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## **RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES OF ARTS ENTREPRENEURS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NORTH CAROLINA HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

To address the call for examination of academic and professional approaches to arts entrepreneurship, we summarize the academic arts entrepreneurship programs in the State of North Carolina and conduct a pilot study with data gathered from arts entrepreneurs who attended the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. Our review of the descriptive data reveals that arts entrepreneurs face a variety of needs and challenges, which are psychological (e.g., peer support) as well as technical (e.g., start-up skills). These findings suggest that, as prior literature stresses, arts entrepreneurship education programs should entail both the “entrepreneurship mindset” aspect and the “venture creation” aspect, so we advocate a holistic approach that combines both these perspectives with other related courses. We conclude, based on our exploratory study, that collaborative and flexible approaches, such as cross-campus programs for arts entrepreneurship education in higher education, could have beneficial outcomes for art entrepreneurs. Implications for future research are discussed.

### **Introduction**

While scholarly discussions linking arts to entrepreneurship are nothing new (e.g., Adler, 2006; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001), arts entrepreneurship has emerged as a distinctive field encompassing diverse disciplinary inputs in higher education. In part because of its promise to address “employability” issues of artists (Pollard & Wilson, 2014), the field of arts entrepreneurship has begun attracting attention from scholars and educators in a wide range of disciplines, such as performing arts, visual arts, and literacy, as well as business entrepreneurship. As a result, despite a relatively short history of this field, recent years have witnessed a “movement” (Druckenbrod, 2009) toward the expansion of arts entrepreneurship education through the collective efforts of scholars, educators, and practitioners (Beckman & Essig, 2012).

As the field is evolving, we believe it is time to reflect on Beckman's (2007) question about the effectiveness of arts entrepreneurship education. Effectiveness in education is conceived of as a multidimensional concept, entailing learners' educational satisfaction and their academic, career and personal development (Cameron, 1978). In other words, the effectiveness of arts entrepreneurship education is explicated by the extent to which arts entrepreneurship educational programs address and meet students' needs in terms of their professional, as well as academic, development. The first challenge for all arts entrepreneurship educators and scholars who seek to design appropriate content and methods lies in defining the concept of arts entrepreneurship (Brown, 2005; Pollard & Wilson, 2014). A second challenge is to consider the wide range of artists and their various needs in developing and promoting their entrepreneurial efforts (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). A third challenge is to define the various educational approaches and models that may be appropriately designed to meet artists' expressed needs for both academic and professional development (Essig, 2013). Once the first three challenges are in large part met, perhaps the most difficult fourth challenge is to

measure the effectiveness over time of the education and training provided in different arts entrepreneurship educational models. Welsh and Tullar (2013) have provided some beginning evidence for assessing entrepreneurship across campuses in their entrepreneurial propensity scale. This paper is an effort to consider the first three challenges, and trusts others will address the fourth in future publications and build on the work of Welsh and Tullar (2013) in assessing cross-disciplinary entrepreneurship, particularly arts entrepreneurship.

As do the fields of nonprofit management (O'Neill, 2007) and social entrepreneurship (Choi & Majumdar, 2014), the field of arts entrepreneurship suffers from the contested nature of key concepts, processes, and goals (Hong, Essig, & Bridgstock, 2012). The "commercial" approach of business entrepreneurship connotes a negative view toward arts education and as such is a controversial topic (Bridgstock, 2012). Artists and musicians fear that entrepreneurship education may result in jeopardizing their mission, creativity, and artistic quality. As DiMaggio (1991), among others, argues, the tension between "arts" and "business" can be heightened in entrepreneurial processes. At the same time, artists are constantly struggling to establish their professional careers within a shifting context that seeks to respond to changes in funding, governance, and competition (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). For instance, in the 1980s during the Reagan administration's budget cuts in non-market programs, including the arts (Hall, 2001), artists were forced to obtain sophisticated management and entrepreneurial skills for their survival (Salamon, 1987). More recently, the economic downturn of the Great Recession resulted in large reductions to what were considered "non-essential" programs in the arts as donors and government funders not only saw reduced revenues, but also sought to alleviate the harmful effects of the Recession on social programs. Given this complex environment, developing appropriate educational programs for arts entrepreneurs necessitates a deep understanding of the needs and challenges artists face.

