering

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

VSA would like to welcome the first Focused Interest Groups (FIGs) to meet up at VSA! These groups will be collecting for an informal kickoff in advance of the keynote speaker: Internal Visitor Studies Managers, Zoo and Aquariums, and Bridging Communities. Come learn more and consider joining!

9:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Welcome from VSA and President's Address

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Join conference attendees and the VSA President in hearing about recent VSA activities and welcoming all to the conference.



Thursday, July 16 Conference Schedule

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Opening Keynote

Liz Ševčenko

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Liz Ševčenko is founding co-Director of the Humanities Action Lab at The New School in New York City, a network of 20 universities who collaborate on student- and community-created public projects that bring historical perspective to contested current issues. HAL is an outgrowth of the Guantánamo Public Memory Project, which Ševčenko launched while director of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a network of historic sites that foster public dialogue on pressing contemporary issues. Before founding the Coalition, Ševčenko was a Vice President at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and developed public history projects to catalyze civic dialogue in New York and around the country.



Exhibits often have the most impact on the people who make them. How can we build national dialogue on sensitive issues by building an exhibit together? Ševčenko will explore how communities across the US and internationally have collaborated to confront the most difficult parts of their pasts – from Guantánamo to the Gulag – and open dialogue across major divides on their future.

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – I

**Learning Beyond the Walls:
Evaluating Informal Education
Experiences in Public Spaces**

Chris Cardiel, OMSI; Kevin Crowley, UPCLOSE/University of Pittsburgh; Toni Dancu, Exploratorium



[Fletcher Place](#)

In this session, we will begin a conversation regarding the evaluation of exhibits in outdoor and nontraditional spaces intended to reach underserved audiences. Bring a data collection instrument you'd like to share and join us to discuss current projects and explore the opportunities and challenges involved in evaluating such experiences!

**Evaluators and Non-Evaluators:
Shades of Grey Matter**

Elee Wood, IUPUI Museum Studies; Susan Foutz, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Amanda Krantz, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc



[Gallery](#)

Evaluation capacity-building is a significant thread of discussion in our field. This session provides thought-provoking, active discussion on questions such as: Who can evaluate? How does training matter? In this participatory session we'll explore evaluator roles and how these questions are not just black and white, just shades of grey.

**Method to the Madness: When
Methods Meet the Real World**

Liz Kollmann & Juli Goss, Museum of Science Boston; Gina Svarovsky, University of Notre Dame; Liz Rosino, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry



[Pogue's Run](#)

Come talk about the nitty-gritty details of data collection! Over the past few years, we've thought through some worst-case scenarios with projects large and small and realized that even basic methods can be challenging. Hear about our tactics and ask the group about any of your recent struggles.

Paper Presentations

[Renaissance Place](#)

**How Evaluation Changed a History &
Science Exhibition**

Catherine Hughes, Conner Prairie; Allison Cosby, Conner Prairie; Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota



Evaluators from a history museum and a science museum discuss how their close partnership impacted the development of a key initiative to marry history and science. This case study will highlight the ways in which the two very different organizations worked together to plan, carry out, analyze, report, and utilize formative, remedial and summative evaluations. They will describe how various phases of the evaluation of the project informed changes to exhibition and interpretation development.



Implementing Collaborative Exhibition Development in an Art Museum

Tiffany Leason, Indianapolis Museum of Art



With the aim of becoming a more visitor-centered institution, the IMA has implemented a new exhibition development model that is a team-based collaborative effort that seeks visitor input throughout various stages of development. While not uncommon in other cultural institutions, it is a significant shift for an art museum.

Leisure & Practice: How Museum Visits Impact Your Work

Taline Kuyumjian, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry



What happens when YOU visit a museum for fun? This session explores museums' most unique visitors – museum professionals – and the complexities that exist between their leisurely museum visits and their professional practice. Research findings show that experiences in both environments contribute to and shape how the other is understood.

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.
Lunch on Your Own

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.
Ambassador Lunch

Please meet at the Registration Table to walk to lunch.

This year, the VSA Ambassadors are excited to host our first ever Ambassador lunch. If you are new to VSA, or new to the conference, join us for a lunch session where VSA Ambassadors will chat about their work, the association and the conference. If you cannot make the lunch, please find one of us, or feel free to send us an email and we'd be happy to get together. We are here to help you make the most out of your VSA Conference experience!

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Conference Planning Committee Meeting
[Fletcher Place](#)

Professional Development Committee Meeting
[Renaissance Place](#)

2:00 – 3:15 p.m.
Concurrent Session - II

Point of No Arrival: Cultivating Culturally Responsive Research & Evaluation Practices

Ivel Gontan, OMSI; Cecilia Garibay, Garibay Group; Jane Schaefer, Garibay Group; Veronica Garcia-Luis, Exploratorium



[Renaissance Place](#)

Being thoughtful about practice comes naturally to visitor studies professionals, but how does reflecting on that practice help you grow professionally? Join us for a discussion as we talk through our trials, tribulations, and triumphs in our journey to conduct research and evaluation that is culturally responsive and competent.

Visitor Photography: Engagement, Empowerment, Education

Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert Cyprus University of Technology; Divya Rao Heffley, Carnegie Museum of Art; Kristin Bayans, Portland Art Museum; Justin Meyer, University of MI; Kaeleigh Herstad, Indiana University



[Fletcher Place](#)

Photography in museums has become a major part of the museum experience and many museums have, or are, re-evaluating their policies regarding photography. This panel presentation focuses on research and practice that supports visitor photography's capacity to enhance informal learning opportunities, empower visitors, and encourage civic conversations and democratic participation.

Roundtable Discussions
[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Publishing Your Work: A Chat With the Editor of Visitor Studies

Steven Guberman, Science Museum of Minnesota



In this roundtable, the editor of Visitor Studies -- the peer-reviewed, international journal of the Visitor Studies Association -- will describe the process of preparing, submitting, reviewing, and revising manuscripts, discuss the types of manuscripts published in the journal, and answer questions.

Thursday, July 16 Conference Schedule

2:00 – 3:15 p.m. Concurrent Session - II

Studying Young Children's Engineering & Design-Based Experiences

Lisa Newton, Lawrence Hall of Science



Join colleagues to discuss strategies for studying engineering and design-based experiences of young children from Pre-K to early elementary age. Discuss what engineering experiences for young children might look like, consider a few example protocols/instruments, share successes and challenges, and pose your own questions.

