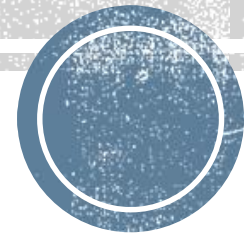


ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITIES & ARTS

A DISCUSSION WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2018 AT MORVEN MUSEUM & GARDEN



INTERESTED IN CONNECTING WITH US?

- Questions? Comments? Interested in working more with NJCH?

Contact Angela Speakman

Director of Development & Communications

aspeakman@njhumanities.org

609.695.4838, ext. 230



WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT ADVOCACY?

- Definition of advocacy - the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal, the act or process of advocating for something

Some questions to consider –

- Is advocacy more important now than in the past?
- Is advocacy better when it's more proactive or reactive? (ongoing and ever present vs. response to threat)
- With limited resources – funding and manpower – what is priority?
- Who is worthy enough to be a recipient of advocacy messages?
- What's more important – advocacy from the organization or the constituency?



WHY NOW?

- Is advocacy more important now than in the past?

HECK NO!

- It's always been around, but in recent years, urgency increased.
- What did threats about cutting the NEH, NEA, CPB, IMLS, and other agencies spark?

OPPORTUNITY!



DO YOU HAVE TO PICK ONE?

- Is advocacy better when it's more proactive or reactive?
Ah, that's a trick question. Hopefully, there's room for both.

But, it's important to include planning whether it's for "regular" advocacy efforts or advocacy efforts in response to direct or indirect threats.

- Ongoing efforts get the benefit of more planning.
- In-the-moment efforts get the benefit of heightened relevancy.



HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

- With limited resources – funding and manpower – what is priority?

It depends on advocacy goals.

Here's the catch:

- If you don't have advocacy goals, then you can't make decisions about how to prioritize.
- Advocacy goals will help determine priorities, but will require institution-wide comprehension, buy-in, and commitment for success.



WHO MAKES THE CUT?

- Who is worthy enough to be a recipient of advocacy messages?

Okay, okay, much of what you do could be a form of advocacy AND everyone is worthy, but it's a cost vs. benefit consideration.

- For our purposes, we're specifically looking at who gets special attention because their awareness helps further your mission.
- Typical recipients: elected officials, influencers, funders, potential partners and ambassadors, able-to-be converted supporters, and other individuals and entities that can or have the potential to advance your work.



WHICH IS BETTER?

- What's more important – advocacy efforts from the organization or the constituency?

Hopefully, there's room for both (little echo-y, yes?).

- Organization
 - Assumption - that you're already committed to advocate when the opportunity arises.
 - Possible shift – The org can seek out the opportunities.
- Audiences
 - Assumption - that they're already interested in arts and culture.
 - Possible shift – The org can provide the opportunity for the advocacy.



IF I ONLY HAVE TIME FOR A TOP TEN LIST...

Internally Focused Strategies

1. Create an advocacy plan

- It will likely be a collaborative effort – administration, programming, communications, development, board, etc., but the effort will need to have a champion or champion department.
- To be most effective, everyone is aware, and potentially involved.

2. Talk about that plan

- It may sound overly simplistic, but scheduling check-ins and keeping everyone informed is key.
- Set advocacy goals for the ongoing activities.



IF I ONLY HAVE TIME FOR A TOP TEN LIST...

Internally Focused Strategies

3. Thoughtfully craft materials that consider varied audiences
 - Constituency
 - Community influencers
 - Elected officials
 - With careful consideration, media

4. Educate the staff and board
 - Start from the beginning.
 - Look for the ways that relate to the role.



IF I ONLY HAVE TIME FOR A TOP TEN LIST...

Internally Focused Strategies

5. Work to identify a group of advocates/ambassadors
 - Use varied perspectives from the org to identify advocates.
 - Formally invite them to participate as advocates.

Externally Focused Strategies

6. Brag
 - But...plan for the braggery! Be strategic about choice and positioning.
 - Use the most appropriate channels (website, printed materials, appeal letters, social media, etc.).



IF I ONLY HAVE TIME FOR A TOP TEN LIST...

Externally Focused Strategies

7. Be specific about what you want core advocates to do
 - Pick one request/message.
 - Use the asks with care.

8. Offer examples or starting points to the constituency
 - Templates work, especially with customizable sections.
 - Make resources easily findable.



IF I ONLY HAVE TIME FOR A TOP TEN LIST...

Externally Focused Strategies

9. Encourage general constituency to be genuine in their messaging
 - Help advocates to share meaningful experiences.
 - Convey importance of reaching diverse sets of ears.

10. Seize opportunities to connect via advocacy messages as they arise
 - As those opps align with advocacy efforts, make decisions about positioning.
 - Sometimes you and/or the team may decide to pass.



SOME CLOSING NUGGETS

- Engaging visuals pair well with text.
- “Different” (situationally-appropriate!) can work to your advantage.
- Including the topic of advocacy in your org’s work content conveys it is a priority.
- Membership, exclusive groups/circles/societies, legacy programs, etc. can all advance advocacy efforts.
- Advocacy varies widely – to inform, to persuade, to act or a combination of all three. Know what you want to accomplish.
- If there’s a reasonable ask – and you’ll know what’s reasonable if you’ve done your homework – clearly ask for it.



RESOURCES

- <https://njhumanities.org/get-involved/advocate/>
- <http://njhumanities.org/resources/>
- https://www.nhalliance.org/take_action
- <http://www.statehumanities.org/advocacy/>
- <https://www.americansforthearts.org/advocate>
- <http://www.artpridenj.com/>
- <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/kca/en/resources/ArtsEducationAdvocacyToolkit.pdf>
- <https://medium.com/@jasonrhody/to-protect-the-arts-and-humanities-go-local-3577df55e422>



WRAPPING UP

- Questions? Shares? Comments?
- Follow-up is welcome.
Angela Speakman
Director of Development & Communications
aspeakman@njhumanities.org
609.695.4838, ext. 230

Thank you for your time and participation!

