

# Student Theatre Coalition Producer Handbook

Updated 06/29/23

## **Student Theatre Coalition Producer Handbook**

This handbook serves as a compilation of the most updated versions of the various board producers handbooks in the Student Theatre Coalition. Some direct excerpts were taken from the Arts Alliance and WAVE handbooks, with additional information provided from other handbooks and general knowledge. The board you are producing for may still maintain a handbook that is specific to their board. Feel free to ask them about it. This handbook is meant solely as a guide for anyone who is or is interested in producing for a StuCo board.

## Introduction

Congratulations! You've been chosen to produce for Northwestern's Student Theatre Coalition, colloquially known as StuCo. Or, maybe you're deciding whether or not you want to petition to produce. Whether you're looking at a McCormick or sustainability slot, from a mainstage to any of the numerous reading series and secondary processes, this manual is for you! Hopefully, it's organized well enough that you can pick and choose exactly what you want and need to know without being overwhelmed with information. So, let's get started, shall we? Below is a table of contents, but before we even get there, here are a few things you should know ASAP.

MONEY: Unfortunately, as we work on better and more accessible processes regarding SOFO and payments for materials and equipment, producers are typically expected to front money, which means you can be missing money for up to six months and unfortunately sometimes longer. While some shows only cost a few hundred dollars, other shows have budgets that range into the thousands. If you know this is going to be a problem for you, approach the production manager, finance director, and executive director of the board you are producing for ASAP. There are several approaches to take. You can see if they have people on the board who may be willing to help front costs. You can also let them know you're able to front the money but only if you get it back within a certain time frame, as it is possible to be reimbursed within a couple weeks.

BOARD SUPPORT/TIME COMMITMENT: Sometimes, board support just doesn't happen. And while this should never be the case, I know many producers who only take three classes in the quarter they're producing, or take easier classes, etc. Be prepared to spend an insane amount of time in your space the week of the show. Think close to 10 hours a day. Obviously this is not the case for every show, and can be worked around. But, it's student theatre. And that means things go wrong and change constantly, and you can't be prepared for everything. Producing is incredibly rewarding but it is also a huge commitment.

The goal of this manual is to give you a path to success, while letting you know about some of the challenges you might face. And, if you are reading this as someone deciding whether or not to petition to produce, even better.

# **Table of Contents**

| Important People to Know     | 5  |
|------------------------------|----|
| Timeline                     | 8  |
| Team Building                | 10 |
| Production Calendar          |    |
| Design Deadlines             | 13 |
| Budgeting                    | 16 |
| Casting                      | 18 |
| Build                        | 20 |
| Load-In                      | 21 |
| Tech Week                    | 22 |
| Shows                        | 23 |
| Strike                       |    |
| The Spaces You'll Work In    | 25 |
| SOFO                         | 26 |
| Catalyzer                    | 27 |
| Fundraising                  |    |
| Room Reservations            | 27 |
| Marketing/Advertising        | 28 |
| Technical Guides             |    |
| Accessibility in Your Spaces | 29 |

## **Important People to Know**

If you're producing for StuCo, you should get the contact sheet of the board you are producing for ASAP, and save the board leadership's numbers to your phone. On most boards, this would be the Executive Director, Business Manager, Production Manager, and Artistic Director, with the last one being the least important for a producer. Confused about what some of these people do?

**The Production Manager:** Your direct liaison to the board and a sounding board for ideas and issues. Your production manager will be someone well-versed in the StuCo production process. They can help you with pretty much any area or part of the production process, so utilize them often, but make sure you check in with them about the best method and timing of communication. They will also likely reach out to you, and let you know they're there to support you!

**The Finance Director:** All purchases you make on behalf of the show should be made in coordination with the finance director. Talk to the Finance Director to find out if the board you're producing for has debit cards, although most do not. All original receipts must be saved and given

to the finance director. While producers are never required to be SOFO trained, it can be helpful to understand the SOFO process, but as a producer you will never be the one going to SOFO.

**Executive Director:** Sometimes also referred to as the President. If you have any issues with your PM or feel you are not getting the support you need from the board, you can go to the ED. You can also use your ED as another individual with a lot of knowledge who can help you navigate conflict or solve problems, particularly when they pertain to PR or board relations with the greater StuCo community.

**Artistic Director:** They will reach out to your director to serve as an artistic mentor. Can come into rehearsals and give the director notes on request. Will be your point person for any sort of optics or PR crisis. They typically head public relations and can word open letters and help you mitigate any unexpected situations that arise.

The board should provide you with a conflict resolution pathway, but as those may still be in development, feel free to go a step further and reach out to someone listed on the StuCo Exec Contact sheet provided below. Emailing is preferred, but if something is super urgent, email the co-chairs or text someone directly.

