2011 NASAA Leadership Institute
Plenary Roundtable
Abridged Transcript

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Jonathan: Welcome to our plenary roundtable.

As many of you know, NASAA firmly believes in the value of peer-to-peer learning. Many of our services and conference offerings are designed to help you, as state arts agencies, share with each other the vision and strategies and that you yourselves have developed based on your experiences in your own states. That was the focus of your conversations this morning. However, NASAA also has a commitment to looking beyond the state arts agency circle, too—to harvest information and advice from other arts or policy spheres, and to connect you with people who might offer a different point of view.

That's the approach we're taking with this afternoon's session. In this hour, we want to inform our thinking about our own strategies by harvesting a variety of outside

perspectives about the larger cultural context in which we work, the policy context of state government and the political climate in America.

Here are the folks who are going to help us do that. It's my pleasure to introduce our three panelists:

Lori Grange is the deputy director of the Pew Center on the States, which she helped to launch in 2006. The Center's goal is to create "high performing states" that adopt policies, programs and practices that provide a good return on investment to citizens. Lori oversees the Center's research efforts, which include a team of more than 35 analysts, budget specialists, policy experts and journalists who do in-depth research on all 50 states.

Celinda Lake is president of Lake Research Partners, a political polling and campaign consulting firm. Lake Research Partners conducted the Imagine Nation poll that many of you know about. That study revealed a huge constituency of voters willing to support candidates who stand up for the arts in education. She's been a pollster or advisor to too many elected officials for me to list here, but their names include Janet Napolitano, Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi. Celinda also served as congressional staff to a select committee on education under Pat Williams that examined community arts education.

Andrew Taylor joins us from the Wisconsin School of Business, where he directs the Bolz Center for Arts Administration. He's chaired the Association of Arts Administration Educators and has been a consultant to numerous cultural organizations and facilities, both in the United States and in Canada. Andrew was also one of the first arts leaders to dive into the blogosphere, with his Artful Manager blog. If you've never checked that out, give it a look. It's a great mix of research snippets and news about arts innovations, technology, marketing, cultural participation, human behavior and more.

Our panelists have spent the morning listening to us. In addition to asking for their impressions of the overall environment, we will also ask for their impressions of us. During the last part of the session, we will open the floor and you will be able to ask questions of our guests as well.

First, let's take a look at the general environment and talk about trends. Andrew, you are an information omnivore and responsible for training the next generation of arts administrators. What kind of environment are you training them for?

Andrew: As Jonathan has said, I run an M.B.A. program, and our job is to find and foster and connect high-performing professionals for arts and culture. That tends to mean nonprofit, public and corporate entities, but it also means people out on the edge doing their own businesses or commercial enterprises or a hybrid organization. We spend a lot of time discussing what kind of environment we are training them for.

I keep coming back to Donald Schön, who talked about how you could train people to run a ship, build a ship or design a ship. What we have done increasingly over the last 50 years in to teach people to run a ship efficiently and effectively. You are pretty much given a ship; it is a public agency or a 501(c)(3) entity; now how do you optimize? Over the past 10 years it has become increasingly clear that a 501(c)(3) is not the right ship all of the time. So now we have to train people to run the ship, assess the ship to determine if it is the right kind, and then design a new ship while

still moving full steam ahead—while also organizing an armada from a dinghy! We cannot add complexity to solve the problem, so we are trying to find the core dynamics that define a cultural manager's job.

Jonathan: It sounds like there are a couple clusters of competency. One of them is adapting your organization to the changing environment. Another one is looking at organizations and seeing their essential characteristics. Do you see those characteristics changing in any pattern that you can observe?

Andrew: I tend to think of institutions as evolutionary creatures, and they evolved in a certain era when certain resources were available. The last 30 years has seen one of the greatest increases in wealth and distribution of wealth in human history. We designed these organizations in a time when we had increasing access to an educated work force, an increasing access to wealth, and underpenetrated markets for artistic experience. Around the 1990s, those things started peaking and declining. We essentially built fixed-cost-intensive institutions because every year you would earn a little more than last year. Once that stopped happening, we suddenly had an overly intensive fixed-cost enterprise, and then you have trouble.

