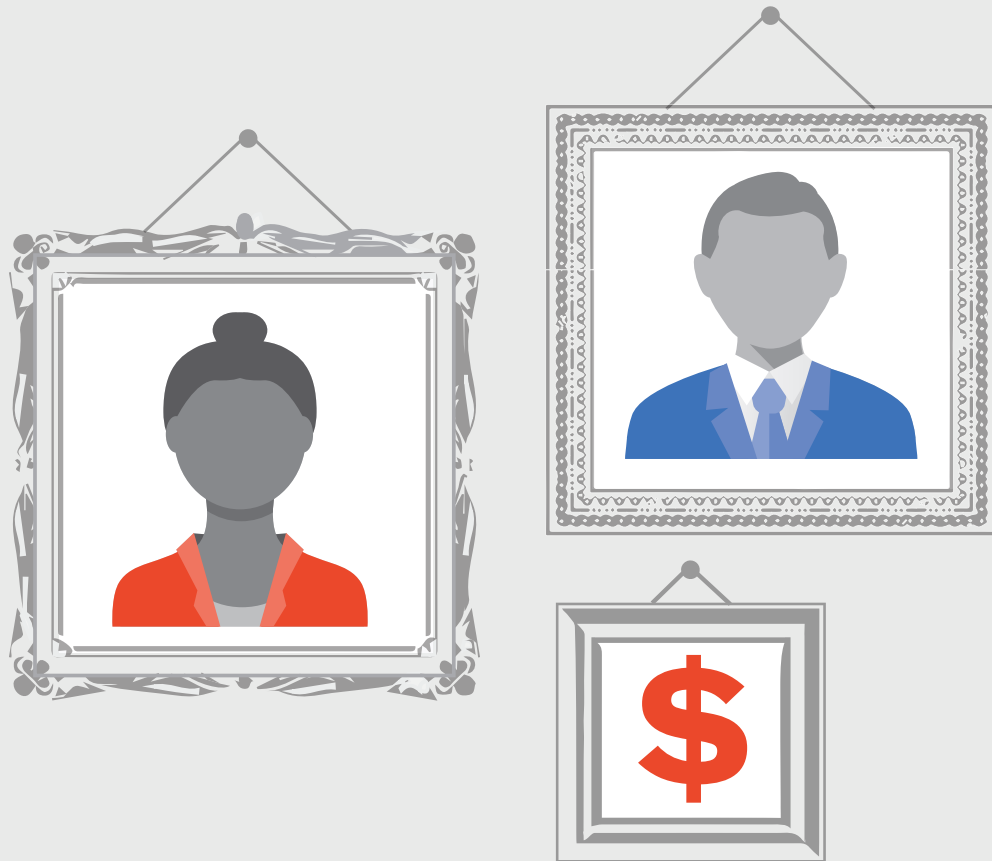


The Ongoing Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships



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Summary of Findings

AAMD's members are committed to fostering diversity—in their governing authorities and staff, among the individuals within or entering into the art museum profession, in the perspectives reflected in their museums' collections and programs, and in the range of audiences they serve.

— Excerpt from the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) Statement of Values

Art reflects and shapes society. AAMD members, who are the directors of the leading visual arts institutions in North America, play a critical and influential role as conduits between the great art housed in their museums and their communities.

In a 2014 report, AAMD and the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR) found that a gender gap existed in art museum directorships. We found that women held less than half of directorships, that the average female director's salary lagged behind that of the average male director, and that these phenomena were most persistent in the largest museums. Three years later, despite press attention and field-wide dialogue on the topic, the gender gap persists, although trends showing incremental gains in some areas of pay and employment representation deserve recognition.

We first present results from the most recent year. The data collected from museums in 2016 reveal these findings on gender representation and salary equity related to operating budget size:

- There are clear disparities in gender representation depending on operating budget size. The majority of museums with budgets of less than \$15 million are run by a female rather than male director, whereas the reverse is true for museums with budgets of \$15 million or more. For this second cohort of larger museums, female representation decreases as budget size increases.
- In both larger and smaller museums, women are at a salary disadvantage in absolute dollars, with the gap most exaggerated at the largest institutions. And, while there are exceptions in the \$6 million to \$15 million range, female directors tend to have lower salaries than their male counterparts if we consider compensation relative to operating budget.

In addition to operating budget size, museum type is another factor that we explored as having potential impact on the representation and salary differentials noted above. Our findings are as follows:

- The prevalence of female directors is tied to museum type, which is also tied to average budget size. Museum types vary considerably in their average annual operating budget. With the exception of Single Artist museums, the museum types with lower average budget size tend to be led by women more so than men, and those with larger budgets have a greater tendency to be run by men rather than women. Therefore, museum type does not shed much more light on differences related to gender representation in museum directorships than does our exploration of budget size.

- Museum types do vary in the extent of their gap in salary equity between female and male directors, with the ranking of the gap expanse not entirely in line with the ranking by budget size. In other words, some museum types with higher average budget have less of a salary gap between female and male directors than some museums with lower average budget size. On this measure, museum type is a factor that helps us understand the salary dynamics at play.

