

ASSOCIATION FOR THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ETHICS TASK FORCE REPORT: A CODE FOR TEACHERS OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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MUTUAL RESPECT AND INTEGRITY

Individuals, departments, and programs are guided by the principles and obligations that derive from our common membership in the community of teaching and that exemplify the collegiality essential to the collaborative process of theatre practice. Our lives and work are based on personal and professional integrity, responsibility, and consideration. We must be sensitive to and respectful of the rights and human dignity of all individuals. We recognize that each individual is different from all other individuals and both respect and are responsive to these differences. We strive to appreciate the diversity of society and the theatre community as providing opportunities for learning, new perspectives, and creative growth. Committed to the principles of equal opportunity and treatment of all students, faculty, staff and applicants for admission, casting of, employment, we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

As persons engaged in the common enterprise of education, scholarship, and practice in theatre, we are responsible to and mutually supportive of colleagues and associates regardless of rank, title, position, or level of responsibility in department, program, or production project. We do not discriminate against or harass associates. We respect and defend: the free inquiry and creative practice of colleagues. We acknowledge the value of different approaches to the discipline and performance of theatre. We encourage the free expression of support and of criticism of these approaches as realized in production, publication, and instruction while striving to be objective in our professional judgment of colleagues and showing due respect for the opinions of others. We encourage and practice civility in discourse and reliance on persuasion rather than coercion. We neither encourage nor join divisive interest groups or factions within our theatre organization, educational unit, or production team. We advocate and cooperate in communication models and conflict intervention strategies as appropriate ways to avoid or resolve such divisions. In our own work with students, staff, or faculty we strive to avoid fostering any cult of personality that promotes self at the expense of deprecating colleagues or inappropriately influencing students. Faculty and staff have responsibility to model behavior for students.

As colleagues collaborating in a profession that depends on intellectual and creative freedom for its health and integrity, we accept a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and creative exploration and to further public understanding of academic and artistic freedom.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

As theatre educators, we espouse freedom of speech, equal access, and diversity. We seek to create responsible learning environments in which any idea may be explored. We insist that these learning environments are sensitive and responsive to differences in religion, race, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, or sexual orientation. We expect to foster engagement that leads to awareness, understanding and respect of self and other, and courage to push boundaries in learning about and making theatre.

REHEARSAL/PRODUCTION, LABORATORY TEACHING, AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

Administrators, faculty, and staff are responsible for the physical and emotional safety, supervision, and integrity of the rehearsal/production and studio teaching environments. We are faced with situations and demands which regularly go beyond those faced by educators who work solely in classroom or seminar environments. Our work with young students requires us to engage them intimately in emotional and physical terms, as well as intellectual ones, as a crucial part of their development as artists and in making of their art. We require students, faculty, and staff--for reasons integral to the process of making theatre--to work in settings, such as in the shop or rehearsal hall, involving potential physical risk beyond that found in a classroom. Often there is a delicate balance between producing challenging art and keeping students safe emotionally and physically.

Administrators, faculty, and staff should respect different approaches to performance/production and laboratory teaching/training. The philosophy behind approaches used should be communicated to the community at large; the goal should be to provide a common understanding of the principles, values, and objectives of the performance/production and laboratory teaching/training components of the program. We should also teach students clear standards of professional conduct and behavior.

Administrators and faculty must support students in having balanced lives beyond the production or studio space. Accordingly, we must build balance into our programmatic structure, e.g., in terms of course/credit hour loads and parameters for rehearsal and production. Concomitantly, we must set a high standard for achievement, discipline, and professionalism for our students. For each production or project, we must clearly define each person's responsibilities, and the nature and duration of the rehearsal/production process. We should enable and encourage students to take advantage of performance and employment opportunities outside of the program. Faculty must not monopolize students' creative energies.

Teachers must create studio/rehearsal/production environments free from any form of harassment and abuse, and which allow expression and inquiry. We must not be abusive and must not condone abuse among students. We are obliged to employ our knowledge, training, experience, and insight fully to help students grow; this will require us pedagogically and artistically to challenge the student.

The use of physical touch is a routine teaching practice in acting, voice, touch in the classroom or in rehearsal. Whenever a teacher uses physical touch in the classroom or in rehearsal, he or she must ensure that: its use proceeds from the teaching or rehearsal objective at hand; the physical contact with a student in class or rehearsal is specific and restricted, and involves no element of coercion; the student clearly understands the purpose of the physical contact; and the student is asked for consent for the touching in a non-coercive manner and has the right to refuse.