To explore appropriate educational programs in arts entrepreneurship, the first issue of *Artivate* directs us back to the core principle of this field; it reminds us that the fruit of artists' endeavors is aesthetic. Thus, "our prefix separates us from the business school and our suffix separates us from the arts school" (Beckman & Essig, 2012, p. 1). With this principle in mind, educators have explored multiple approaches to teaching arts entrepreneurship. One approach focuses on "New Venture Creation" while the other approach focuses on "Habits of Mind" or "Entrepreneurial Mindset" (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Beckman, 2007; Essig, 2013; Pollard & Wilson, 2014). Other scholars emphasize that artists can pick up entrepreneurial mindsets anywhere and focus on skill-building that includes New Venture Creation, but goes beyond the basics to other important topics, such as Entrepreneurial Marketing, Entrepreneurial Finance, and Law for Entrepreneurs (Welsh, 2014). Many artists have already established their businesses when they realize they need entrepreneurial business skills beyond starting the business and creating a feasibility and business plan. This is a more comprehensive or holistic approach to arts education that provides lifelong skills for the artist (Welsh, 2014). As a first step, our study answers the call by Essig (2013) to examine the approaches to learning for arts entrepreneurs from an academic perspective in one state, North Carolina, and from a professional development perspective by reporting the results of our survey conducted at a major conference in the same state. Thus, our study, although limited, begins to examine both the academic and professional needs of artists and how they are being met.

### **Arts and Entrepreneurship in North Carolina**

North Carolina is an interesting place to study the issues surrounding artists' needs and

arts entrepreneurship education for several reasons. First, North Carolina has a vibrant artistic community with a nationally competitive employment market for visual artists (including designers and photographers) and musicians (North Carolina Arts Council, 2012). The number of jobs in the artistic and creative fields in North Carolina increased by more than 8 percent between 2006 and 2011 to 137,225 total creative jobs, generating over \$12 billion in wages, salaries and benefits – \$2 billion more than the impact in the previous four years (North Carolina Arts Council, 2013). Second, as Table 1 presents, North Carolina is home to long-standing university-based, innovative arts entrepreneurship programs. Not only are many students graduating with arts education degrees, they also have further access to arts entrepreneurship programs offered throughout the state. Third, our decision to conduct a pilot study in North Carolina is also convenient; the study authors are based in the state. One co-author of this article, Dianne Welsh, has established a close relationship with a local community of artists and entrepreneurs throughout North Carolina and the Southeast region of the United States that allows us to obtain critical insights into the everyday working life of artists and their businesses. See Table 1.

At the same time, from a broader perspective, earnings of artists in North Carolina have lagged behind the national average. According to the National Endowment for the Arts' data compiled from U.S. Census, 26.2 percent of artists in North Carolina versus 2.3 percent of artists nationwide earned less than \$15,000. Conversely, the percentage of artists with higher earnings (\$100,000 to \$124,999, \$125,000 or more) is lower in North Carolina than the national average (National Endowment for the Arts, n.d.). Arts entrepreneurship has been attracting growing attention due to the possibilities it affords to address graduate employability issues (Pollard & Wilson, 2014). Therefore, while earnings alone do not represent “success” in an artistic career, it is one important indicator. This data on artists' economic conditions indicates that, despite North Carolina's rich history and resources in the arts and entrepreneurship, there appear to be serious unmet needs for arts entrepreneurs.

### **Cross-campus entrepreneurship programs: A Comprehensive Approach**

We advocate a blended approach that combines the particular business discipline applied to art in a course. This way, the learning is both blended and applied (Welsh, 2014). This solves the problem that Beckman and Essig (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Essig, 2013) discuss: that arts entrepreneurship education is not just about the “how to” of venture creation, the heart of arts entrepreneurship is about our deep understanding about artistic creativity and imagination. This is encompassed in cross-disciplinary programs. While these programs are more complex and there are the ever-present resource constraint issues in higher education, the blending of the business discipline applied with art offers the most promise for artists to not just survive, but be successful. Facing these challenges, we believe that cross-campus programs, such as those at North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, are effective methods to teach the complexity of arts entrepreneurship.

