# Theater Arts CTE Meeting Minutes, June 3rd 2022

## In Attendance

**ELAC Theater Members:** Cristina Frias, Vanessa Mizzone Pellegrini, Jessica Hansen, Lisa Hashimoto Stone, Francois Pierre Couture, Marina Chavez, Maribel Chavez, David Laird Scott

**Advisory Committee Members:** Sara Guerrero, Nathan Singh, Becky Smith, Celina Martinez, Michelle Merring, Luis Quintana, Caitlyn Conlin, Andrew Lynford, Rose Portillo, Erica Ortega, Jessica Kubzansky, Robert Castro, Zilah Mendoza Hill, Thomas Dean Kellogg, Dominic Patacsil

## Greetings and Introductions

Meeting started at 12:03pm

## General Overview CTE Advisory Committee & Department Updates

Stone shared the ELAC Land Acknowledgment.

Group introductions with name, job title and industry experiences.

Stone delivered a summary about the purpose of the CTE Advisory Committee. Department updates include data about returning courses to campus, student performances. Low enrollment continues to be a challenge, but the administration was very helpful to keep us on campus. Working toward centering student experience and holding ourselves accountable.

Stone shared the two value statements for the Theater Department. Frias shared the Anti-Racism theater training series and the student town hall.

## Discussion: Certificate of Achievement in Performance

Frias introduces that the department hopes to create a Certificate of Achievement in Performance.

The group agrees that students need skills in auditioning, taking direction, fight choreography/combat training,

Mendoza Hill suggests that students can interview well and take courses in public speaking and interviewing, so they can show confidence.

Ortega shares that performer’s should be able to be confident, flexible, and able to adjust “in the room”.

Smith thinks that a COA is meaningful, especially to graduate directors. It means they took the extra step in their preparation. Class offerings at ELAC are amazing. Flexibility is needed in front of an audience and a director. Experience in improv for working with Director’s.

Quintana’s background is in education and suggests that performers have other skills, like working in education. Also, we should be considered artists and try all forms of art, to balance out their skills. Networking is a huge skill that students should have, it is difficult to “sell yourself”. Actors should strive to be a multi-hyphenate and need encouragement.

Castro has noticed a trend in students being more successful that look at the roll of actor as a generator of art making. They suggest devised work, collaborating, writing, creating, and new work.

Martinez suggests adding in writing opportunities for performers.

Kubzansky discusses the support for actors to have agency and generate projects. They advocate using new plays. They discussed a project with another school where they create a mock audition and then allow them to hear the casting discussion after, to show them a “real world” casting experience for their training.

Merring, after looking at the theater courses proposed for the COA, sees that young performers do not understand the text of classic pieces. They suggest we make it more accessible and easier to reach, so our students understand the words. Have rhetoric training and finding all the clues in the text. Merring shared that classics are not being done everyone, but it is a good place to be grounded and be prepared. Also, they suggest that the COA include elements of education and teaching artist training. Knowing those careers are just as valuable as being on stage.

Maribel Chavez shared in the chat that “as a student in the theater department and an actress, the classes here have really been beneficial and helpful for me towards my career path, and I am very grateful”

Quintana adds skills in video shoots, self-tapes, editing, etc.

Singh includes that community college students can also take classes outside theater, like Chicano Theater and gender studies, to help them in their work. These are connected to our mission. Students should build their skills outside of just “acting” to create holistic experiences.

Guerrero agrees with Singh that BIPOC students can struggle with identity and do not know who they are at the core. ELAC theater is working hard to do that with the students. Having a community TYA being the home of community colleges. Use plays like Jose Casas with performances with the college performers for the local youth.

Lynford agrees that “the individual” is very important. From a casting perspective, there is so much available to actors we must not overload them to think that they have to be good at everything. It is a fine line. A point of training is that they should try everything but hone it before moving into a professional life. There needs to be support and encouragement from the college, but that they develop a focus for future casting. “You can’t teach people to audition well” but you can teach them the techniques and basic rules to fall back on.

Kellogg shares that a COA in Performance believes that the title needs apprenticeship is important. That achievement is not the end of the journey. The classes and training are great that are listed.

Maribel Chavez shares that as a student they feel they have learned a lot about the industry, themselves, their culture. It is nice to have all the professors be so helpful and explain everything. This helps to go to auditions confidently. Faculty is motivational and give opportunities to see if this is what we really want to do. We are treated like professionals.

Marina Chavez agreed. They think that Shakespeare should be a part of the certificate to be sure that it goes beyond literature, it is something to be performed not read. They support it on the certificate.

Frias discusses the amount of industry opportunities as a performer in the world today. They asked the question: “Is there anything you notice in the industry that could help our students further their skills to make the most of the variety of opportunities available?”

Zilah shares that technical skills are a must for performers now. Knowing the language, using laptops, iPads, and technology. Including using Zoom. Was unable to find young people with these skills in Los Angeles.

Kellogg adds that voice work, animation work is a huge area for students to get work.

Patacsil, as a high school theater teacher, believes their biggest job is to demystify theater. 70 students enroll in the classes and fear performance as they are still trying to figure out who they are. The class is about all theater skills. Professor Corona’s class on Garfield campus was a success and the students are excited to take ELAC classes in the future.

Merring shares that their performers request voice work workshops and able to support sound in a space, including singing performance. This could be a part of being on Zoom for a long period. Some requests are for Alexander Technique but was very influential for them.

Frias includes that Labor Market Data is important, but how do we track performers working in the industry?

Kellogg asked how we keep track of our students. Frias discussed enrollment difficulties and that our student body

Kubzansky suggests talking to TRG Theatre Research Group. With funding they could help us keep our own tracking and labor market data and would like to connect us.

Pellegrini suggests getting data on how many people auditions for companies and how many are cast.

Frias asked the group how they are doing building back to going back in person theater, performance, and work? How do we make our communities feel welcome to return?

Hill shared that they are just about to go back into the community, and they are anxious to reengage in person.

Lynford shares that they are visiting theaters and they are packed. People are hungry for the theater. Performers are excited to be back in the room in person for auditions.

Patacsil shares that their audience presence is healing and incredible to have them back “in their home”. The program had to rebuilt and the team/family formed is inspirational.

Merring shared that they came back in person for classes and vaccination was required for staff, faculty and students. They did lose some people for their season with mask mandates. The greater good was a community that felt safe and their outdoor setting was very helpful. Outreach in social media has been the best way to connect and a huge mailing list. Their challenge is to bring more diversity in audience to the theater.

Frias thanked the committee for their participation.

## Closing

Meeting adjourned at 1:32pm

Minutes recorded by Jessica Hansen

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