Towards a Visitor-Friendly Guard Experience in U.S. Art Museums

by

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VII. PRODUCT:
INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the 1999 movie, The Thomas Crown Affair, protagonist and art thief Thomas Crown built trust with a security guard as a repeat visitor to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Mr. Crown regularly visits the museum in order to admire Van Gogh’s Haystacks, ritualistically settling in on a museum bench and enjoying a sandwich in the galleries. Mr. Crown disobeys the museum rule of no food or drink in the galleries and the guard on duty, donned in his traditional uniform of a maroon blazer, white shirt, black tie, and grey polyester pants, alerts Thomas to this fact. Although reprimanded for disobeying museum rules, the character of Thomas Crown still had a positive experience with the guard because his tone was friendly, yet authoritative when stating a museum rule.

The guard Thomas Crown came into contact with communicated verbally, thus leaving an impression based on his tone. Security guards in U.S. art museums also make negative or positive impressions on visitors based on their uniforms, job titles, demeanor, and ability to provide visitor service through answering wayfinding or collections inquiries.
In the 1992 landmark professional museum publication, *The Museum Experience*, museum researchers John Falk and Lynn Dierking discuss this relationship further:

> every museum visitor is affected by museum guards, no matter how experienced the visitor or how much a part of the establishment the guards seem to be. Guards come in all shapes and sizes, in all forms of dress, and in a variety of dispositions. Without saying a word, guards communicate to the visitor the nature of the institution.\(^1\)

Falk and Dierking’s observations about how guards communicate a great deal to visitors regarding the nature of the institution and about what they must think of visitors is one that must be investigated more closely in the museum field. This is especially true due to the art museum’s recent focus on the museum visitor and his or her needs. Recently, visitor service has become a crucial aspect of the museum experience, which if positive, can encourage repeat visits, if negative, can deter visitors from returning. Security guards can be intimidating figures in a setting in which many people seek sanctuary. As a visitor, having a guard follow or watch your every move can seem a bit like having a police car following you; you hope that you are doing absolutely nothing wrong and the blue and red lights don’t go flashing behind your car. Visitors, especially inexperienced

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ones, are “particularly cautious about their behavior”\textsuperscript{2} and may fear that if they make one wrong move a guard will humiliate them by commanding museum rules across the gallery.

Despite its importance, what encompasses the terms “visitor service” and “visitor-friendly” is complex. It can refer to the cleanliness of the institution and more often than not, the behaviors and attitudes of the staff toward the public. For the purposes of this paper, I will be focusing where security guards fit into the museum’s emphasis on visitor service. My purpose is to examine how museums can marry the roles of security and visitor service through evaluating everything from job descriptions and titles, uniforms, and training practices in order to create a more visitor-friendly museum guard.

For many museums to continue accomplishing their goal of exemplary visitor service, the job description and thus the roles of museum security guards need reconfiguration. As Michelle Falkenstein described in a May 2005 \textit{ArtNews} article, “The Training of the Guards,” only in recent years have museums started to recognize the importance of guards who are “trained in customer service in addition to evacuations,

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, 87.
medical emergencies, and dealing with confrontational visitors.”³ With more and more institutions focusing on visitors walking away from their museum experience satisfied and wanting to return, the duties of guards need to go beyond protecting objects and visitors. As Falkenstein concludes, they must at the same time be well versed in security measures and customer service. This hybrid presents many challenges for museum professionals but it can be approached positively through small changes over a period of time. In my research for this master’s project, museum professionals reported their biggest challenges involve merging these two roles. These museum staff members seemed to view changes as having to happen all at once. Instead, by focusing on making incremental changes, museums can achieve a successful hybrid of visitor-friendliness and security.

Art museums small and large across the United States, are taking these steps to create a visitor-friendly guard through new uniforms, job titles, and training practices. One of these is the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. At the Walker, staff made the decision to change the job titles of “guard” to that of “gallery officer.” After that, the museum outfitted gallery officers with “less intimidating khakis and vests.”⁴

⁴ Ibid.
Additionally, the Walker decided to alter the direction in which guards circulated on the museum floor. This helped curb any perceptions that guards were following visitors too closely.\(^5\) Clearly the staff at the Walker are in tune with what Steven Layne, President and CEO of Layne Consultants International, a cultural-property protection adviser, believes: “in the past, museum security officers were told to stay out of sight, but there’s a tremendous amount of customer service. They have to relate to the public.”\(^6\)

Before examining positive models of visitor-friendly guards at institutions like the Walker Art Center more closely, it is vital to understand the traditional roles of security guards at other institutions across the country. One of these roles involves enforcing rules in the museum setting. Even visitor-friendly guards at the Walker are still expected to implement these rules to protect the collections, facility, and other visitors from harm, but hopefully the training encourages a more welcoming interaction with museum visitors. Enforcing rules encompasses the tough job of informing visitors they are not allowed to touch sacred museum objects, to get too close to paintings, to take pictures with a flash,

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or to cross lines that are obvious to the security guard and oblivious to the visitor overwhelmed by his or her surroundings in the first place. The source of these rules comes from the need to conserve precious objects so that future generations may enjoy the beauty of the art. Furthermore, guards serve to preserve museum decorum, which ultimately supports the museum experience as ritual. Without the presence of guards, these rules and etiquette cannot be effectively employed. However, many museum visitors are not aware of the conservation practices and expectations for behavior in museums.

At the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco, there are subtle, almost invisible signs posted in the galleries alerting visitors to why they are forbidden to touch the art, including how damaging it can be. These signs are similar in nature to the labels for works of art, as they are laid out on plexiglass with white text. Visitors can find them as they transition from room to room and they read as follows:

**PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH THE WORKS OF ART**

**ALL WORKS OF ART ARE FRAGILE,**

even those made of hard materials such as wood or bronze. Touching can scratch, puncture, smudge, or deposit fingerprints. Please stay one foot away from paintings and uncovered works on paper.

We appreciate your cooperation.
For guards to be able to enforce such rules, visitors must first be aware of why these rules are in place to begin with. However, since signs such as the ones at the Legion are so easy to gloss over completely, as seems only appropriate in the museum environment, just how many visitors notice them in the first place and in turn obey the requests asked of them in the posted sign? Or are these signs serving the purpose to remind guards of the visitors’ script they are meant to enforce? Assistant Security/Visitor Services Manager at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Paul Smith, had this to observe about visitors’ receptivity to enforced behavior, “regular law abiding people do not like being told to do something. It doesn’t matter if there is some validity to the request. People react reflexively to any authority.”7 This resistance of authority sometimes leads to additional questions being posed by visitors to security guards. They often want answers to why rules are imposed on them in the first place, but also may have other inquiries that come to mind during their visit.

Answering questions is one vital part of the visitor service role that security guards play. Without a human being to answer questions, visitors would often be lost, as wayfinding is almost always challenging and overwhelming in a museum building. Even frequent visitors still have

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questions that need to be answered from time to time. While some questions deal with basic visitor service and navigational issues, such as: “Where are the nearest restrooms? How do I get out of this place? Other visitors attempt to engage guards in conversation: Isn’t this a boring job? How do you stand here all day long? Are you allowed to sit? Are you an art student? Why am I not allowed to touch the art? Why are no flash photographs allowed in museum galleries? Do you know how lucky you are to be surrounded by all of this beautiful art all day long?” Other questions that go beyond navigational and natural curiosity include the following more in-depth and collections based questions: “Do you know about this particular work of art? Why did the artist choose to paint this particular subject? What was the artist’s background?” Walter Durrane, security officer at the McMullen Museum in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, comments on his experience with these types of questions, especially the two remarks he hears most from visitors: “you’re lucky to be surrounded by art all day” and “how do you stand all day long?” by concluding “After a while, you get used to it.”

In addition to serving as rule enforcers and visitor-service representations, guards could also serve to fulfill the role of informal

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educator. Due to the fact that guards are often the only floor staff available to immediately answer the above questions, it is essential for them to be properly trained in appropriate responses and manners. For visitors, human interaction is one element that contributes to the overall impression of the museum.

Despite being mesmerized by the art that surrounds them on a daily basis, guards face two immense challenges: low status and boredom. By integrating friendly visitor service approaches to the job, perhaps these two factors would be mitigated significantly. The Labor Law Talk website includes some derogatory terms for guards in their description: “rent-a-cops and imitation bacon (after the derogatory slang ‘pig’ for ‘policeman’).” Such terms are rarely said to a guard’s face, but guards can sense the lack of respect from visitors and museum staff. This originates in the fact that on the surface the job seems simple and easy to do. However, conditions such as boredom often cause psychological problems for guards. Boredom results when the museum environment does not stimulate guards and individuals have problems being alone with their thoughts for long periods of time. Upon hiring guards, security

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managers must ensure that individuals can maintain stability while in such an isolated environment.

With so much recent emphasis on the visitor experience and educating the masses that seek sanctuary in architecturally cathedral-like structures, museums often need to first look in-house at their staff in order to enhance the museum experience. Unfortunately, the staff that interact with the public on a regular basis are not receiving proper training which enables visitors to perceive their museum experience as a positive one. This is discussed by Meghan Arens in her master’s project, “Missing-Visitor Service is U.S. Art Museums, If Found Please Call-,” when she concludes that “despite their prime positioning on the front lines, security officers are only trained to interact with the public in a narrow range of ways.”¹⁰ Museums must recognize that a satisfying visit includes the social interaction visitors have with floor staff and design training with that in mind. Part of the recognition process involves having guards receive adequate training that goes beyond simple museum procedures and wayfinding issues. Through in-depth, informative, and visitor service centered training, museum education, visitor service, and security departments can provide guards with a sense of purpose and

¹⁰ Meghan Arens, Missing!: visitor service in art museums-if found, please call--, Final Master’s Project, John F. Kennedy University, 2004, 112.
empowerment, which will in turn transfer over to the overall satisfaction of the museum experience for visitors.

Museums face the overwhelming challenge of finding the resources to revamp their training practices. Yet, training security guards is an essential part of assuring the museum’s collection and its visitors are safely protected. The majority of art museums I surveyed for this project disclosed that their institutions do not have the resources to initiate collaborations between guards and education or visitor service departments.

As museum staff, guards often yearn to learn more about the museum’s collection and history of the institution so they can help visitors they speak to on a daily basis. Interviews with guards for this project affirmed this interest in additional educational and visitor service training.\textsuperscript{11} Museum staff would be wise to capitalize on guards’ interest in the mission. When I first started working as a guard at the Milwaukee Art Museum in 2003, it was surprising to experience just how many visitors wanted me to analyze the art for them. I knew I was not alone and noticed a pattern among other guards. Many of us had a strong desire to get more out of the job by learning about the collection in order to help our visitors. The majority of my fellow employees were artists or art students. Yet,

\textsuperscript{11} Talbert Web, interview by author, 16 April 2005.
numerous guards were simply there for the paycheck. Despite this, I
noticed that almost everyone fell under the spell of the beautiful objects
they so carefully guarded. Museums must recognize this trend among
guards they employ and use it to their advantage. Guards make key
observations on visitor behavior and can transmit to staff in curatorial,
education, exhibition design, and visitor service departments. In turn,
those staff members can work to improve the visitor experience at their
institutions through conversing with guards and using them as resources.

The majority of guards with whom I talked want more educational
training. Individuals such as Legion of Honor guard Talbert Web enjoy
being surrounded by the art on a daily basis. Many guards even
“eavesdrop” on docent tours conducted in the galleries in which they are
stationed. This begs the question as to whether training security guards
should move beyond the traditional basic security issues toward a docent
training program. This project explores questions like this and looks at
model programs so art museums across the United States are creating to
train more visitor-friendly guards. It concludes with a panel session at the
American Association of Museums conference, which enables institutions
to convey the process of switching to a more visitor-friendly model.
RESEARCH GOALS/QUESTIONS

Research focuses on six primary questions:

1. What is the traditional role of the security guard in United States art museums?

2. What are general demographic characteristics of museum security guards?

3. How are the roles of security guards changing to become more visitor-friendly?

4. How do security guards currently collaborate with education and visitor service departments?

5. What can be done to encourage better collaboration between education, visitor service, and security departments in U.S. art museums?

6. What do education and visitor service departments need to know in order to foster collaborations with security guards?

With these research questions come numerous objectives. I have identified five, including to explore, research and analyze the shifting roles of security guards in United States art museums; to develop a profile of museum security personnel in U.S. art museums; to assess
museum professionals’ attitudes toward collaboration efforts with security guards; to understand how, and if, U.S. art museums develop and implement collaboration efforts between education staff, visitor service personnel, and security guards; and finally, to develop a product that informs museum professionals about the need for visitor-friendly guards at U.S. art museums.

**METHODOLOGY**

In order to gather information necessary for this project, three modes of research were conducted.

**Literature Review**

A review of available museum journals and texts establishes the necessary background for the project and provides a basis for understanding current thought about the role of security guards in art museums. On-line resources such as the World Wide Web and electronic reference databases were also consulted. Articles also led to professionals who were qualified to address the topic in personal interviews. The topics I had to consider when conducting research included: the history of museum security; new models of visitor-friendly security programs;
duties, job titles, and uniforms of security guards; museum education and visitor service; and customer service models in the for-profit world.

**Interviews** with numerous museum security managers, guards, visitor service staff and educators were conducted to determine current thought and perceptions about the role of security guards in museums. Interviews have helped clarify what role security guards play in museums, with special interest being in how visitor-friendly training, uniforms, and titles were implemented. I also assessed the types of collaborations between education staff, visitor service personnel and security guards that may have been done in the past, and if so, what steps they took to meet institution specific goals and objectives. Interviews were conducted throughout the project, as guidance and feedback were necessary.

**Surveys** were sent to security managers and museum educators in order to gain further insight into collaborations between security guards and educators in art museums. A total of 80 surveys were mailed to directors of education and security at U.S. museums. The results from these enabled me to gain feedback from museums I am unable to visit in order to interview security managers and educators. The comments I received from
various educators and security managers are extremely valuable and appreciated.

LIMITATIONS

Numerous issues limit the extent of research on my master’s project. This project looks only at large U.S. art museums, with a focus on visitor-friendly guards. This research project is confined to the following boundaries.

Due to time and financial constraints, I limited my survey sample to 80. In addition to surveys, the number of interviews and pool of interviewees was limited. It was impossible to speak with every guard, education staff or visitor service manager while visiting or through contacting institutions, thus limiting my findings to the pool of people who participated in this study.

The scope of this project is also limited geographically. I focused my research solely on United States art museums. Financial limitations prohibited my ability to make visits to many museums outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, although I did visit museums in Texas and Wisconsin.

For the purposes of this paper, I limited the scope to that of how a visitor-friendly guard is formed through collaborations between security
guards, museum education and visitor service departments. The insights into collaborations derives from the fact that my original focus for the paper involved investigating a theorized disconnect between collaborations between security guards and educators. You will find that my survey findings and conclusions are heavily embedded in this topic, but nevertheless are still useful for looking at visitor-friendly security guard models.

I was also unable to investigate and compare and contrast how security guards in industries outside the museum field may differ in their expected roles and outlook for jobs in the future.

Consequently, I could not engage in discussion regarding other museum departments such as collections, curatorial, evaluation, and exhibition design. Nevertheless, I project my research will be useful to these departments as they all come into contact with the security department from time to time.

**Product Description**

The need for this conference session grows out of my desire to inform the larger museum community to recognize how they can work
with security guards in order to meet visitor service standards in their museums.

The goal of the conference session, *Security Guards of the Future: Protecting and Providing Visitor Service*, is to inform museum educators, visitor service and security managers how to best work with security guards in order to create a more visitor-friendly role. This encompasses many various objectives: proper visitor service and educational training, budget and time concerns, and decreasing boredom and job dissatisfaction among guards.

This goal coincides with the AAM Annual Meeting’s 2006 theme of *A Centennial of Ideas: Exploring Tomorrow’s Museums*. This encompasses assessing questions such as “what must we be, for whom, and to what purpose?” and “how do we educate effectively, attract new audiences, partner with communities?” Certainly, like museums themselves, the role of security guard has evolved slowly since 1906. Until recently, both the role of guards and the museum itself had not focused so intensely on the visitor-friendly side of the field.

The choice of a conference session at AAM originates, as stated above, in the emphasis in this topic reaching a large audience of museum professionals. Art museums need to reevaluate their security programs based on the major shift museums have endured in recent decades. This
can only be fulfilled if museum professionals other than security managers pay attention to guards at their museums.

The annual AAM conference attracts approximately 5000 museum professionals from all over the country. According to the AAM website, the audience encompasses mostly museum professionals at many different types of institutions. Perhaps one of my goals, the desire for additional training of guards, will be fulfilled through museums putting more time and effort into education training practices.

The content of the session focuses on three areas. First, speakers will ascertain what prompted their institution to consider a more visitor-friendly guard. Second, they will focus on how that new role was merged with the old expectations for guards. Third, speakers will discuss trials and tribulations as well as the feedback they received thus far from the new model.