Jonathan: Lori, what changes do you see happening in government?

Lori: Before I begin, I'd like to say one thing. Your roll call session this morning was the most fun and rowdiest conference kick off. The National Governor's Association has nothing on you.

To start off, as you all know, the fiscal situation remains a tough road ahead, and the government is definitely changing because of the crisis. Let me name a few of the changes that I think echo the comments that I heard in the sessions this morning. One is that the definition of *essential services* has really narrowed. A number of people this morning were talking about what is government's core role, and that is such a defining question right now, possibly more than it has ever been before. Most states would say that education in K-12 remains a top priority, but now they have health care costs, long-term bills coming due like pension and Medicare gobbling up more and more of the budget. So when it comes to being considered essential, almost everything beyond K-12 and health care almost starts from a place of being considered nonessential. You have to either make the case or do more with less, which is obviously a tough situation. We see that happening across many state governments and programs.

A second interesting trend is that states are pushing down more and more responsibility to localities with little to no money involved. For example Nebraska earlier this year eliminated all state aid to its localities. That certainly means that on a city and county level severe cuts in services and fee increases are occurring or may occur and that could be an interesting and painful development for some of your constituents.

Another interesting trend I think I heard mentioned this morning is the role of the private sector vis-à-vis state government. This both is complicated for state agencies and provides opportunities.

And finally, of course, there are trends that we are seeing in state government capacity overall. Across the board we are seeing a shrinking work force; governments are not filling slots when attrition occurs. There is greater pressure on

state agencies to cut, consolidate and improve their value proposition and to really demonstrate that you warrant the taxpayers' investment. Continued innovation is occurring sometimes out of necessity, sometimes out of opportunity: on-line services, shared services, or pilot efforts in government, like four-day work weeks that Utah experimented with. Those are a few of the trends that we've seen.

Jonathan: Celinda, in what directions do you see the political climate moving?

Celinda: Some of the trends have already been discussed, the economy and the budget situations, and I have also heard about the current strong distrust in the government—which may be worse now than even in the Watergate era—as well as strong partisanship polarization and the dramatic emergence of the Tea Party. This is not your grandfather's Republican party anymore. A recent poll showed that 80% of the public still think we are in a recession and that a majority of people expect their personal financial situation to get worse, not better, over the next year. So people are extraordinarily tax sensitive and money sensitive.

Those are the trends, but before I see a room of grown people cry, let me tell you that I see great opportunities here as well. One is this economy. The linkage of tourism and economic development with the arts is still very underdeveloped. And also, I would say we are thinking about that linkage too narrowly. The Imagine Nation poll that we did said that creativity, imagination and innovation were critical for competing in the 21st century, critical to the global economy and critical to recruiting talent to states. In a current poll we are doing about recruiting talent, we are talking not only to the executives, but also to their spouses. They are as much a decision maker in whether they move to a state as the executive, and they don't want to move somewhere without culture and good schools.

This is a tough financial time, but frankly people are less interested in "cut, cut, cut" than they are in setting priorities. I think in that priorities debate there are a lot of opportunities for the arts as a strong community builder and as an economic benefit. People are prioritizing K-12. They believe that isn't something that can be delayed; and now we have 74% of Americans who believe that their kids will be worse off than they themselves are, which is astounding. College-educated voters, who have always believed that they could buy their kids' way out of this, now no longer believe they can. Also remember that only 25% of American voters have a college education. It is a very urgent priority with the public that we offer our kids an education that will allow them to succeed and allow them to compete.

People believe that building strong communities is important. They also believe that any three people in America can agree on more than Congress does. Being a place where people come together, where people can come together in new ways not just in their silos, bringing people together in all kinds of ways is very important.

And then women. Women will determine the election in 2012. They are increasingly making the decisions, and men are increasingly admitting that women are making the decisions. Women are really looking for two for one. We are the ones who gather all the receipts to buy computers for the schools at the same time, we are the ones who started to buy green at the grocery store. Women are thinking about where there can be value added.

