

Program Review Executive Summary Madison Project Fall 2012

General Comments

The Madison Project is a Santa Monica College-based 501C3 program whose purpose is to present cultural programming in the two theatres at the Performing Arts Center (PAC) – the Broad Stage and the Edye Second Space. Although both spaces are used and scheduled for performances by college instructional programs (such as Music and Dance), the Madison Project presents an acclaimed and varied roster of world class performances by artists that span all performance genres, attracting a broad audience from the west side community as well as the SMC community.

Until the PAC was completed in 2007, no college venue of a size and quality adequate for presenting such programming existed. The vision for such a venue and the original staff of the Madison Project (so named because the PAC site was originally Madison Elementary School) were the drivers behind the multi-year fundraising effort that generated the initial funds to build the PAC spaces. Once built, the Madison Project was charged with implementing self-sustaining programming that would draw the community and help support the operations of the PAC performance spaces. The Madison Project offered a limited first season in Fall 2008 and has steadily grown in size of programming, stature and influence in the local performing arts scene, and in generating community support. From 2009 – 2012 the number of people served increased from 10,000 to 68,000.

As a 501C3 entity, the Madison Project has its own board of directors (which includes representatives from the District Board of Trustees) as well as an artistic advisory board. The Madison Project is well on the way to meeting the charge to be self-sustaining. A \$10 Million donation from Eli & Edye Broad jump-started the capital campaign, a portion of which has been used to support the implementation phase of the Madison Project. Ticket sales and annual fundraising contributions are significant on-going funding sources. A large coterie of volunteers supplement the program and is further evidence of the high level of community support the Madison Project has garnered in such a short time.

From the beginning, the Madison Project has included extensive educational and community outreach efforts and now has a robust outreach program in place. Outreach elements include programming designed specifically for local school children, master classes open to SMC and other students, collaborative efforts with SMC instructional programs, reduced ticket prices and occasional free access to performances. A strong partnership with PS Arts has increased outreach to Title I primary and secondary schools serving 10,000 students a year. Programs offered to schools are designed to

meet California Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards. In addition to bringing programming to the schools, students are brought to PAC for performances and special events. Recognizing that the cost of transporting students was a barrier, the Madison Project fundraises and budgets for buses. Admirably, the success of these outreach efforts has created a demand that is greater than the capacity of the Madison Project to fulfill.

The Madison Project also works closely with Santa Monica College units such as academic departments and the Office of Outreach and Recruitment. Particularly strong and collaborative relationships have been developed with the Music and Dance departments. These collaborations benefit the college in multiple ways and strengthen the relationship between the Madison Project and the College.

The diversity of performances offered is a notable strength of the Madison Project programming, which draws a wide range of patrons and interests. This has contributed to the cultivation of a loyal and diverse audience base that has resulted in an increase in ticket sales and funding support. Free public events such as the Broad Fest, inaugurated in Fall 2012, help to showcase the program and the college and broaden community support and audience participation.

Although the Madison Project has established goals and developed outcomes, to become more effective in informing program planning, assessments need to be more sophisticated and consistently administered. Surveys are one assessment tool used to measure audience satisfaction and outreach effectiveness. In response to results, the program is increasing programming of some genres and is currently developing more comprehensive educational materials for use in the public schools. The program has generally exceeded its short term target goals but needs to work on refinement of unit outcomes and student learning outcomes (for the educational outreach component) and more effectively articulating them to the institutional learning outcomes.

A perennial problem for the Madison Project is parking, which has been inadequate since the PAC venues were completed. While the project has done an admirable job of developing solutions during performances such as stacked valet parking and shuttle buses to nearby parking sites, and clearly recognizes this is a site shared with college academic programs, this problem will only get worse as the site is expanded with the addition of the PAC east wing. This is an institutional rather than a program issue.

Overall, the Madison Project is a showcase program for Santa Monica College raising the college profile within the community and beyond. Both the programming and the Broad Stage venue receive universally positive feedback.

