Ages and Stages of a Museum Career

Welcome!

The webinar will begin at 2:00 p.m. C.T.
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories
The Museum Services Program provides support, resources, and training to museums in Texas.

- Consultations
- Webinars and workshops
- Resources
www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services

- On our webpage:
  - Webinars
  - Workshops
  - Grants and Fundraising
  - Helpful Resources
  - Connect and Learn
• Laura Casey
  *Museum Services Program Coordinator*
  
  *laura.casey@thc.texas.gov*
  
  512-463-6427

• Emily Hermans
  *Museum Services Program Specialist*
  
  *emily.hermans@thc.texas.gov*
  
  512-463-5921
Upcoming Free Webinars

- **Incorporating AR/VR Technology Within Your Museum**
  - *Tuesday, July 30, 11:00 a.m. CT*

- **Insurance Basics for Historical Collections**
  - *Thursday, August 22, 10:00 a.m. CT*

- **Environmental Monitoring for Museums: The Basics**
  - *Thursday, September 19, 10:00 a.m. CT*
Ages and Stages of a Museum Career

Sarah Erdman
She/Her/Hers
cabinetofcuriositiesva@gmail.com
@CabinetofCurios

Amazon.com/author/saraherdman

For orders of 5+ books contact me
Universal Truths of Museum Work

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- **self-actualization**
  - morality, creativity, spontaneity, acceptance, experience purpose, meaning and inner potential

- **self-esteem**
  - confidence, achievement, respect of others, the need to be a unique individual

- **love and belonging**
  - friendship, family, intimacy, sense of connection

- **safety and security**
  - health, employment, property, family and social stability

- **physiological needs**
  - breathing, food, water, shelter, clothing, sleep

[https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html](https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html)
Hierarchy of Staff Needs

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

HIGHEST PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS
Am I making a difference? Can I maintain the expectations & pace? Am I still learning & exploring?

HIGHER PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS
Do I feel included? Do I feel I meaningfully contribute? Are my outside needs respected & space made for them?

BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS
What is this place? What do I do here? What tools do I need to accomplish my tasks & do I have them?

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
Where are the bathrooms? Where are my spaces? Where do I eat? Where can I sit down? What is my schedule? Am I paid sufficiently to make a living? Are my physical & mental health needs addressed?

ACCESSIBILITY & SAFETY NEEDS
Am I safe? Am I welcomed? Can I enter the front door? Can I access all of the places that I need to? Will I be treated with respect? Will I be treated as a whole person?
Sustainable Living - Challenges

• Working Against Us
  • High barriers to entry
  • Low pay
  • Lack of training beyond content knowledge
  • No HR and other structural barriers
  • Unfulfilling work

• Working For Us
  • We are awesome
  • We want change
Sustainable Living - Ideas

• Macro
  • Don’t shy away from hard conversations about pay, inclusion, diversity. They are already happening so listen and learn
  • Encourage professional development and mentorship, keep all admin/board mission focused

• Micro
  • Be helpful, be grateful, be kind
  • Take care of yourself
    • Physically, mentally, your spaces, your time
  • Get perspective
  • Break silos and make room for new ideas
Universal “To Dos”

• Remember the hierarchy of staff needs and macro/micro ways to be sustainable
• Build your professional development network
• Change your plan and goals as you change
Emerging Museum Professionals (EMPs)

- Usually defined as less than 10 years in the field
- More a “state of mind”
  - Job changes
  - Actively working to move up in field
EMPs Are Professionals

• EMPs
  • You don’t know everything and that is ok...it doesn’t mean you don’t belong
  • Failure will happen
  • Find a mentor

• Supervisors/Colleagues of EMPs
  • Watch, observe and provide feedback
  • Help connect EMPs with mentors
  • Allow them to actively participate
  • Treat them as professionals
Finding Your Footing
EMP “To Dos”

• What do I “look like” professionally
  • My work, my digital footprint, my participation

• What sort of professional development network do I have? What gaps should I fill?

• What is my 5 year goal. Am I making good choices to reach it?
Mid Career Professionals

• What does this even mean?
  • 10+ years in the field?
  • Loans paid off?
  • Certain position achieved?

Still learning and growing but feel like you have something to give back to those still starting out
Shifting Priorities

- Family
- Hobbies
- Professional Goals
- Personal Goals
Finding Your Place

**When are you a Mid-Career Museum Professional?**

- When you've paid off your loans
- When you have a certain level of seniority
- After a certain number of years

**When Your Priorities Start to Shift**

- Finding work-life balance
- Rekindling excitement for the field

**Deciding if Museum Work is Still for You**

**Being mid-career means having experience & confidence to make decisions about your own path**

**Stay**

**Go**
Mid Career “To Dos”

• Is my 5 year plan changing? What do I need to do now to support it?
• Have my professional development needs changed?
• How can I start to give back to the field?
Survivors-Elders-Lifers-Perennial-Seasoned

• Sense of Purpose/Be Careful What You Get Good At
  • Confidence vs. Complacency
  • Boundaries and Opinions

• Thriving or surviving?

• If you feel you are beyond mid-career
  • What does that look like to you?
  • What are your changing needs?
  • What is your goal at this point?
Ages and Stages

• Your “stage” of museum career isn’t to box you in
  • Helps you put your needs into perspective
  • Lets you connect with others

• Some things are universal

• Your professional development network is critical at any stage for different reasons
THANK YOU

• Shaelyn Amaio (Illustrator)
• Michael Madeja (EMPs)
• Marieke Van Damme (Joyful Museums)
• Marieke Van Damme, Dawn Salerno, Claudia Ocello, Sarah Erdman (Why People Leave Museums)
Ages and Stages of a Museum Career

Sarah Erdman
She/Her/Hers
cabinetofcuriositiesva@gmail.com
@CabinetofCurios

Amazon.com/author/saraherdman
For orders of 5+ books contact me