



**STRATEGIC NATIONAL ARTS ALUMNI PROJECT**

Tracking the Lives and Careers of Arts Graduates

***Forks in the Road:  
The Many Paths of Arts Alumni***

**Strategic National Arts Alumni Project  
2010 Findings**

Center for Postsecondary Research  
School of Education  
Indiana University  
1900 East Tenth Street, Suite 419  
Bloomington, Indiana 47406-7512  
Tel: 812-856-5824  
Fax: 812-856-5150  
Email: [snaap@indiana.edu](mailto:snaap@indiana.edu)  
[snaap.indiana.edu](http://snaap.indiana.edu)

May 3, 2011

## Executive Summary

### *Forks in the Road: The Many Paths of Arts Alumni*

#### Strategic National Arts Alumni Project 2010 Findings

More than 120,000 visual and performing arts degrees are granted each year (Americans for the Arts, 2010) and stereotypes abound about what happens to these people. One common view is that few make a living doing art and are dissatisfied with their education and career opportunities. Findings from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) suggest this portrait does not comport with the reality experienced by most graduates of arts-intensive educational programs. In general, arts graduates are happy with their training and have few regrets.

SNAAP is an annual online survey, data management, and institutional improvement system designed to enhance the impact of arts-school education. The project will provide the first comprehensive look at how artists develop in the U.S. and will help identify the factors needed to more effectively connect arts training to artistic careers. This report is based on responses of 13,581 alumni from 154 institutions to the 2010 field test questionnaire.

### Selected Findings

- Ninety-two percent of arts alumni who wish to work currently are, with most (81%) finding employment soon after graduating.
- Two-thirds said their first job was a close match for the kind of work they wanted.
- More than half (57%) are currently working as professional artists (41%) or did so in the past (16%).
- More than six in ten (63%) were self-employed since graduating, with 14% founding their own company.
- Fifty-seven percent of current professional artists hold at least two jobs concurrently; 18% are working three or more jobs.
- Of those who currently only work outside the arts, 54% said their arts training is relevant to the job in which they spend the majority of their time.
- Arts alumni are critical for populating the teaching field, as more than half (52%) of arts graduates have taught in the arts at some point in their careers.
- Seven of ten (71%) of arts alumni who are not currently professional artists continue to make or publicly perform their art.
- Arts graduates are happy with their training, with 90% reporting their overall experience at their institution was either good or excellent.
- Most (76%) arts alumni would attend the same institution again.
- Arts school graduates are 18 times more likely to volunteer at an arts organization (37%) than the population at large (2%) (Independent Sector, 2001).
- Almost a third (30%) of former professional artists and those who wanted to be an artist but did not do so pointed to debt, including student loan debt, as a reason to find other work.

## What's Next for SNAAP

SNAAP promises to yield invaluable data that will deepen our understanding of what constitutes artistic success and contribution. At the national level, arts graduates are quite satisfied with their decision to attend arts school and report that their education is relevant to a wide range of occupations and professions, both inside and outside of the arts. The careers of arts alumni also illustrate new ways of working in the growing contingent economy. For individual institutions, the findings from this study indicate that arts training must place more emphasis on business- and management-related skills to prepare graduates for a life of enterprise, self-employment and entrepreneurship. SNAAP data also will allow participating schools to compare themselves with other similar schools on multiple dimensions.

The next administration of SNAAP is fall, 2011. Registration information including participation fees can be found at [snaap.indiana.edu/institutions/pricing.html](http://snaap.indiana.edu/institutions/pricing.html).

Representatives from SNAAP institutions will be able to join scholars, education leaders and arts policy makers at a national conference hosted by Vanderbilt University in 2012 to examine the issues and challenges facing training institutions, artists, and the broader creative economy.

### **SNAAP 2011 Registration Now Open**

SNAAP is now registering institutions for the 2011 national administration. Additional information, including participation fees, can be found at [snaap.indiana.edu](http://snaap.indiana.edu).

## *Forks in the Road: The Many Paths of Arts Alumni*

### Strategic National Arts Alumni Project 2010 Findings

*My arts training taught me flexibility and resourcefulness.*

*My current job relies on problem-solving, troubleshooting, attention to detail, persistence, focus, staying on task, accomplishing goals, being professional, understanding your audience – all skills developed at art school.*

*As a litigator, my acting training has been invaluable.*

*My arts training helped to teach me collaboration and communication, as well as empathy for people in all types of situations. I use these skills daily in law enforcement.*

*I work with a small modern dance company that allows me to not only use my own creative skills as a versatile dancer, but also as a collaborative choreographer under a director that requires a lot of smart, quick analyzing and decision-making. My capabilities to care for my physical instrument, my body, come in handy alongside my ability to concentrate and remember movement and story development in a fast, efficient, and creative way. All of these aspects I began rigorously honing at college and have continued developing these skills and many more through training and experience after graduating...*

– 2010 Respondents

More than 120,000 visual and performing arts degrees are granted each year (Americans for the Arts, 2010). Stereotypes abound about what happens to these people. One common view is that few, in fact, make a living doing art. Such opportunities, it is thought, are quite limited. As a result, the vast majority of those who wanted to play in a major symphony, show and sell their work in popular galleries, or otherwise apply their creativity and honed artistic skills must cobble together unskilled jobs to make ends meet while waiting and hoping for the big break.

