

You Do (Not) Belong Here

**A Game of Confidence
and the Lack Thereof**

by Michael Meinberg

Introduction

You Do (Not) Belong Here is a game of bureaucratic politics and socializing for four players. It requires a table, a printed copy of these rules, and a pile of six sided dice. If your group has insufficient dice, tokens can be used in their place.

Premise

You are a member of the advisory board for the New Bluewood Arts Center. Most of you are brand new, having been brought in by Terry Young to be new blood to the decision making process. This is your first meeting of the new board, and you have a great number of issues before you, and a limited amount of time to solve them. But there is the creeping doubt in the back of your head, do you really belong here? Do you have the skills and knowledge necessary to solve these issues?

Themes

Consent

If your group has preexisting procedures for handling consent and unwanted topics at the table, then please use those, as they will fit the flow of your interactions best.

If your group does not have such procedures, or if this is a group meeting for the first time, then it is recommended that you use a reactive consent system. The topics that come up in You Do (Not) Belong Here are unlikely to be directly triggering, but if that happens, then any player may call out an “X” and rewind the scene back to before the problematic content entered. No other player is allowed to ask why they chose to do this, and must abide by the decision of the player that called for an X.

If a player feels unable to continue playing for whatever reason, they may excuse themselves at any time, and either return or not, depending on if they feel like they continue playing after some time away.

The Board

Not-for-profit arts oriented organizations require a board to oversee their activities. In most cases, this board consists of a mix of professionals, both from the artistic medium of the organization and those that can offer useful services to the organization. The board often also includes members who are either major donors or who have connections with major donors. The major function of the board is to secure funding for operations, set top level planning, and to hire managers for the organization. The exact duties, limitations, and mission of the board is laid out in the organization’s charter, created at the organization’s founding.

Boards meet anywhere from weekly to twice a year, and typically range in size from four to seven members at any particular time.

Themes

The Arts Center

A lively Arts Center enriches the community to which it is attached, drawing both business and consumers to the downtown of the community, breathing fresh air into the crumbling infrastructure of decaying communities and ensuring that healthy ones remain vibrant. They can serve a variety of functions: providing exposure to developing artists in the community, bringing in art from outside, and providing a space for social functions. The balance between these three functions, as well as which artistic medium is given primacy, will depend on the charter of the Arts Center, the ideas of the board, and the needs of the community.

Instructions

Setup

Before everyone arrives, do the following:

- *Print out these rules in their entirety, and cut out the separate pages of the Handouts Section at the end.
- *Post the Content Warning page on an easily visible wall.
- *Place the character sheets in the center of the main playing table.
- *Place the Scenario Sheets underneath Terry Young's sheet.
- *Place the dice and/or tokens in a large pile to the side of the character sheets.

Before beginning play, do the following:

- *Have everyone choose a character to play. Anyone who brought snacks or drinks get priority in selecting characters and anyone who brought coffee gets top priority. If there is still disagreement over who gets which player, the host can decide who gets the desired character.
- *Whoever chooses to play as Terry Young gets the Scenario Sheets and the role of timekeeper for the upcoming scenarios.
- *Once everyone has selected a character, then distribute the dice. Each player gets an amount of die equal to their character's starting Confidence.
- *Take a moment to review the rules in the rest of this section.
- *Being playing!

Playing Scenarios

Play progresses through a series of scenarios, as laid out on the Scenario Sheets. Every game starts with the Introductions scenario and ends with the Closing Time scenario, both of which have special rules. Between these two scenarios, the group will deal with three Problem scenarios, where the four try to come to some consensus about an action to take with regards to the Arts Center.

At the start of each Scenario, Terry Young's player will read aloud the description at the top of the relevant Scenario Sheet, and then open up discussion amongst the table. The nature of this discussion and the rules for it are based on the kind of Scenario. Each scenario has a listed time limit. It is up to

Instructions

Terry Young's player to keep to that time limit, either directly or by appointing another character to be the time keeper. After the end of each scenario, the group should take no more than five minutes before moving on to the next scenario. If the group agrees, they can move to the next Scenario before the end of its time limit.