Submission requirements involve sending a session proposal application. It includes a detailed outline of the session title, overview, focus, outcomes, relevance, summary, chairperson responsibilities, presenters, and content. This is provided at the end of my project.

Overall, a conference session at AAM accomplishes one of my goals that came from being a guard for eight months: to insight the need for respect and admiration for the duties guards fulfill in the museum.
setting. So many visitors and museum personnel alike are apt to ignore guards, when they should be embracing their key observations and dedication to working as a security guard.
Glossary

By providing definitions to the following key security or education terms, I hope to further help those interested in my project. Some unfamiliar terms originate in the museum security field. Many terms are, in fact, quite similar to each other, and it is important to note minute differences.

**Contract security guards:** Individuals employed by private security companies. They differ from in-house guards in that their training is conducted by the private company and they may not be employed at one institution permanently. Many contract guards move from one company to the next, as needed. Some well-known contract companies include Pinkerton, Securitas, Burns, Wackenhut, Allied-Barton, Guardsmark, and U.S. Security Associates.¹²

**In-house security guards:** Guards who are employed by the museum and not a private, contracted company. The benefits to being an in-house involve better insurance, sick pay, vacation, and the ability to become more interested in and educated about the museum’s collection.

**License:** Forty states require guards to purchase licenses in order to even apply for a job as a guard. These typically cost a little over $100 and include criminal background checks and special training classes.

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**Patrol:** The security guards’ duties to walk through their assigned areas. Patrols vary based on the time of day the security guard works. First shift guards are responsible for watching visitors and the collection, while second and third shift officers can expect to have to use a nightstick to patrol a certain area of the museum, including the offices or tunnels of the facility.

**Rounds:** Another term for patrols. Walkthroughs guards perform as part of their duties to protect the collection and visitors of the museum.

**Security:** According to the Suggested Guidelines in Museum Security, “the protection of people and assets from various threats and potential threats.”

**Security guard/officer/attendant:** A uniformed individual who serves to protect people and property in various settings. In a museum, guards are trained to both protect objects in the collection and the visitors who frequent such institutions. In recent decades, museums have reevaluated the title “security guard” preferring more politically correct terms such as officer or gallery attendant.

**Security Manager:** Staff member responsible for ensuring guards are properly fulfilling their roles. This individual often has a background in criminal justice or police work. Some of his or her duties include visiting

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security guards on their posts each day and training guards upon hiring them as well as throughout the course of their employment.

**Unions:** One way for security guards to empower themselves. These help prevent discrimination and guarantee workers are treated fairly and equally. One definition listed on the website of the American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations includes the following: “unions hold corporations accountable, make workplaces safe, protect Social Security and retirement, fight for quality health care and ensure that working people have time to spend with their families.”

**Visitor-friendly:** This term can be attached to a range of museum related areas, such as staff, facilities, materials such as maps or brochures, websites, or public programs. When defining a visitor-friendly staff member, such as a security guard, discussions may involve uniforms, job titles, and the manner in which staff interacts directly with the public.

**BACKGROUND**

“When you’re a guard, you’re on display like everything else. You’re also invisible.”

- Artist and former security guard, Fred Wilson

The Changing Role of Security Guard

In recent decades, museums have endured numerous changes. They have undergone a metamorphosis from collections based institutions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to being dedicated to optimizing visitor experience and education. The past philosophy of the museum included entertaining and amusing as cabinets of curiosities, while the present status is to “instruct and uplift,” as described by Victoria Newhouse in *Towards a New Museum*.

The roles of security guards have not evolved to meet the educational and visitor service related goals of the modern day museum. Until recently, museums did not implement visitor-friendly guards in order to meet the goal of a positive visitor experience. The following sections will include discussions of how this change especially affects security guards and museum educators who serve a new purpose as public relations tools for museums.

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The term “security,” as defined by the Museum, Library and Cultural Properties Committee includes “the protection of people and assets from various threats and potential threats.”\textsuperscript{17} While the definition of security provides a basic understanding, it does not encompass the innumerable facets underlying the role a security guard plays in his or her job. In order to accomplish this, job descriptions for guards over the years are key to understanding what is expected of guards in museums.

Security guards, as we know them today, were not integrated into institutions such as museums, office buildings, and shopping malls until after World War II.\textsuperscript{18} Post World War II, the first security officers who watched over collections in the museum were night watchmen who made rounds of the building every hour on the hour with a flashlight. Their sole purpose was to protect the collection through observations on rounds and this continues to be a vital role today.

The last twenty years has seen a gradual growth in the role of security guards. In a March 1976 Security Management article, Ralph V. Ward, then President of Ralph V. Ward, Ltd., reported on what “The Museum Security Officer” encompassed at that point in time. This


included the belief that “the basic function of security personnel is to watch the art. Any distraction renders them ineffective.” This reaction was prompted by an “international wave of thefts, arson, and vandalism zeroing into the cultural strata.” Ward goes on to point out that “generally, the expenditure for personnel to supervise the facility represents the largest item in the security budget.” He also notes three prime responsibilities “entrusted to the Guard Force” including: “the protection and preservation of all objects of art within the cognizance of the museum against burglary, vandalism, fire, and other hazards; the enforcement of the institutions’ rules and regulations; and the safety and well being of visitors and employees of the museum.”

Likewise, as security expert Joseph M. Chapman has observed in his article entitled “Stepping Up Security,” “security programs in a number of museums were conceived when collections and facilities were smaller and attendance much less.” Naturally, one would think that as museums evolved, so too would roles of staff, such as guards. Expected roles for security guards such as protecting the art and ensuring the safety of visitors have often stayed the same, even if museums have endured

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
many shifts in recent decades. Guards were often not encouraged to interact with visitors as educators or interpreters, even if visitors pose questions to them as the only identifiable museum staff member at hand in the galleries.

In the 2000s, the role of security guard has shifted dramatically. Museums such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (MOCA), Walker Art Center, San Jose Museum of Art, and the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences in Peoria, Illinois are at the forefront of training guards to be more visitor-friendly. For example, at the MOCA Chicago, true to their goal of a visitor-friendly security guard, the job description for “gallery officers” reads as follows and includes customer service as one of the main attributes to a successful candidate for the job:

The Museum of Contemporary Art seeks individuals with security, art and/or customer service experience for part-time Gallery Officer positions. Gallery Officers are MCA representatives and are part of a dynamic contemporary art environment. Officers monitor galleries, public areas and offices. Responsibilities include maintaining current knowledge of museum facilities and program offerings and providing appropriate information to staff and visitors.  

The major changes between the job descriptions that Ward offered in 1976 and MOCA offers today for security guards include changing the job title

from “guard force” or security guard to “gallery officer” and empowering guards so they can provide information to visitors and staff.

Indeed today, the current expectation for guards includes balancing a night watchman role and a visitor-friendly role. More and more, visitors and museum professionals are viewing security guards as key visitor service staff members who serve as the human faces of the museum.

As these so-called “faces of the museum,” security guards serve several vital purposes. First and foremost, they are responsible for protecting the collection. Guards are assigned to their daily post and start out their shift observing what works of art are on display and which may be on loan (noted by a loan card). Once visitors make their way into the galleries, guards protect the collection by completing rounds. These rounds involve walking throughout the galleries and making sure visitors are adhering to policies such as no touching and flash photography.

As described by David Liston in *Museum Security and Protection: A Handbook for Cultural Heritage Institutions*, guards patrol the museum floor and serve to “give answers and empathy to visitors, announce or enforce the expectations of behavior, and act as the eyes and ears for the entire institution.”

are on the floor with visitors, listening to their conversations and observing their behavior as they walk through the galleries. While it is not expected of guards to listen in on conversations between visitors or make note of their behavior, it is often something they just do as part of their job. Guards already must make keen observations of visitors in order to watch for touching or getting too close to the art. These observations are yet another reason why collaborations between security staff, educators and visitor service personnel are essential and beneficial for visitors, museum staff, and the overall well-being and attitude of the security guard.

**In-house and Contract Security Guards**

The job description and expectations for the role of security guard varies from institution to institution. Another determining factor is whether the museum or a private, contracted company such as Pinkerton employs guards. According to most museum security experts, museums benefit when security guards are employed directly by the institution. As their direct employer, it is the museum’s responsibility to train guards in-house and settle them into their surroundings. In-house guards typically learn more about the museum’s collection and get to know the floor plan and staff. In a *Security Management* article entitled, “The Museum
Security Officer,” Ralph V. Ward, affirms the fact that guards
permanently employed by the museum “develop a sense of belonging and
will probably be more responsive to the particular demands of the
organization.”25

On the other hand, guards employed by a private security company
are managed, trained, and employed by that firm.26 Echoing the consensus
from security experts, the 1977 International Council of Museums
publication, “Museum Security” concludes that in the majority of cases,
contracted guards do not establish close relationships with the museum
because they are not direct museum employees.27 These guards are also
not as familiar with the collection of the museum because they are often
moved from one institution to the next.

Museums may consider hiring contract guards for a number of
reasons. Sometimes they are strapped for cash and their security budget
may decrease slightly. Other reasons listed by British security scholars,
Mark Button and Bruce George, include: hiring expertise, greater
flexibility, transfer of liabilities, higher standards, prestige and image of

26 Robert B. Burke and Sam Adeloye, A Manual of Basic Museum Security,
27 Ibid.
contractor, and human resources problems with in-house security. The museum can forego costly insurance benefits, vacation and sick leave, overtime pay, and the politics of union representation. Museums need to assess the relationship they hope to have with contract guards, as well as the relationship their increasingly important visitors will have with these so-called “faces of the museum.”

**Qualifications for Security Guards**

“No kid grows up dreaming of being a museum security guard. But it is a job that matters. The guards are the face of the museum and sometimes the only thing between an irreplaceable Rembrandt and a curious 7-year-old. The job requires the ability not to go nuts standing in a gallery hour after hour, year after year, and a very good pair of shoes.”

-Steve Bailey, *Boston Globe* columnist commenting on guards at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Security guards are vital protectors of the precious and costly art in an art museum setting, serving as insurance against theft, vandalism, and misbehavior. The role of security guard originates from blue-collar origins, guards continue to receive little job compensation, face lack of respect from co-workers and visitors, and have had few opportunities for [28 Mark Button and Bruce George, “Why Some Organisations Prefer Contract to In-House Security Staff,” in Martin Gill, ed. *Crime At Work: Increasing the Risk For Offenders*, (Leicester: Perpetuity Press, 1998): 205-208.

career advancement.\textsuperscript{30} Advancement might comprise anything from being promoted to a security supervisor to obtaining a job in another museum department. While many museums hire internally, guards typically do not move up in the ranks, even if they are well-educated and qualified.

As of this writing, the average security guard makes approximately $9.20 per hour, but this varies with experience. According to the 2000 Census, the national median wage for a security guard is $1,590 per month.\textsuperscript{31} Half of all security guards earn between $1,330 and $1,990 per month or between $7.65 and $11.50 per hour. Armed guards earn higher wages than unarmed. This is due to a “higher degree of liability and risk” and many security managers try to stay away from using armed guards.\textsuperscript{32} However, some areas and sites across the country warrant the need for armed guards. There are often ways for guards to increase their earnings, such as overtime compensation during special events at the museum. Benefits often include health insurance, sick leave and paid vacation but vary by institution.

The hiring process for museum security guards entails some unique requirements on the part of applicants. Society may perceive the fact that any individual can become a security guard, but it takes stamina and the ability to deal with factors such as unruly visitors and working somewhat in solitude for long periods of time. The preferred educational attainment is a high school diploma, but having at least two years of a college education is considered ideal. Other qualifications include being physically fit in order to withstand long hours of standing, where sustaining keen observation of assigned areas is crucial. Additionally, guards need the ability to remain ardent observers while they engage in brief conversations with visitors and co-workers. Upon hiring guards, security managers are advised to question candidates as to whether they are able to act calmly and authoritatively under stress or in emergency situations.

As a means for human resources staff to “define the type and quality of guard” needed, security consultant Steve Keller suggested showing them a video he produced while security manager at the Art Institute of Chicago, “Museum Security: The Guard’s Role.” In a survey response, Keller told me that the video production team included the head

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33 Brennan, 18.
34 Ibid, 18.
of the education department. Keller went on to reaffirm that using this video prior to hiring security guards is effective because human resources staff “saw a guard as some 78 year old who speaks little English until they saw what a guard does then they changed their perception and the quality of our force improved.”

Requirements for becoming a guard vary from state to state. Forty states require individuals to have a security license. To obtain this license, an individual interested in becoming a guard must pay a $100 fee. The process involves training classes and an extensive background check, including fingerprint verification, driving records, credit checks, and social security investigation to verify identification.

The most current research on security requirements describes the Private Security Officer Employment Authorization Act of 2003, which falls under the National Intelligence Reform. This act has direct impact on background checks for officers, according to a Security Systems News article by security expert Erin Zwim. She goes on to state, “when it comes to guard services, employers need not be on guard.” Zwim describes how the act allows the industry to “have indirect access to criminal history information of contract and proprietary security personnel applicants” and continued by pointing out that “security industry leaders have lobbied

legislation about this for more than a decade.” In addition, Zwim also spoke to Catherine Ross, the President of Day & Zimmerman Security Services, who credits the new bill with making the security industry more professional and respected. Unlike the license that is required in 40 states, the background check portion does not cost the applicant any additional money, since it is paid for by the employer.

A Day in the Life of a Museum Security Guard

As a guard at a major U.S. art museum, you may wake up to don the traditional gray pleated pants, blue shirt, tie, and navy blazer. You arrive at your museum in time for roll call, where you discover new museum business and your post for the next seven hours or so. You walk with fellow guards to the galleries and are sure to check your area to take inventory of the pieces. You may wait ten to fifteen minutes until visitors arrive in your gallery. Another day as a museum security guard begins.

Despite the routine described above, the duties of security guards vary based on their post in the museum. Guards have responsibilities ranging from keeping watch of exhibition galleries; checking exhibit objects throughout the shift, as well as at the beginning and end of duties;

providing face-to-face interactions with visitors; and observing visitors upon entering and leaving the institution. Another duty may include checking bags and personal belongings, enforcing rules regarding large sized bags and packages such as backpacks and umbrellas. Floor guards must always keep in mind the emergency procedures for responding to theft or fire. Ideally, they have received special training for emergency situations and are able to respond quickly and efficiently.

A typical day for floor staff security may start with a 15 or 30 minute orientation session, roll call, and announcement of post assignments. Guards may convene for these announcements in the main lobby of the museum, where security managers or supervisors meet them. Often, these training sessions also include visitor service staff and managers because both guards and visitor service staff need to be well informed on museum happenings and announcements.

In their manual, *Interpreting and Implementing ‘Suggested Guidelines for Museum Security: A Manual for Museum Administrators,*’ security consultants Steve Keller and Ernie Lipple provided insight into how valuable these daily training sessions are. Keller and Lipple noted how these announcements often include information on exhibits, policy
changes, and other miscellaneous matters. However, because security guards often have two consecutive days off during the week, the authors warned that museums need to make sure these announcements are printed, kept on a clipboard or tacked on a board in the security locker room in order for guards returning to the job to be kept well-informed.

The rounds that floor guards perform are most crucial to deterring potential thefts. Security expert Michael A. Gips explained how the film industry depicts thieves assessing guard coverage and timing the rounds of an officer in order to be successful in walking away with a one of a kind object. In order to combat theft, supervisors and managers often advise guards to vary their rounds and pathways, so as not to appear to be routine in their duties.

Gips warned that no standard exists in the security industry as to how many guards should cover a certain area. However, as, Gips pointed out the 1993 handbook published by the International Council on Museums and the International Committee on Museum Security. This establishes the fact that security managers in the United States act independently based on what is best for their institution, but the norm is

“one guard or attendant patrolling every 3,000 square feet of public walk space in a fine art museum or every 7,000 square feet in a science museum.” 39 Another aspect that is vital to assessing the institution’s guard coverage is during traveling exhibits. As part of their contracts with the lending institution, museums may be required to station a certain number of guards per gallery during these special loan periods. 40 Finally, because of the ever-looming budget cuts in museums, the number of guards on the floor may decrease while the coverage of their rounds will increase. This has occurred at museums such as the Milwaukee Art Museum, where the museum cuts operational costs after a major expansion and has had to lay off staff in order to save money.

Besides the security guard who typically works a ten to five shift, guards protect the museum when it is closed to the public. Second and third shift guards must maintain security by completing rounds of the museum’s nooks and crannies. Their duties vary but typically consist of collecting keys and badges from museum staff and maintaining the premises by keeping careful watch of video images and exterior spaces.

Behind the scenes in a museum setting, security guards maintain the security station twenty-four hours a day. In order to keep a watchful

39 Ibid, Gips.
40 Ibid.
eye of the premises, these individuals must be trained on computer
equipment, remain attentive and detail-oriented while surveying videos of
the museum floor and exterior grounds, communicate with patrol or floor
guards to alert them to any visitor or employee misbehavior, and be
capable of handling brief moments of chaos when distributing and
collecting the name badges and keys of museum professionals. As security
expert Steve Keller stresses, he would “prefer to see a guard in a secure
control room monitoring excellent electronics, while a second guard
patrols.”