Jonathan: Let me follow up on that. Are women going to be dominant in the election because they vote more or because they are more numerous?

Celinda: They do vote more and they are more numerous, but they are going to be the deciding factor because right now they are more undecided and they make up their minds later. Men are more partisanly polarized. The prime example is the 2010 elections: men decided to vote Republican in January. Women decided to vote Republican and tipped the vote during the last two weeks of October. Women will be the swing vote, and both parties are competing actively for their votes.

Jonathan: My instinct when I hear that is that the American public does not think that the future is going to be better and that they are looking for a change election. Is that the case? And what does change mean to the different groups?

Celinda: Basically in 2006, 2008 and 2010 people voted for the exact same thing, which is really hard to process. They voted for change and out of their frustration with the economy. In 2012 they are going to vote the exact same way.

As for change and what it means, however, we have a majority of Americans (and two-thirds of women) who that say that the government still has a role to play. They want the economy and community to be stronger, protecting our families and futures, protecting them from economic harm. It is a very expansive notion, but right now change really means getting back on our feet and getting this economy going. Also, Americans right now are really sick and tired of being sick and tired. There is a real collective sadness across the country. People believe that we are losing our preeminent place in the world and collective excellence. I think arts and culture are still a place where they can find excellence in their kids and communities and celebrate them. People are really hungry for that. So, change means problem solving, coming together and getting this economy going. It means moving forward. People really want successes and they believe it will be a long time before we will see any economic successes, so there are other places we can have success and other things that we can do. Again I think that is an interesting place for the arts.

People are looking for solutions, and there are so many interesting currents going on where you can plug in. You [the arts] can't remake the economy, but you can be part of the solution both in the long run with our kids and in the short run with our communities. You can be part of the success. For instance, people don't want to teach to tests; No Child Left Behind has negative ratings. They don't want the next Bill Gates having to study for standardized tests rather than spending time in his garage building something. They believe it takes education and exposure to do that. There are lots of places where you all—being imagination, creativity and community based—can enter in and be one of the success stories.

Jonathan: Andrew, as you look at students in your program and students in other programs, what sense do you get of their political engagement? As they go through their course work, are they looking for guidance about how to be politically engaged as artists and arts administrators? Do you see programs taking a lead in that as an integral role in being a professional?

Andrew: That is a complex question. We are an M.B.A. program, so our students come to us with a passion for arts and arts administration, but what they also want is an immersive experience in business learning. That is the piece that they feel like they have an aptitude for and feel that they can bring. Certainly many of them do engage in the civic process and public process, but we do not have a lot of curriculum devoted to engaging in the civic and political process. So what I am

seeing in my students is that they are now what I call tax-status agnostics. They don't care if an organization is a nonprofit, for-profit, public, community, hybrid, whatever. They have a vision for a better world and a vision for how the part they are interested in might change. They are consuming as much as they can about how money, communities and government work so that when they get out they can use them all as a tool set. Compared to our peer institutions and graduate degree programs, we have less specifically on civic and public policy and more on business and organizational design. But I think at the end of the day, our students care less and less than their predecessors did about whether or not they are a nonprofit professional. Maybe 10-15 years ago we had people who really defined themselves that way, but students now want to make a positive impact regarding arts and culture and don't care as much what sector they fall in.

Jonathan: Lori, tell us a bit about who the Pew Center's clients are and what areas of research you focus in on.

Lori: Our target audience is principally state policymakers and their staff. And of course we have secondary target audiences who have their ear, whether it is the media or other stakeholders.

This morning I heard examples of some state agencies adopting more of a campaign mentality, and I think South Carolina and Minnesota were examples both as a necessity and as an opportunity. A lot of our research supports our advocacy efforts with pre-K education, sentencing and corrections, etc. And one of the things that we've seen that has been interesting is the recognition of the additional advocacy tools that you have in your toolkit that you may not know you have, such as recognizing where you fit into other campaigns that already have traction.