To get a clear sense of trends, we followed the same set of museums over time and looked at gender representation and salary equity for larger versus smaller museums. This trend analysis revealed these findings:

- While men still outnumber women, women have made employment gains at these museums. In 2013, 43% of directorships were held by women, whereas this figure increased to 48% by 2016.
- At museums with operating budgets of \$15 million or more, female directors earned 75 cents on average for every dollar earned by male directors in 2016: an improvement from three years ago, when women earned only 70 cents per one dollar earned by a man. Here the trend is a narrowing of the pay gap, but there is still considerable distance to go before the gap is closed. For the other three quarters of member museums with budgets of less than \$15 million, female directors on average earned 98 cents for every dollar that male directors earned in 2016. This represents a reversal from three years ago when female directors at these same museums earned an average of \$1.01 for every dollar earned by a male director.

These phenomena and other influences were probed through interviews with executive search consultants who work with art museums and with several female art museum directors. The insights that emerged from these interviews enhance further understanding of the historical and ongoing trends. Overall, our interviewees observed that the historical bias towards men as art museum directors has been rapidly changing over the past five-to-ten years. This change has been accomplished through the cultural shifts both within museums and in broader society, and with the emergence of new generations of leaders. The search consultants and directors drew attention to both institutional and individual barriers to equality, but all expressed optimism that the fast pace of change will persist, and that advances will continue to be made towards equity.

Introduction and Context

A key tenet of January 2017's Women's March on Washington states, "We will not rest until women have parity and equity at all levels of leadership in society."¹ Across many sectors in the United States, women are underrepresented in leadership and receive comparably less compensation than their male counterparts. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that women have made advances in workforce participation and educational attainment in the last four decades, and women now hold 52% of management and professional positions, but that women's pay still lags behind that of men: the median pay of women was 83% of that of men in 2014.² In government, women only held 19.6% of the seats in Congress in 2016.³ In the for-profit sector, only 21 Fortune 500 companies were led by a female CEO in 2016, a meager 4.2%.⁴ At nonprofits, the *GuideStar 2016 Nonprofit Compensation Report* cites that median pay for female CEOs continues to lag behind that of men, with the gap widening as budget size increases. In addition, less than 50% of CEOs are female at nonprofits with operating budget categories above \$1 million. At the largest nonprofits, those with budgets of over \$50 million, women only hold 20% of CEO positions.⁵

A 2016 report by The American Association of University Women (AAUW) notes that, due in large part to advances in women's education and workforce participation and deceleration in the rate of men's wage gains, the pay gap between men and women has narrowed since 1960. Should the rate of change observed since 1960 remain constant, the authors estimate women to achieve pay equity with men in 2059. However, if the rate of change diminishes, as seen in 2001, pay equity for women would not be reached until 2152.⁶ These authors found that additional education does not remove the effects of the gender pay gap. In fact, women holding advanced degrees in 2015 held median weekly earnings that were 74% of men's weekly earnings, while women who had less than a high-school diploma earned 80% of what men earned.⁷

Can museums lead the way to improved gender equity? A study by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation found that art museum staff have become 60% female over the past decade, which could ostensibly provide a 'pipeline' of qualified women candidates for leadership roles.⁸ The American Alliance of Museums' (AAM's) *2014 National Comparative Museum Salary Study*, which used different metrics, shows that

1 Women's March on Washington website, Accessed 21 January 2017: <https://www.womensmarch.com/mission/>

2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," *BLS Reports: Report 1040*, December 2015. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/archive/women-in-the-labor-force-a-databook-2015.pdf>

3 In 2016, women held only 19.6% of the seats in congress (20/100 senate, 85/435 house). "Women in the U.S. Congress 2016," *Center for American Women and Politics*. Accessed 20 January 2017 <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-us-congress-2016>

4 Zarya, Valentina, "The Percentage of Female CEOs in the Fortune 500 Drops to 4%," *Fortune.com*, last modified 7 June 2016. Accessed 21 January 2017: <http://fortune.com/2016/06/06/women-ceos-fortune-500-2016/>

5 *2016 GuideStar Nonprofit Compensation Report*, Williamsburg, VA: GuideStar USA, September 2016.

6 Hill, Catherine. *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap*. The American Association University Women. Fall 2016 ed. Accessed 27 January 2017 http://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth

7 *ibid.*

8 Schonfeld, Roger, Mariët Westermann, and Liam Sweeney. *Report: Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey*. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2015.

55.6% (down from 57.2% in 2012) of presidents/CEOs/directors are female, yet women directors earn 71 cents for each dollar earned by male directors, calculated from the medians.⁹

Our research seeks a greater understanding of how art museums, a segment of the overall museum field, fit into this picture. Through a combination of survey analysis and interviews, we examined the gender gap in art museum directorships and factors that influence it. Following the research findings, we will also introduce potential resources and considerations from other industries, and finally suggest some areas for further research in the conclusion.

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Research Findings

SURVEY ANALYSIS:

What is the current state of women in art museum directorships? What are some factors that may drive the gender gap?

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) conducted a survey of its members in 2016 and received 210 responses. The data collected included the institution's operating budget, the institution director's (or top official's) salary, the director's gender, and the museum type (e.g., encyclopedic, contemporary, etc.). The salary information provided was self-reported and may not represent total compensation from all sources. Findings in this section are drawn from survey responses.

