

When a Museum Decides to Stop Charging for Admission

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this case study was to identify the factors that a museum and its staff examine when considering the adoption of a free or suggested donation admissions policy. The research focused on the guidelines that the museum staff and board consulted during the process, how public accessibility factored into the decision, how staff and board members communicated throughout this process, and the predicted versus actual outcomes of the policy change on visitors and stakeholders. This study was significant to the museology field because it added literature about how museums in the United States decide whether a free admission policy might be appropriate for their institution. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with a board member, volunteer, and members of staff at the Children's Museum of Tacoma, WA as well as document analysis. Study results suggested that, led primarily by its executive director, the museum chose to adopt their "Pay As You Will" admissions model in response to three factors: audience research, unstable sources of funding, and the desire to fulfill its mission and strategic plan by increasing public accessibility. This study found that the museum consulted many sources of information prior to making this decision, leveraged the model to secure funding and to market other programs, and increased the size and diversity of the museum's audience as a result. The limitations of this study were the use of one site in the case study, the

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site's self-reported data, and the site's unique position as the only free admission children's museum in the United States.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

U.S. museums that were considering a transition from charging to free admissions at the time of this study did not have much field-wide data to help them predict the effects of such a transition. There were significant gaps in the literature regarding museums that had free or suggested donation admissions in the United States. Information about attendance patterns in U.S. free admission museums was cursory, addressed access programs like free days, or was anecdotal evidence from colleagues in institutions that had already made this transition. The only studies that examined the racial diversity of free admission visitors focused on free days and access programs rather than museums that never charged for admission. Museology scholars were conflicted about free admissions. In “Free at Last: A Case for Eliminating Admission Charges in Museums,” Elaine Gurian advocated for the policy in the frame of museums’ ethical duty to increase public accessibility.¹ Michael Rushton stressed in “Should Public and Nonprofit Museums Have Free Admission? A Defense of the Membership Model?” that admissions fee-based membership policies were economically efficient and that eliminating admission charges creates uncertainty about the public’s value in the institution.² There was no literature studying how and/or why formerly charging museums decided to move to this new model.

According to the New England Museums Association’s report “Benefits and Belonging: A Museum Membership and Survey,” and the Association of Art Museum Directors’ report “Art

¹ Elaine Gurian, “Free at Last: A Case for Eliminating Admission Charges in Museums.” *Museum News* 84, no. 5 (2005): 127-134.

² Michael Rushton, “Should Public and Nonprofit Museums Have Free Admission? A Defence of the Membership Model,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 32, no. 3 (2017): 200-209, doi: 10.1080/09647775.2016.1263969

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Museums by the Numbers 2018,” between 25%³ to 39%⁴ of U.S. museums had eliminated general admission charges in 2018. All available literature showed that eliminating admission charges led to an increase in overall attendance at those institutions, and “Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy (April 2013)” by the American Alliance of Museums indicated that fewer free admission museums saw decreases in attendance than charging museums.⁵ Literature that examined how free admission policies affected the demographic makeup of museum audiences yielded varying results that indicated free admission policies positively affected the number of racial minority visitors. In “Measuring the Impact of Free Admission,” Ben Cowell found that between 2001 and 2006, total attendance amongst “black and minority ethnic” visitors to 17 museums in the United Kingdom increased by 1.7%.⁶ However, the case study “Differences in Visitor Characteristics and Experiences on Episodic Free Admission Days” by Catherine D.D. Bowman et al. showed that attendance from Hispanic visitors went from 17.9% to 24.5% and both Black and Native American visitors went from 1.4% to 6.1% of the visiting population.⁷

Scholars in the field of museology disagreed on the merits of free admission policies in museums. In “Free at Last: A Case for Eliminating Admission Charges in Museums,” Elaine Gurian argued for museums modeling the approach to community engagement used by public libraries and that museums stop charging for admission because it hinders public accessibility. Michael Rushton asserted that the popular model of membership based on admission fees

³ Meg Winikates, “Benefits and Belonging: A Museum Membership Benchmarking Survey,” *New England Museums Now* 5, no. 1 (Summer 2018): Cover story. Accessed April 3, 2019. <https://nemanet.org/nemn/summer-2018/membership-survey/#>.

⁴ “Art Museums by the Numbers 2018,” *Association of Art Museum Directors*, last modified September 8, 2018, <https://www.aamd.org/our-members/from-the-field/art-museums-by-the-numbers-2018>, 9.

⁵ “Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy: April 2013” American Alliance of Museums, 2013, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/acme-2013-final.pdf>, 7.

⁶ Ben Cowell, “Measuring the Impact of Free Admission,” *Cultural Trends* 16, no. 3 (2007): 215.

⁷ Ibid.

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grounded in economic theory solidified the value of the museum's visit in the guests' minds.

Nina Simon hypothesized in "Is There a Formula for Free Admission?" that successfully moving to a free admission model required the museum to secure funding to supplement lost income for three to seven years and to zealously market the model's philanthropic benefits.⁸

The purpose of this case study was to identify the factors that a museum and its staff examine when considering the adoption of a free admission policy. For the purposes of this study, a "free admission" policy was defined as one where the museum allows visitors to enter and experience its permanent galleries without requiring a fee to be paid and the term was used interchangeably with "by donation" and the site's term "'Pay As You Will'." There were five research questions that guided this study:

1. Did an individual staff member's professional background affect their perception of institutional goals and decision-making?
2. Which ethical guidelines did the museum consult when making decisions about public accessibility?
3. How did concern for public accessibility influence this museum's decisions regarding the free admission policy?
4. Who was present at the time of the decision and how did they influence the process?
5. How have the museum's stakeholders been affected by the change in policy?

This study was significant to the museology field because of the gap in literature regarding how free admission museums in the United States decide not to charge for an entry fee. Museums that were considering a transition to a free admission model had only blog posts and other anecdotes to describe the reasons why a museum might make this switch, what the

⁸ Nina Simon, "Is There a Formula for Free Admission?," *Museum 2.0*, last modified January 14, 2015, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/01/is-there-formula-for-free-admission.html>.

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decision-making process would be like, or how a museum's community might respond to this model over the course of several years. Professionals in the field might review this case study and compare it to their own museum's situation to decide if it is appropriate for their mission and community.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that a museum and its staff examined when considering the adoption of a free admissions policy. Free admission policies, in this context, were defined as admission policies in which guests were not charged for general admission to a museum or given general admission with a suggested donation. This chapter will review literature in four main areas: 1) the impact of free admission policies, 2) ethics in museums, 3) accessibility for underserved audiences, and 4) museum finances and membership models.

The Impact of Free Admission Policies

There were few surveys that included information about free admission museums in the United States, and all come from professional networks. Research indicated that a museum's discipline influenced whether it offered free admission or not. The 2013 report "Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy" by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) on museum finances determined that about 25.9% of their member museums had no general admission fee and 10.9% only had a suggested fee.⁹ The New England Museum Association surveyed their members and found that around 25% of those museums did not charge admission fees, but gave no data on suggested donation museums.¹⁰ The "Art Museums by the Numbers 2018" survey conducted by the Association of Art Museum Directors showed that 32% of its members did not charge for admission and 7% had admission with suggested donations.¹¹

⁹ "Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy: April 2013" *American Alliance of Museums*, 2013, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/acme-2013-final.pdf>, 7.

¹⁰ Meg Winikates, "Benefits and Belonging: A Museum Membership Benchmarking Survey," *New England Museums Now* 5, no. 1 (Summer 2018): Cover story. Accessed April 3, 2019. <https://nemanet.org/nemn/summer-2018/membership-survey/#>.

¹¹ "Art Museums by the Numbers 2018," *Association of Art Museum Directors*, last modified September 8, 2018, <https://www.aamd.org/our-members/from-the-field/art-museums-by-the-numbers-2018>, 9.

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Much of the existing literature on the effects of free admission policies resulted from the changes in public funding to museums in the United Kingdom. In December 2001, universal free admission was introduced at all government-sponsored museums in the United Kingdom. After five years of free admissions, there was an 87% increase in attendance across all 17 sites.¹² It should be noted that adults in England – 50% in 2017¹³ – visited a museum and gallery at a significantly higher rate than U.S. adults – 23.7% in 2017.¹⁴ Of the museums surveyed by the American Alliance of Museums in 2012, 18.5% of free admission museums saw a decrease in attendance, but 29.8% of those charging general admission also had decreased attendance.¹⁵ It was common practice for charging museums in the United States to offer a sponsored free admission day once per month or a program that provided free admission to low-income visitors. About 92% of U.S. museums were free to the public “on at least some occasions” in 2012.¹⁶

When museums announced the switch to a free admission policy, increased public accessibility was frequently cited as the main motivating factor for the transition. In 2013, the Dallas Museum of Art announced its return to a free admission policy, saying in a press release that the move “underscores its belief that as a public institution, the Museum should provide access to anyone who is interested in experiencing its collection and exhibitions and participating in its diverse range of programming.”¹⁷ One year prior, Kirsten Sanchez wrote in “Admission fee

¹² Based on author’s calculations made with data provided by Ben Cowell, “Measuring the Impact of Free Admission,” *Cultural Trends* 16, no. 3 (2007): 212.