Beyond Capacity Building: Taking Action Through Evaluation

Kathy Kiser, Shedd Aquarium



Have you ever delivered an evaluation report only to wonder if anyone will actually read the results? If so, you are not alone. Too often, evaluation results are underutilized. This roundtable will explore meaningful ways to use evaluation results with different audiences. How do you use and share evaluation findings?

Citizen Science Commitment: The Relationship between Scientific and Educational Goals

Jessica Sickler, Lifelong Learning Group



Join a discussion about recent studies showing the relationship between citizen scientists' desire to contribute value to science and their persistence in participation over time. Discuss the related opportunities and potential challenges of maximizing both scientific value and educational goals in large-scale, contributory citizen science projects.

3:15 – 4:00 p.m.

Coffee Break

[Alexander Foyer](#)

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – III

Accessibility: What's an Evaluator to do?

Anna Lindgren-Streicher & Catherine Lussenhop, Museum of Science Boston; Kristina Johnson, Access Indy; Elaine Klemesrud, Indiana State Museum



[Fletcher Place](#)

Museums everywhere are recognizing the importance of accessibility for visitors with disabilities, and there is an ever-growing body of resources. However, as evaluators, where do

we start? This session will provide concrete strategies for self-assessment, collecting and using data, and talking to high-level decision makers about accessibility.

Embrace the Complexity! Building Evaluation Capacity Within a Complex System

Amy Grack Nelson & Sarah Cohn, Science Museum of Minnesota; Liz Kollmann, Museum of Science in Boston; Anika Taylor, The Bakken Museum



[Pogue's Run](#)

Educational organizations, from small institutions to large networks, are complex systems. How can evaluation capacity building address the evaluation needs at different levels of these systems? What aspects of these

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*Joe Heimlich, Dale McCreedy, Kirsten Ellenbogen,
Kathy McLean, Alan Friedman, Mary Ellen Munley,
Deborah Perry, Ross Loomis, Ridgeley Williams,
Harris Shettel*

complex systems help foster evaluation capacity building? We will answer these questions through four perspectives of evaluation capacity building efforts.

Visual Communication in Evaluation: The Leading Edge of Awesome

Claire Thoma, *The Children's Museum of Indianapolis*; Kate Livingston, *ExposeYourMuseum*; Kate Haley Goldman, *Audience Viewpoints*



Alexander Ballroom

Visual design may be a hot topic, but clear communication and evaluation use are no passing fad. Hear from evaluators about incorporating better visual communication into their work, from written reports to presentations and many points in between, and leave inspired to apply these strategies in your own practice.

Paper Presentations

Renaissance Place

Using an Evaluation Tool Across Programs and Institutions

Sara Martinez Davis, *Saint Louis Science Center*



Program evaluations often answer specific questions about individual programs making broader comparisons across programs difficult. This session focuses on the lessons learned from one institution's efforts to assess and track audience program data across their diverse programs and subsequently adapt the tool for use across programs at multiple institutions.

Fine-Tuning a Family Learning Object Rating System

Elee Wood, *Laura Weiss, & Alysha Zemanek, Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis*



This session will describe how a model for control group observation was created between the Chicago Children's Museum and an external evaluator. The mechanisms that facilitated its creation and the lessons learned during implementation as they relate to internal issues, such as staff training, and evaluation utilization will be discussed.

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Dining Discussions

On Thursday and Friday evenings, we will be offering participant-led conversation over dinner; the purpose of these conversations is to provide informal networking and socializing opportunities for attendees who share a common interest. Find the list of topics and sign up to participate in a discussion at the registration table. Diners will gather in the hotel lobby at the designated time, walk to the restaurant together, dine, discuss, and pay for their own dinner.

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Art, Innovation, and Design Night

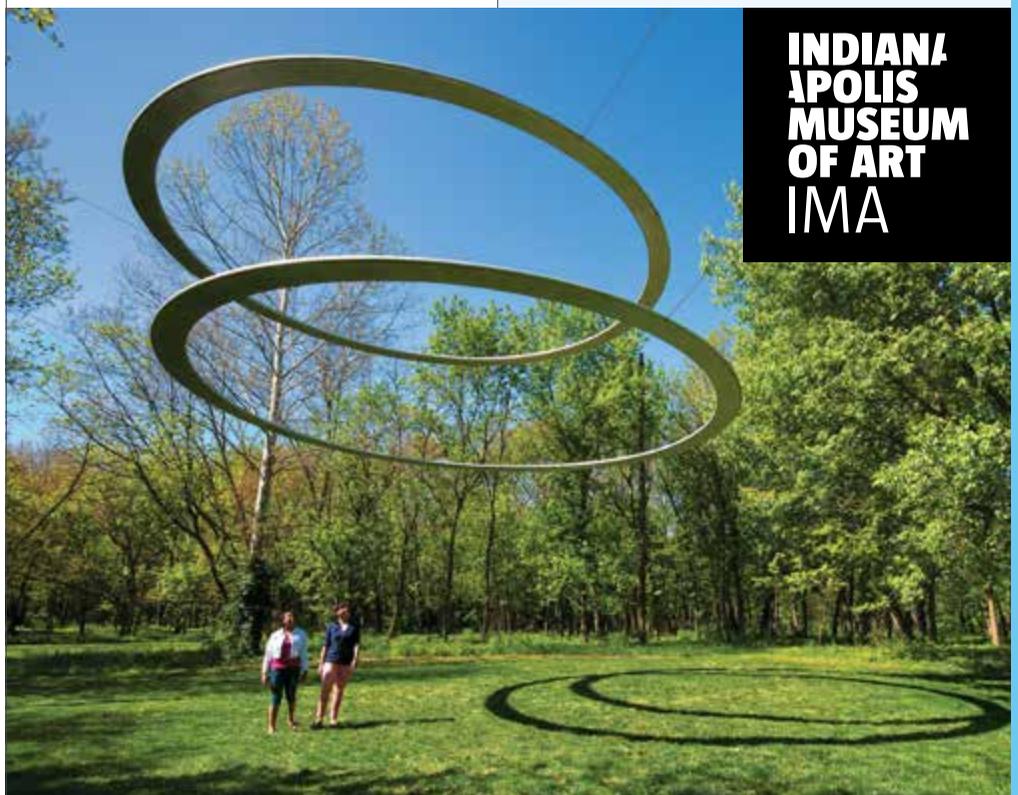
\$50

Join VSA at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and explore its exceptional art collection spanning 5,000 years and visit the *Dream Cars: Innovative Design, Visionary Ideas* exhibition featuring rare, one-of-a-kind concept cars from the early 1930s to the 21st century. Visit the *Car Design Studio* where you can try your hand at designing your own dream car or get creative in the other activity spaces in the museum like *Star Studio*. Walk the 152-acre campus with its lush gardens, outdoor sculptures, historic home, and greenhouse.

