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# ELAC THEATER ARTS

Career Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 17th 10 am to 11:30 am

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## Attendees

Cheryl Rizzo Business Director Play On Shakespeare, former Managing Director of Boston Court

Aurora Illog Center Theatre Group Creative Workforce Initiatives Director

Meighan La Rocca Center Theatre Group Creative Workforce Project Manager

Dionisio Tafoya President Dionysus Creative, LLC., Co-Chair Professional Development, Art Directors Guild IATSE Local 800, CTE Instructor Duarte High School, Mt Olive Institute of Tech, Advisor of CSULA

Camille Schenkkan Center Theatre Group Deputy Director

Jesus Reyes Center Theatre Group Director of Learning and Community Partnerships

Tahnee Freda LAMuseArt Executive Director

Jessica Hansen ELAC Faculty Costumes, Hair and Makeup, Costume Designer, IATSE Local 829

Francois Pierre-Couture ELAC Faculty Scenery/Lighting/Projection and Production Manager, Scenery, Lighting and Projection Designer, IATSE Local 829

Natalie Wong ELAC Theater Arts, House Management Instructor and Box Office

Hashi Stone ELAC Department Chair and Scenic Faculty

## Notes


10am Welcome

10:05am Discussion

1. **Certificate of Achievement Program in Arts Management/ Arts Administration**
  - a. Courses and Learning Objectives (Current and New)
  - b. Career Preparation

Rizzo: Question about the breadth of the program and what students do when they finish.

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Schenkkan: There is one arts management course right now at CSULA, if we create a pathway to them. There could be two tracks: core/general management (budgeting skills, fundraising, marketing, education) and project management/time management/communication skills. Could also include a non profit structure. It could be one course or expand out to be an entire degree, depending on the number of courses. Could also look at courses in other department courses: communication, marketing, accounting.

Tafoya: Shared his experience in Arts Directors Guild, production, and business. Also, teaches at CSULA in film. He is co-developing similar programs at CSULA in film and television. He believes we need more development for production and producers. Live entertainment. Pathways to union membership are important. A scenic artist by trade and wants to create more pathways for these skills. Also pursuing gender equity in scenic careers. Lots of opportunities in other sectors: live entertainment, immersive experiences, film, tv, and theater.

Reyes: What are the producer skills that are needed in that work?

Tafoya: There are film, commercial, project managers, live event/theater producers, etc. Looking for funding, understanding the market, etc.

Schenkkan: shared resources from an arts admin survey course undergrad at CSULA. Included syllabus and assignments [linked here](#).

Chat Couture: Would a production management class be useful? Not producing, per say, but it would help students understand the coordination of the different departments?

Chat Rizzo: Yes, absolutely.

Rizzo: How to be a manager is what she wanted to know more about as a student. The course would be base level in how to manage. Went to CalState Northridge Arts Management program. 1st year was a certificate and 2nd year was a Masters. 6 weeks on each topic (accounting, hr, budgeting, etc.). Designed for people that are already working. This system worked well. Many were already working at a non-profit and used their program as a case study. Certificate programs should stay broad with a little bit of everything. Then, someone can drill down and be specific.

Schenkkan: CSULA has a strong producing program. They are framing things under content creation, which is an interesting new movement we will see more of. It is about empowerment and making their own work. All the same skill set for producing and arts management. Could do a producing course and project management course. There is also a PMP certificate (Project Management Professional Certification). Yesterday CTG met with Local 33 and they developed a program with Glendale college as a feeding program to the union. Schenkkan mentioned that ELAC would be a great match for this type of pathway. Will create agreements and CTG is committed to offering opportunities to these students.



Chat Stone: What about ELAC? Why can't IATSE have multiple feeder schools?

Chat Schenkkan: It can.