| Name                 | Pronouns  | Position                                                    | Phone        | Email                                                            |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kate Horton          | she/her   | Co-Chair                                                    | 203-414-6668 | katherinehorton 2026@u.northwestern.edu                          |
| Wylde Laden          | she/her   | Co-Chair                                                    | 202-230-7606 | wyldeladen2026@u.northwestern.edu                                |
| JingXi Yap           | she/her   | Rights Representative                                       | 312-608-7939 | stucorights@u.northwestern.edu, jingxiyap2026@u.northwestern.edu |
| Adrian Morrison      | he/him    | Financial Director                                          | 646-853-8040 | adrianmorrison 2027@u.northwestern.edu                           |
| Jay Jeon             | she/her   | Associate Executive Busiman                                 | 872-985-7916 | jayjeon2026@u.northwestern.edu                                   |
| Felix Gaddie         | he/him    | External Coordinators                                       | 347-604-0123 | felixgaddie 2027@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Philip Cullen        | he/him    |                                                             | 240-636-4239 | philcullen2025@u.northwestern.edu                                |
| Ani Lawit            | she/her   | Director of Aid                                             | 650-237-9496 | anilawit2027@u.northwestern.edu                                  |
| Ryan Lien            | he/him    | Education Director                                          | 571-302-1067 | ryanlien 2026@u.northwestern.edu                                 |
| Alex Branka          | he/him    | Equipment Managers                                          | 925-239-9813 | branka@u.northwestern.edu                                        |
| Olivia Czyz          | she/they  |                                                             | 847-594-2301 | oliviaczyz2027@u.northwestern.edu                                |
| Nic Lam              |           |                                                             | 832-805-5008 | n.giaplam@u.northwestern.edu                                     |
| Lane Ruble           | she/her   | Marketing Directors                                         | 917-526-0975 | laneruble2027@u.northwestern.edu                                 |
| Ash Aranha           | he/him    |                                                             | 313-782-5846 | asharanha2027@u.northwestern.edu                                 |
| Taylor McMullen      | she/her   | StuCo Secretary                                             | 713-870-0595 | taylormcmullen2027@u.northwestern.edu                            |
| Alex Lopez           | he/him    | Director of Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion       | 513-417-9828 | alexlopez2027@u.northwestern.edu                                 |
|                      |           | Executive (                                                 | Directors    |                                                                  |
| Kiki Sikora          | she/her   | Arts Alliance                                               | 708-657-6883 | keeleysikora2026@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Aiden Kaliner        | he/him    | Jewish Theater Ensemble                                     | 484-431-9390 | AidenKaliner2026@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Ella Waffner         | She/her   | Lovers & Madmen                                             | 716-844-1506 | EleenWaffner2026@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Isabelle Cowan       | she/her   | Purple Crayon Players                                       | 224-505-9580 | IsabelleCowan2025@u.northwestern.edu                             |
| Henry Winkelman      | they/them | Sit & Spin Productions                                      | 323-610-3660 | henrywinkelman2026@u.northwestern.edu                            |
| Nora James Eikner    | she/her   | Vertigo Productions (President)                             | 901-336-0914 | NoraEikner2026@u.northwestern.edu                                |
| Malik Middleton      | any       | Vibrant Colors Collective                                   | 917-566-6095 | MalikMiddleton2026@u.northwestern.edu                            |
| Drew Slager          | any       | WAVE Productions<br>(Univeristy Relations Chair + Prod Man) | 203-895-5478 | DrewSlager2025@u.northwestern.edu                                |
| Hayley Chisholm      |           |                                                             |              | hayleychisholm2025@u.northwestern.edu                            |
|                      |           | Artistic D                                                  | irectors     |                                                                  |
| Kayln Jackson        |           | Arts Alliance                                               | 630-456-0737 | kaylnjackson2026@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Talia Hartman-Sigall |           | Jewish Theater Ensemble                                     | 646-675-4773 | TaliaHartman-Sigall2025@u.northwestern.edu                       |
| Alena Haney          |           | Lovers & Madmen                                             | 832-710-0757 | AlenaHaney2025@u.northwestern.edu                                |
| Kailey Morand        |           | Purple Crayon Players                                       | 832-221-1488 | KaileyMorand2025@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Ethan Karas          | he/him    | Cit & Coin Draductions                                      | 914-323-8530 | Ethan Karas 2019@u. nor thwestern.edu                            |
|                      | ne/nim    | Sit & Spin Productions                                      | 914-323-8550 | sitandspinproductionsexec@gmail.com                              |
| Sidney Cotto         |           | Vertige Productions (Treasurs -)                            | 832-726-2981 | SidneyCotto2026@u.northwestern.edu                               |
| Santina Juma         |           | Vertigo Productions (Treasurer)                             |              | santinajuna 2027@u.northwestern.edu                              |
| Yumi Tallud          | any       | Vibrant Colors Collective                                   | 312-618-8320 | Lauren Tallud 2026@u.northwestern.edu                            |
| Graybill Partington  | she/they  | WAVE Productions                                            | 850.572.6035 | GraybillPartington2025@u.northwestern.edu                        |

#### StuCo Exec Contact Sheet

Next up, a few non-students.

#### **Hayley Kretchmer**

hayley.kretchmer@northwestern.edu

Assistant Director of Student Organizations and Activities

Reach out to her if you are experiencing issues with your board leadership, or if you have questions about specifications of your show contract and rights.

#### **Emily Crespo**

e-crespo@northwestern.edu -Production Manager

You will meet with Emily throughout the process of producing, as she is the one who reviews and approves all technical plans within space restrictions.

#### Jason Harber

jason.harber@northwestern.edu - Event Planning Manager Jason handles the specifics of your space reservation, including times, equipment and setup provided.

### Chris "Sparky" Cvikota

<u>sparky@northwestern.edu</u> - Technical Specialist Sparky will review your technical plans along with Emily, and is a great resource especially for electrics.

## Timeline

Alright, maybe you've already gone through petitions. If so, skip ahead a tiny bit.

#### **Step 1: Producer petitions**

Over the course of two weeks, boards will hold producer petitions. Most boards will ask you to fill out a written form, and then you'll go in for a 10-15 minute petition, where they will ask about your interest in their board specifically, your interest in producing, and some other fun questions that vary by board.

#### **Step 2: Director petitions**

But wait, I'm not petitioning to direct! You may be thinking. True, but boards will invite you to director petitions so that you can rank and provide comments on who you would and would not be interested in being paired with for your slot. This is arguably one of the most important parts of the process, because you want someone you know you'll be able to work with from six months to almost an entire year.

#### Step 3: Show selection

This is where the artistic director and/or literary manager of the board becomes super handy. The Artistic Director will lead your show selection process and will reach out to you very soon after the director list is released. Once you have a director, begin cultivating this relationship immediately! Talk about your hopes and dreams for the slot, as well as specific shows you're interested in. Consider the mission of the board you're producing for as you think about show selection. Most boards will have you pitch 3-4 shows. Important things to consider in show pitches: cast size, intense content/subject matter, difficulty level of music, production requirements, etc. When you pitch, you'll come into the board and talk about your top choices, as well as your excitement level for each show. Your excitement for a show comes off in your pitch, and most boards take this into consideration! If you know a show is on Broadway, touring, or is only licensed in another country, it may be worth looking into whether or not performance rights are available before pitching, although this is not a crucial step.

#### Step 3.5: Show selection & rights applications

StuCo has rights representatives, so luckily for you, you don't have to apply for your shows, and you absolutely should not. The rights representatives will reach out to you regarding specific information they need to apply for your show, and they will let you know ASAP about whether or not rights have been granted. We know rights are stressful, but please do not pester the rights reps. Also, DO NOT PUBLISH ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR SHOW ON THE INTERNET UNTIL RIGHTS HAVE BEEN PAID FOR. If you have questions about this ask your executive director or production manager, or the rights representatives or StuCo co-chairs. Rights sucks. We've all been through the process of not having rights until a week before the show, but no more! Just be ready to be a bit stressed about it.

This next section will be more general, as these steps will have their own sections.

#### Step 4: Team Building

Know that you will need to build a full team of designers and rehearsal room folks, and that your director and your board will play a huge role in helping with this.

#### Step 5: Building your production calendar (including Norris deadlines)

Do this ASAP. DO NOT FORGET to include Norris deadlines on your production calendar. It can also be helpful to make this before team building so you can show designers your intended schedule as they decide whether or not to join your process.

#### Step 6: Budgeting

Immediately put aside 10% of your budget. This is your contingency budget. Most importantly, make a budget so you can stick to it.

#### Step 7: Casting

Generals. Your role in this is mostly supporting your director, and determining what they need to be successful.

