



Exit Interview with Dr. Joy Young

Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville
Search Committee Interview
Friday, September 18th, 2020
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET

Search Committee Members Present: Lisa Johnson, Council Member Michael Boylan, Kirsten Doolittle, Ari Jolly, Kemal Gasper

Guest: Joy Young

Dr. Joy Young referenced that in her role as Executive Director, she was a key arts and culture leader in the community, working to develop programs, work in research, outreach, community collaboration, development and fundraising, advocacy for funding and policy reform, and to ensure cultural equity. She had duties and responsibilities in the grants department, public art, and starting initiatives to strengthen arts and culture. She added managing and leading staff, engaging the community, and oversight in administrative functions.

What would she have done differently? She stated that understanding the organization and where it was in its cycle up front would have made a difference. While the organization is mature in age, it was immature in systems and processes. Joy would have liked the ability to pay more attention to the “back of the house” for more internal work to be done. She had no idea coming in the challenges that the organization faced, for example the unknown IRS problem(s). She made a lot of assumptions and assumed the Board was getting the information that they needed from the staff. Joy stated she has an open communication style and the Board had a desire for communication to be received differently. She assumed that every Board member had a copy of the job description and job summary for the Executive Director position.

Did she feel that she received support required to fulfill her duties as Executive Director? Joy Young stated that she had a 12-page document of goals of which 90% were accomplished and 100% addressed. Some of these goals were affected by the pandemic, however many goals exceeded expectations. Support and grants for artists were supported by PNC to create a grant program, and the Artsee and Shop was sponsored by the Lazzara Foundation.

Joy felt that she did receive Board support. Other goals for the staff and Executive Director were set clearly in the strategic framework. They were to ensure that the organization diversified funding and the Board members were helpful. Also, there was an additional goal for a development strategy to inspire more investment, partnerships and revenue. In community engagement, Council Member Boylan was very supportive. In communication, Director Gasper was very helpful in ensuring that information was pushed along his network. Joy feels there was a disconnect between her goals and the Board’s goals. There were goals for internal capacity that Joy set to accomplish. She felt least supported in monthly reports and stated she had feedback of not doing what the Board wanted.

Director Jolly spoke about her experience in the governance world and the perspective she has formed on the role of a board. Director Jolly stated that typically boards in the charitable organization space provide strategic direction, revenue support and oversight functions as opposed to acting in operational roles. When talking with candidates for the role of the Executive Director, she will be clarifying the Board's function.

Council Member Boylan asked about multiple review processes. Specifically, he asked whether there were conversations that pointed out concerns along the way? He shared that per the bylaws of the organization, each committee would develop strategic goals that were to be followed and executed by Joy and staff. Joy felt a disconnect: when she thought she was completing her goals; something was never quite right.

Director Gasper asked Joy when did she realize the internal challenges and did she ever communicate these? If so, what was the response? Joy described how she was told “we hire you to take care of the problems, that's why we pay you what we do”.

Director Johnson asked Joy who she considered to be the key stakeholders? Joy answered first and foremost the public, then the decision makers from the City of Jacksonville. She also considered providers of art and cultural activities and services, artists, organizations, the Board, corporate/business community, and donors to be key stakeholders. The primary stakeholders varied on what was happening.

Council Member Boylan asked Joy what she would look for in a candidate for the Executive Director position. She answered that the organization needs someone who is able to see the needs of the organization and have time to focus on constituents and their needs. An Executive Director also needs to be able to manage within the internal structure of the organization and have Board support wherever the prioritization is.

The committee asked if there was any advice for the new Executive Director. Joy reflected that she and Ann initially went to the NE Nonprofit Center's board planning retreat and found this resource to be very helpful. It assisted with getting to know one another and to understand mutual agreements. She also recommended leaving room for Governance/Board goals. The Executive Director, Board, and staff should engage in personality assessment and leadership assessment styles. She recommended a retreat with the Board and staff to be ideal in getting to know each other and getting everyone on the same page for the good of the community of the arts.

Key Takeaways:

- 1) Lack of Board experience by the Executive Director resulting in a misalignment of roles and expectations
- 2) Focus on internal operations impacted Joy's time in the community
- 3) Lack of alignment with the key stakeholders
- 4) Important to have synergy between the Board, the Executive Director and the staff