Table 1. University-Based Programs for Arts Entrepreneurship in North Carolina

University and Location (main URL)	Type	Program/ Department and Degree Level	Class Format	Examples of Courses Offered
<b>North Carolina State University</b> Raleigh, NC  ( <a href="http://oucc.ncsu.edu/minors/arts-entrepreneurship">http://oucc.ncsu.edu/minors/arts-entrepreneurship</a> )	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Department - Arts Entrepreneurship Minor</li> <li>• Undergraduate</li> </ul>	Offered primarily on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundations in Arts Entrepreneurship (EMA 365)</li> <li>• Practical Arts Entrepreneurship (EMA 370)</li> <li>• Understanding the Arts Economies (EMA 375)</li> <li>• Capstone Experience in Arts Entrepreneurship (EMA 430)</li> </ul>
<b>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</b> Chapel Hill, NC  ( <a href="http://www.unceminor.org/about/requirement">http://www.unceminor.org/about/requirement</a> )	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School of Business - Entrepreneurship Minor (Artistic Track)</li> <li>• Undergraduate</li> </ul>	Offered primarily on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic Venture Creation (ECON 327)</li> </ul>
<b>University of North Carolina at Greensboro</b> Greensboro, NC  ( <a href="http://entrepreneurship.uncg.edu">http://entrepreneurship.uncg.edu</a> )	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business and Economics - Entrepreneurship Minor and Major (Creative Industries Profile )</li> <li>• Cross listing courses with other programs (e.g., School of Music, Theater and Dance; Department of Interior Architecture; Department of Media Studies; Department of English)</li> <li>• Undergraduate and Graduate</li> </ul>	Offered primarily on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Space: The Meeting of Art and Entrepreneurship (ENT/ART 276)</li> <li>• Creativity, Design, and Entrepreneurship (ENT/IAR 321)</li> <li>• Advanced Studio Practicum: Art and Entrepreneurship (ENT/ART 394)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship in Music (ENT/MUP 402)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship Practicum in Apparel and Consumer Retailing (ENT/CRS 421)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship in Apparel and Design (ENT/CRS 431)</li> <li>• Career Management for Dance and Performing Artists (ENT/DCE 455)</li> <li>• Multimedia for Social Entrepreneurship and Civic Engagement (ENT/MST 320)</li> <li>• Media Financing and Distribution (MST 524)</li> <li>• Media Organization and Management (MST 524)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship and Independent Press Publishing (ENT/ENG 535)</li> <li>• Theatre Management (THR 584)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial Career Development in Music (ENT/MUP 661)</li> </ul>
<b>University of North Carolina School of the Arts</b> Winston Salem, NC  ( <a href="http://www.uncsa.edu/vcprovost/bulletin/2014/UG/2014UGcompletebulletin.pdf">http://www.uncsa.edu/vcprovost/bulletin/2014/UG/2014UGcompletebulletin.pdf</a> )	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School of Music</li> <li>• Undergraduate</li> </ul>	Offered primarily on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Development Seminar: Music Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• (The School also offers a Performing Arts Management Program through the School of Design &amp; Production)</li> </ul>

<b>University of North Carolina Pembroke</b> Pembroke, NC  ( <a href="http://www.uncp.edu/academic/s/colleges-schools-departments/departments/art-degrees/art-entrepreneurship-certificate">http://www.uncp.edu/academic/s/colleges-schools-departments/departments/art-degrees/art-entrepreneurship-certificate</a> )	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Art - Arts Entrepreneurship Certificate Program</li> </ul>	Offered primarily on campus	(The detailed course information not available)
<b>Wake Forest University</b> Winston Salem, NC  ( <a href="https://entrepreneurship.wfu.edu/academics/ese-minor">https://entrepreneurship.wfu.edu/academics/ese-minor</a> )	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School of Business - Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Minor</li> <li>Undergraduate and Graduate</li> </ul>	Offered primarily on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creativity and Innovation (ESE 100)</li> <li>Foundations of Entrepreneurship (ESE 101)</li> <li>Managing the Entrepreneurial Venture: Start-up to Early Growth (ESE 205)</li> <li>Creativity and Innovation (ESE 100)</li> <li>Entrepreneurship (BEM 377)</li> <li>Arts Entrepreneurship (ESE 310)</li> <li>Nonprofit Arts and Education Entrepreneurship: Promotion of Latin American and Latino Visual Cultures (ESE315)</li> </ul>

Table 1. University-Based Programs for Arts Entrepreneurship in North Carolina

As Essig (2013) stresses, three pedagogic techniques—mentorship, collaborative team projects, and experiential learning through incubated venture creation—are vital to effective methods to teach arts entrepreneurship. In particular, collaborative and experiential learning in a heterogeneous environment is highly effective in helping students develop innovative ideas (Essig, 2013). There are a number of ways that this can be achieved pedagogically, one of which is the cross-disciplinary approach. As such, classes blend the particular discipline (e.g., music, architecture, dance, or art) with entrepreneurship and apply the principles of entrepreneurship to real situations the artists face to be successful in their practice (Welsh, 2014). Another method is having the curriculum all in one place. Many institutions have curriculum and programming that encompass the whole of an arts college (e.g., Arizona State University) (Beckman & Essig, 2012). Often classes are cross-listed between the particular arts discipline and entrepreneurship so they can count towards an entrepreneurship minor or major in the business school as well as the arts major (Welsh, 2014). The cross-disciplinary minor is more common in this regard due to the time constraints of arts students and the skill sets needed for their arts career being covered adequately in a minor (Welsh, 2014). Another variation, besides a cross-disciplinary minor open to all majors, is a specific Arts Entrepreneurship minor that solely focuses on arts entrepreneurship courses. Still another method that some schools have chosen (e.g., UW-Madison) is to grow an arts entrepreneurship or arts enterprise focus from within a business school (Beckman & Essig, 2012). This goes along with Kuratko's (2005) study which found that entrepreneurship education in United States has exploded to more than 2,200 courses at over 1,600 business schools. Considering this, collaboration with business schools seems promising for the advancement of arts entrepreneurship education.

