

Massachusetts College of Art and Design Artward Bound Program

NEED

During the past five years, MassArt has tracked Boston Public School (BPS) students enrolled in its youth programs to determine repeating students, district schools represented, and participants who apply to MassArt as undergraduates. At least two patterns have emerged: (1) participation in youth programs decreases significantly during teenage years, and (2) students from certain BPS schools predominate. This data is consistent with a recent Boston Foundation study, *The Arts Advantage*, which reported that access to arts education in Boston schools varies greatly, with only one-quarter of high schools reporting offering any arts education at all to more than 25% of their students.

The deficiency of visual arts skills and preparation on the secondary level in urban schools impacts enrollments at specialized colleges such as MassArt, where the current enrollment of 1,688 undergraduates includes only 43 or 2.5% BPS graduates. The problem continues in the professional world, particularly in the design fields (architecture, industrial, illustration) where underserved populations are underrepresented.

In response to the issues of unequal access in the visual arts and higher education, and with initial funding from the Surdna Foundation, MassArt developed *Artward Bound*, a college access program in the visual arts for low income, potential first-generation college students in Boston schools, modeled on the Upward Bound program.

ARTWARD BOUND

Program Objective: To prepare 8th-12th grade Boston students who have expressed interest in the visual arts, with the artistic and academic skills needed for admission to an art/design college or other post-secondary institution.

Program Background: Meeting throughout the 2009-2010 academic year, a 15 member campus-wide planning team at MassArt developed the structure for the *Artward Bound* program. Researching national program models and meeting with local youth program leaders, the planning team focused on objectives, the student cohort, admission criteria and requirements, parental involvement, curriculum, staffing, space, scheduling, evaluation, and program costs.

Program Details: *Artward Bound* will operate as a year-round program with a full-time director, using MassArt's ongoing youth programs as the framework. A cohort of 30 rising 8th and 9th grade students will be accepted into the program for four years based on evidence of visual arts interest, academic record, teacher recommendations, and an interview and creative arts exercise. After two years, a second cohort of 30 students will be accepted into the program.

The curriculum will include four areas: (1) academic achievement, (2) artistic development, (3) professional exposure, and (4) special events, workshops or courses. The program will provide

personal support and counseling. During the school year, students will be required to attend the college's Saturday Studios art class and/or other courses, take part in academic tutoring sessions, take MCAS, and SAT prep sessions, and participate in workshops that address topics such as time and organizational management, test taking, and writing skills. During an intensive summer six-week program, students will continue to receive academic support, enroll in summer art classes, and participate in various fieldtrips and cultural events/programs. MassArt faculty member and national arts evaluator, Daniel Serig, will serve as the project evaluator. An evaluation will be designed with qualitative and quantitative measures.

Timeline: Based on funding, an *Artward Bound* program director will begin work in the spring 2011; students will be admitted in late spring; and the program will be launched in summer 2011.

Community Partners will include art and design and college readiness youth programs, and the Boston Public Schools. A program advisory board will be comprised of community partners and administrators, faculty, and staff from MassArt and the Boston Arts Academy. The committee will meet on a quarterly basis.

Persons to Contact for Information:

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