

**ROZSA** | Michigan  
Technological  
University

# Sustainability in Stages: A Practice in Continuous Improvement

*Mary Jennings  
Director, Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts*







# Introduction

The Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts, nestled in the vibrant Keweenaw region, stands as a unique hub for artistic expression, showcasing talents from across the Midwest and beyond. It plays a pivotal role in bringing live music, theatre and diverse performances to both locals and visitors, fostering a sense of community through its gatherings, meetings, celebrations and festivals. This grand venue, designed to host large audiences and intricate performances, undoubtedly contributes to the cultural richness of the area.

Recognizing the need for a sustainable approach, Rozsa Center Director Mary Jennings takes a bold and delightfully human approach to continuous improvement in sustainable business practices. Join Jennings for a presentation on sustainability strategies and programs implemented at the Upper Peninsula's largest performing arts venue to move toward a more sustainable future.





# Events are not sustainable

Live performances and arts events generate important community and regional impacts, economic and otherwise. However, the business of presenting live events is inherently wasteful.

Prioritizing sustainability practices has not been widely adopted in the industry. The Rozsa is working to become an industry leader in this space.





# Strategic Planning

01/  
Establish  
Sustainability  
Goal

02/  
Identify  
Responsibility  
as a Core Value

03/  
Identify  
potential  
campus and  
community  
partners

04/  
Start,  
imperfectly



## Progress in Year 1

Plastic film recycling container installed & collected **16.8 lbs of plastic film** recycling.

Invested in **reusable water cups** for Concessions

Switched to bagging our own candy in bags with **rice-paper bags** for concessions





# Decreasing Concessions Waste



## Vision

To support the Rozsa's sustainability initiatives while managing and elevating Rozsa concessions operations.



## Targets

Reduce single-use plastics, source locally and regionally produced products, and limit food waste.







**Keweenaw**  
coffee works



# BREAD LOAFERS Bakery





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Dramatic decrease in paper use for marketing while growing attendance through conversion to **rack card print programs, digital programs**, and monthly posters.







# Decreasing Paper Consumption



## Vision

To support the Rozsa's sustainability initiatives while growing our events, modernizing our marketing efforts, and supporting a renewed effort to improve brand recognition of both the Rozsa and the VPA.



## Targets

To cut paper consumption by 50% while hitting our financial and attendance projections. Assess where future adjustments need to be made.





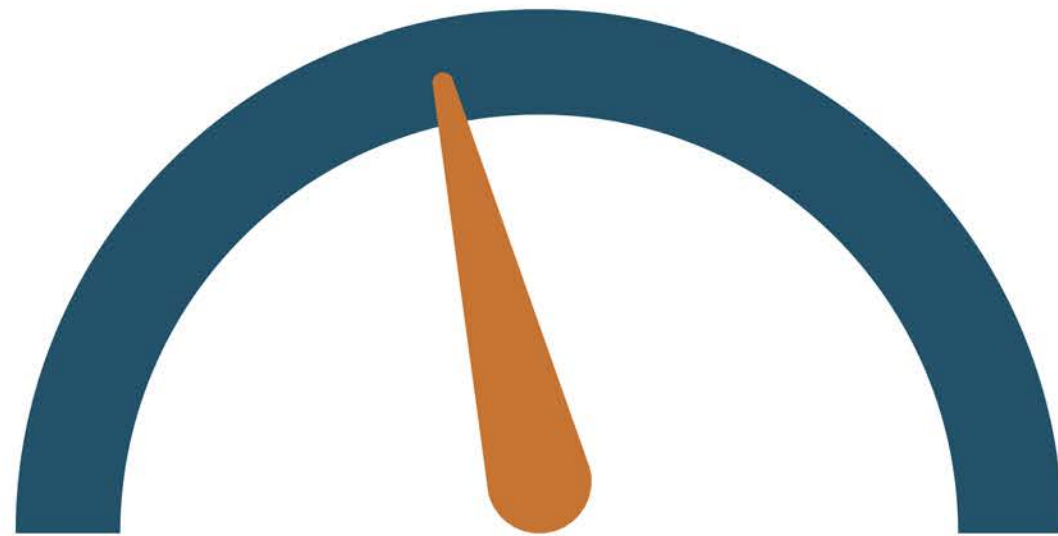
# How did we do?