Findings from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) suggest this portrait does not comport with the reality experienced by most graduates of arts-intensive educational programs. In general, as those arts alumni quoted at the beginning of this report suggest, arts graduates are happy with their training and have few regrets. They went to arts school to learn art and, by and large, they are satisfied with the quality of instruction they received concerning their artistic craft. More than half have worked as professional artists at some time in their careers.

In this report, we present these and other illuminating findings about the lives and careers of arts alumni. To place this information in context, the next section offers more details on SNAAP and the people who answered the 2010 questionnaire.

## What is SNAAP?

SNAAP is an annual online survey, data management, and institutional improvement system designed to enhance the impact of arts-school education. The project will provide the first comprehensive look at how artists develop in the US. The findings reported later also begin to identify the factors needed to more effectively connect arts training to artistic careers, making it possible for education institutions, researchers, and arts leaders to better understand the systemic factors that helped or hindered the career paths of alumni, whether they have chosen to work as artists or have pursued other paths.

The information from SNAAP is especially timely given the changing environment in which arts training institutions operate. Career opportunities are shifting, competition for both students and resources is on the rise, and a generational shift in leadership is under way. Institutions need good data to respond and plan effectively. Accreditors also increasingly expect schools to have information about alumni paths.

To insure high quality data, three field tests of the online survey were conducted between 2008 and 2010. The user-friendly, Web-based questionnaire was developed to be sensitive to the diverse pathways and experiences of art school graduates. Using drop-down menus, check boxes, and open-ended responses, the questions invite arts alumni to report their:

- satisfaction with curricular and extracurricular experiences
- current and past education and employment
- relevance of arts education to work and further education
- obstacles, critical relationships, and opportunities
- support and resources needed after graduation
- types of art practiced and how often
- experiences as teachers
- income and support, student debt, other financial issues

Beginning in fall 2011, SNAAP will be administered on a fee-for-service basis at participating schools. This report is based on the results of the 2010 field test.

## Who Participated in the 2010 Survey?

In 2010, 81,669 arts alumni from 154 institutions (8 arts high schools, 146 undergraduate programs, and 90 graduate programs) were invited to participate in the SNAAP survey. All those who graduated between 2005 and 2009 were eligible as were those who graduated 10, 15, and 20 years ago (i.e., the classes of 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2000, 1995, and 1990). Overall, 13,581 alumni responded, with an average institutional response rate of 24% (Table 1). A trivial number (1%) declined to participate. Of the remaining 75%, we do not know how many actually received the invitation but ignored or overlooked it, or never saw the invitation because of incorrect or outdated e-mail addresses.

Four fifths (81%) of the respondents were alumni from undergraduate programs; 16% were graduate program alumni; and 3% were arts high school alumni.

**Table 1: SNAAP Response Rates, 2010 and 2009 Field Tests**

Disposition	2010 (154 Institutions)			2009 (54 Institutions)		
	Number	Overall Response Rate*	Average Response Rate**	Number	Overall Response Rate*	Average Response Rate**
<b>Total # of records provided by institutions</b>	116,493	N/A	N/A	39,722	N/A	N/A
Records without e-mail addresses	34,824	N/A	N/A	17,142	N/A	N/A
Bad e-mail addresses: bounced back or undeliverable	12,131	N/A	N/A	2,870	N/A	N/A
<b>Total # of e-mail invitation sent</b>	<b>81,669</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>22,580</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Contact by e-mail but nothing returned	55,200	79.4%	74.8%	15,675	79.5%	74.6%
Refusals	757	1.1%	1.1%	190	1.0%	0.8%
Partially completed surveys	2,027	2.9%	3.3%	1,058	5.4%	6.3%
<b>Completed Surveys</b>	<b>11,554</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>2,787</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
<b>Total Response Rate***</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>

\* Overall Response Rate is derived by dividing the total number of respondents by the total number of alumni contacted (minus undeliverable e-mails)

\*\* Average Institutional Response Rate is derived by calculating the response rate for each institution and averaging those response rates.

\*\*\* Response rates are adjusted for non-deliverable e-mail addresses and alumni for whom contact information was not available.

