

Minutes
RAC Annual Board/Staff Retreat
Saturday, September 17, 2022
Cortex/CIC, 4240 Duncan, St. Louis
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Robert Harvey, Facilitator

Attendees:

Commissioners: Cheryl D.S. Walker, chair, Andréa Purnell, vice chair, Rosalind Johnson, secretary, Jerry Gennaria, Mont Levy, Rhonda Carter-Adams, Sam Fiorello, Beverly Isom, Vin Ko, Rudy Nickens, Constantino Ochoa

Absent

Heather Corcoran, John Russell, treasurer, David Wilson

Staff:

Vanessa Cooksey, Nichole Belford, Rita Dillard, Ann Haubrich, Jay Scherder, Chloe Smith, Lea Sutherlin, Shevaré Perry, Angela Rhone, Robert Harvey, MK Stallings, Liz Deichmann, Jason Schipkowski, Leigh Winter

Others in Attendance

Rick Gratza, KEB

Welcome

Cooksey welcomed everyone to the September 17, 2022 retreat at 8:30 a.m.

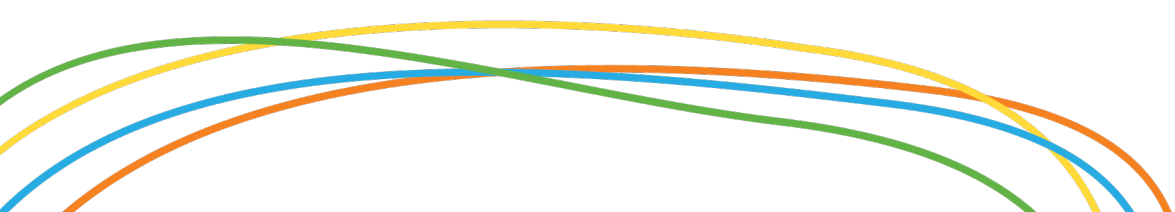
Commission Business Discussion

Bylaw Article III – Commission Meetings:

Cooksey introduced Walker to lead the Commission Business Discussion.

Walker thanked everyone for attending, and extended special thanks to Gennaria, Ko and Wilson (in his absence) for agreeing to serve an additional term and noted they are all eligible for reappointment in 2023.

Walker then reviewed the one-pager on frequency of Commission Meetings, distributed for review at this retreat and noted that the Governance Committee agreed to share the one pager since they had not reached agreement on the number of meetings during the governance committee meeting. The one



paper included current by law language and recommended text, with a blank included for the number of meetings. She then reviewed the one pager which included background, 2021-2022 RAC meetings with Commissioners present, peer group board meeting frequency and potential bylaw impact. Walker further shared her thoughts/support for 5 meetings per year, and shared the thoughts of Wilson, chair of the Governance Committee, in his absence, regarding 5 meetings being too infrequent.

Discussion was held regarding the following: (1) frequency of peer group board meetings; (2) Commissioner examples of other board practices regarding meeting cadence, with Fiorello mentioning that Cortex had recently reduced its meeting frequency from monthly to quarterly; (3) building preparation for in-person Board meetings in 2023; (4) broader aspect, and aligning full Board meetings with best use of commissioner and staff time; and (5) need for documentation on minimum number of committee meetings, including executive committee, given fewer board meetings. The Commissioners agreed on five meetings per year, with Ochoa suggesting that the proposed language be modified to add “at least” before the number of meetings so that it is clear that the numbers provided are a floor and not a ceiling.

Walker acknowledged the support of reducing number of meetings among majority of Commissioners in attendance at this retreat.

Cooksey noted that a Governance Committee meeting will be held to solidify the language for presentation at the November meeting.

Cooksey introduced facilitator, Dr. Robert Harvey.

Dr. Harvey thanked everyone for participating and highlighted retreat norms.

Opening Connectional Activity

Dr. Harvey asked participants to work in groups while individually telling the story of where they came from, their goal for being connected to RAC, and share what they “brought to the moment.”

Telling the Story of the Now and the Future

Cooksey utilized a TEDTalk approach to unpack the story of the Strategic Plan, to date, with the arc of “big wins” and “big trends and data.” Cooksey presented and highlighted the following: (1) the Sankofa Principle; (2) modeling the arts and culture ecosystem; (3) leverage/infuse capital to grow and sustain the arts and culture sector; (4) grants and programs, cultural tourism marketing, and arts and culture sector advocacy; (5) RAC as advocate, partner and catalyst; (6) emphasis on the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 year to date review; and (7) the VUCA environment - Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.

Cooksey asked Dr. Harvey to lead participant engagement.

Dr. Harvey noted that data, trends, wins are critical, and asked participants to work in small groups to identify/share indicators that RAC is still navigating a VUCA environment.