#### Step 8: Build

Befriend your board's production manager and technical directors ASAP if you want this to go well. And find a show technical director. Or don't. Your funeral <3

#### Step 9: Tech Week

Like we said earlier, be prepared to spend a lot of time in the space. Be prepared to hunt down board members whose help you need.

#### Step 10: Shows!

Congratulations! You've made it to the show! Don't be too obvious about it, but make sure you have fun (unless it's not that kind of show. If you know, you know).

#### Step 11: Strike

Unfortunately, your job is not over once the show opens. Strike usually takes 1.5 days depending on the space you're producing in.

## **Team Building**

There are two main sets of people you'll need for a successful show. While these names are not used in the industry, it is easiest to differentiate in StuCo by rehearsal room, designers/technical team, and your business team.

Your rehearsal room should consist of:

- 1. A director (and assistants)
- 2. A music director (and assistants)
- 3. A choreographer (and assistants)
- 4. Stage Manager
  - a. Always go for two assistants, but in Shanley you can often get away with one ASM instead of two
- 5. Intimacy director/choreographer
  - a. This is dependent on your show's needs. Not every show has intimacy, but a lot do. Remember that intimacy is not just about contact, but can also include emotional intimacy. Even if your show does not need someone for the whole show, starting the process with an intimacy workshop is always helpful.
- 6. Fight choreographer
  - a. Basically the same notes as the intimacy choreographer. Think critically about both of these roles.

Your artistic team:

- 1. Set designer (and assistants)
- 2. Lighting designer (and assistants)
- 3. Costume designer (and assistants)
- 4. Props designer (and assistants)
  - a. In the professional world, props designers don't exist. The scenic designer designs the props, and there is a props head who executes the building of them.
- 5. Sound designer
- 6. Sound engineer
  - a. This is not always separate from a sound designer. However, if you are doing a show that involves mic'ing anyone or anything, you will want an engineer who knows how to do more than play sounds from QLab.
- 7. Hair & Makeup Designer
  - a. Some costume designers want to do this as well. Most don't. Check in with your team, but plan on having this be an entirely separate role.
- 8. Technical Director
  - a. While boards have technical directors, it is incredibly helpful to have a show specific TD.
- 9. Head Electrician
  - a. Most StuCo shows don't have these, because your LD will double as the head electrician. Check in with your LD about who they want on their team.
- 10. Head Carpenter

- a. Most StuCo shows don't have these, because your TD will double as the head carpenter. Check in with your TD about who they want on their team.
- 11. Scenic painters
  - a. Most set designers will suffice as a scenic painter. Or if they know they want something hard painted, they'll find someone to do it, or you can help them. But, most shows don't have complicated paint.
- 12. Assistants and any other roles you think may be necessary!

#### Business team:

- 1. Fundraising director
  - a. So so important if you want your designers to be happy
- 2. Marketing director
  - a. Yas social media! They are so important to helping get the word out about the show. However, make sure they're in contact with the board marketing director just in case the board has specific instructions they want you to follow for any marketing as it relates to their board. Also, make sure they are informed about your show's current rights situation so they do not post anything that could cause legal issues.
- 3. Outreach director
  - a. They can help with education, casting diversity, and general outreach if you are hoping to build a more diverse and non-theatre team
- 4. Graphic designer
  - a. Sometimes marketing directors double as graphic designers, but often they do not. Check in with your marketing director to see what they're interested in. Sometimes it's fun to find someone to make a show poster, even if the marketing director wants to make general marketing posts.
- 5. Any assistants or other roles you want to fill

## **Production Calendar**

Like we said earlier, make this asap. Include Norris deadlines, detailed in the Design Deadlines Section.

Also, linked <u>here</u> is the student theatre dashboard, which has Norris specific information.

Things to put on your calendar:

- 1. Initial design deadlines
- 2. Any intermediary design deadlines
- 3. Final design deadlines
- 4. Pub pushes
- 5. Fundraising events of any kind
- 6. Load-in
- 7. Tech week
- 8. Rehearsal start date
- 9. Production meetings
- 10. build
- 11. Strike
- 12. Norris pre-production meetings

## **Design Deadlines**

## Preliminary Design Deadline

8 (min) - 12 (max) weeks prior to opening

This is the first deliverable from your designers. All designs should have been conceived in consultation with your director and should support their vision for the show. All preliminary designs should be approved by you, the TDs, and the production manager. You may find it necessary to give different deadlines to different designers depending on technical ambition and designer reliability. These tend to be more informal

Preliminary Lighting Designs could include:

- 1. Inspiration images, visuals, etc
- 2. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision
- 3. Discussions of lights in transitions

Preliminary Set Designs could include:

- 1. Sketches of design elements
- 2. Basic floor plans of every set configuration
- 3. Research / References images
- 4. Consideration for how set pieces will move in transitions

Preliminary Costume Designs could include:

- 1. Basic sketches
- 2. Character profiles with style outlines and proposed color schemes
- 3. Estimates of what costumes will be rented, sourced, and bought vs. built/sewn
- 4. Research / reference images

Preliminary Sound Designs could include:

- 1. Descriptions of soundscapes, moods, leitmotifs in key scenes
- 2. Discussions of sounds in transitions
- 3. Basic outline of what equipment will be used (who will be miked and how it will be amplified).
- 4. Discussions of balance between recorded and live music

5. Discussions of what sounds or songs are to be composed for your show in particular

- Preliminary Properties Design could include:
  - 1. A complete list of props in the show
  - 2. Discussions of practical props and determination of set vs. props discrepancies
  - 3. Estimates of what props will be sourced and what props must be built
  - 4. Research reference images

Preliminary Hair and Makeup Designs could include:

- 1. Basic sketches
- 2. Character profiles with style outlines and proposed color schemes
- 3. Research / reference images
- 4. Possible makeup charts

## Six Week Pre Pro

About six weeks before your opening, you will have a pre-production meeting. Email Emily Crespo at least a week in advance to schedule this meeting. At minimum you and your director are there. At

best, all your designers, TDs, and prod team are there as well to speak to their work. Be prepared to speak to the plans of anyone who is absent. Planning this meeting weeks in advance facilitates better attendance. For this meeting, designers should also have the items listed below under "intermediary design deadline."

Your designers should be prepared to speak to their preliminary designs. Be prepared to present on behalf of any absent designers. Emily and Chris will let you know if the designs are in line with Norris policies and will advise you on technical feasibility. If your designs are particularly ambitious, be prepared for pushback and allow plenty of time between this meeting and the Final Design deadline to rework any designs that they can't allow. Nearly anything is possible if you are prepared (even building working showers with running water). The PSV pro-staff are paid to support student projects. They genuinely want to get to yes, so if you treat them as partners instead of the enemy they will be incredibly helpful.

