The museum world: Career skills and training for jobs in textile and clothing historic collections

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The museum world:  
Career skills and training for jobs in textile and clothing historic collections

by

Caitlyn Ann Kamm

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Apparel, Merchandising, and Design

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ABSTRACT

Since the turn of the 20th century, textiles and clothing historic (TCH) collections have inspired designers, helped teach textiles and clothing history classes, and enhanced our understanding of history and different cultures (Queen & Berger, 2007; Sauro, 2009; Marckettii, Fitzpatrick, Keist, & Kadolph, 2011). Recently, museums have begun to hold blockbuster fashion exhibits to increase foot traffic, fundraise, and reach a more diverse audience (Anderson, 2000). In light of this trend and the highly competitive museum field, it is necessary to explore the skills and knowledge that make professionals working in these specific collections successful. Thus, the purpose of this research was to understand the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in TCH collections, where professionals learned those skills and gained that knowledge, how professionals’ schooling and formal training prepared them for their careers, how professionals network, and their career paths. Ten TCH collection professionals were interviewed and an internet survey was distributed to the members of Costume Society of America. Both interview and survey results indicated that knowledge of textiles and clothing, museum practices, and liberal arts were crucial to success. Skills emphasized included knowledge of textiles and clothing history, knowledge of textile science, object handling, cataloguing, and having a broad liberal arts background. Professionals advised students to intern extensively, attend conferences, and be very patient when applying for jobs.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Textiles and clothing historic collections (TCH collections) can provide individuals with a sense of identity, personal history, and a link to their past, cultural heritage, and family (Queen & Berger, 2007). TCH collections come in many forms: A subgroup of a larger museum collection such as the Asian Textiles Collection in the Anthropology Department at the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois; the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; or the historic garments included in the Reading Historical Society in Reading, Ohio (Queen & Berger, 2007; The Field Museum, 2011; The Met, 2011). TCH collections can also serve as stand-alone institutions, either large in scope such as the Textile Museum in Washington, DC, or small in size such as the Lace Museum in Sunnyvale, California (TM, 2010; LM, n.d.). Further, many colleges and universities maintain collections used primarily in teaching historic, cultural, and design courses (Marcketti, Fitzpatrick, Keist, & Kadolph, 2011).

While museums have a long history in the United States beginning in the late 18th century, TCH collections became increasingly popular in the twentieth century as a direct result of the ready-to-wear apparel industry which increased the availability of affordable clothing (Alexander, 1997; Queen & Berger, 2007). As consumer use and desire for new clothing increased, people had little space and need for heirloom clothing. Like today, some people kept memories of their ancestors and their own past alive by keeping clothing, textiles, and other apparel-related material culture. Many museums developed collections in order to care for these textiles, garments, and accessories. Some of these collections continue to exist today, including The Textile Museum founded in 1925 and the Costume Institute founded in 1937 as the Museum of Costume Art (Textile Museum, 2010; Costume Institute, 2012).
Museums and TCH Collections in the United States

In 2005, the American Association of Museums (AAM) estimated that there were 8,300 museums in the United States. Today that number has more than doubled to 17,500 museums (AAM, 2011). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) predicted that the museum sector will increase by 20% by 2018, resulting in a much larger increase in employment positions than other occupations. Analyzing what makes new museum professionals successful in job attainment is particularly important given the prediction that a high level of competition for museum jobs will remain a strong trend in the coming decade (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

Farr & Shatkon (2007) ranked curators among the top 350 jobs overall and one of the 100 fastest growing jobs with 1,416 positions opening annually. Furthermore, Farr & Shatkon (2009) recommended the curator profession among the top 200 best jobs for college graduates. However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) maintains that, even as the museums sector expands, the number of qualified individuals seeking museum-related jobs is far greater than the current jobs available. In addition, the Bureau warns that these jobs are vulnerable to budget cuts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Therefore, it is crucial to fully understand the skills and training needed to succeed in the museum world.

According to the Costume Society of America (CSA), the premiere U.S. association for the study of dress history, and America’s Closet Project, a project that helps locate and promote textile collections throughout the United States, there were 2,604 TCH collections in the United States in 2005 (Queen & Berger, 2007). TCH collections are traditionally used for teaching textiles and clothing history classes, inspiring students, and understanding other cultures and history (Marcketti, et al., 2011; Sauro, 2009). Recently, however, museums are increasingly featuring their TCH collections in blockbuster exhibits to increase foot traffic, fundraise through
corporate sponsorship, and reach a more diverse audience (Anderson, 2000; Melchior, 2011; and Sauro, 2009). Melchior (2011) suggested that the “visitors can easily engage with clothing [because] it is part of everyday life, popular culture, and entertainment” (pp. 3). As a result of this growing popularity, knowledge of qualifications and employment opportunities of TCH collections is important. Although there is a large body of literature that explores employment opportunities in non-TCH museums, there is no research examining career paths for those interested in working in TCH collections.

The following research questions will guide the thesis work:

**Research Questions**

- What education and coursework are most helpful to museum professionals who work with TCH collections?
- What skills and ongoing training are needed to be successful in the TCH collections museum world? How are these skills developed?
- What makes new graduates competitive when searching for jobs that work with TCH collections in museums?
**Definition of Terms**

**Accessioning**: A decision made by the curator, conservator, collections manager, registrar, and sometimes the director to add an artifact to the collection; legally becoming responsible for the care and storage of the artifact.

**American Association of Museums**: An organization that gives accreditation to museums in the United States, and provides a forum for scholarship and discussion for those in the museum world.

**Appraiser**: Estimates the value of an artifact based on current art markets and other factors. An appraiser is usually consulted when museums insure artifacts.

**Art history class**: Surveys the history of western art from prehistory to the present, and is sometimes split into two semesters.

**Assistant Curator**: Assists the curator in researching the collection, and various duties to maintain the collection. This position is usually found in large museums.

**Assistant Registrar**: Assists the registrar in cataloguing the collection, packing and shipping the collection, and assisting researchers. This position is usually found in large museums.

**Auctioneer**: Authenticates, acquires and sells objects. Can assist museums with de-accessioning and accessioning objects.

**Cataloguing**: The act of describing, numbering and entering an object and its location into a database to keep track of it.

**Center for the Future of Museums (CFM)**: A think tank started by the AAM in 2008, assists museums in exploring effective strategies for sustaining themselves in the future (CFM, 2008).

**Collections Manager**: Overseas various aspects of the collection: storage, volunteers, conservation, and accessioning/de-accessioning. The collections manager’s responsibilities can often overlap with other positions.

**Conservator**: Has extensive scientific knowledge, and often a degree specifically in conservation. The conservator is responsible for the “health” of the artifacts; restoring, housing, and preserving artifacts.

**Corporate Archive**: Maintains a corporation’s records and artifacts including past catalogues, apparel, and sketches relating to the business’ products.
Costume Society of America (CSA): A professional organization that encourages research in all aspects of dress, appearance, and costume (CSA, 2011).

CSA Regions: Refer to map (Figure 1)

Cultural Perspectives on Dress class: Usually part of both undergraduate and graduate programs of study in textiles and clothing. The class focuses on clothing worn and textile design by non-western cultures.

Curator: The “keeper” of the collection. The curator’s job is to know and pursue research on every object in the collection and create exhibits and publications that display that research. In large museums, there can be more than one curator; one for each collection.

Database: Museums use databases (e.g. PastPerfect) to manage their large number of object records.

De-accessioning: The act of disposing, selling, or trading an artifact that does not fit into the collection or has no history. This decision is made by the same committee that decides to accession an object.

Director: The “CEO” of the museum. The director is responsible for balancing the budget, overseeing employees, developing long term plans, generating funding, and advocating for the museum.

Facebook®: A social networking site that museums can use for advertisement purposes, reaching larger audiences, and facilitating discussion.

Google Alerts®: Monitors the web for user selected content or subjects and email updates to the users account on a daily or weekly basis. For example, one can add “museum,” “costume museum,” and “museum jobs” to get daily emails about those topics.

Individual TCH Collection: A collection that has its own department, but is part of a larger museum. For example: the textiles and clothing collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California.

International Council of Museums (ICOM): Started in 1946, this international organization of 30,000 members facilitates the discussion and research of museums and their relation to the future (ICOM, 2010).

International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA): An organization for students, educators, and other professionals working in the textile and apparel fields that facilitates research in those fields (ITAA, 2011).
Knowledge of construction techniques: The exposure to surface design techniques such as dyeing, printing, batik, embroidery, etc. as well as the making of a garment.

Material Culture/Collections Management class: Provides an introduction to object-based analysis and material culture methodology, and reinforces skills learned in a museum studies class.

Museum Studies class: Introduces basic museum structure, object handling, research, job descriptions and duties, and current museum issues.

Museum: “A non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment” (International Council of Museums, 2007).

Part of General Collection: A general collection that contains textiles and clothing. For example: the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, Iowa.

Registrar: Is responsible for knowing the location, packing and shipping, negotiating loans and insurance policies, and updating the database of objects.

Social Media: A category of web-based technologies including Facebook®, Twitter®, YouTube®, blogs, etc that facilitates conversation among users. Companies and museums use social media to generate feedback, customer loyalty, and educate the public.

Stand-Alone TCH Collection: A textiles and clothing historic collection or museum that is autonomous. Therefore, it is a museum devoted to textiles and clothing. For example: the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. This type also includes university collections.

Textile Science class: Usually part of both undergraduate and graduate programs of study in textiles and clothing. This class focuses on fiber and fabric identification, structure, aesthetic and physical properties, and behavior under specific conditions. Dyes and printing techniques are also covered.

Textiles and Clothing Historic (TCH) Collection: A group of textiles, clothing, or other artifacts related to dress that exists within a museum. Sometimes textile collections have their own curator.

Textiles and clothing history (TC history) class: Usually part of both undergraduate and graduate programs of study in textiles in clothing that surveys western fashion history from prehistory to present day. It is often broken into two semesters.
**Twitter®**: A social networking site that museums can use to update their “status” or inform patrons about latest events.

**Wikepedia®**: A free, searchable online encyclopedia that features articles written by the general public. It provides instant access to information.

**YouTube®**: A public website where museums can post promotional movies, video lectures, and previews of exhibits.
Figure 1. Costume Society of America six designated regions in North America. The seventh region, International Region, is not represented on this map. Map is adapted from the Costume Society of America website (www.costumesocietyofamerica.com).
CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

A cross-case study approach was adopted in which interviews of more than one person were analyzed and compared (Yin, 2009). This method allowed the researcher to sufficiently explore the job duties, qualities, skills, and training needed to be successful working with TCH collections for museums or as consultants. As approved by the Institutional Review Board (Appendix D), the researcher used a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix C). Due to location and time constraints the interviews took place via telephone. These methods were chosen as they allowed the interviewees the opportunity to express their own ideas and stories about their work with TCH collections (Esterberg, 2002; Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

The interviews consisted of descriptive questions supplemented with follow up questions to check understanding (Harrell & Bradley, 2009; Appendix C). Descriptive questions are the most frequently used questions in semi-structured interviews as they are open ended and prompt a narrative response that illustrate specific events in a detailed, descriptive way (Harrell & Bradley, 2009; Yin, 2009). The questions were broken into six categories that explored the 1) respondent’s demographic information, 2) the TCH collection information, 3) current job responsibilities, 4) educational path taken, 5) reaction to the changing role of museums, and 6) advice for students interested in museum careers (Appendix C). Probes and verification techniques were used to ensure depth and accuracy in the responses.

Interviews lasted between 25 minutes and one hour and 45 minutes. To ensure confidentiality, and in accordance with the Institutional Review Board (Appendix, D) pseudonyms for interviewees were assigned and no museum affiliation names were used. Next, the interviews were coded using open and selective coding.
Open coding allowed the researcher to generate codes for repeating themes in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher discovered these codes through carefully reading each interview line by line (Appendix E). After these themes were identified, the researcher used selective coding to select one core category – for example, job titles (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Additional categories were analyzed in relation to this core category. These categories included: job responsibilities, career path, education, additional training, networking, and advice to students. These coding methods highlighted common themes and generated larger themes (Huberman & Miles, 1994).

To be included in the study, respondents met specific criteria: they worked with textiles, clothing, fashion, or costume either in TCH collections or as a consultant for a collection. This study focused solely on professionals who worked directly with artifacts: curators, registrars, auctioneers in the vintage textiles and clothing market, conservators, collection managers, or other related careers. Participants who worked with TCH collections were recruited through the professional organizations of the Costume Society of America (CSA), the International Society of Appraisers, and the American Institute of Conservation as well as through personal contacts. Snowball sampling helped increase the potential sample size. A total of 24 professionals were initially contacted via email (Appendix A). Eleven responded, (response rate of 46%) and 10 agreed to participate in the interview process (acceptance rate of 42%).

In addition to the qualitative interviews, an online survey was developed and distributed via Survey Gizmo®, an internet survey tool to members of Costume Society of America who work in or with TCH collections. Survey questions were developed from the themes identified in the qualitative interviews and included asking participants to rate how important certain classes and skills were for entering the museum world. Participants were also asked how often they used
certain skills (Appendix G). This survey helped to further understand what skills and education level are needed to be successful in TCH collections.

The survey was available for two weeks: opening on Monday (January 16, 2012) and closing at midnight on Monday (January 30, 2012). The original link to the survey was sent via email on January 16, and a follow up email reminding participants to complete the survey was sent January 23, one week before the survey closed. Out of the 1,164 survey requests sent, 46 surveys, or 4% were useable. Several factors may contribute to this low response rate: no incentive was given; survey was not posted on the CSA website; and the survey was distributed within the first two weeks of spring semester. To be considered useable, participants needed to agree to participate by checking the “I Agree” button. This verified their understanding of IRB rights and their permission for use the data for research purposes (Appendix H). Survey responses that were completely blank were dismissed.

After the survey closed, the data was downloaded from Survey Gizmo® into Microsoft Excel®. Finally it was exported to SPSS® Version 18, a statistical software package. Descriptive statistics were run for appropriate items and included: mean, range, mode, standard deviation, and frequency. Frequency tables were generated for all questions and analyzed. The results of this analysis were further discussed in the results section of the thesis.
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenges for Museums and Hiring Practices

The role of the museum has changed since its inception in the United States during the late 18th century (Alexander, 1997). Museums have moved from being about something, i.e., the collection, to being institutions that exist for someone, i.e., the audience. Today, museums face many challenges including finding an audience, balancing budgets, adjusting to changing demographics and perspectives, and training a new generation of professionals (Suchy, 2000; Anderson, 2004; Dilenschneider, 2011). In recent years, there has been much discussion about sustaining museums, sustaining an audience, and predicting the future of museums in light of these challenges. The American Association of Museums (AAM) created the Center for the Future of Museums -- a think tank that develops and presents scholarship that forecasts challenges for museums in the upcoming years (CFM, 2008).

The Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) has published three major discussion papers since 2008. The first, Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures provided an overview of the changing nature of society and how those changes might impact museums. In this report, Merritt (2008) discussed changes that would be both challenging and would provide opportunities. These challenges include attaining and retaining an audience, accessibility of collections, financial constraints, and the U.S. changing demographics. Opportunities also include these changing demographics, technology, and new discussions of best practices.

As mentioned by Merritt (2008), capturing an audience has become increasingly difficult, as museums must compete with the Internet, cable television, Facebook, and YouTube. Chung et al. (2010) elaborated on the challenge of capturing an audience, suggesting that museums must continue to create engaging exhibits that entertain as well as educate the visitor. Chung et al.
(2010) concluded that as Generation Y grows up with the Internet, Wikepedia®, and Google®, they expect expertise and knowledge to be instantaneous and free (CFM, 2010). Through social media networks Generation Y creates their own culture and creative experiences; thus, museums will need to change their role from "creative incubators and repositories" to facilitators of creativity (Chung et al., 2010, pp. 5). Museums traditionally house the creative masterpieces of mankind; now however, museums must provide opportunities for the museum visitor to actively participate in that creativity.

One of the current debates in the museum literature is what to digitize. Many museums now have Facebook® pages and Twitter® accounts so that they can connect with their visitors online, but to what extent should museums use resources to put their collections online? Green (2010) reflected on this debate in concluding that although the Internet allows visitors and researchers to see the objects differently than in an exhibit by zooming in or turning the object 360 degrees, the Internet will never be able to replace the three-dimensional object. Digitizing may provide excellent documentation for a photo archive, but researchers still need to touch and see the actual objects (Green, 2010).

Financial troubles also plague the museum world. Particularly as the Baby Boomer generation gets older and increasingly draws on government sponsored Medicare and Social Security, Green (2010) anticipated that the federal government will tighten its purse strings. This will leave museums and other organizations that depend on governmental grants to look for supplemental funding. On the other hand, Baby Boomers, traditional supporters of the arts and public organizations, will have more free time and will continue to look for civic involvement activities like volunteering (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Further, museums are on the front lines of the “brain exercise” movement, which encourages seniors to continue to exercise their brains.
through intellectual stimuli (Chung et al., 2009).

The demographic changes experienced in the United States further encourage museums to reevaluate their programming and outreach, staff, and exhibits. The U.S. Census Bureau expects the population to increase by just over 100 million people by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). In addition to this increased population, the minority population is projected to increase to just under 50% of the total population by 2034 and be in the majority by 2050 (CFM, 2008).

According to Research Advisors, the consulting firm that provided data for the CFM publications, 9% of the core visitors of museums are minorities (CFM, 2008, pp. 7). In addition, only 20% of museum employees are minorities (Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010). Museums will need to develop programming and outreach that encourages interest on the part of this important segment of the U.S. population.

Chung et al. (2009) noted that changing gender roles will further impact museums. As women with children return to the workforce, dual incomes become necessary and family time becomes precious; parents are looking for ways to enjoy family time on limited budgets. Museums, Chung et al. (2009) argue, can fill the need of a place where families can enjoy each others’ company.

Perhaps the most pressing challenge museums currently face is balancing the budget (Suchy, 2000; Merritt, 2008). Rising energy costs, the recent financial woes of the recession, and increasing concentration of wealth discourages people from spending disposable income on admission and donations (Chung et al., 2009). In addition to individual budget cuts, museum endowment funds took a hit in the stock market downturn. The government is also reallocating monies that once funded museums. All of these factors impact preservation, conservation, storage, and loaning of objects. In order to directly combat this financial crisis, prominent in
2008-2009, museums emphasized their permanent collections instead of traveling exhibits; cut back on staff, programming, and hours; considered selling objects to collectors; raised admission prices; and froze hiring and raises (Grant, 2010). The Listening Post Project found that museum jobs were down 1% from October 2009 to March 2010 (Listening Post Project, 2010). In order to be successful, museums will need to analyze data for trends and changes in demographics, audience needs, culture, and financial situations much more frequently (Merritt, 2009).

The literature also discussed the changing duties of jobs within museums and what the new generation will bring to these positions. Suchy (2000) analyzed the changing role of museum directors. Traditionally, directors have risen from the curator position if they had a strong academic background. This tradition began changing in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s as curators were not trained in the necessary skills to successfully lead museums: skills such as fundraising, management, and marketing (Suchy, 2000; Lord & Lord, 2009, pp. 213). Museum directors are now expected to have a familiarity with business practices and sometimes a Master’s of Business Administration (MBA) (Suchy, 2000). In addition to museum directors, curators in some museums are also taking on the responsibilities traditionally assigned to the registrar, collection manager, and preparator. They are also taking a more public role in education programming (Burdick, 2008). As budgets become tighter, job duties are rewritten to combine traditionally distinct roles.

