snaap

**STRATEGIC
NATIONAL ARTS ALUMNI
PROJECT**

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

INSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS, RESOURCES, AND WORKING ACROSS DISCIPLINES:

What Arts Alumni Are Saying

SNAAP Fast Facts

SNAAP 2.0

In 2015 SNAAP launched SNAAP 2.0, including a revised core questionnaire, new customization opportunities with topical modules, improved institutional reports, a data visualization tool (SnaapGraph), and membership choices, including the multi-year SNAAP+.

The Arts

SNAAP defines "the arts," "art," and "artist" to include a broad range of creative activity, including performance, design, architecture, creative writing, music composition, choreography, film, illustration, and fine art.

Survey

SNAAP is a comprehensive survey administered online to the arts alumni of participating institutions. Completion time for the survey is generally 20 to 30 minutes. Most institutions also selected one of two topical modules that were appended to the core questionnaire: Career Skills and Entrepreneurship or Internships. The results described in this report are based on data collected from the 2015 core questionnaire. Results of the module analyses will appear separately.

Partners

Founded in 2008, SNAAP is based at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research of the School of Education and administered in cooperation with the Indiana University Center for Survey Research. The Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University leads SNAAP national research. Launched with start-up support from the Surdna Foundation and other funders, SNAAP is now primarily self-supported by fees from participating institutions. In 2015, the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation supported analysis of the Career Skills and Entrepreneurship module.

Participating Institutions

SNAAP collects and analyzes data from arts graduates from a wide variety of institutions including comprehensive colleges and universities, liberal arts colleges, and special-focus arts institutions. Since 2008, almost 300 institutions have participated in SNAAP. In 2015, a total of 53 institutions administered the survey. Table 1 summarizes selected institutional characteristics for all 2015 participating institutions, including a small number that were excluded from the analysis in this report due to nonstandard administrations. In 2015, a particularly high percentage of special focus institutions, e.g., independent colleges of the arts, participated.

Table 1: SNAAP 2015 Institutional Characteristics

CHARACTERISTICS	% OF INSTITUTIONS
Region	
Canada	9%
U.S. Northeast	17%
U.S. South	25%
U.S. Midwest	25%
U.S. West	25%
Sector	
Private	53%
Public	47%
Classification	
Baccalaureate Colleges	6%
Master's Colleges & Universities	19%
Doctoral Universities	30%
Special Focus: Arts, Music & Design Schools	45%

Respondents and Response Rates

In 2015 over 40,000 arts alumni participated in the SNAAP survey from 53 institutions in North America. The average institutional response rate was 18%. Table 2 provides respondent characteristics for those arts alumni who responded to the survey, and summarizes selected respondent characteristics for all 2015 participating institutions, including a small number that were excluded from the analysis in this report due to nonstandard administrations.

Audiences

SNAAP provides valuable, actionable data to educators, researchers, philanthropic organizations, and institutional and public policymakers, as well as arts graduates and current or prospective arts students and their families.

Participation Agreement

Participating institutions agree that SNAAP can use data collected through the survey administration in the aggregate for national reporting purposes. Results pertaining to a particular institution and identified as such will never be made public except by mutual agreement between SNAAP and the participating institution.

Institutional Reports

Each participating institution receives a confidential, customized *Institutional Report* that presents and analyzes the responses of its alumni, as well as comparative data from other participating institutions. Schools can elect to compare their data to other institutions on a granular level, including nearly 100 arts majors.

Table 2: 2015 Selected Respondent Characteristics

CHARACTERISTICS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Gender	
Man	40%
Woman	60%
Another gender identity	<1%
Cohort	
1985 and before	22%
1986–1995	15%
1996–2000	10%
2001–2005	13%
2006–2010	18%
2011–2015	23%
Recent Graduate[a]	
Yes	23%
No	77%
First-Generation Student[b]	
Yes	32%
No	68%

[a] We define "recent alumni" as those individuals who graduated within five years of the date they completed the SNAAP survey.
[b] First-generation students are those whose parents or guardians have not completed a four-year degree or higher.