Of the 210 AAMD director survey responses, 100 directors were female: women held 47.6% of art museum directorships. On average, female directors earned 73 cents for every dollar that male directors earned.¹⁰

This leadership and pay gap is better understood when museums are segmented into categories based on their operating budgets. The 2016 figures indicate clear gender disparities that vary with budget size. The first area of discrepancy is in gender representation. The majority of museums with annual budgets of less than \$15 million—54 %—are run by a female rather than male director. In fact, the sub-segments

9 American Alliance of Museums and New Knowledge Organization Ltd. *2014 National Comparative Museum Salary Survey*. Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums, 2014.

10 The same observation that female directors earn less on average surfaces when using median salary (rather than mean salary): women earn 81 cents for every dollar that men earn.

where women hold the majority of directorships are all found in museums with budgets less than \$15 million (see Table 1). By contrast, 70% of museums with annual budgets of \$15 million or more are run by a male director, with relative female representation decreasing as budget size increases. In fact, male directors run 12 of the 13 largest budget museums.

To compare the second area of discrepancy—gender equity in pay—across museums of various sizes, we used two key measures: 1) absolute salary dollars, and 2) salary as a percent of operating budget. As an example of the latter metric, a salary of \$150,000 on a \$15 million budget would be 1% of operating budget.

TABLE 1

Art Museum Director Characteristics By Museum Operating Budget, 2016

MUSEUM OPERATING BUDGET	# OF MUSEUMS	% FEMALE DIRECTORS	AVERAGE SALARY AS PERCENTAGE OF OPERATING BUDGET			
			ALL	MALE	FEMALE	PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE, FEMALE RELATIVE TO MALE
\$100 million +	4	0%	0.4%	0.4%	N/A	N/A
\$45–\$100 million	9	11%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	-0.1%
\$30–\$45 million	11	27%	1.4%	1.5%	1.1%	-0.4%
\$20–\$30 million	15	33%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%
\$15–\$20 million	17	47%	2.1%	2.4%	1.7%	-0.7%
\$10–\$15 million	20	55%	2.4%	2.2%	2.7%	0.5%
\$6–\$10 million	37	49%	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%	0.1%
\$4–\$6 million	28	54%	4.2%	4.5%	3.9%	-0.6%
\$2–\$4 million	60	55%	5.6%	6.0%	5.4%	-0.6%
\$1–\$2 million	7	57%	9.5%	11.3%	8.1%	-3.2%
Under \$1 million	2	*	*	*	*	*

Note: (*) not reported due to low sample size; N/A = not applicable since there were no female directors in this category

In both larger and smaller museums, women are at a salary disadvantage in absolute dollars, with the gap most exaggerated at the largest institutions (not shown in Table 1). At museums with budgets under \$15 million, female directors earned 96 cents for every one dollar their male counterparts earned. This figure drops to 71 cents earned by a female director for every dollar earned by a male director in museums with budgets of \$15 million or more. The wider gap for the largest museums is influenced by the fact that female representation decreases as budget size increases. This leads us to examine salary equity another way: salary relative to budget.

When salaries are examined as a percent of operating expenses, we find that female and male directors are largely on par, varying less than one percentage point from one another: women’s salaries as a percent of budget are between 0.7 percentage points below to 0.5 percentage points above men’s salaries except at museums in the \$1 million to \$2 million budget range where females fare worse, and in museums with budgets over \$100 million where females are not represented (see Table 1). Female directors are actually at a slight salary advantage on this measure in museums with operating budgets between \$6 million and \$15 million, but their salaries are somewhat below those of their male counterparts as a percent of operating budget at museums with operating expenses below \$6 million, or \$15 million or more.

In summary, the survey data show that women predominantly occupy director positions of museums characterized by lower operating expenses and, while there are exceptions in the \$6 million to \$15 million range on the measure of salary relative to operating budget, female directors tend to have lower salaries than their male counterparts.

This begs the question: **What factors beyond museum budget size can help us understand the dynamics that influence hiring and pay, and are there differences in these factors across gender?** An example of another factor is museum type, which reveals tendencies toward women holding director positions in specialized museums. In particular, women dominate directorship roles in College/University museums as well as Culturally Specific institutions.

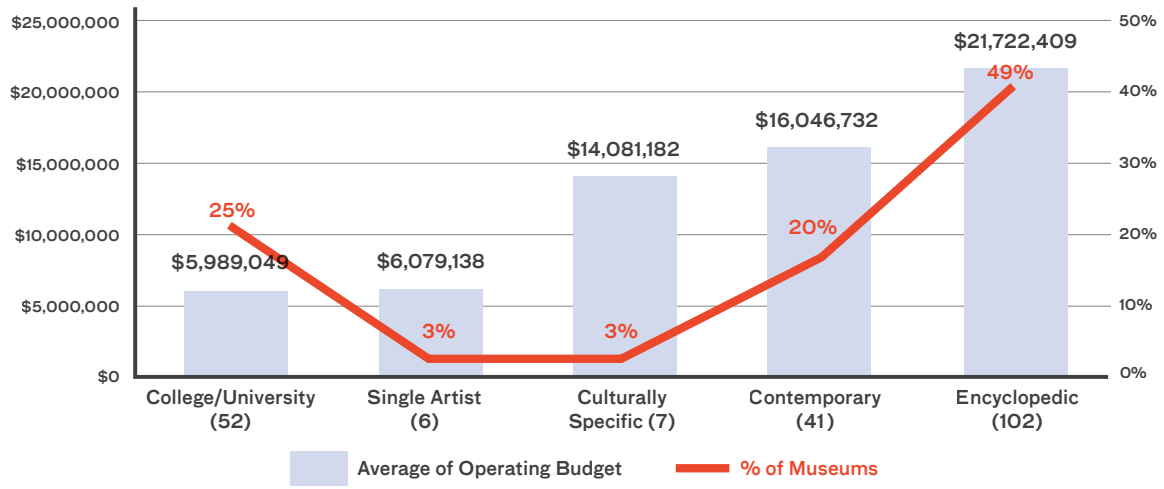
The survey captured six different main museum types: College/University, Contemporary, Culturally Specific, Encyclopedic, Single Artist, and Single Medium. The average operating budgets of Contemporary and Encyclopedic are above \$15 million (see Figure 1), with Encyclopedic holding the largest average operating budget and accounting for almost half of museums surveyed: 49%. Contemporary museums were next in operating budget size and accounted for 20% of museums. (We exclude Single Medium museums from the rest of the analyses since the sample size of two is too small to be useful for drawing inferences). Three museum types have an average operating budget below \$15 million: Culturally Specific, accounting for 3% of museums; Single Artist, 3%; and College/University, 25%.