For example, our pre-K program that tries to encourage states to adopt universal pre-K for three and four year olds. This is a tough sell in this financial situation because it involves investment. For a number of years they have partnered with business groups. This is not just about "let's do good for the kids"; what business groups have said is that the current education system isn't delivering the kinds of workers they see needing in the future. So business groups have stood up alongside our pre-K program advocates and research group and said that this is about our economic growth and future business needs to sustain growth. The business groups recognized that pre-K was important to ensuring success for kids both in the short term and long term, and stood up and told their policymakers that universal pre-K served their economic interests. This was very powerful.

Another example that is similar to this is our environmental and climate change work. The military has actually stood up with our advocates on some of this work, because clean energy and climate change are actually a national security issue. You can argue about it all you want, but at the end of the day the military sees it as a national security issue and has worked with us.

I am skipping around a little bit, so let me come back to the research base. One of the pivotal parts that we have seen in our work is the increasing need to show that your work is evidence based, that your policies and positions and everything you do with it is based on solid evidence of effectiveness and results. That does make a difference in dealing with policymakers and special-interest groups like the media and businesses.

Jonathan: Are you seeing areas in state government making the case for being part of the solution, in other words, "Invest in us and see a net in tax revenues and new jobs"? Are you seeing anyone being successful in the discretionary part of the budget?

Lori: I think that that the bottom line is drubbing agencies across state government. General programs are essentially all trying to make the case that they will be helping drive the state's economy from that point forward.

There has been some innovation. Any opportunity to link to your state's tourism or economic development office is helpful. It's also important to be partnering with business groups and getting chambers of commerce to stand up next to you and say, "We care about this not only because it is arts and culture, but also because it is part of our bottom line and the state's growth and fiscal health."

Jonathan: How are you seeing support for tourism at the state level? Is it a little uneven?

Lori: All states are now trying to find what their economic growth drivers are going to be. Tourism is certainly one element, but not the only one. When it comes to attracting businesses, getting them to stay and recruiting new workers to the state, you have got to show how the assets of the state make people not only visit but stay. Going back to what Celinda was saying, you have to show a strong educational system and the attributes of a community that people want to live in. So arts, culture, sustainability and livability are all part of what states are striving for to attract businesses and workers. States usually put a lot of emphasis on tourism, but it also about getting people to stay, both families and businesses.

Jonathan: Andrew, you live in Wisconsin and that state agency took quite a hit this year, losing 70% of its assets. Why did that happen this year?

Andrew: I think that in Wisconsin there was so much change at once that if you ask the average person, even those who love the arts, they may not even know that the agency changed status or budget. It was a fire hose of changes, both in the content of legislation as well as the process by which we believed in making our decisions as a state.

I was out and about during that and I won't tell you what side I was on (although you can probably guess!), but it seemed to me that we decided that we elect people and that is not the end of the conversation. The election itself is not the indicator that you are the executive and can just go make it happen. In fact, there is a process that we came to understand after that, even if we are of different parties, that there is a process of saying, "Okay, you elected me and here is what I think we can do; you've given me this opportunity so let's talk about it." That seemed to stop even before the election, and it may be that there is just a new group of people who have a different understanding of public process.

In Wisconsin it is just tragic. The arts board has been an extraordinary partner moving in all the ways we've been describing—it was supporting education, commerce and entrepreneurship, cultural heritage and sense of purpose and place—doing everything "correctly." And yet they get a 70% cut because of a belief that arts are not what government does, arts are what the private sector does and therefore we have to get as many resources to the private sector as we can and get

it off the docket. At the same time let's put it in tourism, since art must be about serving people from outside the state. The sad part is that there have been so many changes of a colossal nature, particularly to public employee unions and their rights to organize, as well as education, that the cuts to the arts board have largely gone unnoticed.

Celinda: Can I say something about that? We do a lot of work in Wisconsin, especially with the unions, and a very important piece to the conversation here is that voters know that their states are in terrible shape. Unlike at the national level where there is a larger excuse—bad economy and bad politics—at the state level they are more confused about what is causing it.

