Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (1979-1992): Correspondence 07

Robin Berry

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Sandy -

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- WP
TO: New England State Arts Agency Directors  
Donald J. Aldrich, Chairman  
Dorothy Licht, Vice Chairman  

FROM: Robin Berry, Executive Director  

RE: Conversation with Jim Edgy  
July 31, 1978  

I received a phone call yesterday from Jim Edgy regarding the letter I sent him requesting additional information on the proposed Intergovernmental Activities Panel for the Foundation meeting in Jefferson, New Hampshire.  

My understanding from our conversation is basically this:  

1. He intends to pursue the course of action, as outlined at that Foundation meeting, of an Intergovernmental Activities Panel which would have overall policy responsibility for state, regional and community arts agency concerns. He stated that both Ais and Expansion Arts would be maintained as separate programs for the foreseeable future and would, therefore, not be a part of this panel. This policy making panel would have a pool of consultants who would form sub-panels upon the request, it would appear, of the Deputy Chairman for such areas as grants, consultations and various ad hoc issues.  

2. When asked who would chair this panel, he proposed Steve Sell or Phil Isaacson as the two strongest candidates.  

3. When asked if Hank Putsch would have his own panel, he said, no, Hank would deal with the Intergovernmental Panel.
4. When asked if there would be a program director for community arts agencies, he stated he hadn't made a decision yet.

5. When I stated that while it was important for the staff at the Endowment to have an overall understanding of the "big picture", this panel concept might be too large and unwieldy for a single panel, unless they were willing to meet at least once a month. He stated that when we saw the list of panelists, we would feel confident that they could deal with it, due to their expertise. I stated that it may be so; however, structures stay in place, and people come and go. He seemed to indicate that the Endowment would always see to it that the right people would be placed on that panel.

6. I informed him that the general consensus of the six New England state directors and board members present at the Foundation meeting was that this issue be placed on the NASAA agenda for input by the states to assist in Jim's thinking. He stated that he had no problems with that possibility, however, he hoped that the whole concept would be fait accompli before the NASAA meeting as the result of a presentation before the National Council meeting, August 11 - 12.

7. Obviously this will be a major change in the states' communication with the Endowment. It means that one single panel will not only be dealing with the complex and diversified needs of fifty-six states/territories and regional concerns, but would also be dealing with the even more diversified needs of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of community arts agencies. However, no initiative has been taken, from what I can gather, to get input from the states. I did express to Jim my own personal concern, and what I felt was the basic consensus of the six New England state arts agency directors, that there was a very real possibility that state concerns, with a mutual constituency with the NEA, would get lost in this reorganization. In addition, I am concerned that the states' 20% will get lost in the shuffle. He indicated that he did not share this concern.

My own personal action will be to inform my Chairman, Donald J. Aldrich, and Vice Chairman, Dorothy Licht, (since we will not be having a board meeting in August) of this conversation. I will also communicate with Steve Sell that I am personally concerned about a major reorganization without state input, particularly when the spirit
of partnership with the states was approved by National Council last year. And I have communicated with all of you.

You may want to follow a similar course of action.

RB: ev

BC: Mr. Hank Putsch

Mr. Sandy Crary