### SNAAP Funders

SNAAP is supported by a leadership grant from the Surdna Foundation with additional generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Houston Endowment, Barr Foundation, Educational Foundation of America, and the Cleveland Foundation.

## Major Findings

### 1) Employment

Despite the widespread belief that arts graduates are unemployable, most arts alumni responding to the SNAAP survey found jobs. Ninety-two percent currently hold at least one job. Only six percent are currently unemployed and looking for work, less than the 9.6% national unemployment rate reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for December 2010 ([bls.gov/opub/mlr/2011/03/art1exc.htm](http://bls.gov/opub/mlr/2011/03/art1exc.htm)). Most postsecondary arts alumni (81%) were able to find jobs soon after graduating (80% undergraduate, 84% graduate), with 34% being employed prior to graduation; another 47% found jobs within a year. Moreover, of those who looked for work after leaving their postsecondary institutions, two-thirds (66%) reported that the first job was a close match for the kind of work they wanted. Of this group, graduate alumni were more likely to find a job that closely matched what they were searching for (81%) than were undergraduate alumni (65%).

Equally important, more than half (57%) of arts alumni either are currently working as professional artists (41%) or have done so in the past (16%) (Figure 1). Excluding the 22% who indicated they never intended to be a professional artist, almost three-quarters (74%) were, indeed, a professional artist for some period of time at some point in their lives.

Some other noteworthy findings:

- More than six in ten (63%) were self-employed since graduating.
- Fifty-seven percent of current professional artists hold at least two jobs concurrently; 18% are working three or more jobs.
- Fourteen percent of all alumni founded or co-founded their own for-profit or not-for-profit company
- Alumni with a family member who is a professional artist are more likely also to be a professional artist than those without a professional artist in the family.

**Figure 1: Work Status as a Professional Artist**

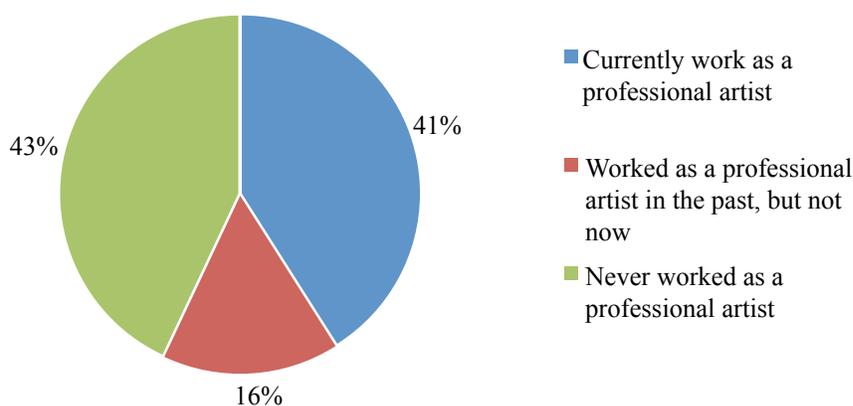


Table 2 displays the percentage of alumni currently working as professional artists by selected arts majors as well as the percentage reporting their institutional experience was good or excellent. It appears that while majors across disciplines are generally quite satisfied with their institutional experience, those majoring in design are more likely to be working as professional artists than those majoring in fine and studio arts and the performing arts.

**Table 2: Professional Artists and Institutional Experience by Major**

<b>Arts Major</b>	<b>% Currently Working as Professional Artists</b>	<b>% Reporting Institutional Experience as Good or Excellent</b>
Dance	48%	93%
Design	59%	88%
Fine and studio Arts	44%	88%
Music performance	47%	92%
Theater	47%	90%

Professional artists represent a large range of artistic occupations (Table 3). Among the 2010 respondents, being a professional musician is the most prevalent of these fields with more than a quarter (27%) currently working in this area followed closely by graphic designers and illustrators (21%). The least common arts occupations for professional artists among our respondents were architects, art directors, and multi-media artists or animators, each equaling only 4% of all professional artists.

The pattern of responses to these and many other SNAAP questions is related in part to the types of institutions alumni attended. For example, the 2010 field study only two percent of the schools were special mission arts schools (e.g., conservatories or design schools) compared with 52% in 2009. For a list of participating schools go to [snaap.indiana.edu/institutions/participants.html](http://snaap.indiana.edu/institutions/participants.html).