You will enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails while you explore a fantastic museum.

Buses will begin circulation promptly at 5:45 p.m. from the main entrance of the Alexander Hotel.

Hosted by the Indianapolis Museum of Art



Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Coffee Break

[Alexander Foyer](#)

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

VSA Business Meeting

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Join fellow members and colleagues for the latest VSA news to find out what is in store for the organization in the coming year. VSA President Joe Heimlich will discuss recent activities within VSA, we will review the Association's finances, and a variety of awards will be presented. Please join us in thanking outgoing board members and welcome incoming board members.



9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jean King

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Jean A. King is a Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development at the University of Minnesota where she serves as Director of the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (MESI). A long-time writer on evaluation use and evaluation capacity building, she is the author of numerous books, articles, and chapters. Professor King has received several awards for her work, including the Myrdal Award for Evaluation Practice and the Ingle Award for Extraordinary Service from the American Evaluation Association, three teaching awards, and three community service awards.



Taking What Action for Change? Dare Evaluation Build a New Social Order?

What, finally, should the evaluator's role in social change be, and with what expectations? Remembering that evaluators often play an indirect role in organizational change efforts, the question becomes how to inspire and support key leaders and decision makers to use the evaluation process and its results. Thankfully, almost 50 years of evaluation use research point to overarching principles and specific actions evaluators can take to help make this world a better place.

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Session – IV

From Questions to Results: The Research Road Map

Elizabeth Bolander & Meghan Stockdale, Cleveland Museum of Art



[Pogue's Run](#)

Broaden your research tool box by learning tips and tricks for project management, evaluation planning, and study design in this conversational panel session. Topics will range from the early stages of determining key research questions and methodologies through data collection, basic analysis, and reporting.

The Unlikely Evaluator: Taking Action to Foster Allies and Advocates

Kate Livingston & Nambii Mangun, ExposeYourMuseum; Betsy Martinson, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave; Elizabeth Fleming, Museum of Life and Science; Jim Kiesel, CA State University at Long Beach



[Gallery](#)

Many of our roads to visitor studies have been riddled with twists and turns, bridges and barriers. Join this panel of "unlikely evaluators" and share your own journey, as we explore how action (and inaction) by audience evaluators and learning researchers can either cultivate or curtail potential allies and advocates.



Evaluation 101



Methodology



Reporting Findings



Research to Practice Cycle



Big Questions and Field-wide Issues



Taking Action

From Field to Institution: Putting Research Agendas Into Action

Jessica Luke, *Museology Graduate Program at University of Washington*; Stephen Ashton, *Thanksgiving Point Institute*; Mary Nucci, *Rutgers University*; Danielle Ross, *Columbus Zoo and Aquarium*



[Fletcher Place](#)

This session is a follow up to last year's research agenda panel session where field-wide research agendas were discussed. This panel discussion will take the conversation one step further, as panelists share how individual institutions are applying field-wide research agendas in their own practice.

Paper Presentations

[Renaissance Place](#)

3D Visualizations Engaging Students and General Visitors About Environmental Topics

Steven Yalowitz, *Audience Viewpoints Consulting*



This presentation summarizes the findings from the summative evaluation of an NSF-funded project about using visualizations to engage students and general visitors about freshwater ecosystems. The project included multiple 3D visualizations, apps, interactives and tabletop exhibits; their individual and collective impact is measured, both short term and longer term.

Exploring how Visitors Find Relevance Within an Exhibition

Stephanie Iacovelli, *Museum of Science in Boston*



What leads visitors to find an exhibition relevant? Come hear about research studying how visitors make connections between nanoscience and their lives during an exhibition experience. Exhibition content and design elements that lead visitors to find relevance will be presented along with a framework for examining relevance in informal environments.

A Kids-Eye View of the Zoo

Alexandra Burris, *Indiana University*



This presentation presents the results of a pilot study using new camera technology, which may allow us to peek into the experiences of child zoo visitors. This long-term study hopes to examine events that take place in the zoo, which may impact child interest development in animals and other science topics.

**11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Lunch on Your Own**

**11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting**

[Pogue's Run](#)

12:45 – 1:45 p.m.

Membership Committee Meeting
[Renaissance Place](#)

Development Committee Meeting
[Fletcher Place](#)

**1:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Concurrent Session – V**

Try it Out! Using Collaborative Evaluation Spaces for Capacity Building

Charity Counts, Chris Carron, Susan Foutz, Cathy Hamaker, Rachael Mathews, & Lisa Townsend, *The Children's Museum Indianapolis*



[Renaissance Place](#)

To satisfy a growing list of evaluation needs and build capacity for evaluation overall, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis created a pop-up evaluation space called "Try It Out!" This space is used for organization-wide visitor research needs. Learn more about Try It Out!, research outcomes, and the overall collaborative process.

Zoos and Aquariums as Agents for Social Change and Betterment

Kathryn Owen, *Woodland Park Zoo*; Kathy Kiser, *Shedd Aquarium*; Jerry Luebke, *Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo*; Rebecca Coon, *Denver Zoo*



[Fletcher Place](#)

The panel will address current efforts among zoos/aquariums to identify their unique role when it comes to engaging the public in skills and behaviors aimed at saving wildlife and creating a sustainable planet, and the role of evaluation in shaping institutional thinking and practice on this issue.

 **Individual Project/Paper Presentations**

 **Panel Presentations**

 **Roundtable Discussion**

 **Individual Project/Paper Presentations**

 **Panel Presentations**

 **Roundtable Discussion**

Friday, July 17

Conference Schedule

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Roundtable Discussions

[Gallery](#)

Edu-Curation: Embedding Visitor Studies in New Museum and University Collaboration

Ann Rowson Love, Florida State University/Ringling Museum; Pat Villaneuve, Florida State University



What if current research, theoretical development, and practice-based models led to real change in the way we prepare future museum educators and curators in graduate programs? Florida State University and the Ringling Museum developed one approach, combining museum education and visitor-centered exhibitions, where embedded visitor studies embrace collaboration and change.