¹³ “Taking Part Survey: England Adult Report, 2017/18,” *Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport*, last modified August 30, 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740242/180911_Taking_Part_Adult_Annual_Report_-_Revised.pdf.

¹⁴ “The 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (2017),” *National Endowment for the Arts*, last modified September 2018, <https://www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/research-analysis/arts-data-profiles/arts-data-profile-18>.

¹⁵ “Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy: April 2013” *American Alliance of Museums*, 2013, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/acme-2013-final.pdf>, 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ “Dallas Museum of Art to Offer Free Membership And a Return to Free General Admission Starting January 2013,” *Dallas Museum of Art*, last modified November 27, 2012, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://dma.org/press-release/dallas-museum-art-offer-free-membership-and-return-free-general-admission-starting>.

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is history at the Bronx Museum of Arts” that the Bronx Museum of Arts had announced they would be moving to a free admissions model with then-director Holly Block, stating this was done to “[increase] access to the museum as a resource for our community...enabling hundreds of children to experience the benefits of arts education.”¹⁸ In 2014, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) began an initiative for museums to provide reduced admission of \$0-3 to all visitors that present an EBT card called Museums for All. Sarah Cohn, who wrote an evaluation report of the initiative titled “Museums for All Evaluation Report,” revealed that “[providing] better access and support to community members” was the most popular reason for adopting the program, with 58% of the sample.¹⁹

All studies on the introduction of a free admission policy showed that attendance increased to varying degrees. The 2016 case study from DCResearch and The Steering Group called “Taking Charge – Evaluating the Evidence: The Impact of Charging or Not for Admissions on Museums Final Report August 2016” examined 20 museums in the United Kingdom and found that 33% of stakeholders thought eliminating admission charges had a positive impact on the number of general admission visitors, and 55% saw a “very positive” impact.²⁰ Museums that transitioned from charging to free admissions saw an increase in repeat visits and casual visits (visits with “shorter dwell times”).²¹ In January 2010, New Taipei City initiated a free admissions policy for publicly funded museums. In “Evaluating Museum Free

¹⁸ Kirsten Sanchez, “Admission fee is history at the Bronx Museum of Arts,” *Bronx Times*, accessed April 10, 2019, https://www.bxtimes.com/stories/2012/15/15_bronxmuseum_2012_04_12_bx.html.

¹⁹ Sarah Cohn, “Museums for All Evaluation Report,” *Institute of Museum and Library Services in partnership with the Association of Children’s Museums*, last modified September 2018, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/museums-all-evaluation-report-2018.pdf>.

²⁰ “Taking Charge – Evaluating the Evidence: The Impact of Charging or Not for Admissions on Museums Final Report August 2016.” DCResearch, and *The Steering Group*, accessed March 30, 2019. <https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Final-Report-Taking-Charge-%E2%80%93-Evaluating-the-Evidence-The-Impact-of-Charging-or-Not-for-Admissions-on-Museums.pdf>, p. 13.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 23

Admission Policy,” Chiang-Ming Chen, Yen-Chien Chen, and Yi-Chun Tsai employed difference-in-difference methodology and determined that a 14.73% increase in average monthly attendance could be ascribed to the introduction of free admissions.²²

Cowell’s study found that between 2001 and 2006, amongst “black and minority ethnic” visitors to 17 museums in the United Kingdom increased by 1.7%.²³ In *The Manual of Museum Management*, Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord recounted how in 2005 the Walters Art Museum and the Baltimore Museum of Art approached the City of Baltimore and Baltimore County with an initiative to fund free admission for three years.²⁴ The Walters Art Museums saw a 55% increase in annual attendance and a 46% increase in first-time visitors.²⁵ Around one-fifth of museums participating in Museums for All initiative had an increase in attendance that was higher than anticipated.²⁶ Additionally, one-fifth of museums reported seeing a shift in the types of people visiting and “a handful” reported that those using the access program were more ethnically diverse.²⁷ It should be noted that this evaluation used self-reported, qualitative data acquired from museum staff and did not include quantitative attendance data from participating sites.²⁸ However, the case study “Differences in Visitor Characteristics and Experiences on Episodic Free Admission Days” by Catherine D.D. Bowman et al. showed a significant shift in visitor’s ethnic diversity on episodic free days.²⁹ On days with standard admission, white visitors

²² Chiang-Ming Chen, Yen-Chien Chen, and Yi-Chun Tsai, "Evaluating Museum Free Admission Policy," *Annals of Tourism Research* 58 (2016): 158.

²³ Based on author’s calculations made with data provided by Ben Cowell, “Measuring the Impact of Free Admission,” *Cultural Trends* 16, no. 3 (2007): 215.

²⁴ Gail Dexter Lord, and Barry Lord, *The Manual of Museum Management* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009), 225.

²⁵ Ibid, 226.

²⁶ Sarah Cohn, “Museums for All Evaluation Report,” *Institute of Museum and Library Services in partnership with the Association of Children’s Museums*, last modified September 2018, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/museums-all-evaluation-report-2018.pdf>, p. 22.

²⁷ Ibid, 26.

²⁸ Ibid, 6.

²⁹ Catherine D. D. Bowman et al., "Differences in Visitor Characteristics and Experiences on Episodic Free Admission Days," *Museum Management and Curatorship* (2019): 1-17, doi: 10.1080/09647775.2019.1578992.

accounted for 68.6% of the population, but on days with free admission that dropped to 52.4%.³⁰

Attendance from Hispanic visitors went from 17.9% to 24.5% and both Black and Native American visitors went from 1.4% to 6.1% of the visiting population.³¹

There were several advocates for free admission policies in the museum field. Many found free admission policies were effective at increasing public access to the museum and its collections. In 1997, the study “Charging for Admission to Museums and Galleries: Arguments and Evidence” led by Stephen Bailey surveyed museum directors from 314 institutions in the United Kingdom and found that those against charging admission believed that “charges [were] contrary to the cultural and educational missions of museums” and “[were] contrary to access objectives.”³² In the article “With Admission Fees, the Question Is: What Should a Museum Be?” Gary Vikan, former director of the Walters Art Museum, told Daniel Grant of *The Observer* “Access is being restricted through high admission fees...Charging a fee that many if not most people can’t afford is just as bad as deaccessioning, to my mind.”³³ Elaine Gurian argued in her 2005 essay, “Free at Last: A Case for Eliminating Admission Charges in Museums,” that admission charges decrease accessibility because they discourage repeated use and the admission process is off-putting to non-users.³⁴ Nina Simon developed a hypothesis through independent research that successfully transitioning to a free admission model required following two steps:

1. Secure a philanthropic gift equivalent to 3-7 years of the lost revenue from daytime admissions.

³⁰ Ibid, 6.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Stephen Bailey et al., "Charging for Admission to Museums and Galleries: Arguments and Evidence," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 16, no. 4 (1997): 360, doi: 10.1080/09647779700301604

³³ Daniel Grant, “With Admission Fees, the Question Is: What Should a Museum Be?,” *Observer*, January, 4, 2018, <https://observer.com/2018/01/met-museums-new-admission-policy-why-do-museums-charge-entry-fees/>.

³⁴ Elaine Gurian, "Free at Last: A Case for Eliminating Admission Charges in Museums." *Museum News* 84, no. 5 (2005): 127-134.

2. Aggressively market the philanthropic benefits of a free museum. Create a new value proposition for giving that is rooted in the idea that the museum is free and open to all. Recruit new members and donors who are invested in supporting public access.³⁵

She went on to explain why revenue from gift shops and cafes would not significantly increase: “When museums are free, people use them more frequently, for more casual reasons. They don't treat the visit as a destination multi-hour experience necessitating a meal and a souvenir.”³⁶

Some argued that charging admission to a museum was in the best interest of the museum and advised against a free admission model. Michael Rushton wrote that admission fees and memberships provided a feedback mechanism to museum management, a way to understand how the community valued the institution.³⁷ He also asserted that access for underserved groups should be increased through special programs based on results from a survey in the United Kingdom that showed “the profile of a typical ‘population’ of museum or gallery visitors [had] remained relatively stable, and firmly biased in favour of the ‘traditional’ visitor groups.”³⁸ Colleen Dilenschneider, “Free Admission Days Do Not Actually Attract Underserved Visitors to Cultural Organizations (DATA),” compared data across 48 cultural organizations and found that free days were more likely to attract repeat visitors than paid admission days.³⁹

Several studies showed that cost was not the primary barrier for non-visitors. Since 2002, the *Public Participation in the Arts* surveys conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts

³⁵ Nina Simon, “Is There a Formula for Free Admission?,” *Museum 2.0*, last modified January 14, 2015, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/01/is-there-formula-for-free-admission.html>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Michael Rushton, “Should Public and Nonprofit Museums Have Free Admission? A Defence of the Membership Model,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 32, no. 3 (2017): 208, doi: 10.1080/09647775.2016.1263969

³⁸ Andy Martin, “The Impact of Free Entry to Museums,” *Ipsos MORI*, March 31, 2003, <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/impact-free-entry-museums>, 4.