## Intermediary Design Deadline

6 weeks before opening, for the 6 week pre-pro

Intermediary Lighting Designs should include:

- 1. A preliminary drafted plot
- Intermediary Set Designs should include:
  - 1. Floor plans and drafting of the set including any complicated technical elements
    - a. This is helpful because Emily will give you feedback on how to build it using best practices!

Intermediary Sound Designs should include:

1. Speaker and power plot

Preliminary Properties Design should include:

1. List of props that may count as weapons

### Final Design Deadline

4 (min) - 8 (max) weeks before opening, at the very least 1 full week before Build

This is the last day your designers have to submit their designs to you and the director. Nothing in these design submissions should be a surprise to you as you will have been in a consistent dialogue with your director and designers to flesh out the final details. You may find it necessary to give different deadlines to different designers depending on technical ambition and designer reliability. Final Lighting Designs should include:

- 1. A finalized drafted plot approved
- 2. A rental item list and equipment list
- 3. Agreement with hair and makeup, costumes, and set on color schemes 4. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision

Final Set Designs should include:

- 1. Either a 3D digital model or Model Box with the complete, accurate set
- 2. An autocad drafted ground plan to scale
- 3. Research images to show paint treatments and all furniture pieces
- 4. Agreement with costume, lights, and hair and makeup on color schemes

5. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision

Final Costume Designs should include:

- 1. Complete color sketches for every principal costume for every principal actor
- 2. Complete color sketches representative of every ensemble costume
- 3. Fabric samples / patterns for any items to built/sewn
- 4. A complete source / buy / rental list
- 5. Plans for fittings and adjustments should costumes not fit
- 6. Approval from choreographers / director to make sure costumes meet actors' physical demands (can you dance in those jeans?)
- 7. Agreement with hair and makeup, lights, and set on color schemes 8. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision

Final Sound Designs should include:

- 1. Full list of cues to be created with representative samples
- 2. Full rental item list and equipment list
- 3. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision

4. A clear delineation of duties to be split between anyone on Team Music vs. Team Sound Final Properties Designs should include:

- 1. A full list of props and clear determinations of whether props are to be sourced, rented, bought, or built
- 2. Detailed plans with visuals and/or models for any props to be built
- 3. Clear delineation of what items are props and what items are set.
- 4. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision

Final Hair and Makeup Designs should include:

- 1. Complete makeup charts (front and profile) for every look for every character. This might not be necessary depending on the scope of your show.
- 2. Complete descriptions of hairstyles to be worn by actors with images and instructions to implement these hairstyles
- 3. Complete list of items to be purchased by the design team vs. items the actors are expected to provide
- 4. Final decisions with costume designers about any hats, masks, or similar items
- 5. Agreement with costume, lights, and set on color schemes
- 6. A verbal or written explanation of ideas and vision

## Budgeting

Below is a list of helpful steps to take to determine your budget. This will vary greatly depending on the board and the show and the space. Basically, on everything. Talk to your board's production manager if you have questions about your specific slot.

**Step 1**: Find out how much money you are getting from the board.

**Step 2:** Put aside 10% of your budget. This is your contingency budget. It will save you at some point in the process, I promise.

**Step 3**: Determine your line items. For most StuCo shows this will include most items on the list below, but it varies. Most importantly, if you are doing a musical, remember that you need to pay musicians. Also, never forget to include U-Hauls in your budget.

- Set & paint
- Lights
- Costumes
- Hair & makeup
- Props
- Sound
- U-Haul
- Marketing
- Musicians
- Miscellaneous
- Photography/videography
- Hospitality (food/drinks at build and prod meetings)

**Step 4:** Determine fixed costs. If you know your show needs 5 musicians and you want to pay them each \$100, you know that's a non-negotiable \$500 out of your budget, but you also know that number won't change. Talk to your music director early on to coordinate this. Rights are another fixed cost, so check in with your board about whether or not you need to account for that in the budget you've been given.

**Step 5**: Lights. Your LD will always be happy with money, but if they are given less than about \$600 they probably won't bother with a rental, as it becomes more hassle than it's worth. Figure out early on whether or not to expect a lighting rental.

**Step 6**: Set. First, don't forget about paint. Second, figure out what you can use from stock. Scenic expenses can often be cut in half by cutting designs down a little bit and using what StuCo already has in stock.

**Step 7:** Put away about \$150 for uhauls. Just do. A uhaul is \$20 a day most of the time, but you never know when you'll need to run to home depot to get an extra long piece of wood.

**Step 8:** Divide up the rest of the money. Talk to your designers, determine what they think they'll need. For a show like *Kinky* Boots, where drag is a crucial element, the hair, makeup, and wig budgets are higher than they might be in a show like *In the Heights*, where people can probably wear clothes primarily from their own closets.

## Casting

You should try to be available for the entirety of generals and any open calls you hold. If generals are being run by Wirtz, they do not typically allow too many people in the room during generals, so you may not be able to be present, but it is good to stay available. Currently, Wirtz and StuCo are holding generals separately, so you may be able to be in the room. Check in with the StuCo Co-Chairs about how they are running the room!

Help your director finalize a callback list to submit this to the StuCo Co-Chairs. As the producer, you are most certainly entitled to artistic input, but keep in mind your director might see this as more of their wheelhouse than yours, and if you are producing a musical, they will likely value your music director or choreographers input as well.

Before generals even take place, you will need to create a one-page graphic explaining the nature of your show and what roles you will be looking for. Include relevant dates, like the first rehearsal, tech week, and performances. Be sure to include any fight or intimacy breakdowns that may be relevant to your show. Your graphic designer can help you make this graphic and the language in it should be made in direct coordination with your director.

Work with your stage manager and director to schedule callbacks. Ideally, you should send out your callback schedule with your callback list so that actors commit to attending your callback first and you'll have less rescheduling to do. You can also check with your stage manager to see if they want to take the lead on scheduling and organizing callbacks. You should also be available for callbacks. Check with your director about how they want to run callbacks. They may want you to help be a reader, or just to watch with them. Your stage manager can help facilitate the flow of people into the room, while you and the director can be in the room. Decide between you and your stage manager whose responsibility it is to book rooms for callbacks. Keep your evenings and weekends open during callbacks to make sure you can accommodate all the people you will be seeing. Remind actors to fill out pref sheets and reiterate key dates. Remember that people cannot be cast if they have not filled out a pref sheet.

Once callbacks are done, work with your director and team to create a depth chart. For every role, make a list of every actor you would like to cast in order of preference. You do not have to list every actor who got called back on the depth chart -- these are the people for which you would rather list the role as TBD than cast. At conferrals, you will have the opportunity to cast actors. Wirtz gets to pull all the actors they want first because they have priority casting. This is something that is changing as StuCo and Wirtz move forward, so if you ever have questions, feel free to reach out to Wirtz or the StuCo Co-Chairs for the most current casting policies.