In an article in Museum, Dilenschneider (2011) reflected on how Generation Y, the new generation of professionals, will handle museum challenges. Generation Y is widely recognized for the traits of social activity, team orientation, unreserved when talking to supervisors, and vocal regarding opinions. Authors and researchers have also found that Generation Y tends to value missions and mentoring over money, find fulfillment in their careers through making a
positive social impact, and values transparency and accessibility of business practices and records (Armour, 2005; Trunk, 2007; Dilenschneider, 2011). Dilenschneider argued that these qualities could benefit museums. Salary rates for museums are very low, which does not seem to inhibit recruiting new Generation Y professionals; rather, the ability to make a positive impact on society gives museum employers a larger pool of candidates to choose from (Burdick, 2008; Eberts & Gisler, 2007; Grant, 2010; Schlatter, 2008; Trunk, 2007).

The friction between traits and personalities of older museum professionals who entered the established museum world and Generation Y museum professionals has already sparked debate and conversation regarding procedures and policies (Armour, 2005; Dilenschneider, 2011). One aspect of the debate, Dilenschneider (2011) argues that Generation Y’s insistence on the transparency of business practice will help reinvent the image of museums (Armour, 2005). Another aspect of the debate is accessibility: how should museums increase accessibility and to what level should collections be accessible? Finally, daily procedures are under discussion: the lexicon used, conservation practices, housing practices, and paperwork procedures. Because there is no single lexicon used for TCH collections, period names often take precedence. For instance, one museum professional that grew up in a certain decade might refer to an object by a “colloquialism or slang term” of that decade (Betty interview).

**Museum Career Advice**

In the past twenty years, a plethora of resources have been available to those looking to enter the museum profession (Danilove, 1994; Camenson, 1996; Glaser & Zenetou, 1996; Burdick, 2008; Schlatter, 2008). These books often read as “how to” manuals: giving advice, recommendations on programs of study and experience, and defining job duties for museum positions.
The review of career literature in museums tends to state agreement on the classification of jobs into five major categories: collections and research, conservation and documentation, exhibition and interpretation, administration and support, and long range planning (Burdick, 2008; Figure 2).
Figure 2. Staff structure of museums (adapted from Danilov, 1994, Figures 2.1-2.3). This figure only details the professions that work in or with TCH collections. This structure varies from museum to museum. For example, larger museums have more levels of curators, registrars, and conservators, while smaller museums may combine two or more job descriptions into one job title.
Curators, fellows, curatorial assistants and researchers fall under the collections and research category (Camerson, 1996; Burdick, 2008). Burdick (2008) defined the curator as the "keeper" of the collection who is responsible for oversight, care, exhibition, and study of one collection. However, the duties of the curator vary according to the size, scope, and mission of the museum. Curatorial assistants work under the curator and assist the curator’s research; assistants usually do not develop their own research directly (Glaser & Zenetou, 1996). Fellows and researchers, similar to curatorial assistants, assist with research without developing their own ideas and are often hired on a short term basis (Danilov, 1994).

The conservation and documentation category can be broken down into the registrar, archivist, collections manager, and conservator (Camerson, 1996; Burdick, 2008; Danilov, 1994). The registrar and archivist are similar in that they both keep track of all the records and locations of the objects within the museum’s collection (Burdick, 2008). Registrar’s also act as couriers and escort objects to other museums, negotiate loans, take out insurance policies, and pack and ship objects (Camenson, 1996, pp. 28-29). The collections manager "supervises, numbers, catalogues, and stores" the objects (Camenson, 1996, pp. 30). The conservator helps to prevent further damage, harm, or deterioration of the objects (Eberts & Gisler, 2007).

Exhibition and interpretation includes preparators, exhibition managers, exhibit designers, educators, and publishers of catalogues (Schlatter, 2008). Those professionals who work with exhibitions and interpretation install exhibits under the curator and conservator’s supervision, design and build exhibits, develop programs to compliment the exhibits, and help the curator publish catalogues of the exhibit (Glaser & Zenetou, 1996).

Administration and support encompasses public relations, information technology support, the director, and any secretarial staff (Schlatter, 2008). Public relations professionals are
responsible for marketing the museum through advertisements and promotional events (Glaser & Zenetou, 1996). Information technology professionals support the computer and audio visual systems of the museum; including, but not limited to cataloguing and collection databases (Schlatter, 2008). The director’s job has changed in recent years, as has the position’s requirements. The director position now requires a background similar to that of a CEO with a MBA rather than an academic with a PhD (Suchy, 2000). The director is largely responsible for overseeing the budget, developing the staff, and continuing to hold educational programming.

Finally, the long-range planning category consists primarily of the board of trustees, grant writers, professional development team, fundraisers, and institutional development teams (Burdick, 2008). This group works closely with the director to obtain funding for the museum, oversee the budget, and develop strategic plans for the goals of the museum.

Each of these positions varies in size and scope according to the mission (Danilov, 1994). Small museums often have very simple staffing structures, while the largest museums have the most complex with multiple levels of the same job (Figure 2). For example, the Downers Grove Park District Museum in Illinois has one paid employee who serves as the director, curator, education coordinator, and volunteer and internship coordinator (DGNP, 2011). The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City has multiple curatorial departments with individual curators, associate and assistant curators, as well as numerous staff members with distinct job duties (The Met, 2010).

The literature disagrees to some extent on what paths it takes to get into the museum world. Camenson (1996) argued that there are three routes into the museum world that include an advanced degree, a degree or certificate in museum studies, and internship experience. One either needs a bachelor’s degree in museum studies, an advanced degree in a specific discipline,
and an internship; or a bachelor’s degree in a specific discipline, an advanced degree in museum studies, and an internship. However, in the case of a career change a master’s degree or certificate in museum studies and an intensive internship would suffice (Camenson, 1996, pp. 14-15). In contrast, Danilov (1994) noted that museum specific certificates and degrees were not originally, nor are they currently, universally accepted as sufficient education for job attainment (pp. 95). Although the collective literature agrees that certain museum positions, such as conservator and curator, require an advanced degree, there is some debate over the necessity of a museum studies’ degree. The literature does state agreement that internships and volunteering are crucial for “getting your foot in the door” in the museum world (Danilov, 1994; Burdick, 2008).

Most of the career guides that focus on museum careers do so in an overarching general manner. Many include interviews with a variety of professionals from different disciplines: from curators of fish to registrars of large art museums. However, these books do not directly reflect specific museums or collections such as TCH, nor jobs that are often outsourced. Although there is discussion that outsourcing certain duties is a popular trend in museums, only Naftali & Naftali (1999) provided an annotated list of certificate programs in consulting jobs like personal property appraisal. No guides provide case studies or advice on how to get involved with careers that do consulting for museums.

**TCH Collection Careers**

While many sources exist for students interested in careers in fashion design, merchandising, textile engineering, fabric design, and textile chemistry (Giacobello, 2003; Goworek, 2006; Hartsog, 2007; *VGM Career Books*, 2002), not many resources exist for those seeking careers in TCH collections in museums. The researcher found three books that discussed careers working

However, these books were limited in their advice to TCH collection hopefuls.

Danilov (1994) noted that the Fashion Institute of Technology had a Master of Arts in textiles and clothing preservation/conservation. In his discussion of available graduate programs, Danilov included a section on “other specialties,” which highlighted that a degree in the “historic costume and textiles field” would provide a sufficient background for a museum career (pp. 131). Finally, “costume/textile training programs” appeared in the index (pp. 523).

Like Danilov (1994), Eberts & Gisler (2007) devoted a section to textiles and clothing museum related careers. Although not its own chapter, their interview of Melissa Levington provided insight into the job responsibilities of a textile curator. Her interview outlined her path from a curatorial assistant at the Museum of London to her current career as textile curator at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. Eberts & Gisler (2007) proceeded to emphasize that a Master’s of Science in dress history could lead to a career in museums.

Finally, Granger (2007) in her book *Fashion: The Industry and its Careers* created the most comprehensive source on careers in the fashion industry. The fashion scholarship section described fashion educators at the middle school, high school, and college levels and careers in museums (Granger, 2007). Each of the job titles was discussed in terms of level of education and experience required, challenges one might face, salary ranges, and description of job duties. Granger, 2007 outlined seven museum careers -- director, curator, assistant curator, collections manager, archivist, conservator, and technician. Although the job duties and descriptions coincided with those duties found in the museum literature, the educational and experience requirements did not match. Specifically, Granger stated a conservator needed a bachelor’s degree in museum studies, textile science, archaeology or related field, and an internship or work
experience (Granger, 2007, pp. 287). This directly contradicted much of the museum career literature which stated that conservators are required to have a master’s degree in conservation (Danilov, 1994; Burdick, 2008; Schlatter, 2008). In addition, Granger (2007) maintained that museum technicians, who possess either an associate’s or bachelor’s degree, can expect a salary range of $34,000 to $47,000 annually; while, an assistant curator, where a master’s degree is preferred, can expect between $28,000 and $36,000 annually (pp. 278, 285). This contradicts what the museum literature concluded, that assistant curators are traditionally paid more than museum technicians (Danilov, 1994). The disconnect between the museum career literature and the fashion career literature could be related to different areas of expertise. In any event, there is a lack of literature that focuses specifically on careers in textiles and clothing historic collections.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS
Qualitative Results

The following sections discuss, in detail, the interviewees’ responses to the questions asked in the interview protocol (Appendix C). This section is divided into the following nine sections:

1. The first outlines the demographics of the sample population.
2. The second section describes how the interviewees became interested in the field.
3. Section three details the museum professionals’ education including degree, program of study, and specific classes taken at the undergraduate and graduate level.
4. Complimenting section three, section four describes additional training outside of the classroom including internships and volunteering.
5. The fifth section discusses their job responsibilities.
6. Section six outlines the paths they took to their current position.
7. The seventh section describes how the participants network.
8. Section eight discusses how museums have changed and what challenges they currently face including what skills are more relevant today.
9. The last section outlines advice that the participants have for students. This section contains advice on what skills to master and classes to take. It also demystifies networking and suggests approaches to searching for a job or internship.

Section 1: Demographic Results

The ten interviewees worked in institutions across the United States and were divided by region as designated by the Costume Society of America (CSA): Midwestern (n=4), Mid-Atlantic (n=3), Western (n=2), and Southeastern (n=1) (Table 1). Of the 10 participants, 80 percent were female (n=8) and 20 percent were male (n=2). Interviewees ranged in number of
years of experience from three to over 30 years. Similarly, participants ranged in the time they had been in their current position from less than a year to 14 years. The ages of participants spanned 39 years: the youngest at 26 and the oldest at 65 (Table 2). Participants received their first museum related jobs at different times: some were hired before or soon after graduation ($n=4$), two years after graduation ($n=4$), one year after graduation ($n=1$), and three years after graduation ($n=1$). With one anomaly, those participants who received jobs either upon graduation or before graduation entered the workforce in the 1980s. Those who were not hired upon graduation entered the work force in the 1990s and 2000s.

Table 1
Interviewee’s Institution Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Type of Collection</th>
<th>Number of TC Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>Midwestern</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Curatorial Assistant</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>&gt;20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Conservator</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>18,000-19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Collections Manager</td>
<td>Midwestern</td>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Museum Assistant</td>
<td>Midwestern</td>
<td>Part of general collection</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Head Curator</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>10,000-12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Head Curator</td>
<td>Midwestern</td>
<td>Part of general collection</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>25,000-30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Regions are based on the Costume Society of America’s designations. See figure 1 for map.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Undergraduate Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
<th>Year of First Job</th>
<th>Time to Get First Job</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Art History, Studio Art</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Textiles and Clothing (TC)</td>
<td>TC History &amp; Museums</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>Before graduation</td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Curatorial Assistant</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>TC History</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>7-9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Conservator</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Anthropology &amp; Sociology</td>
<td>TC Conservation</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>&lt;1 year</td>
<td>&gt;25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Collections Manager</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Textiles and Clothing (TC)</td>
<td>Arts Administration</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Museum Assistant</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>TC History</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Head Curator</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Art History &amp; English</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Before graduation</td>
<td>&gt;25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>English &amp; Renaissance Studies</td>
<td>TC History &amp; Museums</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Head Curator</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Anthropology &amp; TC</td>
<td>TC History</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Before graduation</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>European Studies</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Pseudonyms were used throughout the manuscript. Degrees were abbreviated as follows: Bachelor’s degree as BA and Master’s degree as MS. Textiles and Clothing is abbreviated “TC.”
Although the highest degree held by the majority was a master’s degree \((n=8)\), a bachelor’s degree was the highest degree held by two participants. Interviewees had a variety of scholastic backgrounds with undergraduate majors in anthropology \((n=2)\), art history \((n=2)\), English \((n=2)\), European studies \((n=1)\), and merchandising and design \((n=1)\). The interviewees’ graduate degrees were equally diverse: history of textiles and clothing \((n=3)\), double major in history of textiles and clothing and museum studies \((n=2)\), textiles and clothing conservation \((n=1)\), arts administration \((n=1)\), and unrelated \((n=1)\).

Similar to their diverse backgrounds, the participants’ institutions varied in location, number of objects, and type of collection. One participant worked at an auction house; and therefore, did not have a collection. The number of textiles and clothing objects ranged from less than 3,000 to 35,000: 33 percent had less than 10,000 TC objects \((n=3)\), 44 percent had between 10,000 and 20,000 TC objects \((n=4)\), and 22 percent had over 20,000 TC objects \((n=2)\).

The nine collections were further categorized into three types: stand alone collections, individual collections, and part of a general collection. A “stand alone” collection was not part of a larger museum. The stand alone collections included university collections and museums of textiles and clothing. An “individual collection” was classified by the researcher as a separate department contained within a larger museum. “Part of a general collection” meant that the textiles and clothing collection was included as part of the overall museum. Of the 10 participants, four worked in collections classified as stand alone collections: three of which were university collections and one was a museum devoted to textiles and clothing. Three participants worked in collections classified as “individual collections” at larger museum institutions. Two participants worked in collections classified by the researcher as “part of a general collection.”

*Section 2: Interest in Textiles and Clothing Historic Collections*
The museum professionals came to TCH collections in different ways. Five of the 10 participants described their experiences in depth. Linda had always been interested in museums. She had volunteered as a docent in several different museums since middle school. While pursuing anthropology as a major during undergraduate studies, she added an interdisciplinary minor that included a class on cultural perspectives of dress. She found the course so fascinating that she changed her major to textiles and clothing took a graduate level class: “I took the graduate level conservation class and met other graduate students and learned what graduate school was about and then decided to go to graduate school in textiles and clothing directly.” She was hired as the curator of a TCH collection before she graduated with her master’s degree.

Emily, originally a double major in apparel design and journalism, entered her undergraduate studies with the hopes of becoming a fashion journalist. However, after wandering into a local historical society on a family vacation, she decided to pursue fashion history. The historical society was featuring a fashion history exhibit at the time of her visit. Her mom asked the receptionist if the curator was available: “The receptionist called the curator and I ended up talking to her for a good half an hour about what she does and what it would take for me to get to where she was and […] it sounded fascinating.” The next fall she decided to major in apparel merchandising and design and add a museum studies minor. She continued her education with a master’s degree in arts administration. She explained why she loves fashion studies:

    Things are interesting to look at, but just that you learn so much about history, about people, morals. You learn about their values, you learn what was going on economically. There’s all sorts of different things that you can find out about a person, about a culture through dress.

Laurie frequented a major dress history institution as a child and fell in love with the exhibitions. Although she knew that she wanted to work with historic textiles and clothing, she did not know what path to take. Knowing that she did not want to be a fashion designer, she
majored in English literature. When analyzing literature, she often focused on how the protagonist was dressed. She stated,

I had a very astute professor who pointed out that whenever I analyzed a short story or a novel I was really focused in on what the protagonist was wearing and I would analyze what they were wearing and how it fit in the social context of the time.

Her professors encouraged her to pursue her interest in textiles and clothing. She completed her master’s degree in fashion history and museums.

Both Jack and Emma did not discover their passion for textiles and clothing history until they were in their master’s programs. Jack began his master’s degree in art, but he began his curatorial internship at a museum with a TCH collection. He discovered through this experience that he did not want to become a fashion designer, but realized textiles and clothing history was a perfect combination of fashion and academia. In contrast, Emma worked as a collections assistant in her university’s TCH collection. She said that she just fell in love with the collection. Although the interviewees came to textiles and clothing history in different ways, they followed their passion.

Section 3: Program of Study

Seven of the 10 participants emphasized their interdisciplinary liberal arts education. Ariel attended a small liberal arts college and majored in studio art and art history. She found her broad background very helpful for her career: “I am a huge proponent of a liberal arts education […] I had to take a little bit of everything, which I think is so important.”

Similarly, Jack graduated with a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts in art history and a bachelor’s in English. While in the Mid-Atlantic Region working on his master’s degree in art history he was required to complete a curatorial internship. This internship, however, turned into a full time position; therefore, short-circuiting his completion of his master’s degree. After working in
museums for some time, he decided to go back to school for a master’s in an unrelated field, which he completed and then returned to working in the museum world.

Mike entered the museum world with his Bachelor’s of Arts degree in European Studies. This interdisciplinary degree emphasized a variety of subjects: history, art history, French, and political science. He said he was surprised by how much he utilizes his degree:

I’m always surprised at how much of my degree I actually use. Whether it’s medieval history or ancient Greek and Roman history or 19th century political history. You know, any of the artists in the 19th and 20th on occasion and certainly studying foreign languages has helped worked working at a museum here in a city like this where there’s certainly a lot of exposure to the French language and the French language is still sort of active here in some use. So that’s very helpful too.

Like Ariel, Mike really appreciated his liberal arts education.

Although Laurie’s graduate degree was specifically in textiles and clothing, her undergraduate degree was interdisciplinary. She graduated with a Bachelor’s of Arts in English. Like other participants, Laurie very much appreciated her liberal arts education: “Yeah, I don’t regret [my interdisciplinary education] for anything. It was wonderful and it really added a great flexibility to my thought process.”

Laurie also credited her unique graduate program with preparing her for her career. She reflected on her degree saying:

For what I’m doing right now it was a great preparation […] When I was there it was very hands on. It was very mater-of-fact about what the jobs out there were like, what you would have to learn […] It was a really kinda nuts and bolts degree, but that’s what I needed to get my foot in the door.

She took classes specific to different museum jobs: registrarial, conservation, chemistry relating to conservation, dress making, and curatorial classes. Although she didn’t have a lot of theory, she was required to take art history. She particularly enjoyed a history of jewelry class, which
was taught by an elderly professor whose family had been jewelers for generations. In her classes she learned how to handle objects, do research, and mount exhibits.

In addition to classes, her school required an internship as part of the master’s program. Laurie completed her internship at a museum in the Mid-Atlantic Region. She was very grateful for this opportunity for the collection operates similarly to her collection: “[the collection] operated very much the way I operate here, she [the curator] was very much really left to her own devices and depended on student help.” She loved the internship so much that she continued well past her required semester. She found her program very helpful for preparing her for her position. The only skill that she regretted not learning was grant writing:

We had a class on historic house museums that included a project on grant writing. And I forget why I never took that, but I always regretted that because I have had to write grants and it’s a skill and I mean I’ve gotten better, but it would have been nice to have that experience.

Laurie’s unique education prepared her for her career as a sole staff member of a university TCH collection.

Betty attended the same graduate program as Laurie 10 years later. She described her program as a 50-50 mix of hands-on and research training:

Well my graduate program was really great in terms of hands on training. We had a 50-50 mix of research and curatorial type training: like a lot of art history and fashion history and writing papers and researching and so forth. At the same time we had an equal number of classes on conservation.

Like Laurie, Betty took a number of classes related to specific museum skills: museum management, mannequin dressing, collections management, mounting, and conservation classes. Because of her interest in conservation, she took most of the science and conservation classes offered. She found this was particularly relevant to her work: “I understand when we seek the advice of a conservator or we seek a specific type of treatment. I really understand that process.
It also helps in recording that information [fiber type, dye, condition, etc.] about the object.” In her current position, she constantly uses her knowledge of storage solutions, archival materials, and mounting objects.