What we found is that voters can conclude that "this is just a bad situation and everyone is in it and if we have to cut the arts agency, oh well." But what if you let the voters know that this is a set of choices, that it isn't like the weather, that it is a set of choices that were made, a set of priorities? In Wisconsin, when we said that [Governor] Scott Walker didn't just go in and make cuts across the board, that first he gave tax breaks to corporations, then people were much angrier about the choice. Otherwise they were like, "Well our state is in terrible shape and even if I don't like the guy, what are we going to do?"

So one of the things that is really important here is to let the voters in your state know that this doesn't just happen, like the national economy or the weather. We have a set of choices to make and we have to set priorities. The public doesn't want to zero out arts, that goes too far. We need to structure this type of conversation very differently.

Andrew: One other thing related to this point that I'd like to bring up: this phrase "government arts agency." If you think of it, every one of those words is changing. If you think of the word one in the middle, what we thought of "arts" 20 years ago and what we thought should go in the box that government should support, then that is a whole other conference. So let's just think about "government" and "agency." Those terms are really changing right now.

Let's ask what is the government good for, even though many people want to talk about what it is bad at.

And anything called an "agency," as any of you who have studied business can attest, is one of the biggest, most complex elements of business leadership. An "agent" is someone you authorize to make decisions on your behalf. And if you don't act in the best interest of your client, you get your license revoked. This is why realtors are so heavily regulated. I heard in one of the rooms today the question, "What would your public want you to do five years down the line?" The way each of you interpreted "your public" was interesting. Some of you interpreted your public as the people who receive the grants, others the legislators because they have been elected to represent the public, and another group see themselves serving the public at large. This idea of who you are an agent for to me seems like an incredibly vexing question.

Celinda: One thing I say to all of my political canvases is that people have many contradictory views and deeply resent having them pointed out to them. What people are really furious about is politics, not government, and thy feel that politics has completely captured government. That is not to understate the mistrust, but I think

it is a very different solution and strategy when you realize that what the public is mad at is that government doesn't serve the people anymore—it serves special interests, it serves the lobbyists, it serves the people who fund campaigns. All decisions are constantly influenced by the political process. That you could send the best person to Washington and they get captured in five minutes, like a Venus's fly trap. That is an important distinction. People are very antipolitics and feel that politics and government have become completely intertwined. The intensity of their feelings is as much about politics as it is about government.

Jonathan: We have the experience [as state arts agencies] of having our budgets move cyclically with the economy. In the 1990s when the economy was good, our budgets doubled overall; when the money was available our budgets grew faster than state government. Our advocacy rationales were more than competitive. I wonder if in the future there will be some independence between the economy and people's thoughts about government. As people rethink politics and government now, is this going to be cyclical the way the economy is, or is it like we are looking at a philosophical change that is going to last a generation?

Celinda: The interesting thing is that the Gen Y'ers out there are some of the biggest believers in government. Even in that youthful cohort there is a difference in beliefs, although no one feels like the government is serving them well today. Gen X'ers, on the other hand, are some of the most skeptical about government. In terms of where we are headed, we have embedded behind the baby boomers two generational cohorts that have differing views of government. I don't know if it will pick up on the economy or whether there is permanent change.

Lori: if I could read that crystal ball I would be making a lot more money. Revenues are seeing a bit of an uptick, but aren't expected to get back to prerecession levels until 2014—and that is just prerecession levels. Meanwhile, health care costs and other costs are just escalating. I think that most people accept that as normal now.

I want to pick up on a couple of other threads. There are transformative changes that are happening outside of the fiscal recession, maybe they are now being driven by it, but they started apart from that. For example, the change from manufacturing to a knowledge based economy. That's an interesting example to me of the breakdown of the is-government-good-or-is-government-bad debate, because basically to compete in that global economy and move the knowledge, you have to have government working with business in the private sector. It can't be either-or. So when we think about it that way, state government policies and agencies don't necessarily have to ride on fiscal ups and downs. They are embedded in the notion that to drive economic growth it has to be government and private sector partnerships.

To get back to some of our Pew Center on the States campaigns, we are seeing a lot of effort to try and imbue those issues into states' long-term economic growth plans. Taking the long view, and looking at state economic development in particular, a big trend for us is how government and the private sector are working together, and getting out of the notion that government agencies are solely dependent on a state's fiscal health.