The rules on Confidence and Mastery apply to all scenarios.

Introductions Scenario

The Introduction scenario is largely freeform, and provides an opportunity for the players to slip fully into character. They may disclose as little or as much as they feel that their character would, in preparation for the discussions to come.

Problem Scenarios

Unlike the Introduction and Closing Time Scenarios, there are more Problem Scenarios than the group will be able to handle in a single session. Prior to each Problem Scenario, Terry Young's player chooses one of the Scenario Sheets to represent the problem placed before the group.

Each Problem Scenario presents an issue regarding the administration of the Arts Center, and presents two different options that can be pursued. After reading out the description of the problem and the two options, the floor is opened up to discussion. Whenever anyone else speaks in support of one of the options, you may choose to place one of your Confidence in support of that option, in the corresponding box on your character sheet. As the scenario progresses, you may place further Confidence in support of either option, as the words of the others sway you. Using Confidence in this way is a gamble, and may result in the loss or gain of Confidence, depending on how the dice fall and what the group decides as their final choice.

At the end of the Scenario, the group must come to an agreement on which option to follow through with. If there is not consensus, then the option favored by the majority is followed through with. In the case of a tie, then Terry Young's

seniority gives them the tie-breaking vote.

After an option has been agreed to, roll every Confidence that has been placed in support of that option to show how well you think that the proposal will do. Every die that comes up as a 1 or 2 is a doubt about the idea that you've supported and is lost and every die that comes up as a 5 or 6 is a hopeful thought about the success of the project and grants 1 additional Confidence, any die that comes up as a 3 or 4 is ambivalent and results in no change to Confidence. Then, compare the amount of Confidence in support of the other option to the number of rolled dice that came up as 5s and 6s. If you have less in support of the failed proposal you are certain that it was a terrible idea to begin with and lose all of that Confidence, otherwise you think it might have been the better idea and keep it all.

Ex: At the end of a Scenario, you have two Confidence in support of Option A and one Confidence in support of Option B, and the group has decided to go with Option A. You roll your two dice in Option A and come up with a 1 and a 5, so you lose one Confidence from the 1 and gain one from the 5, resulting in a net of 0. Next, you compare your amount of dice in Option B to the amount of 5s and 6s in Option A. Since the 5s and 6s are not greater, you get to keep your Confidence from Option B.

Closing Time Scenario

The Closing Time Scenario is the capstone to the game. After working together throughout the meeting, the characters now get to see what sort of relationships they can establish after it's all done. The Closing Time Scenario is similar in style to the Introduction Scenario, but has one additional mechanic.

In order to attempt to establish a connection with another character beyond being on the Board, you have to spend Confidence. This Confidence is lost no matter whether or not that person accepts the attempt.

Instructions

The cost for this attempt varies, as listed below:

Exchange of contact information - 2 Confidence

Professional meeting - 4 Confidence

Personal meeting - 6 Confidence

After the Closing Time, then all that can be said has been said, and it is time to go home.

Confidence

Confidence is your most important resource. It fuels your ability to interact with those around you, and gives strength to your arguments. It will be gained and lost throughout the course of the game. Each point of Confidence is represented by a six sided dice, and the amount that you begin the game with is listed on your character sheet.

During Problem scenarios, you will gamble your Confidence as described in that section as you attempt to find solutions to the problems that the Art Center faces.

If you feel like no one is listening to you, you may Burn a Confidence, by stating your intention to do so and discarding one of your dice into the center pool. After doing so, everyone at the table has to listen to your next sentence.

If you run out of Confidence, then you cannot speak unless you are addressed directly.

You can recover Confidence three times per game, by taking a short, five to ten minute break, stepping away from the others in the group and taking the time to regain your composure. Each time you do so, you gain two Confidence.

You can also gain or lose Confidence by Questioning or Answering your Mastery, as described in the section below.

Mastery

There are certain things you know, certain subject areas where your knowledge is superior to everyone at the table. That knowledge may not be particularly useful, but you know the truth about those areas. Your character sheet describes the areas where your character has Mastery. Any statements that your character makes in regards to the Mastery topic are true and correct in the world of the game. Any other character that attempts to contradict your statements must Question your Mastery.