³⁹ Colleen Dilenschneider, “Free Admission Days Do Not Actually Attract Underserved Visitors to Cultural Organizations (DATA),” November 4, 2015, <https://www.colleendilen.com/2015/11/04/free-admission-days-do-not-actually-attract-underserved-visitors-to-cultural-organizations-data/>.

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showed that higher education attainment was the most significant demographic factor in arts attendance. An analysis of the 2012 survey found that 52.6% of adults with a college education had attended an art exhibit and there was a 17-percentage-point gap in attendance between adults with a bachelor's degree and those with some college education.⁴⁰ Non-visitors without a college degree were more likely to have difficulty finding and traveling to an arts event or venue, and twice as likely to cite physical disability as a barrier.⁴¹ One study by Marine Le Gall-Ely et al., "Free Admission to Museums and Monuments: An Exploration of Some Perceptions of the Audiences," on museum-goers in France found that people examined both the direct and indirect costs associated with visiting a museum, such as transportation and dining in the area, and compared the hypothetical visit to other leisure activities.⁴² Some visitors believed the quality of their experience would be lower in a free museum than at a charging museum, due to overcrowding or additional wear and tear on the facilities.⁴³

In "Field Trips and the Admission-Free Museum," the American Association for State and Local History showcased the struggles that the Detroit Historical Museum had when it reopened with free admissions in November 2012.⁴⁴ Their staff was overwhelmed by the number of school groups coming through the doors unannounced.⁴⁵ According to one of their educators, "We've had several busloads of students show up unannounced on busy days. We've had a handful of loud and poorly supervised self-guided groups directly interfere with other schools'

⁴⁰ "When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance, NEA Research Report #59 January 2015," *National Endowment for the Arts*, last modified January 12, 2015, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/when-going-gets-tough-revised2.pdf>, 19.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Marine Le Gall-Ely et al., "Free Admission to Museums and Monuments: An Exploration of Some Perceptions of the Audiences," *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 13, no. 1 (2008): 64, doi: 10.1002/nvsm.307.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 65.

⁴⁴ "Field Trips and the Admission-Free Museum," *American Association for State and Local History*, last modified June 4, 2013, <https://aaslh.org/field-trips-and-the-admission-free-museum/>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

tours, frustrating both the paying teachers and our tour guides...we have seen a small decrease in the number of bookings for paid programs.”⁴⁶ After the Walters Art Museum went free, they saw an initial 25% decrease in membership and “attendance at [the Walters Art Museum and the Baltimore Museum of Art] first paid special exhibition after going free was disappointing.”⁴⁷ Walters Art Museum staff believed that free admission would encourage more spending in the museums’ stores, but that was not true in this case.⁴⁸

Accessibility for Underserved Audiences

Literature on accessibility for underserved audiences primarily focused on physical accessibility and programs for disabled visitors. Resources about increasing accessibility highlighted interpretive materials and exhibition design changes for visitors with mobility, hearing, vision, and/or mental impairment. Disabled people were statistically more likely to be impoverished, presenting them with financial barriers in addition to their physical and/or mental disabilities. According to 2014 data from the United States Census Bureau, the median annual income of households with a disabled adult was “about 60 percent of the median annual income for families of people without disabilities,”⁴⁹ and about 80% of people with disabilities did not participate in the labor force as opposed to over 30% of those without disabilities.⁵⁰ People of minority ethnic backgrounds also had difficulty accessing museums. According to AAM,

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Gail Dexter Lord, and Barry Lord, *The Manual of Museum Management* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009), 227.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 226.

⁴⁹ Danielle M. Taylor, “Americans with Disabilities: 2014 Household Economic Studies,” *United States Census Bureau*, November 2018, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/p70-152.pdf>, 15.

⁵⁰ Janie Lynn-Kang, Megan Dunn, and Andrew Bank, “Labor Force Characteristics of People with a Disability,” October 2018, <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2018/labor-force-characteristics-of-people-with-a-disability/home.htm>.

“Demographic Change and the Future of Museums,” only 9% of frequent museum visitors were from an ethnic minority even though they represented 34% of the U.S. population.⁵¹

Race and ethnicity played a complicated role in museum visitorship, but non-white visitors were shown to have more barriers to attendance. In “Demographic Change and the Future of Museums,” Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva examined 25 years of data from the National Endowment for the Arts and found that members of minority and racial groups were less likely to participate in the arts, and the gap between white and non-white art museum visitors increased from 1992 to 2008.⁵² However, different ethnic groups were attracted to different types of museums. A 2008 survey conducted by IMLS, “InterConnections: The IMLS National Study on the Use of Libraries, Museums and the Internet Museum Survey Results,” Institute of Museum and Library Services,” found that Black and Hispanic adults were most likely to visit zoos or aquaria while White adults were most likely to visit historic sites, which overwhelmingly represent White historical figures.⁵³ In 2011, Cecilia Garibay, “Responsive and Accessible: How Museums Are Using Research to Better Engage Diverse Cultural Communities,” wrote about a study by the Garibay Group found that Latinx visitors were less likely to visit if they perceived a “lack of cultural relevance and not feeling welcome or represented – which included not seeing other visitors or staff like them.”⁵⁴ A case study by Douglas Houston and Paul Ong of five institutions in Los Angeles, “Arts Accessibility to Major Museums and Cultural/Ethnic Institutions in Los Angeles: Can School Tours Overcome

⁵¹ Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, “Demographic Change and the Future of Museums,” *The AAM Press*, 2010, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Demographic-Change-and-the-Future-of-Museums.pdf>, 5.

⁵² *Ibid*, 12.

⁵³ José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King, “InterConnections: The IMLS National Study on the Use of Libraries, Museums and the Internet Museum Survey Results,” *Institute of Museum and Library Services*, January 2008, <http://www.interconnectionsreport.org/reports/ConclusionsFullRptB.pdf>, 18.

⁵⁴ Cecilia Garibay, “Responsive and Accessible: How Museums Are Using Research to Better Engage Diverse Cultural Communities,” *Dimensions*, February 28, 2011, <https://www.astc.org/astc-dimensions/responsive-and-accessible-how-museums-are-using-research-to-better-engage-diverse-cultural-communities/>.

Neighborhood Disparities?,” found that “the neighborhoods with higher percentages of Hispanic, Black, and [Asian/Pacific Islander] residents tended to be associated with lower membership rates for both [major art museums and ethnic/cultural institutions] without socioeconomic variables.”⁵⁵ It also found that major institutions were located in affluent neighborhoods, such as Beverly Hills, making them less accessible to residents of low-income neighborhoods.⁵⁶

“Demographic Change and the Future of Museums” made predictions about how museums could be affected as the United States shifted towards a majority minority population over the next few decades. They concluded that in order to adapt to demographic shifts, museums would need to be attuned to their communities through existing data and institutional research, partnering with other community organizations on research, and encouraging diversity in museum employees.⁵⁷

In recent years, attention had turned to the correlation between board diversity and its effect on the institution. A study by Kathleen Buse, Ruth Sessler Bernstein, and Diana Bilimoria, “The Influence of Board Diversity, Board Diversity Policies and Practices, and Board Inclusion Behaviors on Nonprofit Governance Practices,” in 2014 showed that nonprofit boards with both a diversity policy and inclusion practices were likely to be diverse in race and gender, and that this diversity translated into more effective governance.⁵⁸ A 2017 survey by BoardSource, “Museum Board and Leadership 2017: A National Report,” found that 46% of museum boards

⁵⁵ Douglas Houston and Paul Ong, “Arts Accessibility to Major Museums and Cultural/Ethnic Institutions in Los Angeles: Can School Tours Overcome Neighborhood Disparities?,” *Environment and Planning A* 45, no. 3 (2013): 741.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 736-737.

⁵⁷ Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, “Demographic Change and the Future of Museums,” *The AAM Press*, 2010, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Demographic-Change-and-the-Future-of-Museums.pdf>, 28-30.

⁵⁸ Kathleen Buse, Ruth Bernstein, and Sessler Bilimoria, “The Influence of Board Diversity, Board Diversity Policies and Practices, and Board Inclusion Behaviors on Nonprofit Governance Practices,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 133, no. 1 (2016): 179-91.