Unlike Betty’s graduate program which was very specialized, her undergraduate program was broad enough to give her larger understanding of the world. When asked if there was anything she would change about her program of study, she mentioned being exposed to the appraisal process and the vintage market:

One thing that we didn’t really talk about much is that when you work in a museum collection you are having to understand the value of these items monetarily. So the one thing, as a registrar, that I left off of all my job duties is I manage all the incoming and outgoing loans, so I have to make sure the valuation provided by lender is correct or I have to provide a valuation if we’re leaving something out. A lot of times it’s a really tricky market because there are several different ways of approaching the market: there’s the wearable market and then the collectible market.

Additionally Betty felt that her program lacked in classes on registrarial skills: “Yea, I didn’t learn much about loans. A lot of things a registrar does, you don’t learn in school really.” Betty did learn these skills through her internships and her job.

Elizabeth, a conservator in the Mid-Atlantic Region, earned her undergraduate degree in art history and sociology. As a result, she needed to take an extra year of prerequisite classes for her master’s degree in textile conservation. In this first year she focused on the sciences. She said that in addition to textile science, organic chemistry was the most important class: “You need to be able to understand the materials you are using: the dyes and the treatments.” In addition to her textile conservation degree, she found her program in patternmaking very helpful: “It helps me understand how to build stabilizers, how garments are constructed, and sometimes we make garments from the originals.” Elizabeth found that her degree; which stressed hand skills, fiber identification, organic chemistry, and textile science, was essential to her work.
Linda’s undergraduate degree was in anthropology with a minor in textiles and clothing related to social change. She completed her master’s degree in textiles and clothing history at the same university as her undergraduate degree. In her graduate program, she found the amount of hands on artifact analysis helpful:

There was also a lot of hands-on artifact [analysis] in classes and that was very very useful primarily through history of costume, and history of textiles, and cultural perspectives on dress those were some of the fairly artifact heavy courses that where those where very useful.

She also found that the textile science and conservation courses helped her with fiber identification and identifying the best storage and treatment solutions for the object. She could not emphasize enough how important the research and writing practice was:

I seem to be drawing on a lot is the research and writing emphasis and we certainly had to research and write for certain courses but also the thesis I think that regardless of what your thesis was one the research and writing has been excellent training for what I do here.

She appreciated that her graduate program pushed her to turn her term papers into scholarly articles. As a curator, she needs to write concise and interesting didactics. She said she learned how to do this through writing abstracts in her graduate classes and taking essay tests in her undergraduate classes. In addition to her classes, she had a work study with the university art museum.

When asked what she could have changed about her program of study, she said having more theory, a merchandising class, and a research methods class. She explained that she would have enjoyed more emphasis on theoretical history classes and the theoretical basis for cultural studies. She also would have liked to have taken merchandising “because it ties in to the exhibition of objects the idea of displaying something to its best advantage in a way that is eye catching and very appealing; I think there are tie-ins to exhibition work.” Finally, she started in
the spring and her required research methods class was not offered during her two years. In hindsight, she said the class could have prepared her for writing didactics because of the amount of abstracts students needed to write for the class.

Twenty years later, Emma attended the same graduate program as Linda. Emma completed her undergraduate degree in apparel merchandising with a minor in marketing. In her graduate program, Emma focused on history of textiles and clothing, conservation, and museum studies. Through her program she learned:

A general way of thinking about how to accession items. For instance, the example that comes to mind: you will learn a numbering system. Every museum is different, […] but having the base information down like most numbering systems are the year that it was accessioned, for instance, the donor, you know, and then the object like .1 or .5 depending on how many objects come into a group. Having that type of knowledge then being able to apply it realistically to a collection.

She also learned about conservation. This knowledge has helped her properly display and store objects, order archival supplies, and handle objects safely. In addition, to her class work, Emma was very involved in the university’s TCH collection, through which she developed her research, curatorial, and exhibit installation skills. She also taught the museum studies class for two semesters. When discussing what she could have done differently, she mentioned taking a grant writing class. She also would have chosen a program that was more museum-focused. I think I was trying to carve out within the […] curriculum my own little way for textile and clothing history and museums, which taking an already narrow field and making it smaller. It’s not to say that [the program was] a bad program, but I don’t think I knew what I was really getting myself into.

Even though she focused much of her energy into the collection, Emma struggled to find employment after her graduate program.

Emily also struggled with her graduate program, which was not textiles and clothing specific; rather, her program focused on arts administration. Like Emma, she would not have attended her
graduate school again. She would have changed two major things about the program: the faculty’s receptiveness to fashion history and taken the first section of the fashion theory class. Emily had a lot of trouble presenting her thesis because she felt as if her committee wrote her off:

My panel when I was proposing my thesis was really one of the worst educational/professional experiences of my life. Just because they did not get what I was saying. I think the word fashion and the word costume and dress, I think these words. I think they had these preconceived notions of what I was going to be talking about, they didn’t actually listen to what I was saying because when I stepped up and said: ‘This is what I’m going to be talking about and I’m going to define these words. And I defined the word costume. And I defined the word fashion. And I defined the word dress.’ And then I sat down and I started presenting my thing and they asked me questions, and it was clear they hadn’t even listened to my intro where I defined those words.

She believed that this was partially due to the fact that the professors did not see the value in studying fashion.

She did, however, gain experience in museums through her graduate assistantship in the school’s TCH collection. She found a mentor in the director of the collection and followed her example. Under her mentor’s guidance, she developed mannequin dressing and object handling skills. She explained why she focused her efforts in the collection: “there was no really fashion track, that’s why I had to go seek out through work, through my graduate assistantship.” Unlike her broad graduate program, she specialized in textiles and clothing for her bachelor’s degree. She supplemented her apparel merchandising and design degree with a museum studies minor. Instead of really tailoring her knowledge during her graduate program, she broadened her knowledge to include the administrative side of the art world. She did admit that she does not use the knowledge she gained through her master’s degree on a daily basis.

Finally, Catherine completed her undergraduate degree with a major in apparel design with an emphasis on tailoring. She completed her master’s work in textiles and clothing history in the
Southeastern Region before moving to the Western Region for a job. Although she did not discuss specific classes, she did say that her assistantship in the university’s TCH collection taught her skills necessary to the museum world: numbering, accessioning, cataloguing, object handling, mounting, and housing. As a graduate assistant with the collection, she “had this great opportunity to help set up Past Perfect which is the museum software that they are now using. It was just really wonderful.” In addition, the university also gave her “full classes where I was the instructor too, so I got a lot of great teaching experience. So I knew that I could do that.” Finally, Catherine practiced writing travel grants:

My advisor was really wonderful about helping me to learn how to write grants. Like grants for travel money. I was really supported with doing as much travel as possible. So I was able to do a study abroad in Ghana with African dress and adornment. Really great opportunities. And I think that really helped shape me.

Her advisor also encouraged her to write and submit as many papers as possible to both regional and national conferences. Catherine had a unique combination of experiences through her master’s program that prepared her for her current position as a curatorial assistant.

Overall, participants appreciated their educations on some level. Each participant, whether or not they completed a bachelor’s or master’s degree in the textiles and clothing field learned skills relevant to their museum careers. Seven (70%) of the ten attended an interdisciplinary program and cited that their ability to think of things in a larger context and have a larger sense of the world has been very beneficial. Two of these seven and two of those who attended a textiles and clothing specific program gained experience working in their university’s TCH collection: exhibit installation, mounting and mount making, dressing mannequins, conservation, fiber identification, object handling, cataloguing, accessioning, and artifact analysis. Not all of these seven, however, learned these skills in the classroom. Six (60%) attended a program that taught textiles and clothing history.
Section 4: Experience Outside of the Classroom

Whether required or on their own time, nine (90%) respondents either completed an internship or volunteered at a museum. This experience outside of the classroom expanded their museum-related skill set, allowed them to use their classroom knowledge practically, exposed them to the “real” museum world, and introduced them to other professionals in the field.

Although Betty’s first internship was not in a museum, but in a fashion designer’s archive, she practiced her mannequin dressing skills and learned how to photograph objects. While interning in this corporate archive, she learned an important cataloguing lesson:

It was really good to see how the Filemaker worked as a database and cataloguing […] At some point during my time there they actually lost the entire database. My biggest lesson was to back up and to be really careful about who has access to [the database].

Working in this environment exposed her to working in a corporate world.

Her other corporate archives internship was in a fashion publishing company’s archive. Her job there was to re-house slides of historic fashion. She said the slides were originally housed in “a nice leaky basement and in like file boxes that were just disgusting.” She also helped to identify and organize slides pertaining to one designer. She felt that she benefitted from this project:

It was really great research experience. And it coincided […] nicely with the big exhibition that we did here on the wardrobe of [a main client of the same designer]. I had looked at a lot of [the designer’s] collections on slides and sorted through them […] The whole process of understanding the value of primary source material was I think what was really valuable.

Because both archives were owned by corporations, they had “a different mentality” than museums. She said that one really needs to “sell the idea” of museum standards when in a corporate setting. Second, she noted that “as part of the money making business, everything had to be dropped at the mention of anything being done in terms of research.” Finally, the
publication company charged researchers a fee to access their archives. Clearly, the archives were a secondary concern for corporations.

In addition to working with corporate archives, Betty also interned and volunteered at a large museum with a standalone TCH collection in the Western Region. There she learned how to make buckram mannequins and about the exhibit planning process. She also used her housing skills that she learned in her program of study and previous internships. Betty held that doing internships in different settings helped prepare her for her current position as an assistant registrar.

Similarly, Emily interned at a variety of institutions. As an undergraduate, she interned at two museums with prominent TCH collections: one in the Western Region and one in the Mid-Atlantic Region. She also interned at many smaller museums. During her graduate program, she completed an internship in the same city as her program. She maintained that internships were crucial for her success because they enhanced her object handling skills and exposed her to museum paperwork.

Both Catherine and Mike interned at their local history museum. Mike appreciated his experience at his state’s history museum because it familiarized him with the museum’s staffing structure and the interdisciplinary nature of museum work. He continues to collaborate with other departments on projects such as exhibitions. Catherine’s internship at her city’s history center introduced her to museological skills: object handling, storage techniques and strategies, mounting objects for exhibition, and photography. She believed that because of this experience, her graduate program gave her an assistantship in the university’s TCH collection. She appreciated this opportunity:
I worked [at the city’s history center] prior to my graduate school and so because of that they [the department] automatically thought that I would be good in the collection […] And I think that was really helpful because I could help with collections.

Both Mike and Catherine found that their internships gave them insight into the museum world.

Like Emily and Catherine, Linda volunteered in museums before her graduate program. She had been volunteering in gift shops and as a docent since middle school. Linda explained how her wide experience helped shape her career: “On my own I had amassed art history, living history, and science museum experience. So that helped inform my choice to go toward a history museum, not toward another kind of museum.” Again, volunteering gave Linda an insider perspective.

Like Betty, Laurie and Jack were required to do at least one internship for their master’s degrees. Laurie interned at a museum in the same city as her graduate program. She remembered that she loved it so much that she extended her internship well beyond her required semester. Laurie realized that the curator at that museum was much like her in her current position; in that, they both were a department of one. This experience prepared Laurie for her current position by not only exposing her to this type of work environment, but also by allowing her to practice skills she learned in school: object handling, conservation, and registrarial duties. She also did an “informal internship” at the museum where she obtained her first job. This allowed her to make an impression on her future employers.

Similarly, Jack completed an internship at a museum in the city of his graduate program. During his internship, he specialized in making props and mounts including wigs, Manchurian fingernail guards, and even a hand painted 18th century parasol. He reflected on his internship, saying that it:
showed [him] a path in between [fashion design and art history] where [he] could observe and interpret a subject area that [he] really love[s], which is fashion and so to have the academic conforming with it and also [his] real engagement with contemporary design.

His knowledge of dressing mannequins and proficient hand skills caught the attention of his supervisor, who encouraged him to apply to a position at a different institution. Later, he would return to this museum for the remainder of his career.

After graduating from her master’s program, Emma interned and volunteered in the museum world while she looked for a job. Her freelance work as a textile conservator for a historic home led her to her curatorial internship at a different local historical house museum.

When I told the curator at the Estate that I had conservation experience, I think she misinterpreted what I was saying in as I am a conservator and I can do this no problem. And she was like: “I’d love to have you take a look at this.” And then I have this furniture project. I had no idea what I was doing […] So I just grabbed all of my conservation books and my textile book and just taught myself and learned as I went.

Through this project, she taught herself conservation techniques from books. With this expanded knowledge, Emma sought an internship with a different historic house museum. After working with the conservator there for some time, she moved into working with the curator. For this curatorial internship, she developed her research skills. Not only did she apply her conservation and research knowledge in a practical way, but she also continued to gain experience. She believed that employers appreciated that she was continuing to be active in the museum world, doing research, and presenting that research at national conferences.

Four of the nine (44%) participants who completed internships or volunteered discussed how their internships taught them new skills. Emma learned conservation techniques, while Jack learned how to make accessories. Betty, Jack, and Catherine were introduced to mounting through their internships. Both Betty and Catherine expanded their skills to include object
handling, housing, and storage strategies. Emma, Laurie, and Betty stressed that their internships gave them the opportunity to practically apply their knowledge gained in academic settings.

Five participants appreciated that their internships/volunteering exposed them to the museum world. Laurie was able to see how a department with one staff functioned, while Mike became familiar with the staffing structure of museums. Because of her exposure to many types of museums, Linda chose to pursue history. Jack discovered that he was a costume historian through his exposure to the museum world. Finally, Betty observed the difference between museums and corporate archives.

Six of the nine (67%) participants who completed internships or volunteered emphasized that their internships led to future opportunities. Through her work as a free lance conservator, Emma was introduced to the curator she would later intern under. Mike, Laurie, Jack, Elizabeth, and Betty volunteered or interned at the museums that would eventually hire them.

Interning and volunteering introduced new and reinforced existing museological skills. These skills included housing and storage, mount making, object handling, conservation, research, cataloguing, and justifying museum work. When looking for jobs, participants stressed that employers appreciated their ability to apply these skills to a collection.

Section 5: Job Responsibilities

When describing their job responsibilities, interview participants often used words such as “everything.” According to Emma, a museum assistant, “My job responsibilities are a little bit of everything: I do collection management, I do curating, I do registrar. I update Past Perfect, new accessions. I do event planning. Pretty much anything.” Like Emma, Emily, a collections manager, also noted a variety of job responsibilities: curating exhibitions, maintaining the
database, public outreach, and working with other departments on campus. Similarly, Laurie, a curator in a collection of one staff member, agreed:

I need to be able to do everything, I need to be able to do the paperwork, I need to write the loan paperwork, I need to do deed of gifts, I need to do everything: basic conservation and I need to know when I hire [a conservator], I need to know enough about conservation to hire her.

All three participants, regardless of job title, stated their job responsibilities included grant writing, accessioning, deaccessioning, maintaining the database, curating, cataloguing, managing volunteers, housing objects, and handling public inquiries in their job responsibilities. All three completed research, whether it was for exhibits or papers to be presented at national conferences. Because they worked in university settings, both Laurie and Emily also had teaching obligations in addition to their collection work.

Similarly, Catherine, a curatorial assistant at a large institution, had trouble describing her job responsibilities because she was in charge of a number of different duties at her standalone TCH collection of over 20,000 objects and multiple staff in a large museum.

It’s difficult for me to say what my daily duties are. One of the main factors of my job is to shepherd through new acquisitions and deaccessions. So I do a lot of coordination with vendors, donors. I work a lot with registrar to kind of do the work of shipping off art into museums and um kind of figuring out the legal status of things. I work with artists who give gifts, people all over the world. So that’s a big part of my job. Another part is that I work with exhibitions.

Catherine also worked closely with the textiles and clothing curators to pull and photograph objects for consideration for exhibition. In addition to her own research, she researches, writes papers for presentations, and writes didactic panels and exhibit catalogues. For exhibits, she created accessories including wigs and some jewelry. She recently stated her responsibilities were growing to include curating and installing small exhibitions.
Like Catherine, Betty, a registrar, worked with multiple staff in a 15,000 object standalone collection. Although Betty’s TCH collection is part of a university, she also has many job responsibilities and stressed the importance of flexibility and patience. In addition to the traditional registrarial duties of maintaining records, tracking objects, and inventorying the collection, Betty’s job includes: textile mounting, vacuuming objects, dressing mannequins, researching, managing interns, photographing objects, and managing visual assets. She emphasized that she really has two job titles: “In a way we all have two job titles. So mine is registrar and digital asset manager and someday we’ll be able to grow and take on our job responsibilities more exclusively and become more departmentalized.” It is evident that having multiple job duties is not only characteristic of small collections with one or two staff, but can be found in all sizes of collections.

One job duty that transcended job titles was mentoring interns and managing volunteers. Professionals felt fortunate to have interns. According to Mike, a textiles and clothing curator, “I’m very fortunate that I get to work with interns pretty much every semester. So I work with people that are considering moving into curatorial work.” Often, interns and volunteers shared the job responsibilities of the professional staff with close supervision. Emily stated, “And then a large part of what I’m trying to do with the collection is upgrade the storage, so I’m leading a team of volunteers. So last semester I lead them to make hat mounts and this semester we’re making padded hangers.” Betty illustrated how she manages interns:

I was for the first year, but this past year I’m basically managing a whole schedule, a full schedule of interns and volunteers that cataloguing can get done. I spend all my time basically making sure they’re trained and they’re doing things properly. They do the object labeling and I just check everything. It’s really interesting to go from spending the whole day cataloguing as the assistant registrar to just making sure it gets done and just being kind of, I don’t know, traffic monitor (laughs) of the flow of objects. So yea, it’s been really interesting. There are certain projects where I have one volunteer working on that project and I’m letting it go and it’s gonna take another year. It’s going to take
another 3 years for that volunteer to finish that project, but it doesn’t have to happen immediately because those objects aren’t going anywhere.

Each participant, including the Ariel (auctioneer) and Elizabeth (conservator), discussed managing interns.

Mike, a textiles and clothing curator at a state museum agreed with the other curators in the study that research was an essential feature of his job. He emphasized the number of projects that he was working on at the time of the interview including planning an exhibition, researching, managing interns, cataloguing, storing and housing objects, and accommodating research requests. With this much multi-tasking for such a large collection spread out over five buildings, he described how he needed to be “hyper-organized:”

In terms of being able to track collections, storage locations, the movement of collections. We have master files of all of our original signed documents and catalogue worksheets and photographs. Of course, we also have our inventory database. So, at any given time if I’m suddenly hit by a bus and can’t tell anybody where everything is, then everything should be trackable.

This “hyper-organization” was also very important, he said, if someone retired or resigned. The person who retired or resigned often took with them institutional memory, including a knowledge of where objects were, how storage was organized, why a certain lexicon or numbering system was used, etc.

Although Jack did not elaborate extensively on his current job responsibilities, he did discuss what skills he used every day. In his current position as chief curator, his job was more administrative and supervisory. Therefore, he stated he needed to be able to write well, speak clearly and lucidly, constantly negotiate situations, and manage people. As a historian, however, he said, he needed to be “somewhat inventive about approaches to interpretation and history.” In addition to this creativity, there are technical skills that he relies on, including object handling and what he calls “a critical eye.” “You have to have a critical eye to be able to look at
something and say: That has been altered. That’s in a state where it’s going to disintegrate.” To the researcher, he seemed disheartened when he mentioned how little time he was able to spend conducting research. Elizabeth, a conservator at a museum devoted solely to textiles and clothing, described her main duty was to care for the collection. This included caring for any object that was on loan or traveling:

I will supervise the packing of the crate. The objects will be put in the truck. I will be there for the reception of the objects, the opening of the crates, and the installation of the objects. And then same thing at the end, the returning. I will be there for deinstallation and the delivery of the object.