Women hold the majority of directorships in two museum types (see Figure 2): female directors can be found at 60% of College/University museums and 57% of Culturally Specific museums. Culturally Specific museums come closest to gender parity in salary, where women earn 91 cents for every dollar earned by men (see Figure 3). The gender gap in salary is slightly broader for College/University museums, with 85 cents earned by females for every dollar earned by males, despite the fact that more women run College/University museums than men.

Men hold the majority of directorships in the remaining three museum types (see Figure 2): male directors lead 54% of Contemporary museums, 59% of Encyclopedic museums, and 67% of Single Artist museums. Female directors earn 82 cents on each one dollar earned by a male director in Contemporary museums (see Figure 3). The gap widens to 78 cents on the dollar for women who lead Single Artist museums. The biggest pay disparity can be found in Encyclopedic museums, where female directors average only 69 cents for every dollar earned by a male colleague. It is interesting to note that salaries for both men and women tend to be higher for directors of Contemporary museums than for those of Encyclopedic museums, even though the organizations they run tend to have a comparatively smaller average operating budget (see Figures 1 and 3).

FIGURE 1

Average Operating Budget and Percentage of Museums by Museum Type 2016



Note: The number of museums per category can be found in parentheses following the Museum Type on the x-axis.

FIGURE 2

Gender Percentage of Directorships by Museum Type 2016

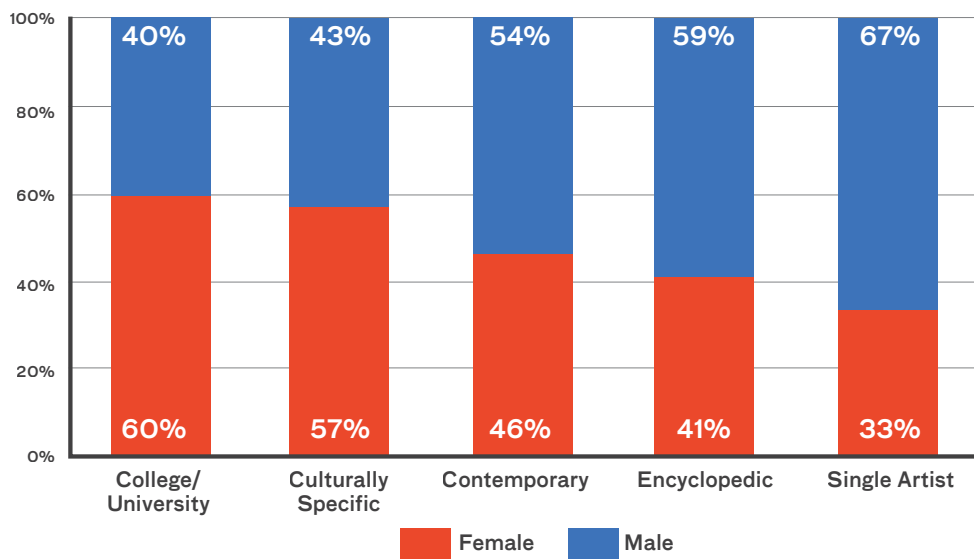
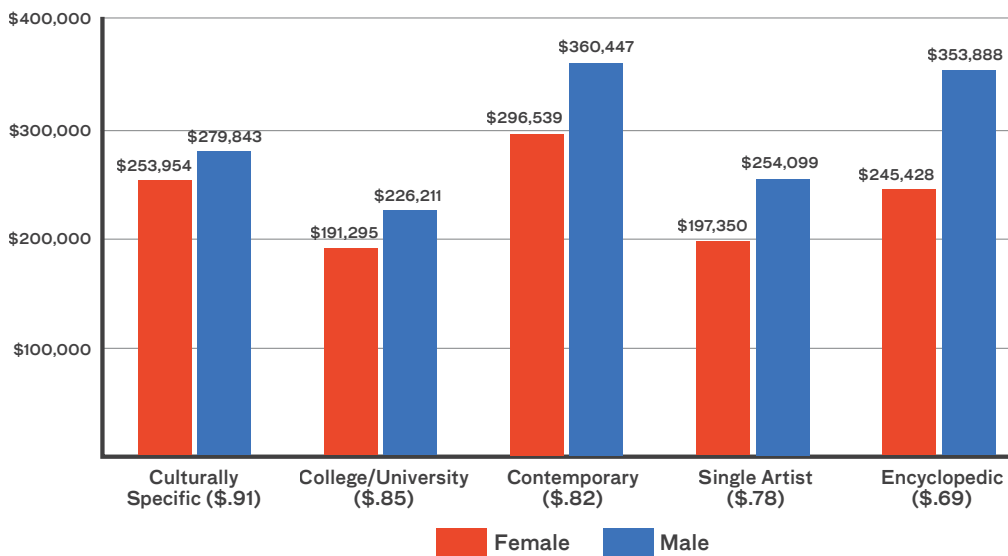