Institutional Connections, Resources, and Working Across Disciplines: What Arts Alumni Are Saying

2016 SNAAP ANNUAL REPORT
August 2016

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with Angie L. Miller, Nathan D. Martin, Sally Gaskill, and Steven J. Tepper

1. About SNAAP

The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) is an annual online survey, data management, and institutional improvement system designed to enhance the quality of arts school education. SNAAP generates rich, detailed information about the lives and careers of people with intensive training in the arts, broadly defined. Survey questions focus on the educational experiences of arts alumni as well as their career paths, both in and outside the arts.

SNAAP data can point to ways to better connect arts training to artistic careers, making it possible for arts leaders, educators, and researchers to understand and address the systemic factors that help or hinder the career paths of arts alumni, whether they work as artists or pursue other paths. SNAAP data allow participating schools to compare themselves with similar schools across multiple dimensions. The annual findings also provide insights into national patterns and trends from detailed analyses of employment data, career outcomes, and institutional experiences by artistic discipline, geographic region, graduation year cohort, and degree type.

SNAAP grew out of the Surdna Foundation's interest in helping arts training institutions across the country learn more about their alumni. Following several years of planning, three field tests of the survey were conducted beginning in 2008. Since SNAAP's inception, over 140,000 arts alumni from almost 300 participating educational institutions in North America have taken the opportunity to describe their educational experiences and career paths by answering the SNAAP questionnaire.

Data in this report

SNAAP fielded a revised questionnaire in the fall of 2015, building on actionable items in the 2011–2013 core questionnaire, dropping questions that no longer seemed worthwhile, and adding a few new questions. In addition, SNAAP offered two optional Topical Modules, to be appended to the core questionnaire, on (1) career skills and entrepreneurship and (2) internships. Nearly all (50 out of 53) institutions participating in SNAAP 2015 chose to append the career skills and entrepreneurship module, seven selected the internship module, and four selected both.

Over 40,000 arts alumni from 53 institutions in North America responded to SNAAP 2015. For this report, we analyzed data from the 35,337 alumni (76% undergraduate and 24% graduate) at 46 U.S.-based postsecondary institutions.[1]

New SNAAP survey questions address (a) the extent to which alumni feel connected to their educational institution; (b) the resources current artists lack; and (c) which alumni work across multiple art forms/disciplines. In this report, we focus on findings from the new questions and revisit a few related trends from previous reports.

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[1] Canadian institutions and two U.S. institutions with nonstandard administrations are not included in the overall results.

2. Satisfaction with Arts Education

As in the 2011, 2012, and 2013 SNAAP surveys (Frenette & Tepper, 2016), arts alumni who responded to the 2015 survey reported feeling extremely satisfied with their education, and answers stayed remarkably similar across alumni income level and employment status.

More than nine out of ten arts alumni (91%) rated their overall educational experience as either "good" or "excellent" (as opposed to "poor" or "fair"). Even individuals earning $20,000 or less per year and those currently unemployed and looking for work rated their overall educational experience positively (87% and 79%, respectively). If they could start over again, three-quarters (75%) of arts alumni said they would "probably" or "definitely" attend the same institution (as opposed to "uncertain" or "probably no" or "definitely no"). Finally, 84% said they would recommend their school to another, similar student ("like you").
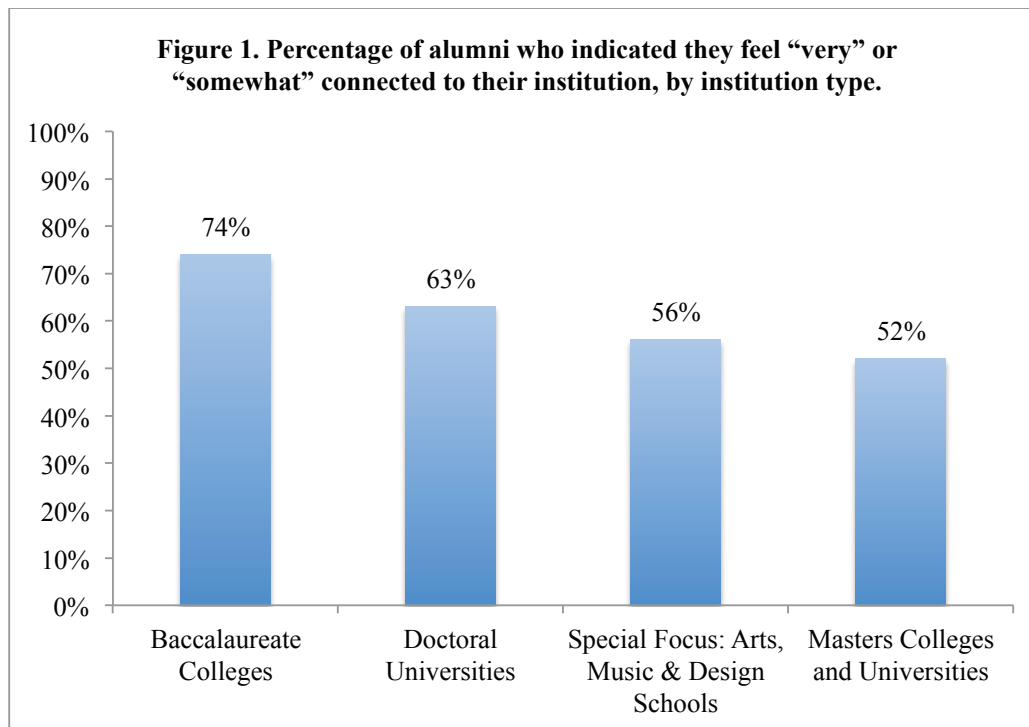
Connection to institution

