M. Stage Managers & Production Managers

Stage Managers and Production Managers practice a discipline in which their creative activity is devoted to enabling and implementing a theatrical work of art. Theatre is a collaborative art involving the contribution of writers, actors, directors, designers, technicians, and an audience. Stage management is the component of this process responsible for the interaction of all these participants. The process of planning, rehearsing, and performing a theatrical work of art is a paradigm for group activity, the equivalent in the theatre field to traditional research. Successful work requires collaborative efforts from faculty and students. The disciplines of stage and production management are central to this process.

When evaluating documentation in a tenure dossier, external reviewers, administrators, and the tenure and promotion committee may ask themselves whether the candidate’s tenure portfolio demonstrates the ability to teach and use their practice to explore:

Production Expertise

- Understanding of scenic, costume, lighting, and sound design practices
- Ability to interpret designers’ renderings, models, and/or sketches
- Ability to communicate effectively with all members of the design and production team regarding resources of time and/or funds to accomplish the project
- Ability to use computer resources (spreadsheets, databases, etc.) to support such production process as scheduling and budget management
- Understanding of the materials commonly used in scenic construction
- Understanding of safe handling procedures for scenic equipment and materials
- Understanding of safe stage operations and stage maintenance, including stage rigging and machinery, stage lighting equipment, and stage audio equipment
- Knowledge of relevant standard safety procedures and regulations, as well as those prescribed by related professional organizations such as Actors’ Equity Association (AEA), United Scenic Artists #829 (USAA), the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDCS), Society of Fight Directors (SAFD), and the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), as appropriate.
- In-depth understanding of equitable practices in the theatre through a display of cultural competency and the techniques necessary (consent based and trauma-informed practices) for honoring the professional and personal boundaries of students
- Training in Mental Health First Aid, Bystander Intervention, Anti-Racism, LGBTQ+ support, and DEIJE work

Historical Context

- Knowledge of dramatic literature across the globe, including historic and contemporary genres
- Knowledge of theatrical production history, with emphasis on elements of scenery, properties, lighting, costumes, and sound
- Knowledge of art history, especially architecture and décor, and understanding of how designers use such knowledge.
Collaborative Skills

- Ability to coordinate and communicate responsibly and tactfully with people of diverse artistic personalities and cultural backgrounds
- Ability to support the creative environment by anticipating, prioritizing, and solving problems
- Demonstrated success in working collaboratively with theatre artists of the highest caliber
- Competence in higher levels of planning required in seasonal or repertory contexts
- Knowledge of union rules in their places of employment
- Experience in time and personnel management, scheduling, and meeting contractual obligations
- Proven organizational skills
- An understanding of ethical practices associated with the field of professional and academic theatre and performance
- An understanding of how DEIJ/E is considered when selecting research projects for students
- An understanding of how DEIJ/E informs the recruitment of students, in cases where that is part of the candidate’s labor
- An understanding of how DEIJ/E issues impact their life at the university and an ability to think about their own implicit biases

Overall excellence from the Stage Manager/Production Manager requires the ability to integrate knowledge in the areas noted above. Stage Managers/Production Managers must possess a working knowledge of the structures and practices of all areas of theatre performance and design. They must have the skill to meet a production’s requirements in the organization of communication, organization of rehearsals, and the skills to run a live performance to professional standards. Such expertise is demonstrated by participating in realized productions both on and off campus. Stage Managers/Production Managers are best evaluated by attending a live performance of a production for which the manager is responsible. Whereas the inclusion of cue sheets and associated paperwork is essential as support material detailing the process of the manager, it does little to evaluate true ability. Drawings, charts, and other paperwork should be evaluated but they cannot substitute for the viewing of an actual production. Still or video photography might add some useful information to an evaluation but, again, are inferior to a live production. If recorded media are used for evaluation of a candidate, the circumstances of the recordings must be clearly stated.