FIGURE 3

Average Salary and Female/Male Salary Gap* by Museum Type, 2016



*The amount that a female director earns per one dollar that a male counterpart earns can be found in parentheses following the Museum Type on the x-axis.

What has changed for women in art museum directorships over the past three years?

Of the 210 respondents to the 2016 survey, 181 also participated in the 2013 survey. In this section we report only on those museums for which we have survey data for both years. Following the same set of art museums over time allows us to avoid skewed results that may occur when art museums with exceptional activity provided data in one year but not the other. Total operating expenses increased 13.5% for these museums while director salaries rose a more modest 10.5%. Both increases far outpaced inflation for the same period, which was 3%.¹¹

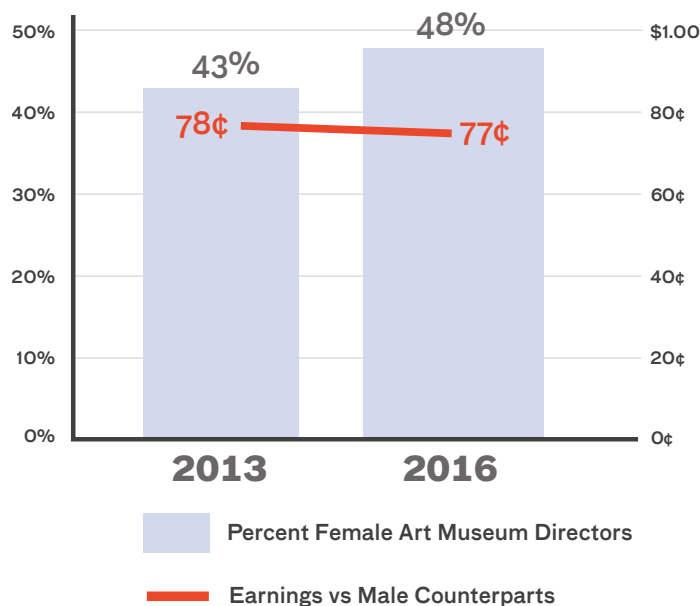
While men still outnumber women, women have made employment gains at these museums. In 2013, 43% of directorships were held by women whereas this figure grew to 48% in 2016. The increase in female directorships occurred in Encyclopedic, Contemporary, and College/University museums that were almost exclusively in the cohort of smaller organizations.¹² 30 museums experienced a change in top leadership. In 15 cases a male director succeeded a male director and in two cases a female succeeded a female.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Accessed 21 January, 2017: https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

¹² While the average operating budget of Encyclopedic and Contemporary art museums is above \$15 million, there are museums in both categories with much lower (as well as much higher) annual expenses.

Two museums with budgets under \$15 million appointed a male director to replace a female director. 11 museums now have female rather than male leadership, 10 of which have a budget under \$15 million.

FIGURE 4
Earnings and Percent Female
Directors 2013 vs 2016



Women have not made much progress overall in terms salary equity. In 2013, female directors at these museums earned 78 cents for every dollar earned by a male director. This slipped slightly to 77 cents by 2016. The downward shift is reflected in the fact that female directors made overall salary gains of 10.9%, while male directors saw an average salary increase of 12.6% over the three-year period.

What has changed for women in art museum directorships at these institutions over the past three years differed for the largest cohort of museums and the remaining three-quarters of museums with smaller operating budgets.

Larger Museums. The pay gap for female directors at the largest institutions persists, but it shrank over time. In 2013, female

directors at these museums earned 70 cents for every dollar earned by a male director, closing the gap to 75 cents by 2016. Male-to-male director turnover resulted in higher salaries paid to the new person at four out of six of the largest museums. Even so, salaries for male directors rose 5.8% over time, while those of female directors—all but one of whom held the position in both survey years—rose 13.1%. The large museums led by females had lower average budget size than those led by males, but salaries for female directors were slightly higher as a percentage of operating budget: female’s salaries were the equivalent of 1.4% of total operating expenses in 2016, while those for male directors were 1.0%. The salary growth for female directors makes sense when operating budget growth is taken into consideration. Female directors of the largest museums grew their organizations’ budgets by over 18% from 2013 to 2016, while budget growth for museums run by male directors increased 5%.