Cross-campus approaches are a major part of the arts entrepreneurship programs at North Carolina State University (NCSU) and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG).

NCSU's Arts Entrepreneurship minor is the nation's first cross-campus arts entrepreneurship program heralding out of the music school, according to their brochure (NCSU, n.d.-a). The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, under the direction of Dianne H.B. Welsh, has the largest cross-campus entrepreneurship program in the state of North Carolina and the largest for a school with its size in stature in the United States. The Entrepreneurship Cross-Disciplinary Program<sup>1</sup> encompasses 47 courses in 26 departments or programs since its founding six years ago. It includes one of its seven profiles or areas of specialization, a Creative Industries Profile, within the minor and major in Entrepreneurship, offered out of the Bryan School of Business & Economics. Currently, 11 courses are listed under the Creative Industries profile that students can choose from in the Entrepreneurship Cross-Disciplinary Program (UNCG, n.d.), including Music, Art, Interior Architecture, Media Studies, Dance, Theatre, Consumer and Retail Studies, and English. The classes are taught by professors in the discipline that are taught Entrepreneurship through the Coleman Entrepreneurship Fellows Program and the Director, as well as working one-on-one with the Hayes Chair in Entrepreneurship. UNCG's Entrepreneurship Cross-Disciplinary Program has been widely recognized and won six major national and international awards since its inception in 2009.

Another variation of cross-campus or interdisciplinary programs can be found in the expanding nonprofit programs. While the focus of much of the discussion here has been on artists' self-employment, many artists choose to affiliate themselves with collaborative work in nonprofit agencies, gain funding from local foundations, or obtain government grants. These opportunities are perhaps better understood by having at least some understanding of the nonprofit sector, as well as the entrepreneurial mindset and skills required for success in both self-employment and in nonprofit work. In particular, courses in social entrepreneurship have become popular and appropriate for artists who wish to promote not only their creativity, but also serve the needs of their communities or specific populations. Navigating the world of government and foundation funding, gaining access to partnerships with existing nonprofit agencies, or collaborating with other artists requires a somewhat different skill set than that traditionally offered in standard entrepreneurship courses. Nonprofit programs, such as the existing post-baccalaureate Nonprofit Management Certificate at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, have the potential to add material not found in most entrepreneurship programs—e.g., nonprofit management, philanthropy, nonprofit financial management, grant writing, strategic planning, nonprofit law<sup>2</sup>. Other programs in North Carolina universities (NCSU and UNC Charlotte) also offer similar courses and certificates that reach out to practicing artists and others who need this kind of training and education. UNCG's option of completing the program completely online on a part-time basis offers greater flexibility to artists who have limited time and financial resources.

Additional coverage of these nonprofit subjects outside of formal certificate or degree programs are beginning to be offered by nonprofit institutes, centers, and continuing education programs in many universities, though few are marketed explicitly toward the artist entrepreneur. Some are in the form of workshops or institutes, which are affordable, require little commitment, and give artists a local network of potential collaborators or contacts. The advantage over a full degree or certificate is that artists can typically select only those topics or workshops that they need, rather than a full program with coverage of materials they may not see as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://entrepreneurship.uncg.edu>

<sup>2</sup> [www.uncg.edu/psc/mpa](http://www.uncg.edu/psc/mpa)

Nonetheless, for artists, the often unintended, but valuable, consequence of taking courses or workshops with other participants in the nonprofit sector is that they will gain a broader perspective and may become more flexible in furthering their careers in programs with existing agencies.

From the standpoint of the “Habits of Mind” approach (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Essig, 2013), cross-campus and cross-disciplinary opportunities beyond the business school base are critical. These opportunities may also be developed to build artists’ careers, such as in Fine Arts degrees and nonprofit studies. MFA and BFA programs are increasingly developing their own courses in arts entrepreneurship that may add significant value for their students. However, many of those in North Carolina universities, such as those cited above, appear to be confined to single disciplines, such as in Music Schools or Art majors, with only suggested outside electives in management or entrepreneurship. Given the reality of budget cuts and fewer resources, we recommend more concerted efforts toward cross-campus arts entrepreneurship minors, certificates, and perhaps majors. This could contribute toward cross-fertilization among artists who otherwise tend to focus solely on their own arts program in theatre, dance, music, literature, and film. In fact, the graduate certificate in Entrepreneurship was open to any major, and included nonprofit management and law classes, now serves as a model for other institutions. Unfortunately, the certificate is no longer available due to budget cuts. The value of studies beyond disciplinary boundaries may have the added benefits of increasing the creative expression of students, as well as providing them with a rich network of contacts beyond a single major or degree that are likely to extend past graduation.