Jonathan: Does the public respond differently when they see a public-private partnership than when they see a government doing something?

Celinda: Massively. The word *partnership* right now is testing very, very well, period. It has a certain value proposition to it. It is interesting; I think it's kind of a maturing of thought.

We had this battle of, "We're going to run government more like a business" or "Government should be run like government and not like a business." But voters now think it has to be some of both. You can't just run government like a business; there is a higher value than just making money.

In the privatization polling we've done, how people rank the services they would privatize is interesting. For instance, they would privatize the DMV in a minute. But they think it would be horrible to privatize things like distribution of road control, because then you might bring in people's private views to a public service that should be provided. They think private means "profit making." But they do like this partnership idea because they think it will be the best of both worlds.

Lori: Can I give one example that I think shows that the private sector's interest in the bottom line is not necessarily a bad thing for government? We do work in the field of elections, trying to help states' voter registration systems and the information to voters around elections. We've had a number of state elections agencies working with Google, whereby Google designed a platform where if you are a voter with an election coming up you can simply type into Google, "Where is my precinct?" and what will pop up is where your precinct is, what's on the ballot, who's on the ballot and where you go vote. In this partnership, Google wins because it brings more people to their platform. Voters win because it's now what we expect, one click and you get the info you need. And states win, too. I think there are a lot of similar examples out there where it doesn't have to be an either-or. From our perspective, that is where a lot of the most intriguing work is happening.

Andrew: I keep coming back to the word "government." And "government support of the arts" is such an odd phrase. It isn't government supporting the arts as much as it is government supporting those things that are important to the citizens who elected it. The government itself is a partnership, it is the way we decide the things we need to decide together. I think the other thing to flag here is that we think we have nonprofit, private and government sectors and we think we can attribute certain things to each of those, but in fact they are almost entirely permeable. I have friends who always correct me when I start to sound like nonprofits are the only companies that think about civic outcomes. To assume that each of those sectors has a core or exclusive claim is a problem. I haven't seen the argument yet, and maybe I am not looking in the right places, but what do we think government is? We are so angry at it, but what do we think it is? It is what we decided, and if we don't like it maybe we should decide in a different way. The idea that it is a different entity I think is just an incorrect assumption.

Jonathan: What big ideas did you hear in this morning's session that sound like, going forward, could be the most useful?

Celinda: Let me say one thing that I think was missing. There is too little focus on the children's nexus. Even in tough financial times, people are willing to do things for their kids. When I was in Pat Williams's office, he had Robert Mapplethorpe photos mailed to every voter in his state. Happily those photos had been preceded by his son's Christmas cards that were quite abstract. And those had an enormous pull with

voters; they thought, "Well somebody's kid did the Mapplethorpe photos; I just don't want my kids to see them."

Jonathan: That played out in the next reauthorization of the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts], because it led to the provision that if the budget went over $176 million, half of that money would go to arts education.

Celinda: So I think the kids' piece is a really underutilized brand. Also, people don't want to micromanage. Political candidates want to micromanage what is going on in the classroom and what is going on where, but most people aren't like that. They are like, "make good things happen everywhere" and "maybe we'll keep some kids in school and create the next Bill Gates or Einstein."

Jonathan: Andrew, things you heard or didn't hear?

Andrew: Well I can't tell you all the things I didn't hear. I didn't hear anyone talking about squirrels, for example. Of the two things that kept grabbing me, the first was this agency thing. There didn't seem to be agreement and maybe there doesn't have to be. The other was a lack of clarity about who it is that you work for. I don't think there is a right answer to that. I am completely on board if you say, "I work for cultural professionals in my field, because they are best positioned to deliver to the members of their community effectively and with transparency"; or, "I am responsible to my legislators because they have been elected by the community to represent them." And another group wanted direct access to the people and to serve them that way. I think all three are beautiful things to do, but it strikes me that sometimes the ball is shifting so fast that staff or the governing authority or your community may not be completely clear about this.