Smaller Museums. There is quite a different story for female directors at museums with operating budgets under \$15 million. The pay gap for female directors widened over time at these museums. Female directors gained positions as described above but lost their advantage on comparable salary, earning \$1.01 in 2013 for every dollar earned by a male director and only 98 cents per dollar earned by a male director in 2016. At these museums, salaries for male directors rose an average of 10% over time while those of female directors increased 6.8%. Male and female director salaries at these museums both accounted for roughly 3.7% of total expenses in 2016. As was the case with the largest organizations, female directors tend to

oversee museums with a smaller average budget size than those run by men. In contrast to the trend for larger museums, budget growth for smaller museums run by male directors increased at a more robust rate than those run by females: 6% and 4%, respectively. Half of the museums that hired a female to replace a male director paid a higher salary to the new director than to the predecessor, and half paid a lower salary.

Like other recent reports concerning gender pay disparity, these results show less progress on closing the gender gap than desired, yet the data provide vital utility in demonstrating incremental gains and losses. To gain insights into these trends, we spoke with female executive search consultants and museum directors. Their observations and contributions to our understanding of these issues are shared in the section that follows.

INTERVIEWS WITH FEMALE MUSEUM DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTANTS WHO WORK WITH ART MUSEUMS:

What are current major barriers faced by women becoming directors at art museums? Why might women candidates opt out of participation in director searches at greater rates than men? What, if any, are the current trends you have observed with regard to women becoming directors in certain museum types? Are you optimistic about the progress toward gender pay/representation equity?

Every executive search consultant and museum director interviewed has at least 15 years of experience in her respective role. While all interviewees agreed that their observations can provide valuable insight and context into the discussion of gender inequity within art museums, all applied caveats to their remarks, flagging the nebulous nature of blanket statements and expressing reluctance to perpetuate stereotypes. They acknowledged that many of their comments are gross generalizations, and emphasized the importance of recognizing their observations as such.

Barriers and Preferences

As in the last report, the discussion with the interviewees referenced two major barriers in achieving women's equality in art museum directorships: internal or personal factors, and external or institutional factors. Interviewees placed varying emphasis on the factors, and discussion of each variable was based on personal experience or observations. When addressing the external factors, there was a general focus on board and staff gender composition, tendencies, and readiness to accept and support change. As for internal factors, most interviewees acknowledged typical, preconceived notions of candidate assertiveness or confidence, but strongly emphasized the need to reevaluate definitions and criteria of ambition and success. A common sentiment among the interviewees was that perhaps traditional notions of aspiration and the conventional construct of achievement are too limiting to fully, and accurately, describe women as leaders within the art museum field.

Many of the interviewees, particularly the search consultants, referenced a recent trend of high turnover in art museum directorships, which they credited with potentially heralding significant shifts among leadership and management norms within art museums. More than one search consultant suggested that the field is experiencing a period of enormous generational shift. Longtime directors are leaving their posts and retiring, and many of the board members, who were generational peers to those directors and matured alongside them, are in the position of trying to find a new director. The consultants noted that these inevitable prospects of transition engender a general desire and openness for change.

But challenges arise, which can translate into environmental or institutional barriers women confront when vying for top leadership roles. Many of these barriers were attributed to the decision-making habits of museum boards. To understand how to prepare an organization for a change, one consultant noted that it is important to look at factors that inform board decision-making, such as generational tendencies, patterns of philanthropy, and simply where the money supporting the institution lies. Overall, the interviewees found that while women are making gains in leadership roles, they are facing an environment in transition. The board composition and attitudes toward social mores and perspectives on life, such as work-life balance and working mothers' time allocation to family responsibilities, do not reflect the attitudes of the incoming generation. A need for a certain level of board readiness for change and a better understanding of museum operational realities are critical to preparing an organization to support more diverse leadership. Bridging the gap between board members' perceptions of an institution's operational realities and the real and mounting challenges faced by art museums could result in more progressive attitudes toward the variety of leadership styles and capabilities that women leaders offer.

Another external challenge mentioned, though admittedly unquantifiable, is the legacy of unspoken notions of what leadership looks like, which several interviewees felt historically may have tended toward males. Yet over time, that conception of leadership appears to be changing, in large part due to generational shifts, as alluded to previously. More than one search consultant observed that museum management norms are also evolving from the traditional, top-down, hierarchical structures to flatter, more transparent, collaborative, and consensus-focused systems.

When discussing internal or personal barriers faced by women in becoming directors of art museums, each interviewee expressed concern about the semantics used when describing ideas of ambition, confidence, or appetite. Generally, the interviewees agreed that consideration of a female candidate's level of ambition as a hiring factor may not be the right way to frame the issue, as it suggests there is a universal definition of ambition. In addition, most of the interviewees posited that concepts of success likely differ according to gender.

While some boards of large institutions may not be ready and willing to hire a female director, women may be just as unwilling to seek out positions at these institutions. In response to the finding that proportionally fewer Encyclopedic museums are run by a female director, many of our interviewees offered that women may be voluntarily opting out because they are thoroughly satisfied with their current institution. They may have less interest in scope and scale but more interest in embedding themselves more deeply into their current communities. This is not to ignore other potential reasons for opting out such as widespread

skepticism that, as a woman candidate, they would not be seriously considered to run a large Encyclopedic institution, or that the timing is simply not right for their family. More than one director stated that she had opted out of a recruitment opportunity due to family matters, and later engaged in a career move when the timing was right for her family. Ultimately these considerations encourage questioning whether opting out of traditionally sought-after positions is a bad decision, and they reveal the need to acknowledge and accept a variety of definitions and criteria for success and fulfilled ambition.