### **Future for Cross-Campus Programs for Arts Entrepreneurship**

While there is no official count of cross-campus programs in the United States or around the world, it is evident that cross-disciplinary programs continue to flourish in various forms unique to the college or university. Conferences have been developed out of many academic programs to encourage working artists to attend if they cannot take university classes (e.g., North Central College, Drury University, St. Olaf’s College). The Self-Employment in the Arts Conference<sup>3</sup> has both an annual conference and regional conferences, including the Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference<sup>4</sup> at which we conducted our survey. Welsh’s upcoming publication (2014) provides insights into the support for and development of cross-campus programs. The Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers sponsors an Award for Exceptional Activities in Entrepreneurship across Disciplines, the only one that focuses on cross-disciplinary efforts. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation first funded interdisciplinary initiatives around the country at 19 colleges and universities in 2003, called the “Kauffman Campuses” program (Kauffman Foundation, 2012). Most of these Kauffman campuses still have cross-disciplinary entrepreneurship courses available to their students and a minor in Entrepreneurship.

In the last five years, the Coleman Foundation has sponsored the Entrepreneurship Fellows Program, focused solely on cross-campus entrepreneurship course development outside the business school curriculum. Professors across campus are trained in entrepreneurship and how to blend entrepreneurship concepts and practices with their discipline in the courses they teach. The Coleman Foundation has a summit for both new and veteran fellows each year,

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<sup>3</sup> [www.selfemploymentinthearts.com](http://www.selfemploymentinthearts.com)

<sup>4</sup> <http://seac/uncg.edu>

where they are provided training by seasoned directors of the program and the program's founder, Joseph Roberts<sup>5</sup>. The individual campus directors then continue the training and mentoring throughout the year on college campuses. So far, 250 faculty members at 20 colleges and universities from across disciplines have been engaged, resulting in new or revised cross-disciplinary courses that blend entrepreneurship with the specific discipline taught by each professor outside the business school. Each course must emphasize self-employment, but each college is allowed to develop their own model for cross-disciplinary entrepreneurship that fits their campus. The focus on self-employment is particularly applicable to the arts, where many artists are self-employed in their own businesses. Cooperatives do exist among artist entrepreneurs, but are less common in the United States compared to other parts of the world, such as Europe.

### **Pilot Survey on Arts Entrepreneurship**

Arts entrepreneurship is an emerging, yet growing, field that lacks empirical studies (Katz, 2008). Our exploratory study, therefore, addresses the call for empirical studies in arts entrepreneurship, with a specific objective to identify the needs and challenges of the arts entrepreneurs that attended the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina in February 2014. We ask what challenges artists are facing and what programs and resources do they conceive of as urgent needs for their professional career advancement.

We present data from our survey with the conference participants, and identify the major challenges and the needs the respondents seek to fulfill through services and programs offered by higher education. Our limited findings and conclusions lead us to recommend collaborative and flexible approaches to arts entrepreneurship education, as discussed earlier in the article. Since our survey had a limited sample, this study is highly exploratory and we cannot draw any implications for arts entrepreneurship education in a larger context. Nonetheless, surveys conducted of artist entrepreneurs are limited and we believe that our findings provide arts entrepreneurship educators and scholars with important insights and a "reality check" on the current needs of arts entrepreneurs and help us develop future programs that will meet their needs.

### **Data and Methods**

Given the needs of artists' employment and professional career advancement in North Carolina, this exploratory article is based on our survey study conducted at the Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference in February 2014. The subsequent sections detail this survey study, in particular the survey site, data collection methods, and data analytical methods.

**The Survey Site.** To obtain data illustrating the current state and needs of artists for advancement of their professional careers, we chose to survey participating artists at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference held on February 22, 2014, on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro located in the Piedmont Triad. While we were aware that our convenient sample was small and likely to be biased, the main rationale behind our sample selection lies in the fact that participants were artists actively seeking information and resources about arts entrepreneurship to advance their professional careers.

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<sup>5</sup> Editor's note: Joseph Roberts is a co-editor of *Artivate*.

Thus, we expected the conference participants to provide as many important insights as possible for our study, i.e., the challenges artists were facing in their career development and educational programs, and resources they needed from higher educational institutions. Second, we also chose the Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference as a main site for our data collection due to the scale of this conference. Dr. Dianne H.B. Welsh founded the conference in 2009 after starting a similar conference in Tampa/St. Petersburg in 2007, and creating the curriculum in business and entrepreneurship for the Ringling School of Art and Design, “The Business of Art and Design.” This conference is the largest event for both entrepreneurs and artists in the southeastern United States, and attracted what is likely the largest pool of audience members who are entrepreneurs and artists in our target area. Artists have attended from as far away as Pennsylvania and Florida. Further, prior empirical studies suffered from a very low rate of survey responses from the arts and cultural field. For example, one study by Morris, Coombes, Schindehutte, & Allen (2007) had a 21 percent return rate. The scale of this conference allowed us to collect responses from a large number of individual artists, whom would be extremely difficult to reach otherwise.