Typically, StuCo conferrals happen the Sunday after callbacks end. Shows take turns requesting actors they want to cast. When someone lists an actor who is at the top of your depth chart, you have a *direct conflict*. The StuCo co-chairs will refer to the actors' pref sheets and "award" the actor to the team with higher preference. If another team lists an actor who is lower on your depth chart, you have an *indirect conflict*. Indirect conflicts are generally tabled for later once teams have fuller

pictures of their cast. Actors may also withdraw from consideration from your show. The Co-Chairs will send your team the list of withdrawals one or two nights before conferrals. If you think someone may have filled out their pref form incorrectly when you receive withdrawals, feel free to ask the co-chairs to check in with the actor. If the actor cannot be reached, you will have to honor the pref sheet.

Reach out to your graphic designer two weeks in advance and ask them to be on standby during conferrals, or have a graphic pre-planned. Send your cast list to your graphic designer as soon as it is complete. Your graphic designer should just be adding names to an already completed design and will email the list back to you. Send the list to the StuCo co-chairs. Abide by any restrictions the StuCo co-chairs place on file size (large files prevent some people from seeing the list!)

Moving forward, it may be worth finding a casting director, or finding someone to work with to help cast, especially if you are looking to have a more diverse cast.

## Build

Build typically takes place over two or three weekends, at either the WAVE garage or the Arts Alliance garage. These garages are not actually owned by the boards anymore, they are just names. Reservations occur through the StuCo Equipment Managers, reachable at <a href="mailto:stucoequipment@u.northwestern.edu">stucoequipment@u.northwestern.edu</a>. Reserve times as early as possible!

Before getting to build, check out the garages. Find out what tools are available, and make sure you are able to buy things you can't find. You'll work with your show and board TDs, as well as your board's Production Manager to plan out build and determine how much time you think it will take. Whatever you don't have, you'll probably buy from Home Depot or Vogue Fabrics (if it's fabric). Try to use star bit screws! They are the best kind. When going to make a purchase, don't forget to bring a tax exempt form or be sure you can pull it up online. Home Depot usually will just take the number without needing a signed form.

If you know that your set designer or TD is working on something else, make sure you plan appropriately. There's no point in scheduling build time where someone won't be able to effectively lead the rest of the people who are there. Your primary help will be board members, and not everyone has the ability to lead a build or use all of the tools. Your production manager will likely share a spreadsheet with you of who will be at build each day, and if they don't, ask them to. This can help you and your TD/set designer plan out what can be accomplished at each day of build.

Plan to be at the garages for all of build. If you are comfortable doing so, you can help lead, or you can be the person who is able to go run and buy materials if needed. It's also a nice gesture to bring coffee and bagels for the people who show up to build. Save the receipt and work it into the budget.

Keep in mind that you can only work on weekends as the build garages are located next to offices. All evidence of build must be gone when you are done. That means nothing left outside and no paint on the grass. Keep this in mind as you plan your set, it is going to have to fit in the garage or in storage when you are not building. There may be another show building in the same garage as you. Coordinate with your fellow producers to ensure easy collaboration. Take different lunch breaks to give each other a full hour with all the tools at your disposal.

Build is a learning environment. Every effort should be made to allow all participants at build to increase their knowledge and develop new skills. This requires setting a tone by the scenic designer, the producer, and other upperclassmen of explaining with kindness and patience, and taking the time to teach a skill, even if it means taking longer than doing it yourself. Along with this, assumptions of build skills based on sex, age, or any other pillar of identity will be avoided by all build participants.

## Load-In

Load-in typically begins around 1pm or 4pm on the Sunday the weekend before your show opens. You will likely get access to the space you're working in around 4pm, so if you need to transport materials from the garages or elsewhere, get some hands together earlier so that as soon as you're able to get in the space, you can start working. Coordinate with your production manager to determine what time it would be helpful to have an all hands call. All hands means that every person on the board is expected to be present. However, especially with bigger boards, you will likely never get a full turn out with an all hands call.

What needs to come first, set or lights? Is there any painting that needs to happen still before something can be loaded in? What tools do you need in the space? Make sure you are only using equipment that you are allowed to use in Norris spaces. This will differ greatly for Shanley vs. McCormick or the Louis Room.

GET A UHAUL. And get insurance on it. Please please please. 15 foot UHauls have ramps, so if you have heavy things on wheels (like lighting road cases) consider getting a 15 foot.

If you have to put up something complicated like truss, make sure you have someone who knows how to put it up, and who feels comfortable leading others in doing so.

## **Tech Week**

Make a tech week schedule as soon as you are able. Be ready to change it up, but it is always good to have a plan. Check with your designers about what times they might be able to be in the space and plan ahead for things like dark time and set notes time, as well as any quiet time your sound engineer/designer may need. This may also change as needed after each day of tech. Determine early on when your invited dress and photo call will be. This is typically the Thursday right before opening.

At the end of each day of tech, hold a production meeting. This is your time to go through general notes from the day, as well as schedule anything that needs to happen before the next day of tech.

Check in with your designers about whether or not they need board ops. Sound might, lighting almost definitely will want board ops.

Your job during tech week is mainly to troubleshoot, or get down and dirty if there's still some things that just need to get done. In a perfect world, you would be doing nothing during tech. Realistically, you will be putting out a number of fires. Knowing what can go wrong is key to avoiding issues in the first place and quickly solving issues.

Here are some things to put on a to do list ahead of time to prepare for a successful tech:

- 1. Get a uhaul
- 2. Get your lighting rental (optional)
- 3. Load the set in
- 4. Hanging and focusing lights
- 5. If you're in Shanley, you'll need to set up risers and chairs
- 6. Taping down cable
- 7. Making sure your program is ready more than 10 minutes before opening. Here are some things you can include
  - a. Directors note
  - b. Cast list
  - c. Crew list
  - d. Special thanks
  - e. Donor thanks
  - f. Land acknowledgement
  - g. Any content warnings

And finally, always remember to thank your team and the board you are working with for their help. You may not find them particularly helpful the whole time, but expressing gratitude goes a long way.

#### Shows

Happy opening! You've made it. Most shows typically do land acknowledgements before each show, although we recognize that this can become performative. Look into resources and acknowledgements that you can put in your program or your pre-show announcement. Always include fire exits, content warnings, and any other information you might need in your announcement. Some helpful things are run time and whether or not there will be an intermission.

Write a thank you note to everyone on your process! You've just opened and closed a show in one weekend, which can be extremely emotional in a lot of different ways. Take a deep breath, and find whatever way that works for you to either celebrate or breathe and move on.