Evaluating the Visitor Experience: Effective Measures for Live Cultural Programming

Betty Belanus, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage; Jon Kay, Traditional Arts Indiana/Indiana University



This session will invite VSA conference audience members to meet with two Indiana folk artists and to view them demonstrating and talking about their work. Audience members will then step back from the experience and brainstorm ideas for effective evaluation of visitor engagement for live cultural programming.

Leading, Influencing, and Advocating for Organizational Change

Marcie Benne, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry; Veronica Garcia-Luis, Exploratorium; Lindsay Maldonado, John G. Shedd Aquarium; Aaron Price, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago



Influencing organizational change often feels challenging and lonely. Three storytellers will briefly share personal experiences; then all participants enter into discussions by sharing stories, questions, and suggestions. Kim Kiehl, Dale McCreedy, and Marcie Benne will be available as needed to offer perspectives gained through their Noyce Leadership Institute experiences.

Telling the Story: Best Practices in Evaluation Communication and Presentation

Kimberly Pratt, COSI; Renae Youngs, Minnesota State Arts Board



Museum visitors respond well to clear, compelling ideas. But so do our colleagues, clients, project partners, funders, board members, and others. Discuss some best practices, some no-cost and low-cost resources, and your favorite presentation and communication tips. Several presentation formats will be discussed.

Embedded Assessment: The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Making Evaluation “Fun”

Mary Michail & Claire Thoma, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis



Embedded assessments create opportunities for evaluators and researchers to make data collection more fun and less onerous for visitors

and program participants. Those with experience using embedded assessments and those interested in learning more are invited to discuss contexts, strategies, and challenges of designing embedded assessments for programs and exhibits.

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Coffee Break

[Alexander Foyer](#)

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Poster Session

[Alexander Ballroom](#)



Building Cross-Institutional Relationships

Bryn Pernot, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago; Lei Zhao, John G. Shedd Aquarium

Cross-institutional collaboration has been promoted as a way to build research capacity, but what does the implementation process look like and what do we learn from this process? A recent partnership between two museums in Chicago is used to contextualize the opportunities and challenges of relationship-building.



Building the ISE Field By Synthesizing Evaluation Reports on Informalscience.org

Amy Grack Nelson, Science Museum of Minnesota; Sarah Cohn, Visitor Studies Association

The Building Informal Science Education (BISE) project coded 520 evaluation reports posted to informalscience.org, and now we want you to use our freely available resources to inform your own practice. Stop by and learn about our coding framework, NVivo database, synthesis papers, blog posts, and more.

 **Capturing the Visitor Experience**

Jan Packer, University of Queensland

The visitor experience is commonly considered the “core product” of museum-type attractions. It is what visitors anticipate, communicate, and remember. Models of the visitor experience and experiential profiles of six zoo/aquarium exhibits are presented. These will contribute to understanding, designing, improving, and marketing the visitor experience.

 **Case Studies in Open-Ended/ Reflective Interviews: Tips & Lessons Learned**

Maggie Ryan Sandford, Science Museum Minnesota

Via two qualitative studies from the Science Museum of Minnesota, this poster shares proven new open-ended reflective interview techniques: technical particulars of exhibit-focused listening and prompting, age-specific reflective interview Dos and Don'ts (including Puppet Facilitation for preschool-aged subjects), and vocabulary modifications for dampening an interviewer's cultural bias.

 **Chinese Visitors' Motivations and Learning Experiences**

Qinglian Zhang, New York University

The poster will focus on Chinese visitors, including tourists, students, and immigrants in New York art museums to learn about their motivations, expectations and difficulties. Art museums want to attract more diverse audiences, but cultural differences can produce obstacles to repeat visitation.

 **Conservation Choices: Inspiring Action Through an Immersive Aquarium Exhibit**

Sarah Werner, Lee Patrick & Sarah Edmunds, Wildlife Conservation Society

Through the design of a new exhibit—Ocean Wonders: Sharks! —the New York Aquarium is striving to increase awareness of New York's critical, often overlooked, seascape. By focusing exhibit components on how peoples' choices affect local ocean ecosystems, the exhibit promotes social change by empowering visitors with specific conservation actions.

 **Demographic Differences Between Museum-Based Fab Lab Attendees and Non-Attendees**

Gloria A. Segovia & Bryn Pernot, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago

Makerspaces have the potential to influence large numbers of people, but there is little known about who uses them. This poster will share information about engineering attitudes, creative identities, do-it-yourself backgrounds and demographics of guests who visited a museum-based Fab Lab and how they compared with the general museum audience.

 **Does Collecting Data on Tablets Still Provide Quality Responses?**

Elaine T. Horr, COSI

Is qualitative data value compromised when collecting data using electronic devices versus traditional pen-and-paper? This question is explored by developing a method used in analyzing and comparing the analysis of questionnaire items gathered using pen-and-paper and tablets with paired keyboards, and planned future work using other types of electronic devices.

 **Engaging the Visitor: Increasing Confidence & Interest in Contemporary Art**

Lauren M. Wilson, University of Texas at Austin

Responses of 70 participants informed a study investigating the connection between feeling confident interpreting contemporary art and subsequent interest. Findings address the perspective of those who are not regular museum visitors and offer suggestions for engaging infrequent contemporary art viewers.

 **Evaluation as an Action: Navigating Change with Marcellus Matters**

Dolly Hayde, Lifelong Learning Group

This poster explores how strategic application of evaluative thinking helped a critical science literacy project adapt to unavoidable change. By embracing the role of evaluation as a constant, personnel used project modeling, a study of team communication, and data management support to inform the structure and delivery of program elements.

 **Evaluation Resources on InformalScience.org**

Grace Troxel, Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE)

The Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) developed a new evaluation landing page on InformalScience.org. The page visually highlights resources to help both new and veteran project leaders leverage professional evaluators to develop evaluation plans and proposals, iteratively inform projects, and disseminate evaluation findings.

Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Poster Session

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Exploring a Model of Adult Development in Engineering Education

Lauren Causey & Joseph Schantz, Science Museum Minnesota

The research describes an approach to preparing teachers to implement the Engineering is Elementary curriculum in the school districts that surround the Science Museum of Minnesota. We explore ways in which this particular model of adult development compares with existing ways of preparing classroom teachers for engineering content.