Administrators and supervisors must provide clear and specific expectations and job descriptions to staff involved in the mounting of productions or in the maintaining of production and rehearsal spaces. They must ensure that staff work within the scope of their job descriptions.

Administrators, faculty, and staff must provide a physically safe work space that complies with generally accepted health and safety laws, and in which work-related stress is kept to a minimum. This means we must:

- Follow all local, state, and federal fire, health, and safety regulations;
- Adhere to hazard communication (right-to-know) laws for those working in potentially hazardous situations;
- Provide workers with access to inventories and data sheets for potentially hazardous chemicals in the workplace and with formal training for handling potentially toxic chemicals;
- Equip shop areas properly in terms of well-maintained machinery and tools;
- Provide an appropriate amount of space for building activities;

Provide appropriate space, ventilation, and equipment whenever people are using hazardous substances (e.g., sprays, foams, dyes, etc.);
Dispose hazardous substances properly and in accordance with environmental protection laws;
Train and appropriately supervise faculty, staff, and students in production, construction, running crew, and strike activities;
Enforce safety precautions and use of protective equipment, especially for eye, respiratory, and noise-level protection;
Maintain appropriate and healthy work schedules.

Administrators, faculty, staff, and students are collectively responsible for keeping rehearsal and performance spaces physically safe. While we all share this responsibility, the administration, faculty, and staff are ultimately responsible both to oversee spaces and equipment and to model appropriate behavior on decision-making in these matters.

FACULTY PRODUCTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Administrators, faculty, and staff must stay current in their fields and be productive, contributing members of the academic theatre community throughout all stages of their careers.

Administrators must:

Encourage and support professional development for individuals, providing release time and financial assistance whenever possible;
Articulate clearly and carefully their expectations for professional productivity, face-to-face and in writing;
Inform individuals of evaluation principles and procedures, and indicate their impact on tenure and promotion decisions and on annual or periodic reviews;
Engage in constructive and purposeful evaluation that leads to the further positive development and improvement of colleagues, according each person respect and due process.

Administrators must:

Insure that faculty obligations are fairly and equitably assigned and workloads are reasonable;
Balance time spent in shops and studios against class time, class size, and other creative and scholarly activities and expectations;
Assign service activities, especially committees, in a fair and equitable manner, mindful of the impact that such work has on tenure and promotion (committee work must not consume an undue and unrecognized portion of a person's time).

Review should occur and mentoring should be available for all members of the faculty at all ranks. Annual merit reviews should not preclude faculty mentoring and formal periodic peer reviews based on established criteria in support of an individual's pursuit of tenure, promotion, or contract renewal.

Senior faculty and staff members are responsible to assist in the development of junior faculty members, serving as mentors, advisors, and role models. They must guide junior colleagues through the steps leading to tenure and promotion, inspiring them to lifetime excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and university and professional service.

When professional development involves release time and/or periods of time away, administrators may require other faculty and staff to fulfill the duties of the person on leave; they must make these assignments fairly and reward them appropriately. Students must not be penalized if a leave results in the cancellation of courses and/or other requirements necessary for graduation.

Administrators and other members of the theatre faculty must respect the individual's right to a personal life outside the theatre.

FACULTY POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPOINTMENT GUIDELINES

Prior to the announcement of a faculty vacancy, all responsible parties should agree on major elements of the position and expectations concerning the professional profile of the faculty member being recruited. Search procedures and committee composition should reflect the collective agreement, as should all documents disseminated about the position.

The institution should engage in an open process in announcing and recruiting for the position. The procedure established for soliciting and reviewing applicants and for selecting final candidates should be consistent with the institution's announced criteria and commitment to a fair, open, and non-discriminatory search. All announcements should include information concerning rank, length of appointment, whether the position is with tenure or carries eligibility for tenure, whether the position is contingent upon funding or other conditions, and requisite experience, credentials, and expectations. Criteria and procedures for reappointment, promotion, and tenure, as well as other relevant information, should be available to all interested candidates. Upon request, candidates should be informed about the selection process and their placement within it. The process should be courteous, respectful, forthright and reciprocal. Appropriate confidentiality must be maintained throughout the process.

Candidates should be notified in a timely manner when the position is filled. Institutions hiring faculty employed elsewhere full-time should inform the other institution promptly. Records of applicants should be kept for one year following the conclusion of the search.

Upon appointment, clear criteria, performance expectations, and opportunities should be provided in writing for faculty that address qualitative and quantitative issues with respect to teaching, advising, research and creative activity, programmatic responsibility, university and professional service.