Dean’s Scholar Proposal

Honors; Music-Music Management Studies; Marketing; Sociology

March 15, 2012

The Marketing and Promotion of Fine Arts Institutions

When I initially applied to the University of Delaware Honors Program, I was asked to address my “unique combination of interests” and how I would be “interdisciplinary, creative, or entrepreneurial” in my four years of study at Delaware. I planned to enter as a University Studies student; I had no idea what to present as my interests. Nevertheless, I was intrigued by the idea of interdisciplinary study and decided to write about my already established passion for music, and how I could utilize University of Delaware’s resources to combine that passion with other academic concentrations. Little did I realize that two years later, I would actually be pursuing the interdisciplinary combination of music, business, and the social sciences that I described in my admissions essay.

Even though I entered my freshman year as an undecided student, by taking the typical spread of general ‘101’ classes, I was able to apply my interdisciplinary ideas to my course work. My interests started coming together after my SOCI 201 class watched a documentary that focused on the manipulative marketing techniques aimed at adolescents, and the socialization of children through consumer culture. Although the documentary criticized the corporate world, I became intrigued by the idea of studying marketing, but applying those techniques towards non-profit performance arts organizations. In addition, I developed an interest in the sociological research on community interaction with fine arts organizations, and individual perceptions of these institutions. By combining my interests in business, sociology, and music, I will be able to apply my interdisciplinary academic passion to the real world.

I am a firm believer in making the arts accessible. After participating in dance, theater, and music programs throughout high school, I know what arts programming can do for neighborhoods and individuals. Unfortunately, when funds are low, especially in school districts and other government entities, the first budgets to get cut are those of music and performance organizations. These budget cuts are detrimental, as research has shown the importance of music to the human experience. Daniel Levitin’s *This is Your Brain on Music* explores the psychological and neurological side of the argument. Not only does he discuss the effect of musical elements such as rhythm, pitch, and timbre on the brain, but also the positive effects of music on individual and evolutionary development. What interests me more is the sociological side of the argument—namely Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘cultural capital.’ This idea originated with the observation that having knowledge of the arts and music is valuable, and that having it benefits individuals in a number of ways. This knowledge may not have direct monetary value, but having it makes a person more desirable in a social setting, and may give him or her greater access to financial success. Conversely, not having any cultural capital acts as a barrier to success. In today’s society, ‘cultural capital’ can take on a different form. To a high school student, knowledge of a certain video game, movie, or band can help one climb the social ladder, while not keeping up with trends in pop culture can act as a barrier to ‘popularity.’ However, it has been proposed that young adults with more traditional forms of this capital—such as knowledge of the fine arts—are more likely to achieve academic and personal success. Therefore, making the arts accessible to more people could help individuals transcend socioeconomic boundaries and act as a force against inequality. This sociological concept is partially why I am so dedicated to a career in arts management.

In this way, music management and sociology make an interesting pair, but the marketing aspect adds a practical dimension. On the surface, it seems a bit unnecessary, as most of the people I have met in the non-profit music industry studied Music, English, or Social Work—not Business or Music Industry. Nevertheless, I believe that a solid grounding in the principles of business administration is incredibly important to achieve success in a non-profit arts position. There is a common misconception that the term ‘non-profit” describes a way of running an organization, rather than what it actually is—a tax identifier. So, there is a pervasive idea that non-profit organizations should step away from ‘running like a *non-profit*’ and ‘run like a *business*.’ This is known as Total Quality Management (TQM). Originated by Dr. Armand Feigenbaum in his book *Total Quality Control* (1991), TQM uses principles such as leadership, productivity, and enhancement in order to improve efficiency in the work place, and the quality of the outgoing product. In arts organizations, critical financial and managerial decisions must be made. Just because it is a cultural organization does not mean those decisions and the principles behind them should be any different than those of a multi-billion dollar corporation. Therefore, by incorporating the foundations of accounting, finance, marketing, operations management, and sales in my curriculum, I can better understand markets and financial decisions, not only in the corporate world, but in the non-profit sector as well.