## 2) Art Matters, Whether Working in the Arts or Not

The skills and competencies attained in an arts education program have value beyond producing art, as important as that is to a creative economy and personal satisfaction. Of those who currently only work outside the arts, 54% said their arts training is relevant to the job in which they spend the majority of their time. More specifically, 28% felt artistic skills were important in their work, and 68% reported that their institution contributed a great deal to their development of these skills. For example, of alumni currently working only in occupations outside of the arts, 70% indicate the use of technology is important in their profession, and 48% report that their institution contributed a great deal (combination of “quite a bit” and “very much”) to their development of these skills. Of those in legal occupations, 50% say that their arts training is at

least somewhat relevant to their current work. Of those working in health care, 41% report that their arts training is relevant. Of those in management, two-thirds (64%) report that their arts training is at least somewhat relevant.

**Table 3: Institutional and Career Satisfaction by Arts Occupation**

Occupation	% in Occupation	% Rating Educational Experience at Institution as Excellent	% Rating Educational Experience at Institution as Good or Excellent	% Very Satisfied with:		
				Income	Opportunity to be Creative in Work	Opportunity to do work that reflects their Personality, Interests, and Values
Actors	9%	52%	88%	14%	68%	68%
Architects	4%	56%	95%	15%	35%	39%
Art directors	4%	43%	88%	29%	46%	33%
Craft artists	4%	41%	85%	0%	58%	69%
Dancers or choreographers	6%	54%	89%	21%	68%	75%
Directors, producers, or managers in theater and stage	6%	45%	88%	13%	54%	64%
Film, TV, or video artists	9%	46%	87%	18%	49%	50%
Fine artists	14%	49%	88%	8%	80%	78%
Graphic designers or illustrators	21%	43%	89%	12%	39%	32%
Multi-media artists or animators	4%	44%	85%	24%	58%	39%
Musicians	27%	55%	92%	12%	61%	68%
Photographers	8%	43%	85%	18%	71%	66%
Web designers	9%	46%	90%	24%	32%	34%
Writers, authors, or editors	8%	46%	85%	13%	67%	67%

Many arts alumni who are not currently working as professional artists contribute to the arts through their current work in other arts-related occupations. Of those that are not current professional artists, 14% teach in K-12 schools, 6% teach in postsecondary institutions, and 6% are arts administrators or managers.

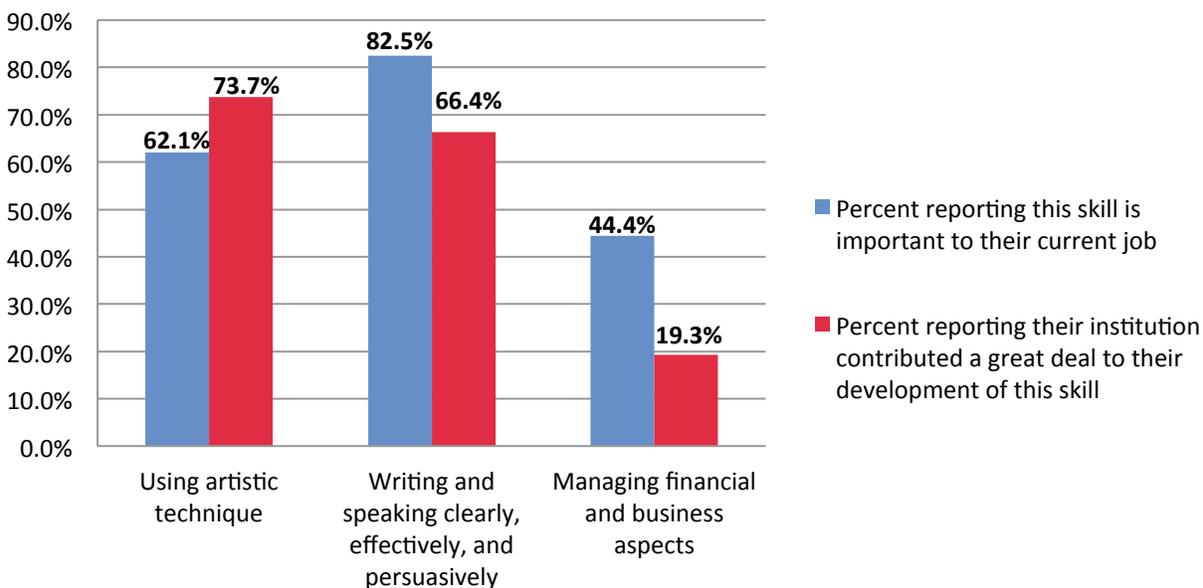
Surveys of employers ([aacu.org/leap/public\\_opinion\\_research.cfm](http://aacu.org/leap/public_opinion_research.cfm)) show that the vast majority want people who can think clearly and analytically, can fashion solutions to complicated problems, and can work effectively with others in different situations among other abilities. Arts graduates experience the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy similarly. About 86% of graduates say that thinking critically about information is an important skill in their work life; 91% say working effectively with others is important. Nine of ten (88%) say thinking creatively is a key to being successful at work. Equally important, three-quarters of arts alumni say their institutions contributed a great deal to their developing these abilities.