As described by security expert Steve Keller, it is important to post
a guard near the security station, or where museum employees exit, to
perform a task no guard enjoys: checking the bags, briefcases, and purses
of museum employees. While not all museums are making this an
essential role of the security guard, it is a key way to prevent theft.
According to numerous scholarly sources, past practices involved making
exceptions for some of the employees in so-called important positions,
who may consider themselves exempt from having their belongings
checked. The ASIS International Suggested Guidelines in Museum
Security notes how this does occur at museums. This document concludes
that
there shall be a commitment by museum management that the security program is applicable to everyone and that no one, because of his or her position, rank, title, status or for any other reason, is exempt from compliance with the policies and rules that are designed to protect the collection, visitors, and staff. 41

The committee who convened and assembled the Suggested Guidelines in Museum Security also concluded that a number of institutions make exceptions for trustees, volunteers, VIPs, donors, key staff, board members, members of affiliated groups, and others, which is the “primary reason for the breakdown of security operational procedures and discipline.” 42 Guards once again serve to enforce rules which sometimes are not clear to those who are adhering to these standards, such as museum staff in the case described above.

Whether it is on the museum floor or while in the surveillance room, a guard who works the third shift must stay awake during long periods of solitude. A typical graveyard shift may consist of the following: two guards relieve the second shift pair of guards at 11pm. One guard begins his or her duty in the surveillance or control room while the other patrols a certain area of the main lobby area of the museum. These two guards maintain close contact with each other for any suspicious behavior either may observe or work as a team to ensure the property is secure.

42 Ibid, 8.
They will switch positions every hour, perhaps solely for the purpose of each staying awake and attentive. There are also rounds that both guards must complete in a night. These rounds include the patrolling the museum office areas with a baton, where certain areas have designated spots that the guard will set off. Security managers are then able to check on the rounds the next morning or on a regular basis to ensure the third shift guards are patrolling effectively.

**Guards get a bad rap**

Most museum visitors have endured a negative experience with a security guard at one point in his or her life. In talking to friends, family, or complete strangers about this master’s project, almost everyone told me their own personal stories of negative experiences with guards that are forever ingrained in their memories. More often than not, this negative connotation originates in the hardest part of the job—enforcing museum rules by requesting visitors not to touch the artwork.

As Jerry E. Hudson concludes in his article “What Images Should We Project,” “perhaps the most awesome and threatening power a security person has is the authority to restrict another person’s freedom of movement. This authority requires not only in-depth familiarity with the rules but also tact, diplomacy, discretion, and an unusually strong will.”
When a guard boasts and employs all of these qualities, the experience for the visitor is not nearly as intimidating or disrupting. An effective guard should be able to observe the behavior of visitors without making them feel uncomfortable in such a serene setting.

No matter their age, it is inevitable for people to be defiant of museum rules from time to time. However, sometimes younger visitors are disturbed by having to adhere to all of the dos and don’ts introduced during field trips or museum visits with their families. An article written by two 15 year old Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery visitors, Thomas Carney and Thomas Willshire entitled “Telling it Like it Is,” discusses how uninviting the museum environment is. According to these teenagers, part of this elitist or intimidating feeling comes from the presence of security guards. The authors say, “We were also put out to find ourselves being shadowed by security guards who seemed to imagine we must be up to no good.” With a guard looming over their shoulders and watching their every move, younger museum visitors are put off by their museum experience and may not be repeat visitors as adults. However, they need to learn that guards are there to be helpful and are simply doing their job, not

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necessarily assuming that the visitors are going to cause harm to the works of art.

Another reason why guards get a bad rap is due to the fact that some visitors feel comfortable with guards in the room, whereas others feel exactly the opposite. In *The Museum Experience*, Falk and Dierking state, “those who feel comfortable in museums will be at ease in the presence of guards, but for those who feel out of place or insecure, guards can and do create anxieties.”44 They go on to tell the story of one museum visitor who dealt with his or her own anxiety around security guards:

> even the guards in the museum, they come around the corner and they stare at you. My father said he wanted to go up to one of them and tell him to get away, because we weren’t going to steal anything, and the more he treated us as if we were there to cause trouble, the more my dad wanted to go and punch him in the nose.45

This unfortunate conclusion is perhaps due to a lack of understanding from visitors as to what purpose guards are in the museum galleries to serve. However, the father of the visitor calmed down and reasoned with his daughter or son by explaining that, “we shouldn’t be angry at the guard, because he was just taking orders, and trying to keep the museum the way the people who own it want him to.”46

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
Coming to a positive, if not cynical viewpoint in *Museum Watching*, avid museum visitor and amateur photographer, Elliot Erwitt, humors readers with an observation on security personnel in museums:

one should be kind towards museum guards. Next to elevator operators, they have the world’s most boring job. The only way they can assert themselves professionally is by putting forth a prohibition or explaining how to get to the men’s room. You should be charitable and not complain why they tick you off for something because that is the only time they have something to do.47

As Erwitt describes, guards are challenged by boredom and the only chance they may obtain to interact with visitors throughout the day is to provide answers to simple questions visitors pose. Erwitt provides a satirical perspective on how museum visitors similar to him may view a security guards’ job as “the world’s most boring job.” Although Erwitt went further and gave guards the benefit of the doubt regarding the difficult duties of the job, some visitors may not do the same.

According to her master’s project on visitor service in U.S. art museums, Meghan Arens ascertained the following:

at the same time that some museums are demonstrating an expanding visitor service role for security, many museums are still plagued with the negative security association. One respondent noted that they regularly receive complaints about guards following visitors. Another museum is challenged with attempting to erase negative connotations of security. Three museums responded that security works closely with visitor service staff and

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are essential to the museums success. At such places, security officers are given the information to help visitors and participate in walk-throughs with curators prior to exhibition openings. Still, one museum feels that ‘the division of visitor service from membership and security creates challenges [for us]. [We] did not fit anywhere perfectly within the organizational structure because [we] integrate so many different disciplines.’

The conclusions Arens made based on her findings are not far from my own perceptions of what is keeping many museums from creating a more visitor-friendly guard. As one of Arens’s responses stated, there is a division between security and visitor service as the two departments are so multi-faceted. There are positive models of how these two departments and many others in the museum can work together to ensure visitor-friendly security staff. I will discuss some of those in the subsequent section, focusing on visitor service and how museums especially can learn from for-profit institutions such as Disney.

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48 Meghan Arens, Missing!: visitor service in art museums-if found, please call--, Final Master’s Project, John F. Kennedy University, 2004.
Visitor service

“The tenor of the visit can be influenced by the demeanor of the guard. Like all first impressions, these shape attitudes that will be long-lasting and difficult to change.”

John Falk and Lynn Dierking in *The Museum Experience*

Happy staff=happy visitors

Recent decades have seen museums evolve from focusing on the importance of their collections to concentrating on the visitor experience. Museums are in the business of pleasing their public through educational programs, community outreach, interesting temporary exhibits, and finally through the staff they employ. In spite of these wonderful components, as many institutions know, they cannot please all the people at all times. In order to attempt to please the majority if people, it is important to discover the needs of visitors through tools such as evaluation studies, direct feedback from visitors themselves, or through talking to staff such as guards to understand why visitors may encounter difficulties or have unique insights with regards to wayfinding, labels, exhibit layout, educational programs, staff behavior, etc. People love providing feedback, both when they are displeased or completely satisfied with the outcome of a museum visit. Often, this feedback is gathered through visitor comment

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drop boxes or talkback boards, but direct conversations also can accomplish discovering insightful conclusions from an outside perspective.

As museum consultant Will Phillips states in his article “Linking Objects with Audience,” “significant audience growth depends upon the museum learning about what it is good at, not more about its traditional strengths.”\textsuperscript{50} Museums must capitalize on new, not old strengths and learn to deal with their weaknesses so they become strengths in the end.

One way to overcome weakness could be via ensuring the visitors who come to the museum are respected. This often involves looking beyond the visitors themselves, and making sure staff are equally respected, because they will in turn have a high regard for visitors. This especially holds true for floor staff, such as visitor service representatives, docents, volunteers, and security guards. \textit{Boston Globe} columnist, Steve Bailey, recently described cutbacks in guard services and pay at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and how this affects the overall impression the museum leaves on visitors. In the article, “Mr. Rogers’ legacy,” Bailey ascertains the idea of how museums can’t “have happy customers and unhappy employees. Right now, the MFA is a place with

far too many unhappy employees.”  

This reflects poorly on the current director of MFA, Malcom Rogers, and it seems up to him whether or not the museum will resolve “an ugly contract standoff with its 130 security guards.”  

Security staff are unhappy because overtime pay might be eliminated and most MFA guards “get by week to week” according to the president of the guards union, Michael Raysson.  

The issue of low pay and how that might affect the attitudes of security guards towards their jobs is raised again in an International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS) article entitled “General considerations for museum security.” Author and chairperson of ICMS, Günther Dembski, stresses how museums can make a good impression as long as their front end staff, are “prepared to represent the museum as competent, well dressed, informed and friendly people.” However, Dembski goes onto say:  

but we must accept and compensate for the fact that service staff,  

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52 Ibid.  
who include guards, are human beings whom we generally pay the least in the museum. We pay the guard the least to do the most varied and critical things, from giving first aid, evacuating people from the building, saving paintings or other objects during emergencies, extinguishing fires, and risking personal life to stop violence and theft.\footnote{Ibid, Dembski.}

Dembski notes that large museums and some consultants have developed more customer service oriented training programs and manuals for security staff. With that, he also highlights the fact that “security staff are more effective when they consider themselves appreciated and accepted by all staff.”\footnote{Ibid.} Motivational factors behind this requires looking at aspects other than money: including guards “in museum meetings, plans, and benefits; respecting their duties and responsibilities to check staff and visitors; and treating security staff as the loyal stewards of museums that we want them to be.”\footnote{Ibid.} Because visitors and fellow museum staff alike often misunderstand the role of security guard, it is important for guards to feel completely comfortable in their environment.

Like Bailey and Dembski, museum consultant Will Phillips also equates happy staff with happy visitors. Phillips describes the satisfaction of employees by saying, “a lack of respect for the audience often parallels a lack of respect within.” He goes on to convey a situation in which a security guard told him “he didn’t understand the museum’s opening

\footnote{Ibid.}
policy. ‘We open at 10:00 on Sunday,’ he said, ‘and no one comes until 1:00. Then at 5:00, when the museum is full of people, we shoo them all out.’ This museum rarely thought to ask the guards, admission staff, or volunteer docents about their perspective of audience needs.”58 Floor-staff such as guards and visitor service representatives assemble many observations such as this and museums can learn from these in order to provide better visitor service.

How Museums are Learning From Disney

What do Mickey Mouse and Museums have in common besides the fact that they both start with the letter “M”? Both are in the business of satisfying their constituents. However, Mickey Mouse and Disney especially excel at this. Naturally, that Disney is ahead of museums makes sense as museums have only begun focusing on their visitors in recent decades. This still begs the question, why are families especially so satisfied at the end of their visits to Disney theme parks and perhaps not so satisfied after visits to museums?

Some museums are recognizing this certain satisfaction level obtained on visits to Disney theme parks by experimenting with it as a model at their institutions. This is wise in a world where museums keep

competing with for-profit institutions and need to ensure they will keep attracting regular and new visitors.

The Cincinnati Art Museum is one institution that came to the realization that if they did not keep up with the growing area around them, they would lose visitors. In *Cincinnati Enquirer* article by Jenny Callison, “Art Museum Uses Disney as Marketing Model,” she states that businesses surrounding the art museum in Cincinnati were expanding and something had to be done at the museum to keep up with this growth. In response to this, “a counterattack was drawn: To be successful, the museum must provide an engaging, enjoyable experience that will make visitors want to come back and bring friends.” \(^59\) With that mindset in place, the museum decided to work from a model developed by Disney by placing “visitor satisfaction at the top of its list of goals.” \(^60\) The process involved looking at what visitors want, without taking “away anything from the collections” and by emphasizing the importance of the visitor rather than the art objects. \(^61\) Like Disney’s visitor satisfaction model, the Cincinnati Art Museum decided to focus on its visitors. The museum’s first visitor satisfaction coordinator, Sheila Hunt, ensures author Callison

\(^60\) Ibid.
\(^61\) Ibid.
that providing key training sessions for staff is an important element in creating a positive museum experience for visitors. Hunt affirms that things such as “helping a visitor with the map when you see they’re having trouble. Smiling,” those contribute to a great experience at the museum. She goes on to say:

we thought the greater the art we had, the more people would come to see it. Now we realize that people will be more likely to come back to the museum if they have a pleasant experience with people rather than a great experience with art.62

At the time of publication in 1999, the Cincinnati Art Museum’s program was considered very thorough compared to other 20 other leading U.S. museums with which Hunt spoke. The feedback received has reflected the positive impression visitors are walking away with. One visitor, Jo Borack, commented specifically on her positive experience with the museum’s security staff, “Guards used to be rather intimidating. Now they anticipate visitor needs and come up to see if they can help.”63

Underrepresented Audiences and their visitor service needs

63 Ibid, Jo Borack, as quoted by Jenny Callison.
One element that is often overlooked is diverse participation in museums and how the “perception of elitism” is sometimes due to the attitudes of staff such as security guards and volunteers. This is conveyed in the 2001 study done by the Smithsonian Institution, Office of Policy and Analysis, entitled, “Increasing Museum Visitation by Under Represented Audiences: An Exploratory Study of Art Museum Practices.” According to this article, there needs to a “modification of the museum setting,” which can encompass looking at the floor staff and how their attitudes may reflect the overall impression visitors get during their experience. According to this study, “guards are intimidating and make some people feel they are under constant surveillance. This detracts from their enjoyment. …Interactions with unfriendly guards reinforce the image that museums are ‘snobbish’ places.”64 This article reaffirms the notion that “security staff, volunteers and docents are the primary human contacts between visitors and museums. The only museum staff members most visitors talk to are the front desk staff, guards in the galleries, and store staff.”65 Many institutions made sure to improve visitor service where

65 Ibid.
The Virginia Museum of Arts (VMA) had to refine their approach because they “received complaints from ethnic visitors about guards watching minority visitors closely.” Like many institutions, one way VMA thought they could enhance the visitor experience was through rethinking uniforms to become more casual than they were in the past. Besides uniforms, the contract guards at VMA had the importance of courteous, professional behavior stressed to them in training sessions.

Another example of visitor-friendly tactics for underrepresented audiences lies in a model at the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, North Carolina. A new craft and design museum in downtown Charlotte required hiring a new type of gallery attendant to bridge the gap between security and visitors services. The new gallery attendants wear long aprons. The museum education supervisor supervises the guards. They receive docent training and additional training in the museum’s collections. The gallery attendants are encouraged to approach and engage visitors in conversations about exhibits. They have the authority to remove objects from cases for closer inspection, to discuss artist techniques, to organize group tours on the spot, or engage a family in a scavenger hunt.

The Mint Museum is not the only institution to bring the museum to different audiences and consider revamping their staff’s ability to be

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66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
visitor-friendly. Additionally, the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego has opened a satellite facility in downtown, thus also reaching “a younger, more family oriented and more ethnically diverse audience at its downtown facility.”69 With this new audience came ensuring the staff there were more diverse and well-trained in visitor service approaches, so as to make that new audience more comfortable in a museum setting.

**Museum Education Practices and Guards**

The definition of education in a museum setting has changed dramatically over the last decade. With this change came the need for new staff, such as museum educators, to inform museum visitors. As Kodi R. Jeffery described in “Constructivism in Museums: How Museums Create Meaningful Learning Environments,” until recently, “there was no such thing as a museum educator, although people probably assumed they were learning something from their museum visits.”70 As museums continue to become more focused on their communities and appeal to more than just the educated and wealthy sectors of their societies, they must evaluate their education programs as well. Museum education publications are loaded with discussions of evaluation, learning theories, and formal and

69 Ibid.

informal educational research. It is clear that museums are realizing just how much potential lies in their roles as educators to the masses.

In *From Knowledge to Narrative*, Lisa Roberts described three essential elements in museum education: interpretation, the language used to interpret, and the content of the messages.\(^1\) Interpretation is key. Roberts wrote, “the work of interpretation becomes an act of empowerment, because it provides visitors with both the knowledge and the consent to engage in critical dialogue about the messages museums present.”\(^2\) Due to constraints from their job description as protectors of the art, security guards would not be able to fulfill the role as interpreter similar to that of a docent.

Instead, guards may benefit from filling a similar role to that of museum volunteers, as Alison L. Grinder and E. Sue McCoy discussed in *The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents, and Tour Guides*. Grinder and McCoy mentioned how volunteer guides serve to “supplement and extend information provided on exhibit labels and signs.”\(^3\) Many guards already fulfill this need when museum visitors request additional information than what is given in exhibit content.