**Data Collection Methods.** Our survey instrument intended to identify the major challenges and needs of artists in their professional and entrepreneurial careers. Considering a relatively nascent state of research on arts entrepreneurship (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Pollard & Wilson, 2014), qualitative and exploratory research is more appropriate and effective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, we highlighted the exploratory nature of this pilot study and utilized primarily open-ended questions in our survey questionnaire, responses which were reviewed via content analysis. Our survey questionnaire consisted of six questions, three of which asked our intended survey respondents about challenges and needs that they are facing, as well as methods they used previously, in career advancement. More specifically, we asked: “How have you been advancing your professional career?” “What are major challenges that you are facing in your career advancement?” and “What training programs or resources do you need to advance your professional career?” The question of “How have you been advancing your professional career?” offered respondents a set of multiple choice answers: “Took entrepreneurship course,” “Took nonprofit management course,” “Attended the previous Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference,” “Attended other conferences or workshops,” and/or “Other”. The questionnaire also had a question about the respondents’ interest in participating in our future research on arts entrepreneurship.

A survey questionnaire was distributed to all conference participants when they checked in at the conference. Descriptive open-ended questionnaires require more time and effort on the part of survey respondents. To maintain an acceptable response rate, we followed suggestions from Dillman, Smyth, & Christian (2009) about “providing extra motivation” to the conference participants. For instance, the conference’s founder, Dr. Welsh, announced the importance of this survey and our plans to tailor future arts entrepreneurship programs to meet their needs. We received 119 responses from the 288 attendees on the same date, a response rate of 41 percent. A typical response rate ranges from 26 to 50 percent in the nonprofit context (Hager, Wilson, Pollak, & Rooney, 2003). Our response rate was higher than the average response rate ranges.

**Data Analysis Methods.** After the conference, separate content analysis on the gathered responses was conducted by two coders for the purpose of validity (Krippendorff, 2012). Content analysis is a methodology that reliably develops measures to interpret textual material

(Krippendorff, 2004) that in the last decade has been increasingly used in management studies (Duriiau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007). The objective of our content analysis was to identify recurrent themes in respondents' answers, from which we determined major challenges and needs that artists were facing in their professional career advancement.

### Survey Findings

The results summarized in the subsequent sections are based on the collected responses and the content analysis. While limited in scope to one major conference, we hope that the results of the survey give us a glimpse into artists' pragmatic needs from extant educational programs of arts entrepreneurship, regardless of whether those artists are practicing in the community or pursuing college degrees in the southeastern United States.

### Sample Characteristics

As depicted in Table 2, a wide range of fields and interests was represented in the sample. The total of 119 survey participants included artists in the following fields: visual arts (48 percent), performing arts (21 percent), literary arts (12 percent), and the remaining 12 percent divided among business, technology, and entrepreneurship. There were nine respondents who did not specify their fields. It should be noted that our sample included student artists from the host, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and other colleges in the state of North Carolina. We included these student artists in our dataset because they were formally or informally involved in arts-related programs and/or arts entrepreneurship and facing the same or even greater challenges to developing their careers as non-student artists. Our sample also included those who were from outside Greensboro, where the conference was held: of 288 conference attendees, 168 were from other areas. We did not differentiate the survey participants by location because their attendance of the conference suggested that these participants had access to resources provided by universities in North Carolina, including the host University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

**Table 2. Survey of Arts Entrepreneurs: Specialized Fields**

Fields	Examples	Response (%)
Visual	Graphic, painting, sculpture, photography, textile, fashion, film, media arts, illustration	62 (48%)
Performing	Music, dance, theater	27 (21%)
Literary	Creative writing, novel, poetry	16 (12%)
Other	Business, life coach	15 (12%)
No answer		9 (7%)

The number of responses does not equal the number of survey respondents (N=119) since some respondents reported more than one field as their specialization.

### Methods Previously Utilized for Professional Career Advancement

Our survey participants were also asked how they had been advancing their professional career. Our survey questionnaire lists the following methods: “Took entrepreneurship course,” “Took nonprofit management course,” “Attended the previous Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference,” “Attended other conferences or workshops,” and “Other.” As Table 3 shows, 34 respondents (29 percent) reported that they took an entrepreneurship class, whereas only six respondents (5 percent) took a nonprofit management course. One respondent took courses for a certificate in arts administration. The much larger number of respondents who took entrepreneurship courses may be due to the many UNCG students who participated in the conference. Seventeen percent of respondents had attended the Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference in the past. The mission of the conference, a regional version of the Self-Employment in the Arts National Conference, is to present entrepreneurial strategies and resources for students and emerging artists to become self-supporting and successful in their careers. A related goal is to foster their ongoing development by creating networking opportunities among students and emerging artists, working artists, business professionals and community organizations (for a complete background of the conference, please see Welsh, 2014). Aside from university-based courses and conferences, artists have actively used the internet and social media, as well as on-the-job training (26 percent).

