



"Pachuquismo" performed by Vanessa Sanchez & La Mezcla, a Mellon Foundation-supported grantee. Photo: Beth LaBerge for KQED Arts.



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Director of Learning and Evaluation Mellon Foundation

New York, NY

The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom to be found there.

The Opportunity

The Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest funder in arts and culture and humanities in higher education. In 2020 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Foundation) adopted a new strategic direction as a social justice philanthropy. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom to be found there. Through its grants, the Foundation seeks to build just communities, enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. The new strategy prioritizes lifting the voices of artists, scholars, writers, curators, researchers, and cultural advocates who have often been ignored or even silenced.

As the focus of grant-making has shifted, so too has the desire to learn and evaluate the work in new and innovative ways that reflect the broad creative mandate of the Foundation. As a strategic priority, Mellon seeks to build a strong connection between the allocation of Foundation resources and the changes the Foundation hopes to see through its work. The Director of Learning and Evaluation is a new position reporting to the Executive Vice President of Programs. It has been created to drive this change.

The Director of Learning and Evaluation has a unique and compelling opportunity to help foster an organization-wide culture of learning and evaluation. The Director will usher in change in a collaborative fashion, acting as a thought partner to leadership and the Program team.

The new Director will emphasize interdisciplinary dialogue, imaginative use of learning and evaluation methods, creativity, and risk-taking. The Director will work closely with program staff to promote and support a culture that is hungry

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*Courtesy JAE, a Mellon Foundation grantee.
Credit: Olivia Moon Photography*



Students at Occidental College, a Mellon Foundation grantee. Photo courtesy of Occidental College.

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for information to assess programs, improve strategies, help both program staff and grantees learn and facilitate sharing those lessons with the broader public. As stated by one Foundation leader, “We want someone to help us understand grant-making real-time, not just retrospectively. We need dynamic and flexible evaluation in ways that have integrity but can be quickly responsive.”

The Organization

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, a New York-based not-for-profit corporation, was established in 1969 by the children of Andrew W. Mellon, and named in his honor. Ailsa Mellon Bruce’s Avalon Foundation, established in 1940, and the Old Dominion Foundation, established in 1941 by Paul Mellon, were consolidated to create the new organization.

In its first year, Mellon’s assets totaled \$273 million. By the end of 2020, the total endowment was approximately \$8.2 billion with annual grant-making of over \$400 million.

In 2018, Elizabeth Alexander became the 7th President of the Foundation. The Foundation developed a new strategic plan under her leadership in 2020, and established a social justice frame for the work of the Foundation. As the work has evolved, the staff has as well. Approximately one-half of the 150-person staff has joined in the last three years. The organization has been thoughtful and intentional in bridging old work with the new and creating an internal culture that reflects the social justice strategy. The team is comprised of continuous learners with insatiable curiosity. Their internal and external work is grounded in rigorous inquiry, dialogue, and reflection.

Mellon makes grants in four core program areas: Arts and Culture; Higher Learning; Humanities in

Place; and Public Knowledge. *In their unparalleled dynamism, the arts, culture, and humanities are invigorating forces; they draw strength from the ceaseless interplay among deep questions, deep knowledge, and deep joy, Mellon Foundation.* The Foundation has moved from what was historically a distanced relationship with arts, culture and humanity to one that is alive, responsive, and ever-evolving.

The Monuments Project highlights the transformative work of the Foundation. It is a \$250 million commitment to more accurately reflect the range and complexity of American stories in our monuments, to ensure multi-vocal participation in the shaping of our national commemorative landscape, and to deepen public engagement with this effort. One example of the Foundation's work is a grant to the Trust for the National Mall. The grant helped bring Artist Suzanne Firstenberg's temporary, monumental installation "In America: Remember" to fruition; each flag represented a life lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mandate

The Director of Learning and Evaluation will work with the leadership and Program teams to weave a thread of evaluation and learning throughout the Foundation's work and build the organization's capacity for strategic learning and evaluation around its grant-making portfolio. The Director will help the team articulate the change they seek and design proactive and integrated structures to support the work. Specifically, the Director will:

- Build learning and evaluation principles into Mellon's grant-making strategies
- Invest selectively in evaluations at the grant, Foundation, and field levels to assess change and identify the elements that led to that change.



*"In America: Remember," a temporary, monumental installation by artist Suzanne Firstenberg and hosted by The Trust for the National Mall, a Mellon Foundation grantee.
Photo: Robert Nickels/Getty Images.*

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A patron of The Jewish Museum, a Mellon Foundation grantee. Photo courtesy of the museum.

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The ideal candidate will have experience driving change at an organizational level in an inclusive fashion.

- Develop and support structures and opportunities for learning at the Foundation and in the field.

The Director has three interconnected main areas of responsibility:

- Building a Foundation culture of continuous learning and evaluation to drive overall Foundation and program strategy, to inform decision-making about grant areas, and to support field learning.
- Supporting continuous improvement of the Foundation’s strategy development and reviewing processes and tools to establish and strengthen foundation-wide frameworks for evaluation and learning.
- Collaborating with program teams in leading the Foundation’s grant programs, advising on the integration of evaluation and evaluative thinking into the work.

The Candidate

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished, collaborative, and consultative leader. The individual will have the following traits.

Professional experiences:

- Global and critical thinker with demonstrated ability to develop and implement programs that have impact and contribute to programmatic directions and priorities.
- Experience driving change at an organizational level in an inclusive fashion.
- Passion for building a learning culture.
- Mastery of both quantitative and qualitative methods, ability to determine the appropriate mix of methods to meet information needs,

strong analytical skills, and the capacity to effectively use research and evaluation.

- Solid knowledge of evaluation and learning as evidenced through established networks, publications, or recognized accomplishments.
- Skilled in organizational learning and organization development, especially learning as a team endeavor and distinguished in the development of learning programs.
- Capacity to effectively use research and evaluation for learning and strategy development purposes.
- Ability to translate concept to action.

Personal assets:

- A deep commitment to the core values and principles of the Foundation.
- High emotional intelligence and the ability to meet people where they are.
- Entrepreneurial spirit.
- Demonstrated ability to involve and work collaboratively and effectively with peers and all levels of staff in joint and shared efforts.
- Excellent communication skills, including oral, written, and group facilitation.
- Ability to represent Mellon to a variety of stakeholders and partners in credible and influential ways.
- Demonstrated risk-taking and flexibility, with a high tolerance for ambiguity.
- The highest level of personal and professional integrity and quality standards.
- Excellent judgment, flexibility, good humor, high energy level, modesty, and graciousness.



*Performance of "Wired" by Kinetic Light,
a Mellon Foundation grantee.
Photo: Kinetic Light*

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College graduates in a program for incarcerated learners. Photo courtesy of California State University, Los Angeles.

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The Relationships

The ED will report to and manage:

Reports to: Executive Vice President of Programs

Manages:

- Learning and Evaluation Team
- Library and Archives

The Location

The Mellon Foundation is located in New York City. The staff has returned to in-office work three days a week.

Salary Considerations

Mellon Foundation is committed to providing compensation that is competitive and equitable within the philanthropic sector. The estimated salary range for this role is \$225,000 - \$300,000. The amount of pay offered will be determined by a number of factors, including but not limited to qualifications, unique skills, credentials or experience that is expected to impact the candidate's contribution to the role. We will also consider market data as well as the Foundation's internal pay equity framework. Mellon offers a generous total reward package that provides base salary as well as a comprehensive benefits program.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

Mellon@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call **Crystal Stephens, Diane Westmore,**
or **Michelle Hall** at 404-262-7392.