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\(^2\) Ibid.

Meanwhile, museum educators could train guards in the area of interpretation based on certain criteria that would differ from docent training.

While Roberts provided three key aspects of museum education, the definition of museum education is often vague. George Hein illustrated this ambiguity in *Learning In the Museum*: “yet just what the educational intention of the museum might be, how the institution considers education, how it believes that people learn, and what education consists of, are frequently unclearly defined if defined at all.”

Hein’s criticism of museum education is warranted in that the present day perspective on museum education is still vague within numerous institutions. The concept of museum education is still so fresh and there is no clear or preferred manner in which the museum field has necessarily defined museum education.

**The Educational Mission or Policy**

To counteract this often ambiguous definition of museum education, Hein suggested an apparently simple but potentially

complicated solution: museums must implement educational policies.\textsuperscript{75}

Drafting an educational policy includes factoring in many variables, such as the education mission statement, audience, goals and objectives over a five to ten year period, the education action plan, resources and budget, training, evaluation, marketing, roles and functions within the museum, and networks outside the museum. Visitors often benefit from these policies but how do staff such as security guards profit from or fit into these documents? In their educational policies, museums may be defining their educational audience primarily as their visitors. However, it is vital for institutions to understand that through educating guards, they are also directly keeping their visitors informed and satisfied with their museum visit.

In \textit{Writing a Museum Education Policy}, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, a lecturer at the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester in Great Britain, offered a solution to the above question. Museums need to relate their educational mission statements to the institutional mission. Part of this includes in-service training of staff; Hooper-Greenhill concludes that employees and volunteers alike need to understand the educational role of the museum. This especially holds true for front-end staff who come face-to-face with visitors. They need to “be

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
helped to appreciate the need both for a courteous attitude to any questions asked by visitors about the collections, and for the knowledge with which to advice visitors as to whom they should consult or where they should look for an answer to their questions."\textsuperscript{76} As a result of this in-house training, front-end staff such as security guards, visitor service representatives, volunteers and docents can perform their duties more effectively.

Additional training of museum professionals plays a part in the bigger picture of museum education, as described by Deborah Perry, Lisa C. Roberts, Kris Morrissey, and Lois H. Silverman in the chapter, “Listening Outside and Within.” They warn that not just educators but everyone needs to be informed “as museums redefine who they are and what they are all about.”\textsuperscript{77} They went on to argue “training should be developed with an eye to the broad notion of the public dimension.”\textsuperscript{78}

How do security guards fit into this picture of museum education? As stated above, training and collaborations in museums will translate to the goal of the modern museum to provide valuable experiences to visitors.

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\textsuperscript{76} Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, ed. \textit{Writing the Museum Educational Policy}, (Leicester: Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 1991), 15.


\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, 46.
so that museums are perceived as trustworthy educational institutions.

Although traditional duties of security staff have solely included guarding
the art, they are the key floor staff visitors depend on for answers to their
questions. As long as guards are well-informed, empowered to answer
pertinent questions, and have the ability to mix firmness and friendliness,
visitors will retain a favorable impression of their museum visit. Hopefully
this will bring repeat visitors.

Recent shifts in museum education

Since the museum itself has shifted from collections based
institutions to visitor oriented ones, the focus of education departments
also has evolved. As Eilean Hooper-Greenhill ascertained, past definitions
of audiences for museum education departments was limited to
schoolchildren and adult-tour groups. In recent years we have seen this
role reshaped dramatically to include educating the general public through
displays, interactive technology programs, exhibition related interest, and
public programming events.79

George Hein concluded how vital three major reports were in
implementing change in the field of museum education. The first of these
is The Belmont Report (1969), which put “pressure on museums to serve

79 Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, The Educational Role of the Museum, (London:
the public and the need for resources to carry out museum’s mission.”

The second includes the Commission on Museums for a New Century (1982), which “sought the public’s view of museums and their appropriate positioning within communities.” This idea of looking outward to communities instead of within to collections enhances the way museums view their visitors and the needs of the public. Finally, the most recent shift occurred in the publication of Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums (1992), which “restated the profession’s commitment to education, or museum learning, and returned to the theme of community service as essential to museum practice.” Overall, these three reports really solidified the need to focus on the communities which surrounds museums. Once recognizing those community’s needs and makeup, museums will keep refocusing their educational mission statements.

The Museum Experience

In their book, Listening In On Museum Conversations, Gaea Leinhardt and Karen Knutson provided an account of a conversation between two twenty-something year old visitors who had never visited an

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80 Hein, 7.
81 Ibid, 8.
82 Ibid.
art museum before. Due to this lack of experience in an art museum setting, the two women walked up to the first painting they saw and touched it, prompting the female security guard to react by walking over to speak with them. Despite their lack of museum, the security guard monitoring the gallery space handled the situation quite beautifully. Instead of embarrassing the women, the guard chose to simply inform them that they were too close to a painting. One woman chose to explain her actions with the statement, “I don’t know anything about art.” The guard responded to questions from the women but also snuck in an educational comment about the artwork with, “and look what good condition it’s in. That’s because nobody’s allowed to touch it.”

Leinhardt and Knutson credit the guard with “making a lovely educational move” by “showing the visitors how very old the painting is and then, with a clever segue to her own goal, she explained that they painting looks so good in spite of its age because no one has touched it. This interaction with the guard left the visitors informed but presumable not feeling chastised.”

While this example presents insight into how security guards can protect the art and educate the visitors at the same time, some may argue that this type of in depth conversation is distracting guards from their

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84 Ibid, 139.
duties. The female guard in the story was doing her job, but she was also engaged in an in-depth conversation with two visitors. Sure she was providing an educational experience and perhaps a comforting tone to a potentially embarrassing situation for the two inexperienced visitors, but was she doing her job? That depends on whether or not this institution defines the job description for their guards as being visitor-friendly. I label the guard as a visitor-friendly individual because of her approach. This is just one of many elements that come into play with a more visitor-friendly guard. We have no description of her uniform or job title, so her demeanor points to one that was fulfilling a more visitor-friendly model.

**Guards as adult learners**

Teaching and training adults requires paying special attention to learners and their needs. Adults learn differently from children. There are even two different words used to describe both types of learning: “andragogy” refers to adult learning, while “pedagogy,” refers to teaching of children.85 In a chapter entitled, “Children, Teenagers and Adults in Museums: A Developmental Perspective,” featured in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, Nina Jensen pointed to scholar Malcolm Knowles,

who concludes that “to children experience is external, something that happens to them; to adults personal experience has defined their individual identity.”86 Jensen concluded “adults bring their own expectations, goals, and experiences to museums, and museum programs should recognize and accommodate them.”87 In order for museum educators, visitor service and security managers to effectively train and educate security guards, they must consider all of the factors that make adult learners unique from children.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Kim Hermanson argued that museum education comes from the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Adults are motivated extrinsically when they have a goal in mind. An intrinsic learner gains something internally even if there is no external reward present in the end.88 While we may be able to make assumptions about how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are essential for the average art museum visitor, how can these motivations merge when security guards and education departments collaborate?

87 Jensen, 115.
According to Csikszentmihalyi’s theories and my research, I conclude that security guards are apt to learn as intrinsically motivated individuals. As Czikszentmihalyi says, “people are intrinsically motivated when they are freely expressing themselves by doing what interests them.”

Many guards are already interested in learning more about art and, particularly, pieces they guard every day. They may even have had formal training in art history, such as Boston College’s McMullen Museum security officer Deborah Grondin who studied art history in college and after many years away from that field, returned to be a guard in order to keep receiving the continuing education she enjoyed so much. She praises her job by saying, “I have learned so much here in 10 years.”

Guards such as Grondin have genuine motivation and interest, generally because if they do not, their job is quite boring and time passes slowly. Nonetheless, there probably is a mixture of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations underlying extra guard training or education. Training programs consist of a combination of factors, often involving what might be considered material that would fall under extrinsic motivation. This may encompass having the goal of educating visitors. Training programs

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89 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
can include art history training on particular works of art in the permanent collection. From there, they can branch out to also incorporate in depth training of special or temporary exhibits. Training on both of these levels allows guards to feel motivated with a goal in mind and in turn, helps the visitors obtain answers to many of the questions they feel guards are educated enough to respond to.

**Guards as observers and educators as facilitators**

As described above, guards witness all types of behavior in the museum setting. They often seem to have a sixth sense when it comes to attending to the needs of visitors. Security guards may be the only staff a visitor interacts with on their visit to a museum. Because of this, guards need to move beyond their role as protectors of the art and enjoy the status of informers, though not interpreters, of the art. The conversation between the female guard and two novice visitors provides an excellent example of this. The guard chose to inform visitors of what was before them, perhaps recognizing the fact that they were novice visitors. Visitors are often distracted, suffer from museum fatigue after the average hour and a half visit, and may need someone like a guard to talk to in order to make sense of the overwhelming sense they encounter in the museum setting. Guards
who serve not only to protect but also to inform will meet the transitioning role of the visitor-friendly museum.

The role of security guard has not evolved significantly as museums, and especially their education departments have been shifting dramatically in the last decades. As museum educators evaluate whom they are serving, they need to look within, to their staff. Hopefully, educators can maintain their reputation as experimenters and risk takers who are able to improvise in order to “be responsive to audiences and context,”\(^\text{92}\) as described by Mary Ellen Munley in “Museum Education and the Genius of Improvisation.” Translating these abilities to not only their visitors, but to museum staff such as guards would fulfill the educational missions of museums. How can the numerous factors I have described above play a role in creating a visitor-friendly guard? What do museums need to do in order to evolve the roles guards play in interacting with visitors in order to create a more positive and visitor-friendly experience? What does proper training look like and how is it implemented to begin with? How do guards feel about becoming more visitor-friendly?

To be an effective part of museum education, guards need the museum to educate them. In turn, they will educate visitors and meet some of the goals of the mission statement.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Report of Findings
In order to ascertain what relationships between guards, visitor service staff, and educators in U.S. art museums exist and would be beneficial to staff and visitors alike, I conducted interviews and a survey of security managers, museum educators, visitor service managers, and security guards. In the spring of 2005, I sent eighty surveys to directors of security and directors of education at U.S. art museums. My survey enabled me to assess in greater detail the current range of relationships between security guards and museum educators in art museums and to make conclusions as to why certain relationships do or do not exist.

My findings are presented thematically. Under each topic, I address findings from various sources, including interviews, surveys, and literature review.

**Survey**

Two different surveys were used in order to distinguish responses from directors of security and museum educators. Surveys returned by twenty museum professionals total made for a return rate of twenty five percent.

Questions were designed to elicit what kind of collaborations do or do not exist and what positive relationships may look like between security guards and museum educators. Within this larger picture, I wanted to see whether or not museums used in-house or contract guards.
The type of employment often determines what type of training is conducted and who conducts, which in turn affects how prepared guards are to protect the artwork and to answer pertinent questions asked by visitors. More generally, it also establishes what type of relationship exists between guards and other museum staff. The questions I posed all had a goal of finding out more on the subject of training guards and obtaining a description of what training for guards is like in major art museums. With that, I wanted to discover elements such as does this training extend beyond basic safety and property protection issues to include educational aspects? Additionally, I wanted to find out why certain training factors are in place in museums.

**In-house and Contract guards**

*Findings*

As described above, the first question I addressed in a survey sent to security managers or directors is whether they employ in-house or contract guards. While six of the respondents affirmed they employ in-house guards, two said they use contract guards. Two security managers replied that they use a hybrid of both in-house and contract guards, but did not explain why. I should have further solicited the reasoning behind the
museum’s choice of using in-house or contract security guards or a mixture of both.

Conclusions

If guards are in-house, they often have a better chance of obtaining additional education from their managers or museum educators. This is due to the fact that in-house guards often work at the museum for a longer period of time than contract guards. Therefore, putting training hours and money into educating these guards is worthwhile for the museum.

On the other hand, the company they work for typically trains contract guards. They may be oriented on the first day of work at a museum they are contracted to work for. Contract guards are often not committed to working at a particular institution for a long period of time. In the case of the museums that use a hybrid sort of structure, that of both contract and in-house employed guards, contract guards may be brought in to cover for a temporary depletion of in-house guards.

Assessing the relationship between guards and educators
**Findings**

In addition to asking whether in-house or contract guards are used, I also wanted to assess the relationship between guards and educators. I thus asked the following question: Do security guards and education staff members currently collaborate? While sixty percent of respondents affirmed that guards and education staff members collaborate, forty percent said they do not. What this collaboration entails is not always clear, but most respondents went on to describe the relationship based on other questions I asked later on in the survey.

I did not define the term collaborate, for the purpose of seeing what responses this term would conjure up from security managers and museum educators. This lack of definition often resulted in responses such as “I wouldn’t use the term collaborate,” as answered by a security director at a major mid-Atlantic museum. This respondent did not offer a very detailed explanation for why her institution does not have collaborations in place between the two departments. In fact, she went on to contradict her original statement when she proceeded to describe the fact that docents at the museum have presented educational tours for security officers. Perhaps the word choice of collaborate was not appropriate to her as this description does sound more like a training exercise for the guards. The guards are not providing anything in return to
the docents or to the education department, so perhaps this is why the respondent originally declared that she would not use the term collaborate.

One respondent provided that collaborations do occur at his museum, but officers have “other responsibilities beside being knowledgeable about the art.” What these responsibilities include was not described in-depth, but one could assume that guards serve solely to protect the art at that institution.

While many museums do not currently consider collaborations between guards and educators beneficial or worth their time and money, some survey respondents provided feedback that was on the opposite end of the spectrum. One of these examples is in the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. Respondent Marilyn M. Russell, the Curator of Education, wrote that guards and educators at the museum do collaborate, which includes a “briefing every morning on current exhibitions. But, security officers are not seen as informal educators—we want them to understand what they spend all day in front of for their benefit and in case they get questions.” Russell also said that the Carnegie offers all-day training two times a year on the whole museum. Her insight establishes the importance of teaching guards about art for their benefit as well as the benefit of visitors, without completely changing their responsibility of protecting the artwork. However, as Russell included, the education provided does then
empower guards to answer questions that visitors may ask about the art, whether they are complicated or simple. Guards will at least be educated and empowered to answer some of the basic questions about artworks in the collection and the intentions of artists without completely assuming an interpretative role.

Responses from the sixty percent of educators who answered that they do collaborate with guards elaborated on what that entails, including: informal orientation sessions to inform of new exhibitions, facilitated by curators and/or educators during briefing every morning; tour guide/docent training; diversity of audiences; general educational information; and expectations about student behavior and teacher responsibility.

Forty percent of educators responded that there were no collaboration efforts existing at their museum. Reasons behind this are as follows: don’t want guards acting as art educators; confusion of roles of security staff employees when main function is protection of works of art; training did take place at one time, but enthusiasm to learn waned among guards; have long discussed this, but museum does not budget to pay guards for training time; and they (guards) are not expected to participate in educational programs.
Another issue raised by the question of why there are no collaboration efforts is what kind of focus museum education departments are employing. As Timothy Kane, Director of Security at the Seattle Art Museum, responded, “education focus is on external audiences, not museum staff; finances also focus externally.” This reply validates my premise of first educating staff properly, which can only lead to better visitor service and repeat visits. Time and budget seem to be factors that keep coming up as barriers to properly educating all staff, not only security guards. Mr. Kane also went on to say that while collaborations between guards and educators are not in place currently, they have recently been considered.

M. Williams, Director of Education at the Cleveland Museum of Art also said that their museum does not currently have a working relationship between guards and educators. According to her, this is due to the fact that there is a “confusion of roles for a security staff employee whose main function is protection of works of art.” It seems that the Cleveland Museum of Art is undecided as to how to best approach this new visitor-friendly role, because as Williams states, there is a confusion of the roles a security officer should fill.

The Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, New York, has long discussed a relationship between guards and educators, but “the museum
does not budget to pay guards for training time” according to Cara Wingfield, the Director of School Programs.

One barrier to providing education to guards lies in the fact that they may be enthusiastic about the educational process at first, but they lose interest. As described by Barry M. King, Museum Educator and Coordinator of Teen Programs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the enthusiasm of guards “waned after 5 months.” Mr. King said, “at one time I met with guards during roll call once a month. A section of the museum was selected where I would pick an object to inform guards assigned to that area.” Since guards did not respond positively to this type of training, King canceled the additional training. However, I wonder why he allowed the guards to influence him from further conducting the aforementioned training.

Conclusions

Besides the fact that education departments focus externally, the barrier to forming a relationship with guards may simply come down to the fact that there is such a confusion of the role security guards should play. While they are primarily protectors, they also are some of the few staff members that visitors can turn to with questions. Education departments may not feel responsible for providing information to guards, but it is a smart way for museums to appear more visitor-friendly. If
guards are educated, visitors will feel comfortable asking them questions and therefore may be more likely to become repeat visitors.

