Request for Haverford College intern/January 14, 2016

Contact:

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Description of organization:

DataArts (formerly the Cultural Data Project) in a national nonprofit organization, based in Philadelphia, which serves 16,000+ arts and cultural organizations (museums, theaters, dance troupes, etc.). We are a cross between a nonprofit arts service organization and a technology company, with a dash of research institute/think tank.

We are dedicated to empowering the nonprofit arts and cultural community with high-quality data and resources in order to strengthen its vitality, performance, and public impact. DataArts is a trusted source of high-quality data and knowledge that advances cultural initiatives. We equip arts and cultural organizations to collect, learn from, and use data effectively; build critical technology and tools for the collection, management and use of data; and are the engine for a national partnership for cultural data, dedicated to collective learning, leadership, and action.

In Winter 2016, we re-built and re-launched the online data collection system which is the core technology application of DataArts. As part of that re-launch, we are entering into data collection partnerships with other national arts service organizations, such as Americans for the Arts, the League of American Orchestras, Opera America, and the National Guild for Community Arts Education, to better serve the different types of arts and cultural organizations. These collaborative effects will greatly increase the reach of DataArts, bringing in data from several thousand new organizations into the DataArts system over the course of the next two years.

Founded in 2004 as a program of the Pew Charitable Trusts, DataArts became an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization in 2012. Originally working only in Pennsylvania, DataArts quickly expanded to serve the arts and cultural communities in California, Massachusetts, New York, and many other states; we will soon serve organizations in all 50 states and Canada.

Proposed work for an intern:

We propose that a Haverford student intern with the Research Team at DataArts. The Research Team is primarily focused on analyzing data about arts and cultural organizations, developing different types of reporting on these organizations (including reports on representativeness,
market analyses, demographics, the activities of different disciplines, etc.), and preparing materials for use by the organizations, those who work on their behalf, politicians, business leaders, and others. The Research intern would work closely with the Research staff to write new reports, develop new iterations of existing reports, test methodologies, prepare and test automations (including data visualizations for the web).

**Qualifications/interest:**

The most important qualifications would be (1) an interest in nonprofit organizations, especially nonprofit arts organizations and (2) an interest - or at least a lack of fear - in working with large datasets. Qualified students would be welcome from most any discipline, but those with interest or experience in Public Policy, Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Computer Science, as well as the Fine Arts, would be most welcome. While not required, experience working in Excel, statistics programs (SPSS, SAS, Stata), mapping systems (ESRI), data visualization (Adobe Creative Suite, Tableau), or programming (Java, HTML, PHP, Python) would be welcome.

**Tasks:**

Over the course of 2016, the Research Team will be building and re-building its automated and semi-automated systems that let us derive understanding and insight from the mass of data that we collect on nonprofit organizations. In some cases, we will be working on specific projects that will likely need to be accomplished during Summer 2016 - e.g., an analysis of “What is the demographic composition of the arts and cultural community in Los Angeles?” will likely be conducted during this time. In other cases, we will be working on broader questions, such as “How can we best report on arts and cultural organization in ways that make sense to U.S. Senators and Congresspersons?” and testing different iterations of such a report to see what will work best. The organization in general and the Research Team are very interested in a wide variety of topics related to arts and cultural organizations, and we will be able to tailor the internship, to a degree, to the interests and skills of the specific student. Some of the topics are:

- the role of arts and culture in economic development
- measuring social impacts of arts programs
- Creative Placemaking
- financial health of arts and cultural organizations
- the impact(s) of wider social and economic trends on arts and culture
- gentrification in cities and the role of arts and cultural organizations
- arts and cultural events calendars as leading indicators of neighborhood change

**Skills and experience offered:**

The internship will affords candidates the opportunity to experience what it is like to work with “Big Data” in the context of working with nonprofit organizations, while trying to understand and influence public policy decisions. As such, it will provide a somewhat unique window onto three different professional works, which could be invaluable to a student with the willingness and will to take advantage of it. Depending on the projects involved and the student’s interest,
we will offer the opportunity to gain hand-on experience and learn to use a variety of software tools that can be professionally and academically valuable. In particular, we would be willing to train a student to use advance statistical, mapping, and data visualization software.

**Challenges for undergraduate students:**

DataArts is a pleasant, collaborative organization with a highly motivated and experienced staff. The pace of work in our organization is quite high. A student would be expected to function semi-independently at first and mostly-independently as the summer went on.

**Rewards for interns:**

DataArts takes seriously the idea that an internship should offer opportunities for both professional and educational development. We will ensure appropriate mentoring on both counts and are committing to the student having a fruitful summer. Both the intern’s direct supervisor and the organizations COO/CFO are Haverford alums. Finally, the student will complete the internship with a portfolio of work that they would be welcome to use or cite as they pursue future employment or academic opportunities.

**Conditions of work:**

Work takes place during normal weekday working hours, Monday-Friday. No evening or weekend work is anticipated. Little or no travel is anticipated (possibly a day trip to NYC or DC, if appropriate to project work). DataArts office is located a half-block from the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, in Old City.

**Supervising the student:**

The Senior Research Associate (Nick Crosson HC’93) will train and directly supervise the student for work conducted at DataArts, with assistance from the Research Associate (Rebecca Johnson), as appropriate. The COO/CFO (Larry Bomback HC’04) oversees the overall progress and goals of DataArts’s Research endeavors.