The 2015 SNAAP survey included a new question related to alumni's educational experience. Alumni were asked how connected they feel to their educational institution since leaving (options included "not at all," "very little," "some," and "very much").

Answers were positive, although not overwhelmingly so; as a whole, 60% alumni reported feeling connected to their alma mater ("some" or "very much"). These responses of "some" and "very much" varied slightly based on gender (59% for women and 62% for men), race/ethnicity (61% for White, 56% for Black, 55% for Hispanic/Latino, and 61% for Asian alumni), parents' level of education (59% first-generation—i.e., parents do *not* have a four-year degree—and 61% non-first-generation college graduates), and degree level (58% for undergraduate and 63% for graduate).

Alumni responses differed slightly based on the type and size of the educational institution they attended. While most alumni (56%) of "Special Focus: Arts, Music and Design" institutions reported feeling connected to their educational institution, nearly two-thirds (63%) of alumni from the combined group of "Baccalaureate, Master's, and Doctoral Colleges and Universities" answered this question positively (see Figure 1). Alumni answers also differed based on institution size; alumni of institutions with under 2,500 students (57%) were slightly less likely to report feeling connected to their institution than were those of schools with 2,500–9,999 students (59%) or institutions with 10,000 students or more (63%).

Figure 1. Percentage of alumni who indicated they feel "very" or "somewhat" connected to their institution, by institution type.

While it might be surprising to find that alumni of specialized arts, music, or design schools are less likely to feel connected to their institution than alumni of larger, comprehensive universities, one possible explanation is that larger institutions offer a greater breadth of educational, co-curricular, and social opportunities. As we discuss below, building a portfolio of co- and extra-curricular activities during school is strongly linked to feeling connected to one's institution.

Several studies show that student participation in extracurricular, co-curricular, and other special programs during college is linked to higher retention rates and students' overall success (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1987). Arts alumni who reported taking part in such activities while enrolled in school were also more likely to say they felt connected to their educational institution after graduation.

As Table 1 shows, alumni who worked on a community project, participated in co-curricular activities, had serious conversations with students different from themselves, and worked with an artist in the community were especially likely to feel connected to their institution compared to alumni who did not participate in these activities.

Finally, answers varied little by individual income, but alumni were more likely to report feeling connected to their educational institution if they were currently working in the arts. Among alumni who spend the majority of their work time in an occupation related to the arts, 63% reported feeling connected to their alma mater, compared to 55% of alumni who mostly work outside the arts. Also, alumni were more likely (61%) to report feeling connected to their educational institution if they found a job within a year of graduation compared to those (48%) who only obtained work more than one year after graduation. Finally, approximately two thirds (67%) of alumni who had used career services since graduating reported feeling connected to their institution, compared to 58% of alumni who had not used these services. Therefore, alumni who experienced positive employment outcomes after graduation, ostensibly linked to career preparation they received from their educational institution, later reported feeling more connected to their educational institution.

Table 1. Percentage of alumni who indicated they feel "very" or "somewhat" connected to their institution, by participation in type of activities while enrolled.

