

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Frequent relocations as a military spouse led me to shift gears from traditional employment into consulting—an intentional choice that allows me to carry relationships, projects, and missions with me wherever I go. Today, I bring that same adaptability and commitment to every organization I serve, helping them build capacity, achieve goals, and thrive in changing circumstances.

EDUCATION

Temple University – Philadelphia

December 2014

Doctorate of Education in Curriculum, Instruction and Technology (Math & Science)

Dissertation: The impact of Zoo Live Animal Presentations on
Students' Propensity to Engage in Conservation Behaviors

University of North Carolina – Wilmington

May 2008

Master of Arts in Teaching Science

The University of Arizona - Tucson

May 2003

Bachelor of Arts in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

EXPERIENCE

Nonprofit GrowthGen

Remote

2020-present

Cofounder, Nonprofit Coach and Consultant

- Support clients in their efforts to identify goals and priorities, develop SOPs, evaluate programs, strengthen fundraising strategy, build relationships, and reflect on their needs and approaches.
- Identify community needs through conversation, networking, survey data collection, and other exploratory efforts.
- Network and convene nonprofit and cultural organizations to promote growth, community, and capacity.
- Co-author training curricula for grant writing, project management, and evaluation skill development.
- Engage key stakeholders for the advancement of the organization and project mission.
- Mentor growing professionals on grant writing practices through direct instruction, sample product reviews, and mini project collaborations.
- Serve as ideation and proposal Technical Advisor (TA) to new grant-seeking organizations, including multiple city governments.
- Create shared workspaces and identify appropriate Learning Management Systems (LMS) to support collaboration.
- Create tools to support organizational efficiency, practice, and training.

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum,

Honolulu, HI

2017-2024

Consultant (2019-2024)

- Conducted institution-wide audit of evaluation practices and worked with department leads to develop institutional evaluation plan, tools, and reports to begin process of internal benchmarking and reflection.
- Developed Fundraising SOPs to support project development, institutional vetting, and fundraising approaches.
- Supported and mentored teams on project development and grant-writing skills.

Director of Education (2017-2019),

- Led team of 20+ educators covering four functional areas serving the Museum daily visitors and delivering scheduled group programs.
- Restructured the department and implemented changes to allow for skill specialization and greater autonomy of program deliverers based on their strengths and interests.

- Coached team (who had lacked a supervisor for six years) on professional practices, career-enhancing philosophies, budgeting, and reporting.
- Balanced \$1M annual departmental budget and built novel revenue streams to sustain operating budget.
- Advanced department and institutional relationships with external foundations, individual donors, planned-giving, and grant funding. Collaborated with Development partners to secure over \$3M in additional funding in two years.
- Developed departmental vision and goals in alignment with institutional mission and 5-year business plan.
- Served on inter-departmental teams to co-create major events, seasonal exhibits, and key cultural activities to build a cohesive and deliberate visitor and participant experience.
- Led visitor evaluation efforts to include exhibit impacts, education programs, and visitor experiences to ensure better alignment of activities with objectives.
- Studied Hawaii State Education Standards, built Teacher Advisory Committee, and collaborated on teacher Professional Development initiatives to inform school program directions.

Avance, El Paso collaboration with El Paso Museum of Art

El Paso, TX

2014-2016

IMLS Project Manager

- Managed inter-organizational team of educators in the design, development and delivery of a novel museum program targeted to underrepresented audiences (early childhood families + first generation immigrants).
- Directed grant deliverable activities and reporting practices.
- Studied art, early childhood, informal education, access-focused, and Latino-serving museum program research and best practices to inform project direction.
- Innovated evaluation practices and maintained records during interim period between external evaluators.
- Wrote curriculum guidebook and training materials to share and disseminate program findings and materials to additional organizations.

Insights Science Center

El Paso, TX

2014-2017

Executive Director

- Managed Board activities, cultivation, accountability, and impact practices.
- Recruited, hired, directed, mentored, and reviewed small team (2-8 depending on the season) of part-time staff.
- Designed and developed cutting-edge museum exhibitions and programming.
- Cultivated funding partners, donors, and grant opportunities within the local, state, and federal funding networks.
- Aligned new experiences with state and regional education standards
- Designed interpretive signage and educational content.
- Managed all print and electronic press releases and marketing efforts, including on social media.