Leadership Style and Culture

The majority of the interviewees commented on the leadership style of men versus women. Men's tendency to be more direct and matter-of-fact may better complement a more hierarchical structure and fulfill a board's perception of effective leadership. The interviewees generally described women's approach to leadership as geared toward building consensus. More than one director commented how this approach is not always readily accepted, and even met with surprise. Yet these differences in approach can also help to explain other factors related to why women may opt out of directorship recruitment. Most consultants and directors interviewed described women as tending to be more engaged and deeply embedded in their communities, while observing that men are likely to be more comfortable with a shorter employment horizon at their current institution.

The survey findings that reference the percentage of women directors by museum type jibed with the consultants' own observations regarding higher representation of women in College/University museums and a lower percentage of women in Encyclopedic museums. Generally, the interviewees considered College/University museums to be more progressive, and thus better conducive or predisposed to support diverse leadership than the more traditional environments found at Encyclopedic institutions. Not only is it incumbent upon universities to be welcoming places for people of diverse backgrounds, but these institutions also may prove attractive to candidates of dual-income households seeking positions nearby, with education benefits for the family. Another factor mentioned by several interviewees to account for the high percentage of women directors at College/University museums is that these museums are typically supported by the more extensive resources of the greater College/University. It was mentioned that generally, boards have historically felt more comfortable with male directors assuming risk, particularly for Encyclopedic museums, which most interviewees viewed as conservative, traditional, and risk-averse. The safety net afforded to College/University museums offers women the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. This is not to say that women directors are given equal opportunity to translate successes at one museum type to another. In fact, several interviewees observed that it is easier for men to make the leap from running an organization with a small budget to one with a much larger budget.

Most of our interviewees were surprised by the fact that the majority of Contemporary museum leadership positions are held by men. Most interviewees observed that Contemporary institutions are where they have seen the strongest female directors and believe these organizations to hold open and progressive attitudes since many, if not most, Contemporary museums were founded as alternatives to established Encyclopedic institutions. Because they were initiated as cultural organizations in reaction to traditional norms, Contemporary museums are inherently predisposed to take a more open worldview, and tend to attract a

more diverse group coming out of academic programs. Expanding the discussion regarding female director representation in relation of museum type, one director pointed to deeper features within the art history and museum field that propagate limiting factors. The argument was made that Western art, created by men, has historically dominated the U.S. art history conventional curriculum, which has, in turn, likely influenced both collecting habits and leadership profiles of major institutions.

The Future

In describing the efforts that can be made by the various constituents committed to resolving gender inequality, there was general agreement among the consultants that they themselves play an important role by laying the groundwork for a next director to be successful. Because people revert to old ways of behaving and old habits of communicating, executive search consultants help boards and search committees take informed steps geared toward inclusive and diverse leadership selections. That said, there was a consensus among the interviewees that it is incumbent upon each board to make concerted efforts to candidly evaluate the effectiveness of its governance, decision-making processes, and ways it supports and collaborates with its museum director. Many commented that all too often, boards do not fully understand the environment in which museums operate; the competitive challenges; and fundamental shifts occurring with audiences, museum authority, and technological advances. In many cases, executive search firms have invested time into educating boards on these environmental and organizational realities in order to help boards understand what exactly the next director is inheriting.

When asked to comment upon the gender pay gap, there was shared dismay and some surprise among the interviewees regarding the current reality. More than one search consultant commented that these pronounced gender pay disparities were not something they had observed as of late. Offering some practical context as to why an incoming director may not earn as much as the exiting leader, regardless of gender, one consultant noted that typically boards regard the outgoing director's salary as one that has been earned over a period of years. In addition, the board will likely want to give itself leeway to raise the new director's salary over time, and will thus pull back from the outgoing director's salary. One consultant offered that nonprofit institutions must strike a balance between giving appearances they are overpaying any one person with offering a salary that is based on prior earnings as well as responsibility for the organization.

So: What can be done to ensure continued progress toward gender equity in pay and representation among directors of art museums? On the individual, personal front, the interviewees unanimously placed high value on professional development for any aspiring leader. This can come in the form of formal programs and continuing education courses such as the Getty Leadership Institute and Center for Cultural Leadership, as well as personal commitments to attaining business and financial acumen through self-study. It is critical that anyone in, or vying for, a leadership role of an organization can thoroughly master and communicate its institutional mission as well as business and financial operations. More than one director also stressed the importance for women to train themselves to ask for more money, both during the recruitment process and over time at their current institution. Change management was a recommended

approach at the institutional level. Organizations and their respective boards must make deliberate efforts to prepare themselves to change old ways of behavior and support greater diversity in leadership.

When asked if optimistic about the progress toward gender equity, each interviewee replied with her own version of an affirmative response. Admittedly frustrated with the current state of affairs, consultants and directors alike generally took a sanguine attitude, tempered by the acknowledgment of the work still ahead. While the current survey findings do not reveal a clear-cut story of strong progress, one consultant recommended taking a longer view. Stepping back to look at the decade-by-decade progress will reveal observable advancement of women in positions of leadership in the art museum field. It remains that society as a whole is grappling with these notions, and it is imperative that open discussion and dialogue continue in order for gender equity to prevail.

