

Grantee Name
Emerson College Dept Of Finance
Project Title
To support a national convening of Latina/o theater artists to establish a Latina/o Theater Commons
Project Progress and Successes
<p>In March, the Latino/a Theater Commons Steering Committee came to Boston for two days to begin planning the national convening, now scheduled for October 31-November 2, 2013 at Emerson College. Since then, the Steering Committee has been having full group conference calls every three weeks, and more frequent calls for each of the three subcommittees: programming, outreach, and fundraising. As of this writing, we have 76 confirmed confirmed convening attendees. We are working on the third draft of the convening agenda and plan to finalize it in the coming month. We have begun to secure matching funds, and are waiting to hear back from a number of promising asks. We have discovered, through research, that this gathering will be the largest of its kind for Latino/a theater artists since 1986!</p> <p>What has been most exciting, however, is the momentum that the Latino/a Theater Commons is generating within the Latino/a theater community. Not only is the steering committee deeply invested in creating this convening as a jumping off point for continued action and conversation, but artists outside of the original group are now also coming on board and lending their time, expertise, and passion to this project. At the recent TCG conference, there were three distinct Latino/a events: a meeting with the Teatro Alianza of North Texas Organizations about forming alliances locally and nationally, an official conference session on Latinos in Theater, and an informal lunch hosted by members of the Latino/a Theater Commons that were at the conference. On July 15th, the LATC hosted a one-day Encuentro for the Los Angeles Latino Theater Network. We hope that these efforts continue to multiply and reverberate as the convening comes closer.</p>
Challenges / Obstacles / Failures Encountered in the Project
<p>So far the biggest challenge for the Steering committee has been determining who gets invited to the convening, and how to address questions from those who have not been invited. While bringing 76 people seems like a lot, the reality is that there are scores more artists that should be a part of the conversation than there is room. The group has navigated this challenge thus far by paying close attention to demographics of the invitee list (region, career stage, artistic discipline, gender, independent artist or scholar or institutionally-affiliated) in an effort to make the participant group as diverse and inclusive as possible. In addition, the steering committee is working with HowlRound to make the convening virtual participation friendly through streaming on HowlRound TV, organizing watch-parties, and designing moments when those not "in the room" are made present to those who are.</p>
What was learned from these that might be of benefit to others?
<p>The value of face-to-face communication cannot be underestimated in building these kinds of events/movements. As soon as the Steering Committee had time together in person, the whole tenor of the endeavor changed. We have found that while there is value in emailing and in talking on the telephone, there is nothing better than in-person conversation to promote greater understanding, values alignment, and dispel misconceptions. The amount of buy-in and excitement that has been generated around the Latino/a theater commons is a testament to the hard work of the Steering Committee and the many hours they have</p>

committed thus far to having these conversations and making them a priority.

Links to relevant website(s) and/or project publications, reports, etc.

Cafe Onda on HowlRound: <http://howlround.com/cafe-onda>
Latino/a Theater Commons related HowlRound content to date:
<http://howlround.com/tags/latino-theater-commons>

If someone wishes to speak with your organization further about your project, would there be a willing contact? Y/N

If yes, please provide contact name and information for preferred method of contact (email, phone, etc).

Yes! Please contact Polly Carl via phone at 612-743-3278 or via email at polly@howlround.com.