Fact and Fiction of Visitor Pathway Choice in Museums

Stephen Bitgood, Jacksonville State University; Gareth Davey, Monash University Malaysia

Pathway choice is fundamental to visitor movement through museums. This presentation: (1) refutes the over-generalized dictum of right-turn bias; (2) challenges poster viewers to identify correct pathway choices based on exhibit configurations; and (3) summarizes findings and recommendations from the literature.

Get in the Game: Evaluating the Indie Game Revolution Exhibit

Anna Lopez, University of Washington, EMP Museum

This summative evaluation is a collaboration between Anna Lopez, University of Washington Museology graduate student and the EMP Museum. This evaluation assesses visitors' understandings on the topic of independent games with regards to its definition, evolution, impact, and creation after experiencing the Indie Game Revolution exhibit.

Going Pro and Tracking Stats: Is It Worth It?

Kelsey Picken, Claremont Graduate University

There are many ways to connect with your visitors. In considering which platforms to use, or starting your social endeavor, how do you know if it is "worth" it? Upgrading and tracking your statistics is one way, but what does it all mean, and what does it tell you?

How can Learning Effectiveness in Planetariums be Measured Using an Online Journal?

Kristen Vogt, University of Illinois at Chicago

This poster examines how students engaged with learning at the Adler Planetarium's out-of-school program. By using the programs in the museum, as well as participating in an online reflective journal, the Planetarium explores the benefits that museum and evaluation professionals have by using online journals for visitors and students.

The Impacts of Co-Tinkering at an Engineering Design Exhibit

Lauren Wielgus & Matthew Berland, UW Madison

We looked at the effects of co-tinkering on visitor exploration at an engineering design exhibit about circuits. We combined a quantitative analysis of telemetry data with a qualitative analysis of video data. Through this work, we can see that co-tinkering supports more effective exploration of the problem space.

Kids' Opinions Count: Learning From Young Multimedia Guide Users

Lynn Courtney, Museum of Fine Arts

The multimedia guide's Kids Tour at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston contains family-friendly content for 153 artworks throughout the MFA's collections. This poster reports on a study of the Kids

Tour conducted to inform upcoming improvements, and explores what was learned from observations and interviews directly with young visitors.

Learning Through Touch

Jen MacDowell, Ellen Roth, and Lauren Messenger, University of Washington

This summative evaluation conducted by the Seattle Aquarium and University of Washington Museology Graduate Program students assesses observable visitor learning behaviors that take place at the Life on the Edge: Inland Seas touch pools in order to inform current programming and develop future exhibits.

Looking Inwards: Moving from External to Internal Program Evaluation

Sarah Dunifon, Lincoln Park Zoo

Moving from external to internal evaluation in a student program at Lincoln Park Zoo will be showcased. Looking outside an organization for program evaluation or conducting it in-house can be dependent on funding, staffing, and evaluation goals. Key points include the IRB, the revision process, challenges and lessons learned.

Making Natural History: Dynamic & Collaborative Audience Research in Exhibit Design & Planning

Fiona P. McDonald, John Fraser, Su-Jen Roberts & Kate Fliner, New Knowledge Organization

Through a single case study of concept testing that emerges from the context of a natural history museum, this poster presents the visualization of data of how researchers engaged visitors and museum staff, as well as two external design firms, in participatory action research at Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Metacognitive Discourse in



Museum Cafés: Assessment in Unexpected Spaces

Catherine L. Dornfeld, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Matthew Berland, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Museum cafés are potential spaces for assessment of metacognitive discourse occurring after exhibit exploration. Metacognitive discourse reveals visitors’ individual and collective knowledge. Prior studies indicate the need for evaluation of metacognition in museums—a challenging task. Expanding beyond exhibits into cafés provides increased opportunity for researchers to evaluate learner outcomes.

Out of this World! NASA Educator Workshops and Astronomy Days at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

Lisa Shannon, Mary Styers & A.C. Cosby, Magnolia Consulting, LLC

Magnolia Consulting, LLC collaborated with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences to conduct a 3-year formative and summative evaluation of museum space science programming under a NASA grant. The mixed-method study revealed positive program outcomes for educators, students, and adults. Evaluators will discuss project findings and key takeaways.

Penguin Promises: Moving Visitors From Intent to Action

Judy Mann & Gabby Harris, South African Association for Marine Biological Research; Roy Ballantyne & Jan Packer, University of Queensland, Australia

The Penguin Promises campaign encourages aquarium visitors to make a promise to the penguins: a promise to become more environmentally responsible after their visit. The poster will answer the question, “What are some of the ingredients of a successful behavior change campaign?”

Places & Spaces: Mapping Science

Katy Börne & Elizabeth Record, Indiana University School of Informatics and Computing

Places & Spaces showcases innovative approaches to data visualization, critical for making sense of the large streams of data we confront on a daily basis, and provides examples of data visualizations that delight the eyes, engage the viewer, and impart vast amounts of information in a focused, digestible format.

Poverty, Programming, and Participation: Mapping Data to Inform Action

Erin M. Nolan, Washington University

Mapping can unveil patterns of institutional access, helping to inform future action. By combining previously collected visitor zip codes with U.S. Census Bureau information on median household income, we find that, for one institution, community programming can help offset disparities in ways even free admission cannot.

Primates Watching Primates: Evaluating Guests’ Orangutan Exhibit Experience

Anna Musun-Miller, Indianapolis Zoo; Laura Weiss, IUPUI/Indianapolis Zoo

The Indianapolis Zoo’s Simon Skjodt International Orangutan Center represents a major innovation in zoo guest experience and conservation impact. This project investigated how guests use the space, what key messages guests took away from the exhibit, and what effect the exhibit had on guest attitudes towards orangutans.

Quiz Yo’ Self: Evaluating Network Stations at the Wellbody Academy

Jana Greenslit & Anna Lopez, University of Washington

This formative evaluation is a collaboration between the University of Washington Museology Graduate Program and Pacific Science Center. This evaluation assesses how visitors use and understand the Network Stations at the Professor Wellbody Academy of Health and Wellness exhibit.