Her job also included researching storage techniques, products, and strategies. She also prepared objects for exhibit, helped design proper mounts for objects, and worked with curators to properly mount objects on display. Finally, she grants public requests including giving talks and lectures on proper care and conservation practices.

Although Ariel, an auctioneer in the vintage couture and accessories market, does not work in a TCH collection, she does work with museums. Her job duties include: estimating auction values, researching authenticity, getting property to sell, “curating” and working with museums to sell their deaccessions or help them to acquire objects. She described curating as:

Basically just deciding what is right for our market and what will sell best in our market because we get a lot of potential phone calls of items that might just go on hold. So I need to make sure I’m putting together a collection that will not only sell in our market, but also kind of work off one another and sell to the best of their ability. Like if there are too many very similar garments, dress, I should probably hold off and wait on those for another auction and decide basically what is gonna uh entice the buyer so for Galanos, of the say 15 dresses, what 7 will do best together.

She further described how she works with museums to help with the deaccessioning and acquiring processes:

So the way we work with museums is in a deaccession capacity. […] We are always looking to have use of name in a deaccession within a museum capacity, whereas museums it’s really tricky because someone donated that and it took, you know, they
wanted it to remain in their archives, so people can get offended if the museum turns around and sells it. Whereas a lot of people in the museum world would say “You know, we need money. We’re a museum, an organization that’s not-for-profit and this is how we need to raise money to you know basically keep our acquisitions to the best of, to the best of they can be. You know what I mean? That’s how we work with museums.

She also explained that museums refer business to the auction house if the museum already has the object that a donor is planning to donate. Finally, Ariel has given lectures. Ariel learned all of her skills in her position at the auction house.

Even in large museums, job responsibilities did not seem to be completely aligned with the job title. Many job titles shared job responsibilities. For instance, two curators (Laurie and Mike), the museum assistant (Emma), and the registrar (Betty) all catalogued objects and maintained the museum’s database. Similarly, the museum assistant (Emma), collections manager (Emily), two curators (Laurie and Linda), registrar (Betty), and conservator (Elizabeth) worked to upgrade and maintain storage facilities. The auctioneer (Ariel), curatorial assistant (Catherine), and museum assistant (Emma) related that one of their job responsibilities included being a liaison between donors and the museum. In addition, many of the participants indicated that they had done some outreach or education as part of their jobs: Mike and Catherine planned events for professional organizations; Emily and Laurie taught; Linda handles public inquiries and requests; and Ariel, Betty, and Elizabeth provided lectures and workshops.

Section 6: Job Path

When discussing their paths to their current positions, many participants felt that they were lucky or were in the right place at the right time. Jack was asked, in the 1980s, to apply to his first job as an associate curator. While completing his master’s degree in art, he completed a curatorial internship in a standalone TCH collection hoping to become recognized as a fashion designer in the mid 1970s. During his internship, he realized that he was not a fashion designer,
but a costume historian. Impressed with his work, a colleague asked him to apply for an associate curator position at a museum. Although he never completed his master’s degree in art, he was hired because of his museum experience. At this first job as an associate curator, he really learned about historical fashion:

The whole benefit though of that job was the skill set that I acquired through it was: the director was going through a culling of the collection. He was going through a deaccessioning process and so I was there to help him review every single thing in the collection as he was going through and making selections of things he was going to deaccession and that was an extraordinary kind of seminar in costume or fashion forensics […] It was really really wonderful. It was really through that, that I know most of what I know about clothing.

From this job he completed a master’s degree in an unrelated field. Finally, he was asked to serve as chief curator and oversee the TCH collection.

Elizabeth, who graduated from a textile conservation program in the 1980s, received a two year fellowship directly out of her graduate program. Again, she considered herself very lucky: “I was again very fortunate. My supervisor at the museum became pregnant when I was there and I was asked to stay one more year to replace her. So that’s very lucky.” Her luck continued as she was offered a temporary position at a well known conservation institute, which eventually turned into a full time position.

Linda, who obtained a job as a textile curator before she graduated, in the early 1990s, from her master’s program, stated:

Absolutely I think it was a lot of the being in the right place at the right time because my experience has been definitely unusual. I think a lot of people start as an assistant something or they start in slightly different position and work their way up to curator, and I got lucky and started right in.

This unique experience was made possible by a professor’s recommendation. Linda served as the textile curator at her employing museum for 19 years before a number of layoffs forced her job
responsibilities to expand to include the general collection. The museum then changed her title to chief curator.

Like Jack, Mike does not have a master’s degree related to the field of historic dress. Additionally, Mike feels that he was extremely lucky to get the curator position when he did: “I just turned about 28 when I got the job officially. I actually did not have a master’s. I kind of snuck in in a way.” Like many of the other participants, Mike volunteered at his current museum for six months after he graduated college. After finally being hired in 1994, he worked in different departments before becoming the assistant to the costume curator. Through his various positions, he discovered that he always wanted to work in collections, and in 1996 he had that opportunity:

And I was always lucky enough in 1996 to serve as an assistant to the costume and textiles curator at the time who was mounting an exhibition of eveningwear. That gave me my first big taste of what it takes to mount a large costume exhibition because I believe there were between 40 and 50 exhibition displaying both male and female eveningwear going back to the 1890s. It was a survey of 100 years of eveningwear from the 1890s to the 1990s. Shortly after that exhibition closed, the curator announced that she was moving on to another museum and I essentially begged the director for this job. And he gave it to me.

At the time of his predecessor’s resignation, Mike was looking at graduate schools for his master’s degree. According to Mike, he was not the best candidate on paper, but had an intimate knowledge of the collection and the process of mounting large textiles and clothing exhibits. He noted that he was hired because the museum was in a unique position:

We were working on a very large costume exhibition that was opening about a year and a half later and he wanted somebody who could dive right in, rather than have a long interim period of search and then bringing in someone from the outside because it was something that was specific to [state’s] culture. So it was easier to have someone with a familiarity with [state’s] history and costume traditions.
Similar to other participants, Mike felt that he was in the right place at the right time. He emphasized that he made himself indispensible by being enthusiastic about costume, helping install a large exhibition, and putting in extra time and effort.

Laurie also got a job before she graduated, in the 1990s, from her master’s program in history of fashion and museums. Although it was a part time job, she considered herself lucky because it allowed her to take on other part time museum jobs and build her experience. She elaborated:

I consider myself very lucky because I managed to get a part time job […] dressing the mannequins for [the museum’s] archival photography. So, I got to see objects. I got to handle objects. And I got paid. That was great. And that allowed me to take on other part time jobs. So, I took a job at [a second museum]. I took a job at [a third museum]. It gave me a little bit of breathing room. And I, I was lucky. I was absolutely lucky that I got that part time job because I got that like a week before I graduated. Yea, totally lucky, but otherwise I don’t know if I would be able to swing it.

Laurie continued to work in a variety of museum settings until she got her full time job two years after graduation. Like Betty, she volunteered at her first museum and made herself indispensible. She illustrated this by saying “it was because I made myself known to them: I had volunteered, I had said ‘Ok, I’ll help you dress mannequins for the next exhibition, Ok, I’ll stay late.’” She emphasized being flexible, being seen, giving a lot, and staying active in the museum community as factors for her success. She made herself known to the museum world and applied to any job she could. She also put a lot of heart and soul into her work, by working long hours and volunteering whenever possible. She continued to write papers and present at national conferences while she was looking for her full time job.

Emily also completed a number of internships before obtaining her first full time position three months after graduation. As an undergraduate student she completed two internships at well known institutions: one in the Western region and one in the Mid-Atlantic region. Upon graduating, she was hired as a collections technician at the same institution in the Mid-Atlantic
region on a grant. While doing her graduate program in the Midwest, she interned at a
predominant history museum with a well established TCH collection. To keep her options open,
Emily applied for a variety of jobs both general museum jobs and those specifically related to
TCH collections. Gaining experience through her various internships and her graduate
assistantship in her college’s TCH collection, Emily was able to apply for and get her current
position as a collections manager in a university collection.

Like Linda, Betty obtained her job before she graduated from her master’s program in the
early 2000s. In fact, she finished her thesis during her first year in her new position. Betty
described her path as a set of fortuitous circumstances: “I found out about a job opening coming
up here. So it was just one of those things: professional development, alumni, everything that
you’re told to do worked in this flow of good luck really.” After interning at a different museum
in the same region, Betty attended a conference and met a number of professionals at her current
museum. Her department chair advised her to contact an alumnus from her program, while she
was in the area. The alumnus was leaving the assistant registrar position, and Betty applied
immediately. Reflecting on the experience, Betty said: “I came out for an interview and
volunteered with them when they were installing [an annual] exhibition. So I actually spent a
couple days getting to know everyone here and helping dress mannequins […] And I just kind of
made myself indispensible.” She also believed that it was to her advantage to apply 2,500 miles
away from where she did her master’s program because it showed the museum that she was
willing to travel.

Although it took Emma longer to get her part time position at a small state museum, she, like
Emily, completed a number of internships and some freelance work. At first, Emma had a hard
transition:
I was looking for a job for almost 2 years after I graduated, and I think I had an unrealistic expectation when I graduated. Because I had a master’s degree, automatically, I wouldn’t say entitled, but on the right level just to step in as curator or to step in as any higher end job.

She applied for 50-70 jobs before getting her current part time position. Emma agreed with other participants and could not emphasize how hard and exhausting the job search was. When looking at the American Association of Museum’s job listing, she “learned really quickly that museums were looking for 5 to 7 years of experience or 3 to 5 years [years of experience]. Counting my assistantship, if you even counted that as experience, I wasn’t going to have that.” While she was applying for jobs, Emma did not stay stagnant; rather, she continued to build her resume. She did a small conservation project for a local historic house museum, where she continued researching and wrote a paper for presentation at CSA. She believed that this independent research was the reason she obtained her current position.

Like Emma, Ariel, an auctioneer in the Midwest, did not acquire her first job until two years after she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in art history and studio art. She claimed that she was just in the “right place at the right time.” She described her job hunt experience:

Yea, sorta just right place, right time in all honesty. I happened to be attending a preview and the director of the department then was leaving and I just got talking to [the head of the auction house] and I know a lot about the subject matter and you know, it's sort of a new arena of departments at auction houses.

Finally, Catherine obtained her full time position three years after graduating from earning her master’s degree. If she did not get a museum job within the first three years of graduation, she would go back to school for her doctorate and teach. Following the advice of her mentor, Catherine interned at local history museums and worked in the university’s TCH collection during her graduate school. After moving from the Southeastern region where she went to school, Catherine moved to the Western region in search of a job. She had many interim jobs,
such as being an adjunct faculty, theater costume designer, and in high school teaching. She described how discouraged she was while she was looking for museum work: “I wouldn’t have known about the job openings for my current position without my advisor letting me know because at that point, I had kind of given up looking at museum jobs. That’s after searching for awhile.” After applying for the job it took six months for the museum to officially offer her the job.

Participants put themselves in the position to be “lucky:” they sought out as much experience as possible, offered to work late, and made themselves indispensible. Overall, participants stressed how much museum experience they had before obtaining their full time jobs. Five of the 10 participants interned, volunteered, or held temporary positions at the institution of their first job. Many participants discussed the importance of making oneself indispensible by volunteering, working late, taking on extra projects, and exhibiting passion. Furthermore, many participants emphasized how difficult the job search was. Finally, participants stressed how lucky they felt to have received a steady job in the museum world.

Section 7: Networking

Eight of the 10 participants maintained memberships with the Costume Society of America (CSA). Ariel, the auctioneer, and Elizabeth, the conservator, were not members of CSA, but were members of societies specific to their field. Of the eight participants that were members of CSA, seven found the community very important to their professional development. According to Laurie,

CSA has been great. CSA, I think, just the idea that CSA existed was really important to me. When I was a student the opportunity to give presentations in a professional forum was tremendous. It gave me a great confidence. It also gave me a sense of where I sit in the field because it wasn’t just me spinning my wheels and doing my little research. I was sharing it with people and getting feedback. That was really wonderful.
Several members appreciated how CSA has built their “textile self esteem.” Networking through CSA has provided professionals with a community to share scholarship, expertise, and experience. Linda stated, “If I am curious as to how other kinds of intuitions have exhibited an object or if they have done a certain approach to storage or exhibition. I can just call them up.”

Mike felt the same way and elaborated:

I made friends from all over the world and now have these connections and know about the expertise of my colleagues around the country and around the world to a point that if there’s a question about something I can’t find an answer to, but I know that Joe Smith in Montana is a specialist in this particular field of research that I can go to him and create a professional relationship or research relationship with somebody like that.

Of the seven professionals who were active members in CSA, many felt that CSA provided a wonderful place to network and share solutions to various challenges they faced daily.

In contrast Jack was a member of both CSA and the Association of Museum Curators, but was not very active. He cited his exhibit and publication schedule as the reason:

I’m really not an active participant and it’s a bad thing, but realistically we just can’t handle it. And I would say that a significant portion of my staff doesn’t even hold a membership because their life is just so consumed by keeping up with our schedule of publications and exhibitions.

Earlier in his career, however, he networked by being seen and staying in touch with former colleagues. This networking strategy led to his first job as an associate curator and then his return to his current museum.

Of the eight participants who were members of CSA, five were members of additional professional organizations including American Association of Museums (AAM) and state museum associations. Although Mike was no longer a member of AAM, he did say that it was crucial to the beginning of his career:

because I was able to meet other people in museums from all over the country and really see how they do their jobs and also to see examples of best practices that the museum industry in museums that are larger than mine is.
Similarly, Emily and Betty both found that AAM was crucial to their understanding of the museum world and allowed them to share expertise with fellow museum professionals. Both Emily and Betty both avidly read the Registrar’s Listserv. In addition to her institution’s membership, she got an individual membership. Betty reflected on her experience:

I also ended up getting an individual membership because I wanted to join the Registrar’s Committee and I read the listserv all the time and it’s completely indispensable for me. I don’t think I would really know what a registrar should do without it. In terms of practical, real life situations, it’s really great.

Emily, a collections manager, shared many of the same feelings about the listserv. She noted that the Registrar’s Listserv is still helpful for her as a collections manager because she deals with some of the same issues that a registrar might. She illustrated how the listserv has helped her:

When I was trying to figure out what nomenclature we were going to use, um for the database that we are setting up right now here. I sent a message to listserv. It’s just really smart people. Most of them are registrars, but there are a lot of collections managers because AAM doesn’t have a collection manager committee.

Although Linda was not personally a member of AAM, her institution was a member. Emma was also a member and uses the job postings on the web site. Members maintained that they received many of the same benefits from AAM as they did from CSA: community, confidence, and professional development. AAM offered workshops and lectures on best practices in museums, whereas CSA focused more on textiles and clothing history.

Two participants also discussed membership in other organizations. First, Elizabeth mentioned the benefits of the American Institute of Conservation, the Canadian Institution of Professional Conservator (CIPC), and the Canadian Museum Association (CMA). One benefit she discussed was the different membership and award levels. Reflecting on her own experience of obtaining grants for her conservation training, she emphasized that AIC and CMA have different competitive levels:
AIC offers some grants for training for which you can apply. They will be for student, intermediate, and advanced levels of the profession, which I think is good because it allows everybody to apply then. You don’t always compete with the top ones. You may not be chosen if they just look at your qualification. So it’s good that they have different levels to answer the need of different people.

She also agreed with previous participants in saying that the field is collaborative and that organization websites are one forum: “They have a website with job postings. They [the websites] have a lot of exchange. So those are very useful for getting information. It’s a field; I feel that we want to share information. And for me this is really important.” Second, Ariel, the auctioneer, was actively involved in her subject matter. She belongs to the local museum’s costume council and the Women’s Jewelry Association (WJA). Like other participants, Ariel appreciated the lectures and also gave lectures. She viewed membership in these organizations as “just kind of another way to give back.” Both Elizabeth and Ariel find professional organizations helpful.

Many participants networked at conferences and symposia. Emily, Emma, and Jack said that being seen was really crucial to their careers. Emily said that just talking to people at symposia helped her get her job:

And I really feel like the reason I have my job today is because I went to the […] symposium. I had met my boss prior to that symposium, but didn’t really know her really well, and ended up in a group at dinner with her. And realized “Hey, she works at [my current university] and I submitted an application for this job.” And so we started talking and lo and behold, then I got a call for an interview. So, I really feel that really being able to talk to other people in the field has really helped me. It’s given me confidence and I’ve gotten good advice from people. And I got this job, I think, because of networking through Costume Society.

Both Mike and Betty stressed that regional and local conferences were very important to their networking. Mike was able to connect with people in his region as he climbed up the ladder. Betty attended the registrar committee’s luncheon in her region and was able to connect with
other professionals on a personal basis. In addition, Betty named loans as another networking opportunity: “It’s a grueling process where everything’s hammered out, so to also meet those people kind of through the email chain. You meet people that way and then you want to meet them outside of that.”

Like Betty, Emma has used unique ways to learn about jobs and opportunities. She used LinkedIn®, Google Alerts®, word of mouth, and attending lectures to connect with other professionals in the field. Although, she admits, she is not as active on LinkedIn as she might like, she has had some success with Google Alerts®:

Through Google Alerts®, I found a lecture announcement [...] And I was like “Oh, even if I’m not really interested in Lighthouse papers, which was the topic, I still want to go and see who shows up to these type of events” [...] And I was able to. I made lots of connections just going down there.

By going to this lecture, Emma started a small project with a local historical society to keep her resume active.

Most participants viewed professional organizations like Costume Society of America, American Association of Museums, and state and regional organizations as essential to their professional development. Not only did participants attend conferences and symposia, but they also kept in contact with other professionals. This contact could be through email, a research relationship, a common blog like the Registrar Listserv, or other forms. Participants felt that this community gave them confidence, feedback, support, inspiration, professional development, a forum for sharing expertise and more.

Section 8: Museum Changes and Challenges

The ten participants stated museums changed since they first started. Participants discussed that accessibility, education, an internet presence, and funding were increasing concerns to museums. Other participants discussed the changing requirements of staff and training programs.
Still others described how the museum’s role in the community was changing. Finally, museum professionals specified what skills were becoming more needed.

Museums’ missions have always included education and ability to access the collections.

Mike said that there is a push to make collections more accessible:

The issue of accessibility is a lot more important and is something that we spend a lot more time on. And when I say accessibility I mean the amount that we share with the public about our collection by creating not only physical exhibits in our collection, but by virtual exhibits and an online presence.

To meet this growing need, Mike stated eventually their database will be searchable online.

Laurie agreed, saying that although she is always trying to increase accessibility to her university collection; she sees that this is a popular trend among larger museums. Emily, like Mike, named the internet as the main vehicle for increasing accessibility. She also felt that museums need to focus on diversifying their audience by focusing on “underserved audiences,” different ages, and many ethnicities. To help attract audiences, she discussed the concept of “a third place”:

The whole concept is you have home and you have work/school. Those are like your first places you go. You go home, then you go to work or school. Then what’s your third place? Is it the coffee shop? Is it the mall? Where’s the next place that you really like to go hang out? Is it your friend’s house or maybe it’s a museum. I think it’s the idea of…You know coffee shops have free internet. They just want people to come and sit and interact, whether they’re interacting with each other or with their computers. They just want them to hang out in the space, and I think museums are starting to move towards being third places.

She mentioned one museum that is currently trying to become more of a “social hub” by hosting music nights twice a week. Other museums have coffee shops and cafes to draw in an audience.

Three professionals explained that diversifying audiences and increasing accessibility is difficult because “museums don’t know what people expect from them” (Betty). Therefore, museums find it difficult to satisfy their communities and exceed their expectations. These professionals found that the changing role of museums in their communities is significantly
changing. Emma agreed by explaining that some museums are “having a little bit of an identity crisis […] trying to figure out what the public would like to see.” Her museum is addressing this very question by partnering with other public institutions to sponsor community events like summer concerts in the park. These programs “increase awareness in the community” about museum programs and changing events.