The concepts of making cultural capital more accessible to populations and Total Quality Management have attracted me to the concept of combining the subjects of business and sociology with my Bachelor of Arts in Music with a concentration in Music Management track. However, the *focal* question I wish to pursue over the next two years ties these three different components together. I wish to explore: (1) the stereotypes that are ascribed to certain demographics, such as gender, race, and social class; (2) how those stereotypes negatively affect the way in which diverse populations relate to the arts; and (3) how to counter them with positive marketing and business strategy. For example, because I was in performance groups in high school, I was constantly surrounded by jokes and snide, stereotypical remarks regarding male involvement in the arts—centered on male performers being ‘girly’ or homosexual. These jokes and comments seem funny and harmless, but their implications suggest that boys try to avoid the arts due to the negative stereotypes associated with singing, dancing, or playing an instrument. That being said, my coursework would explore how male arts involvement is typically portrayed as feminine or homosexual, and how that stereotypical representation may negatively impact their involvement in arts programming. In another example regarding social groups and inequality, the arts are portrayed as an upper-class luxury. Therefore, how does the preconceived notion that ‘the arts are for the bourgeois’ alienate those populations with lesser income?

In considering the questions I presented here, the main solution I would like to extract from my curriculum, research, and internships over the next four semesters is how applying total quality management and sociological principles have the power to change the status quo. I am interested in learning management strategy, marketing techniques, and economic theory, and how I can apply that to a corporate environment, and to a non-profit organization, where I can counter these negative stereotypes, and make the arts more accessible to socioeconomic and racial groups that have been excluded from participating in the artistic community. My goal is to stimulate interest in performing arts among diverse communities. Essentially, I want to make the arts, for lack of a better term, ‘cool’ again. With the application of sociological theory in my coursework and research, I will learn how to target specific populations and emotions, and attract audiences. Simultaneously, the applications of finance, accounting, and sales management will assist in making the most effective monetary decisions toward that goal.

Although many universities offer majors in the music industry/music business, the University of Delaware is not included in that list. Although it offers a concentration in Music Management for B.A. students, the curriculum is less exhaustive than the Bachelor of Music course of study, and does not include business courses. There is the 4+1 MBA program, and when I initially considered the program, I seriously considered this as a great opportunity. However, I soon realized that not only would pursuing the 4+1 program prevent me from integrating sociology into my course of study, but it would also prevent me from gaining applicatory field experience before obtaining my Masters Degree. In the discipline of Arts Management, especially, I have been told it is more beneficial to gain work experience than immediately work towards an advanced degree.

The more obvious option would be to pursue a dual degree—a BA in Music with a concentration in Music Management, and a BS in Marketing, with a minor in sociology. However, after planning and strategizing the remainder of my college career, I realized that I would need far more than 4 years of schooling to complete the dual degree, let alone the additional minor. With my interests spanning across two colleges, the requirements I would need would be nearly impossible to fulfill, especially as a student entering the majors in her sophomore year. By pursuing the Dean’s Scholar program, I have the opportunity to take these interests and create a unique program emphasizing music, sociology, and marketing. My program will delve deeper into business theory than would a simple Business Administration minor. Also, my integrated equivalent of a sociology minor gives me the opportunity to specifically focus on classes that will help me investigate the stereotypes and perceptions within the business of arts promotion and appreciation. By incorporating such specific courses, I will better be able to concentrate on my focal question, rather than taking a random spread of classes with no discernable common thread to complete the minor requirements. Therefore, this combination will round out my curriculum more than the typical BA in Music with a concentration in Music Management and a double minor in Sociology and Business administration would allow.

In preparing my proposed curriculum, I have looked at the established music business/industry programs at reputable institutions such as Drexel University, University of Southern California, New York University, University of Miami and Syracuse University. The common threads tying these programs to the BA in Music with a concentration in Music Management degree at Delaware are their focus on music theory (reading and writing), performance, music history and literature, music management courses and internships that expound upon music industry practice with copyrights, and patronage. What these schools offer, not provided by Delaware, is the business component—focusing in economics, accounting, finance, marketing, and management.

