Mayor Speaks at Festival of International Students

On October 14, 2016, the Penn Museum continued its 47-year tradition of hosting a free, Museum-wide reception for the region’s international students and scholars at the Festival of International Students. More than 800 guests from all over the globe mingled in the Penn Museum galleries to celebrate the talents and cultural diversity that international students bring to the Philadelphia area. The Museum’s International Classroom program teamed with the Academic Engagement Department to host this unforgettable evening, with lead sponsorship from the Penn Language Center and Penn Global. Campus Philly and Global Philadelphia helped to publicize the event among their networks.

Participants enjoyed global music and dance performances, networking opportunities, and the chance to win prizes from several local institutions. Interactive information tables offered fun activities to learn about different cultures. Among the special guests were Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and Consular Corps of Philadelphia President Peter Longstreth.

Museum Partners with Philadelphia Museum of Art

While the Penn Museum and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) have shared both objects and professional relationships over the years, the PMA exhibition *Creative Africa* marked the first time that the museums partnered on K-12 education programs and school resources. The Learning Programs Department initially invited PMA education staff to tour the Penn Museum’s Africa and Imagine Africa Galleries and to hear a talk by the Keeper of our African collection, Dwaune Latimer.

In June 2016, we co-hosted a teacher professional development program in the PMA’s Perelman Building for 37 local educators. The PMA offered a talk by Project Coordinator John Vick titled “Look Again: Contemporary Perspectives on African Art,” while the Penn Museum allowed teachers to study and touch African artifacts in the Penn Museum’s teaching collection. Our International Classroom cultural program invited Kenyan Beatrice Bolger to present a lesson about East African textiles, and teachers were able to make their own paper *kangas* (traditional East African garments). We also provided similar activities during the PMA’s Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) program and during their African-themed homeschool day. This partnership marks the beginning of more collaboration in the future.
Chinese Students Learn about Museums

For four weeks this past summer, 39 Chinese undergraduates from Jiangsu province took part in the Museum’s second intensive summer program (the JESIE program) in museum careers. The program, named “Discovering the Museum,” was designed to give students a well-rounded understanding of museums and arts administration. It featured presentations by a wide range of Museum personnel on topics ranging from conservation to public programming. Chinese students from Penn’s Graduate School of Education assisted with the classes.

Museum Staff Presents at Conference

Celebrating its 71st year, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums hosted its annual conference in Wilmington, Delaware with the theme “Museums Exposed: Real Issues, Real Talk.” Nine Penn Museum staff presented at the conference: American Section Curator and Senior Keeper Lucy Fowler Williams, Ph.D. and Education Programs Manager Kevin Schott, along with Lenni-Le-nape consultant Tina Fragoso, spoke about collaborative approaches for exhibitions and programs featuring Native American material; Public Programs Manager Jenn Reifsteck presented on programs that attract millennial audiences; Ellen Owens, Merle-Smith Director of Learning Programs, and Emily Hirshorn, GRoW Annenberg Program Manager, discussed best practices for offering education programs to Title I schools.

Finally, Owens, along with Diversity Manager Hitomi Yoshida, Outreach Manager Allyson Mitchell, and Research Liaison Sarah Linn, closed the conference with a session about activating museum collections with 21st century learning skills.

Encouraging Local Students to Engage with History

Each year, thousands of Philadelphia middle and high school students participate in National History Day, a national program that helps students develop critical thinking, research, reading, and communication skills. Students prepare original projects using primary sources and compete in local contests, with the winners advancing to state and national competitions. This year’s theme is “Taking a Stand in History.” Students gain experience conducting historical research and analysis and produce a documentary, exhibit, essay, performance, or website.

The Penn Museum helped with professional development for teachers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, demonstrating how our resources, including the new Digital Penn Museum, can be used for student projects. In February, the National History Day volunteer judges will come to the Museum to learn how to provide critical feedback to participating students.

RIGHT: Photograph by Richard Gouldey, courtesy of Philadelphia Department of Records.