Although Linda has not seen the role of museums changing, she has noted that how the public views museums “has shifted […] since the Antique Road Show has gotten very very popular on television.” In her experience, people are visiting museums hoping to find out what an object is worth. Of course, she said, “museums cannot tell them [the] value, which they cannot understand.” Recently she has noticed that her museum has been getting many more inquires about what people have and the object’s value:

So instead of people coming to museums and taking their time to learn, they kinda feel like museums need to come out at them and be kinda a little bit more exciting and interactive. So I think the public kinda expects a little something different.

According to participants, assessing and meeting these expectations are necessary to carrying out museums’ missions and attracting larger audiences.

However, meeting and exceeding the community’s expectations by providing more programs, increasing accessibility through social media and the internet and reaching diverse audiences has become increasingly difficult due to budget cuts. Emma’s summed it up by saying museums have to do “more with less.” However, her museum has found that by “reminding the city that [the museum] is there” by attending potlucks, increasing programs, and even calling the city’s information technology professionals to fix simple computer problems helps make sure that the museum doesn’t “get tucked away in a corner and forgotten about.” Making the museum valuable in the community increases donations and funding.
Unfortunately, Emma, Linda, Elizabeth, and Catherine have found that these responsibilities have fallen to limited staff. Because of budget cuts, museums have significantly cut back on staff. Emma’s job as a museum assistant was once much more specialized and a full time position, but as other positions have been terminated, her job description has grown and her hours are now part time. With only two employees, staying active in the community, managing a team of volunteers, caring for the collection, and finding new funding sources have become daunting tasks. Emma and the director, Lisa, have had to prioritize and focus “on just getting people to the museum and growing [the] endowment, making sure we have a group of support for the museum.” Friends of the Museum, the museum’s support group, does share some of these responsibilities. Similarly Catherine’s department has become leaner, forcing her to learn how to efficiently multitask.

Both Linda and Elizabeth consider themselves lucky to still have jobs with so many positions being cut. In light of these cuts, Linda’s responsibilities have expanded from working only with textiles and clothing to working with the entire collection. Elizabeth compared the current environment with the one in the mid 1980s when she graduated from her master’s program in Canada:

I’m comparing two countries, but the government was giving a lot of money. There was an interest to support the museum institution, the art institution […] It was flourishing. Now, it’s very very different. A lot of institutions have cut a lot of their staff […] There is no more money, or very little.

As a result, there was a growing trend of hiring freelance conservators.

She emphasized that it was necessary for these independent conservators to “have a good business feeling.” She noticed that conservators are becoming self employed and therefore, need to “sell themselves” and to explain and justify the work that needs to be done because to the outsider the job may look fairly simple. Another challenge these conservators face is the
expensive materials. The overhead cost can often be a problem for independent conservators. These conservators also need to be able to move:

You need to be able to work, well I have a contract on the east coast and the next time it’s on the west coast, and the next time it’s in Utah, and then you know you have to be willing to be able to move.

In light of these limited jobs and continuing staff cuts, Emily wondered about the ethics of museum programs. She explained her concern:

There are all these museum studies programs across the country and there’s a limited amount of jobs and a limited amount of funding. How ethical is it to take all the students? […] I feel like no, you should think about how many jobs there are in the field and then be more selective and pick the best students and then have a very intensive kind of training.

She believed that smaller classes could provide students with more hands on experience instead of having a lecture format. Furthermore, students would get more individual attention, which would prepare them for certain job responsibilities like cataloguing and writing didactics. Since many universities have collections, smaller classes could utilize them more; whereas, larger classes may get a tour of the collection once. Emily held that intensely training a select group of students would benefit both the students and the museum profession by preparing these young professionals to handle many situations.

Linda observed that there are more master’s programs specializing in textiles and clothing available now than when she was in school. Jack discussed that requirements are different for museums now than when he was entering the profession. During the 1970s, he obtained his first job with a bachelor’s degree, while today his museum will not consider anyone without a master’s degree. He emphasized that when hiring, his department looks for someone with training or a certificate. This requirement is really a way of “editing out a number of applications more than anything else.” Jack emphasized that he has not seen the structure, focus on
preservation and education, or job description change over the last 40 years. While the overall structure of his museum has not changed, more institutions are recognizing fashion as important:

There’s been a recognition in a number of institutions that have previously see it as not equal to some of the other art or cultural area. There is an interest in it simply because it is an opportunity to generate a wide [audience], to engage the general public.

In light of this increased interest in fashion, Ariel observed that museums are buying a lot more couture from auction houses. She has seen this trend in small regional museums as well as large national museums. Other than increased acquiring, the relationship between auction houses and museums has remained unchanged.

In hopes of increasing foot traffic, Betty and Catherine, have observed that museums have changed their attitudes towards exhibitions. Betty explained that there is more of an emphasis on blockbuster exhibitions that draw large crowds. Catherine explained that her museum, under the director’s guidance, has started using “pop-up installations” to increase foot traffic. She explained that pop-up installations are currently popular in the contemporary art galleries, but not in museums:

A pop-up installation means that it would literally pop up in a gallery and you infect blogs with “Oh you have to come see this gallery. Come check it out now, it’s only up for a few months.” Kind of thing. And so it’s not standard museum practice.

She emphasized that museum exhibits often take three to five years to prepare. However, for their first pop-up installation, they were given three months to complete it.

Finally, participants discussed challenges that they face when working with the collection. Catherine’s museum collects contemporary as well as historic objects. These contemporary objects are being made “with unstable materials that degrade over time.” This use of new materials requires staff to rethink storage. She explained: “Like rubberized cloth needs to be confined to a specific packing style so it doesn’t eventually degrade onto some other piece of
artwork nearby.” Betty said that one of her biggest challenges has been finding a lexicon to use. Because fashion terms and colloquialisms change over time, creating a unified database has proven particularly difficult. For example, she explained, “if it’s catalogued in the ‘50s and ‘60s and the accepted terms of the times have changed or it’s all colloquialisms or the slang at the time” it makes it very hard to catalogue. Because of changing industry terms, colloquialisms, and slang, database key word searches have become difficult and ineffective.

As a result of these changes and challenges, technology skills are becoming more important: including the ability to implement new products, manage databases and digital assets, taking and editing photographs, and using the internet effectively. Linda predicted that “individual staff members will have to rely on themselves a little bit more” in terms of technology and be “more proactive on adding the products into what we offer.” She said that currently the staff relies heavily on the information technology department to research new products. However, she concluded that staff will need to research products and rely on the information technology department only to implement those products.

Mike discussed the importance of managing databases. Mike’s museum invested in a sophisticated collections management database that allows the museum to document the objects and their stories. Knowledge of management applications and their capabilities is essential. Mike’s museum uses an online system called E-Museum® that is attached to their database system. This system encourages museums to share their images and with other museums and make their databases accessible online. Mike’s museum also is active on Facebook®, Twitter®, and Flickr®. The museum updates its images on Flickr® using its database. Because databases help make collections more accessible, Mike said that having “those kinds of skills and level of familiarity with [databases] is important.”
With digital images becoming increasingly important in museum record keeping; learning to create, edit, and manage these assets is necessary. According to Betty, digital images “provide a new way to see everything.” Her museum will have a specific database that manages these images and links them to the website. One should also be able to take photographs without distorting the size or color of objects. Editing images using Photoshop® is another skill that, according to Betty, is becoming increasingly important. As job descriptions expand and the demand for accessibility increases, knowledge of digital asset management will continue to be an important skill in the museum world.

With the hopes of connecting with an ever expanding audience, museums are depending more and more on the internet and social media. Participants agreed that employees that are familiar with and can effectively use social media and the internet are highly valued. Mike, Betty, and Emily specifically listed tweeting, updating Facebook® and posting photos on Flickr® as important steps in attracting an audience. Emily said that “to be able to say: ‘I know how to tweet in a professional way, to be able to garner an audience.’ You know maybe tweet something educational and to have people actually interested in it” is an advantage. She also noticed that a lot of jobs are requiring more technology skills like knowing HTML and how to build a website. The respondents emphasized the growing importance of technology and the ability to maintain and take advantage of it.

Section 9: Advice

The professionals interviewed advised current students in three areas: skills and classes, networking, and job search. The skills and classes section outlines what qualities and technical skills students should have when looking to enter the museum world. Participants also suggested several classes students could take to develop those qualities and skills. The networking section
discusses the importance and benefits of membership in professional organizations, internships and the internet. In this section, participants highlight the art of connecting with people. Finally, the job search section explains where to look for jobs, how hard the search is, and again how important internships are.

**Skills and classes**

Nine of the ten (90%) of the participants discussed specific skills that students should learn and classes that students should take. Jack argued that one really needs specific attributes such as enthusiasm, curiosity, diligence, and passion to be a curator. These qualities are innate, he said, and cannot be taught:

My feeling is that what makes a really skilled curator really is not something you get trained to do. It’s already part of your temperament. The way to do it, you can be taught, but […] it just happens to be that you’re really interested and invested and sustained in your pursuit in a subject. I don’t think that’s training.

He als said that his baseline for hiring interns and professional staff is twofold: (a)ability to be flexible and (b) ability to work with other people:

To be flexible to have a very elastic idea about a problem [and] the ability to work with other people. There’s nothing that we do here that’s so isolated that you can be solitary […] So that kind of flexibility and ability to work with others is really the base line. Anything else for me is extra.

Mike agreed that the ability to work with others is crucial. Although other participants did not mention these interpersonal skills when discussing results, they indicated that they must work with many other staff and departments in their positions.

Laurie and Betty agreed that flexibility is important. Betty said that one needs to be flexible to be able to do the best with what the museum has:

It’s just the lesson of the museum world is that everything is compromised. So you have these great wonderful ideals of how everything should be, but then you have to assess what your resources are and your time is and it’s going to be such a different thing.
Flexibility is crucial to find a balance between how one would like things to be done and what is realistic. Emily said that museums are often “all hands on deck” and one needs to be prepared to handle these situations. Mike noted that it is helpful to be extremely organized when handling these situations. Therefore, he recommends that museum hopefuls have organization skills.

Both Emily and Betty maintained that the ability to “sell oneself” was very important. Emily elaborated:

You need to be able to talk about yourself well […] and speak articulately about your work because that’s going to set you apart from other people. But maybe have the hands-on skills, but if you can sell yourself and talk about yourself well, you know that’s really going to be an advantage.

Betty suggested that one could gain these skills through a nonprofit marketing class.

In addition to personal skills and attributes, participants also listed more technical skills: sewing, garment construction, artifact analysis, and writing. Mike noted that, although not a requirement, many of his interns come in with basic sewing skills. These skills are helpful for sewing tags on garments, making padded hangers and other storage accessories, and padding mannequins for exhibition. Jack emphasized the exposure to making a garment as important:

The understanding that comes from taking something two-dimensional and making it into a three-dimensional object is something that is underestimated in terms of a costume historian. You really have to know what goes into it […] You really have to understand the principles by which conventional or traditional tailoring resides.

This understanding allows one to “make quicker, more accurate judgments about authenticity, quality, all of that.” Artifact analysis is also an essential skill. Jack sees, even with his own staff, “that there isn’t this sustained consultation with objects as a prerequisite to getting a degree.” He continued to say that artifact analysis is essential to understanding an object’s time period and context.
Finally, three participants encouraged students to “hone” or sharpen their writing skills. Catherine said that museum writing is very different from writing in graduate school. Museum writing demands a clarity and conciseness because it usually takes place in the form of catalogues, didactics, and flyers. Catherine remembered transitioning from writing longer research papers to writing 75 word didactics was very difficult. Laurie suggested that being a docent teaches one to write didactics:

So often curators write their didactics and their labels to other curators and they don’t think about the fact that average people are coming in. And when you give tours, you learn to tell the story of the exhibition in a very matter of fact way and communicate to people without talking down to them.

She reflected on her own time as a docent and said that it has made her a better curator and a better teacher.

Linda emphasized that someone wanting to go into museums, especially to be a curator, must be comfortable with and be good at writing. Although, she did mention, her museum has an editor who will read exhibit labels, catalogues, or magazine articles. Like her museum, Jack’s institution has an editor to read exhibit labels and other written materials. Therefore, writing skills were not as important as they are for Linda and Catherine.

In addition to skills, participants also suggested classes to take and educational paths to follow. Seven of the 10 (70%) indicated that a broad background, liberal arts degree, or interdisciplinary degree would expose students to a larger context. Therefore, students could place objects and knowledge into a context of a time periods, location, culture, or event. This broad background, Emily said, would make the student more marketable: “It was kind of emphasized to me that […] I needed to not back myself into a corner where everything on my resume said clothing and textiles because there are so few jobs in this field.” Even in
conservation, Elizabeth stressed that it is important to take both science and art classes to understand the chemistry side of conservation and the cultural context of the objects.

Linda, Betty, and Catherine all felt that a broad background was important, but were also proponents of getting a degree in textiles and clothing. Linda stated that having a degree specifically in textiles and clothing will give the student a deeper understanding about the meaning of things. She continued to argue that one could always learn museum skills (e.g. cataloguing, labeling and housing) during an internship or at a job. On the other hand, Mike suggested that either a subject matter degree, like textiles and clothing or art history, or a museum studies degree would suffice. However, no matter the degree, all three participants agreed that one should be exposed to best practices in museums and have a thorough understanding of the history of textiles and clothing.

In fact, nine of the 10 participants said that understanding the history of textiles and clothing is absolutely essential. Catherine constantly uses this knowledge when cataloguing, accessioning, and deaccessioning and said “it’s really, really great to have very fast costume knowledge, ethnographic knowledge, basically whatever the collection has.” Similarly, participants agreed that textile science courses informed their decisions about storage, display, mounting, and conservation. Elizabeth said that conservation degrees require several textile science classes and basic organic chemistry classes.

Some museum professionals suggested that students take some interesting classes. Laurie mentioned French. She pointed out that if anyone is going to study textiles and clothing or the history of it, he/she needs to be able to understand and read French fashion magazines, advertisements, books, and autobiographies of designers. Laurie also thought that a background in material culture would be helpful in providing a framework and methodology for studying the
history of textiles and clothing. Betty imagined a library science degree would be helpful for a registrar because one needs to know how information is organized and what lexicons to use. Finally, Catherine suggested that students take a grant writing class because not only do museums need to constantly be applying for funding, but this is helpful for obtaining travel grants to conferences. Participants concluded that a mix of both museum skills and subject knowledge is important to succeed in the museum world.

Networking

Nine of the 10 (90%) participants gave advice about how to network. The most frequent was “to see and be seen.” They encouraged students to attend conferences and lectures, intern, volunteer, talk to people, and join LinkedIn® to become a familiar face in the field. Jack held that internships and volunteering were necessary to networking:

You try to give as much as your time as possible as a volunteer or intern so you can deliver more than you’ve been asked for. It’s the same process. What happens is, simply being in the skills and vision of your potential colleagues or those who will hire you. That’s the first step.

Jack continued to say that where one got his/her degree was a small factor in networking and hiring; rather, the passion and dedication one has for his/her job was much more important. Emma agreed that networking is really just being seen. Networking can be very intimidating especially if one is not an extrovert. Reflecting on her own experience, she said that it gets easier:

Just see and be seen, just start going to as many events as you can. It’s a little awkward, I’m not the most social person, like I have no idea what to say to people. I was always afraid of networking myself […] The more you do it the easier it gets. I have my staple things that I fall back on for conversation […] like “what are some upcoming exhibits,” what’s on the horizon for the museum in the next year.”

Catherine agreed that one just needs to talk to people. Talking to professionals in the field and then following their advice puts one on their radar.
In addition to interning, professionals said that joining regional and national organizations and attending their symposia and conferences is a very good way to network and become familiar with other professionals. Mike said that joining organizations like American Association of Museums (AAM), Costume Society of America (CSA), and Southeastern Museums Conference (SMC) is much easier because of the internet and student level memberships. These organizations, especially CSA and AAM, provide access to an international community of professionals interested in textiles and clothing and museums. If the student membership is still too expensive, Mike said that CSA offers a budget friendly electronic membership that provides members with emailed newsletters and keeps them connected to the organization. In addition to student memberships, many organizations hold regional conferences, which are much more affordable to students. They are often within driving distance and provide “a really easy way to become involved in the organization without a serious financial investment when you can’t afford it.” Finally, Mike stressed that CSA and AAM offer student awards to travel to these conferences. Because of an AAM fellowship, he was able to attend his first national AAM conference.

Linda reinforced how important regional conferences are to professional development. These regional conferences often provide better quality networking because they are smaller and more intimate than the national conferences:

You really get to know some people in your area […] I would say put most of your money and energy into those more local groups because you can truly meet more people and hear about more openings, but keep an eye on the national postings [too].

In addition to CSA regional conferences, many states also have their own museum associations (e.g. Iowa Museum Association, Massachusetts Museum Association, and New Mexico Association of Museums). These state organizations often have more job postings than the
national or regional associations. However, Linda did not dismiss national conferences, but said that ideally students or museum hopefuls should attend both. Finally, Linda stressed that one should join organizations that support one’s interest like costume, ethnic, theater, or conservation organizations. She summarized her suggested strategy as a “multipronged approach:” belong to both national and state organizations (but put energy into the state organizations), belong to a museum association, and belong to an association that addresses one’s specific interest.

Attending these conferences was not enough, however, one also needed to gain contacts. Like Emma, Laurie said that networking was truly an art. She really disliked when people approached her aggressively and said “Oh! I want to do something in this! And here’s my card.” She often felt like people threw business cards at her looking for a contact. She encourages students come to networking with a very friendly, open approach like: “Hey, I’m a graduate student and I’m really interested in storage locations, would you be willing to meet with me and talk to me about storage?” And something like that. I’m so much more open to responding to because it’s concrete.

She emphasized that museum professionals are busy and asking for help with specific things makes it much easier for them to make time for the meeting. She also mentioned that if one can find out what the professional likes to do, he/she will be much more receptive and willing to make the time to accommodate the asker. After the meeting or contact has been made, one should follow up with a simple handwritten thank you note. One can then connect with the professional on LinkedIn® and reconnect at a conference. In conclusion, she said “Don’t just come rushing at me with a business card because you want something […] be sincere. Be interested.”

Participants encouraged students to attend conferences at the state, regional, and national levels. They also insisted that museum hopefuls intern to gain work experience and also to
expose themselves to potential colleagues and employers. Emily said that one should intern across the country because it shows that one can travel. Internships also de-romanticize the museum world: exposing students to some of the challenges museums face daily. In addition to active networking, those interested in working with museums should also explore organizations’ websites, keep up with job postings, set up Google Alerts®, and become active on LinkedIn®.

**Job search**

All ten professionals gave advice about searching for a job. Participants stated how hard and draining the job hunt really was. In fact, three participants (30%) said “don’t do it.” When answering what advice she had for current students, Emily responded:

> The immediate answer’s “Don’t do it,” but I don’t want to say that. I don’t want to discourage anyone […] so I would never actually ever say that to someone. The first thing I would say is really think long and hard and do as many internships as you can.

Laurie cautioned that if one is “kind of into it, [one should] find another way to make it work.” She suggested working for an academic publishing company, having a blog, or writing papers for conferences and presentation. Finally, participants emphasized that one does not go into museums to make money. Museum hopefuls must be aware that salaries are often low and responsibilities are large and diverse.