Considerations From Other Industries

The gender gap in art museums is a microcosm of a more widespread phenomenon, as indicated in the introduction to this report. What can the art museum field learn from other industries and organizations that might shed light on ways to address gender inequity? In an effort to stimulate discussion within art museums, we offer the following considerations.

Even before the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and beyond the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009,¹³ the discussion of gender pay equity has produced continuously evolving efforts toward establishing parity among female and male pay. Many would agree that much of the gender pay gap is attributable to the fact that more men occupy higher-paying leadership roles than women. This is the classic glass ceiling, or the “unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, p. 4).”¹⁴ To address this discrepancy, a more traditional response a company may consider in order to attract and retain top talent, regardless of gender, is to offer flexible work policies, especially during the child-rearing years. According to a Pew survey, 70% of working mothers indicate that a flexible work schedule is extremely important, and 48% of men share this sentiment.¹⁵ Climbing the corporate ladder requires the ability to avoid stalling out on a particular rung due to workplace policies that keep employees from maximizing their productivity. While research shows workplace flexibility reduces turnover, the stigma associated with such

13 More information about both Acts can be found on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s website, Accessed 4 March 2017: https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/brochure-equal_pay_and_ledbetter_act.cfm.

14 Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, *A Solid Investment: Making Full Use of the Nation’s Human Capital: Recommendations of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission*, Washington, D.C., November 1995.

15 Miller, Claire Cain, “How to Close a Gender Gap” Let Employees Control Their Schedules,” *The New York Times*, Accessed 7 February 2017: <https://nyti.ms/2kHV85f>

policies is the reason these are not widely utilized.¹⁶ How can change be mobilized in the face of inequity and stigma?

Simple awareness and understanding of the issue has done a great deal to motivate major companies to take action, such as Apple, which claims to have closed the gender pay gap in its company.¹⁷ Further, other influential firms such as SpaceX, Salesforce, and Intel, have committed to, or already have conducted, salary audits as first steps toward dislodging their respective gender pay gaps.¹⁸ Perhaps the actions and policies of these prominent companies will serve as role models and proliferate into adoption at a broader scale and scope.

Achieving equal pay and establishing a level playing field is a continuous process, and one that requires wholesale corporate involvement, as well as active measures taken by women hoping to attain equal pay for equal work. Participating in professional development opportunities and engaging in mentorship programs are traditional approaches that will likely continue to yield valuable gains toward pay and promotion advancement. New and powerful tools have begun to develop in sophistication and prominence to assist women in combating the gender pay gap. A recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* recognized the utility technology can offer to help in closing this gap.¹⁹ The increased online availability of vital employment information has empowered women by allowing them to make progressively informed decisions and choices. Companies such as GetRaised, Payscale, and Comparably offer salary information so women can gauge their own pay gap.²⁰ Other companies, such as Fairy God Boss and Doxa, provide insights into company policies, as well as firms' cultures toward "female friendliness."²¹ The gathering and dissemination of information has long been the cornerstone of any advancement. Continued monitoring of measurable variables affecting the gender pay gap through traditional and emerging methods is paramount for maintained mobilization of actionable insights toward advancing gender equality.

16 *ibid.*

17 Newcomb, Alyssa, "Apple Says It Has Fixed Gender Pay Gap for U.S. Employees," *NBCNews.com*, last modified 4 August 2016. Accessed 6 February 2017: <http://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/apple-says-it-has-fixed-gender-pay-gap-u-s-n622891>

18 Pile, Tatiana, "Major Companies Working to Eliminate Their Gender Pay Gap," *AOL.com*, last modified 14 March 2016. Accessed 6 February 2017: <https://www.aol.com/article/2016/03/14/major-companies-working-to-eliminate-their-gender-pay-gap/21327607/>

19 Krawcheck, Sallie, "How Technology Can Help Close the Gender Gap," *Harvard Business Review*, last modified 25 January 2017. Accessed 7 February 2017: <https://hbr.org/2017/01/how-technology-can-help-close-the-gender-gap>

20 *ibid.*

21 *ibid.*

Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusion

By examining AAMD 2016 survey data, which was collected three years after the initial 2013 survey that was the basis of the 2014 gender gap report, this research functions to both monitor the state of gender equity among art museum directors and encourage continued inquiry and research into other factors affecting gender equality. Understanding that the insights discussed regarding the study are limited to responses from AAMD members, our interviewees posed important questions and suggestions for future analysis of the gender gap in art museums. One consultant was particularly interested to know what exactly constitutes a Contemporary institution within the survey, again referring to the unexpected majority of men directors in that museum type. This points to limiting factors that can arise from analyzing survey data that is derived from self-reported responses. Other suggestions included looking at museum prominence (aside from budget), as well as analyzing the data regionally and with consideration to the dominant political tendencies of those locations, and the composition of their respective boards. With observable generational shifts in organizational and management norms in art museums, further research may explore other characteristics of directors such as age, tenure length, race, ethnicity, and LGBTQ orientation.

Clear disparities in gender representation and compensation still exist within the field of art museums, making continued investigation of factors affecting gender equality ever more critical to ensuring improvement in the needle of progress. Continued, concerted efforts from all art museum stakeholders are required to maintain momentum toward progress, and model future behavior to reflect more inclusive and equitable gender representation.