Jonathan: Perhaps equally practical, if less beautiful, is serving the people who bring in the votes for you.

Andrew: Yeah, being an agent of your own survival. But there also comes a time in many agencies where they become less about the mission and more about the means. For instance, a group could be starting as an enthusiastic group about classical music but become more interested in maintaining a full-time contract with a symphony orchestra. If we happen to get some audience members that's great, but its more about keeping a set of 80 professional musicians.

The other thing I noticed in an exercise where they were asked, "What would you do if you only had three staff members, an office and half a million bucks?" and one person said, "Great, that's just what we have now," and another said, "It would be great to have three staff members." But one of the participants said, "Get rid of the office." We asked, "Why do we have an office when we can scatter those people around the state or have them work from home?" It seems like a misallocation of limited funds.

And then we discussed who those three people were. It was pretty clear that they all had to be extraordinary and engage legislators, they couldn't be some good and some bad ones. Every one of them had to be strong. Someone said, "One is a convener, one a scholar and one is an implementer." So breaking out of those traditional structures where you have a grants manager and public policy advocacy person, and rather look at the core functions of the agency and make sure that we have a person on each one.

Lori: By the way, Andrew, we had an incredible conversation about squirrels in our room. But I think one of the most inspiring things I heard is the notion that you can present yourself as part of the core of almost every other effort going on in the state. The benefit of what you do in the arts is that you can cut it at almost any angle and fit yourself into the priorities of the state. Instead of always saying, "Please support arts and culture," you have enormous range to persuade people to fund you. Kids, work-force training and development, technology, etc., we could go on and on. The opportunities for you to insert yourself into any other conversation going on about funding or economic development or almost anything else are endless. You don't have to give up "arts and culture are important," but it seems to me that, based on what you have to offer and what states are looking for, you can present yourself as an essential component of all of these other areas.

Celinda: One of the interesting things I caught was different sets of campaigns. One example I heard was the tobacco tax campaign, where they worked churches and unions, whereas others worked the legislature. So I think the question that goes into the next session is, "What campaign are you running and how does that determine your audience?"

Jonathan: Questions from the audience?

Tom Birch (NASAA legislative counsel): Just to underscore the idea about being in the core function of government: Kansas Governor Brownback [who eliminated fiscal year 2012 funding for the Kansas Arts Commission] said that Kansas was getting rid of the arts because is not a core function of government like education and social services. But we are at the core of all those functions, and it is a strong way for us to talk about where we are in public policy. I am intrigued about the phrase *public support for the arts.* Is that the phrase we want to use? Are we really asking for public support for the arts, or ways in which public support makes the arts accessible and available? It is that public dollar that is there to support the public's use of the arts, the public's desire for the arts. I think that phrase works against us. It implies public support for that building that is the museum up the hill.

Celinda: I would challenge you even more than that. What we found in the Imagine Nation work was that it didn't work very well to talk about public support for the arts. What we found was that talking about values like imagination, creativity and innovation worked. That made people much more expansive and willing to draw links to the 21st-century conversation about the community you want to live in and quality of life. I don't think we have all the language, but I want to challenge you to say that the arts and culture are the means, and that the language we want to use is more values-oriented and expansive.

Andrew: There is a great Theodore Levin marketing phrase, "People don't want a quarter-inch drill, they want a quarter-inch hole." You don't sell them the drill, you sell them the outcome. I would agree with Celinda that support for the arts is like support for a drill. What is the outcome that I might get that I might not get otherwise? I think *government support for the arts,* all three of those words are losers and loss leaders. We need to find better ones to change the core of what we do.

Lori: Our sense from our work is that there is no one sentence or expression. More to the point, milk every sentence you have. Fundamentally it is about values, but

there is nothing wrong with tactically using sentences that support what you do, but make clear to other audiences what they get out of it. It is a good thing to say, here is how we can help: bring in workers, bring in businesses and so forth. Don't feel that you have to choose one or the other.