Reflections on Lessons Learned from Evaluating the NISE Network

Marta Beyer, Museum of Science; Marcie Benne, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota

Learn about the recently produced document from the NISE Net Evaluation Team about what we learned from evaluating one of the largest NSF-ISE initiatives ever implemented. This includes lessons about setting up the evaluation, collecting data, and disseminating findings. Copies of the document will be available to flip through!

Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Poster Session

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Supporting Youth Development With Evaluation and Assessment Tools

*Rich Pennington and Ayiana Machado,
Science Museum Minnesota*

Before youth can become leaders in their communities, they need to gain relevant skills and the confidence to use those skills. Evaluation can provide many development opportunities. At this poster, we will share how evaluation has tools to help youth take action to improve themselves and their environment.

Uncharted Waters: Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Seattle Maritime Gallery

*Jimi Hightower, Sara Strasne & Sarah
Taggart, University of Washington*

This remedial evaluation was conducted in MOHAI's McCurdy Family Maritime Gallery to better understand how visitors use the space and to determine what elements can be incorporated to make the space more effective.

Uncovering Environmental Understanding and Engagement of Aquarium Guests

*Lindsay Maldonado, Shedd Aquarium;
Jessica Mikels-Carrasco, DJ Case &
Associates*

Informal Science Institutions (ISI) have the potential to promote an environmentally sustainable society, but there is limited research on environmental learning and environmental social psychological outcomes for visitors. We seek to address this gap in visitor research and understanding. Here we present our preliminary findings and plans for future work.

Understanding Adult Audiences' Experiences: Past, Present, and Future.

*Sarah Cohn & Eric LaPlant, Science
Museum Minnesota*

Millennials. Boomer senior citizens. Demographic and culture shifts. If you didn't notice, our audiences are changing. We present the past, present, and future of audience studies at the Science Museum of Minnesota and how we are responding and taking action to improve our relationships with our many, varied adult communities.

Understanding Children's Connections to Nature Through Facilitated and Non-Facilitated Experiences

Amy Rohlman, Shedd Aquarium

How do children make connections to nature, animals, and the environment? Is it through facilitated activities or free play? This poster presentation will focus on research investigating how children visiting Shedd Aquarium make connections to nature through exhibits and what Shedd is doing to help facilitate those connections.

Visitor Responses to Carcass Feeding: A Study Conducted at the ABQ BioPark

Ellen Roth, University of Washington

This summative evaluation assesses the attitudes and comfort levels of visitors who view carcass feedings in three animal exhibits at the ABQ BioPark: Hyena, Tasmanian Devil, and African Painted Dog.



5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Get to Know VSA Happy Hour

[Slippery Noodle Inn](#)

Free

VSA's Membership Committee invites you to attend a Happy Hour at the Slippery Noodle Inn. Hangout with other attendees and VSA members to get to know them and the organization better while exploring part of Indianapolis' night life.

Pre-registration is not required for this event. Food and drinks available for purchase.

The Slippery Noodle Inn is located at 372 S. Meridian St., a 5 minute walk west from the Alexander Hotel.

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Dining Discussions

On Thursday and Friday evenings, we will be offering participant-led conversation over dinner; the purpose of these conversations is to provide informal networking and socializing opportunities for attendees who share a common interest. Find the list of topics and sign up to participate in a discussion at the registration table. Diners will gather in the hotel lobby at the designated time, walk to the restaurant together, dine, discuss, and pay for their own dinner.



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VSA

Visitor Studies Association

SAVE THE DATE!
VSA WILL BE IN BOSTON IN 2016!

JULY 19-23, 2016

Hyatt Regency Boston
1 Avenue de Lafayette
Boston, MA 02111

*Start thinking about how you
can continue the conversations
with us next year.*



Saturday, July 18

Conference Schedule

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

[Alexander Foyer](#)

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Finance Committee Meeting

[Fletcher Place](#)

Newsletter Team Meeting

[Renaissance Place](#)

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – VI

Exploring Evaluation Across Multiple Institutions

Rena Youngs, Minnesota State Arts Board; Betsy Martinson, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave; Julie Scordato, Columbus Metropolitan Library



[Fletcher Place](#)

What does it mean to build evaluation capacity within a network of institutions? What does it look like to evaluate progress toward outcomes shared by many organizations? Compare perspectives on multi-site evaluation from a grantmaking agency, an evaluation community of practice, and a cross-institutional youth development program.

Complex Studies of a Complex Subject: Data Visualization and Visitors

Mary Ann Wojton, Lifelong Learning Group; Sasha Palmquist, Palmquist & Associates; Lisel Record, Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center at Indiana University



[Gallery](#)

This session will share insights from university scientists and museum evaluators who partnered to create a series of studies to explore how

visitors make sense of “big data” visualizations. Methods used include intercepts, structured interviews, and card sorts. Panelists will also discuss the benefits and challenges of a complex partnership.

Harnessing Empathy: The Path to Inspiring Others to Take Action

Barbara Soren, University of Toronto; John Goodson, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis; Sharon Pierce, The Villages



[Pogue’s Run](#)

At The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, The Power of Children’s Take Action gallery helps families learn how they can make a difference in the lives of others. Live theatrical performance, real-life community partnership, and evaluation of visitors will assist in developing ‘tools’ for harnessing visitors’ empathy into implementing social change.

Paper Presentations

[Renaissance Place](#)

“Making Connections:” Fostering Change at the Science Museum of Minnesota

Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota; Gina Svarovsky, Notre Dame University



In its first year, the “Making Connections” research project has already caused ripples of change within the Science Museum of Minnesota. The study population of underrepresented audiences allowed internal teams to begin building an understanding of the nuance of new strategic planning initiatives whereby SMM seeks to engage diverse audiences.

Inclusive Learning Opportunities at the Zoo for Individuals With Disabilities

Jennifer Matiasek, Chicago Zoological Society



As Chicago Zoological Society increases the inclusivity of its programs for individuals with disabilities, we hope to create a model that enables participants to transition across programs and sustain personal growth beyond a single experience. Initial evaluations have provided feedback to help us expand and develop as a community resource.

Gendered Understanding of History Exhibitions (and how This can be Expanded)

Antonette Hrycyk, History Colorado Center



This session provides an example from research performed at the History Colorado Center in Denver, CO to demonstrate how a simple post-visit intercept interview can be of help to understand how visitors interpret the gendered narratives in a history exhibit.