Cooksey then reviewed the Strategic Plan Timeline 2020-2024, included in the Retreat pre-read packet, and highlighted each pillar: (1) Grow and Develop Capacity of Artists and Arts Organizations; (2) Advance the Education of Young People In and Through the Arts; (3) Increase Equity in the Arts Through Leadership and Collaboration; and (4) Strengthen Key Organizational Infrastructure.

Cooksey asked Dr. Harvey to lead participant engagement.

Dr. Harvey asked participants to work in small groups to capture/identify RAC's big wins.

Cooksey then reviewed big data and trends and highlighted the following: (1) Regional LAA Benchmark and RAC STL LAA ranking; (2) share of total STL philanthropic revenue and how it relates to RAC; (3) STL demographics; (4) role of arts in youth wellness; and (5) STL combined Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue 2019-2022, actuals and forecasts, grantee needs.

Cooksey asked Dr. Harvey to lead participant engagement.

Dr. Harvey asked participants to identify a number from the big data and trends and tell a story about that number, along with how RAC can reposition itself to a better ranking.

Cooksey highlighted the "so what?" of the four Strategic Plan pillars ... including (1) unrestricted funds needed to prevent sector-level failure; (2) capacity building for all grantees and stakeholders; (3) arts must contribute to youth wellbeing; and (4) a radical commitment to equity. Cooksey noted that while the drafted budget and work plan will be presented, respectively, in November, these pillars must be accomplished to move forward with next strategic plan. Cooksey then highlighted VUPA moving forward and noted that where there is volatility – she will lead with vision, where there is uncertainty – she will lead with understanding, where there is complexity – she will lead with clarity and where there is ambiguity – she will lead with agility. She then highlighted the three (3) big questions – 1. Are there other workstreams and/or services RAC must also own for the growth and sustainability of the arts and culture ecosystem? 2. What is the Commissioner's collective risk tolerance for the innovative use of revenue, people, and place to ensure RAC is thriving [#1] in 2030? 3. What annualized metrics will be used to evaluate success - Qualitative or Quantitative?

Cooksey asked Dr. Harvey to lead participant engagement relative to the three (3) Big Questions.

Dr. Harvey asked participants for assumptions from "Big Question 1"; he then reviewed alignment and asked participants to recall "glocal," art and culture ecosystem and VUCA as highlighted earlier in the presentation; and the need to understand/probing connections and clarifying facts. He then gave an

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overview of “dancing at the margin” of possibility and beyond the scope, and posed the following to participants for small group, collaborative discussion: (1) what is happening in the art and culture ecosystem, what is happening in the regional ecosystem – and what the data is telling about both? (2) what is at the margin of possibility for RAC given the needs? (3) the “how, now and wow.” He asked participants to focus on moving RAC toward clarifying its bodies of work for growth and sustainability in the region, and to give Cooksey feedback.

Dr. Harvey presented/posed the following to participants regarding “Big Question 2”: (1) risk appetite - the amount and type of risk that [an organization] regards as appropriate for it to accept in order to execute its strategy; (2) what makes the work of unpacking risk appetite so challenging for boards, commissions, and staff teams? (3) risk areas – revenue, people, place. Dr. Harvey then reviewed “me-to-we” and asked participants to evaluate/create individually, and in small groups, low risk to high risk on the x-axis and high innovation to low innovation on the y-axis, map all risk appetites on a new collective matrix chart, try to achieve alignment on a mutual set of risk appetites for each category, and try to map a risk appetite chart as a collective with a share out from each group. He then shared revenue risk examples and people risk examples.

Dr. Harvey presented/posed the following to participants regarding “Big Question 3”: (1) what is data and who is it for? (2) “1-2-4-all” individual reflection, pair-and share out prompts provided and friction analysis; (3) individuals, review the strategic plan, reflect on the story of the here and now, and the big questions to begin ideating on how to measure success; (4) pair and share out ideations and begin a “metric x” forcefield table by aligning and identifying up to six metrics – (3) qualitative and (3) quantitative that RAC should utilize to assess and evaluate its success; and (5) pair and share out for each force, using a scale of 1-5 weakest to strongest, and determine the intensity of each force for or against each metric.

Dr. Harvey then conducted a closing exercise involving all participants.

Submitted by Lea Sutherlin
Executive Assistant & Commission Administrator

Retreat Packet Attachments:

- RAC Annual Board/Staff Retreat Agenda, September 17, 2022
- Cortex 1 Lot Parking Map
- CIC 2nd Floor Map
- RAC Annual Board/Staff Retreat Pre-Read List w/Links
- RAC/Missouri Statute
- RAC Strategic Plan Timeline 2020 – 2024