## Strike

Strike can suck. Be prepared for this. If you know you have a lot to do, don't show up hungover at 10am. Something helpful can be having a night strike after your closing performance so that you have less to do the next day and you have the potential to enjoy the cast party.

Make sure that your designers and your board know when strike is well in advance. Decide early on whether or not you're going to have a night strike and LET PEOPLE KNOW. Some things to consider for strike:

- 1. Getting a uhaul: you will likely need this for a lot of things. Returning lights, returning flats, etc.
- 2. If you have a lighting rental, you'll need somewhere to store the lights until the following Monday. Norris is usually pretty lenient about this, and most shanley shows will let you leave your lights in there while they load in.
- 3. Make sure you have the tools you'll need to strike the set!
- 4. Sound strike can be relatively easy. Anyone can unplug cable and rip up tape, but make sure people who are coiling cable know how to do so. Check with your sound team to see what kind of support they want. Often, it's easier for them to just strike by themselves.
- 5. Make sure any sourced costumes get back to their owners. Anything that was bought can be stored in a number of places. Check with your board to see where they store equipment and leftover costumes or supplies.
- 6. Do not start earlier than 10am. It will not be productive.
- 7. Do not throw trash away in regular trash cans. If you painted Shankey at all, you must be prepared to repaint the floor and any poles or walls back to black.
- 8. Decide whether or not you want an all-hands or whether or not you want to assign people to specific times of strike. Check with your designers to see what kind of support they want.
- 9. If you have something complicated to strike, like truss, make sure there will be someone there who both knows how to strike it, and who feels comfortable leading others in striking it.
- 10. Checking out! Shanley check out has a standard process. Find a QR code, and fill it out. Then, meet with the PSV person around 2 to finish your check out. If there is something being left in Shanley during another shows load-in, just let the PSV person know that this has previously been agreed upon.

Congratulations! You produced a show!!

## The Spaces you'll work in

## **McCormick Auditorium**

Located inside the Norris center, it is a 330 seat auditorium that functions as a proscenium theatre. Currently, the only way to effectively use the space is to put lighting fixtures in the aisles in the house, given that the cove, the primary lighting position, is unusable. As a producer, the most important things to know about McCormick are:

- 1. Your lighting designer will need a good amount of money.
- 2. Find a good sound engineer, not just a designer. Make sure they know how to use sound equipment, otherwise no one will be able to hear.
- 3. You cannot build platforms for people to stand on that are taller than 3'11".
- 4. Be prepared for the band to take up a lot of space. Make sure your MD and set designer are communicating about this early on.
- 5. Be cognisant of cast size. Directors and music directors like big casts, but sometimes it just makes it crowded on stage, especially because the McCormick stage is shaped so weirdly.
- 6. If you're curious about other information, please refer to the technical manuals linked on the StuCo Website.

## The Louis Room

Also located inside the Norris center, the Louis Room is a multi-purpose room that can serve as a proscenium style house, in the round, thrust, or basically anything your director and designers can imagine. It typically holds anywhere from 60-100 seats, although this number, as you can see, often varies even more outside of those bounds. Things to know about the Louis:

- 1. Again, your lighting designer probably needs a good amount of money. Check with them early on about whether they plan to put lights on the ground or on the balcony level.
- 2. Find a good sound engineer! Especially if you're doing non-proscenium.
- 3. You cannot build platforms for people to stand on that are taller than 3'11".
- 4. While these rules apply in McCormick, because the Louis room has carpet, Norris is even stricter about things like paint and wood glue. Just don't do it.

## **Shanley Pavilion**

Located behind Lunt and across from Swift, Shanley is a shack that usually holds about 70-80 chairs. It can be turned into anything your heart desires, although it does have those three silly poles up the middle that can either be your best friend or your worst nightmare. Things to know about Shanley:

- 1. You can get away without having much of a lighting budget. Check in with your designer early and see whether or not they want to/can use Shanley stock to accomplish their and the director's vision.
- 2. Set budgets can be much lower in shanley than in the other two spaces.
- 3. You can paint the floor and the walls, but whatever you paint must be painted back to black when you load out.
- 4. Be cognisant of how big your cast and your band is, just because of how small Shanley is.

## SOFO

SOFO is not always fun. Befriend your board's business manager, and listen to everything they tell you. Make sure you save all of your receipts, and make sure you write down who needs to be reimbursed for what. Sometimes, if you're willing to, it's easier to front everything yourself. Even if someone else pays for something, you can venmo them, and then all of the reimbursements will just go to you.

While it is not necessary to be SOFO trained, the more you know, the more you'll be able to help your team and your board's business manager. Also remember that SOFO cannot reimburse tax. If people buy something without a tax exemption, make sure they know this. Or, be prepared to venmo people for tax and find a way to get yourself back the extra money.

If you're buying things online, you probably just want to bite the bullet on tax exemption. But, if you go through iBuy NU or go through Northwestern's preferred vendors that can make it easier. Feel free to look over the SOFO training powerpoints for extra information.

## Catalyzer

Catalyzer has restrictions on what you can buy, but it is a great way (most of the time) to raise extra, but necessary, funds for your show. Talk to your board early on if you want to do a catalyzer.

Catalyzer can seem intimidating, but just ask your board to see if anyone has done a catalyzer application before, and then they can send you helpful information to fill out the templates. It's nice when the director and producer are the project leaders for the catalyzer campaign, but it can also be a member of the board you are producing for.

When it comes to getting people to donate, be persistent (but not too annoying) and encourage them to donate even in small amounts. It's also helpful to have people reach out to their close contacts themselves (like their parents-since they're more likely to donate if their child asks them for money than some random student they don't know.

## Fundraising

Here are some ways to make extra money:

- 1. Northwestern Grants
  - a. The Wild Ideas Grant, The Hillel Make It Happen Grant
  - b. Reach out to departments to see if they will sponsor you. Think broadly about themes and topics that might connect to your show.
- 2. Profit shares
  - a. Companies will give you a percent of their proceeds. People often do profit shares with chipotle, and bubble tea places.
- 3. Bake sales
- 4. Events (think fundies, open mics, etc)
- 5. Venmo fundraisers

a. Sometimes people put together cute little venmo fundraisers. They're not always super effective, but they can be cute. Examples include: if you raise x amount of money, then the director and producer will dye their hair, or if you raise x amount of money, the cast will jump into lake michigan in clothes

## **Room Reservations**

<u>25live</u> is your best friend. If you need rooms, check early and often. Make sure you get rooms with enough space for what you need. If you're producing a musical, getting rooms with pianos is helpful. Those rooms include: wirtz struble, wirtz 101, bergen, south, wirtz 235

Wirtz is the most accessible rehearsal space, followed by Kresge, University, and then Locy. Locy is bad. Try not to use it. There is no elevator and the only bathrooms and water filling station are in the basement. You also have to walk up stairs to get into the building. Figure out early on if any of this might pose a problem for your team, and make sure you reserve rooms that fit your teams' needs.