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions – VII

How Orangutans Started an Evaluation Program at the Indianapolis Zoo

Laura Weiss, Indiana University-Purdue University; Don Reifler, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis; Caitlin Kegley, COSI



[Renaissance Place](#)

A single exhibit, the Simon Skjodt International Orangutan Center, changed the Indianapolis Zoo’s attitude

and approach towards evaluation. Over the course of four projects done in partnership with Museum Studies graduate students at IUPUI, the institution saw forward shifts in student/staff involvement, review processes, and the use of findings.

Assessing Public Impacts of Multi-Site Projects: Opportunities and Challenges

Steven Guberman & Gretchen Haupt, Science Museum of Minnesota; Gina Svarovsky, Notre Dame University; Chris Cardiel, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry



[Gallery](#)

Projects taking place in multiple locations present opportunities and challenges for the assessment of public impacts. Hear about the advantages and difficulties of assessing the impacts of multi-site projects, the methods used to study three informal science education projects taking place at multiple sites, and the lessons that were learned.

Assessing and Improving Programming for Specific Audiences

Rachael Mathews, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Fran Mast, Shedd Aquarium; Elaine Horr, COSI



[Fletcher Place](#)

This session introduces three examples in different museums of how planning and evaluation have led to more effective programs. Beginning with the planning process, examples of planning tools are introduced and shared. The discussion leads to the processes of collecting data, analyzing the data and using it for training and program improvement.

Exploring Tools for Empowering Visitors

Stephen Bitgood, Jacksonville State University; Elizabeth Bolander, Cleveland Museum of Art; Amy Cota-McKinley, Worcester College; Lindsay Maldonado, Shedd Aquarium



[Pogue's Run](#)

Questions addressed in this session include: "How can we empower visitors to engage with exhibit content in the most meaningful way?" and "What cost-effective empowering tools can be used to supplement the 'hardware' of exhibits?" Presenters will guide participants in a discussion of these and other related questions.

**NEW!
Post-Conference Workshop**

Registration is required

Half Day Workshop
2 – 5 p.m.

Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Research and Evaluation Volunteers

Fran Mast, Researcher/Analyst, Manager of Audience Research and Evaluation, Shedd Aquarium



[Fletcher Place](#)

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Closing Luncheon

[Alexander Ballroom](#)

Free — Ticket Required

**Keynote Speaker
Javier Barrera Cervantes**

Originally from Veracruz Mexico, Javier Barrera Cervantes is an Indianapolis-based Media Strategist. He is a founding board member of the Latino Youth Collective, a program that provides resources and opportunities for youth to engage in personal and community development through critical pedagogy, grassroots organizing, and collective action. He also serves as the Director of the Campeñine Youth Academy, a summer research program that trains and employs youth to conduct research and enact social change in their community.



The Shock Doctrine, the Distraction Industrial Complex and the Rise of the "don't give a f#\$@" Generation

We will take a look into a generation growing up in an era of information overload, pervasive social marketing, and the lack of a persistent sense of historical conscience and explore how these realities present a wave of new challenges for those working with and for youth. We will use the Campeñine Youth Academy, a summer leadership institute designed to train youth in participatory action research using new media technology, as an example and see how this program has helped us to move people from empathy or charity to solidarity in the search for collective consciousness.

Event includes lunch.

VSA Conference Team

Special thanks to our conference team, whose time, energy, and dedicated service has enabled VSA to present such a fantastic event.

2015 Conference Team

Sarah Cohn, Association Manager

Rita Deedrick, Development Committee Liaison

Valerie Grabski, Abstracts Editor

Amy Grack Nelson, Workshop Co-Chair

Kate Livingston, April Awards and Scholarships Chair

Sara Martinez Davis, Membership Committee Liaison

Julia Miller, Workshop Co-Chair

Camellia Sanford, Conference Planning Committee Chair

Claire Thoma, Program Co-Chair

Elee Wood, Conference Planning Committee Vice-Chair and Program Co-Chair

Jennifer Borland

Jennifer Holland

Jerry Luebke

Jessica Luke

Jessica Sickler

Jill Stein

Josh Gutwill

Joyce Ma

Karen Wizevich

Kari Williams

Kate Haley Goldman

Kate Tinworth

Kayte McSweeney

Kerry Morgan

Kirsten Latham

Kirsten Buchner

Kris Morrissey

Laureen Trainer

Lauren Marallo

Linda Wilson

Lindsay Maldonado

Lisa Newton

Lisa Sindorf

Liz Rosino

Lynne Carmichael

Maia Werner-Avidon

Marley Steele-Inama

Martin Storksdieck

Mary Ann Wojton

Mary Jane Taylor

Matt Sikora

Meghan Stockdale

Michelle Maghari

Minda Borun

Nette Pletcher

Nick Visscher

Nicole Stutzman Forbes

Rebecca Teasdale

Rebekah Sobel

Regan Forrest

Rita Deedrick

Ryan Auster

Sarah Brenkert

Sarah Cohn

Sarah Lee

Sheila Brommel

Stephen Ashton

Stephen Bitgood

Steven Guberman

Susan Foutz

Tiffany Leason

Wendy Meluch

Zdanna Tranby

2015 Session Proposal Reviewers

Amy Niedbalski

Andrea Michelbach

Angie Ong

Beth Maloney

Beth Shea

Beverly Serrell

Caren Oberg

Chris Catanese

Clara Cahill

Donna Braden

Elaine Horr

Elizabeth Bolander

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Emily Craig

Emily Skidmore

Fran Mast

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Insight Evaluation Services

Rita Deedrick

Saul Rockman

Wordcraft

Chicago Third Friday

Breakfast Center for Museum

Exploration and Gossip

(Barbara, Beverly, Cricket,

Deborah, Dianne, Linda, Lindsay, Lisa, Patty, Tamara, Tina)

Front-End Friends

Lynn Courtney

Gina Svarovsky

Cheapskates for Visitor Studies! (\$19.95)

Your Name Here...

The 28th Annual Visitor Studies Association Conference is supported by businesses, organizations, and individuals committed to understanding and serving visitors in informal learning environments. Please support those whose work furthers VSA's vision of a world where lifelong learning is embraced, and where learning in informal settings benefits individuals, communities, and society at large.

Conference Sponsors



CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Lifelong Learning Group

Local Host Organizations



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IMA



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indianamuseum.org

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VSA Board of Directors and Committees

Special thanks to the following volunteers whose time, energy, and dedicated service have enabled VSA to increase the scope and quality of its service to the field.