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were entirely white, as opposed to 30% of all nonprofit boards.⁵⁹ Only 10% of museum boards had a strategic plan to increase inclusion and only 21% “have modified policies and procedures to be more inclusive.”⁶⁰ When asked, 49% of board chairs and 55% of museum directors said they believe board diversity and inclusion improved the museum’s public reputation.⁶¹ This year, AAM announced the Facing Change initiative to “increase diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) in museums at board leadership and governance levels” in five U.S. communities.⁶² A year prior to that announcement, AAM, “Facing Change: Insights from AAM’s Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group,” outlined five insights to enhance DEAI work within museums:

1. Every museum professional must do personal work to face unconscious bias
2. Debate on definitions [of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion] must not hinder progress
3. Inclusion is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of museums
4. Systemic change is vital to long-term genuine progress
5. Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization⁶³

Ethics in Museums

Museum professionals had a myriad of philosophical resources to choose from such as museology textbooks, the guidelines developed by professional networks, articles in museum-related journals, and the anecdotes of their peers found in blogs, podcasts, and other digital media. Museology scholars and professional networks tended to stress the importance of four principles: loyalty to the mission, stewardship, public access, and accountability.

⁵⁹ BoardSource, “Museum Board and Leadership 2017: A National Report,” *BoardSource*, 2017, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/eyizzp-download-the-report.pdf>, 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 11.

⁶² “Facing Change: Call for Applications from Museums,” *American Alliance of Museums*, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/facing-change1/>.

⁶³ “Facing Change: Insights from AAM’s Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group,” *American Alliance of Museums*, 2017, accessed April 5, 2019, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/facing-change1/>, 7-11.

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According to the Internal Revenue Service, “Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-exempt Status,” all non-profit institutions seeking tax-exempt status needed to have “one or more exempt purposes stated in its organizing documents” and needed to perform that purpose or risk losing their tax-exempt status, especially when it generated unrelated business income.⁶⁴ Hugh Genoways and Lynne Ireland, *Museum Administration 2.0*, wrote that a museum’s mission statement should be “both a broad statement of purpose and a guide for the museum in regard to programs, services, and activities.”⁶⁵ Support of the mission was the basis for the American Alliance of Museum’s Code of Ethics, which covered museum governance, collections and programs. This code stated that stewardship “[entailed] the highest public trust and [carried] with it the presumption of rightful ownership, permanence, care, documentation, accessibility, and responsible disposal.”⁶⁶ Collections were widely considered to be held in the public trust, which obliged the institution’s governing body to “care for that heritage not only for the present generation, but for their descendants in perpetuity with the same prudence that one would be expected to exercise if the property were one’s own.”⁶⁷ Because museums served multiple stakeholders, the literature emphasized the role of accountability in museums and referenced the importance of measuring outcomes. Peter Brinckerhoff, *Mission-based Management*, argued that the point of these measurements was to provide transparency for the public and urged museums to “Go very public...post the results where everyone can see them.”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Internal Revenue Service, “How to lose your 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status (without really trying),” *IRS.gov*, accessed May 24, 2019. <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/How%20to%20Lose%20Your%20Tax%20Exempt%20Status.pdf>

⁶⁵ Hugh H. Genoways and Lynne M. Ireland, *Museum Administration 2.0*, ed. Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), Kindle edition, Ch. 2, Mission Statement.

⁶⁶ “AAM Code of Ethics,” *American Alliance of Museums*, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>.

⁶⁷ Gail Dexter Lord, and Barry Lord, *The Manual of Museum Management* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009), 314.

⁶⁸ Peter C. Brinckerhoff, *Mission-Based Management: Leading Your Not-for-Profit in the 21st Century*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 68.

Earned Revenue Sources in Museums

Revenue sources for private, non-profit museums accounted for 75.3% of all museums in the United States.⁶⁹ Revenue sources for museums could be broadly categorized as earned and unearned income. Earned income came from goods and services generated by the museum (including but not limited to admissions, memberships, and store sales), while contributed income came from sources unrelated to those services. Government appropriations, endowments, donations and other forms of private support were all forms of unearned income.

The amount of earned revenue that museums received varied depending on the discipline. In 2008, IMLS found that the average natural history museum recorded \$408,321 of earned revenue while the average history museum brought in \$26,120.⁷⁰ Additionally, government entities represented 24.4% of funding sources for science and technology museums as compared to 6.9% for children's museums. In 2003, earned income accounted for about 33% of art museum revenue, as opposed to 27% in 2017.⁷¹

Hugh H. Genoways and Lynne M. Ireland wrote in *Museum Administration 2.0* that museum admissions, store sales, program and rental fees were “the most consistent way to earn income.”⁷² In museums that utilized them, admission fees were charged to visitors upon entering the museum and allowed them to visit the galleries during operating hours for one day. In some of the literature, this purchasing process was seen as an orientation for new visitors. Gall-Ely's study found that the purchasing process for admissions fosters a sense of communal stewardship

⁶⁹ Based on author's calculations made from “About the Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions subsector,” *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, accessed April 17, 2019. <https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag712.htm>.

⁷⁰ “Exhibiting Public Value: Government Funding for Museums in the United States,” *Institute of Museum and Library Services*, December 2008, <https://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/MuseumPublicFinance.pdf>, 27.

⁷¹ “Art Museums by the Numbers 2018,” *Association of Art Museum Directors*, last modified September 8, 2018, <https://www.aamd.org/our-members/from-the-field/art-museums-by-the-numbers-2018>, 9.

⁷² Hugh H. Genoway and Lynne M. Ireland, *Museum Administration 2.0*, (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD, 2017), Kindle edition, Ch. 5, Earned Income.

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and “[gives] visitors a feeling of empowerment.”⁷³ Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord noted in *The Manual of Museum Management* that ticketing was also beneficial because admissions staff could “record and report data about visitors – number in party, time of day, gender distribution, number of children and so on.”⁷⁴ The American Alliance of Museum’s report, “Museum Financial Information 2009,” found that the median admission fee across all types of museums was \$7.⁷⁵

One of the earliest examples of admission fees implemented to earn income happened hundreds of years ago. Sharon Macdonald in *A Companion to Museum Studies* wrote about the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University’s first admission fees.⁷⁶ In 1686, the museum officially established admission fees as the main funding source for operations and employee salaries, with fees varying from as little as six pence to as much as ten shillings.⁷⁷ Admission fees were described as a one-time charge to visitors for access to the museum or special exhibits , but “can be marketing and membership tools, and provide valuable information on visitor demographics, and peak attendance times and days.”⁷⁸ In 2008, the average entrance fee per adult visitor was \$12.90 across all museum types, but that only accounted for 17% of a visitor’s “out-of-pocket costs to use museums.”⁷⁹ In 2017, admission fees made up about 7% of total

⁷³ Marine Le Gall-Ely et al., "Free Admission to Museums and Monuments: An Exploration of Some Perceptions of the Audiences," *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 13, no. 1 (2008): 66, doi: 10.1002/nvsm.307.

⁷⁴ Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord, *The Manual of Museum Management*, 2nd ed. (AltaMira Press: Lanham, MD, 2009), 162.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth E. Merritt and Philip M. Katz, ed., *Museum Financial Information 2009*, (Washington, DC: The AAM Press, 2009), 66.

⁷⁶ Sharon Macdonald, *A Companion to Museum Studies*, (Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, 2011), 124-125.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 124.

⁷⁸ Hugh H. Genoways and Lynne M. Ireland, *Museum Administration 2.0*, ed. Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), Kindle edition, Ch. 5, Admission Fees.

⁷⁹ José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King, “InterConnections: The IMLS National Study on the Use of Libraries, Museums and the Internet Museum Survey Results,” *Institute of Museum and Library Services*, January 2008, <http://www.interconnectionsreport.org/reports/ConclusionsFullRptB.pdf>, 29.

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revenue for the average art museum and accounted for an increasing amount of their earned income – 15% in 2003 compared to 27% in 2017.⁸⁰

Museum memberships were annual passes that permitted the member to enter the museum without paying an admission fee and typically included other benefits such as a discount in the museum's store. Mark Walhimer explained in *Museums 101* that membership could be considered tax deductible, but "if the member receives goods or services as part of the membership, only part of the membership cost would be considered deductible."⁸¹ The American Alliance of Museum's report "Museum Financial Information 2009" found that 93% of private museums offered memberships.⁸² The average dues collected for membership differed depending on museum discipline, with children's museums averaging dues at \$87.07 versus history museums' average of \$30.69.⁸³

Synthesis

It was unclear how many museums in the United States offered free or suggested donation admission at the time of this study, but it was found to be at least one-quarter of all museums. All available literature found that implementing a free admission policy led to an increase in general admission attendance. In the United Kingdom, the reintroduction of free admission led to marginal increases in visitation from minority groups, but no such studies about this in the United States were available. Scholars in the museum field disagreed about whether museums charging for admission should eliminate those charges. Some argued that it was a museum's ethical duty to be publicly accessible and that free entry would serve that purpose.