Chat Schenkkan: These might be helpful resources for the new certificate:

[https://res.cloudinary.com/dv3qcy9ay/image/upload/v1590707865/2020/prog\\_StuEdu/WorkinginTheatre\\_Resources\\_Info\\_Docs/ReadyToWork.pdf](https://res.cloudinary.com/dv3qcy9ay/image/upload/v1590707865/2020/prog_StuEdu/WorkinginTheatre_Resources_Info_Docs/ReadyToWork.pdf)

<https://www.centertheatregroup.org/programs/digital-library/career-resources/research-and-information/>

Chat Illog: Regarding the 2nd link above, We are disseminating the 3rd iteration of the Theatre Alumni Career Survey this summer and will have a new report that looks at the information from Theatre Alumni from the past 20 years (from graduation).

Hansen: The pathway to education/union is an amazing opportunity for students, but they are becoming very political and specific to people and campuses. Would be great for CTG to facilitate scaling this opportunity to all students.

Tafoya: grads need the skills to make and to do things on a basic level, not just learn the art of it but also the "how to."

Chat Stone: ELAC just created a Skills Certificate in Scenic Art. Classes include Scenic Art, Advanced Scenic Art, Scenery Practicum, and Sketching and Rendering.

Chat Schenkkan: Cal State has an excellent Producing Track.


Reyes: ELAC already has the productions and the theater in the community program. To augment them, have the student actually produce and manage them! The students can focus on producing in a real life scenario, scheduling, agenda, location scouting, meetings, budgets, fundraising. CTG could also offer their producers to offer them mentorship and guidance (special guest speakers).

Couture: We will be starting students doing production management this coming school year. This will be an experiment into what feedback we get, how reasonable the experience is, we could also have them touring with the show and shadow teachers to learn arts management. Working with producers/managers that understand HOW things are done are so much more well rounded and successful.

Rizzo: Wanted to also add that the important thing is that you don't have to know everything but you have to be resourceful. 90% of the job is managing people. We do not have enough production managers in the world and especially in Los Angeles.

Wong: One area that we need for students is the computer course, which is such a valuable skill and they can help us with so many tasks. Scheduling, outlook, excel, spreadsheets, etc. Can say first hand that computer courses are such a valuable experience and skill set.

Illog: Trying to combine all the ideas into a certificate. There are 3 areas: general roles of departments (marketing, communication, community partners, education) with the



structure of arts organization, programming (finances, budgeting, the community, and planning programs). There are multiple pathways. The certificate is an opportunity for them to self evaluate and see what they are most interested in. To get more granular, project management skills should be identified early on. Not formally taught and personal experience was relying on their own personal skills, but strategies and theories should be taught in the classroom. Do the practicum part, explore how it applies in a setting.

Schenkkan: Important to note that producing and arts management are two different pathways. Producing is more aligned with business programs. Important to separate production management/producing from Arts Management/Arts Administration.

Rizzo: With an MPA, one can run any business and arts is just the application of it. Was one of the only arts people in the room for grad school.

Schenkkan: They are having trouble looking for the baseline level of business skills in recent applicants for employment.

Couture: Since our students struggle with more administrative tasks, what are you (industry partners/transfer schools) looking for? How can we shift our practice to prepare them? What are they missing?

Schenkkan: For arts management, the survey course info is 100% new to them. They are feeling overwhelmed that they don't already know any of it. The career options are new. There are 3 areas: 1. What is arts management? 2. What are the skills for arts management? 3. Jobs in arts management. There is so much interest in this course and there is so much need in the industry. They need the information sooner. They take it senior year at CSULA and wish they had known it earlier.

Reyes: At ELAC we are positioned to say what is arts management and what it looks like right now. At a community college, you can get them earlier and introduce arts management to them right when they start. It is important that they know it is a career and what it looks like. That it is an option.

Chat Rizzo: It helps but it's not the most important thing if they know how to find it and hire the right people to work with.