Elizabeth agreed that she would not encourage many people to go into conservation because there are so few jobs and private work is hard, expensive, and does not pay well. Conservation training is also a significant monetary investment. Furthermore, conservation staff often has so many projects, that they cannot take the time to mentor young conservators through internships or volunteering. Like other professions in the museum world, conservation has a very small job pool.
Because the field is so competitive, one has to be prepared to put in an enormous amount of time and energy. Laurie, reflecting on a previous student’s expectations, explained that one has to make it happen. If one doesn’t put in the time, money, and energy, getting a job will not happen. She also emphasized that one needs to keep the “textile” part alive because one may not get a job for two to three years after graduation:

[A student of hers] went back to waitressing [after graduating with her masters] and it was really devastating to her. I said “You know what, until you find that job, you set up a blog, write papers, go to CSA meetings, keep that part of you active. Find a way to make it work for you because what you do 9-5 during the day […] that’s only part of you.

Laurie suggested broadening one’s experience by volunteering across museum departments and subjects. Betty took this advice further saying to intern or volunteer in archives or other areas outside museums.

All 10 participants insisted that students intern to (a) gain work experience and (b) de-romanticize the idea of museums. Linda explained that one needs to volunteer because:

There is a lot more that happens then you realize and unless you’ve been in a museum you might have different expectations so to know whether it’s something that you really want to do I think it’s useful […] But of course then you might want to volunteer because it counts toward your work experience.

She also said that museums’ tight budget benefits volunteers because they “can often get really high quality experience.” Emma encouraged master’s students to volunteer or intern between their first and second years of their program. Emily mentioned that one should volunteer and intern across the country because it shows the employer that he/she is willing to travel and take a job far from home.

Both Catherine and Laurie had suggestions regarding applying for, obtaining, and keeping an internship. When reviewing internship applications, Catherine looks for candidates that “tell [her] in their cover letter that they really look forward to using their knowledge practically with
hands on experience.” This illustrates that the internship candidate really wants to be with the objects, apply their knowledge, and learn best practices. She further highlighted enthusiasm. She is often disappointed when interns “look so good on paper, but when they come in, they don’t seem as interested.” Having an active interest is very important because it shows the supervisor that one really wants to work in museums.

Laurie found that one problem that she has with interns is their level of professionalism. She has noticed that younger interns are very informal, which in a formal environment like a museum does not work well. She listed several things that interns should be: punctual, quiet, efficient, able to get along with others, and focused. She explained that chatting while working is very disruptive especially in her small space. She also is amazed when her interns take personal phone calls while cataloguing. Interns, she said, should realize that “it’s a very, very small world. So, for example, I had somebody from the Metropolitan call me today saying: ‘Oh, tell me about this one who worked for you two years ago.’” Professionalism and respect can make a profound impression when interning. This good impression can further shape how future employers see their candidate.

Although all 10 candidates emphasized how competitive the museum job market was, Mike explained why this was the case:

That has a lot to do with the fact that people work in museums because they’re passionate about history and art and culture and working with artifacts. You know you’re not going to get rich working in a museum until you become a director. So it’s something that people are passionate about. And as a result the job scene and the museum industry is very competitive among those who really, really want to work in museums.

In light of this competition, Emily, Emma, and Betty had some advice for obtaining jobs: apply across disciplines and departments, start looking early, apply across the country and world, and do not turn down jobs. Emily advised to have more than just textiles and clothing on one’s
resume because one needs to marketable in case one does not get a job in the textiles and clothing field. Emily said “don’t back yourself into a corner” by being too specialized. She emphasized that a broad background in museums is also important because one’s first job may not be with collections, and smaller museums often take on a lot of responsibilities. To understand how marketing, education, curatorial, registrar, and conservation operate is very important. Emma urged students to start looking at jobs at the beginning of one’s program to see what jobs require. One can then tailor his/her experiences and education to match these job requirements.

Several participants mentioned that one needs to apply across the country and even across the world because these museum jobs are very infrequent. Interviewees also noted that one must be able to move because chances are one will not find a job within 20 miles of one’s home. Finally, Betty discouraged turning jobs down that are not necessarily related to textiles and clothing (e.g. working in an archive with paper). Not only do these jobs count towards experience, but they also broaden one’s expertise and provide a new context for future work. For example, Betty found her internship in a publishing company’s archive very useful when setting up an exhibition on Dior at her current museum.

Finally, Jack discussed an interesting timeline to gauge one’s success in his/her field. He has noticed that within the first five years of working, your immediate circle of colleagues and boss must know that you are special and that they can rely on you. In 10 years, your field should recognize that you are something special and you should start to get noticed by people outside your close professional circle. By 15 years, you should be known to the outside world. He has noticed this timeline through years of experience and explained why this is helpful:

I’ve just seen that if you are in the right place and you’re doing the right thing. It seems like a very short calendar, but it’s a calendar that I’ve observed. If you’ve been
somewhere for 10 years and you’re not known outside your little circle something’s wrong. Either you’re not performing well enough or you’re in an environment which isn’t appreciating you enough. Most people think the latter, but it’s more likely the former. It’s more that the bad seed is you.

The museum professionals interviewed had several suggestions for students who are interested in working with museums. They encouraged students to assess how passionate they were about working with museums. Interviewees could not stress how difficult the job search process was, how long it takes, and how draining it was to get a job. They also warned that the pay was low. However, if one was truly determined, one needs to get as much experience working in museums as possible through internships and volunteering. One should also learn how to network by talking to other professionals and forming meaningful connections. Finally, students and professionals can evaluate themselves using Jack’s timeline.

Survey Results

In order to reach a larger sample and gain a broader perspective on skills and experiences that make museum professionals successful, a survey was submitted to the Costume Society of America members (Appendix G). The survey specifically asked for respondents who worked in museum settings to respond, thus eliminating those CSA members that did not hold affiliations with museums such as archivists, professors without responsibility statements related to historic textile and clothing collections, and living history interpreters, among others. Of the 1,164 surveys distributed to Costume Society of America members, 81 members or 7% responded. Forty-six or 57% of those surveys were completed and used for analysis. This section of the thesis describes the

1. Sample demographics of the quantitative data.

2. The education and career path respondents took to attain their current positions.
3. The participants’ undergraduate and graduate programs of study and their recommendations for students.

4. The importance and frequency of skills that the respondents used in their museum careers.

5. Advice and further comments participants stated.

Section 1: Demographic Results

The 46 participants differed in age, total number of years of experience, and number of years in their current position (Table 3). Ages ranged from under 21 to over 60. Ten participants (22%) were between 22 and 30 years of age, six participants (13%) were between 31 and 40, nine respondents (20%) were between 41 and 50 years of age, and seven respondents (15.2%) were between 51 and 60 years old. The range in total years of experience; including internships, paid employment, volunteering, and assistantships; was from less than five years (n=10) to more than 20 years (n=14). Eleven respondents stated between five and 10 years of experiences, and the same number (n=11) stated between 10 and 20 years of experience in a museum setting. Twenty-three (89%) respondents indicated that they had been in their current museum related positions for less than five years, 12 (26%) participants were in their positions for 10-20 years, six (13%) had been in their positions for 5-10 years and five (11%) stated placement in their current careers for 20 or more years.

Respondents held a variety of jobs either within TCH collections or as consultants for these collections. These jobs included: curator (n=21), curatorial assistant (n=4), registrar (n=3), collections manager (n=3), research assistant (n=2), conservator (n=1), and other (n=13). Those respondents who selected “other,” listed the following as their job titles: development (n=1),
director \((n=2)\), collections graduate assistant \((n=1)\), conservation technologist \((n=1)\), museum specialist \((n=1)\), consultant \((n=1)\), instructor \((n=2)\), historian \((n=1)\), and volunteer \((n=2)\).
Table 3

*Survey Sample's Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curatorial Assistant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections Manager</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Technologist</td>
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<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
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<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
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<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Specialist</td>
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<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of experience</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants, except for the three consultants, worked in three types of museums: free-standing TCH collection or museum (four respondents or 9%), TCH collection or museum that were part of the general collection (twenty-two respondents or 48%), and TCH collections or museums within a university setting (17 respondents or 37%).

Collections and museums were situated in each region designated by the Costume Society of America. Twelve (26%) participants represented the Northeastern region, which includes the eastern coast provinces of Canada and states of the United States. Seven respondents (15%) were from the Mid-Atlantic region, which is made up of New York, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. Nine respondents (19%) represented the Midwestern region. Seven (15%) came from the Western region, which includes the west coast of both Canada and the United States. Three respondents (7%) were from the Southeastern region, and four (8%) were from the Southwestern region. Finally, four respondents (9%) were from outside of the Americas. These factors created a diverse sample (Table 4)

Table 4
Survey Sample’s Institution Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of General Collection</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within a University</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-Standing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Atlantic United States</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwestern United States</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern United States</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern United States</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern United States</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western United States</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants’ educational paths were as unique as their job titles, ages, and museums (Table 5). The majority \( n=28; 61\% \) of the sample’s highest degree was a master’s degree. Another 10 (22\%) held a bachelor’s degree as their highest degree. Eight or 17\% had doctorate degrees. For their undergraduate degrees nine (20\%) participants majored in a textiles and clothing related field including apparel design, fashion marketing, fashion merchandising, textiles and apparel management, and millinery. Eight or 17\% majored in art history. One art history major had a minor in human sexuality, and another focused on religion. Six or 13\% majored in anthropology and/or sociology. Four or 9\% obtained their bachelors in home economics. One of the four specialized in clothing construction. Three (7\%) completed a bachelors in art. Two (4\%) participants’ degrees were in English, while another two participants’ degrees were in history. One participant majored in psychology and one in theater. Finally, three participants had unique degrees: communications and political science with a minor in history \( n=1 \); anthropology and art \( n=1 \); and art history, fashion design and the sciences \( n=1 \). Although the participants stayed mostly within the humanities, they held undergraduate majored in an array of subjects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| TC                              | 6 28.57  
| Anthropology                    | 4 19.05  
| Art History                     | 3 14.29  
| History                         | 2 9.52   
| Home Economics                  | 2 9.52   
| Other                           | 4 19.05  
| Graduate Major                  | 18     
| TC                              | 9 50.00  
| TC and Museums                  | 6 33.33  
| Museums                         | 3 66.66  
| Other                           | 0 0      
| Highest Degree Held             |  
| Bachelors                       | 4 19.05  
| Masters                         | 14 66.66  
| Doctorate                       | 4 19.05  
| Curatorial Assistant            | 4       
| Undergraduate Major             |  
| Art History                     | 1 25.00  
| Fine Art                        | 1 25.00  
| TC                              | 1 25.00  
| N/A                             | 1 25.00  
| Graduate Major                  | 3       
| TC & Museums                    | 1 33.33  
| TC                              | 1 33.33  
| N/A                             | 1 33.33  
| Highest Degree Held             |  
| Bachelors                       | 1 25.00  
| Masters                         | 3 75.00  

Table 5

*Education, by the Two Most Frequent Jobs*
Their graduate programs \((n=35)\), on the other hand, can be divided into three major categories: textiles and clothing, museums, and a combination of the two. Thirteen \((28\%)\) completed either the masters or doctorate in a textiles and clothing related field. Five of these participants mentioned that they focused specifically on history and/or culture. Other participants did not specify their focus area. Eight \((13\%)\) respondents indicated that they graduated with a museum related degree: museum management \((n=1)\), museum studies \((n=5)\), or museum studies with a focus in registration \((n=1)\). Nine or \(17\%\) of participants tailored their graduate studies towards a combination of both textiles and clothing and museums. One of the nine pursued historic preservation of textiles and clothing in relation to museums. Finally, five participants obtained degrees outside of these three categories: applied design \((n=1)\); clothing history, design, and community organization \((n=1)\); fiber arts \((n=1)\); history of decorative arts \((n=1)\); and law \((n=1)\). Participants’ graduate degrees were much more focused on connecting textiles and clothing and museums than their assorted undergraduate programs.

Respondents in this survey indicated that they belonged to a wide variety of professional organizations. Some individuals, however, belonged to one or two, while others belonged to five or six organizations. Thirty-two \((70\%)\) participants were members of Costume Society of America. Nine \((20\%)\) stated membership with the American Association of Museums, while seven \((15\%)\) also belonged to Textile Society of America. Five other organizations were also mentioned more than once: American Association for State and Local History \((n=4)\); International Textile and Apparel Association \((n=3)\); Association for Living History, Farm and Agriculture Museums \((n=2)\); and the Fashion Group International \((n=2)\). Twelve participants also named a variety of local and regional organizations such as The Virginia Conservation Association and the New England Museum Association. Finally, eight \((17\%)\) respondents
belonged to organizations based on specific subjects such as Vintage Fashion Guild, International Center for the Study of Ancient Textiles, and International Organization of Lacers, Inc. These professionals connected with other professionals at organizations dedicated to museums, textiles and clothing, historic clothing, local and regional history, and other subject areas.

Section 2: Career Paths

All participants \((n=46)\) indicated the length of time it took them to obtain their first museum job following graduation. Two participants \((4.3\%)\) did not find positions for three to five years. Six \((13\%)\) indicated that it took them one to two years to find jobs. Twenty-two \((47.8\%)\) participants found jobs within their first year after graduation. Finally, sixteen \((34.8\%)\) noted that they had changed careers and therefore the question did not apply. The largest percentage of participants found their jobs within the first 12 months of graduating with their terminal degree.

Participants found out about their current positions in a variety of ways. The advisor or major professors of 13 \((28.3\%)\) participants recommended that the participants apply. Ten \((21.7\%)\) said that they discovered the open position through a professional organization or a contact they met through that organization. Eight \((17.4\%)\) learned about their position through an internship/volunteer contact. Six \((13\%)\) participants discovered the opening through the American Association of Museum’s website. Four \((8.7\%)\) participants were notified of the open position by a family member, acquaintance, or friend. Another four continually searched job sites and other resources for their position. One of these four received an announcement from a company on his/her master’s program’s listserv. In addition to recommendations from family, friends, advisors and notifications from AAM, professional organizations, and other job search engines; twelve \((26.1\%)\) participants answered “other.” Responses to “other” included: seeing a
posting in the newspaper and self-employment. Results illustrated the many ways that
participants learned about job openings.

Section 3: Program of Study

Thirty-seven participants described skills or classes that they would have liked to have
gained or taken during their program of study that would have been helpful in their museum
careers. Several participants named more than one class or skill. These classes or skills fell into
five major categories: textiles and clothing \(n=15\), business \(n=12\), interdisciplinary \(n=10\),
museums \(n=9\), and technology \(n=2\). Textiles and clothing classes and skills included
conservation and stabilization techniques including knowledge of dyes for color matching and
conservation beyond storage and handling skills. Five participants wanted to take advanced
classes in textiles and clothing history and cultural perspectives in textiles and clothing. Two
respondents said they wanted a sewing or fashion class.

Ten participants summarized five interdisciplinary skills or classes: art history \(n=4\),
research \(n=2\), writing \(n=2\), material culture methodology and theory \(n=1\), and foreign
languages \(n=1\). Nine participants wished their programs of study required general museum
studies classes \(n=3\), dressing/object mounting classes \(n=3\), object handling \(n=2\), and a
curatorial class \(n=1\). Finally, two would have liked exposure to technology including database
management.

Survey participants were asked to consider 13 classes and their importance for preparing for
a museum related career. These classes included:

1. Art History
2. Conservation of Textiles and Clothing
3. Event Planning
Participants were then asked to rate how necessary these classes are to take when preparing for a museum career in a TCH collection from 1 (not necessary) to 7 (extremely necessary). Finally, participants were asked to list any additional classes that they felt were necessary.

The 13 classes were rated on a Likert scale from 1 (not necessary) to 7 (extremely necessary) (Table 6). The means ranged from 2.61 (Statistics) to 6.27 (Internship/Practicum) (Figure 3). “Art History” (n=45) had a mean of 4.8 (SD= 1.83). However, the mean may be misleading as 15 (32.6% of n) felt that Art History was an extremely necessary course. Another 12 (26.1% of N) rated the course’s necessity as a 4 (neutral). In contrast, 27 (58.7% of N) respondents rated “Conservation of Textiles and Clothing” as very necessary (6) or higher (7). The average rating for the class was 5.27 (n=45; SD=1.81). “Event Planning” was rated at neutral (4) or below. Eight participants (17.4% of N) were neutral about the importance of taking an event planning class. Twenty-three (50% of N), however, rated its importance as a 3 or 2, making the average rating 3.24 (SD= 1.60). Forty-four participants gave “Grant Writing” an average rating of 4.68
which was just above neutral (SD=1.58). Nine (19.6%) were neutral on the importance of a grant writing class, while 20 (43.5% of N) thought that a grant writing class was necessary (5) to somewhat necessary (6). Five (10.9% of N) agreed that a grant writing class was extremely necessary (7).

Twenty-six participants (56.5% of N) agreed that a “History of Textiles and Clothing” class was extremely necessary (n= 45, M=5.78, SD= 1.86). Similarly, 23 (50% of N) indicated that a “Material Culture/Collections Management” class was extremely necessary (n=44, M=6.09, SD=1.27). Only three participants (6.5% of N) were neutral or found the class unnecessary (rating of 4 or under). Ten (21.7% of N) were neutral about the importance of a “Marketing/PR” class (n=44, M=3.70, SD=1.53). Fourteen (30.4% of N) respondents felt that a marketing/public relations class was necessary to some degree (rating of 5-7), while 20 (43.5% of N) rated the class under neutral, indicating that it was unnecessary to some degree (rating 1-3). In contrast, 27 (58.7% of N) indicated that a “Museums Studies” class was somewhat necessary (6) to extremely necessary (7) for someone intending to go into museums (n=44, M=5.39, SD=1.51). Similarly, 27 (58.7% of N) agreed that a “Research Methods” class was somewhat necessary (6) to extremely necessary (7) (n=44, M=5.61, SD=5.47).
Table 6
Classes Rated by Level of Importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not Necessary</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Extremely Necessary</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of TC</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Planning</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Writing</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.68</td>
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<td>History of TC</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.78</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Public Relations</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.53</td>
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<td>Museum Studies</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Psychology of Dress</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship/Practicum</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>1.26</td>
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<td>Statistics</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Note.* Classes were rated in terms of level of importance on a likert scale from 1 (not necessary) to 7 (extremely necessary).
Figure 3. Means Level of Importance, by Class

Survey participants were asked to rate the importance of taking each of 13 classes on a scale of 1 (not necessary) to 7 (extremely necessary). The means of each class rating are displayed here.
Although nine (19.6% of N) were neutral on “Social Psychology of Textiles and Clothing” class’ importance for museum hopefuls, 16 (34.8% of N) indicated that this class was somewhat (6) to extremely necessary (7) \((n=44, M=4.34, SD=1.99)\). An overwhelming 60.9% (28 participants) of the total respondents \((N=46)\) rated a required “Internship or Practicum” as extremely necessary (7). This class also had the highest average rating of 6.27 \((n=44, SD=1.26)\). In stark contrast, “Statistics” had the lowest average rating of 2.61 \((n=44, SD=1.47)\). Thirty-four (73.9% of N) felt that statistics was unnecessary to some degree (rating of 1-3). Eleven of these 34 said that a statistics class was not necessary at all (1). Lastly, 10 (21.7% of N) participants were neutral on the importance of a “Textile Science” class \((n=44, SD=1.92)\). With an average rating of 4.11, 17 (37.0% of N) responses fell above and below neutral.

In addition to the classes listed above, 45 participants responded to the “Other” category. Three of those responses were unusable. Of the 42 useable responses, six major categories were identified: museum related \((n=26)\), liberal arts \((n=13)\) textiles and clothing related \((n=12)\), business related \((n=8)\), and technology related \((n=4)\). Additionally, two participants noted that classes depended on the specific career (e.g. curator versus registrar), while four indicated that the list provided was sufficient. Some participants listed more than one class; therefore, the total number of classes does not equal the participants who responded.

Twenty-one participants highlighted museum related classes. Of the 26, seven said that exhibit design would be helpful. Eleven mentioned that a general museum class that served as an introduction to job opportunities, theory, history of museums, storage, disaster preparation, collection management, registrarial duties, and program development would be useful. Finally, eight participants named classes that focused on handling, object mounting/dressing, and
care/preservation of objects. One participant suggested that an object mounting/dressing class should include paper wig making.