Regarding the business component of my curriculum, I have included ECON 151/152, ACCT 207/208, MATH201/202, FINC 311, and BUAD 301/302/306/309/470/473. When I approached Dean Andrews about my academic interests, we went through the core curriculum for majors in Lerner School of Business and Economics and created a ‘mini business degree’ composed of the basics. With introductory courses covering foundations of economics, finance, and statistics and also more in-depth expository courses such as Introduction to Marketing, Marketing Research, Management and Organizational Behavior, Operations Management, Sales Management, and Buyer Behavior, I will be able to acquire the knowledge to prepare myself to work in a business environment, including a non-profit. By going beyond the just the introductory courses, especially by taking more than just the ECON100, FINC200, and ACCT200 recommended to minors, I will be able to round out my curriculum with more relevant coursework.

Similarly, the Dean’s Scholar program will help me go beyond the typical sociology minor by narrowing my focus and incorporating cross-listed coursework that delves into the fields of Black American Studies and Women’s Studies. As for the background courses, I am committed to taking Self and Society as well as Theories of Society, in order to expound upon the basic sociological concepts I learned in Introduction to Sociology. Then, in accordance with my interests regarding performance art, I plan on taking Sociology of Art and Culture and Sociology of Pop Culture. Also, to appeal to my focus on different demographics and their relative interest in the arts, a course such as Race, Class and Gender will round out my curriculum. This combination of courses allows me to concentrate on my focal question more deeply than would the typical sociology minor.

Regarding my primary degree, a Bachelor of Arts in Music with a concentration in Music Management, I have made very few changes to the curriculum. The core of the curriculum is more broad and general than a Bachelor of Music degree, so there was not much that I could eliminate or modify without compromising the validity of my program. I have only eliminated two aspects of the established course of study: 1) MUSC 175 (Class Piano), because not only do I already have a basic background in piano, the only time I could take it would be during my senior year, after all of my private study and theory courses are finished, rendering the course irrelevant; and 2) MUSC153/4 (two semesters of private study), as I already completed the equivalent in my freshman year with the honors private music study. I have spoken with multiple music department faculty members, and they have agreed with these changes. The more major modification I am making to my Arts and Sciences degree involves my breadth requirements. Based on my proposed curriculum, I will be taking SOCI 220 (3 cr.) in my senior year, which will count towards my university and Arts and Sciences breadth requirements, as well as my second writing requirement. However, this leaves the other 6 credits unaccounted for. As part of my Dean’s Scholar proposal, I request to have FREN 209 (French Conversation through Film—taken in my freshman year) and SOCI 449 (Sociology of Art and Culture—to be taken in my senior year) to count towards the remainder of my Group A requirements. These two courses do not happen to be listed as ‘Creative Arts and Humanities’ breadth, but have similar themes and topics to those that are. There are eight film courses listed in the Group A category—3 of these happen to be offered through the Foreign Language and Literature department. Therefore, I believe that a class such as French Conversation through Film should count as an equivalent—for in the class, the focus was not necessarily on conversation and fluency, but rather analyzing the films and the culture portrayed. Similarly, HIST 216 (Introduction to Material Cultural Studies), which satisfies the Group A requirement covers material that is similar to that taught in SOCI 449 (Sociology of Art and Culture). These two courses just approach the subject matter from different angles. I believe that these two courses adequately allow me to satisfy the spirit of the Creative Arts and Humanities requirement.