⁸⁰ "Art Museums by the Numbers 2018," *Association of Art Museum Directors*, last modified September 8, 2018, <https://www.aamd.org/our-members/from-the-field/art-museums-by-the-numbers-2018>, 6.

⁸¹ Mark Walhimer, *Museums 101*, (Rowman & Littlefield: London, 2015), Kindle edition, Ch. 13, Contributions.

⁸² Elizabeth E. Merritt and Philip M. Katz, ed., *Museum Financial Information 2009*, (Washington, DC: The AAM Press, 2009), 70.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 71.

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Others argued that free admission models were economically inefficient and only served to devalue the museum in the public's eyes. Literature about public accessibility in museums that was not about physical access was limited and primarily related to race. Different racial groups were found to have different rates of visitation, with white people being the most dominant visitor group.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduced the methodological approach for this study and provided a rationale for taking a case study approach.

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that a museum and its staff examine when considering the adoption of a free or suggested donation admissions policy. The study was guided by five research questions:

1. Did an individual staff member's professional background affect their perception of institutional goals and decision-making?
2. Which ethical guidelines did the museum consult when making decisions about public accessibility?
3. How did concern for public accessibility influence this museum's decisions regarding the free admission policy?
4. Who was present at the time of the decision and how did they influence the process?
5. How have the museum's stakeholder's been affected by the change in policy?

In order to provide insight into these questions, a case study approach was selected and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a former board member, an active board member, and a selection of museum staff members. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to ensure that subjects could adequately articulate their memories and feelings in their own words while maintaining focus on the interview's topics. A set of interview questions guided this process, but when one question had been answered by a subject's previous response or regarded as irrelevant for that interview, it was skipped. The semi-structured style of interview also allowed for follow-up questions or prompts that clarified answers.

Sampling

There were three criteria for the potential case-study site: 1) the museum had previously charged for admission (i.e. it could not have been founded with a free admission policy), 2) the museum adopted a free admission policy within the last ten years, and 3) the museum was located within a three-hour drive of the University of Washington. Potential case study sites were identified through internet searches, conference sessions, and prior knowledge of museums in the area. Upon reviewing various museum websites, the Children's Museum of Tacoma (CMT) was determined to be the best site for this study.

Criteria for the subjects of this study were that they were employed or active at the museum at the time of the transition and that they held a position of supervisory responsibility at the time of the study. After an email introduction and approval from CMT's Executive Director, the museum's Executive Assistant helped to find available staff and board members and arranged the interview times. There was a total of seven interviewees: a former board member, an active board member, and five museum staff members.

Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

Four interviews were conducted in-person at the museum, one was in-person at a local café, and two took place over the phone. The interviews lasted approximately 20 to 35 minutes. During the interview, the internet service Otter.ai was used to record interview audio and automatically transcribe the audio into text. All subjects provided written consent or signed a form consenting to be recorded prior to the interview. There was an interview guide with 21 questions and nine of these had prepared prompts and follow-up questions (See Appendix A for the full interview guide). Subjects were provided with a modified version of the interview guide (without prompts and follow-ups) and consent form at least 48 hours in advance to allow them to

reflect on past events, as this transition took place seven years prior to the study. A few questions were not relevant to the board members and were skipped during the interview. Slight changes in language were used to accommodate the subject's different roles within the museum. In some interviews, it became clear that the subject would answer a question similarly to the previous one and so the question was not asked. In addition, one participant provided their written notes made in preparation for the interview.

Data Analysis

All automatic transcriptions made by Otter.ai were reviewed while consulting the audio recording and edited to ensure the transcript was accurate. After finalizing transcription, interviews were coded using descriptive coding. For each interview, passages of the transcript were categorized by their ability to answer one or more of the research questions. A coding rubric was created to organize these codes by the relevant research question (See Appendix B for the coding rubric). Claims made in the interviews were then compared to information found in the museum's 990 tax forms from 2010 to 2016, the museum's self-published annual reports from 2012 to 2017, and information found on the museum's website for validity when possible.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presented the findings of this study. It began with a description of the case study site. It then described the findings as they related to each research question.

Description of Case Study Site

The Children's Museum of Tacoma (CMT) was located in the Museum District of Tacoma, Washington. This was a grassroots organization founded in 1985 by a group of teachers, parents, and community leaders that occupied three different locations between 1986 and 2019. It moved to its third location at 1501 Pacific Avenue in 2012 and opened there with its “Pay As You Will” admission policy. CMT described its mission and vision:

At the Children's Museum of Tacoma, our mission is to honor children and champion play. Everything we do begins with our image of the child. We believe children are compassionate, capable, inquisitive, creative, valuable, contributing and dreamers. Our vision is to be a leader in our community in using play to learn, to grow, and to thrive.⁸⁴

Research Question 1: Does an individual staff member's professional background affect their perception of institutional goals and decision-making?

This study was unable to make inferences about how an individual staff member's professional background affected their perception of institutional goals and decision-making. This was due in part to the study's small sample size. The work history found in this sample was not diverse, with three subjects having prior experience at one other company or museum and two having no experience working for another institution. All subjects except the active board member had been in other positions at this museum prior to the one held at the time of the study, and one had a deeply rooted connection to the museum dating back to childhood. The former board member was referred to by others, and by themselves, as a museum founder.

⁸⁴ “About,” *The Children's Museum of Tacoma*, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.playtacoma.org/about>.

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Additionally, all but one staff member identified development as a primary responsibility of their current position. The former board member expressed that it was a primary responsibility in their previous roles at the museum. The active board member had financial oversight responsibilities and was aware of development efforts. The Executive Director had been a development officer for this museum for a few years before becoming the Executive Director and had been in that position for about 10 years before the move to the “Pay As You Will” model. Many of the subjects acknowledged that, during the time of the policy transition, the museum’s board was not demographically diverse. The active board member elaborated that it was not racially diverse (being primarily white) but it was diverse in gender with slightly more female members than male members.

Research Question 2: Which ethical guidelines did the museum consult when making decisions about public accessibility?

The museum and some individual staff members held memberships to several professional networks for resources. The most commonly mentioned network was the Association of Children’s Museums (ACM). Some noted that the museum’s Executive Director sat on the board of this association. Staff members shared that they turned to other museum to ask for advice. In particular, the Denver Children’s Museum advised about the design of the Children’s Museum of Tacoma’s satellite location that would open on Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the summer of 2020.

When discussing the decision to eliminate admission charges or, more broadly, to increase accessibility, staff alluded often to the museum’s mission “to honor children and champion play.” The second most mentioned guide to decision-making was the museum’s strategic plan, which was printed on placemats used at every board meeting with the mission in

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large font. In its strategic plan, the museum identified priority communities in need of catered services such as “Puyallup Tribe, children with special needs, teen parents, military, and foster children.” Their Deputy Director explained that partnerships with other nonprofit organizations in the area helped in identifying these communities and services that would best serve them. Subjects also referenced research that the staff had done about their audience and the local community, sometimes conducting studies of their audience and sometimes examining data about subsidized school lunches. One study conducted by the museum’s evaluator in 2010 revealed that the number of visitors coming to the museum for free through various access programs accounted for close to 50% of all attendance. The museum’s Evaluator recalled the study and the swells in visitation on free days:

I want to say that [it was] something like 52-54% of our families when we did the analysis. Over half of our visitors were coming in either on these free days or during the summer [when] the farmers market happened right out in front of the museum... They were not receiving the experience that we intended for all of our visitors. So that knowledge coupled with community data gave us the motivation to try out the “Pay As You Will” model.

The sentiment that overcrowding degraded the visitors’ experience of the museum and its activities was echoed by the museum’s Program Director. On these free days, some activities were unmanageable for the significantly larger crowd at the museum and the staff would exchange them for other activities that were considered less enriching, but easily controlled. The Program Director felt the museum was not fulfilling its mission by offering a different experience to families and children who could not afford the admission fee.

Research Question 3: How did concern for public accessibility influence this museum’s decisions regarding the free admission policy?

There was unanimous consensus amongst subjects that the “Pay As You Will” model was adopted because it would increase the museum’s accessibility to people who would not have

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attended otherwise. The *Play to Learn* program was already offered free at several neighborhood locations around Pierce County when “Pay As You Will” was implemented, but free passes to the museum were in high demand. Tacoma Public Libraries partnered with the museum to offer passes that could be checked out, but these passes were in such high demand that a waitlist formed. According to data provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Washington, about 41.3% of the students enrolled in the Tacoma School District were low-income during the 2017-18 school year.⁸⁵ As noted in the section for Research Question 1, staff was concerned about how the museum’s facilities, and therefore the visitors’ experience, were affected by the high volume of attendees on free days. Five years after this policy was put in place, demand for the museum’s services had not abated. In 2017, one of their audience surveys revealed that over 65% of the respondents would not have been able to pay \$10 per person on the day they visited, which was stated in the survey as the average children’s museum fee for their region.

