



U R B A N A R T S
l e a d e r s h i p

G R E A T E R B A L T I M O R E C U L T U R A L A L L I A N C E

Evaluating Urban Arts Leadership & Equity

A Collaborative, Multiply-focused Learning Journey
August 2020-August 2021

Reflecting on the Past

Key Experiences During the First Seven Years of Urban Arts
Leadership

Journey Scroll



SANKOFA

Retrieving Wisdom From The
Past & Moving Forward

The Journey Scroll

The Journey Scroll is a customized data collection tool developed by TGCS as part of the Group Insight Facilitation process.

A Journey Scroll provides an interactive framework for stakeholders to outline the important stages of project development, documenting the inception, growth, expansion, and contraction of any complex community-based organization accountable to promoting progressive ideals of public education, yet also responsive to local and national critical events, social movements, and community needs.

Journey Scroll Insights

PURPOSE: UAL participants were polled to provide insights into their experience with the program.

Stories were shared and self-categorized into one of the following categories:

BRIDGE

Provided a means to overcome an obstacle or traverse a "whirlpool"

CHUTE

Something that made the program(s) take a step or more backwards

HEARTWARMER*

"It created a meaningful connection with another human in the arts"

LADDER

A mechanism that helped the program(s) rise up or advance

LIGHTBULB *

"helped us as a host organization, see ourselves in a new light"

MIRROR*

"A reflection of who you are in your role and why"

WHIRLPOOL

A place where things were stuck, or swirling about without making progress

***User-generated category**

89 Urban Arts Leadership program participants and members received an invitation to participate anonymously in the survey

18 total stories were received in response.

Some sample responses are found below

“My cohort was able to take a trip to the National Museum of African American History & Culture around its opening. To me, this experience was unlike any museum trip I’ve taken. Being in a program where we’re trying to push artists of color into spaces to be seen while simultaneously being in one of the largest museums for that purpose was like inception. I was seeing the future becoming brighter but also experiencing and seeing throughout history that this (the black experience) was not always acceptable or commendable. It opened my eyes to see how much harder I have to work in my craft. Not for the acceptance of the “elite” but for those in my demographic and pave a new route that can be recognized on a grander scale. The time we had there wasn’t enough but sharing that experience with a cohort who grew into my family was one for the books.”

Self-identified **Ladder** moment

“The increase in funding from my initial letter to when I joined was helpful. Because of the schedule requirements I had to cancel several freelance jobs. But after receiving the increase I was able to still manage some of my bills on my own.”

Self-identified **Bridge** moment

“[...] With the amount of hours that the five of us were logging each week just to fulfill the host org and Field School work duties/timelines, a \$10,000 stipend starts to feel less like a “generous” gift and more like subtle exploitation within a program that knowingly recruits young, up and coming creatives of color (many of whom from the Baltimore area) that are hungry for mentorship and willing to do whatever it takes to achieve that and break into the arts”

Self-identified **Chute** moment

THE URBAN ARTS LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

RETROSPECTIVE 2013-2021

89 SURVEY RECIPIENTS
18 ANONYMOUS RESPONSES
REPRESENTING
7 DIFFERENT POSITIONS
TRACKED UAL'S JOURNEY VIA
4 DIFFERENT EFFECTS



- 2013** THE FOUNDATIONAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE WERE DEEPLY INFLUENTIAL IN THE CREATION OF THE PROGRAM
- 2014** IT WAS EXCITING TO BRAINSTORM WAYS TO HELP HIGHER ED PROGRAMS BETTER PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND THE UAL PROGRAM
- 2016** THE INCREASE IN FUNDING FROM MY INITIAL OFFER ENABLED ME TO CANCEL SOME FREELANCE GIGS TO FOCUS ON THE UAL WORK
- 2017** MY COHORT'S TRIP TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE HELPED ME SEE BOTH THE FUTURE AND THE PAST FOR ARTISTS OF COLOR
- REALIZING THAT NOT EVERYONE COMING INTO THE PROGRAM UNDERSTANDS THE VALUE OF MEETINGS WAS EYE OPENING, AS THEY ARE WHERE EVERYTHING HAPPENS!
- LEARNING ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE PROGRAM FROM AN ALUMNUS WAS CRUCIAL, AS I NEVER HEARD ABOUT IT IN ALL MY YEARS AT MICA
- AFTER COMPLETING THE PROGRAM, I WAS NOT ABLE TO FIND A JOB IN THE CREATIVE FIELD AND HAD TO TAKE A NON-ARTS-BASED JOB TO PAY THE BILLS
- 2018** WE ORGANIZED A CONFERENCE WHERE WE DISCUSSED IDEAS OF COMMUNITY AND CAME AWAY WITH SOME CONCRETE GOALS FOR REBUILDING
- OUR FELLOWS CREATED A LARGE UNIFYING EVENT

- 2019** WITNESSING THE PROBING QUESTIONS OF THE BALTIMORE CITY CAUCUS AT THE MARYLAND ARTS FESTIVAL IMPRESSED ME
- THE GRADUATION CEREMONY WAS A VERY POWERFUL LEAP-- A KAPOW! MOMENT THAT REVEALED HOW FAR EVERYTHING HAD COME
- PRESENTING A WORKSHOP ON EXPLORING FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH OWNING YOUR OWN ART SPACE HELPED MY COMMUNITY
- 2020** THE 2020 COHORT SUFFERED FROM A ROCKY START AND THE AMOUNT OF WORK SHOULDERED BY ME AND MY COLLEAGUES FELT SUBTLY EXPLOITATIVE
- THE CANCELLATION OF AN ORCHESTRAL CONNECTION PROJECT DUE TO THE PANDEMIC WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT GIVEN THE VISIONARY WORK PUT INTO IT
- THE VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR THE 2020 COHORT REVEALED A SHIFT IN MINDSET AND SHOWED THE BOND OF THE COHORT

PERSONAL INSIGHTS COLLECTED FROM USER-GENERATED CATEGORIES

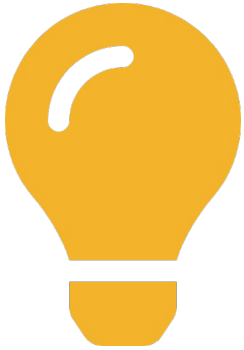
- A FELLOW SHARED AN ILLUMINATING COMMENT WITH ME ON HOW MEETINGS WERE WHERE THINGS WERE DECIDED AND IT STUCK WITH ME
- A UAL HIGHER-UP GIFTED ME THE THOUGHTFUL PRESENT OF A STATUE TO REPLACE ONE I'D GIVEN TO A COLLEAGUE
- A FELLOW ASKED ME INSIGHTFUL QUESTIONS ABOUT MY POSITION BASED ON OBSERVATIONS THEY'D MADE ALL YEAR

Highlights of the stories were then shared out via a graphic representation of the program's journey

JOURNEY SCROLL

Click each image to access the PDF file

Highlights from the Journey Scroll



Periods covered by responses spanned from
2013 to 2020

Common themes of responses included

A focus on a heightened understanding of organizational
structures

The financial aspects of participating in the program

Sense of connection to a larger community