## Marketing/Advertising

**The publicity for your show is super important!** This is how you are going to get people to see your show! It is also the life and image of your show before people see it on stage. The more on top of publicity you are the more people will be talking about your show and the more it will be on people's minds.

**Be original and creative!** If you can come up with creative ways to publicize that will make your show more memorable. Meet with your Graphic Designer and Publicity Director early to talk about what you are excited about and what you can feasibly achieve.

**Publicity teams are great to have, and the bigger they are: the better.** Unlike some other teams, publicity is a team where numbers make the job easier for you. The tedium like ground-flyering, or flyering in dining halls, or window/banner painting can be given to your publicity team and can be done faster and more efficiently if you have a large team. It's recommended to have one or two people as "Publicity Directors" to spearhead these publicity initiatives and keep the larger team in check.

You are likely working with a graphic designer. Graphic designers are in high demand on campus – for this reason, it is crucial that you always give your graphic designer advance notice of your needs (two weeks or more is golden). Your board's Marketing Director can be a great resource too!

## Here are some tried-and-true ways to publicize:

- 1. **Flyering:** Decide on whether you want one graphic for flyers or if you want to do a teaser and a final poster, or two teasers, etc. Also make sure that your flyers have both the WAVE logo and the StuCo logo on them. Flyering is a tedious task so it will take some rallying to cover campus, but you can do it! Flyers can be posted on the ground (there is a map on Norris' website with accurate locations), in various campus buildings, and in dining halls (you have to clear this with NUCuisine first).
- 2. **Window Space and Banner Space:** Check first with WAVE's Marketing Director to see if we already have this space reserved for you. If not, do so through Norris Events Management. For both you will have to go to ARTica in the Norris Underground. For banners, you paint the banner in ARTica and then when it is dry, hang it between two trees by the arch. You could alternatively have a professional banner printed, but this is a pricier option. For window, you get paint from ARTica (make sure it's washable!) and paint the windows on the ground floor of Norris.
- 3. **TVs:** There are TVs in some dining halls and in Norris than will show your graphics, sometimes for a cost. Make sure to contact the right people to see if you will need to pay and what dimensions your graphic needs to be.
- 4. **The Rock:** If you want to guard the Rock for the 24-hours and paint it, this could be a fun way to publicize AND bond with your team.
- 5. **Buttons or Stickers:** If you have a logo for your show, you can find a company that will print out buttons or stickers. If you do this early enough, you can hand out buttons and stickers at

bake sales or other events to have people publicize your show around campus by wearing them.

- 6. **Merch:** Merchandise, if done quickly enough, can be a great way to publicize, otherwise it's just a fun way to remember the show, which is worthwhile also. People tend to have very strong opinions about what the merch should be for a given show, so either factor in the time to hear all of these opinions or make an authoritative decision yourself and move forward with that. It's also a bit of a tedious job, so rather than do it yourself this is a job that you should most definitely give to an assistant producer or publicity team member.
- 7. **Social Media:** Some shows are more present on social media than others. Facebook is always something that should always be done. You can decide whether or not you want to make a fan page for your show and give updates about the show through there, or only use the WAVE page for updates and then make an event the week of your show. As for other social media platforms, like Twitter and Instagram, you can decide whether or not you find it worthwhile to engage the community through those mediums.

## **Technical Guides**

Norris Student Theatre Dashboard Pre-Production form Technical Manuals StuCo Website

## Accessibility in Your Spaces

StuCo as a whole is still working on accessibility. Below are some things to consider, and maybe some tips and tricks. Linked below is also the 80th Annual Dolphin Show Accessibility Guide, which may provide more insights.

What is accessibility?

In StuCo, accessibility can be defined as equal opportunities to participate in a fulfilling way, without any barriers related to ability level, race, gender, economic background, and any other difference amongst community levels. This applies to EVERYONE.

### Taken from the DS80 Accessibility Guide:

Marketing/Social Media Accessibility

- General Best Practices:
  - Don't overuse hashtags and emojis
    - Using hashtags:
      - Camel Case: a typographical convention in which an initial capital is used for the first letter of a word forming the second element of a closed compound.
        - An example: use #DolphinShow instead of #Dolphinshow

- This allows for screen readers (used by people who are blind/visually impaired in any way) to be able to recognize the hashtag has multiple words.
- It also provides a huge benefit to users with cognitive disabilities or dyslexia in deciphering hashtags.
- Choose background colors wisely
- Sans Serif fonts are the easiest to read
- When distinguishing words, utilize bolding the text rather than putting it in italics or underlining it.
- Image descriptions/Alt Text:
  - Image descriptions are written-out depictions of the visual content in a social media post. Here are some examples of social media users who would benefit from image descriptions:
    - People who use text-to-speech technology on their phones or computers have written content read aloud to them to increase understanding. This technology only works on written content like post captions, not on photos or graphics.
    - For people who have their phone or computer settings set to increase text/font size to better read text on their device. This technology also only applies to written content and not photos and graphics.
  - Key tips for image descriptions:
    - Short and concise is almost always your best bet!
    - Steer clear of ableist language.
      - Ex. "In this image, you can see..."
    - Include only objective descriptions of the image, not personal interpretation
  - An example in action:



- Image description: A graphic reading the letters "D S" in bold capitals with an outline of a dolphin forming the curve of the "S." Text below the graphic reads "The Dolphin Show."
- If you would like more guidelines on alt text examples, click <u>here</u>.
- Options for Alt Text:

- For Instagram:
  - Instagram does automatically generate alt text using AI, but it is often inaccurate, so it is best to put in the info manually.
    - Before posting a photo, tap "Advanced Settings."
    - Tap "Write Alt Text."
    - Write your alt text in the box and then continue on to post.
- For Facebook:
  - Like Instagram, Facebook does automatically generate alt text using
    - AI, but it is often inaccurate, so it is best to put in the info manually.
      - Before posting a photo, tap "Edit."
      - $\circ$   $\;$  Select the "Alternative Text" option to the left of the image.
      - Save your alt text and navigate back to the post.
  - When posting links, photos often appear with the link. You are NOT able to create alt text for this image. Thus:
    - Add text in the caption that says "Link preview description:" followed by a description.
- Closed Captioning:
  - Closed captioning is the written text version of the audio in a video in real time. As the video progresses, a written script of the audio appears on the screen.
  - Key tips for closed captioning:
    - Include both spoken words and short descriptions of the video's sound effects and/or music.
    - Ensure your captions are in real-time with the video.
    - Group your captions in shorter chunks to make sure the screen does not become overcrowded with text at one time.
    - Write your captions in an easily-read font.
  - Options for closed captioning:
    - For Instagram:
      - Instagram automatically generates captions for all video content, which can be turned on by the person posting.
        - Before sharing a video post, tap "Advanced Settings."
        - In advanced settings, scroll down to "Accessibility."
        - Toggle "Show Captions" to turn on captions.
    - For Facebook:
      - Facebook automatically generates captions for all video content, which can be turned on by the individual user (see below).
    - If you are uploading content to YouTube:
      - YouTube automatically generates captions for all videos posted to its platform.
        - This is a great accessibility tool, but it is not always completely accurate to the text.
      - YouTube Studio enables you to type your captions directly into the software to ensure they are correctly displayed. You can also adjust what is shown on the screen at a time.