The character who Questions puts forth a single Confidence towards the the character that they are Questioning. The target can choose to either to let things slide, in which case the character Questioning can contradict the statements of the character with Mastery, or Answer the Question. When Answering, the character puts forth one Confidence as well. Both characters then roll, and whoever rolls the highest takes the Confidence from the other character. Regardless of the outcome of the roll, if a character Answers then their statement is not contradicted and the truth of their Mastery remains known.

Terry Young

Backstory: You were the youngest member of the old Board, and was well aware of your lack of seniority. The other members of the Board seemed like such large personalities, such vibrant people that you couldn't even hope to compare to them, and they ran the Arts Center with such skill that it began to truly flourish and become a prominent element of the community. But then the dictates of the charter came to light, and they all stepped down, leaving only a single old member to carry on the traditions and legacy to a newly formed Board.

Everyday, you wish that someone else had taken on that responsibility. You just can't do it. You've picked the people who you think are the best and the brightest in the community, to help continue that legacy, because you know you can't do it alone.

Mastery: You know the history and the rules of the Arts Center better than anyone. You are always correct when you make statements about the Boards, its history, its charter, and its mission. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

Malus: You selected the other members of the Board and are quite aware of their particular strengths, you cannot Question their Mastery.

Starting Confidence: 4

Option A

Option B

Sam Jones

Backstory: You used to be the talk of the town, the big celebrity who went off and made something of yourself. You opened a gallery in the city, you rubbed elbows with the famous and the skilled and the wealthy and you projected grace and power to all that came to know you. But things starting turning. Your rivals started to gain primacy, your gallery stopped being the place to go, stopped being the hip and the trendy and the new, and became a part of the establishment, and thus in conflict with others that were far more deeply entrenched into the culture of the city. Within five years, things fell apart completely and you were forced to return to your hometown, where everyone still marveled at you, though you had no idea why they would think you were anything special. You weren't special, you were just another washed-up has-been, forced to return in shame to small town living. Still, when the opportunity to involve yourself in the arts once again arose, you couldn't help yourself.

Mastery: You finger is still on the pulse of the art world, and you are always correct when you make statements about the current fashions and trends amongst artists and those interested in high culture. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

Malus: You know the pettiness and the drama of the big city artists. You can never support an action to bring in outside artists if you have the option to help develop hometown artists.

Starting Confidence: 3

Option A

Option B

Alex Cruz

Backstory: You own a small actuarial firm in town, though you're the junior most of the three members of the organization. One of the more senior members was a previous member of the Board and recommended that you join in as her replacement. You have always been eager to please others, to find the diplomatic solution to problems, so you jumped at the opportunity to prove yourself. Plus, it'd be nice to get out of the house a bit more. But you soon realized that you were entirely out of your depths. You were never a huge arts fan, and never spent more time than you had to in pursuit of them. To make things worse, it had been a while since you dealt with the particular financial difficulties of a not-for-profit organization. But that latter task proved more surmountable and you've spent days poring over texts and records in order to understand the budget and finances of the Arts Center in preparation for this meeting.

Mastery: There's very little about finances that you don't understand, you are always correct when you make statements regarding the budget of the Arts Center. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

Malus: You don't know the first thing about art, and can't make any arguments based on the artistic value of an option.

Starting Confidence: 3

Option A

Option B

Kelly McEntire

Backstory: You work for city hall, part of the mayoral staff, and have managed to survive the recent change in administrations by being a hard worker and not making any noise about the changes brought in by the new mayor. You like helping people, but you've learned over the years that the best way to do that is to stay quiet and do your job. People who make waves or strive for radical change are always dragged down by the power of consensus. You know your place as a cog in a larger machinery that helps the town to function and keep moving. So you were surprised when the mayor personally volunteered you to the position on the Board for the Arts Center. You don't want to expect, you don't know what to do, you really don't know much in the way of anything. All you can do is go and hope that you don't make things worse by being there, that your lack of knowledge and experience don't ruin everything.