While educators definitely state that they do not want guards at their museum acting as educators, the reasons for this are somewhat unclear. They seem masked in the excuses of time and budget, but I wonder if there are additional underlying factors causing educators to react negatively to this type of collaboration. If educators were working to improve the museum experience by providing valuable programs for visitors, should they not recognize the need to facilitate a positive museum experience through training floor staff to be competent and empowered? Based on my findings, educators are taught to focus externally and have not done a great deal of consideration on the topic of looking within to their own staff.

**Why no relationship exists or failed**

*Findings and Conclusions*

Once it was determined whether collaboration efforts were in place, I asked respondents who answered “no” to explain further. As stated by many individuals, expectations for guards include being solely protectors of the art and visitors. The role of the security guard has not evolved at a number of museums, although the museum itself may have
changed its ways to become more visitor-friendly and focused on
education in recent years.

Museum educators provided some interesting feedback as to why
collaborations between guards and their education departments are
beneficial or are not. These descriptions followed the question of “if there
are no collaboration efforts, why?” The Director of Education at the
Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Suzanne Isken, wrote, “we
don’t want the guards acting as art educators.” However, she also went on
to conclude that the museum believes “that educators can help security
relate better and in more friendly and inviting ways. Guards will get
reactions to the art from visitors and helping them understand the art helps
them understand the visitors.” Isken’s insight is valuable. While she does
first conclude that the museum does not want their guards serving as
educators to visitors, she does see how important it is to create a
relationship between guards and educators for the benefit of visitors.
Ultimately, visitors will hopefully be provided a positive museum
experience with guards being empowered to answer questions. Isken’s
conclusion regarding the fact the more guards understand the art, the more
they will understand their visitors makes a valid point. Guards who are
interested and able to appreciate the art they guard may appear more
visitor-friendly. They can engage in brief conversations about the art with
visitors, but not serve to completely describe and interpret the art for visitors. Docents still serve to fulfill this role and so do in-depth labels.

Facilities Manager at The Mint Museums in Charlotte, North Carolina, Ed Benton, answered the question about collaboration by writing, “we don’t see a need for this. If a visitor has a question, the security officer is instructed to refer them to a curator or education staff member.” However, responses like Mr. Benton’s prompt an additional and vital question: Are there curators or education staff members on hand who can quickly provide answers to questions? Visitors want instantaneous responses to questions they pose. Immediate satisfaction is part of the customer service field. One could facetiously pose an improbable scenario where guards use their radios to contact curators or education staff members when visitors have a content question.

The “instant gratification” type of philosophy is currently practiced at the San Jose Museum of Art and for the time being, seems to be an effective way of helping visitors obtain in-depth answers to their questions. Former visitor services manager, Meghan Arens, informed me of this process in an interview. According to Arens, the Visitor Service Representatives (VSR), who are a hybrid of visitor service and security, radio the Visitor Service Manager with difficult questions. The manager is able to look up answers to questions or may already be more
knowledgeable than VSRs. If this individual cannot uncover the answer, he or she can then proceed to pose it to someone who is more knowledgeable on the collection, educational aspects, or whatever may be necessary to answer some of the difficult questions a visitor may ask.⁹³

Likewise, Seattle Art Museum (SAM) Director of Security Timothy Kane noted that a relationship between security guards and educators is “recently under consideration.” Kane explained that this type of collaboration has not existed in the past because “education focus is on the external audiences, not museum staff” and “finances also focus externally.” Kane’s reasons are important ones to note. Part of my initial hypothesis included that most museum education departments focus externally instead of internally, due to factors such as financial barriers and time. Hopefully, as Kane alluded to, in the hopes of creating a more visitor-friendly guard, many museums may start realizing how essential it is to educate museum staff in addition to visitors. By doing so, museums can empower security guards to help visitors in a friendly manner. In turn, this may alleviate boredom among guards, a challenge described by an anonymous security manager at an art museum in Texas, as well as provide the best visitor service.

Training Security Guards

I wanted to be able to paint a picture of what training practices are like for guards in major U.S. art museums. In order to best accomplish this, I asked security managers how often guards are trained, who provides the training, and what topics are covered.

Findings

In answer to my first question of how often guards receive training, many respondents answered that guards are trained upon hiring and additionally receive annual training in safety and fire. Three respondents wrote guards are trained daily at role call meetings. This type of training is important to update guards on current issues and happenings at the museum. I was surprised at how few respondents included this type of training in their answers, as it is important to keep floor staff such as guards up to date.

I asked security managers to describe who is responsible for educational, visitor service, or safety training practices for security guards. Responses included the following: external instructors, museum staff or contract security company, solely contract security company, security managers and/or supervisors, human resources department, and curators.
Nine of the fifteen security managers wrote that they provide the training or security supervisors do.

Conclusions

As shown above, the majority of security department respondents said that they themselves conduct training for guards. This is most likely occurring because it is easier for security managers and supervisors to include the training in their time and budget, opposed to going out of their way to match guards up with museum personnel such as the human resources department, curators, or educators.

Fulfilling the Educational Mission by Educating Guards

Findings

In response to the question, “do you feel collaborating with guards can help achieve the educational mission or philosophy at your museum?” curator of Education at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Marilyn Russell, wrote: “guards can be helpful if well-informed-they are not a good choice for educators because they cannot engage with visitors and still guard the artwork.”
Nine of the ten museum educators who responded wrote that they feel as though collaborating with guards does help achieve the educational mission or philosophy at their museum.

While the Carnegie Museum of Art and the Walker Art Center believe in educating the guards as much as possible, a major art museum on the mid-Atlantic coast does not “place that kind of pressure on the security staff.” This was the only museum educator who replied “no.” But, the museum ensures that guards are knowledgeable enough to assist visitors with answers to basic questions like where the bathrooms are or other navigational issues. The Director of Education at this museum credits the events of September 11th as having put pressure on security staff to guard the art, visitors and building instead of fulfilling a more educational role to visitors.

As described by Susan Rotile, Program Manager of School Programs at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, “gallery monitors” as they are called at the Walker, “are considered ‘front line staff’ because they have direct contact with museum visitors. The more informed they are about the museum, the better.”

Conclusions

Guards who know about the environment they are guarding are less bored and able to help visitors with the questions they want answered.
promptly. Rotile confirmed the hypothesis that guards are the faces of the museum who need to have some kind of educational training beyond simple security training sessions.

Russell’s response above raises numerous valid points. Security guards often need to be educated on the permanent collection, special exhibits, and daily museum happenings in order to help visitors. Responses guards provide visitors must be brief so that they can still maintain their number one responsibility to guard the artwork and maintain the overall safety of visitors and the museum.

Challenges guards face

Findings and Conclusions

Guards cope with enumerable challenges. In the survey sent to security managers, I asked them to answer what challenges they or their employees encounter in the museum security field. Director of Security at the Seattle Art Museum, Timothy Kane, wrote: “Way too small a space to answer.” Unlike Kane, many security personnel listed challenges their guards face, such as basic safeguarding the art, staff, visitors, and the property itself; unruly children, visitors touching, boredom, low pay and long hours. In addition, numerous managers or directors like Colette Lampkin, Assistant Chief of Security at the Cincinnati Art Museum,
included the challenge of “maintaining security and protecting art objects while still being visitor service friendly.” Ed Benton, the Facilities Managers at the Mint Museums responded that challenges among his security staff include “implementing and enforcing rules that should be in place but are resisted at times by those in the arts and arts departments in the museum. They sometimes feel that the rules should not apply to them.” Benton’s response invokes numerous issues I described in the background section, such as the fact that many people (even staff and board) forego complying with museum rules. In my background, I included sources that described board members and key museum personnel who did not agree with having their personal belongings being checked as they left the museum premises.

Additional challenges include limiting basic visitor behavior such as touching the art, cell phone use in galleries, and prohibiting food and beverages in galleries. As discussed in the background, visitors do not want to be told what to do by a complete stranger. However, much of their frustration and annoyance comes from a lack of museum etiquette. Visitors who do not regularly seek out museums during their leisure time may not be aware of basic rules or pretend not to be. Some visitors even go so far as to question guards by saying that there are no written rules posted and they had no idea that they could not touch the artwork, take
flash pictures, etc. Museums can further help guards and their visitors by posting inconspicuous signs that list basic rules in each gallery. As described earlier, one museum that does a good job of this is the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. The museum has signs similar to those of their labels that have a clear plastic background and a white font, which is somewhat easy to read. While having these signs posted is helpful, some visitors may struggle with reading these signs and the labels themselves as the white text sort of blends in with the colored walls.

Security managers struggle most with turnover rates in the guard force they employ. I also found accounts of this high turnover rate during my literature review. Security managers point to this high turnover as a result of boredom, low pay, long hours, and general frustrations with the job. They also wrote that guards are challenged by balancing security with customer service and enforcing rules. Another challenge security managers face are the motivations of their security staff. As stated above, guards need some type of way to feel useful and empowered on the job.

**Innovations in visitor-friendly guard programs**

*Revamping Job Titles and Duties*

The job title “security guard” is becoming obsolete. *ArtNews*
magazine author Carly Berwick credits a number of U.S. museums for reflecting on the expanded roles of guards and attending to these by also evaluating and changing their job titles.

Institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego and Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences now call guards “gallery attendants,” while the Cleveland Museum of Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art are shifting to “protective services staff.”94 The Hood Museum of Art in Hannover, New Hampshire is transitioning from security guards to the visitor-friendly title of “security and visitor-services staff.”95

Additionally, the term “gallery guide” was recently implemented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The Guggenheim has also decided to cross-train “gallery guides” in the arenas of gallery educator and security guard. They are “required to attend trainings in gallery techniques and exhibition content as well as security guard procedures that are in compliance with the New York Guard Certification.”96 Interesting to note are the unique requirements associated with this new position, which include: MA/MFA in art history, museum education, studio art, or a related field; prior experience as tour facilitator

94 Ibid, 149.
95 Ibid.
with clear communication skills; experience with artwork, research, security issues and working with the public; and applicants with bi-lingual skills are strongly recommended.\(^{97}\) Once hired based on these qualifications, gallery guides are also distinctive in their required duties. While the security guard duties are similar to the traditional roles I mentioned earlier in the background section of this paper, the gallery educator side of the job is innovative. As a “gallery educator,” these guides are expected to: interface with visitors as a friendly museum representative; orient visitors to the museum by fielding questions and providing information; engaging visitors in conversations about the works in the galleries; and give walkthroughs to the guards of any new exhibitions.\(^{98}\)

One new title that seems like it is hardly more visitor-friendly, yet may empower security staff, is the job title “security officer” at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Berwick interviewed the head of visitor services staff at the Getty, Andrea Leonard, and she informed Berwick that the term guard “was not the friendliest.”\(^{99}\) The term officer does imply an act of empowerment, as visitors and employees themselves may relate it to the other societal intimidating and authoritative figure, the police.

\(^{97}\) Ibid.
\(^{98}\) Ibid.
officer. When defining officer, the Merriam-Webster online dictionary includes the following interpretation for the term, “one charged with police duties” or “one who holds an office of trust, authority, or command.” The later part of the definition is interesting in that the term officer is supposed to be defined by the three characteristics of “trust, authority, and/or command.” One has to wonder how much visitors trust security guards or officers, no matter what their job title may be and if they consider them to be the authoritative and commanding. Project manager at the Getty, Les Borsay, was happy to reaffirm that the security staff, employed by the institution and not a contract company, are called officers not guards. Besides the visitor-friendly title, he elaborated on how the security officers there receive “customer” or visitor service training on a regular basis, not just when they begin working for the institution. Furthermore, he believes that a “sense of pride” is gained through well-trained officers instead of just being given a jacket and flashlight. Finally, the Getty is unique in sponsoring an “education assistance program.” The museum offers any museum staff, $2000 per calendar year for undergraduate work and $3000 for graduate work. Borsay said that the department pushes for officers to become more educated and this program

definitely insights a unique opportunity for officers who work at the Getty.

At Lakeview, the title “gallery attendant” came into use only in the last three to four years, as is a common timeframe at museums such as the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the San Jose Museum of Art in San Jose, California, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

The job description for gallery attendants at Lakeview goes on to include the fact that they “wear many different hats” because they “serve as public relations and information officers beyond monitoring the activities within the galleries and the entire museum.” Guards manage to affect the atmosphere of the institution. As protectors of the art, they are often expected to answer pertinent questions posed by visitors. In order to achieve the best visitor-friendly impression, guards must be educated beyond the safety of the museum’s collection and its visitors. Lakeview’s philosophy on this includes the fact that because guards are asked numerous questions about the museum, “it is preferable that the gallery attendant become familiar with exhibition contents. However, they must not be so distracted with answering questions that they lose sight of their primary mission—protecting the artworks.”

Uniforms

How do visitors distinguish security guards from other museum employees? By their uniforms of course. The traditional art museum security guard uniform consists of grey pants or skirt and a blue blazer. Employers often provide blue or white shirts, as well as knotted ties for men and crossover ties for female guards. It is important that the security guard wear a low heeled and comfortable shoe, since being on his or her feet all day warrants the need for comfort. However, uniforms vary from institution to institution based on their collection, community, image, and security needs.103

Author James Brennan credits local police departments with popularizing navy blue as a color choice for blazers. The choice may have come from the fact that if security guards looked similar enough to police officers, they would deter would-be criminals. In a Security Management article entitled, “Outfitting Your Guard Force,” Brennan also goes on to say that uniforms for guards should have an emphasis on “practicality, easy maintenance, and sustainability to the site requirements.”104 Guards are typically provided at least three uniforms, those of which they are responsible for washing and maintaining a presentable appearance of.

103 Ibid.
According to *Museum Security* author, Robert Tilloston, uniforms serve “to heighten the sense of responsibility of the guard” and “provide a sense of security to the visitor.”\(^{105}\) In Tilloston’s book, the vice president of Metro Security Systems, Inc., Rick Masimei, stresses that a “properly uniformed guard who looks and acts professionally will deter would-be criminals just as effectively as a guard whose uniform closely mimics the police.”\(^{106}\) Besides distinguishing guards from other museum staff, uniforms can serve additional purposes.

In “Outfitting Your Guard Force,” author James Brennan provides three goals that security officers believe can be achieved if uniforms are properly designed and worn. These include “enhanced image for the employer, enhanced self-image of the guard, and enhanced security for the company.”\(^{107}\) The recent alterations to the guard uniform, which make the apparel more visitor-friendly and less intimidating, are especially able to enhance all three of Brennan’s goals.

On a visit to a major art museum in Texas, I observed a mixture of uniforms among the newly titled “gallery attendants” or security guards. Instead of the traditional polyester gray pants and navy blue blazer, many guards donned different colored suit jackets or pants. One female guard

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\(^{105}\) Tilloston, 24.


\(^{107}\) Brennan, 32.
wore a completely black suit with a traditional white collared shirt and man’s tie. Upon seeing her all black suit, I concluded that she must have been a docent or perhaps even a supervisor or security manager. I also encountered guards who chose to wear green jackets with gray dress pants or the traditional blue blazer and gray pants. Based on my viewpoint as a visitor that day, this lack of uniformity made it difficult to identify the security staff.

In a *Security Management* article entitled, “What Image Should We Project?” security expert Jerry E. Hudson ascertains that the uniform is a “vital weapon in the security manager’s arsenal.” Uniforms that “are properly presented and worn with respect can diffuse many potential problems. Security officers may deter violence just by the presence of their uniforms.”\(^\text{108}\) Hudson goes on to describe other reasons why special uniforms for guards are necessary: the mission statement of the security department, as “deterrents to uninvited guests or dishonest employees,” and simply to be easily identified to the community of visitors and museum employees who may need to call on a guard for assistance during a time of need.\(^\text{109}\) However, rather than maintaining the look of an intimidating guard, museums are exploring new ways to maintain a

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\(^{109}\) Ibid.
visitor-friendly image by looking to distinguish guards with alternative clothing options.

In a March 2001 *ArtNews* article, “The Changing of the Guards,” Carly Berwick discusses the shift in security guard uniforms. With the goal of being more visitor-friendly, museums are getting away from the traditional and often intimidating uniform and exploring new options. As Berwick describes, these new alternatives often include the more casual khakis and buttons that say “Ask Me,” which aid museum visitors in approaching guards with questions. According to Berwick, “today, the person hired to make sure art does not get vandalized or stolen often serves double duty as the person who serves to make visits pleasant.”\(^{110}\) In order to achieve the goal of offering a pleasant museum experience through visitor-friendly guards, museums are also attending to changing the titles of their security personnel.

In order for institutions such as those described by Berwick and others to be visitor or customer friendly, uniforms are one simple way to make a museum visit less imposing and unfriendly. While it is not a U.S. institution, it is important to note the uniform alteration that took place in 1998 at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Assistant Security/Visitor Services

Manager, Paul Smith, bragged that his department is “one of the most ‘customer friendly’ security departments in the world.” To accomplish this, Smith and his colleagues “dispensed with all of the quasi-police paraphernalia such as guard uniforms, badges, etc.” and retrained guards to be hosts. “They are trained to facilitate the experience of the patrons rather than being remote and stentorian.”