	PARTICIPATED	DID NOT PARTICIPATE
Worked on a community project or in a role serving the community[a]	65%	47%
Participated in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, sports)[a]	66%	50%
Had serious conversations with students who are different from you in terms of their ethnicity, religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values[a]	61%	43%
Worked with an artist in the community[a]	65%	48%
Studied abroad	65%	59%
Internship	62%	59%

[a] "Participated" includes those who responded "Often", Sometimes", and "Rarely"

3. Missing Resources: What Current Artists Need

The SNAAP survey includes several questions aimed at understanding why graduates who wanted to build careers as artists ultimately pursued opportunities in another field. Paying attention to who leaves the arts, and why they do so, has shed light on how factors such as debt and lack of access to networks act as important barriers, particularly for Black and Hispanic alumni (for more information, see the SNAAP report, *An Uneven Canvas: Inequalities in Artistic Training and Careers*, 2013).

To further understand the barriers alumni face as they navigate their careers, the 2015 survey added a question on what *current* artists are lacking. Arts graduates currently working as artists were asked:

> "What is the most important resource to which you currently do **not** have access but need to advance your artistic career?"

Current artists could select one of these resources, listed here from most to least frequently selected:
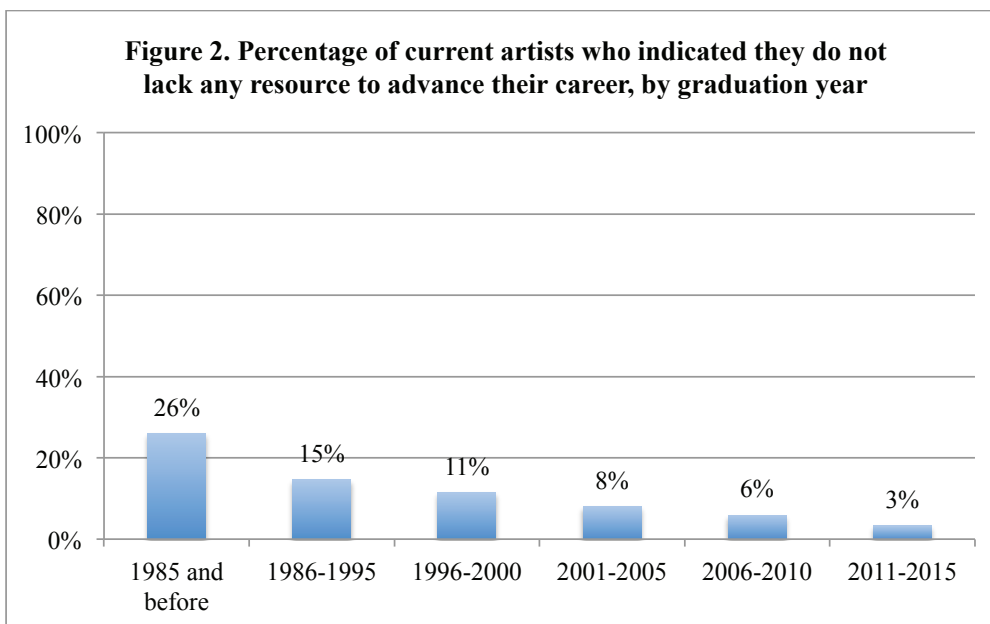
- Publicity and recognition of your work (23%)
- Business advising (15%)
- Professional networks (15%)
- Loans, investment capital (13%)
- Did not respond to item (12%)
- Studio space (10%)
- Equipment (8%)
- Performance, exhibition space (4%)

Gender, parents' education, race/ethnicity

Responses to the question about what current artists are lacking differed slightly based on gender and parents' level of education. Women were slightly more likely to select "business advising" than men (16% compared to 14%). Furthermore, non-first-generation college graduates were slightly more likely to select "publicity and recognition of your work" than first-generation graduates (24% compared to 22%, respectively).

Unfortunately, the arts are not immune from larger, well-documented patterns of race-based disparities in borrowing opportunities; such discriminatory practices have been documented in realms such as small business loans (Blanchflower, Levine, & Zimmerman, 2003) and mortgage loans (Bocian, Ernst, & Li, 2008). In the SNAAP survey, more than one in five Black alumni (21%) said they lack access to "loans, investment capital" compared to only 12% of White alumni. The Hispanic population historically also faces discrimination in borrowing, but only 15% of Hispanic arts alumni selected "loans, investment capital" as

Figure 2. Percentage of current artists who indicated they do not lack any resource to advance their career, by graduation year

the main resource they currently lack. Nevertheless, Hispanic arts alumni were more likely (18%) to indicate that they lacked business advising than White (15%) and Black (15%) alumni.