Mastery: You know what the administration of the city wants to accomplish, and the larger scope of its political aspirations. You are always correct when you make statements about the needs and desires of the city's political bodies. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

Malus: You don't like drawing attention to yourself, and you don't like rocking the boat. If two people agree to implement an option, you have to agree with them.

Starting Confidence: 2

Option A

Option B

Content Warning

This game deals with topics related to social anxiety, impostor syndrome, and other related conditions. It is designed to be medium to high bleed, low to medium intensity, and low impact. If you have any of these conditions, this material may be uncomfortable. If, at any time, you feel you cannot continue playing, do not be afraid to excuse yourself.

Introductions

Description: The new Board is called to meeting, for the very first time. None of you truly know each other, none of you have ever met face to face before, and here in this meeting room, you have to find solutions to a host of problems. Before setting into that, though, perhaps it would be wise to get to know each other a bit more?

Time Limit: 15 minutes

New Hire

Description: With a new Board taking over, perhaps now is time to review the current arts managers for the center. Have they been working sufficiently? Should they be kept on, at least until the next meeting? Or is it time for some new blood to enter the pool and give the arts center a chance to grow in new and different directions?

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Keep the current manager
- B) Hire a new manager

Space

Description: A small business next to the arts center has recently filed bankruptcy. The previous moved swiftly and purchased the deed to the building and the land. Now there is the question of what to do with the space. On the one hand, parking has always been an issue along main street, and the building could easily be torn down to produce a parking lot. On the other hand, the building could be incorporated into the existing structure of the arts center, providing more space for activities and galleries.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Build a parking lot
- B) Expand the building

Funding

Description: Funding is always tight for arts organizations, and the center is no different. With resources as tight as they are, you have limited options when it comes to reaching out for new funding. Certainly, you will continue to seek out donations and pro bono work where you can, but more funds are needed than the current drives are proceeding. To that end, a major event is needed. You could talk to the artists who have supported the center in the past and gather pieces of art that you can auction off. Alternatively, you can invite major donors and others local movers and shakers to a gala event and hope that it encourages a higher degree of donations.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Auction
 - B) Gala
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Educational

Description: The Arts Center has typically focused on adults, both adult audiences and adult artists. However, you could expand the developing artists initiative to include younger children. This would mean hiring specialized personnel for younger ages, as well as pursuing options to limit the liability of their presence and activities. However, it could expand awareness of the center to entirely new, and previously untapped, audiences, and help provide educational opportunities for the community.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Expand to include children
 - B) Maintain current operations
-

Gallery

Description: The Arts Center's gallery is going to be emptied at the end of the month, when the current contract runs out. You have to decide what you'd like to replace the current exhibit. Broadly speaking, you could seek out an existing and established artist (or artists) and have them bring their works in to display, or, alternatively, use it as a space to highlight the work of the developing artist's initiative, giving them a public showing of their finest work and opportunity for the entire community to see what has been created within it.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Outside artists
- B) Local artists

Performance Hall

Description: The Performance Hall has an empty slot coming up next month, and you've received two offers from groups that both want to use it during that time. One is a touring folk band and the other is a local theater troupe. While the local troupe is of decent quality for a community theater, the band has been critically acclaimed nationwide for their music.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Theater Troupe
- B) Band

Diversity

Description: You have recently received a complaint that the Arts Center seems to focus its attention almost entirely on the works of white men, and upon reviewing the history of the Center, this seems to be true. You could continue on your course, and use your own best judgment, and the best judgment of the arts manager, to select what works you think are the best fit. Or, you could make a concerted effort to reach out to marginalized and underrepresented groups and make sure that their work receives the attention that it is due.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

- A) Keep with current policy
- B) Reach out to underrepresented groups

Closing Time

Description: The day's work is done and time is running low. It's time to go home and think on what has been done. But before you leave, perhaps there's someone, or multiple someones, that are worth reaching out to, that you might be able to form something more than a purely professional relationship with. Now is the time to put the work behind you, and think about what comes next.

Time Limit: 15 minutes