**Table 3. Methods Previously Utilized for Professional Career Advancement**

Methods	Examples	Response (%)
Took entrepreneurship course		34 (29%)
Took nonprofit management course		6 (5%)
Attended the precious SEA		20 (17%)
Attended other conferences		18 (15%)
Other		30 (26%)
No answer		9 (8%)

The number of responses does not equal the number of survey respondents (N=119) since some respondents reported more than one method.

SEA = Sothern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference.

### Major Challenges in Professional Career Advancement

Table 4 presents the four main recurrent themes within major challenges, which our content analysis identified in the survey responses along with illustrative quotes from our survey respondents. With respect to major challenges, the biggest group of respondents—36 percent of arts entrepreneurs (42 responses)—reported that a lack of start-up and other managerial skills and knowledge has hindered their professional career advancement in the artistic and creative fields. This result should not be surprising since our survey respondents sought out business and entrepreneurship skills by attending the Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference. Nevertheless, we believe this result warrants our attention because those who reported “a lack of money and financial resources” as the main challenge constituted a smaller group (25 percent) than the group reporting “a lack of start-up and other management skills” (36 percent) and the

second largest group reporting “a lack of confidence and non-financial support (26 percent). These results may be interpreted as an impact from pioneering arts entrepreneurship programs, in particular comprehensive programs that stress entrepreneurship and business skills. Our survey underscores that artists are familiar with, at least by name, a variety of business and management techniques such as marketing. Instead of concluding that money was the main challenge, these artists know that money should be obtained by utilizing various management skills effectively and efficiently.

The most interesting result was that “a lack of confidence and non-financial support” was identified as the second largest challenge according to our survey data (31 responses representing 26 percent). We see two different patterns in this group: internally and externally challenged people. First, the group that are internally challenged, i.e., artists’ own personality may not be best suited for entrepreneurial activities, such as an introvert personality. Second are those that are externally challenged with networks, i.e., due to the nature of their work, many artists struggle on their own without an adequate support system (e.g., finding my team or reliable people). Additionally, artists indicated that what they meant by networks was how to get inside them, for example how to approach a gallery to display their work. The results further suggest that even with increased knowledge about various business skills, artists still need to develop entrepreneurial skills.

Twenty-five percent of the survey respondents indicated a lack of financial resources, and 13 percent a lack of time as major obstacles in their career advancement. As Welsh has witnessed with artists with whom she has collaborated, many artists are working on their own instead of being affiliated with or forming an organization such as an Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Our survey results show that overall many artists are overwhelmed and struggling, alone without financial support and other forms of support. Many artists also take a second job to make ends meet (“managing artwork requests with independent projects and day-job,” a response to the question, “What are major challenges that you are facing in your career advancement?” from a visual artist). A response from an arts-major student reveals her struggle, “without money and time, it is very difficult for me to focus on my art” [emphasis in the original]. This response suggests that lack of money can undermine the quality of artistic work. As such, the lack of money and time has a negative effect on artists’ career advancement.

**Table 4. Major Challenges in Professional Career Advancement**

Recurrent Theme	Response (%)	Illustrative Quotations
A lack of start-up and other management skills	42 (36%)	“Getting started” “Taking an idea and acting on it” “Not knowing how to create a business model” “Lack of knowledge about contacting companies” “Marketing” “New technology” “Training in nonprofit management”
A lack of confidence and non-financial support	31 (26%)	“Finding direction” “Motivation” “Fear”

		“Introvert personality” “Overcoming personal obstacles” “Meet people in the creative entrepreneurship field” “Finding my team or reliable people”
A lack of financial resource	30 (25%)	“Money” “No income” “Tax information”
Time constraints	15 (13%)	“Time” “Time management” “Struggle from full-time employment to freelance”

N = 118

The number of responses does not equal the number of survey respondents (N=119) since some respondents reported more than one challenges or others did not provide their answers.

**Training Programs Needed for Professional Career Advancement**

Our survey questionnaire also asked artist respondents at the conference “What training programs or resources do you need to advance your professional career?” As displayed in Table 5, almost half the respondents (47 percent) identified the need for networking and peer support as the number one need among artist entrepreneurs.

