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Calarts

ATTN: Annabelle Baltierra

RE: Director of Annual Giving – Job Application/Christof Bove

Dear Annabelle,

Below is a transcript of a video-cast cover letter that I submitted for the job of Director of Annual Giving.

I look forward to the chance to discuss my application in greater detail with you.

Best,

Christof Bove

Good morning. I hope you all have a copy of today's agenda. I'm going to stick pretty closely to it. Let's jump in.

There are a number of ways in which we can make the Calarts Annual Giving Program more creative, effective and financially prosperous. Today, let's focus on one MAJOR way we can energize the Program.

The Calarts Annual Giving Program is missing a critical opportunity and, in terms of today's solicitation habits, an absolute necessity. This problem has two parts:

1. Calarts does not have a visually inspiring, easily accessible, widely broadcast Annual Giving Message;
2. Calarts is not OPTIMIZING current social media platforms to the financial advantage of the Giving Program.

Calarts is simply not utilizing today's best revenue-generating information, message and solicitation tools.

But there is good news: Calarts can address this issue, and it can do so before its institutional rivals do.

Let's break this challenge down further:

The Annual Giving Program needs a clear, integrated MESSAGE for donors.

The MESSAGE must be multi-media, but its primary form should be video.

The MESSAGE must get broadcast. To begin with, the media platforms would include: the Calarts website, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, the Calarts blog, and Twitter.

(Once The Calarts Giving Message is packaged and produced, it can of course grow across other platforms.)

Let's step back for a second and look at what Calarts does have at the moment for a publicly accessible Annual Giving message:

1. A few paragraphs on the Calarts website.
2. The annual phonathon.
3. The written, mailed donation request.

Until now, these have been effective tools. Today, however, they are not enough. Far more effective tools exist for soliciting and maintaining a vibrant, GROWING support for Calarts.

Let's put the problem in a slightly different way:

If I am an individual donor or a corporate executive in charge of giving, I have nowhere to go to EXPERIENCE The Calarts Giving Message.

Yes, I can surf around and pick up pieces of the Calarts experience. But I cannot find a simple, compelling VISUAL answer to the question: Why should I give to Calarts?

Not answering this question effectively and in a visually exciting way is our missed opportunity. This is an especially glaring omission for a school that nurtures and produces such amazing artistic talent.

Let's take a moment to look at the competition. Let's look at Rhode Island School of Design. What are they doing for their Giving Program?

As it turns out, not much more.

They have a 30 second video promotion on the school's website from Seth MacFarlane. In it he talks about why RISD is great place to learn. But this piece of video is not a properly executed Giving Message!

NYU, Art Center, Berkeley, etc. also lack a widely broadcast, energetic Giving Message.

Now let's turn back to the issue for Calarts.

What should Calarts do? How can the school really energize its Annual Giving Program?

Here's where we begin:

Create a clear, integrated MESSAGE about Giving to Calarts—parts of which can be shaped to target different giving entities—AND effectively broadcast that MESSAGE not willy-nilly but in a strategic manner across all appropriate social and media networks. This MESSAGE must be primarily a visual, video one that captures the EXCITEMENT of the Calarts Experience and makes people and corporations KNOW why they WANT to support this incredible learning experience.

In the simplest terms, this is a critical exercise in BRANDING the Annual Giving Program so that it raises more money, more effectively using new tools, and, at the same time, reinforces the LARGER MESSAGE about the health and vitality of the Calarts. Corporations and individuals alike have come to EXPECT the use of this kind of marketing message strategy. Calarts is significantly underperforming by not meeting this expectation.

Here's where we go:

In our next call, I will outline the details of how we should address this challenge. I will present preliminary answers to the following questions:

1. What would The Calarts Giving Message look like?
2. How should we broadcast The Message to current and potential donors?

The answer to the first will be the creative heavy-lifting. The answer to the second will involve a detailed marketing plan and roll-out schedule. It is critical to understand that I am NOT proposing a penny-ante Kickstarter-like campaign, but instead a properly produced capital initiative that optimizes The Calarts Giving Message for maximum financial return.

Before our next call you will also have a written, strategic plan to review. In it I will address your questions about not only creative production and message script, but also

budget, partnership with Alumni Affairs, student involvement, special events and inter-department and office Advancement strategies.

In other words, the new Calarts Giving Message must be in SYNC with the whole school and in SERVICE of the Calarts mission to nurture dynamic and diverse artistic expression.

At this point, why don't we open things up for discussion.