## Decreasing Paper Consumption



**Cut paper consumption in half**

**31540 sheets**



**72,985 sheets**

**56.8% reduction**



**Hit financial projections**



**99.5%**

On average, our public audience performed or out-performed our projections, indicating that the shift in marketing investment has worked well for the broader Keweenaw audience.



**Hit attendance projection**



**88.7%**

While the public attendance was close to our projections, our student attendance is lower than we would like, which is why there is a disparity in financial and attendance performance.





# Digital Programs



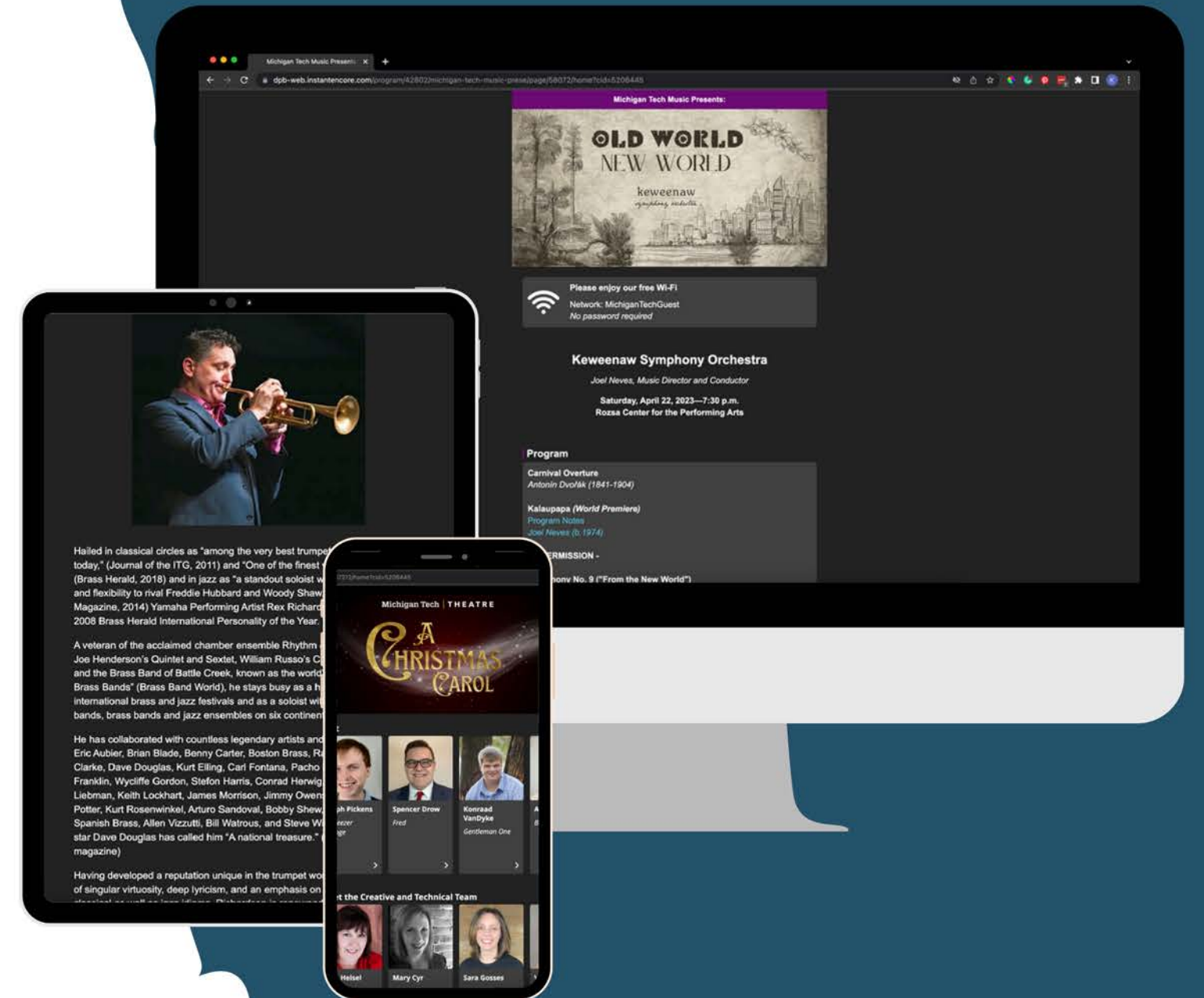
## Vision

To advance our sustainability and accessibility initiatives with digital programs that are optimized for screen readers and simplified print programs to provide a physical piece and memento to guests.



## Targets

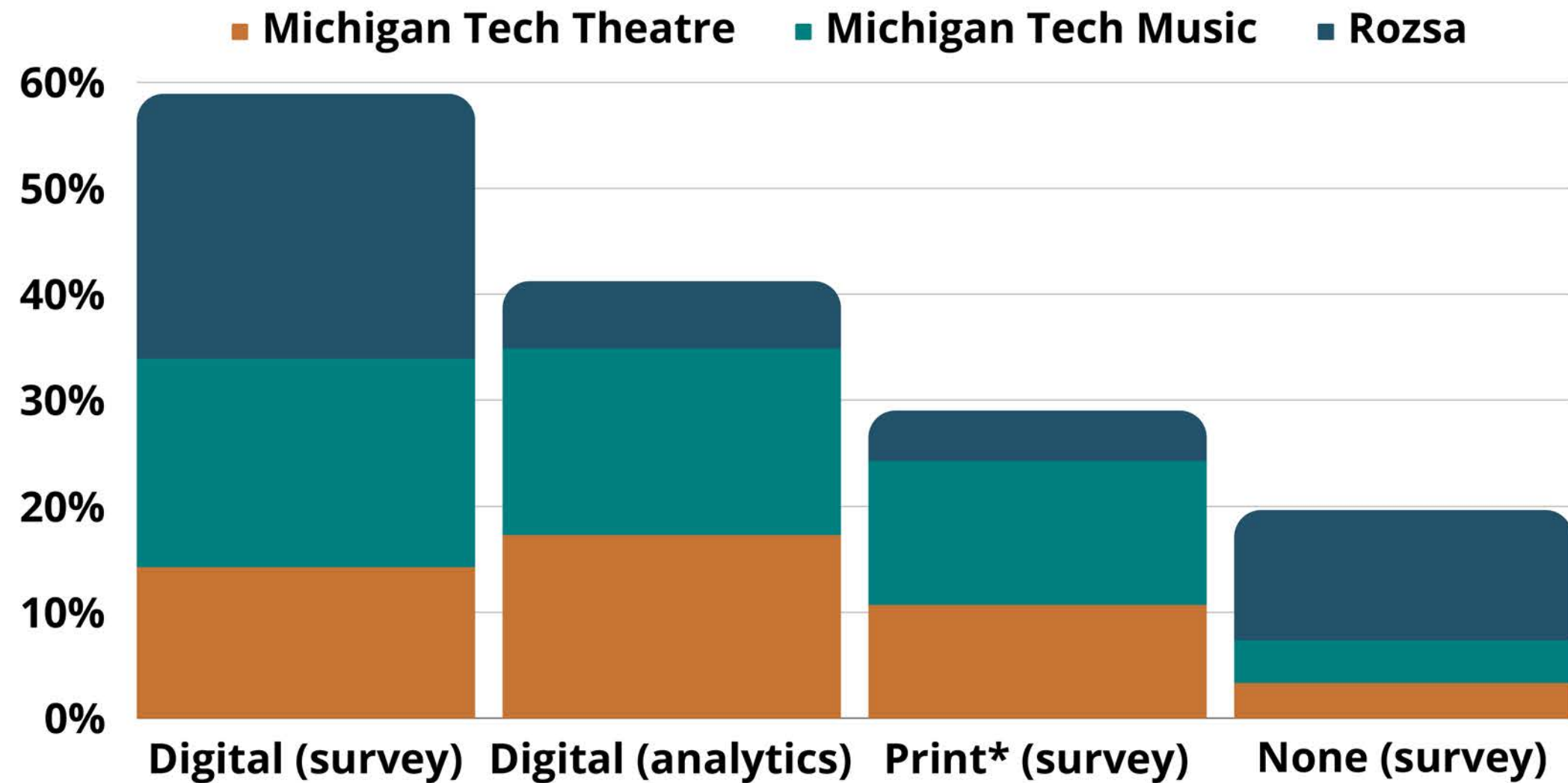
To improve access points, usability of the digital program, grow capacity to offer enhanced digital content, and shift primary digital program use to before and after the show, as well as during intermission.