Thirteen participants named liberal arts classes: history (n=4), art history (n=2), anthropology (n=2), French (n=1), and communication skills (n=4). The history category included two people who listed history and the two people who listed social history.

Communication skills includes label writing (n=2), public speaking (n=1), and research (n=1). Similarly textiles and clothing classes were listed by 12 participants: cultural dress (n=3), sewing/garment construction (n=3), textiles and clothing history (n=2), material culture (n=2), and textiles (n=1).

Compared to previous classes listed, a relatively small portion of the sample listed business (n=8) or technology (n=4) classes. The businesses classes listed included personnel management (n=3); finance including creative budgeting (n=3); and fundraising, including but not limited to grants, (n=2). Finally, four participants listed technology related classes including computer literacy (n=1), photography (n=1), web design (n=1), and database management (n=1). Thirty-eight participants listed 18 additional classes (six were repeated from the classes previously listed in the survey): exhibit design, object handling, object mounting/mannequin dressing, public speaking, website design, French, writing (especially exhibit labels), history, management, finance, fundraising, photography, anthropology, cultural perspectives in dress, computer literacy, database management, photography, textiles, and garment construction/sewing.

Forty-five participants also suggested degrees that would be most beneficial to museum hopefuls. Nine or 19.6% of the total sample (N=46) suggested a degree in an apparel related major. Fourteen (30.4% of N) agreed that a specific museum studies program would be most
beneficial. Nine stated that any major would suffice if it was accompanied with a museum studies minor or certificate.

Finally, 13 (28.3% of N) listed other majors. Seven (15.2% of N) said a combination of textiles and clothing and a museum studies was best. One of these seven mentioned that the major/degree does not matter, but the experience in both textiles and clothing and museums made the difference. Another participant encouraged majoring in museum studies with a minor in textiles and clothing. Other majors listed included art history, history, anthropology, and decorative arts. One participant held that the path depended on the student’s goals; but the graduate degrees should be more specialized. Another participant argued that the major does not matter, as long as the student gains direct experience. One participant stated that a B.A or B.S in the subject matter “is more useful.” Lastly, one participant did not have enough experience to comment. Although the largest percentage of participants agreed that a museum studies degree was best, participants listed a few different paths to take.

Section 4. Frequency and Importance of Skills

Participants were asked to reflect on nine skills and rate them in two ways: (a) how frequently they used certain skills and (b) how important the skills were to their specific museum careers. These skills were as follows:

1. Appropriate object handling
2. Conservation/Preservation skills
3. Financial oversight of the department
4. Grant writing
5. Knowledge of construction techniques
6. Knowledge of fashion vocabulary
7. Knowledge of fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints

8. Knowledge of museum practices and vocabulary

9. Management/supervision of others

If participants had other suggestions, they were allowed to enter them under the “other” category.

Participants first rated how often they used each skill from 1 (never) to 7 (daily) (Table 7, Figure 4). Thirty-three (71.7% of N) participants used appropriate object handling skills daily. On average this skill was used the most frequently \( (M=6.42, SD=1.28) \). None of the participants stated that they never used this skill (rating of 1). Similarly, all participants indicated that they used their conservation/preservation skills. Twenty-two (47.8% of N) participants used this skill frequently with a rating of at least 6. Overall, the 43 participants who responded used this skill fairly frequently with an average rating of 5.05 \( (SD=1.81) \). Ten participants noted that they never used financial oversight or used financial skills, while 12 said they used this skill daily \( (n=43, M=4.09, SD=2.39) \). Grant writing skills were used the least by participants with an average rating of 2.95 \( (n=43, SD=1.80) \). Fifteen participants never used grant writing skills, while 11 rated it a 4, and only two use it daily.

Nine participants responded that they used their knowledge of garment and construction techniques daily, while 16 rated the frequency of their use of this skill as a 4 or 5 \( (n=43, M=1.67, SD=1.84) \). Although one participant indicated that he/she never uses his/her knowledge of fashion terms and vocabulary, the average rating was 5.74 \( (n=43, SD=1.63) \). Thirty (65.2% of N) participants used their knowledge of fashion terms quite frequently (rating of 6 and higher). Twelve (26.1% of N) participants indicated that they used their knowledge of fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints regularly with a rating of 5, while 16 stated that they used this knowledge daily. On average, participants used this knowledge regularly \( (M=5.43, n=42, SD=1.81) \).
### Table 7
**Skills Rated by Frequency of Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate object handling</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation/Preservation</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Fashion Vocabulary</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Oversight of the Department</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant writing</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of construction techniques</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Supervision of others</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of museum practices</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Skills were rated in terms of how frequently they were used on a likert scale from 1 (never) to 7 (daily).*

### Table 8
**Skills Rated by Level of Importance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate object handling</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation/Preservation</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Fashion Vocabulary</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Oversight of the Department</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant writing</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of construction techniques</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Supervision of others</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of museum practices</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Skills were rated by level of importance. A likert scale from 1 (not important) to 7 (extremely important) was used.*
Figure 4. Survey participants were asked to rate the importance of nine skills on a scale of 1 (not necessary) to 7 (extremely necessary). Participants were also asked to rate the same nine skills on how frequently they used the skills. Again, these skills were rated from 1 (never) to 7 (daily). The means of each skill rating are displayed here.
Twenty-six (56.5% of N) participants used their knowledge of museum practices and vocabulary very frequently, giving the skill a rating of a 6 or higher. Like their knowledge of fibers, yarns, dyes and prints, participants indicated that, on average, they relied on their knowledge of museum practices frequently ($M=5.6$, $n=42$, $SD=1.40$). Thirty-two (69.6% of N) gave “Management/Supervision of others” skill a 5 or higher, which suggests that they used this skill on a regular basis. On average, participants rated the frequency of their use of this skill a 5.38 ($n=42$, $SD=1.56$). On average, participants used object handling ($M=6.42$), knowledge of fashion terms and vocabulary ($M=5.74$), and knowledge of museum practices the most frequently ($M=5.60$). In contrast, grant writing skills, on average, were rarely used ($M=2.95$).

In addition to these skills, 42 participants also mentioned other skills that they frequently relied on. Eighteen (39.1% of N) mentioned that they used technology related skills including social media, graphic design, photography, Photoshop, and database maintenance. Thirteen (28.3% of N) participants said that they used public relation type skills frequently. These skills include good public speaking, working with the public and diplomacy, “people skills,” and working with other colleagues. Twelve (26.1% of N) respondents listed subject or related knowledge as important skills that they often used. This knowledge included “keeping up to date with journals, papers, and conferences related to clothing.” They also indicated that they used their textiles and clothing knowledge to accurately describe and date objects. Knowledge of sewing, prints, jewelry, and art history was also relied upon. Eight (17.4% of N) participants listed museum skills that they regularly used including cataloguing ($n=2$), numbering ($n=1$), storage ($n=1$), mount making and mannequin dressing ($n=2$), and conservation knowledge ($n=2$). Again, eight (17.4% of N) participants listed research (10.9% of N) mentioned writing skills, and four (8.7% of N) highlighted teaching as repeatedly used skills. Finally, event
management (n=1), project management (n=1), people and resource management (n=1), and the ability to work well with change (n=1) were also on the list of repeatedly used skills.

Participants also rated each skill from 1 (not important) to 7 (extremely important) (Table 8, Figure 4). Forty-two participants rated “Appropriate object handling” from 2 (one participant) to 7 (36 participants). On average, participants felt that appropriate object handling was very important (M=6.64, SD=1.06). Although, not considered as important, conservation and preservation skills had an average rating of 5.86 (SD=1.26). Seventeen of the 42 participants (40.5%) who rated this skill agreed that it was extremely important (rating of 7). Another 11 (26.2% of n) rated this skill a 6. Eleven participants (23.9% of N) were neutral (rating of 4) about financial oversight of the department (n=42, M=4.02, SD=1.85). Four participants gave this skill a 1 (not important). Similarly, of the 42 participants who rated this skill, two indicated that grant writing was a skill that was unimportant in the museum world. Nine participants were neutral on the skill and eight rated it as extremely important. Although not as low as financial oversight’s average rating, grant writing’s average rating was also under five at 4.48 (SD=1.78).

In contrast, participants thought that “knowledge of construction techniques” or garment construction skills was somewhat important (M=5.50, n=42, SD=1.50). Twenty-five (54.3% of N) participants agreed that knowledge of construction techniques was very important. Knowledge of fashion vocabulary and terms was also rated as very to extremely important by a large percentage of total participants (67.4% of N; 31 participants). On average, participants rated this skill just under very important (M=5.98, SD=1.39). Knowledge of fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints was, on average, rated similarly (M=5.74). In fact, 28 (60.9% of N) indicated that this knowledge was at least very important (n=42, SD=1.36). Knowledge of museum practices and vocabulary, on average, was rated the second most important skill, under
object handling, with an average rating of 5.93 (n=42, SD=1.09). This skill was so highly regarded that no one rated it less than a 4. Thirty (65.2% of N) gave it a rating of at least 6. Finally, more participants gave the ability to manage others a 4 than any other rating. The average rating was 5.74 (n=42, SD=1.40). Although all nine skills received an average rating above 4, three skills were considered, on average, the most important: appropriate object handling (M=6.64), knowledge of fashion terms and vocabulary (M=5.98), and knowledge of museum practices and vocabulary (M=5.93).

Forty-one participants responded to “other.” Four major skill sets were identified as important: knowledge (n=17), museum (n=13), business/public relations (n=10), and technology skills (n=6). The knowledge skill set contained six individual skills: research (n=6), subject matter knowledge (n=5), object care (n=3), knowledge of foreign languages (n=1), knowledge of material culture methodology (n=1), and interpretation skills (n=1). One participant stressed that the ability to synthesize art history and textiles and clothing was very important. Thirteen participants (28.3% of N) listed four important skills in the museum skill set: dressing/mount making (n=5), museum writing (n=6), exhibit design (n=2), and cataloguing (n=1). Museum writing included writing didactics, articles, and catalogues. Ten (21.7% of N) participants indicated that business and public relation skills were necessary. This skill set included: donor relations (n=2), marketing (n=2), sales (n=1), communication skills (n=1), creative budgeting (n=1), and listening (n=1). Although some of these skills matched the original skills, participants reemphasized these and mentioned new skills in the “other” category.

Section 5: Advice and Further Comments

Participants had the opportunity to share their additional thoughts through two open-ended questions: advice for current students, and any other comments they would like to share. Thirty-
nine participants gave current students specific advice in five content areas: experience \( (n=19) \), museums \( (n=11) \), program of study \( (n=11) \), qualities \( (n=5) \), and networking \( (n=3) \). Eighteen of the 19 explained that hands-on experience in museums was invaluable, while the other encouraged students to gain retail experience. One participant wrote that it was important to volunteer because “artifact handling and exhibit development skills are what make the difference when we hire full time staff” (Anonymous).

Of the eleven participants whose advice related to museums, four stated that handling skills were of the utmost importance. Three told students to diversify their skills in other subjects within the museum world: educational programming, development, conservation, and different academic subjects. Another three participants advised students to “de-romanticize” museums: “Learn museum [education] and registrarial matters so you are more employable. Better yet, choose a different field” (Anonymous). Lastly, one participant said that you need a “light hand,” or having dexterity.

Of the eleven participants who discussed programs of study, four urged students to pick a good program that has a strong museum studies component. One participant acknowledged that students will often need to make their programs fit their specific needs. Similarly, one participant wrote that students must often seek out textiles and clothing history courses because they are not necessarily readily available. Two professionals encouraged students to study related subjects like art history and accessories and jewelry.

Five participants promoted four different qualities that they felt were necessary to learn or have: passion \( (n=2) \), curiosity \( (n=1) \), flexibility \( (n=1) \), and perseverance \( (n=1) \). Lastly, three participants advised students to network in order to get a job. Throughout the survey participants
continued to indicate that internships and experience was crucial to success in the museum world.

Finally seven participants filled in the “other comments” section of the survey. One participant indicated that he/she learned event management as a volunteer in an extracurricular club; therefore, suggesting that museum applicable skills can be obtained in a variety of experiences. The second response recommended that students be allowed to study textiles in clothing within a TCH collection. One costume designer explained that “designing and building costumes for theatre and film and TV is a wonderful career and some ways more creative. It depends on how much creativity and innovation you can manage.” This participant encouraged students interested in textiles and clothing history to explore other career options.

Another participant lamented that his/her graduate program could have been much better, “especially in regards to dress history and conservation (which is not emphasized at all)” (Anonymous). A curator identified foreign languages as a necessity for curatorial research in textiles and clothing. Finally, one former museum executive concluded that:

One can (re)learn research skills and how to work new technology, but there is no substitute for hands-on experience. When I was in an executive position, I always looked to hire the person who’d gotten their hands dirty over the one who only had an academic track record, no matter how fine it might be.

Participants provided very valuable information about skills needed, skills they use daily, classes that they took, classes they recommend, and other helpful comments.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

TCH collections whether in a university, part of a general collection, a stand-alone collection, or an individual museum can provide a unique experience for museum visitors (Steele, 1998; Marcketti et al., 2011). Students and designers often use historic garments as inspiration, while scholars study textiles and clothing as a way of understanding diverse cultures and previous time periods. A more recent trend is the use of fashion exhibits to generate foot traffic for a museum (Anderson, 2000). Fashion exhibits are popular because visitors’ engage with clothing daily and can feel an understanding and connection to it (Melchior, 2011). In light of the important role that TCH collections play in connecting with the public, drawing in audiences, informing scholars, and inspiring students and designer, it is important to understand the professionals who care for and make these collections accessible. To gain a better understanding of what skills and knowledge are necessary for success in TCH collections, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 10 TCH museum professionals and received usable surveys from 46 other TCH museum professionals.

Interviewees were recruited from professional organizations and referrals including Costume Society of America. This snowball sampling technique produced information from four curators, a curatorial assistant, an auctioneer, a conservator, a collections manager, a registrar, and a museum assistant. Interviews took place via telephone and lasted between 25 minutes and an hour and 45 minutes. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed using open coding to discover themes (Esterberg, 2002; Appendix E). The identified skills, knowledge, and education that interviewees discussed fit into three major content areas: textiles and clothing, museum practices, and liberal arts.
First, interviewees stated that they used knowledge and skills related to textiles and clothing frequently. This knowledge included textiles and clothing history, fiber and weave identification, garment construction, and textiles and clothing conservation. Interviewees encouraged students to gain textiles and clothing knowledge by recommending classes. Second, participants discussed museum practices as an important area to have experience in. The skills that became evident in this content area were object handling, storage, fundraising, cataloguing, and artifact analysis. The third and final content area was liberal arts. Participants not only appreciated their broad liberal arts education, but they agreed that it gave them a larger perspective which helped them in their careers. Therefore, they named classes and majors that would be beneficial including history, French, anthropology, sociology, and art history.

An internet survey was generated from the themes discovered in the interviews. The link was emailed to members of the Costume Society of America. It asked respondents to rate 13 classes on a seven point Likert scale from not necessary to extremely necessary. Survey participants also rated nine skills in terms of frequency of use on a seven point Likert scale from never used to used daily. Like interviewees, survey respondents suggested majors for students hoping to work in TCH collections. Survey results largely agreed with interview results and fit into the same three content areas.

**Textiles and Clothing Knowledge**

Survey and interview results both emphasized the importance of textiles and clothing knowledge. Knowledge and familiarity with fashion vocabulary and terms was not only mentioned in interviews, but was rated, on average, as important ($M=5.98$) and used by professionals on a regular basis ($M=5.74$). Second, almost all interviewees emphasized that a strong, working knowledge of the history of textiles and clothing was very important. The survey
data supported this with an average importance rating of 5.78, and it was also found by Granger (2007) who included it among the list of necessary skills for TCH collection hopefuls.

Survey participants agreed with Granger (2007) and noted other knowledge areas that job prospects in museum jobs should be familiar with including artifact analysis, storage practices, and exhibition planning. In order to successfully conduct artifact analysis and store objects, interviewees encouraged students to take textile science courses. The survey reflected that participants use textile science knowledge such as fiber identification regularly ($M=5.43$).

Camenson (1996) and survey and interview data stated that conservation and preservation knowledge was required by more than just museum conservators alone. The survey indicated that participants, one of which was a conservator, used conservation knowledge regularly ($M=5.05$) and found that knowledge to be important ($M=5.86$). Interviewees agreed and said that this knowledge was very helpful when hiring conservators, as well as other museum professionals.

There was agreement among interviewees and survey participants about the importance of garment construction knowledge. Jack was adamant that students be exposed to garment construction techniques at some point in their career. Survey data agreed that this knowledge was important with an average rating of 5.50 on the scale of importance. However, this knowledge was not used regularly with an average frequency rating of 1.67 or just above “never used.”

The interview and survey data collected for this study agreed with the literature. However, as the survey data was not limited to one job title, the data suggests that the above skills are necessary to a variety of TCH collection careers. While both Granger (2007) and Camenson (1996) attributed skills to specific job titles.
Museum Practices Knowledge

In addition to subject matter knowledge, familiarity with museum practices was also deemed important by both interview and survey data (M=5.93). Although object handling was mentioned in interviews, the skill was emphasized in the survey data as very important (M=6.64) and used almost every day (M=6.42). Furthermore, interview and survey participants listed dressing/mount making, accessioning, and a general knowledge of museums as important.

Participants expanded on skills and knowledge that was not discussed in the literature. Label and didactic writing was a repeating theme in both the survey and the interviews. Another skill mentioned was museum related technology including establishing and maintaining an internet presence through a website and social media, photography and editing, and database management. This emphasis on technology and a different genre of writing was unique to this study.

Three ways were mentioned to gain museum knowledge: formal training, internships, and on the job training. Both survey data and interview data agreed that a museum studies class was important to take (M=5.39). Camenson (1996) sited a graduate degree in museum studies as good preparation for a museum career. Participants strongly encouraged museum hopefuls to intern or volunteer. Survey participants rated interning as very necessary (M=6.27). Both survey and interviewees noted that interning will not only rounded out one’s skills, but would also help to “de-romanticize” the museum industry. Similarly, Daniilov (1994) and Burdick (2008) argued that internships and volunteering counted towards work experience and made one visible to potential employers. Finally, two survey participants noted that they learned their museological skills on the job and wished they had gone through formal training.
Liberal Arts Knowledge

The third major knowledge area was liberal arts or interdisciplinary knowledge. Of the 10 interviewees, seven were grateful for their liberal arts education. They agreed that the variety of classes and interdisciplinary study gave them a broader perspective and helped them interpret objects. When asked what classes students should take, both survey and interview participants suggested a variety of history classes: art history, world history, and general history.

Interestingly, on average, an art history class was rated as slightly above neutral on the scale of importance \((M=4.80)\). This seemed to disconnect with the three survey participants who said that they wish they had taken art history and the one who advised students to take the course. In fact, both Danilov (1994) and Camenson (1996) suggested that a degree in art history would prepare a student for the museum world.

Survey participants discussed other classes as well. Material culture classes were rated, on average, as very important \((M=6.09)\). Research methods classes were rated as important \((M=5.61)\). This rating coincided with the interviewees’ responses. Four of the 10 mentioned that they do research on a regular basis. While the literature discussed research and analysis (material culture) in relation to specific job titles (e.g., curators), it did not emphasize the importance of this knowledge to all job titles.

Other Knowledge and Qualities

As a result of limited funding, competition with technology like Wikipedia®, and the museum’s changing role in the community, business skills and knowledge are becoming more important to the museum world (Camenson, 1996). This knowledge area included skills like finance and budgeting, managing others, fundraising and grant writing, and marketing and public
relations. Financial oversight was rated as neutral importance ($M=4.02$) and neutral in frequency of use ($M=4.09$) by museum professionals.