### 3) Satisfaction with Education

In general, arts graduates are happy with their training and have few regrets. Most (76%) would attend their same institution again. Ninety percent said their overall experience at their institution was either good or excellent. A large percentage of those who are at present professional artists rated their educational experiences as “excellent” (Table 3). Topping the list are architects with 56% reporting their experiences at their institutions were excellent. Lowest were craft artists with 41% rating their educational experiences as excellent.

Graduates went to arts school to learn art; by and large they think their institutions trained them well. To this point, nearly three-quarters (74%) of alumni report that their institution contributed a great deal to developing their artistic technique (Figure 2, where “a great deal” refers to those who responded “quite a bit” or “very much”). An even larger proportion of alumni (89%) are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their classroom, lab and studio teachers and the quality of instruction they received concerning their artistic craft. While arts alumni generally gave their schools high marks, more than half (51%) of undergraduate alumni were dissatisfied with the career advising their school offered as were 43% of graduate alumni. Another area of expressed concern was not being adequately prepared to effectively negotiate the current economic climate. More than half (53%) reported that their institution was not helpful (combination of “very little” and “not at all”) in terms of acquiring financial and business skills. Of those, 42 % say that these skills are important for their work life, suggesting a mismatch between training and required work skills for a large minority of students.

**Figure 2: Importance & Development of Skills**



#### 4) Satisfaction with Career and Income

Job satisfaction levels are very high for those in many arts occupations. Even for those arts graduates that never intended to work as professional artists, 35% were very satisfied with the opportunities for creativity in the occupations where they spent the majority of their work time. Moreover, 44% were very satisfied with their opportunity to do work that reflects their personality, interests, and values. While satisfaction levels are high for this group of alumni, they are even higher for professional artists who work as fine artists, dancers, or choreographers, musicians, actors, and photographers.

Large percentages of alumni who are only professional artists (47%) and teachers of the arts (54%) report that they are very satisfied with opportunities to be creative in their work, compared to those working only in either arts-related occupations (32%) or occupations outside of the arts (20%). A similar pattern appears when considering opportunities to do work that reflects their personality, interests, and values, with 47% of those working only as professional artists or 64% teachers of the arts reporting that they are very satisfied, compared to 27% for those who only work in occupations outside of the arts. These numbers are comparable to the job satisfaction of all college graduates nationally -- approximately 53 percent of college graduates surveyed between 1988 to 2010 say they are very satisfied with their jobs according to data from the General Social Survey (GSS), a national survey of attitudes and demographics of US residents conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago (2011). The GSS data (1988 to 2010) show that 59% of artists (performing artists, designers, actors and directors, and musicians) are very satisfied with their work, compared to 52% of lawyers, 54% of financial managers, and 53% of high school teachers.

Satisfaction rates, however, differ considerably across different types of professional artists (Table 3). For example, the vast majority of fine artists and photographers (who spend most of their time in these occupations) were very satisfied with their opportunities to be creative in their work (each more than 70%). In contrast, graphic designers or illustrators, architects, and web designers were strikingly less likely to be very satisfied with their opportunities to be creative at work (each under 40%).

A majority of fine artists and dancers or choreographers were very satisfied with the opportunity to do work that reflects their personality, interests, and values (each more than 70%). However, less than 40% of those in other fields, including architects, multi-media artists or animators, web designers, art directors, and graphic designers and illustrators reported that they were very satisfied with their opportunity to do work that reflects their personality, interests, and values (Table 3).

While most current professional artists are satisfied with their work life, far fewer feel the same way about their income. For example, as Table 3 shows, art directors comprise the group that has the highest percentage of respondents who are very satisfied with their income with only 29%. No craft artist said they were very satisfied with their income.

In terms of job security, only a third (32%) of professional artists reported that they were very satisfied. Respondents working in other areas were more satisfied with job security:

- Those working outside the arts (44%)
- Teachers of the arts (40%), and
- Those working in arts-related occupations (38%).

## 5) Career Influence

Arts alumni who currently are professional artists report their school had a greater impact on their careers than those who are not currently professional artists (both former artists as well as those who were never artists) (Table 4). At the same time, more than two-fifths (42%) of those who never became professional artists say faculty members in their arts institution had a *major* influence on their careers. In addition, the perception of influence is greatest among more recent grads who are professional artists than among older cohorts of artists. For example, of those who graduated in 1990 12% report that their “school network” had a major impact on their career in contrast to 26% of those who graduated between 2005 and 2009.

