

RESD Professor receives Creative Economy Fund grant from UMass President's Office

A partnership between Professor Robert Farrant of RESD, the Cultural Organization of Lowell and the Revolving Museum has received a \$35,000 grant from the University of Massachusetts President's Office *Creative Economy Fund* to support a two-pronged project on behalf of Lowell's creative economy. The project consists of the following:

1. A detailed economic impact study regarding the various impacts on Lowell's economy of several cultural activities, and
2. An outreach effort to strengthen ties between the UMass Lowell community and the city's fast-growing arts and culture community. Particular attention will be paid to the development of long-term strategies to link UMass/ Lowell students on both campuses to downtown cultural activities and that can actively involve city residents and community members in the many cultural events taking place at UMass/Lowell.

Rationale

There are many cultural activities taking place in Lowell's downtown. There are also many cultural programs at UMass Lowell. However, there is a dearth of reliable data regarding who attends on campus or downtown and why, what the economic impact is on the downtown area's businesses, and what marketing and communication strategies would be most promising for increasing attendance at these activities. There is also almost no cross listing of events and activities such as gallery openings. One thing is well understood, though – and that is that the University is not drawing community members into their cultural programs, and conversely, cultural organizations in the city proper still struggle to attract UMass Lowell students to their events.

The three partners have agreed to work together to find answers to the above questions. They have also agreed to work together to use the findings of their research to jointly craft a clear and feasible strategy to increase student involvement (both planning and attending) in downtown cultural events, and to increase community members' involvement in cultural events on campus.

The grant will fund two RESD graduate student research assistantships for academic year 2007-08.

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