Fearless Board Development
Friday, May 10, 2-3:15 p.m.

Introduction (Ruth) 2–2:10 p.m.

Our panelists:
- Julia Bland, Louisiana Children’s Museum
- Deborah Gilpin, Madison Children’s Museum
- Michael Luria, Children’s Museum of Tucson
- Vatsala Pathy, Children’s Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus

Audience survey: How many are Executive Directors, board members, development directors?

It used to be “work, wealth, and/or wisdom,” but board member recruitment is getting more strategic—each seat is valuable! Let’s learn from each other how to recruit board members who are
- Passionate about your mission
- Bring expertise that your museum needs
- Represent the diversity of your community
- And provide capacity and connections for fundraising

Overview of four segments:
1. Board recruitment with an eye to diversity
2. Board engagement and retention during their term(s) of service
3. Board engagement after members roll off
4. Board roles during institutional change, particularly a capital campaign

Part 1: Board recruitment with an eye to diversity 2:10–2:25 p.m.
- Understand the expertise you need (Deb, e.g., insurance)
- Start board members on committees first to ensure a good fit, and require that each committee recruit diverse members; show how committee service fits into the larger vision/strategic plan (Deb)
- Be clear about expectations, particularly financial (Vatsala, re give/get cultural shift)
- Don’t rely on word of mouth; tap into organizations that engage people of color as their constituency (Vatsala, Ruth)
- Tap into nontraditional networks, and be aware of the many different types of diversity, including age (Julia, Michael)
- Recruit all year long, and for “this year or next” to allow for flexibility and fill the pipeline (Deb)
- Develop a recruitment packet with key documents: a board job description, sample commitment form, annual report, current budget, sample board minutes (Michael)

Part 2: Board engagement and retention during their term(s) of service 2:25–2:40 p.m.
- Understand busy schedules of people in high demand, and consider a call-in option to encourage participation (Julia)
- Make your documents for the meetings easy to find and archive with a board website; consider a consent agenda (Deb, Michael, Ruth)
• Host coffees or happy hours with a board member to encourage engagement outside of the museum (Deb); ask your chair to host an annual holiday party (Ruth)
• Board commitment forms help board members stay on track and understand the difference between operating and capital gifts (Julia)
• Yearly re-caps of how much they gave or facilitated others to give is highly motivating (Ruth)
• Serve adult beverages at every meeting; do your board retreat near the museum and then invite board members’ families for a private event at the Museum afterwards (Michael, Deb?)
• If you do a golf tournament, encourage board members to make a weekend of it and spend more social time together (Michael)
• Conduct an annual board self-evaluation to ensure that board members are getting what they need, and that the museum is getting what they need from them; this documentation is important if you need to have hard conversations (Vatsala)

Part 3: Board engagement after members roll off 2:40–2:55 p.m.
• Induct former board members into an alumni society (Deb)
• Retain former board members as volunteer advisors, and augment with community volunteer advisors; include this list on the back of your board list (Deb)
• Have an annual VIP event where all former board and major donors are welcomed back to the museum for a presentation of the annual report (Ruth)
• Develop a Leadership Council of exemplary former board members who meet once or twice a year to get an update and offer guidance (Ruth)
• Consider a former board member honoree at your annual gala (Ruth)
• Former board members are often the perfect prospects for a capital campaign committee (Julia)

Part 4: Board roles during institutional change, particularly a capital campaign 2:55–3:05 p.m.
• The difference between a governing board and a capital campaign committee; the different skills and financial capacity required for each role (Julia, Deb)
• After a capital campaign, think about engaging your board members around causes or strategic focus areas; create a case for support and build donor circles around each (Julia)

Questions from the audience 3:05–3:15 p.m.

Session Description:
Many leaders bemoan the difficulty of building a diverse board and admit defeat before they start. How can senior staff guide board recruitment to increase diversity and ensure retention? How can you sustain board engagement and support throughout a member’s board term, and after the term ends? How can you ensure that your board reflects what your museum needs, particularly during times of institutional change? Explore the return on investment for strategic board recruitment, and join a discussion that focuses on how a diverse board not only reflects changes in your community, but also offers institutional resilience during changing times.