- How to turn on captioning from the consumer end (if you are curious about how users can access captions or if you are interested in accessing them yourself!):
  - On your iPhone:
    - Open the "Settings" app.
    - Scroll down to "Accessibility" and then tap "Subtitles & Captioning"
    - Tap next to "Closed Captions + SDH" to turn on video captions on your device, when available
  - On Facebook (from a computer no mobile options are currently offered!):
    - Open "Settings and Privacy" on Facebook
    - Click "Settings" and scroll down to "Videos" in the left-hand column
    - Click next to "Always Show Captions" to turn on captions for Facebook videos, when available
- Email Marketing:
  - Emails sent to a listserv are examples of material from the web that need to incorporate accessibility, including alt text (like mentioned above for social media!) and descriptive hyperlinks.
    - Emails should use a plain text font or universal Sans Serif font (like Arial) in at least a 12-point font size.
    - Files or forms that are linked from the email should be accessible.
    - Images in the email should use alt text or include captions beneath the image.
      - Decorative images or graphics can be tagged with alt = "" so screen readers are able to read them.
- Website:
  - $\circ$   $\;$  The website should be 508 compliant. More about that <u>here</u>.
  - An accessible website allows all users to navigate through all sections and pages of the website.
  - Users are able to experience all content on its pages and in any linked material.
  - Allow users to skip repetitive elements on the page through a "Skip to Main Page" or Skip Navigation" link.
  - Do not rely on color alone to convey meaning. Color information may not be available to a person who is color blind and will be unavailable to screen readers.

At-Large Production Accessibility

- Production Behind the Scenes Standpoint
  - Rehearsal Room and Production Meetings
    - In rehearsal reports, include a section for accessibility notes! An example of this may be that a line changed or music with lyrics has been added and captioning needs to be made aware or that an actor is speaking a portion of text in another language and ASL and Captions needs to be made aware.
    - Step stools and places to sit should be available anywhere people will be congregating for long periods of time: rehearsal rooms, offices, build, backstage, etc.

- Allow for both digital and paper access to notes, as well as options to take notes either digitally or on paper.
- Virtual access to all meetings. This can be extremely helpful to disabled individuals, both for those who cannot make it to an in-person space and for those who have intermittent episodes of needing to stay at home despite usually working in person.
- Embody flexibility, even when it can be challenging. The coronavirus pandemic has, in many ways, forced people to confront the personal lives of their colleagues in a way that they haven't before, which has made space for flexibility in workplaces and schools that wasn't previously present. Holding onto this recognition of everyone's humanity and personal needs after the pandemic is over would be an immense help to all theatre practitioners, including disabled people.
- Design Elements
  - Costumes:
    - Keep in mind the needs of performers throughout the show (i.e., in *Matilda*, the children dance a lot!)
    - If needed, incorporate mobility aids into the costume design, rather than adding in the mobility aids later on down the line as an afterthought.
  - Lighting:
    - Consider whether any photosensitive cast/crew/audience members will be harmed by your design.
    - Strobe lights in general should be completely avoided.
  - Set:
    - If making a set for someone with a mobility-related disability, ensure you are familiar with the construction of safe ramps. The ADA recommended incline for a ramp is as follows: every 1" of vertical rise requires at least 1' (12") of ramp length (5 degrees of incline).
    - Discuss with the stage manager, director, or someone else who might know whether anyone 21 involved in the production has allergies or sensitivities to particular woods, synthetic materials, or paints so as not to utilize those materials.
- Build
  - Step stools and places to sit should be available anywhere people will be congregating for long periods of time: rehearsal rooms, offices, costume and scene shops, etc.
- Sensory Friendly Production Audience Standpoint
  - Lighting
    - House lights remain on for the entire performance.
    - A reduction of strobe lighting and lighting focused on the audience.
    - In general, lighting effects will be made less intense.

- Identify any unpredictable light cues (i.e., lighting, thunderclap) and determine a way to notify audiences of these sounds during performances using a visual indicator (like a glowstick).
- Sound
  - Sound is capped at 90 decibels.
  - Identify any unpredictable sounds (i.e., lighting, thunderclap) and determine a way to notify audiences of these sounds during performances using a visual indicator (like a glowstick).
- Lobby
  - Guests are free to talk and leave their seats during the performance.
  - Space is held throughout the theater for standing and movement. There will also be blocking of rows or sections in order for quick exits. The front row will be left available.
  - Quiet spaces within the theatre will be created and clearly marked within the theatre for those that feel overwhelmed or would like a break from the performance.
  - An access guide will be made available to guests that details everything they must know in order to prepare for their visit.
  - There will be training for those interacting with patrons to be inviting and accommodating to various audience needs.
  - Sensory bags will be available at every performance with various items that can lessen sensory overload and designed to help sensory needs in children and adults.
  - A lobby display will be created for theatre productions of tactile/visual opportunities prior to the performance.
- Technology
  - In the event, Dolphin is able to rent from the Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium, assisted listening and captioning devices will be available at all performances.

Interested in learning more? Check out these resources:

#### Organizations

- <u>Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium</u>
- National Arts & Disability Center (TONS of resources)
- <u>VSA Research and Resources</u>

#### Articles

- <u>The Future of Theatre is Accessible</u>
- Access is a human right
- <u>Making Theatre Autism-Friendly</u>
- <u>Actor Calls for Future of Theatre Accessibility</u>
- <u>Accessibility and the theatre: what's the problem?</u>
- Video: Discussion, Accessibility in Theatre

## Documents

- <u>A Near-Comprehensive Guide to Accessible Theatre</u>
- <u>Sensory Friendly FAQ for show example</u>
- <u>Kennedy Center Sensory-Friendly Info</u>
- <u>Social Media Accessibility Toolkit</u>
- <u>ASL/Deaf Community Resources (created by me, also in the shared accessibility folder)</u>

## **Student Organizations**

Seesaw Theatre ASL Club