The uniforms the Asian Art Museum guards don are unique. While they still wear the traditional suit or “funeral uniform” as guard Vladimir Kalika called it, their red ties fit with the museum’s collection. They consist of an Asian dragon, which is a symbol of protection according to Kalika. He linked this symbol to the fact that he and his co-workers are also symbols of protection in the museum.

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112 Vladimir Kalika, Interview by author, 5 May 2005.
Inspired by their surroundings yet invisible in them: Guards as artists

“Many of the guards are artists themselves, who love being around the place.”

-Steve Bailey, Boston Globe columnist commenting on guards at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Many guards are invisible, but yearn to be visible as artists. Artists often work in places such as museums to earn extra money to support their artistic endeavors. By educating the guards on the collection, they may be inspired or grow as artists or art historians. For example, artist Fred Wilson’s 1991 sculpture, Guarded View, was inspired by his work as a security guard at the Neuberger Museum. The work of art features four headless mannequins wearing the guards’ uniforms from New York museums such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan and the MOMA. Besides exhibiting racial stereotypes due to the fact that Wilson painted the hands and necks of the plastic figures brown, the piece also represents “divisions of labor in the culture industry: museum guard as vocation primarily performed by people of color.” Additionally,

Maurice Berger, author of *Fred Wilson: objects and installations 1979-2000*, goes on to say

many of the security guards who work in New York museums are African American, and they operate in institutions that, for the most part, under-represent the work of black artists in their permanent collections and exhibitions. *Guarded View* brought home the relative anonymity of these guards who watch over and protect these museums’ vastly Eurocentric holdings, men and women who stand side-by-side with these objects only to be ignored by museum staff and visitors alike.\(^\text{115}\)

In fact to test the invisibility or “visibility” that underlie a security guard job such as the anonymity mentioned by Berger, Wilson conducted an experiment of his own during a lecture he was asked to give at the Whitney. As part of his artist talk, he would take visitors on a tour of the museum. At one point in the tour, he changed into a guard uniform, “told his audience to meet him downstairs to view some other pieces” and while they were reconvening, Wilson “positioned himself near the elevators” and went “completely unrecognized”\(^\text{116}\) by the visitors he had been lecturing to moments before. As to why these particular visitors ignored Wilson on that day, credit is due to how the clothing change altered the attitude of visitors and prompted them to ignore Wilson’s presence, without truly realizing who he was.


\(^{116}\) Ibid.
Numerous guards go undetected to visitors and museum personnel as talented artists whose main motivations for donning a blue blazer and grey slacks are simply to be closer to inspiring works of artwork. Famous artists who have worked as guards include Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Robert Ryman, and Fred Wilson, to name just a few. Security guards often credit their day job for inspiring their own work. One such case comes from a December 20, 2003 New York Times article by Dan Barry entitled “Private Lessons In the Halls of Old Masters.” Barry provides an account of Metropolitan Museum of Art security guard Fabian Berenbaum, who is an artist with a master’s degree in fine arts. Berenbaum enjoys his job and “rarely feels the crushing despair of why bother.” The fact that he spends his days surrounded by amazing works of art helps his work ethic and he says, “you see the production, and you get a sense of the work that goes into being a great painter.” The talent of guards is often unknown to other museum staff and visitors, but comes into play when collaboration efforts with the education department are in place. This may involve how guards could easily apply art concepts such

as visual thinking strategies (VTS) as guards solve visual problems during their daily work.

Like Berenbaum, the works of art he encounters on a daily basis inspires Yale University Art Gallery lead security guard and emerging artist, Alberto Noriega. Mr. Noriega came from Peru in 1992 and had training as a police officer in his home country prior to moving to the United States. For a recent carving he completed, Noriega used a plate from the American galleries for inspiration for a carving of a fish. Clearly the time Noriega spends in the galleries are not only being used for the purposes of security. To that he weds looking at visual works that help him advance his own art Besides using his job to inspire his artistic talents, Noriega also aspired to learn more about the history of the collection by working with the education staff at his museum and is studying to be a Gallery instructor. He wanted to empower himself because he noticed that “everyone comes to security for information.” With that sense of empowerment, Noriega was further able to tell people about the collection. So, he asked the education department if he could “train with them and they said yes.”\footnote{Alberto Noriega, as quoted by Anna Hammond in “Alberto Noriega: one to one,” Available at http://artgallery.yale.edu/pages/whatisart/what_alberto.html Accessed 9 February 2005.} This dynamic individual even took his training so far as to develop a program to train the other guards. In response to a question
posed by the museum’s deputy director, Anna Hammond, about the training program he was developing for the rest of the guards. With that, Noriega went on to say that he wanted to train the other guards “so that they could be a better help to the public.” He explained,

So, while I am studying with the education department here about the collection, I am developing a training program for all of the guards to learn information that is more accurate, more reliable, and more trusted. The information you give to the public is more important than anything because they trust you and you have to honor that.121

Clearly guards such as Noriega serve as an example for other guards, who may not feel willing to speak up about their desire to learn more and gain exposure for their own artistic talents.

How do these talents come to fruition for the museum the guards look to for inspiration in their own work? Education and curatorial departments often organize gallery nights showcasing the work of museum staff. Until these opportunities arise, the talent of many staff members goes overlooked. One example of this lies in artist Doug Holst, a guard at the Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM). After exhibiting his work during the staff gallery night exhibition at MAM, Doug received notoriety and recognition from the art community. Eventually, MAM even purchased a painting of his and it was featured in an exhibit.

121 Ibid.
Conclusions

The role of security guard in U.S. art museums is slowly reflecting the transformations of museums over the last decades. As the education and visitor service departments continue to cater to visitors in this new age of visitor-friendly institutions, so too should they look within to their staff, such as guards. Educating the staff on the collection and positive visitor service models is an effective public relations tool that is often overlooked in museums.

Interviews

The interviews with seventeen total security guards, security managers, visitor service managers, and museum education staff, many of whom were identified from the surveys I had sent afforded deeper insights three very different perspectives. In these interviews I was looking for deeper insights into questions such as what type of visitor-friendly guards maybe in place in museums currently, what training practices are like, if guards feel the need to be more educated for the sake of their visitors, and whether or not security managers, educators, and visitor service managers feel the need for a more educated and visitor-friendly guard. Interestingly, of the three guards were the most reticent of the use in art education for their jobs. On the other hand, museum educators and security directors
were a little hesitant to provide definite answers to some of my questions. Many interviews came out of the surveys I sent, with respondents offering additional help. I proceeded to e-mail many of them with additional questions, directly relating to some of their responses.

*Security Guards*

I conducted ten interviews with guards, mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area. The museums I visited included the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Legion of Honor, the Yerba Buena Art Center, the Asian Art Museum, and the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas. Security guards typically love to talk to visitors, as it breaks up the monotony of their day. Of course, their security managers prefer a proper balance between engaging with visitors or other staff and protecting the art. As an interviewer, I was no exception to this rule. The majority of guards I spoke to were more than willing to describe various aspects of their jobs. When inquiring about the specific subject of educational training, guards like Legion of Honor guard Talbert Web perked up and were excited at the prospect of training beyond their typical safety and emergency planning sessions. Numerous respondents were seasoned veterans of the guard force at their institution. The majority I talked to had worked at their museum for approximately ten years or more. Their dedication came from their love of their surroundings and especially their
visitors. These guards were typically older individuals who were now semi-retired.

One such guard is the charismatic Talbert Web at the Legion of Honor. Mr. Web has worked as an on-call security guard for thirteen years. Prior to that, he had been educated as an engineer and went on to work for the postal service for over thirty years. His undergraduate degree required engineering students to take classes in Western art in order to ensure well-rounded students. Mr. Web loved this year of classes in art and he proceeded to make regular visits to the Legion of Honor throughout his life. On the day of his retirement from the postal service, he visited the Legion of Honor and spoke to a few of the guards he knew. They encouraged him to apply for a job there and he ended up starting work as a guard the next day.

Guards I spoke to at a number of institutions all disclosed their tendency to teach themselves about the collection. One way of accomplishing this is during their rounds by listening in on docent tours. Security guards do this for a number of reasons. First, out of sheer curiosity. Second, it often serves simply to curb one of their biggest challenges—boredom. Third and most importantly, guards want to learn about the collection they are surrounded by. This was made clear on a visit to the Legion of Honor. Talbert Web elaborated on how he
eavesdrops on docent tours because he often has visitors posing questions which would help them deconstruct the art they are frequently so puzzled by. In fact, I observed Mr. Web doing so prior to speaking to him about this. Mr. Web said he would definitely benefit from additional educational training and feels it should be a necessary part of the training for guards. Additionally, he concluded that this type of training would really benefit him and other guards in aiding visitors to be more comfortable and informed in their surroundings.

Meghan Arens spoke to Jennifer Cooley at the Des Moines Art Center regarding how the institution’s security officers “are an internal force and take part in the docent training program.” Cooley also stated that “both employees and visitors alike feel that the DMAC staff is incredibly friendly to each other and to the public, and is knowledgeable, friendly and willing to help.”

Another valuable conversation I had with a security guard occurred at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. A former lawyer in his home country of Ukraine, Vladimir Kalika, decided to become a guard after he immigrated to the United States over ten years ago. Mr. Kalika had been a guard with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco prior to transferring

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122 Ibid.
123 Talbert Web, Interview by author, 16 April 2005.
124 Meghan Arens, Missing!: visitor service in art museums—if found, please call--Final Master’s Project, John F. Kennedy University, 2004, 89.
to the Asian Art Museum in recent years. Like Mr. Web, Mr. Kalika learns about the collection by following docent tours during his rounds. Based on the in-depth conversations I had with him, it is clear that Kalika is passionate about his job and is well informed on the history of the building and the museum’s collection. He did point out that the job can be boring from time to time. However, he still boasts about his favorite areas to work in. He enjoys that his job affords him the ability to engage with customers (visitors), especially when he experiences occasional challenges with them, which was his favorite part of being a lawyer.

Common themes among other guards that I spoke to include the sense of wanting to help out their visitors, the need to feel respected by not only visitors but museum staff as well, and the investment they have in their jobs.

Security Managers

Security managers are typically the authorities on their guard force. Based on their experience with guards, they are able to assess what type of training is efficient for guards, after assessing their education and interest level. I spoke to three key informants. Steve Keller is one of the foremost researchers and writers in the field. As a former director of security at the Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. Keller designed helpful training courses for
guards that went beyond the typical safety training and included a dash of educational information. When I asked him about his experience at the Art Institute, he described that he

> Always tried to get people to buy into my program by giving them some way of seeing my objectives as theirs. Unfortunately, education departments don’t always see the need for security so approaching an educator and asking him or her to help you is sometimes seen as a nuisance.\(^{125}\)

Mr. Keller went on to say,

> But they (educators) also complain disproportionately about the guards so I took every opportunity to use those complains as a starting point in explaining how I needed to have their help in order to get the guards to be better motivated and thus perform better.\(^{126}\)

His response informs us of how a working relationship between security and education departments is often difficult in major U.S. art museums. It seems that a gap between the two departments really affects the potential for the relationship between guards and educators. While both departments recognize the importance of the relationship, it often comes down to the fact that time and money are major barriers.

In addition to Keller, I also interviewed Facilities Manager at the Mint Museum of Art in North Carolina, Ed Benton. His initial survey responses prompted additional questions, which led to additional inquires.

\(^{125}\) Steven Keller, Interview by author, 28 March 2005.  
\(^{126}\) Ibid.
I was curious to discover more on one particular communication process he had described. When visitors have a question about the collection, officers are instructed to “direct the visitor to the reception desk where the appropriate person can be contacted via their office phone.” Benton went on to say, “there are also certain times when we do have trained docents that are on the floor near the reception desk that can also answer most questions in an informed and accurate manner.” As I mentioned earlier in this section, visitors often want immediate answers to questions they pose to front end staff. Because of this, they might not want to wait for long periods of time such as at the Mint Museums.

The reason for this protocol is the museum’s hesitation, as Benton illustrates: “To have the security officer give much more than basic information. Some of the officers have been here for a while and have learned a lot of good info that they can relay to an inquisitive visitor. However, a well-known and unfortunate fact is that there is a rather high turnover rate in the contract security business.”

Mr. Benton was not alone in his commentary of how the impact of high turnover of museum security guards on museums. Turnover affects the investment the museum itself may or may not want to make in educating the security staff. Additional training would not only benefit the veteran guards, but also new hires. By providing this type of educational
atmosphere, new guards would feel a sense of purpose in their job and may be more likely to work at the museum for a longer period of time. Other staff who are responsible for security guards, such as Kristan McKinsey at the Lakeview Museum in Peoria, Illinois, also included this observation and also offered insight into her challenges with making sure guards are visitor-friendly.

The Vice President of Collections and Exhibitions at Lakeview, Kristan McKinsey, informed me of a recent incident in which she had to fire a gallery attendant due to the fact that he was “offending the public.” Visitors complained that he “hovered, that he didn’t let kids have fun; plus, he sat down and fell asleep—not a good thing for the public to find!” Additionally, this guard “did not smile and make people feel welcome while also giving them the sense that their actions were under watch.”

Perhaps this is when collaborations between education and security staff would be fruitful, so an incident such as what is described above does not take place in the future. While interviewing educators, I gained insight into how they might approach working with security staff.
Educators

Museum educators provided insight into the training side of my topic. They know what has worked in the past or doesn’t work with training docents, but what do they know about guards?

The educators I spoke to generally replied that budget and time prevents them from providing guards with additional educational training. One particular individual, who prefers to remain anonymous, said that the Northern Atlantic region museum she works at does not currently collaborate with guards. However, guards do “tell museum educators about feedback and questions they get” on a regular basis. While there is no formal working relationship in place, it is important for educators to recognize that guards can provide valuable insight into the needs of museum visitors. Educators can then proceed to rework public programming or exhibits in their museums.127

Another educator who preferred to remain anonymous had a similar to response to the above insight. This individual believes that having a secure environment at his Midwestern institution is key, but also training guards to be proficient in providing “a safe, secure environment and knowing where one is in a large institution and what is available to serve particular needs is essential to our guests’ sense of comfort,

127 Anonymous, Interview by author, 30 April 30 2005.
Balancing this sense of security and customer service seems to be a theme that is raised quite often in my survey and interview responses. As stated earlier in the paper, balancing these two characteristics is vital to how the visitor perceives the institution he or she is visiting. Obviously, a guard who provides informative yet friendly service to visitors will positively affect the experience those individuals walk away with. This optimistic experience will in turn influence their likelihood of a repeat visit to the museum and the chance of sharing that experience with friends and family.

Visitor Service Managers

Visitor service managers and personnel are part of the key staff who will aid in ensuring the visitor-friendliness of guards reflects the mission of the museum. Some museums place the responsibility for this to fall under larger departments, especially at smaller institutions. Such is the case at the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences in Peoria, Illinois. The Vice President of Collections and Exhibitions, Kristan McKinsey, informed me exactly what a visitor-friendly guard means to her institution.

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128 Anonymous, Interview by author, 4 May 2005.
This includes outfitting her guards in khaki slacks, a white shirt and navy vest or jacket (suit style), with the footwear not being proscribed.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{Final Conclusions on Interviews}

Information generated from both surveys and interviews confirmed many of my suspicions about the museum security field. One of these includes the fact that time and budget both prevent a fruitful relationship from forming between guards and educators at some museums. This theory originated in my experience as a museum studies student with a focus on public programming. The field is known for having small budgets allotted especially for the education departments.

Furthermore, I suspected there would be confusion surrounding what roles guards should prioritize, with security managers and educators often seeming daunted themselves by this question. Should guards be solely protectors of the art and visitors, or should they also be encouraged to provide the utmost visitor-friendly service to museum visitors?

Responses from security managers and educators often reverted back to the traditional role of key protector, not a visitor-friendly representative of the museum.

Yet overall guards positively to any mention of additional training, especially that which covers the collection and history of the museum.

\textsuperscript{129} Kristan McKinsey, Interview by author, 27 June 2005.
Guards feel a connection to the building, people, and art they watch over and protect on a daily basis. It is only natural that they would feel this way, especially because they are in such an isolated position and have an abundance of time to think about things. Educators should tap into this dedication and enthusiasm.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

U.S. art museums need to recognize the importance of bridging the gap between their education, visitor service and security departments in order to be successful in meeting their missions. More specifically, security guards, visitor service managers, and educators currently do not exhibit fruitful and reciprocal relationships with the end goal of employing security guards who are able to better understand the collection they protect and to improve their visitor service skills as the faces of the museum. Educators and visitor service managers can benefit from a relationship with guards in order to discern the many questions guards receive from visitors and to understand general observations about visitor behavior guards see day after day. Educators and visitor service managers need to reevaluate their relationship or lack of relationship with guards and view them as untapped and potential resources. Additionally, they can
assist security guards in overcoming their boredom, obtaining a sense of purpose, and improving their overall well being via small training programs aimed at helping guards become public relations tools. I offer recommendations for educators, visitor service and security managers to consider. While I limit these recommendations to staff in those three departments, other museum staff can also benefit from the following suggestions.