No resources needed?

It is surprising that more than one in ten current artists did not select any of the resources listed to advance their career. Such answers are better understood when we consider differences by income and cohort. First, artists who earn less money are more likely to indicate needed resources; among alumni who reported earning $50,000 or less in 2014, only 8% did not choose a needed resource, compared to 16% of alumni who had earned over $50,000. Second, as Figure 2 shows, alumni from more recent cohorts—artists who have had less time to establish a strong career—are progressively less likely to leave this resource item blank. Notably, 26% of alumni who graduated in 1985 and before did not indicate any needed resources for advancing their careers, compared to only 3% for artists who graduated between 2011 and 2015.

4. Working Across Artistic Disciplines

To better understand the careers of arts alumni, the 2015 SNAAP survey added a question asking them whether their artistic practice since leaving their educational institution has "involved working across multiple art forms/disciplines." Overall, 75% of alumni who have ever worked as artists indicated their practice has involved working across multiple art forms/disciplines.

How do artists who work across disciplines fare professionally compared to those who do not? It is well established that arts alumni's careers are unpredictable and often "messy." Artists frequently work intermittently, hold more than one job at once, and/or alternate between arts- and non-arts-related employment (Lindemann et al., 2012). Within such a labor market, research suggests that the more diverse the artists' tool kits, the better their professional outcomes (Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009). While there are undoubtedly benefits to specialization, overall, one would reasonably predict that "generalist" arts alumni are more likely to stay in the arts well after graduation (Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009;

Zuckerman, Kim, Ukanwa, & Von Rittmann, 2003). Below, we review differences between multiple- and single-discipline artists by demographics, educational experiences, and career outcomes.

Demographics

Among arts alumni who have ever worked as artists, men (76%) are slightly more likely than women (73%) to indicate they work across multiple art forms/disciplines. SNAAP data show no considerable differences on this question by race/ethnicity or by parents' education (i.e., socioeconomic status). However, probably the most compelling demographic question is whether working across art forms has become increasingly common.

Popular narratives about the growing importance of the enterprising artist—who must be a Jill- or Jack-of-all-trades to navigate the complex creative economy—would suggest the recent ascent of the nimble, cross-discipline artist. Are arts alumni more likely to work across art forms now than one or two decades ago? The answer to this question is a slightly surprising "no and yes":

- Among alumni who currently or previously have worked as artists, the likelihood of working across disciplines has been consistently high based on graduation year: 76% of arts alumni who graduated more than 15 years ago (2000 and before), 75% from 2001–2010, and "only" 70% of most recent graduates (2011–2015) indicated they have worked across multiple art forms. Regarding arts alumni from the last five years, their careers are probably too short at this stage for their answers to surpass previous cohorts.

- In one respect it does appear as though the importance of working across disciplines (to stay in the arts) has increased over time; current artists are more likely to say they have worked across multiple art forms (78%) than those alumni who previously, but no longer, worked as artists (66%).

Therefore, evidence suggests that it is far from new that a high percentage of artists work across disciplines, but being able to develop such a multi-discipline profile has arguably become increasingly important to remain employed in the arts.

Educational experiences

Are certain educational experiences tied to a higher likelihood of working across artistic disciplines?

Working across art forms might stem in part from opportunities and early experiences during one's education. The SNAAP survey asks alumni about their satisfaction with various components of their experiences at their former educational institution, including "opportunities to work in different artistic disciplines from your own." In current and past artists' responses to this question, 76% percent of multi-discipline artists indicated they were "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with such opportunities during school, compared to 65% for single-discipline artists. Multi-discipline artists were also more satisfied with "opportunities to network with alumni and others" (54%) and "freedom and encouragement to take risks" (81%) than were single-discipline artists (50% and 76%).

Visual art and design majors are more likely to work across art forms than performing and literary arts majors. As shown in Table 2, past and current artists who studied fine and studio art (81%), design (80%), and craft (79%), are more likely to report working across multiple art forms than are music (60%) and creative writing (53%) alumni. Further research is needed to understand the importance of working across disciplines by major, but so far we can suggest that a multi-discipline tool kit is more important in visual art and design than in other fields.

