

DPS CreativeConnect Summit Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2015 – Mile High United Way



Introduction & Updates | 4pm - 4:10pm

Introduction

Jonathan Howard | *Industry Summit Co-chair and Teacher, Denver School of the Arts*

RJ Owen | *Industry Summit Co-chair, Universal Mind*

Updates

Lauren Trent | *Manager of Strategic Partnerships, DPS CareerConnect*

Karis Morrall | *Communications and Event Specialist, DPS CareerConnect*

Panel Discussion | 4:10pm – 5:00pm

Panel Introductions

- John Goerner, Non-Stop Productions
 - A broad background in both technical education and creative education is important. My background is a degree from CSU in journalism – had to have many different credits in the broad area. Going forward, it's even more imperative that kids that come into this know all of the technical abilities but also on the creative side too.
- Suanne Hall, Mapquest
 - I would actually say the exact opposite. Now that the industry is getting a little more mature and there's more opportunity for specialization. I specialized in user experience design.
- Jess Moore, AIGA
 - With design and different experiences, it important to have expertise in one thing and then support it with other experiences. I can speak to a designer because I understand code, but I don't necessarily know code. Understanding the basics of the program is important, but these programs might not exist in the next 10 years. Being able to adapt for the next thing.
- Stuart Barr, DCPA
 - I come with more of a generalist attitude coming from technical theater. Starting with a generalization is a great idea, but getting to a specialization is something to strive for. I'm seeing a lot more technology. Audio has changed. Now people are running audio off of laptops. Because of the changes that are occurring with technology, it's important that they get as much technology as they can get. It's also important to know how to build a flat. There are a lot of ranges of needs.
- Eric Rouse, DCPA
 - Bit more of a focus on health and safety. Theater technology is a potentially dangerous world. When I taught at the university level, it was really important to teach them in very general ways. Projector for sets. The cool thing is that the students can keep up with the technology. Now it's not so much "don't teach the software" but that they understand what's important and where to focus.
- Juan Sanchez, TackMobile

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- Coming from a more general approach is really important. Hire the specialist. For us, we're hiring a lot of specialists that are very targeted at specific things that we need to have done. When I was growing up, it was enough to have a website. Now it's much more.
- Jonathan Black, CastIron Designs
 - Specialization is becoming very important and common in the industry. But at the same time, having a good gauge on all of these different fields is a very good thing because adaptability is key. Software is changing so fast. Software that didn't exist when I started graphic design is now the norm. For educators, facilitating specialization where it makes sense is important.
- Dean Ladany, IATSE
 - We see a lot of need for specialization, but please give the general overview. Once the flame catches, they'll seek out the specialization.
- Jonathan: Because students are integrated into technology and software, and because software changes, it's really important to teach skills.

What do you see in your businesses in terms of the qualities that you're looking for?

- Dean Ladany – Work ethic. We're seeing an entitled generation.
- Eric Rouse - I'll be honest – it's actually why I stopped teaching at the university level. I agree completely. An eagerness to work, but also to never be afraid to ask questions. If you don't know, ask the question.
- John Goerner – The enthusiasm for learning: creativity of understanding what question to ask, the enthusiasm of being there and wanting to learn, asking questions and knowing when to ask questions.
- Jess Moore – A lot of the students feel the stereotypes of "I'm not good at math." I actually had someone in my industry say that they didn't know how to use Excel. I want people to understand that they can be good at business as well as creative.
- Suanne Hall – At Mapquest, we have "cultural ambassadors" who hire every new person who walks through the door. So they could be the most creative mind, but if they aren't a good cultural fit, they just don't make it. One of the things that I look for is if they're really interested in something in particular, but they have to state that they're interested in the idea of helping people. Compassionate, good listener.
- Juan Sanchez – I think passion is really important. We've had three interns out of high school who were writing code. Professional chef, basketball player who didn't have coding experience but really wanted it. Resourcefulness is really important. You may not have the means to get something done my way, but you figure out how to do it anyway.
- Jonathan Black – Students being able to teach themselves is really important. Giving them the base knowledge they need. Nurturing when you see that little fire or spark. Having updated curriculum is super-key. Because things are changing so fast. Juan mentioned 3-d printers; all schools should have 3-d printers and be able to use Sketch-up and other programs. Learning one tool will make you twice as at learning other things.