FOR MUSEUM SECURITY MANAGERS AND EDUCATORS:

1. **Introduce the idea of a more visitor-friendly guard to meet current museum philosophy.**

   To meet the shift from a collection based to visitor-focused and friendly museum, staff must also reevaluate the job descriptions of security guards they employee or hire contractually. In the past, guards were defined as the human side of security—serving to protect the art and visitors to the museum. Currently, guards are viewed as more than protectors of the art and visitors and encompass a visitor service side to their duties. According to my findings, combining these two roles is one of the biggest challenges for museum educators, visitor service and security managers. If all three departments consider the recommendations listed below, they may be able to overcome this challenge in order to capitalize
on guards as key resources and public relations tools. Guards will need to have an understanding of what visitor service entails. Museum staff must accept the importance of transitioning from guards who currently are not encouraged to speak at length with visitors to those who are expected to be friendly staff members who are available resources for questions or problems visitors may have.

2. **Recognize the importance of a collaborative relationship between security guards and managers, educators, and visitor service managers.**

To get security managers, visitor service managers, and education department personnel to buy into the idea of creating relationships among them, they need to mutually be on board with the idea. Additionally, this relationship must be fostered from the top-down. Ensuring everyone from the director to the Board of Trustees are aware of why such a relationship is beneficial will guarantee an understanding from all parties. As Maria-Rosario Jackson so eloquently stated in *Mastering Civic Engagement*

> a collaboration can take many forms; there is no ‘right’ structure. At their best, collaborations facilitate the work at hand, change to accommodate the particular circumstances of the participants, have a purpose, and involve relationships that enable the achievement of individual and collective goals. They require organizational flexibility, time, patience, staff, resources, and (sometimes) mediation; this is especially true of long-term efforts between dissimilar players.  

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Security guards and other museum staff have traditionally been “dissimilar players” in institutions and this, as Jackson describes, will require extra effort on the part of all parties involved in collaborations.

First, security managers must recognize the importance of expanding the job description and role requirements of their security guards. Managers need to understand how vital their guards are as public relations and customer service tools in the museum, not only as safety devices. They must see how a visitor-friendly guard can benefit them directly. Guards will be empowered and hopefully more positive about their duties. Perhaps their typical complaints of boredom as a result of long hours in near solitude will change if their managers encourage guards to build relationships with their visitors. Managers might see a decline in the turnover rate they currently face with their security staff.

Secondly, museum educators need to look outside the traditional role of serving an exterior audience and recognize the vitality of serving their own staff. If staff such as guards are educated on the museum’s collection, they can in turn answer questions from visitors, whose impression of the museum may very well depend on the staff with whom they interact with. Educators can also benefit by tapping into the guards as resources based on the observations guards make on visitor behavior.
Besides observations, guards engage directly with visitors when they pose questions. Educators need to use these observations and conversations to benefit their department. They can assess what alterations need to be made in the museum setting and pass these insights onto other departments. Ultimately, the visitor and the museum itself will mutually benefit from improving upon any kinks in the system.

Thirdly, visitor service managers can be of help in ascertaining what positive models of visitor service look like. Guards can learn from managers and visitor service staff alike in order to help visitors obtain answers to questions in a friendly manner. This will ensure visitors walk away from their experience fulfilled and satisfied with their museum visit.

For example, while a guard at the Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM), I had countless families with small children who approached me with a very important question-“where can I take my children to make their own art; they are inspired by these surroundings and want to be creative?” These families were interested in taking their children to a discovery room, which MAM did not have. MAM did have an education gallery, which featured a temporary exhibit geared towards children. This setting presented areas for children and families to engage in active play through props such as a puppet theatre or a craft area where children could become artists themselves with the paper and colored pencils provided. However,
numerous families kept refuting my suggestion to take their children there and instead offered advice on a room that would suit their needs. They often asked me to pass the information onto someone “at the top,” but no one from the administrative offices ever approached me requesting more insight into what type of requests I received from visitors. If only administrative personnel would approach the guards as resources, the museum and its visitors could benefit greatly from simple observations. Whether or not the museum can afford to be all things to all people my meeting these requests is another issue which comes into play. Museums are strapped for resources and may not be capable of creating specialized experiences for every visitor. By noticing patterns among requests, posed by visitors, museums can start by attending to the feasible needs one at a time.

To foster a collaborative relationship among security guards and managers, educators, and visitor service managers, which currently is non-existent or not considered important to many of the museums I surveyed or spoke to, both security managers and educators must be on board. They have to see the long-term value of such a relationship. They can benefit from each other’s insights in order to meet the mission of the museum and current philosophy of the visitor-friendly museum.
3. **Start small: training guards does not have to be in-depth and time consuming. Address the need for additional educational training by informing guards during the daily roll call meetings.**

When mentioning the idea of additional training to security and visitor service managers and educators in interviews and surveys, a number of them responded by saying, “we don’t have the time and money to provide that type of training for the guards.” The whole idea of training implies in-depth and time-consuming classroom setting lessons, similar to the art history training docents undergo. However, if security managers and educators work together, as suggested in recommendation number one, they will find a way to train guards without it costing any additional money or time.

I propose that educators, visitor service and security managers utilize the daily role call meeting. This often takes place prior to the museum’s opening and includes updates on museum happenings and guard posts for the day. Often, these daily meetings include staff from the visitor services department, docents, and volunteers. Educators may want to recognize the fact that well-trained docents are already attending these meetings and have them present to the guards and visitor service staff. The training does not have to be in-depth, just informational. Docents could choose one work of art each day and deconstruct it for the guards and
visitor service staff. That way, guards are learning something new about the collection each day, not all in one session.

4. **Demonstrate respect and value for museum security within the museum’s planning processes.**

Security is vital to any and all museum discussions on visitors, education, evaluation, and even exhibit planning. Thus, security staff should be included in all museum planning meetings, as well as weekly operational discussions at the senior staff level. This will help museums benefit from security expertise at the get-go and avoid problems later on. Additionally, security staff may have valuable insights about visitor behavior and service.

Besides including their security managers in planning processes, security guards must also be considered and integrated. Guards such as one individual I spoke to at a large Western museum, currently feel underappreciated. This type of impression can lead visitors being treated poorly as a direct result of guards perceiving as though administrative staff and visitors alike do not appreciate or respect their line of work. If guards were consulted about their role in the larger museum picture, they would obtain a sense of satisfaction in their work.

Like visitor service, the importance of staff such as security guards need to be included in long-term planning. No fancy machine or security
device can replace the human element in security. Successful institutions encompass security goals and objectives in their long-term plans, in order for everyone to be on board with what security entails. For example, this may include alerting all staff to procedures such as the importance of bag checks. This type of situation can often meet defiance from staff, but it is vital to include the fact that everyone, including the director and board members, are subject to these searches. If the institution approaches it as something that is part of the normal procedure, not just an exception that occurs from time to time, it will become effortless and understood by all museum personnel. The search is often overlooked, especially for staff at the top, and it does not demonstrate a lack of trust for the museum’s staff. If it is part of the security routine, it will be accepted.

5. **Share training, management techniques, and model collaborations.**

In order to be successful, museums must collaborate with each other and not view other institutions as competitors. Museums can learn from mistakes made in the past by their own institutions and others. More specifically, educators often copy other ideas presented and implemented by museums other than their own, and this is accepted in the museum community. The same sort of process can be applied to sharing training techniques for front-line staff such as docents, volunteers, security guards,
and visitor service staff. Many survey respondents included lists of numerous training topics they cover with their guards. This sort of list is a useful reference for other museums to compare and contrast what they are and are not covering in their training programs. Perhaps new ideas will come out of this sort of dialogue. It is important to share your management techniques as well. While no two museums are the same, models from other institutions are always useful tools for implementing new or continual programs.

One easy way to share information is through list-serves. A popular list-serve in the museum security community is MSN or the Museum Security Network. Numerous survey respondents listed this as a key source of information, showing that this list-serve is counted on as a tool for security managers to keep up to date on museum security news. Post training subjects, issues, challenges or whatever concerns you about the museum field. Perhaps others with respond with useful suggestions or even benefit from the information you provide. From my experience with this list-serve, not enough people are posting positive elements about the field. Often, the subjects covered include recent thefts or fires at U.S. museums. While we can learn from this type of news, more positive dialogue about museum security should be integrated into this list-serve.
6. **Assess job titles and descriptions, uniforms, and training practices of guards so they are relevant to a more visitor-friendly museum.**

First, look at other institutions who have implemented successful models for these visitor-friendly behaviors. Talk to museum professionals in the security, visitor service, and education departments at institutions such as the Walker Art Center, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Mint Museums in North Carolina, the Lakeview Museum in Peoria, Illinois and the J. Paul Getty Museum. Set goals for what your institution strives to convey through visitor-friendly job titles, descriptions, and uniforms. What worked for another institution may not necessarily be a success at yours. These elements must fall in line with your mission, audience, and community at large. Ensure your security personnel are well-trained in areas such as visitor service and well-educated on the permanent collection and special exhibits. This type of training, as mentioned earlier, can start small and grow as needed. Address guards in daily roll call sessions, where they already learn about the latest news on the museum in order to be up to date for visitor needs and questions.
Final Recommendation

Finally, it behooves all museum professionals to accept a responsibility to attend to external audiences and internal audiences alike. This especially holds true due to the fact that museums have exhibited more visitor-friendly behavior in recent decades. By looking within at their staff, museums can ensure a positive attitude from the likes of floor staff such as guards who are often the only museum personnel visitors will encounter during their visit.
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APPENDIX A:

Survey Instrument for Security Managers

1. What educational background do your security guards have?

2. Are your security guards in-house or contract workers? Please circle appropriate answer.
   In-house       Contract

3. Do security guards and education staff members currently collaborate?

4. If not, why do you think there are no collaboration efforts?

5. How is security staff trained? Please provide a description of that training.
   How often? _________________
   Who provides training? ___________________________
   What topics are covered?
   ___________________________________________

6. What challenges do you or your employees encounter in the art museum security field?

7. Which literature, if any, do you consult for security information?

8. Would you be willing to answer additional questions by phone or e-mail? If so, please circle method of communication that you prefer.
   ✰ Phone       ✰ E-mail
9. Are you interested in a copy of my results?

☑ Yes  ☐ No

10. Can I quote you in my master’s project?

☑ Yes  ☐ No

I. Security Manager Extended Responses

Do security guards and education staff members currently collaborate?

- Particularly with familiarization with an upcoming special exhibition.
- They interact.
- Yes, and curators.
- No, but recently under consideration.
- Yes, we have a frontline management team (visitor services, security, education) we attend joint daily briefings and joint periodic training sessions.

If not, why do you think there are no collaboration efforts?

- We don’t see a need for this. If a visitor has a question the security officer is instructed to refer them to a curator or education staff member.
- Education focus is on external audiences, not museum staff; finances also focus externally
- The officers have many other responsibilities besides being knowledgeable about the art.
How are security staff members trained? Please provide a description of that training.

How often?

- As needed—upon hire and periodically thereafter
- Annually
- Daily/roll call
- Annual first aid, weekly customer relations
- Ongoing
- Once a year
- At hire and quarterly
- When hired; annual fire and safety training and daily meetings
- It’s supposed to be at the start of work and frequently thereafter

Who provides training?

In-house
- Security supervisors
- Training supervisors
- Facilities manager along with the security supervisor
- Education staff, Curators, other staff
- In-house Security and external instructors
- Human resources department

What topics are covered?

- Security, fire, life safety, emergency preparedness
- Too numerous a list—happy to discuss
- Safety, emergency preparedness/response, art safety and protection, customer service, security, report writing, etc.
- Operations, customer service, first aid/CPR, and others
• Medical, theft, decorum within museum, people skills
• Basic museum security concepts, emergency procedures (fire, evacuation, flood, injury), theft/vandalism procedures, emergency equipment, emergency art handling procedures, facility familiarization, appropriate use of force, crowd control, museum protocol
• All aspects of the job are covered
• History and tour of our museum

What challenges do you or your employees encounter in the art museum security field?

• Implementing and enforcing rules that should be in place but are resisted at time by those in the arts and arts departments in the museum. They sometimes feel that the rules should not apply to them. Also funding is always an issue.
• Balancing safeguarding the art, the visitors and staff and the property; staffing levels for special events.
• The greatest challenge that our security staff encounters is trying to maintain security and protect art objects while still being visitor service friendly.
• Our biggest challenges come in customer service. It is difficult to train for enforcement and customer service. Sometimes you can’t do one and expect the other.
• Balancing security of our collections with customer service is our biggest challenge.
• Low pay-long hours
• Expected to do so much
• Overworked, underappreciated
• Way too small a space to answer
• Balancing the protection of the art vs. customer service. Protecting the art from unauthorized touching. Cell phone use in galleries. Restricting food and beverages in galleries.
• Interpersonal skills a priority
• High turnover
• Motivating security staff, visitors touching, unruly children, boredom

**Which literature, if any, do you consult for security information?**

• Museum News
• Security-technology applications
• Security Management
• CSO
• Continuity Insight
• Security Director
• Police Chief
• PSTN (Professional Security Training Network) publications, ICMS (International Committee on Museum Security) publications, ASIS (American Society for Industrial Security) publications
• Many trade publications
• Steve Keller (security consultant and author)
• Guidelines and Standards from ASIS. and NFPA
• We receive newsletters and bulletins from the IFCPPC (International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection) that are museum related and contain very usable information as well as providing contacts if you have museum related security questions
APPENDIX B:

Survey Instrument and Responses: Museum Educators

I. Survey questions: Museum Educators

1. Does your education department currently collaborate with the security guards? For example: Do you offer any training to them as informal educators to museum visitors? Please circle yes or no.

☑ Yes (please explain in # 2, but skip # 3) ☐ No (skip to # 3)

2. If the answer to number one is yes, how?

3. If not, what is the cause of this?

4. Do you feel collaborating with guards can help achieve the educational mission or philosophy at your museum? Please explain.

5. Would you be willing to be contacted for further questions via phone or e-mail? If so, please circle method you prefer.

☑ Phone ☑ E-mail

6. Can I quote you in my master’s project?

☑ Yes ☐ No

7. Are you interested in a copy of my results?

☑ Yes ☐ No
II. Museum Educator Responses

If the answer to number one is yes, how?

- Twice a year we join the security staff training to explain educational programs, new programs, areas of concern and field questions.
- There is a briefing every morning on current exhibitions but security officers are not seen as informal educators—we expect them to understand what they spend all day in front of for their benefit and in case they get questions. We also offer two times a year all-day training in the whole museum.
- I’ve worked with the guards on a number of occasions in order to proactively bring them into the student visitor experience. Although this sounds exciting and dynamic, it’s the most basic work, i.e. providing them with information about how the education department works with students of all ages. It’s a combination of making them aware of all the different programs we offer, our expectations about student behavior and teacher responsibility, and the corresponding badges students and teachers might wear. It’s a very influential aspect of the Museum’s environment and underutilized in my opinion.
- Informal orientation sessions to new exhibitions done by curators and/or educators
- Security personnel are trained about our education programs and the diversity of audiences we serve.
- Several of our “gallery monitors” have taken the tour guide training

If not, what is the cause of this?

- We don’t want the guards acting as art educators.
• At one time I met with guards during roll call once a month. A section of the museum was selected where I would pick an object to inform guards assigned to that area. In general, their enthusiasm waned after five months.

• Confusion of roles for a security staff employee whose main function is protection of works of art.

• We have long discussed this, but the museum does not budget to pay guards for training time (the same is true of the receptionists).

• They are not expected to participate in programs.

Do you feel collaborating with guards can help achieve the educational mission or philosophy at your museum? Please explain.

• Gallery monitors are considered “front line staff” because they have direct contact with museum visitors. The more informed they are about the museum, the better.

• Having a safe, secure environment and knowing where one is in a large institution and what is available to serve particular needs—is essential to our guests’ sense of comfort, receptivity, and confidence.

• Yes, and many guards tell us about the feedback and questions they get.

• We do not place that kind of pressure on the security staff, but we ensure that they are knowledgeable enough to assist visitors in a general way. Prefer a team or collaborative approach security of the art, visitors, and buildings are primary responsibilities of our security staff. More pressure in a post 9/11 world.

• Collaboration happens between education and security for special projects such as outreach to community groups and schools. This type of collaboration fulfills our mission while maintaining key responsibility.

• We believe that educators can help security relate better and in more friendly and inviting ways.
Guards will get reactions to the art from visitors and helping them understand the art, helps them understand the visitors.

- Guards can be helpful if well-informed-they are not a good choice for educators because they cannot engage with visitors and still guard the artwork.
- Not necessarily. If they enjoy their job in general, yes.
- Yes-knowledge empowers people. Officers are happier when they aren’t guests. Our philosophy is to help visitors have a quality experience whether it is through the staff, amenities, art or programs.