**Table 4: Major Career Influences by Professional Artist Status**

<b>Professional Artist Status</b>	<b>Major Influence of Classmates on Career</b>	<b>Major Influence of Faculty on Career</b>	<b>Major Influence of Alumni of their Institution on Career</b>
Current professional artists	33%	55%	20%
Former professional artists	27%	47%	14%
Never a professional artist	22%	42%	11%

Considering barriers to artistic careers, many graduates seem to be pushed away from being professional artists by lack of jobs and pulled to other fields by better pay. Table 5 shows responses for why those who intended to become professional artists chose not to and why those who had previously been professional artists changed careers.

**Table 5: Reasons for Not Being a Professional Artist**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>% of those who Intended to Become Artists but Did Not</b>	<b>% that Stopped Working as Professional Artists</b>
Higher pay or steadier income in other fields	48%	52%
Work as an artist not available	51%	39%
Debt, including student loans	34%	25%
Change in interests	17%	22%

## 6) Expressing Creativity

Arts graduates are much more engaged in creative pursuits than other U.S. citizens. Seven of ten (71%) arts alumni not currently working as professional artists continue to make or perform their own personal (not work-related) art, including but not limited to fine arts, design, photography, film/media arts, craft arts, music, theater, dance, and creative writing. This percentage is much higher than numbers reported in surveys of the general population. According to the National Endowment for the Arts-sponsored Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), 41% of all

Americans make or perform personal art (photos, movies or videos; weaving, needlework or sewing; playing music; theater; dance; pottery, ceramics or jewelry; creative writing; painting, drawing, or sculpture) (Novak-Leonard & Brown, 2011).

Among those who are not currently professional artists and who make art outside of their work life, a substantial number derive great value from their creative lives. Eighty-eight percent report that their personal art is important or very important. Furthermore, two thirds (68%) exhibit or publicly perform their personal (not work-related) art.

## 7) Teaching Art

Arts schools are critical for populating the teaching pipeline. Fifty-two percent of graduates have taught at some point in their careers. Additionally, 24% have volunteered to teach the arts within the past three years. It's worth noting that more than half (52%) of arts alumni who said they never intended to become artists are currently or have been teachers of the arts. On the flip side, 41% of those who have never been artists but intended to be currently teach or have taught the arts. Thus, teaching appeals to and attracts many arts graduates. In addition, teachers of the arts reveal high rates of satisfaction with their opportunity to “contribute to the greater good” with 63% reporting that they are very satisfied with this aspect of their work. This is much higher than the percentage of professional artists (29%), those working outside the arts (34%), and those in arts-related occupations (34%) who are very satisfied with this aspect of their work.

## 8) Supporting the Arts

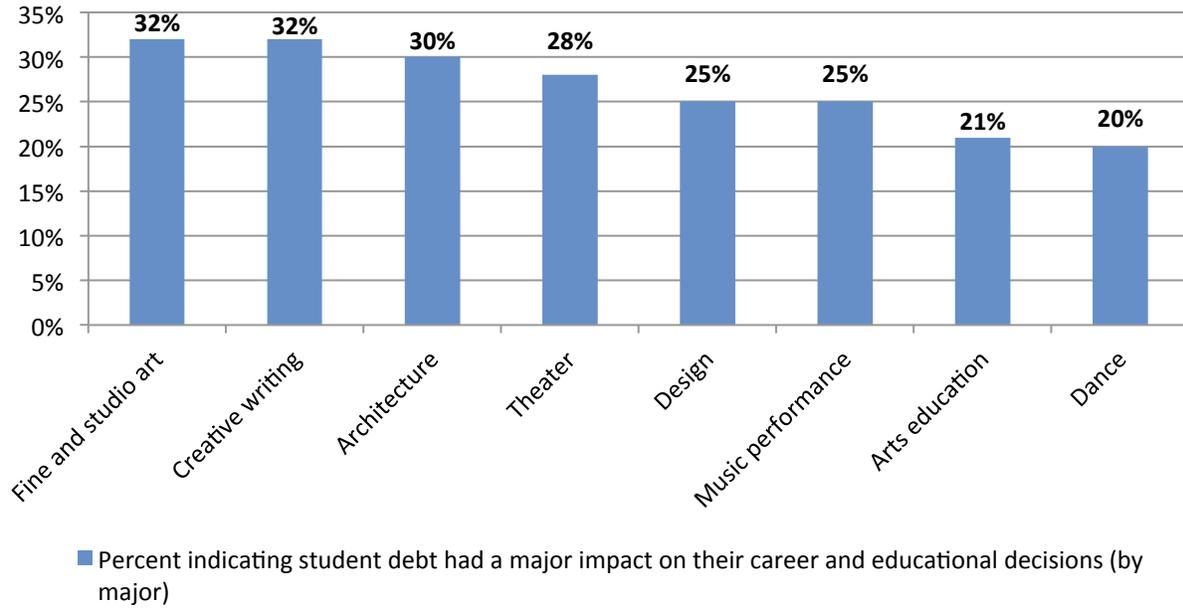
Arts school graduates are also a critical part of the support structure for the arts – as volunteers and donors. More than a third (37%) volunteered at an arts organization in the past three years. This number is much higher than those found in general population surveys, as these report that only 2% of Americans volunteer for arts, cultural or humanities organizations (Independent Sector, 2001). Forty-one percent of arts graduates donated money either to an arts organization or an artist. This percentage is particularly notable because, according to the Indiana University Center for Philanthropy (2007), approximately 6% of all U.S. households earning under \$100,000 a year contribute to the arts. Of those arts graduates with household incomes less than \$100,000 (about 76% of SNAAP respondents), 40% give money to the arts, more than six times the general public giving rate.