Staff indicated that one consideration in the transition to the “Pay As You Will” model was the need to communicate to the public that they were welcome regardless of how much or if they donated at the front desk. Training visitor services staff to treat all guests with sensitivity and not project a judgmental air was an important part of the “Pay As You Will” model. The Program Director explained that other access programs that required subjects to identify themselves as low-income families directly or indirectly were deemed humiliating:

So families who were getting passes, families who were checking out a membership from our local library branches, families who were sharing at our front desk that they were needing to come in for free lunch again ... Wearing my own parent hat, I can't imagine doing that and some of the judgment that you may feel in speaking your truth.

⁸⁵ “Diversity Report: Enrollment by Student Program and Characteristic,” *State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*, accessed May 30, 2019, <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100261>

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At the time of this study, the museum was in the process of opening a satellite location on Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The museum had been cultivating a relationship with the local military operation for years through its Play to Learn program, and this partnership would position the museum as a pioneer in the field once again. This was going to be the first children's museum located on any U.S. military base. The active board member noted that bringing "Pay As You Will" to the new location presented a challenge at first because of the military's hierarchical culture and their desire to present officers with benefits not afforded to enlisted soldiers. After discussions and focus groups, Joint Base Lewis-McChord agreed to the "Pay As You Will" model and would find other ways to accommodate officers and their families at the new museum.

Research Question 4: Who was present at the time of the decision and how did they influence the process?

All subjects were active participants in the museum's operation, either through employment or board membership, during the period when the museum was making the move into its new location and transitioning into the "Pay As You Will" model. All staff members, aside from the Executive Director, did not hold director positions within the museum at the time of this transition. They observed some of the discussions through board meetings, but did not participate in the decision-making process. The Deputy Director, who returned to CMT in 2010 after working at another museum, recalled that the decision to move to "Pay As You Will" had been made shortly before she returned. Collectively, the responses from staff members indicated that the Executive Director brought this idea to the board and conversations about the decision took place amongst the department directors, the Executive Director, and the board. One staff

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member recalled that the staff was informed of the decision shortly after it was discussed amongst the department directors.

When asked if “Pay As You Will” was specifically adopted to increase accessibility, the Executive Director agreed it was an objective, but later clarified that this was only part of the motivation. The Executive Director was concerned about strains on the museum’s finances. Only a small portion of the museum’s income was earned through admission fees and the Executive Director saw this as an opportunity to secure funding. Analysis of the museum’s tax form 990 from 2011 (one year prior to “Pay As You Will”’s introduction) revealed that admission fees accounted for 7.82% of total revenue for that year and 5.2% in 2010. According to the board members, the board understood this model to be a solution to the museum’s difficulties with securing funding and the community’s need for affordable early learning experiences but did not recall issues with overcrowding on free days. The active board member characterized the conversations about the transition:

I can't remember exactly, but I'm sure we talked about it over a couple of meetings. Obviously, the risk was that people wouldn't pay, and we'd have a big budget problem. But the board decided in the hopes that it would make us much more accessible to all the community. So we went ahead on the phase to do this.

One staff member mentioned that the board’s concern about financial security during the transition led the decision to assess the “Pay As You Will” model after two years. The Executive Director elaborated that the museum had secured a five-year grant from KeyBank to subsidize the anticipated annual revenue from admission fees, calculated to be \$50,000 per year. Evaluating the sustainability of “Pay As You Will” in the middle of this period afforded the board time to craft a new model if this one proved not to be feasible. “Pay As You Will” was seen as a risky solution to both the community’s need for accessible early learning experiences and the museum’s struggles with securing sufficient funding.

Research Question 5: How have the museum’s stakeholders been affected by the change in policy?

Staff commented multiple times that they had seen an increase in attendance, and the museum’s annual reports supported their claims. In 2011, the year before the Children’s Museum of Tacoma transitioned to the “Pay As You Will” model, they reported a total of 41,470 visits to their galleries. After moving to a new location and opening under “Pay As You Will” in 2012, this more than tripled to 126,932 visits. It also diversified the audience geographically. The Planning and Evaluation Director provided a table of attendance by county, although attendance by county for FY18 was not available:

Table 1: Attendance by county at the Children’s Museum of Tacoma

County	FY10	FY15	FY18
Pierce	85.5%	80.1%	
King	9.5%	14.7%	
Thurston	2.3%	2.4%	
Elsewhere	2.7%	2.8%	
Total Served	51,367	121,051	167,260

The “Pay As You Will” model encouraged visitors to return on a recurring and casual basis. In a visitor survey, the museum received several comments from families saying that they visited this museum more frequently than others or even visited multiple times in a month. The Program Director shared her own observations of the audience after the new model was implemented:

When you pay a price like the price for admission to something that requires the whole family, there’s this desire to push and get your money's worth, to see everything, and to maybe push your family or your child through experiences before they're ready to move on. And one of the first observations that I had in some of our evaluations is that families [that made] a donation were really content to let their children play in one of our playscapes. So maybe they made a \$10 donation that day and they only played in the water. There wasn't this need to move through and get your money's worth because they were able to decide the donation that felt right to them.

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The Executive Director was concerned that the museum's membership offerings would not be enticing and that CMT would see a decrease of memberships once visitors could enter at very low cost. According to the 2012-13 annual report, the community contradicted those concerns and membership more than doubled within the first six months after "Pay As You Will" was adopted.

There was unanimous consensus amongst the study's subjects that the "Pay As You Will" model enhanced the museum's ability to secure grants and major donors. Staff with development responsibilities said that it made their requests for funding more compelling, to both grant providers and major donors. The former board member stated outright that the model was sometimes viewed as a marketing strategy meant to elevate the museum's profile. The Planning and Evaluation Director confirmed that the museum leveraged the news of KeyBank's sponsorship to get press coverage:

I think it was really a coup when KeyBank pledged their sponsorship. We did a public announcement article in the News Tribune. So that offered the museum some exposure that we hadn't had previously and kind of elevated our profile in the community.

The museum was not able to convince KeyBank to renew its support for "Pay As You Will" when the five-year period of support ended in 2017. Analysis of the museum's 990 tax forms reported for the years 2013 to 2016 showed that contributed income steadily declined, going from \$1,186,342 to \$876,657. This indicated less income contributed by grants and gifts. In its annual reports, the museum reported its revenue from grants in a variety of ways, but in their report for FY18, the museum stated that they received 20% of their income from grants. However, revenue generated by fundraising events increased by about 71.7% between 2013 and 2016. Program service revenue increased by about 2.5 times between 2013 and 2017 with a large portion attributed to the museum's licensed childcare center, The Muse, which began generating

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revenue in 2015. It should be noted that on its 990 tax forms the museum continued to report revenue from admissions. After implementing “Pay As You Will”, the museum continued to charge an admission rate for groups wishing to reserve a time slot with a maximum charge of \$10 per child.

Other Findings

Since adopting the “Pay As You Will” model, the Children’s Museum of Tacoma received attention from the children’s museum field. This was the first children’s museum in the United States to adopt this kind of admission model, and CMT has used this position to enhance its reputation amongst other children’s museum. CMT’s Executive Director served in a few leadership roles within the Association of Children’s Museums and served as one of its vice presidents at the time of this study. Some members of the staff remarked that they saw this institution as a pioneer and wanted to demonstrate to their colleagues at other children’s museums that the model could be sustainable.

Discussion of Findings

The most influential figure in the Children’s Museum of Tacoma’s (CMT) decision to transition to the “Pay As You Will” admission model was the Executive Director. Initially looking for solutions to the museum’s funding insecurity, she utilized the museum’s audience research and data about the Tacoma and Pierce County regions in her approach to the board and later the staff. Although this study set out to describe how individual professional experiences could have influenced the decision, that was determined to be impossible with this study’s findings. When this decision was made, the museum’s board was diverse in gender but not ethnic

identity. In support of the Buse, Bernstein, and Bilimoria study,⁸⁶ this study found that the board did not have a diversity plan for itself but did incorporate public accessibility as a pillar of the museum's strategic plan.

While considering its adoption of the "Pay As You Will" admission model, the Children's Museum of Tacoma consulted several sources of information and one ethical guideline. The museum's own audience research is what first led the Executive Director to explore solutions and to propose the elimination of admission charges as they prepared to move to a new location. Data showing the large number of low-income students in the local public-school system further supported the idea that this museum's community would benefit from accessible and affordable early learning experiences. Although the subjects explained that the museum is an active participant in the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), none of them mentioned using this association's resources to guide the decisions regarding "Pay As You Will". It is unknown what types of resources were offered by ACM at the time, but an examination of the webinars offered between September 2015 and June 2019 revealed that ACM had hosted six that addressed diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion work in programming and operations.⁸⁷ The museum's leadership decided to transition to the "Pay As You Will" model primarily on data collected by the museum or the local schools. When discussing the ethics of the transition, the museum's mission was often cited and every subject except for the former board member was able to recite the museum's mission. The museum used its mission statement in a manner similar

⁸⁶ Kathleen Buse, Ruth Bernstein, and Sessler Bilimoria, "The Influence of Board Diversity, Board Diversity Policies and Practices, and Board Inclusion Behaviors on Nonprofit Governance Practices," *Journal of Business Ethics* 133, no. 1 (2016): 179-91.