Cinda Holt (business development specialist, Montana Arts Council): I have a question for Celinda. Last week at Grantmakers in the Arts, we heard an interesting presentation on the "browning" of America. One statement was that by the next presidential election there will be 20 million Hispanic voters. My question is, how does that relate to your women majority?

Celinda: We have now majority minority states, but they are not necessarily majority minority electorates, and one of the reason is that the Latino population turns out at lower rates. That is one of the areas that is lagging behind. But, the Latino vote is one of the fastest growing votes and will be a major determinate over the next 10 years in a lot of places.

Jonathan: Do you have a sense of how that affects the arts?

Celinda: In the little work that we have done, the Latino population does seem to approach this differently, but the education/youth nexus is a really strong nexus. The other thing is that the browning of America also includes other cultural groups, such as the Asian-American population, which is also growing very fast. One of the fastest growing uses of the Internet is Asian-Americans, Latino-Americans, etc., looking for community cultural events on-line, especially so that they can help keep their kids from forgetting where they came from. That is a whole area that is underutilized as far as running a campaign.

Sue Gens (executive director, Minnesota State Arts Board): We had a three-week government shutdown; we all hung "Gone Fishing" signs on our doors, because our Democratic governor and Republican bicameral legislature couldn't reach an agreement on our budget. We also have a presidential candidate in our state, one of whose slogans is that she will not compromise. Am I hypersensitive or is the word *compromise* a dirty word? Are you seeing polling that says that the public doesn't see compromise as the thing to do in government?

Celinda: The dilemma is that we have increasing polarization at the ends of each party, but the middle really wants to compromise. If you look at Republican or Democratic primary voters, they do not want compromise. But if you look at the general election, their number-one value is compromise. And that is why our system is really fracturing right now, because you get nominated for not being a compromiser, but you get elected for compromising. So the answer to your question is that it depends on who you are talking to.

Jeff Rich (chair, Ohio Arts Council): Gore Vidal said, "The right things get done for the wrong reasons." We were faced with the possibility of a very conservative legislature and governor and were concerned about potential cuts. We ended up with a 30% increase in funding. We did it through retail politics. We threw fund-raisers and let the people who were elected or wanted to get elected know that the only reason that we were throwing this fund-raiser was because we believe in public support of the arts. We have term limits in our state and you don't have time to train them or teach them, you only have time to buy them. And you buy them by throwing fund-raisers.

Celinda: I totally agree, sadly. The other thing I'd say is that every arts agency in their spare time should be taking those FEC [Federal Election Commission] and contribution lists of candidates and matching them against contributors to the arts, and ensuring that those who are writing that check anyway make sure that their candidates know that they support the arts. I think that is a good first step in this linking. On a further note, I think that is absolutely the story in our country's political system, and anyone who cares about any outcomes in government should be for campaign finance reform. If we don't get at this thing it is going to be a train wreck. Buy them now, but make a system where you don't need to buy them 10 years from now.

Elaine Mariner (executive director, Colorado Creative Industries): Women electeds at all levels seem more likely to understand public investment in community, whether it is arts or education or whatever. But it seems to me that the rate of women running for office is down, so I was just wondering what your perspective is on this?

Celinda: The Center for Women in Politics has some very interesting research. Women used to support investment, especially in education. The Republican party in particular has been pretty bad about nominating women, but the momma grizzlies in the Tea Party have changed that. The Tea Party surprisingly has not been bad about nominating women at all. At the same time we have lost the Democratic women. Their numbers were down everywhere. We need to get more women in the pipeline.

There are three big differences between men and women running. First, for men, someone along the way has inevitably said, "Hey you should run for office." Women by and large do not have that. So all of us should pick a woman in the arts community and say that to them. All of you women here should also think about running. Second, women think they need training and men do not. Tell the women that they do not need as much training as they think. And the third thing is women raise money in smaller contributions.

Jonathan: Our time for this session is coming to a close. I want to thank all of our panelists for being with us today. We really appreciate your perspectives and your participation in our consideration of state arts agency change. This has been a valuable dialogue about the value of the arts and how best to adapt to our changing environment, and I encourage everyone in the room to keep this conversation going throughout the rest of this institute and when you arrive back home.