At the 2018 TCG Fall Forum on Governance: CultureMakers, we took a look behind the curtain, discussing and articulating best practices for one of our field’s most elusive and least-examined challenges: organizational culture. Fall Forum attendees engaged with their peers and experts from beyond our field to uncover the business imperatives for creating a vibrant and supportive workplace, and to determine the best way to align their organization’s culture with its mission and strategy. TCG thanks our 2018 Fall Forum participants and sponsors for joining us as we work toward making all of our theatres happier, healthier, and more enriching places to work.

265 Attendees joined TCG, including participants from 161 TCG Member Theatres and Affiliates, and including over 60 theatre Trustees from around the country. 65 Speakers led 22 Sessions over just 2 days of programming.

Fall Forum attendees were welcomed at an opening reception at The Library at The Public Theater, which featured a short performance from the Kilbanes’ EDDIE THE MARVELOUS WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD, recently developed at the 2018 O’Neill National Music Theater Conference.
Opening Plenary “Change Your Culture, Change the World”
featured keynote speaker Laura Freebairn-Smith, Partner, Organizational Performance Group

Wonderful presentation that really helped everyone understand what organizational culture is all about...she is an excellent, engaging presenter. –Anonymous

Morning Plenary “Invest in People, Invest in Outcomes”
featured brief presentations from Joshua Borenstein, Former Managing Director, Long Wharf Theatre; Tim Cynova, Chief Operating Officer, Fractured Atlas; Karena Fiorenza, General Manager, Steppenwolf Theatre Company; and Laura Zabel, Executive Director, Springboard for the Arts, and a conversation moderated by Stephanie Ybarra, Artistic Director, Baltimore Center Stage

This was a very powerful panel discussion! Stephanie did a wonderful job in facilitating the conversation and brought crucial points and questions to the panel.

–Johamy Morales, Director of Education, Seattle Children’s Theatre

Closing Plenary “Making our Culture, Making our Future”
included vision statements offered by Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director, The Public Theater; Linette Hwu, Board President, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; Madeline Sayet, Director; and Teresa Coleman Wash, Executive Artistic Director, Bishop Arts Theatre Center, and a discussion facilitated by Lisa Mount, Director, Artistic Logistics

This was a great way to close out, and a nice balance of perspectives and experiences.

–Patrick McDonnell, Special Projects Associate, New York Theatre Workshop
Breakouts & Other Sessions

Saturday
on Cultivating a Values-based Work Culture
with Harold Steward, Managing Director, The Theater Offensive, and Ashley Walden Davis, Managing Director, Alternate ROOTS

Amazing facilitators and packed with interactive work and generous, thoughtful, practical takeaways.

—Anna Kull, Director of Communications and People, Lark Theatre

on The Room Where it Happens: Practicing Forum Theatre to Explore Board Culture and Inclusion with Sulu LeoNimm and Katy Rubin, Theatre of the Oppressed NYC

Katy and Sulu led one of the most engaging and relevant sessions I've ever attended in my conference-going life. Allowing for role play and analysis is such a valuable exercise for theatre professionals.

—Jamie Clements, Director of Development, Alliance Theatre

Sunday
on Creating a Growth Culture: Unleashing the Potential of Your People to Catalyze Organizational Development
with Jason Najjoum, Managing Director, Synetic Theater, and Gretchen Wright, Director of Development, Westport Country Playhouse

I really liked this session and found it very helpful...There was a lot of frank talk from organizational leaders about what they are facing.

—Karen Chamblee Paisley, Artistic Director, Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre

on For Better or Worse: Painting the Picture of our Organizational (and Fieldwide) Culture through Our Fiscal Data moderated by Teresa Eyring, Executive Director and CEO, TCG, with David Schmitz, Executive Director, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Meghan Pressman, Managing Director and CEO, Center Theatre Group, and Martin Miller, Executive Director, TheatreSquared

I found it very concrete and reassuring to have conversations about the fiscal realities of being a non-profit theatre in the national landscape right now.

—Anonymous
What We Learned

We're in the midst of some intensive EDI and strategic planning work. Having our trustees present to hear success stories, challenges in moving the needle...it was a very positive experience for our whole team.

—Steve Martin, Managing Director, Childsplay

Personally, it was...very empowering to see and hear from a diverse range of leaders. It made me feel like there's no one “right” model of what a leader is.

—Zena Hinds, Director of Development, Tectonic Theatre Project

I was able to learn a great deal from fellow Board Chairs/Presidents on governance issues and board composition.

—William Wyman, Board President, Merrimack Repertory Theatre

Great conversation and great thought are FREE. They are the most important aspect of our social capital. We can have them in our theatres every day!

—Courtney Sale, Artistic Director, Seattle Children’s Theatre