## 9) Debt Matters

The need to pay off student loan debt is a factor in the career path of arts graduates, compelling them to stop or reconsider being a professional artist. For example, when undergraduate and graduate alumni were asked about reasons for not becoming professional artists, or reasons for stopping work as a professional artist, 30% of past artists and those that had never been artists (*but intended to be*) say that debt, including student loan debt, was a reason. For those that cite

debt as a reason, the median amount of student loan debt from their institution was \$25,000, compared to the median amount of \$5,000 for those that did not cite debt as a reason.

**Figure 3: Impact of Student Loan Debt on Career and Future Education by Major**



## What's Next for SNAAP

*“The information is very helpful, and with current staffing we could not do anything near as extensive even to just our own alumni.”*

*– Participating Institution*

*“This was a fabulous and comprehensive survey. I’m very curious to see the general results as well as the results specific to my school.”*

*– Respondent*

*“Thank you for taking the time to compile this much needed information. I hope it helps to shine a light on the actual value of an arts education and helps direct future talented artists to the institutions that will best serve their needs.”*

*– Respondent*

SNAAP is beginning to yield invaluable data both nationally and for individual institutions. At the national level, we are learning that arts graduates are quite satisfied with their decision to attend arts school. Respondents say that their art training is relevant to a wide range of occupations and professions, both inside and outside of the arts. We also find that arts graduates are critical for the larger cultural ecology – many using their education to teach the arts. Large numbers are working as skilled amateurs (not as professional artists), producing and presenting art in their communities. In addition, the careers of artists illustrate new ways of working in the growing contingent economy. Indeed, the experiences of arts alumni may well become the norm for many 21<sup>st</sup> century workers. As noted earlier, 63% of arts graduates were self-employed at some point in their career. They are entrepreneurial, with 14% having started their own company or organization. And, consistent with a popular view of the professional artist, almost three-fifths (57%) of current professional artists hold two or more jobs concurrently.

For individual institutions, SNAAP is producing a treasure trove of actionable findings. For example, the findings from this study indicate that arts training institutions must focus on preparing their graduates for a life of enterprise, self-employment and entrepreneurship. Although the majority of arts graduates work in nontraditional ways (contingent and contract employment), many do not feel they were taught important business and management skills in their training programs. And, given how many arts graduates teach in some capacity, institutions must also take stock as to whether they are adequately preparing their graduates for this important work.

Equally important, a large percentage of students (22%) who attend arts schools never intend to be professional artists. At the same time, many report that their arts training is relevant to a wide range of careers. Institutions need to carefully consider the needs of these students as well as the needs of the more conventional art student. Finally, it seems that school debt can be a major barrier, pushing many graduates away from an artistic career. SNAAP can help provide schools with greater insight about which of their students and which disciplines are most adversely affected by debt.

This and other information gathered through SNAAP will benefit arts education institutions, policy makers, and arts leaders, as well as parents and students considering intensive arts training. The project will deepen our understanding of what constitutes artistic success and contribution. SNAAP data also will allow participating schools to compare themselves with other similar schools on multiple dimensions; they will provide insight into national patterns and trends; and they will allow for detailed analyses of employment and career outcomes by artistic discipline, region of the country, cohort, and degree type. In addition, data gathered through SNAAP will assist government entities, funding organizations, and arts leaders in making investment decisions in education, training, and resource allocation.

Institutions that participate in SNAAP are full collaborators in one of the nation's most important research and institutional improvement efforts ever organized around art and artists. Along with detailed institutional reports available to all participating schools, SNAAP institutions will have priority access to all national reports, including the first-ever comprehensive report on the training and preparation of America's creative work force. Representatives from SNAAP institutions will also participate in a national conference hosted by Vanderbilt University in 2012, joining with top scholars, education leaders and arts policy makers to place SNAAP findings in the context of larger issues and challenges facing training institutions, artists, and the broader creative economy.