THE VSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015 – 2017

OFFICERS

President – Kimberlee Kiehl, *Smithsonian Early Learning Center*

President-Elect – *Not yet identified**

Vice President, Organizational Development –
Laura Huerta Migus, *Association of Children's Museums*

Vice President, Professional Development –
Jessica Luke, *University of Washington*

Vice President, Outreach –
Michelle Maghari, *Crocker Art Museum*

Corporate Compliance & Secretary –
Beth Shea, *Illinois State Museum*

Treasurer – Kathleen Lawson, *Arkansas Discovery Network*

Immediate Past President – Joe Heimlich, *COSI*

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Ly Foor, *Ohio History Connection*

Patsy Reublin, *Bootheel Youth Museum*

Special thanks to the outgoing board members who have dedicated between 2 and 6 years to improving and developing VSA from the inside.

Marcie Benne, *Oregon Museum of Science and Industry*

Robert Breck, *Science Museum of Minnesota*

Kate Haley Goldman, *Audience Viewpoints*

Elisa Israel, *Saint Louis Science Center*

Randi Korn, *Randi Korn & Associates*

Dale McCreedy, *The Franklin Institute*

Randy Roberts, *Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem
Museum of Art*

Saul Rockman, *Rockman et al*

Gina Navoa Svarovsky, *University of Notre Dame*

David Ucko, *Museums + More*

* The VSA Board of Directors will be holding a strategic organization retreat prior to the VSA conference to set our path for moving forward. We will then share this information with the membership and identify individuals with the right skills to compliment the other skilled leaders on the board to fill the open slots and help move and guide our organization into the future.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vice President: Laura Huerta Migus

Thanks to outgoing Vice President: Dave Ucko

BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*Incoming Chair: Not yet identified**

Vice Chair: Anna Lindgren-Streicher

Members: Betty Dunckel, Julie Johnson, and Janet Rassweiler

Thanks to outgoing Chair: Laura Huerta-Migus

The Board Development Committee is charged with ensuring effective board governance of the Association. The committee is responsible for overseeing elections, monitoring and assessing board processes, structures and roles, and providing board members with the tools and support needed to fulfill their board duties.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*Incoming Chair: Not yet identified**

Vice Chair: Lynn Courtney

Members: Rita Deedrick, Anna Johnson, Kim Kiehl, Kelsey Picken, Ellen Roth, Kelley Staab, and Mira Zergani

Thanks to outgoing Chair: Randi Korn

The Development Committee is charged with raising money to support the work of VSA. The Development Committee works with other committees to understand resource needs so it can raise dollars accordingly. Committee members design, manage, and execute fund raising strategies to encourage charitable donations, advertising, and sponsorships.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

*Incoming Chair: Not yet identified**

Members: Sarah Lee, Jessica Luke, and Dave Ucko

Thanks to outgoing Chair: Kate Haley Goldman

The Finance Committee is charged with reviewing the financial processes and systems that are facilitated by VSA's contractors. The Finance Committee works tightly with the Treasurer and the Association Manager to ensure all aspects of the financial accounting are transparent, followed, and documented.

Consider volunteering a few hours a month to support VSA's efforts for its members by joining a committee.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vice President: Jessica Luke

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Camellia Sanford

Vice Chair: Elee Wood

Members: Ellen Bechtol, Clara Cahill, Allison Cosbey, Ly Foor, Dolly Hayde, Claire Thoma, and Zdanna Tranby

This group is the major workforce behind the annual conference. The Conference Planning Committee (CPC) is responsible for ensuring that the annual conference is designed to serve VSA's mission, strategic direction, and members. The CPC oversees the direction and logistics of planning for VSA's current and future annual conferences. The CPC also oversees and advises the annual Conference Team as they prepare for each conference. A new Team is created for each year's conference, consisting of the Association Manager, Program Co-Chairs, local VSA members, and representatives from other VSA committees. The CPC provides guidance and continuity between each year's planning processes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Incoming Chair: Jennifer Borland

Members: Elsa Bailey, Jen DeWitt, Erin Gong, Michelle Maghari, Amy Grack Nelson, Dolly Hayde, Jennifer Holland, Taline Kuyumjian, Julia Miller, Leah Reisman, Kate Livingston, Nick Visscher, and Lauren Wilson

Thanks to outgoing Chair: Elisa Israel

The Professional Development Committee is responsible for providing training and growth opportunities for VSA members and other informal learning professionals. Specifically, the committee is charged with the following responsibilities: conference workshops; webinars; regional workshops; the April Award and Student Scholarships; and professional standards.

OUTREACH

Incoming Vice President: Michelle Maghari

Thanks to outgoing Vice President: Bob Breck

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Members: Jim Kisiel, Lesley Langa, Lauren Marallo, Amy Niedbalski, Liz Rosino, and Beth Shea

Thanks to outgoing Chair: Gina Svarovsky

The Communications Committee is in the process of sunsetting as a formal committee for VSA. Instead of being a standing committee, communications will become a part of every other committee's work, and the Association Manager will provide continuity of communication with members by following a set of communication policies. The Newsletter Working Group will continue to function, in coordination with the Association Manager, producing at least one newsletter every quarter. The liaison to the editorial board of VSA's journal, *Visitor Studies*, will connect directly with the Vice President for Outreach.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Incoming Chair: Renae Youngs

Members: Linda Allegro, Patience Baach, Chris Catanese, Andrea Giron, Lindsay Maldonado, Sara Martinez Davis, Patty Montano, Lisa Newton, and Maia Werner-Avidon

Thanks to outgoing Chair: Marcie Benne

The Membership Committee strives to create accessible and inclusive pathways for joining and engaging with VSA. The committee co-develops a variety of resources and activities to help members get acquainted with each other, share expertise, develop VSA competencies, create VSA experiences, and collaborate to advance the field.





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WHY DOES THE SCHOOL BUS STOP AT ROTO?



Roto is pleased to announce the renewal of its annual partnership with Dublin City Schools, comprising 12 elementary, 4 middle and 3 high schools surrounding Roto's central Ohio headquarters. The partnership provides Roto's museum projects with a diverse pool of participants for our extensive in-house exhibit development and evaluation efforts, while students and teachers enjoy expert support for their innovative in-class projects. Together with our museum and science center colleagues, Roto relies on practices like these to produce some of the most effective and durable exhibitions and cultural experiences in the field.



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