# Digital Programs

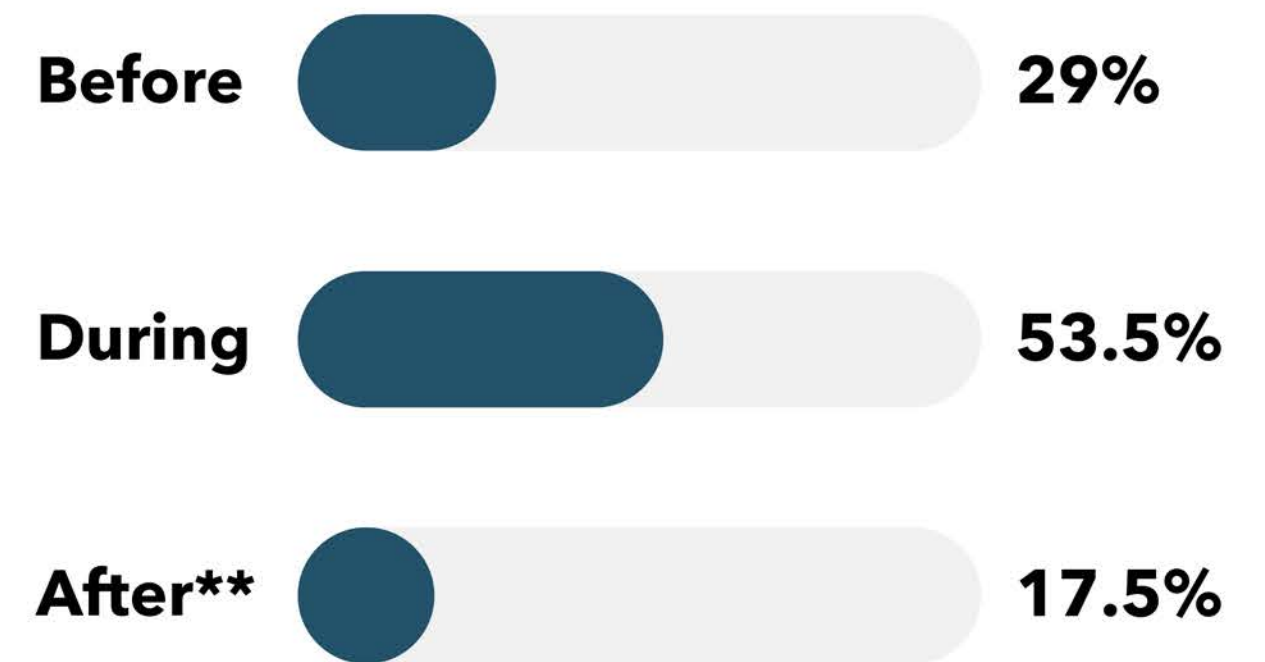
## Program Use (Survey and Analytic Data)



\*Consistent with estimates based on leftover print programs and attendance data

\*\*This option was added from A Christmas Carol on after a guest made the recommendation on a survey.