The next administration of SNAAP is fall, 2011. Registration is currently open, and the deadline for registering is July 1. Information including participation fees can be found at [snaap.indiana.edu/institutions/pricing.html](http://snaap.indiana.edu/institutions/pricing.html).

We look forward to engaging in this important work in the coming years with our colleagues at participating institutions, sponsors, and others committed to improving arts education and designing policies and practices that encourage and support artistic endeavor.

## SNAAP Fact Sheet

### **Total Participants from the 3 Field Tests (2008 – 2010)**

- 19,086 alumni from 192 different institutions (234 total registrations):  
24% average institutional response rate.
- The total includes high schools (19) and postsecondary institutions (175), plus two institutions with both high school and postsecondary alumni.
- Some institutions (7 high schools and 9 postsecondary institutions) participated in more than one field test.

### **2010 Field Test**

- 13,581 alumni from 119 institutions (154 total registrations):  
24% average institutional response rate

### **2009 Field Test**

- 3,845 alumni from 52 institutions (54 total registrations):  
25% average institutional response rate

### **2008 Field Test**

- 1,660 alumni from 37 institutions (41 total registrations):  
18% average institutional response rate

## Resources

Americans for the Arts. (2010). *The national arts index 2010*. Washington, DC: Author.

Association for American Colleges and Universities. (2011). *The LEAP vision for learning: Outcomes, practices, impact, and employers' views*. Washington, DC: Author.

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. (2007). *Patterns of household charitable giving by income group, 2005*. Indianapolis, IN: Author.

Independent Sector. (2001). *Giving and volunteering in the United States: Findings from a national survey*. Washington, DC: Author.

*General social survey—1972-2010 cumulative data set* (Release 1.1, Feb. 2011) [Data file]. Chicago, IL: the National Opinion Research Center.

Novak-Leonard, J. L. & Brown, A. S. (2011). *Beyond attendance: A multi-modal understanding of arts participation*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

## SNAAP National Advisory Board Members

*Kenneth C. Fischer*, Chair  
President, University Musical Society  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

*Antonia Contro*  
Executive Director, Marwen  
Chicago, Illinois

*Douglas Dempster*  
Dean, College of Fine Arts  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, Texas

*Aaron P. Dworkin*  
Founder and Director, The Sphinx Organization  
Detroit, Michigan

*Barbara B. Hauptman*  
Visiting Assistant Professor, Arts Management  
SUNY College at Purchase  
Purchase, New York

*Sammy Hoi*  
President, Otis College of Art and Design  
Los Angeles, California

*Colleen Jennings-Roggensack*  
Executive Director for ASU Gammage  
Assistant Vice President for Cultural Affairs  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, Arizona

*Steven Lavine*  
President, California Institute of the Arts (CalArts)  
Valencia, California

*Fred Lazarus*  
President, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)  
Baltimore, Maryland

*Abel Lopez*  
Associate Producing Director, GALA Hispanic Theatre  
Washington, DC

*Ann R. Markusen*

Director, Project on Regional and Industrial Economics  
Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

*Carlos Martinez*

Principal, Gensler  
Chicago, Illinois

*Bebe Miller*

Artistic Director, Bebe Miller Company  
New York, New York  
Professor, Department of Dance  
The Ohio State University  
Columbus, Ohio

*Stephanie Perrin*

Former Head, Walnut Hill School  
Orleans, Massachusetts

*Carla Peterson*

Artistic Director, Dance Theatre Workshop  
New York, New York

*Gwyn Richards*

Dean, Jacobs School of Music  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana

*Leslie Shepard*

Director, Baltimore School for the Arts  
Baltimore, Maryland

## SNAAP Funding

The SNAAP initiative began with a major leadership grant from the Surdna Foundation. Since then, SNAAP has received generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Houston Endowment, Barr Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, and the Educational Foundation of America. We are grateful to these organizations which have made it possible to conduct three field tests of SNAAP at no cost to participating institutions as well as the preparation of this report.

## SNAAP Staff

### Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

George D. Kuh, *Director and Chancellor's Professor Emeritus*  
Sally Gaskill, *Associate Director and Project Manager*  
Scott D. Jones, *Project Coordinator*  
Amber D. Lambert, *Research Analyst*  
Angie L. Miller, *Research Analyst*  
Josh Hoering, *Research Assistant*

### Indiana University Center for Survey Research

John Kennedy, *Director*  
Kevin Tharp, *Assistant Director, Survey Technologies*

### Vanderbilt University Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy

Steven J. Tepper, *SNAAP Senior Scholar*  
Elizabeth Long Lingo, *SNAAP Research Associate*  
Carly Rush, *SNAAP Project Associate*  
Jennifer Lena, *SNAAP Research Associate*