In addition to classes, I plan on interning at performing arts venues and doing research. This summer, I would like to obtain an internship with an organization such as the Delaware Symphony Orchestra in either their development or marketing departments. Then, to fulfill my internship requirement at the university, I would like to work with the Repertory Theater Company on campus with their marketing staff. Also, I still occasionally work in development for the American Jewish Committee, a nationally recognized non-profit that I interned with during the summer of 2011. In addition, I am presently gathering information about the coveted arts management internship at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC through the DeVos Institute. These placements will help prepare me for working with arts non-profits, in advertising, promoting, fundraising, and developing. No matter where I end up, these skills will help me better understand the industry and be successful. In terms of research, I plan on taking the second writing section of MUSC 312 or 313 to collaborate with either Dr. Phillip Gentry or Dr. Maria Purciello on a research project involving gender and music. I also intend to apply for the Summer Scholars Program in the summer of 2013 and either participate in service learning or work on a research project that would explore organizations’ abilities to connect less fortunate and/or stereotyped populations to the artistic community. Finally, I plan on writing a senior thesis that would connect to my focal question. By examining articles about arts participation and non-profit business strategy, and by creating my own research study about arts involvement and exposure, I plan on exploring how fine arts organizations have alienated specific populations, and how these institutions could attract more underrepresented audiences and participants. This is a broad topic that could branch out into dozens of different directions; however, after taking more courses, I will be able to narrow down my interests and choose the aspects of my ‘focal question’ that I wish to explore and craft into a full thesis.

Over the next two years, I will work with four advisors to mentor me and help me iron out the problems and issues that I may encounter. From the beginning, Jama Allegretto Lynch has been my primary resource. She initially suggested the Dean’s Scholar approach to me, and since then, we have been speaking and meeting on a regular basis, discussing my progress and deciding what steps I should take next. As an experienced advisor, she knows the inner-workings of the university better than any faculty member I have worked with, and has been able to answer every question I have had about requirements, course load, and scheduling. Also, as the Associate Director of the Honors Program, she regularly works with honors Dean’s Scholars, and has worked with me to ensure that I will be fulfilling the necessary requirements for an Honors Degree with Distinction.

Initially, I planned on working exclusively with Dr. Russell Murray to plan the Music Management portion of my curriculum. As the Associate Chair of the Music Department, he is accustomed to working with Dean’s Scholars and knows how to help them craft programs that are interdisciplinary, but that also retain the core of the music curriculum. He also understands how to work around the strict requirements built into the structures of the music degrees. As Dr. Murray is on sabbatical this semester, I have consulted with Professor John Sarro as well. John Sarro is the coordinator of the Music Management studies program at University of Delaware, so he understands my undertaking and is able to offer a ‘music management perspective.’ Also, he supports my choices of business classes, as these are courses he recommends normal music management students take with their free electives. As his specialty is the combination of business and music, he also makes for a fitting advisor as I attempt to combine these two fields.

Dr. Rick Andrews, the Deputy Dean of the Lerner School of Business and Economics, has agreed to be my advisor for the business component of my program. Dr. Andrews has proved to be a valuable source for advising and career-related questions, as he manages the undergraduate advising office for Lerner students. As a marketing academic, he has been able to help me focus my curriculum on the courses that would be most beneficial for a marketing-focused career. Also though, as a University administrator, he understands the relevance of business coursework, not only in a corporate environment, but in a non-profit environment as well. Due to my interests in the non-profit field, his understanding of non-profit business applications makes him the ideal person to guide me through my experience in the Lerner College of Business and Economics.

Finally, to assist with the sociology component of my degree, Professor Dr. Anne Bowler has agreed to be my advisor. She is the perfect person for me to work with because her specialty is in the sociology of art and culture. Due to her familiarity with my topic, she has been able to direct me towards classes that most fit my artistic and multicultural interests. In addition, she has suggested that we meet at least twice a semester to discuss my progress, classes, and projects. Also, she will provide me with journal articles and readings that will further delve into my sociological interests, and that are relevant to my coursework and future career goals.

With these advisors as my support system, I have been able to craft a program about which I am enthusiastic and passionate. Going through this process has made me realize that eight semesters is not enough. For students with a wide array of interests, four years is not enough time for them to take as many classes as they wish or pursue as many degrees as they would like. Therefore, many students must choose only one path. However, I do not want to have to choose. University of Delaware is an institution dedicated to interdisciplinary study. On my application, I was asked to address my unique combination of interests. Now, I want to take that idea from my senior year of high school, put it into action, and make a career out of it. When I entered my freshman year as an undeclared honors student, I was told that being undecided did not mean I was interested in nothing, but it meant that I was interested in *everything*. Now, I understand and appreciate this, and the Dean’s Scholar Program offers me the flexibility I need to pursue *all* of my interests, not just one or two.