## When do people using the digital program look at it? (Survey Data)





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Began **tracking carbon emissions** generated by visiting artists' travel







# Emissions Tracking



## Vision

To support the Rozsa's sustainability initiatives, we will capture visiting artist travel data to calculate emissions estimates, building a year-over-year snapshot of carbon produced by touring artist activities.



## Targets

Develop annual averages based on artist travel from their starting location to the Rozsa.





# Emissions Tracking



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Carbon Emissions Calculator for Visiting Artists								
2			<a href="#">Flight/Car Calculator</a>			<a href="#">Secondary Calculator</a>			
3	<b>Company/Artist Name</b>	<b># of Travelers</b>	<b>Starting Location</b>	<b># Miles to Houghton</b>	<b>Mode of Transportation</b>	<b>Hotel expenses</b>	<b>Meal expenses</b>	<a href="#">Calculate Metric Tons of CO2e</a>	<b>Covert to lbs of CO2e</b>
5	Jay Jurden	1	New York, NY	1617	Flight	\$425.60	\$71.84	0.73	1609.65
6	Jay Jurden	1	Green Bay, WI	210	Car			0.06	132.3
7	Bryan Smith	1	Boston, MA	1419	Flight	\$425.60	\$55.90	0.25	551.25
8	Bryan Smith	1	Traverse City, MI	752	Car			0.26	573.3
9	Samantha Ege	1	London, UK	8968	Flight	\$1,001.18		1.9	4189.5
10	Naila Ansari	4	Buffalo, NY	1525.8	Car	\$1,971.60	\$462.50	0.42	926.1
11	ABT	19	New York, NY	2200	Flight	\$5,448.75	\$1,751.23	0.49	1080.45
12	Hairspray	45	Wausau, WI	185.5	Bus		\$756.00	0.12	264.6
13	So Percussion	4	New York, NY	2200	Flight	\$1,976.55	\$211.00	1.97	4343.85
14	Shodekeh	1	Baltimore, MD	1062.9	Flight	\$492.90		0.44	970.2
15	Shodekeh	1	Iron Mountain, MI	113	Car			0.06	132.3
16	Alize Carrere	1	Coral Gables, FL	3614	Flight	\$425.60	\$67.00	0.71	1565.55
17									0
18									0
19									0
20	<b>TOTALS</b>							7.41	16339.05



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**Green Campus Enterprise** ongoing collaboration.





# Green Campus Enterprise

## Lobby window treatment testing





# Progress in Year 2

Refinement of **digital programs.**

Added back-of-seat stickers with QR codes to make it easier to find digital programs.

Installed additional wifi routers to allow for faster use during events.

**Reusable wine glasses** purchased for Concessions

Added aluminum single-use water bottles option

**Green Campus Enterprise** project continues, focused on energy consumption reduction via Rozsa lobby window treatment

Sustainability presenter at **Midwest Arts Xpo** and **MI Presenters Network Conference**





# ROZSA

## Rozsa Management



**Kiersten  
Birondo,  
Marketing  
Manager**



**Hannah  
Rundman,  
Audience  
Manager**

**Steve Jones,  
Production  
Manager**





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**Questions?**







# About the presenter

**Mary Jennings | Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts:** Mary Jennings is an arts presenter and rural arts advocate. Through her work at the Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan she has earned a reputation for championing community-centered collaborations and finding creative ways to engage rural audiences with the performing arts. She is an Association for Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) Leadership Fellow, and has presented on rural arts leadership and community engagement at Arts Midwest and APAP conferences. Mary studied classical ballet at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet under the direction of Marcia Dale Weary. She holds a BA in Dance from Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts, and an MBA from Michigan Technological University's School of Business and Economics. She currently serves as Vice President for the Michigan Presenters Network and participates in national Presenters Leadership Consortium meetings.