Managing others was rated as important with an average rating of $5.74$ and used moderately frequently ($M=5.38$). Similarly, $90\%$ of interviewees listed managing others (e.g., volunteers or interns) as a job responsibility. Taking a grant writing class was recommended by both interviewees and survey participants. In fact, the class was rated as somewhat important ($M=4.48$) and somewhat necessary to take ($M=4.68$). Interestingly, grant writing was not done very frequently by museum professionals ($M=2.95$). Finally, survey participants rated marketing/public relations as not a very necessary class ($M=3.70$). Museum professionals, both interviewees and survey respondents listed donor relations and etiquette as something that they wish they had or were more comfortable with.

**Implications**

In contrast to the majority of the literature, this study suggests that a variety of job titles will continue to share responsibilities and skills. As funding continues to decrease and staffing becomes leaner, remaining staff will need to work together to continue to provide education and access to TCH collections. Job responsibilities and required knowledge come from three major areas: textiles and clothing, museum practices, and liberal arts. Business skills are becoming more of an asset for museum professionals.

In addition to having the specified knowledge, museum professionals stressed how incredibly competitive the job market is. Interning is crucial for success as it places the student on the radar of potential employees and gives him/her job experience. Unlike the museum career literature that speaks to the museum world at large, this study focuses on Textiles and Clothing Historic Collections.
Recommendations to Students

Professionals advised students to proactively seek out four things: museum skills/knowledge, textiles and clothing knowledge/expertise, liberal arts background, and internships. These professionals could not emphasize enough how competitive the field is and how stressful their job hunts were. They encouraged students to evaluate their idea of museums to decide if they truly wanted to pursue a museum career. If students do decide to enter the museum world there are several classes that the professionals recommended including grant writing, textiles and clothing history, nonprofit marketing, management, textile science, French, writing, material culture, and a sewing/garment construction class. In addition to specific classes, the professionals encouraged students to get a broad, interdisciplinary background because it helps put things in context.

Professionals also stressed that students often need to be proactive about getting the skills and knowledge they need. These necessary skills include object handling, artifact analysis, exhibit preparation and installation/deinstallation, mount making and mannequin dressing, housing, cataloguing, and internet skills. One way to get these skills or supplement one’s education is to do internships. Participants said that interning across disciplines and across the nation or even internationally shows that one can travel, is flexible, and has diverse skills. Participants stressed that students should not “back themselves into a corner” by specializing solely in textiles and clothing because many museums require their staff to work across disciplines and be familiar with a variety of job responsibilities.

Finally, networking was cited as crucial for students. The one rule of networking, as explained by participants, is to be seen. Students can do this through internship, asking questions, attending conferences, going to lectures, and just talking to people in the field. Interviewees said
that professional organizations are very important. However, the more local, regional
organizations are better for networking because they are easier to attend and one can get to know
people on an individual level because attendance is smaller than national conferences.

**Limitations**

The focus of this study was on TCH collections in the United States. Therefore, no
international TCH collections were recruited to participate in data collection. A larger sample
size may have yielded additional themes. Further, only professionals who worked with the actual
artifacts of TCH collections were interviewed. This was intentional due to the researchers’
interest in better understanding the education, career paths, skills and training needed for those
who actually work with TCH collection objects. However, this sample selection did not include
directors of museums and governing authorities who may have meaningful input into the hiring
processes of TCH collection professionals.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW RECRUITING SCRIPT

Dear/Hello____.

Thank you for your interest in participating in my study on what makes students anticipating museum careers successful in the workforce. I would like to set up a time for an interview. When would that be possible? We can do this over the phone, via skype (a video chat program), via email, or in person. Here is my availability:______. By responding to this email you agree to participate in this interview. You will be asked to read and sign a consent form before beginning the interview. It is attached for your reference. Your interview will take between 1 and 2 hours. You can always email me with any questions you may have before our interview.

Thank you so much for your time and interest,
Caitlyn Kamm
M.S. candidate
Textile History
Iowa State University
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: The Museum World: Career Skills and Training for Students Interested in Working For or With Museums

Investigators: Caitlyn Kamm, Sara Marcketti

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this study is to learn more what skills, experience; training is preferred in museum jobs and whether current education programs are meeting these ideals. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a professional either in a museum or one who works with museums as a consultant.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one on one interview with the researcher. This interview will contain demographic questions and those on your educational background, career path, job description, and necessary skills and qualities for professionals in or working with the museum world.

This one time interview may take place in person, on the phone, or via video chat and will be recorded via audio tapes upon your permission.

Your participation will last for a single meeting of 1-2 hours.

RISKS
There are no known risks involved in participating in this study.

BENEFITS
If you decide to participate in this study there will be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by informing both educators and students of the skills, experiences, qualities, and training needed and expected in preparation for working in and with the museum world.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION
You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or
leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: consent forms will be stored in a locked file cabinet, computer files including transcripts and audio files will be password protected, and participants will not be identified by name when data are stored and disseminated. Only pseudonyms will be used in all researchers’ records. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Consent forms will be kept for three years after the close of the study and destroyed by shredding. Computer files will be kept password protected on the researcher’s laptop for a maximum of ten years upon completion of the study, after which point the files will be erased. The museum professionals will be given a pseudonym in the transcriptions and all publications and presentations.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Caitlyn Kamm 708-261-6194; Major Professor: Sara Marcketti 515-294-7393.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

******************************************************************************

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

If this interview will take face via Skype or telephone, please sign or sign with a typed signature and print this form and keep for your records.

______________________________________________________________
(Participant’s Signature) (Date)
Thank you for your participation in this study. This interview will take between 1 and 2 hours. If you ever feel uncomfortable answering any question please let me know and we will skip that question. This will be an open ended exploratory interview, so please elaborate as much as you can on your responses.

**Demographic Section**
1) What kind of museum do you work in (Art, history, etc)? Size of museum? How many objects do you have?
2) Is the textile collection part of a bigger collection? A stand along collection? The only collection?
3) What is your title and how long have you been in your current job?
4) How old are you, if you don’t mind me asking?

**Current Job Responsibilities**
5) Can you describe what your job responsibilities are? What does your average day look like?
6) Who would be qualified for your specific job? What education level? Experience skills?
7) How did you get into your current position? Did you begin in an entry level position and then move up?
8) What specific skills, experience, or training do you use in your job?
9) How did you acquire these skills?

**Educational Path to Museum Work**
10) Describe your path to this career.
11) How did you decide on this career path?
12) Where did you complete your undergraduate degree? In what major?
13) Did you complete graduate work? What school and what major? If not, do you have a certificate and then train on the job?
14) How do you think that your degree program prepared you for your current career?
15) Is there anything about your program that you would change? (Specific course work, skills that you have found that you have needed that you did not receive during undergraduate or graduate training.)
16) Did you complete any internships or experiences outside of the classroom?
17) What were they and how were (the internships or experiences) helpful?
18) How did your schooling or internships shape your career decisions?
19) How long after receiving your degree did you obtain a museum related position?

**Changing role of museums redefining job descriptions**
20) What professional organizations are available in your field and how have they helped your professional development? What organizations are you in or do you participate?
21) Do you feel that museums/the function/role of museums have changed since you started your career?
22) If you answered yes to the previous question, how has the changing function of museums affected your career?

23) Are there any skills that are increasingly useful/in demand/relevant now than when you first began?

**Advice for current students**

24) Do you have any advice for current students who are interested in working in or with museums?

25) What classes/major would you recommend a student take?

26) What experience outside of the classroom would you recommended?

27) How would you advise students to network to get a museum related job?

28) Do you have anything else you would like to tell me?

29) Is there anyone else that you know in the museum world that you think I should speak with?

Thank you for your time. The interview is now complete.
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW IRB APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-1207
515-294-4566
FAX 515-294-4267

Date: 9/19/2011

To: Caitlyn Kamm
143 E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

CC: Dr. Sara Marckett
1060 LeBaron hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: The Museum World: Career Skills and Training for Students Interested in Working for or With Museums

IRB Log #: 11-408

Study Review Date: 9/15/2011

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b).

The determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.

- You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application. Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.
APPENDIX E: CODING GUIDE

1. Interest in TCH collections
   How participants became interested in working in TCH collections

2. Education/Program of Study
   Participants’ educational path including their program of study at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
   a. Classes Taken/Skills Learned
      i. Textiles and Clothing
         1. TC History
         2. Conservation
         3. Textile Science
         4. Artifact Analysis
         5. Research
         6. Patternmaking/Garment Construction
      ii. Museum Studies
         1. Curatorial
         2. Registrarial
         3. Mannequin Dressing
         4. Museum Management
      iii. Interdisciplinary
         1. English
         2. Art History
         3. Anthropology/Sociology
         4. European Studies
         5. French
         6. Political Science
         7. History
   b. Experiences at School
      i. Study Abroad
      ii. Practiced Grant Writing
      iii. Collection
      iv. Teaching
      v. Internship Required
   c. Wish I Had
      i. Theory
      ii. Material Culture
      iii. Grant Writing
      iv. Appraisal
      v. Loans
      vi. Research Methods
      vii. Chosen Different Program
      viii. Interned More

3. Experiences Outside School
Experiences that shaped participants, expanded their skill set, and prepared them for their current positions.

a. Experiences
   i. Internship/Volunteer
      1. Across Country
      2. Variety of Institutions
         a. Large
         b. Small
         c. Corporate Archives
   ii. Part Time Jobs
      1. Freelance
      2. Part Time Museum Jobs

b. Skills Learned
   i. Handling
   ii. Storage
   iii. Exhibit Planning
   iv. Mount Making/Dressing
   v. Justify Museums
   vi. TC History
   vii. Hand Skills
   viii. Exposure to Museum World
   ix. Conservation

4. Job Duties
   Job duties and responsibilities participants perform and have.
   a. Everything
   b. Curating
      i. Research
      ii. Writing/Publications
   c. Registrarial
      i. Cataloguing
      ii. Accessioning
      iii. Loans
   d. Collections Management
      i. Housing
      ii. Handling
   e. Basic Conservation
      i. Mounting
      ii. Vacuuming
   f. Grant Writing
   g. Technology
      i. Website Maintenance
      ii. Database Management
      iii. Photography
   h. Public/Donor Relations
      i. Educate
         i. Lectures
ii. Teaching
j. Currier
k. Managing People/Resources
l. Authenticate/Price/Sell

5. Job Skills
Skills and knowledge participants use in their current positions.

a. Use Daily
i. Museums
   1. Accession
   2. Object Handling
   3. Curating
   4. Exhibit Installation
   5. Catalogue
   6. Paperwork
   7. Dressing/Mount Making

ii. Business
   1. Manage Interns

iii. Broad Background
   iv. Research
   v. Flexible
   vi. Work with Others
   vii. Photography

viii. Textiles and Clothing
   1. TC History
   2. Textile Science
   3. Conservation
   4. Loans

b. Wish I Had
i. Managerial
ii. Public Relations
iii. Grant Writing
iv. Appraisal

c. Needed More Now
i. Business Skills
   1. Development/Funding

ii. Travel More

iii. Being Efficient

iv. Public/Donor Relations

v. Technology
   1. Camera/Photography/PhotoShop
   2. Internet
   3. Social Media

vi. Creative Problem Solving

6. Job Search/Career Path
The nature of the participants’ job search.
a. Time Consuming
i. Took a long time
ii. Applied to variety of jobs
iii. Discouraging
iv. Exhausting
v. Persistence

b. Lucky/Right Place Right Time

c. Be Seen
   i. Interned
   ii. Made self indispensable
   iii. Conference/Network

d. Needed to move

e. Professor recommended

7. Networking
   a. Organizations
      i. CSA
      ii. AAM
      iii. Regional
      iv. Subject Specific
      v. Don’t have time
   
   b. How
      i. Be Seen
         1. Conference
         2. Intern/Volunteer
         3. Be Active
      ii. Sincere
      iii. Follow-up
      iv. Technology
         1. LinkedIn
         2. Google Alerts
   
   c. Benefits of Organizations/Networking
      i. Share Expertise
      ii. Feedback
      iii. Confidence
      iv. Learn/Inspiration
      v. Give Back

8. Museum Changes/Challenges
   What changes or challenges do participants or their museums face.
   a. Accessibility/Audience Expansion
   b. Role in Community
      i. Public View of Museums
   c. Funding/Budget
      i. Expanded Job Duties
   d. Space/Housing
   e. Lexicon
   f. Technology
      i. Pop-Up Installations
g. Increased Interest in Fashion

9. Advice
Advice participants have for current students hoping to work in TCH collections.

a. Skills/Classes
   i. Artifact Analysis
   ii. Organic Chemistry
   iii. Writing Skills
      1. Grant Writing
   iv. Best Practices
   v. Textiles and Clothing
      1. Garment Construction
      2. TC History
      3. TC Science
   vi. Liberal Arts/Broad Background
      1. General
      2. French
      3. Big Picture
      4. Diversify
   vii. Attributes/Qualities
      1. Flexibility
      2. Curiosity
      3. Passion
   viii. Business
      1. Non-profit Marketing
      2. Selling

b. Networking
   i. Organizations
      1. Regional
      2. Conferences
   ii. Be Seen
      1. Network
      2. Conferences
      3. Talk to People
   iii. Keep in Touch
   iv. Sincerity
   v. Scary
   vi. Technology
      1. LinkedIn
      2. Google Alerts

c. Job Hunt
   i. Don’t Do It
      1. No Money
      2. Competitive
         a. Passionate People
   ii. Intern/Volunteer/Free Labor
      1. De-romanticize Museums
2. Know What You Want
3. Build Experience
4. Outside TC
5. Widely Geographically
6. Professional/Good Worker
7. Docent
APPENDIX F: SURVEY RECRUITING SCRIPT

Dear CSA Member:

I am a master’s student under the supervision of Dr. Sara Marcketti at Iowa State University in the Apparel, Merchandising, and Design Program. I am currently working on my thesis: *The Museum World: Career Skills and Training for Students Interested in Working with Textiles and Clothing Historic Collections*, which addresses the skills needed to make students successful in Textiles and Clothing collections and museums.

If you work with a textiles and clothing collection in a museum, university, historical society, or other institution, I ask that you complete the following survey:


The survey will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Please complete the survey by 12:00 midnight Monday, January 30.

If you have any questions regarding the survey you may contact Caitlyn Kamm at kammcait@iastate.edu or Sara Marcketti at sbb@iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects please contact the IRB administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu

Thank you for your participation,

Caitlyn Kamm

M.S. Candidate, Textiles and Clothing History
Apparel, Merchandising, and Design
Iowa State University
APPENDIX G: SURVEY PROTOCOL

Dear Participant:

This is a research study. Please feel free to ask questions at any time. The purpose of this study is to learn what skills, experience; training is preferred in museum jobs and whether current education programs are meeting these ideals.

This survey is completely anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may leave the survey at any time. Although there a few questions that are required, you may skip other questions.

Thank you for participating in this survey and feel free to contact Caitlyn Kamm for further information about this study:
Caitlyn Kamm
Kammcait@iastate.edu, (708) 261-6194

If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects please contact the IRB administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu

Do you agree to participate in this survey?
- I agree
- I disagree

SCREENING: Do you work in or with a museum?
Yes
No
Background information: Personal

1. What is your job title?
   a. Curator (including fellowships)
   b. Conservator (including fellowships)
   c. Registrar
   d. Curatorial Assistant
   e. Collections Manager
   f. Research Associate/Assistant
   g. Appraiser
   h. Auctioneer
   i. Other. Please list:

2. How old are you?
   a. 21 or under
   b. 22-30
   c. 31-40
   d. 41-50
   e. 51-60
   f. 60+

3. How long have you been in your current position?
   a. Less than 5 years
   b. 5-10 years
   c. 10-20 years
   d. More than 20 years

4. I work
   a. In a free-standing textile/costume collection/museum
   b. In a textile/costume collection/museum that is part of a larger museum
   c. In a university or college textile/costume collection/museum
   d. Am a consultant
   e. Other: Please list:

5. What is the highest degree that you hold?
   a. Bachelor’s
   b. Master’s
   c. Doctorate

6. Including internships, how many years of experience do you have working with museums?
   a. Less than 5 years
   b. 5-10 years
   c. 10-20 years
   d. More than 20 years
7. How long did it take you to get a job in a museum setting after you graduated?  
   a. Less than 1 year  
   b. 1-2 years  
   c. 3-5 years  
   d. N/A, I changed careers

8. How did you find out about the job opening for your current position?  
   a. Recommendation from an advisor, mentor, teacher, etc.  
   b. Internship contact  
   c. American Association of Museums website  
   d. Continually searching job sites/resources  
   e. Professional organization contact  
   f. Friend/Family  
   g. Other. Please list: 

**Background Information: Museum**

9. Where is your museum located?  
   a. Northeastern United States  
   b. Mid Atlantic United States  
   c. Midwestern United States  
   d. Western United States  
   e. Southeastern United States  
   f. Southwestern United States  
   g. Western United States  
   h. International

**Helpful Classes**

In regards to preparing for a museum-related career, please rate from a scale of 1 (not necessary) to 7 (extremely necessary) the importance of the following classes:

10. Art History  
11. Conservation of dress and textiles  
12. Event Planning  
13. Grant Writing  
14. History of Dress  
15. Material Culture/Collections Management Course  
16. Marketing/Public Relations  
17. Museum Studies  
18. Research Methods  
20. Statistics  
21. Textile Science  
22. Internship or practicum experiences  
23. What other courses do you consider necessary for a student interested in a museum-related career? Please List:
For students interested in museum careers, would you advise they graduate with a
1. A degree in an apparel related major
2. A specific museum studies program of study
3. Any major as long as it includes a museum studies minor or certificate
4. Other: Please list:

Skills
How often do you use the following skills in your current museum-related career? Please rate from 1 (never) to 7 (daily).
1. Appropriate object handling
2. Conservation/Preservation skills
3. Financial oversight of the department
4. Grant writing
5. Knowledge of construction techniques
6. Knowledge of fashion vocabulary
7. Knowledge of fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints
8. Knowledge of museum practices vocabulary
9. Management/supervision of others
10. Other? Please list: ___________________

For students interested in museum-related careers, how important do you consider the following skills learned at school. Please rank from 1 (not important) to 7 (extremely important).
1. Appropriate object handling
2. Conservation/Preservation skills
3. Financial oversight of the department
4. Grant writing
5. Knowledge of construction techniques
6. Knowledge of fashion vocabulary
7. Knowledge of fibers, yarns, weaves, dyes and prints
8. Knowledge of museum practices vocabulary
9. Management/supervision of others
10. Other? Please list: ___________________

Open-ended Questions
1. What college/university did you attend as an undergraduate?
2. What was your specific major as an undergraduate?
3. What college/university did you attend for your graduate work?
4. What was your specific major as a graduate student?
5. What professional organizations are you currently a member of?
6. Please describe any skills or classes that you wish you had taken during your program of study that would be helpful in your current position.
7. What advice would you give students who wish to work with textile and costume collections?
8. Please type any other comments below.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515-294-4566
FAX 515-294-4207

APPENDIX H: SURVEY IRB APPROVAL

Date: 12/8/2011
To: Caitlyn Kamm
143 E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

CC: Dr. Sara Marcketti
1050 LeBaron Hall
Dr. Mary Lynn Damhorst
1056 LeBaron Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: The Museum World: Career Skills and Training for Students Interested in Working with Textile
and Clothing Historic Collections

IRB ID: 11-408

Study Review Date: 12/7/2011

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections
regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or
  interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly
    or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place
    the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability,
    or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:
- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.
- You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application. Review by IRB staff is required
  prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review
  is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or
  scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in
  the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or
  discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to
  determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to
implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may
constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the
Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only
modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then
an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved
before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. Only the IRB or designees
may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this
study.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.