**Which literature, if any, do you consult for museum education information?**

- ?
- Huh?
- Literature from tours of museums
- Everything that exists
- Too many sources to list
- AAM publications
- Museum education is now a major subject of scholarly literature-in books, journals, and published research
- Too many sources to list here…
APPENDIX C

Security Training Topics at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh*

Establish a requirement that each private security officer should pass written examination to demonstrate that he/she understands the subject matter and is qualified to perform the basic duties of a private security officer. Training should include the following material:

1. Assignment or post orders
2. Blood borne pathogens
3. Bomb threats
4. Communications
5. Company orientation and policies
6. CPR
7. Crowd control
8. Customer service and public relations
9. Diversity in the workplace
10. Emergency response procedures
11. Ethics, honesty, professional image and proper conduct
12. Fire prevention and control
13. Fire equipment
14. First Aid
15. Harassment and discrimination
16. Information security
17. Laws of evidence
18. Legal aspects of security
19. Lock and key control
20. Nature and role of private security
21. Note-taking/report writing
22. Patrol techniques and observing unusual circumstances
23. Physical security and access control
24. Preserving the incident scene
25. Safety awareness
26. Security awareness

*Provided by Matthew J. Labishak, Manager of Corporate Security and Custodial Services
27. Substance abuse
28. Technology in security
29. Testimony
30. Theft prevention
31. Traffic control and parking lot security
32. Urban terrorism
33. Use of force and force continuum
34. Workplace violence
APPENDIX D

Job description and training guidelines for “gallery attendant”
courtesy of the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria,
Illinois.

Job Description

THE SECURITY GUARDS AS THE PUBLIC FACE OF A
MUSEUM

Security is an important museum responsibility. Gallery Attendants are responsible for the safety of the art objects, as well as the safety and comfort of visitors.
This means our Gallery Attendants wear many different hats. They serve as public relations and information officers beyond monitoring the activities within the galleries and the entire museum. They help educate visitors, including students, in proper museum etiquette.

Often the Gallery Attendant is the only person to interact with our visitors after they obtain tickets in the store. The GA is the face of the museum, and their attitude and demeanor reflect the entire Lakeview Museum.

The GA must be able to convey the proper museum etiquette to the visitors in a non-threatening and friendly, but firm manner. They must exercise extreme discretion in determining whether a visitor should be approached about behavior.

The GA often will be asked questions about the museum. This is an aspect of public relations that is very important to Lakeview. So it is preferable that the GA become familiar with exhibition contents. However, they must not be distracted with answering questions that they lose sight of their primary mission-protecting the artworks.

Training materials

The gallery attendants serve important security and public relations services for the Museum. You protect the works of art entrusted to the
Museum’s care. You are among the most visible staff members and set the professional tone of the institution in the eyes of the public.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

You are to see and be seen. Make eye contact with visitors, to let them know that you are aware of their presence in the galleries. People are less likely to break the rules when they know someone is watching them. Keep track of people while they are in the gallery(ies) for which you are responsible. Be aware if someone seems to linger much longer than necessary.

Circulate around your gallery when visitors are present. Sitting is permissible when your gallery is empty, or there are just a couple of visitors.

Be positive and polite when approaching visitors and speaking to them. Do not startle them by approaching from the back. Try to phrase admonitions in a positive way that will not embarrass or offend the visitor. Sometimes it helps to explain why we ask people not to touch or stand too close.

Be alert. Watch visitors as they open a purse, move close to works of art, etc. Politely ask visitors to put away keys or other such items they might have in their hands. Be aware of a visitor is furtive or otherwise suspicious. Be watchful that anyone with a cane does not use it as a pointer or in another dangerous manner. Radio the Front Desk for assistance if necessary.

Limit conversation with the public. Answer questions politely but do not allow one visitor to engage you in a conversation that distracts you from other visitors.

Carry your radio and use it to request extra guards, deal with an emergency, etc.

Stay awake. Walk around if you feel drowsy. Contact the Front Desk to get someone to give you a break. Do not lean on the walls.

Do not touch visitors, even children, unless a work of art is in danger and they do not respond to a verbal instruction.
No reading when visitors are in the gallery. As soon as a visitor enters, put the reading material away.

Breaks. If you are working a shift of 5 hours or longer, you are entitled to a half-hour lunch break and a 10-minute afternoon break. During special exhibits, full-time Museum staff will be assigned to give each gallery attendant a lunch and afternoon break during the week; on weekends, a fifth guard will come in for a shift shorter than 5 hours to allow the gallery attendants and Front Desk person to take lunch breaks. Request additional restroom breaks by contacting the Front Desk for someone to come take your place if there are visitors in the galleries.

IN CASE OF DAMAGE TO A WORK IN THE EXHIBIT

Do not move any part of the damaged item. Use your radio, contact the person at the Front Desk and tell her/him that you need Liz or Kristan immediately. For insurance purposes, we need to photograph the damage before anything is moved. Then we will carefully and thoroughly collect the pieces and remove them from the gallery.

RULES FOR THE PUBLIC DURING SPECIAL EXHIBITS

NO food or drink allowed in the galleries.

NO touching the art. There are no exceptions.

NO strollers allowed in the galleries. We will allow handicapped or mentally challenged child who needs to be in stroller and is accompanied by a responsible adult. Small children are to be held in the arms or by the hand. NO running or horseplay is to be allowed. NO candy or gum in the mouths of children-they might throw it at a work of art.

NO backpacks. These can be left at the Front Desk.

NO coats over the arm. These can be placed in the coatroom.

NO umbrellas. These can be left at the Front Desk or in the coatroom.

NO photography. The only exception for the public is the Discovery Center. (There may be some lenders who come in to take photographs and they have permission).
APPENDIX E

The subsequent material comes from the San Jose Museum of Art. It serves to explain the photography rules at the museum. This type of material often helps security guards or visitor service representatives do their job better, by offering a friendly explanation of why rules exist in the museum setting.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF ARTISTS

Taking photographs of art in the museum certainly seems like a natural thing to do, but in actuality, every photo taken infringes on the copyrights held by the artists, even those made strictly for personal enjoyment.

Artists, collectors, museums, and galleries take great care to insure that only the best possible reproductions of artworks are made to represent an artist’s body of work. Quality reproductions-and the legal rights to use them-play a critical role in helping artists achieve recognition and earn their living.

Please assist the museum in its respect of artists’ rights and refrain from taking photographs in the galleries. Thank you.
APPENDIX F

Excerpt from ASIS International
Suggested Guidelines in Museum Security

SECURITY OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications are presented as a guide only. While every effort should be made to recruit security officers who meet the qualifications provided, museums must be aware of various local, federal, and state laws which may limit their ability to utilize all of these guidelines. Discuss this with your attorney.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Level of Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Capability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to walk a patrol 8 hours a day</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold a heavy door open for minutes at a time</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place a person at least 100 pounds in a wheelchair</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climb steep stairs or a ladder</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/20 vision (or corrected to 20/40 with glasses)</td>
<td>Desirable (Mandatory if armed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear normal conversation (prosthetic acceptable)</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bend, stoop or work with hands above shoulder level</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk intelligently over a telephone or walkie</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
talkie and be understood by other members of the force

No assumptions, deformities or disabilities that would prevent satisfactory performance of duties  Mandatory

Present a neat, clean non-threatening appearance  Mandatory

Lift and operate safely 50 pound fire extinguisher  Mandatory

Lift a small child (50 pounds) and carry in a rescue  Mandatory

**Mental/Educational Capability**

High school diploma or equivalent  Mandatory

Read and understand written material in language of the security force  Mandatory

No history or presence of any significant psychiatric disorder  Mandatory

Emotionally stable  Mandatory

**Other capabilities**

No criminal conviction record indicating moral turpitude  Mandatory

No history of violent acts that would indicate the candidate would harm a visitor or employee  Mandatory

No history of child abuse/sexual abuse  Mandatory

Valid Driver’s License/safe record  Desirable (Mandatory if driving is required)

CPR qualified  Desirable

First Aid qualified  Desirable
Local or State Guard License or Certificate  Desirable

Pre-employment polygraph **where permitted**  Desirable
or pencil and paper test

Physical examination by physician  Desirable

Drug test  Desirable

At least 18 years of age  Mandatory
APPENDIX G:

Guggenheim New York Gallery Guide Job Description

Institution: Guggenheim Museum
City: New York
State: NY
Category: Educator
TITLE: Gallery Guide

DEPARTMENT: Security and Education

Overview:
The Gallery Guide serves as a knowledgeable Museum representative, responsible for the security and safety of artwork in the galleries and of visitors, and for helping Museum visitors engage with the art. S/he is trained and certified in compliance with New York State Certification regulations, and trained as a gallery educator to the standards of the Museum’s Education department. S/he is required to attend trainings in gallery techniques, exhibition content and security guard procedures. Performance will be evaluated jointly by the Security and Education departments.

RESPONSIBILITIES:
Provide security during public hours in accordance with established security procedures. Keep visitors at prescribed distances from artwork using educator techniques of engagement. Monitor the flow of visitors in the galleries and report any incident involving a visitor’s touching or damaging art work.

Provide for the safety of staff and visitors on the Museum’s premises during public and non-public hours. Assist with evacuation during emergencies. Report problems, suspicious activity and safety hazards to a Supervisor and/or Assistant Supervisor.

Encourage and answer questions from visitors about the current
exhibitions, the building, the Museum and its history.

Give walkthroughs to other Security staff of any new exhibitions.

Some overtime will be required.

REQUIREMENTS:

- BA/BFA in art history, museum education, studio art, or a related field required, prefer MA/MFA
- Interpersonal and communication skills, experience working with the public required
- Experience with art and security issues preferred
- Must qualify for the New York State Security Guard Certification; references required
- Bi-lingual skills helpful
- References required
PRODUCT

Museums who have been successful at revamping their security staff to coincide with a more visitor-friendly institution serve as models for museum professionals hoping to implement similar programs at their museums. Museum staff from three institutions that have created these programs through new job titles, uniforms, job descriptions, and training rituals will share their innovative approaches of this process. Speakers will come from the three departments which are key in the collaboration process essential for long term viability, including visitor services, security, and education. Museum professionals of all levels will be able to learn how to implement such elements as suited for their particular institutions.

Kristan McKinsey, VP of Collections and Exhibitions at the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences in Peoria, Illinois, Amy Corle, Visitor Services Manager of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and Les Borsay, Project Manager at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California share their stories, trials and tribulations, and innovative approaches in creating a new visitor-friendly guard. Additionally, speakers will be asked to include visuals of their security
guards, in order to best communicate what a visitor-friendly uniform might look like. Finally, having museum professionals speak about the feedback they may have received from visitors or staff regarding their visitor-friendly guards will conclude the session.

AAM Annual Meeting
Boston, MA
April 27 - May 1, 2006

SESSION PROPOSAL APPLICATION FORM

I. SESSION TITLE
Security Guards of the Future: Protecting and Providing Visitor Service

II. SESSION OVERVIEW

A. AUDIENCE

This conference session is geared for all levels of museum professionals. While the panelists come primarily from art museums, the presentation will be useful for museums of all sizes and disciplines who employ front end staff. Additionally, while my project coincides with looking at how collaborations between security, education, and visitor service staff are particularly successful in creating a visitor-friendly guard program, museum professionals from other departments can benefit from learning how collaborations in general are important in the museum setting.

B. FOCUS

This session focuses on implementing visitor-friendly security guard programs in U.S. art museums. Interview questions include:
What prompted the change from traditional security guards to a more visitor-friendly model?
What has been the biggest challenge with implementing visitor-friendly security staff?
How did you address this challenge? What advice would you provide others when dealing with challenges you may have encountered along the way?
What steps can audience members take at their institutions in order to create a visitor-friendly guard program?

C. OUTCOMES
Attendees will learn:
- Ideas for how to implement a visitor-friendly guard program at their museum
- Ideas for collaboration efforts with security guards, particularly between security, education, and visitor service departments
- The needs of security staff and other front end staff such as visitor service representatives, docents, and volunteers in order for them to best serve their visitors and ensure a positive museum experience
- Ways to measure progress of a visitor-friendly guard program through evaluation techniques such as visitor surveys and talkback boards

D. RELEVANCE
To coincide with the AAM’s 2006 theme of “exploring tomorrow’s museums,” the value of a visitor-friendly security guard needs to be addressed by the museum community. There are many challenges that museum professionals will encounter in the process and the conference session will help plan for those challenges before they are encountered. There are a number of institutions who have been successful in creating models of these programs and they have insights to share with the audience. Museum staff from three museums who have created visitor-friendly security personnel will share their stores and challenges.

III. SESSION SUMMARY
A. Description for the AAM website and final program:

Visitor-friendly security staff are vital in today’s visitor-centered museums. As the “faces of the museum,” it is important to ensure guards reflect the mission and goals of the institutions they protect. Therefore, the purpose of this conference session is to inform museum professionals what it takes to create a visitor-friendly guard and more importantly, why this new type of outlook on security is needed.

B. Description for the AAM preliminary program:

Kristan McKinsey from the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Amy Corle from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and Les Borsay from the J. Paul Getty Museum share their stories, challenges, and innovative approaches in creating visitor-friendly guard programs at their institutions.

IV. CHAIRPERSON

First Name: Lisa
Last Name: Bruemmer
Title: Student
Institution: John F. Kennedy University
Address: 101 Oakwood Lane
City/State/Zip: North Prairie, WI 53153
Telephone: 414-732-1535
E-mail: lisabruemmer@hotmail.com
Qualifications:
Lisa Bruemmer has been researching security guards for the last year as part of her fulfillment in obtaining a master’s degree from JFKU. A former guard at the Milwaukee Art Museum, Ms. Bruemmer is interested in showing museum professionals how essential visitor-friendly security staff are in order to coincide with a more visitor-centered museum experience.

Major points to be covered:
Facilitator of the session and interviewer for the three guest speakers, Ms. Bruemmer will provide a brief introduction and context for the
presentation. She will interview the three guest speakers and offer questions to be posed by audience members. She will ask questions regarding what prompted a visitor-friendly guard program at particular institutions, challenges faced in the wake of that, and innovative approaches guest speakers used and continue to use in ensuring visitor-friendly security staff.

V. PRESENTERS All presenters must be confirmed, and all information complete. Please photocopy this page if you have additional presenters.

**Total number of presenters, excluding chairperson(s):** 3

First Name: Kristan o Confirmed  
Last Name: McKinsey  
Title: Vice President of Exhibitions and Collections  
Institution: Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences  
Address: 1125 West Lake Avenue  
City/State/Zip: Peoria, IL 61614-5935  
Telephone: 309/686-7000 ext. 134  
Fax:  
E-mail: kristanm@lakeview-museum.org  
Qualifications: Kristan McKinsey is the Vice President of Collections and Exhibitions at the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences and has made a conscious effort in the last three of four years to bring her security staff to the level of “visitor-friendly” guards.

Major points to be covered: McKinsey believes that the guards are the public faces of her institution and will share how this philosophy created a detailed job description and training practices that guards can easily refer to when implementing museum rules. Additionally, the Lakeview Museum includes visitor-friendly uniforms and McKinsey can include how those affect the visitors to her museum.

First Name: Amy o Confirmed  
Last Name: Corle  
Title: Director of Visitor Services, Manager of Internal Marketing  
Institution: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago  
Address: 220 East Chicago Avenue
Amy Corle is the Director of Visitor Services and Manager of Internal Marketing at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. She has successfully implemented a visitor-friendly guard program, which was also featured in a 2001 *ArtNews* magazine article, “The Changing of the Guards.”

Major points to be covered:
As this article states, MOCA Chicago found that “the public had totally negative reactions” to the initial change from police-inspired uniforms to all black ones. They found the all black uniforms to be “completely imposing” so the museum “change them to casual khakis” and the complaints dropped off. Ms. Corle will further describe how she addressed this challenge and how her guards serve to be visitor-friendly in the contemporary art environment that is particularly difficult for visitors to comprehend at times.

Les Borsay is the Project Manager at the J. Paul Getty Museum and works with in-house gallery officers there on a regular basis to ensure they are well trained in visitor service practices as well as security.

Major points to be covered:
Mr. Borsay will touch on his belief that Getty officers have a sense of purpose because of the extensive training and educational opportunities the museum provides them. Mr. Borsay will provide audience members with ideas for implementing visitor-friendly and well-trained security staff at their institutions.
VI. CONTENT  
(Check only one in each category)

A. LENGTH  
☐ Double Session (150 min.)

B. FORMAT  
☐ Panel Discussion

C. TYPE  
☐ Best Practice

C. LOGISTICAL SET-UP  
☐ Theater-style

D. SUBJECT  
☐ Communications

☐ (Please check) By submitting a session proposal, I agree to fulfill the expectations in the Session Chairperson Agreement. Failure to fulfill these expectations will jeopardize your acceptance as a session chairperson or presenter at future AAM annual meetings.