Need for networking skills and peer support was followed by need for management programs and resources. This category was further classified into the following groups: ten respondents (20 percent) stressed that marketing help was their primary need. General business programs, including those for finance and running small business, came in second within programs and resources with nine respondents (13 percent). Eight respondents (11 percent) reported that they needed nonprofit management programs, such as grant writing training, board management, and start up of a nonprofit structured under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

Technology related resources and training were also among important programs for arts entrepreneurs. Eight respondents (11 percent) mentioned a wide range of technology training needs, including website development, software training, and social media. The remaining 4 percent asked for more conferences and events as important programs for their career advancement in the arts entrepreneurship.

**Table 5. Training Programs Needed for Professional Career Advancement**

Recurrent Theme	Response (%)	Illustrative Quotations
Networking	33 (47%)	
<i>Breakdown</i>		
<i>Networking</i>	27 (42%)	“Networking”
<i>Peer support</i>	6 (10%)	“Psychological resources for artists” “Support group of peers”

		“Mentoring”
Management	27 (38%)	
<i>Breakdown</i>		
Marketing	10 (14%)	“Marketing” “Arts marketing”
Business in general	9 (13%)	“General business knowledge” “Small business” “Finance” “Business knowledge”
Nonprofit management	8 (11%)	“Grant writing workshop” “Board and member” “Nonprofit management training” “Creating a 501(c)(3)”
Technology	8 (11%)	“Classes on technology” “Social media” “Website training”
Conferences and events	3 (4%)	“More conferences and events”

N = 71

The number of responses does not equal the number of survey respondents (N=119) since some respondents reported more than one program needs or others did not provide their answers.

### Discussion

To contribute to growing efforts to advance the field of arts entrepreneurship, we summarized the academic programs available to artist entrepreneurs as well as conducting a pilot study. Here we report descriptive data gathered from artists who attended the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. We then investigated major challenges to artists’ professional career advancement and particular programs that may meet their serious needs. Our analysis of survey findings confirmed that lack of managerial skills and knowledge is the biggest challenge. Our analysis also identified that a lack of confidence and non-financial support is another major challenge hampering artists’ professional careers. The urgency with this confidence issue was underscored by artists’ reports identifying non-financial support obtained from networking and peer encouragement as their largest need. Still, needs for management programs, including marketing and nonprofit management, came second as programs that artists are seeking for their professional careers. Our findings concerning the challenges faced, and which training programs are needed by artists confirm Beckman and Essig's (2012) point that effective educational programs of arts entrepreneurship should entail a comprehensive approach to arts entrepreneurship education.

In the remaining section, we reflect on how we can proceed with advancing arts entrepreneurship education based on these findings. The prior literature on arts entrepreneurship education has offered important implications concerning future directions. For instance, Essig (2013) suggests that main pedagogic methods for teaching artists the entrepreneurial habits of

mind are (1) mentorship, (2) collaborative team projects in heterogeneous settings, and (3) experiential learning through incubated venture creation. Pollard and Wilson (2014) elaborate five different, yet interconnecting, goals of teaching arts entrepreneurship; (1) the capacity to think creatively, strategically, analytically and reflectively, (2) confidence in one's abilities, (3) the ability to collaborate, (4) well-developed communication skills, and (5) an understanding of the current artistic context.

It should be noted that these methods and goals are highly relevant to what our survey respondents reported as their challenges and needs. They talked about how to approach opportunities as their major challenge-how to approach opportunities, such as a lack of confidence in approaching galleries and getting their foot in the door. They also indicated mentorship, networking, and collaboration as possible methods that will help them overcome these barriers. An overarching theme was their desire to learn and implement management skills and knowledge to be more entrepreneurial.

Based on these preliminary results, we advocate cross-campus programs as unique approaches to attain diverse goals in arts entrepreneurship education. We will also discuss other important considerations about collaborative and flexible educational programs for arts entrepreneurship.

### Conclusion

While this is still an exploratory study investigating arts entrepreneurship programs at the university level, we believe that insights from this pilot study inform us about the expressed needs of artists and educational opportunities for arts entrepreneurship. While we hope our limited pilot study is the first step toward more studies that gauge the effectiveness of arts education, we advocate a blended, holistic approach to arts education on the basis of our findings. We hope this may help to advance further conversations and research not only about artists' entrepreneurship training, but about the effectiveness of arts entrepreneurship programs that aim to help artists "not just survive, but to be successful." This phrase is what the founder of the Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference, Dianne Welsh, uses to describe why she started the conference. While additional national research on artists' training needs is necessary to extend this study, future efforts must also be undertaken to examine the results of their training. Program evaluations of existing and developing entrepreneurship programs can shed light on how satisfied artists are with various educational options, as well as examine how artists actually improve their skills and financial opportunities. Future studies could also focus on assessment of arts entrepreneurship curriculum both inside and outside the classroom.

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