SAVE SCIENCE, Temple University

Philadelphia, PA

2010-2011

Doctoral Research Fellowship Recipient

- Spearhead and conduct original research on zoo outreach program effectiveness using statistical software, heat mapping and other novel strategies.
- Report on findings, inferences, and future directions for dissertation committee, at conference proceedings, in academic journals and for peer use.

Research Assistant

- Developed content to serve as the foundation of virtual, first-person user, quest-like assessments based on local and national standardized test questions.
- Co-created written materials used to generate virtual environments, characters, science content, science tools, science problems, and audio content.
- Explored methods for assessing student and class performance on individual assessment modules.



- Oversaw construction of online dashboard (LMS) interface for students, teachers, and administrators.

John G. Shedd Aquarium

Chicago, IL

2008-2009

Staff Training and Volunteer Coordinator, Interpretive Programs

- Recruited, trained and managed education volunteer corps of over 200 members.
- Co-managed team of 16+ professional informal educators and seasonal employees in addition to 14 teen work-study program participants to meet educational goals.
- Codeveloped evaluation tool for programs and evaluated interpretive staff and volunteers.
- Developed and delivered innovative presentations to internal and external audiences.
- Maintained accurate budgets and deliverable records for funding stakeholders.

The Phoenix Zoo

Phoenix, Az

2004-2005

Volunteer Program Coordinator/Specialist (40 hrs/wk)

- Created and conducted educational seminars, trainings, and courses for adult and youth programs to meet the needs of the different Zoo departments and guests.
- Developed public interpretive themes and programs and evaluated adult and youth volunteers on program delivery.
- Initiated new volunteer database for managing personal information, qualifications, scheduling, training history and used the database to run trending reports.
- Prospected and contacted potential donors, in-kind sponsors, and corporate partners.

MAJOR PROJECTS

- Spearheaded the [The Growing Capacity Project](#) (2023-2025), IMLS-funded grant in partnership with Bishop Museum and over 26 museums and museum-like organizations in Hawai'i
- Evaluated the [Gallery Voices Project](#) (2020-2021), IMLS-funded project at 'Iolani Palace. Met semi-weekly with a team of content experts to identify goals, develop content, evaluate impact, and refine materials for five new gallery exhibitions.
- Codeveloped and delivered multiple versions of [GrantsGen](#) (2021-2025), a mentorship and training program focused on project development, grant-seeking, and grant-writing skills for nonprofit staff working in interpretive and cultural fields.

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

- Hudson, E., Ramsay, M., Cornish-Creed, J., **Kirchgessner, M.** *Growing Leaders: Planting Seeds for the Future*. Facilitated Panel Discussion at the HANOCON, Kaneohe, HI, October 4, 2024.
- Hunter, D. Thompson, C., Silverhorn, T., Mahon, B., Wright, K., Valencia, T., Low, J. **Kirchgessner, M.** *Nothing About Us Without Us*. Facilitated [Panel Discussion](#) at the National Association of Interpretation Conference, Cleveland, OH November 30, 2022.
- Ramsay, M., **Kirchgessner, M.L.** *GRANTWORKS: The Science and Art of Grant Seeking and Award Management*. 50-minute Workshop at the Hawai'i Museums Association Conference, Honolulu, HI April 12, 2019.