⁸⁷ "Previous Webinars," *Association of Children's Museums*, accessed June 11, 2019, <https://www.childrensmuseums.org/previous-webinars>.

that outlined by Hugh H. Genoways and Lynne M. Ireland, as a “guide for the museum in regard to programs, services, and activities.”⁸⁸

Although its importance in comparison to other factors is unclear, public accessibility was a factor in many discussions about the “Pay As You Will” model. The museum experienced a higher increase in attendance than those found in the literature. Cowell’s 2007 study of museum in the United Kingdom showed an 87% increase in attendance over five years and across 17 sites,⁸⁹ but CMT’s attendance increase was closer to 225% after six years of “Pay As You Will”.⁹⁰ Initially, CMT staff and board often discussed public accessibility as tied to the visitor’s transportation access and income level, but later answers seemed to indicate that the museum wanted to expand access for socially isolated or insular communities. Access for visitors in more distant locations was expanded, but the museum did not provide data about other visitor demographics such as age, ethnicity, and gender. King County had a larger population of non-white residents than Pierce County, about 40% as compared to 33% in Pierce County in 2018.⁹¹ Houston and Ong’s study found that students of color have a more difficult time accessing museums because of their concentrated locations in affluent areas.⁹² The transition to “Pay As You Will” occurred at the same time as a move to Tacoma’s downtown Museum District, but

⁸⁸ Hugh H. Genoways and Lynne M. Ireland, *Museum Administration 2.0*, ed. Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), Kindle edition, Ch. 2, Mission Statement.

⁸⁹ Ben Cowell, “Measuring the Impact of Free Admission,” *Cultural Trends* 16, no. 3 (2007): 212.

⁹⁰ See Table 1.

⁹¹ “Quick Facts: King County, Washington; Pierce County, Washington.” United States Census Bureau. Last modified July 1, 2018.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/kingcountywashington,piercecountywashington/PST045218>.

⁹² Douglas Houston and Paul Ong, “Arts Accessibility to Major Museums and Cultural/Ethnic Institutions in Los Angeles: Can School Tours Overcome Neighborhood Disparities?,” *Environment and Planning A* 45, no. 3 (2013): 738.

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this location was only 0.6 miles away from their previous downtown location in the Kress Building.⁹³

The museum had already started to form relationships with a selection of underserved audience groups before entertaining the idea of “Pay As You Will” admissions. These were children with special needs, military families, foster children, teen parents, and the Puyallup Tribe. The Puyallup Tribe was the only minority ethnic group mentioned by any subject for which the museum had implemented outreach efforts. CMT announced that “Pay As You Will” was supported by the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Charity Trust,⁹⁴ but some staff members mentioned that outreach efforts with the Puyallup Tribe had fallen short of expectations.

Before “Pay As You Will”, CMT attempted to increase public accessibility through their outreach program *Play to Learn* which was located in 22 neighborhoods across Pierce County. These neighborhoods were determined to have large populations of children ages five and under and/or a high number of low-income families. After the transition, the museum also designated Tuesday mornings as the “Special Needs Play Day” for the families of children with disabilities or “special needs.” Colleen Dilenschneider argued increasing attendance from underserved visitors would require more than a free admission policy, suggesting outreach programs,⁹⁵ but CMT saw notable shifts in their visitor demographics after implementing their own free admission policy.

⁹³ “About,” *The Children’s Museum of Tacoma*, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.playtacoma.org/about>; “Tacoma Register of Historic Places,” *City of Tacoma*, last modified August 17, 2018, <https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/planning/historic-preservation/landmarks/publications-landmarks-register.pdf>, 2.

⁹⁴ ““Pay As You Will” Admission,” *The Children’s Museum of Tacoma*, accessed June 11, 2019, <https://www.playtacoma.org/pay-as-you-will-admission>.

⁹⁵ Colleen Dilenschneider, “Free Admission Days Do Not Actually Attract Underserved Visitors to Cultural Organizations (DATA),” November 4, 2015, <https://www.colleendilen.com/2015/11/04/free-admission-days-do-not-actually-attract-underserved-visitors-to-cultural-organizations-data/>.

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The ability to secure funding was another major factor in this decision. Several subjects of this study alluded to the museum's financial struggles prior to introducing "Pay As You Will". The American Alliance of Museum's report "Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy (April 2013)" demonstrated that it took several years for museums to see reduced levels of economic stress after the Great Recession in 2008.⁹⁶ Nina Simon briefly recognized the "Pay As You Will" model in the article outlining her hypothesis for a "free admission formula."⁹⁷ The museum had followed the steps she outlined three years after the model was first adopted. Simon's hypothesis involved securing three to seven years of the lost revenue from admissions, and the museum secured this funding through KeyBank's five-year sponsorship. This allowed the staff to focus on building relationships with other funders and major donors, or as Simon proposed in her second step "aggressively market the philanthropic benefits of a free museum...Recruit new members and donors who are invested in supporting public access." Analysis of the museum's 990 tax forms showed that the museum reduced its reliance on grants by expanding its programs to include new offerings such as licensed childcare in *The Muse*.

⁹⁶ "Annual Conditions of Museums and the Economy: April 2013" American Alliance of Museums, 2013, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/acme-2013-final.pdf>

⁹⁷ Nina Simon, "Is There a Formula for Free Admission?," *Museum 2.0*, last modified January 14, 2015, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/01/is-there-formula-for-free-admission.html>.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that a museum and its staff examine when considering the adoption of a free or suggested donation admissions policy.

Conclusions

This study yielded four conclusions. First, that the Children's Museum of Tacoma (CMT) adopted their "Pay As You Will" model in response to three factors: audience research and community data, unstable funding sources, and the fulfillment of its mission and strategic plan. Second, CMT consulted many sources of information prior to making this decision. This included data from local schools, anecdotes from staff, and the number of free admission museums in the country. Third, the museum leveraged the "Pay As You Will" model in order to secure funding and market other programs. Fourth, the "Pay As You Will" model increased the size and geographic diversity of the museum's audience.

Recommendations

Museums exploring the idea of free admission may look to this case study to compare the relevant elements of this case to their own. Some of these conditions may be replicable, while others are specific to The Children's Museum of Tacoma (CMT). Museums seeking to replicate CMT's success might consider the five recommendations resulting from this study.

First, the museum should have information about their current audience and the broader community they serve. A combination of audience research and community data provided by the local authorities can give context for how a newly implemented free admission policy might be received. If the Tacoma/Pierce County area did not have a high rate of low-income families, the community and the museum's funders may not have seen the need to eliminate financial barriers.

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Second, the museum should have consistent leadership throughout the process. A clear vision for how the free admission policy fits into the museum's mission and strategic plan might help mitigate fears that arise from a risky venture such as this. CMT's Executive Director had been in that position for 9 or 10 years and established a relationship with the staff and board before proposing this transformational new policy.

Third, the museum's mission and strategic plan should incorporate public accessibility as a core tenet. It is easier for staff members to integrate the museum's mission statement into their professional duties when it is brief and easily memorized. The word choice in CMT's mission became important because they had just two verbs to guide their actions: honor and champion. The strategic plan should provide the staff with a direction for public accessibility, outlining specific plans and initiatives for underserved audiences.

Fourth, the museum should secure funding equal to at least four years of the museum's average admissions revenue. It is important for the museum to A) have funding security after the transition, and B) have time to change course if the new model is underperforming. CMT secured five years of funding from KeyBank, and they assessed the "Pay As You Will" model after two years. If they had found that the model was not bringing in enough donations to be sustainable, they would have had three years to find other solutions or develop a plan for charging admission fees again.

Five, the museum should proactively communicate the new policy to the public, to other community organizations, to peer institutions, and to potential funders. This could happen in conjunction with a rebranding of the institution itself. Rebranding commonly occurs when a museum moves to a new location, but this could also be done when the museum adds a building to its campus or at the opening of a major exhibit. Although its new location was not far from the

previous, CMT was able to market their relocation and this admission policy as a new phase of identity for their institution.