Were there any things you wish you learned in high school?

- Juan – Public speaking, more experience with writing. I didn't really get that in college, and now it's so much a part of what I do – even more so than design.

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- Suanne – Soft skills and communication skills. There's a lot of us out there that have a very similar personality. I'm a pretty hardcore introvert. I don't really enjoy public speaking. I think one of the things that I realized is that there's a really huge home for students like that in the creative industry.
- Stuart – Computer background. Internships and exposure are really big things that I wish we had. The job that I'm doing now, I had never heard of when I was in high school.
- AIGA – I brought my educational assessment from high school, and it does say fine arts and education. And I was never counseled on that.
- Jonathan – When I was 14, I started playing in a rock and roll band, and I started designing. Then I went to a career fair, and I had never seen a graphic design studio. I had no real idea about the variety of positions, and within that the variety of where you could be in that career. I thought it was homogenous. When I went to the career fair, they showed me some stats, and the median salary was \$18,000. And I thought to myself that my mom didn't want to go to college, and she was making \$30,000. So I decided to pursue computer science. I took one class for half of a semester, and I realized that it wasn't what I wanted to do.
- John Goerner – I was involved in arts in high school. And I think that maybe that did prepare me for having a broad base and seeing the creative side of things and the connections that I could make.
- Jonathan Black – My business partner came from an engineering mindset. When he looked at school for art, his family pushed him to be in engineering. From the outside looking in, he thought that he didn't have any art skill, but he had creative ability. You can get into something that's really creative and bringing in that logical side of the mind.

Open questions:

- Virginia: Can you all come into my class and talk? I tell them the same things that you do, and I can say that they don't listen
- RJ: Creative Mornings. Once a month on a Friday, 8:30-10am. There are 130 chapters throughout the US. It's something you might want to bring some students to. All of our past videos are online: www.creativemornings.com.
- Next event Friday at DU.
- Kevlyn: What would you suggest if you were prepping a senior who has a lot of potential? What would you suggest for them to have in their graduation toolkit? Website, what would you be looking for in a young potential hire?
 - DCP: Having done the college recruiting thing for so long, websites is the way to go. As long as the student is able to bring something to the table. Have a way to show it. A good resume is very important – something that makes them not look bad. The second that you see a typo on a resume, you just dump it. It's critical that you help students proof them.
 - What about a student who doesn't want to go to college?
 - Stuart: A list of references of people who you want to talk about your work. It's a small world, and anyone who comes to me with a list of references, chances are I know that person.

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- Lauren: One of the objectives of the summits is to give an example of college and career pathways. What schools and industry credentials are you looking for?
 - Jonathan: We're a boutique agency. We're working with very high-quality designs. It would be difficult for us considering someone who didn't go to school for design. It's really critical for them to be a critical thinker, and I don't think you can get those skills without going to school. If you go to a good school that teaches you the principles of design. It's not necessarily what school, but what's in their portfolio. It's important for them to be able to articulate what great design is. If someone came out of high school and they had a good portfolio and were just a rockstar, we would consider them.
- Virginia: What sorts of things are you looking for in a portfolio?
 - Jonathan: Ours is specific, since we're doing branding. Everything from a logo, to the business card, to a whole spectrum of signage. We would look for a portfolio that is well-rounded – digital, web.
 - AIGA: Going back to the public speaking piece earlier, I want that particular individual to be able to talk to me about what they've done. And that they can understand how they got to the end point.
 - John: Expanding on that, client interaction is important. It's the ability to interact with the client. They need to be able to think about the process and what's important in different situations.
 - Juan: The three interns that we had right out of high school – they had code in the public repository already. One had designed and built a website and was already maintaining it. Another had built an iOS app for his dad's company. He was also going out and meeting people.
 - Jonathan: Real-world experience is really key for someone coming out of high school and looking for a job. Even a high school student can do real client work. Pushing students to pursue that can be a good thing, whether it's just a website for a friend's band. When I finished school, I looked on Craigslist and found a couple of jobs. And it gave me a little experience of what it's like to have a job and working with a client.
 - DCPA: University of NC School of the Arts, Cincinnati School of the Arts, Ithaca College, Webster College. I look at programs that are more professional than studio.

Part 2: Small Group Discussions | 5:00pm – 5:50pm

Feedback & Close | 5:50pm – 6pm