- Pecore, J.L., **Kirchgessner, M. L.**, Demetrikopoulos, M. K., Carruth, L. L., Franz, K.J. (2017). Formal lessons improve informal educational experiences: Influence of cognitive novelty on student engagement. *Visitor Studies*, 20(1), 89-104.
- Kirchgessner, M.L.** *Are you my match? Efficient and effective standards research and PD.* 1-hour workshop held at the Informal Science Educators Association (ISEA) of Texas Conference, Houston, TX. February 19-21, 2016.
- Kirchgessner, M. L.** & Sewall, B.J. (2015) The impact of environmental, social and animal factors on visitor viewing behaviors at big cat exhibits. *Visitor Studies*, 18(2), 150-167.
- Bergey, B. W., Cromley, J. G., **Kirchgessner, A.** & Newcombe, N. (2015) Using Diagrams Versus Text for Spaced Restudy: Effects on Learning in 10th Grade Biology Classes. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(1), 59-74.
- Schifter, C.C., Natarajan, U., Ketelhut, D.J. & **Kirchgessner, M.** (2014) Data-driven decision making: Facilitating teacher use of data to inform classroom instruction. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 14(4), 419-432.
- Kirchgessner, M. L.** *Exploration of animal use in programs and student conservation behavior change.* Poster presented at the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Annual Conference, Orlando, FL. September 14-18, 2014.
- Pecore, J.L., **Kirchgessner, M. L.**, Carruth, L.L., Demetrikopoulos, M.K., & Frantz, K.J. *Pre-trip lesson raises engagement at zoo by reducing novelty.* Poster presented at the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Annual Conference, Orlando, FL. September 14-18, 2014.
- Pecore, J. L., **Kirchgessner, M. L.**, & Carruth, L. L. *Possibilities of informal settings to impact science educators through unique collaborative professional development.* Paper presented at the Association for Science Teacher Education (ASTE) Annual Conference. San Antonio, TX. January 15-18, 2014.
- Tenam-Zemach, M., **Kirchgessner, M.**, Pecore, J., Lai, L. & Hecht, S. (2014) Development of an innovative method for analyzing the presence of environmental sustainability themes and an ecological paradigm in science content standards. *Studies in Education Evaluation*, 4, 133-142.
- Kirchgessner, M. L.** *Interpretive Placement: Fools Gold or Real Wealth?* Presentation (concurrently webcast) for the National Association of Interpretation Annual Workshop, Reno, NV. November 6-9, 2013.
- Bergey, B. W., Cromley, J. G., Dai, T., Wills, T. W., & **Kirchgessner, M.** *Comparing Two High School Classroom Interventions for Improving Comprehension of Chemistry Diagrams.* Paper submitted to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 27-May 1, 2013.
- Cromley, J. G., Bradley, B. W., **Kirchgessner, M.** & Willis, T. W. *Combining Conventions of Diagrams Instruction and Repeated Practice in Biology Classes,* Paper accepted for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 27-May 1, 2013.
- Tenam-Zemach, M., Pecore, J., Tenam Lai, L. & **Kirchgessner, M.** *A Methodological Approach to Analyze Florida's K-12 Next Generation Sunshine State Science Content Standards.* Paper accepted for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 27-May 1, 2013
- Pecore, J. L., **Kirchgessner, M. L.**, & Carruth, L. L. (2013). Changes in science content knowledge and attitudes toward science teaching of educators attending a zoo-based neuroscience professional development. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies*, 86(6), 238-245.
- Tenam-Zemach, M., Pecore, J., Tenam Lai, L. & **Kirchgessner, M.** *A Methodological Approach to Analyze Florida's K-12 Next Generation Sunshine State Science Content Standards.* Paper accepted for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 27-May 1, 2013
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Repeated Practice in Biology Classes, Paper accepted for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 27-May 1, 2013.

Teufel, C., Natarajan, U., Ketelhut, D.J., Shelton, A., **Kirchgessner, M.**, & Schifter, C.C.

Designing Professional Development for Scientific Inquiry. Presentation delivered at the annual meeting of the National Science Teacher's Association (NSTA) Conference, Indianapolis, IN. March 31, 2012.

Shelton, A., Willard, C., **Kirchgessner, M.**, & Shriver, J. *Technology Evaluations and Integration Ideas*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference, Hershey, PA, February, 14, 2012.

Cromley, J. G., Bergey, B. W., Fitzhugh, S. L., Wills, T. W., **Kirchgessner, M.**, Newcombe, N. *Effectiveness of Student-Constructed Diagrams Versus Self-Explanation Instruction*. Paper presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, CA, April 13-17, 2012.

Natarajan, U., **Kirchgessner, M.** & Jass Ketelhut, D. (2012) *A Design Strategy for Scaling Up Implementations in Virtual Environments*. Poster presented at European Conference of Game Based Learning (ECGBL), Cork, Ireland, October 4-5, 2012.

Dai, T., Cromley, J. G., & **Kirchgessner, M.** *Change in implicit self-beliefs about ability in biology and its effect on retention in STEM majors: A latent growth modeling approach*. Paper presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, CA, April 13-17, 2012.

Kirchgessner, M., Huffman, R, Fischetti, J. (2007). *Why Most Teachers are Staying*. Poster presented at the North Carolina Teacher Educator Forum (NCTE): Raleigh, NC.

Kirchgessner, M., & Ketelhut, D. (2012). Book review of Video games and learning: Teaching and participatory culture in the digital age. *Science Education*, 96(5), 963-965.

References Available Upon Request