Freda: Went to UCSB and transferred to USC and wants to emphasize the practicum model (in all areas). It really informs you that you budget, understand all the jobs, and how they connect. The greatest experience, resource and skills are producing a student independent production. Synergetic fundraising and thematic partnerships. How to take care of the show. In a practicum you have an advisor, but need to figure things out on your own and be creative. Incorporate that type of experience into the certificate.

Chat Schenkkan: If we're looking at articulation, production management and producing are not necessarily going to lead to the arts management undergrad-I can speak to that.

Chat Rizzo: Partnerships with companies that offer classes would be so helpful. Quickbooks for example - the classes are so expensive and it would be an excellent skill.

Chat Schenkkan: Yes. Same. I was the only theater person in my arts management program.

Chat Rizzo: Fundraising is also entirely a beast right now more than it has been...

Chat Schenkkan: Absolutely true, Cheryl.

## 2. Personal Finance Math Course

- a. Benefit to students in LACCD colleges
- b. Contextualized math concepts
- c. Articulation and transfer

Rizzo: use so much math in different areas. Budgets and finance. Hate a word problem and want to use the tools available like the internet and calculators. What is the level of "math" needed for articulation and transfer status?

Chat Illog: I think an introduction to finance and terminology: Cash flow, Staff Allocation, Personal Budgeting for the Artists-union dues, insurance, etc.

Schenkkan: Accounting, spreadsheets, balance sheets, are all the tabs open every day on my computer. Most important are budgeting and labor costs. It is imperative that they know how to plan to ask for money. Cashflow is covered, and a part of an arts manager's skills set. Lack of skill in reading a budget will be a reason that someone is not hired.


Rizzo: accounting, quickbooks, these are skills that they need both personal and for their job.

Schenkkan: [The Art of Personal Finance](#) is a great book that is used at many schools and also required for CMU in Arts and Producing.

## 3. Theater Industry/Education Strategies for Planning and Budgeting

Freda: Part of the strategy is to make sure that the revenue streams are diversified. Think of it as a stool with legs. Using grants, and other funding sources. A lot of conversations at recent Arts meetings in the region was that many non profits don't think of themselves as a business but that they need to partner other organizations (not all arts businesses) and gather resources. It is scary to have funding reduced and it is hard to find people in development.

Rizzo: Most development people left the arts and went to climate changes, education, etc because of COVID.



Stone: With a little bit of funding and support, we were able to accomplish great things and we could produce at a comfortable level.

Rizzo: The scaffolding (of Covid relief funding) is great, but many had to use it as the actual structure, and without that funding the structure isn't able to stand on its own. It is never enough and the public needs to help funding, but they also have less to offer. There are huge cash flow issues. The ends aren't meeting.

Schenkkan: The model has always been broken and now it is showing. It is critical to keep educating our students about supporting yourself, all the realities of the industry. It is everywhere and there is no going back. And we shouldn't because it was inequitable before Covid.

Stone: Last thoughts, the newest production of Colossal is a great production and the show is a minimal set. We borrowed items and shared pieces from other schools and organizations. Our students had plenty to do, and they saw what it was like to make a show with limited money but partnership resources.

Reyes: How to be transparent with the students about the realities of a budget? Show them and teach them. Also, students will see how you talk to other people about it. The education budgets are shrinking but they knew it and were able to be prepared. Embrace the change, stay on course, don't worry about growing too fast. Keep a steady pace. A great lesson to learn. Fundraising and thinking outside the box conversations with the development office. Might be doing work that others can support in the departments, but you are just using different words. How do we help each other use different words for the same thing?

Couture: We looked at our resources, targeting a few things that will bring education and pull from what we have. It comes from the 99 seat theater formula, and many of our students will be working in these spaces. We need to be honest with the students and scale ideas for the budget that we have. Goal is to always have student designers.

Rizzo: I love that ELAC is so reasonable and that they know how to do things with real resources and realities of the industry.

## 11:25am Conclusion and Thank You