Limitations

This study had three limitations. First, this was a case study of one site and so the results should not be generalized to the wider museum field. Second, this study relied on the museum's self-reported data about attendance and a survey conducted by the museum. It was unclear in these reports if attendance numbers accounted for multiple visits by the same people or simply counted the number of total visits in a year. They were also inconsistent in how they reported sources of the museum's income from year to year. Third, the Children's Museum of Tacoma was the only children's museum in the United States that used this admission model. In other museum disciplines, multiple sites were found to follow a free admission model. Museums of other disciplines might not be in a similar, beneficial position when transitioning to a free admission model.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Catherine Allen

Date: _____

Instrument Number: _____

Research Instrument – When Museums Decide to Stop Charging for Admission

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the extent to which museum professionals support year-round free admission policies within the museology field and within their own institutions.

Research Questions

- I. Does an individual staff member's professional background affect their perception of institutional goals and decision-making?
- II. Which ethical guidelines do museums consult when making decisions about public accessibility?
- III. How does/did concern for public accessibility influence this museum's decisions regarding the free admission policy?
- IV. Who was present at the time of the decision and how did they influence the process?
- V. How have the museum's stakeholder's been affected by the change in policy?

Interview Questions

- 1) Could you tell me about your educational background and how you came to work at [institution name]?
 - a) Prompt: And for how long have you been working in museums?
- 2) What are the roles and responsibilities of your current position?
 - a) Prompt: Would you say that changes depending on the time of year (as in peak vs off-peak season) or do they remain consistent throughout the year?
- 3) Does [institution name] look to any professional network or organization for guidance and resources?

If yes...

 - a) Does the museum or your department favor one network more than others?
 - b) Are they accredited by any organization, such as the American Alliance of Museums?

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- 4) What are [institution name]'s mission and core values? And how does that guide your department?
 - a) *If they do not explicitly mention accessibility...* What role does public accessibility play in institutional or departmental decisions?
- 5) Would you say that most of [institution name's] audience comes from the local community or from a wider audience? Has that changed since the museum opened/made general admission free?
- 6) How does [institution name] approach public accessibility? Are there any active initiatives or efforts to increase public access to or within the museum?
 - a) Prompt: These changes could be in policies, in the physical space, or online.
- 7) Is it an institutional or departmental goal to increase attendance from minority or underserved groups? Why or why not?
- 8) I understand that [institution's name] has a free admission policy. Do you know if this policy was adopted in order to increase attendance or engagement with underrepresented visitor groups?
- 9) How do you think the museum's free admissions policy affects your work?
 - a) *Prompt:* Would the way you carry out your responsibilities change if visitors needed to pay a set amount of money to attend?
 - b) *Prompt:* What if the museum moved to a suggested donation model where visitors are allowed to enter after they donate an amount of their choosing?

For these questions, consider the interviewee's position and how they just answered.

- 10) Were you an employee at this museum when it adopted the free admission policy, and if so, were you part of the decision-making process?
 - a) Who else was employed here and participated in these discussions?

Skip if the participant answers no.

- 11) Do you remember what some of the predicted benefits of this policy were? The challenges?
 - a) *Prompt:* What did the staff think would happen?

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b) *Prompt:* What did the director and board think about it?

12) What was the board like at the time of the decision in terms of diversity?

If they answered "No" to Question 10... What is it like now?

13) How do you think the free admission policy affects [institution name]'s relationship with the local community?

a) *Prompt:* Is it different than what you have observed or experienced at other institutions?

14) How do you think the free admissions policy affects experiences outside of the typical visit, such as traveling exhibits, camps, adult programs, or events?

15) Do you know if there was any resistance from stakeholders to moving to a free admission policy? Do you know/remember what the concerns were?

16) Prior to the implementation of the free admissions policy, did the museum make any changes to the exhibit designs or facilities management?

17) Has the switch to a free admissions policy affected the museum's ability to obtain new major donors, grants, sponsorships, community partnerships, or other forms of funding in any way?

18) How did your major donors react to the news that [institution name] would be founded with/moving to a free admissions policy? What about program participants or their guardians?

19) How did you and your department adapt after the change to a free admissions policy? Were there any surprises that you were not prepared for as a result of the change?

20) Thinking about museums in general, do you think admissions prices and/or policies have any effect on public accessibility?

21) Can you think of anyone who held a supervisory or managerial position when the museum decided to move to a free admissions policy, and are you willing to share their contact information with me?

Appendix B: Subject Consent Form

Consent Form for Exemptions

When Museums Decide to Stop Charging for Admission

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Catherine Allen Phone: 770-570-8966 Email: callen95@uw.edu

Thesis Advisor: Wilson O'Donnell, Associate Director of the Museology Graduate Program.

Phone: 206-543-4642 Email: wilsonod@uw.edu

I am asking you to participate in an interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that a museum and its staff examine when considering the adoption of a free admissions policy. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be audio taped for my note taking only. I may use your title and name of your institution in my final paper. If I directly quote you, I will send the quote to you before publication. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me through the information on this document. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Signature: _____

Date: _____

On card or document left with interviewee:

When Museums Decide to Stop Charging for Admission

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Catherine Allen Phone: 770-570-8966 Email: callen95@uw.edu

Thesis Advisor: Wilson O'Donnell, Associate Director of the Museology Graduate Program.

Phone: 206-543-4642 Email: wilsonod@uw.edu

Appendix C: Coding Rubric

RQ #	Research Questions (RQ)
1	Does an individual staff member's professional background affect their perception of institutional goals and decision-making?
2	Which ethical guidelines do museums consult when making decisions about public accessibility?
3	How does/did concern for public accessibility influence this museum's decisions regarding the free admission policy?
4	Who was present at the time of the decision and how did they influence the process?
5	How have the museum's stakeholder's been affected by the change in policy?

RQ #	Descriptive Code Name	Description
1, 3	Access_Past	Specific programs/methods the museum employed prior to the policy change to increase access for underserved audiences
1, 3	Access_Present	Specific underserved audiences and/or programs the museum used at the time of this study to increase access for underserved audiences
3, 5	Audience_Change	Changes in visitor actions or demographics; what visitors were like before policy change
3, 5	Audience_Description	Description of museum's audience, demographically or otherwise
5	Audience_Relationship	Talked about the museum's relationship with their audience and/or the local community
1	Background_Ed	Subject's educational background
1	Background_Pro	Subject's professional background/work history outside of this institution
1	CMT_Affiliation	Subject's roles in this museum at the time of the study and prior to the policy change
1, 4	CMT_Board	Described the board's composition or its actions regarding the policy change
4	CMT_Director	The director's actions regarding the policy change
3, 5	CMT_Facilities	How the museum's facilities or operations changed due to the new policy; also includes staff hiring and training

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5	CMT_Funder	Mentioned specific funders or how relationships with funders changed
1, 4	CMT_Needs	What the board/staff thought the museum needed to change
5	CMT_Partner	A specific partner of the museum's or how partner relationships have changed
5	CMT_Programs	How programs were affected by the change in policy
5	CMT_Revenue	How revenue sources changed after the new policy was implemented
1, 2	CMT_Values	Museum's values and/or mission were mentioned
1, 4	Communication_Internal	Communication between the museum's staff/board/volunteers about the policy change
3, 5	Communication_Public	How the public was and/or will continue to be informed about this policy
3, 5	Community_Responsive	Staff felt the policy change would be a good response to their community's needs
3	Expand_Access	Staff felt this would be a successful way to improve the museum's accessibility for underserved audiences
3, 4	Facilities_Damage	Concerns were raised that the audience of a free museum would over time cause greater damage to the space and the facilities than the paying audience
1, 5	Improve_Experience	How the new policy has improved quality of visitor experiences
2	Network_Museum	This museum communicated with other museums
2	Network_Peer	CMT personnel networked with their peers at other institutions
2	Network_Pro	Subject or museum staff participated in a professional network or conference for museums; perceptions from the field
2, 3	Not_Mission	Staff felt like access programs of the past weren't helping the museum achieve its mission to its fullest extent
1, 5	Past_Overcrowding	Access programs of the past were providing those visitors with a subpar experience because of overcrowding

WHEN A MUSEUM DECIDES TO STOP CHARGING FOR ADMISSION

2	Role_Model	Mentions how this museum was the first of its kind to adopt this policy or how they want to show other museums that it can be sustainable
2	Value_Access	Museum acts to increase access for priority/disadvantaged groups
2	Value_Bonding	Promotes parent-child and family bonding at the museum
2	Value_Children	Supports the statement that accompanies their mission: "We believe children are compassionate, capable, inquisitive, creative, valuable, contributing and dreamers."
2	Value_Mission	Museum consults its mission when making decisions
2	Value_Play	Museum/staff believes play is essential to child development and family bonding
2	Value_Pro_Development	Museum invests in its staff and their professional development
2	Value_Responsive	Museum is aware of community needs and acts to provide services that address those needs
2	Value_Strategic_Plan	Museum consults its strategic plan when making decisions
3, 5	Visitor_Barriers	Subject identified what they think are/were barriers to visitation