Career outcomes

How else do careers differ between single- and multi-discipline artists?

While single- and multi-discipline artists report earning roughly the same incomes, the latter report being more satisfied with their employment (see Table 3). In particular, alumni who work across artistic disciplines are more likely to be "somewhat" or "very" satisfied with their opportunities to be creative, to contribute to the greater good, and to advance their career. Differences in job satisfaction might partly be explained by the perceived fit between field of study and current work. Nearly eight out of ten (78%) multi-discipline artists consider their arts training "relevant" or "very relevant" to their current work, compared to 66% of single-discipline artists.

Table 2. Percentage of current and past artists who indicated working across multiple art forms/disciplines, by major.

MAJOR	PERCENTAGE OF MULTI-DISCIPLINE ARTISTS
Fine and Studio Art	81%
Design	80%
Craft	79%
Theater	76%
Media Arts	74%
Art History & Curatorial Studies	74%
Dance	72%
Other Arts	71%
Arts Education (Art, Dance, Drama, Music)	70%
Architecture	67%
Music	60%
Arts Administration	58%
Creative Writing	53%
TOTAL	**75%**

Table 3. Percentage of current and past artists who indicated they are "somewhat" or "very" satisfied with identified aspects of their current work, by whether they indicated their artistic practice has involved working across multiple art forms/disciplines.

ASPECTS OF JOB SATISFACTION	MULTI-DISCIPLINE ARTISTS	SINGLE-DISCIPLINE ARTISTS	PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE
Opportunity to be creative	87%	80%	7%
Work that reflects my personality, interests, and values	87%	82%	5%
Opportunity to contribute to greater good	82%	78%	4%
Opportunity for career advancement	72%	68%	4%
Overall job satisfaction	**89%**	**87%**	**2%**

Finally, working across disciplines seems to be linked to ease with entrepreneurial careers. Among arts alumni who have ever worked as artists:

- Alumni who are currently or have been self-employed, independent contractors, or freelancers were more likely (77%) to indicate they have worked across artistic disciplines than were those who have never been self-employed, independent contractors, or freelancers (62%).

- More than four out of five alumni (86%) who have founded an arts-related nonprofit or for-profit organization report their artistic practice has involved working across multiple art forms/disciplines.

Self-employed individuals might be more opportunity-driven and, therefore, more willing or interested to work in a variety of roles and art forms.

5. Conclusion

Results from the 2015 SNAAP administration provide continuing evidence for the value of an arts education. Many patterns from previous years of data are replicated, but several new survey items expand our understanding of the educational experiences and career paths of arts alumni. Further exploring

feelings of connection to one's institution after students graduate and transition to alumni status reveals some disparities along demographic and institutional characteristics. However, looking at this sense of connectedness in conjunction with other aspects of the educational experience, such as involvement in co-curricular activities, offers some actionable suggestions for institutions that wish to strengthen their connections with alumni.

In terms of careers, those alumni currently working as artists might need a variety of resources, and these needs might differ based on demographic and other characteristics. Additionally, the type of artistic work might factor into several other aspects of one's career. Those current or past artists who have worked across multiple artistic disciplines seem to vary based on several characteristics, such as gender and major. Working across multiple artistic disciplines can also impact career satisfaction and patterns in self-employment and starting a business or organization.

The ongoing study of arts alumni is essential for providing arts educators, administrators, and policymakers with a greater awareness of how educational experience can influence career paths both in and outside the arts. Institutions can improve programming and curriculum for current and future

students, while broad cultural changes can do their part in providing resources for supporting arts and artists in local communities and nationwide. One alumnus reported that his institution "gave me a better understanding of how the art world works, is where I gained knowledge about multiple disciplines, [and] is where I expanded my network" which our findings suggest are certainly key elements across the successful careers of arts alumni.

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2015 Participating Institutions

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Arizona State University, Tempe

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California College of the Arts, Oakland
California Institute of the Arts, Valencia
San Diego State University
San Francisco Art Institute
UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, Los Angeles

Colorado
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Connecticut
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Florida
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Florida International University, Miami
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Mission

The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) investigates the educational experiences and career paths of arts graduates nationally.

SNAAP provides the findings to educators, policymakers, and philanthropic organizations to improve arts training, inform cultural policy, and support artists.

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