

Developing Artistic Networks, Educational Models, and Creative Best Practices: Connections in New York City

Introduction: Thanks in large part to the Miller Arts Scholars and Drama programs at UVA, over the past few years I have grown tremendously as a director, playwright, and theater educator. Off-Grounds, my work with the nonprofit group I started, Empowered Players, has continued to expand. The program, which began by serving 10 students, now serves over 100 per semester and continues to expand its offerings. Expanded efforts also include collaboration with UVA students and faculty. My work as an arts educator and facilitator has been influenced by the opportunities afforded to me by the Miller Arts Scholars program, such as attending a training last summer and connecting with interdisciplinary scholars on a repeated basis. However, as an educator and director, I value continuing my education both inside and outside of the classroom. Continuing to learn, grow, and stay up to date on best practices and methods is critical to my professional development, as is remaining connected to the creative and artistic communities. Thus, this year, I would like to return to New York to continue supplement my classroom experiences by expanding my professional network, learning from professionals involved with theater education, arranging individual meetings with professional mentors, and reflecting on my work with the arts.

Objectives: Continuing to expand my horizons as an educator and creator, I would like to use my Fourth Year Award to travel to New York City for an immersive experience. I hope to expand my skills and knowledge in the area of theater, specifically writing, directing, and theater education. Towards this end, I would like to see shows, attend the Educational Theater Association's 2019 National Conference in September, and network with individuals working at colleges in like The City College of New York who have programs in educational theater and creating/writing. Additionally, I would like to join professional organizations, The Drama Teacher Resource Company and the Educational Theater Association, that would enable me to have access to resources and connect with others doing similar work. Thus, I am requesting \$2500 for this trip, conference, and networking and membership opportunities. From this experience, I hope to gain:

- A network of individuals from the Conference that engage in similar efforts and can serve as resources as I return to Charlottesville
 - A toolkit I can apply to my work
 - A chance to replenish my creative well
 - Opportunities to engage with professionals
- A better understanding of how to engage with the theatrical arts in educational and creative settings
- A new perspective of how art can be created by viewing performances and engaging in that sense
- Connections with faculty and creatives at City College that can point me to resources, individuals, and projects of interest, as well as share best practices and tips
- Tangible resources that come as being a member of the The Drama Teacher Resource Company, such as continual free lessons, workshops, curricula and lesson plans

- Benefits of being a member of the Educational Theater Association as similar to those to The DTRC, but extend to include professional development opportunities and lower the cost of other experiences like the national conference.

The timeline of this trip will be September 19-September 22, with time available before and after the conference for a visit to City College and a chance to see shows. Experiences at the conference include hearing from Broadway creative Stephen Schwartz, workshops with professionals (schedule to be released) and much time for networking.

Registration for the Conference costs \$595. Area lodging near the workshop averages about \$260 per night, and train travel to New York ranges from \$80-120 depending on the booking date. Additionally, The Drama Teacher Resource Company membership fee is \$444 for the first year, and joining the Educational Theater Association is \$30 a year. An estimated overall cost for workshop registration, travel, materials/food, and lodging is roughly \$2,514. I am requesting \$2500 to cover the cost of the registration fee and travel expenses, as well as fund other workshops and performance opportunities in NYC and the membership fee.

Upon returning from the Conference, I hope to partner with the president of the Educational Theater Association with whom I have a mutual connection to bring educators to Virginia to host similar, regional events, continuing my mission of promoting arts accessibility and education in Virginia. My outcome report will consist of sharing results of this work, bringing the EdTA to central Virginia as well as all that I learned and experienced from the trip and how that translates to my work.

Concerns: I currently do not have many concerns for this project, considering the conference and networking can be solidified early on and the New York shows and opportunities will continue in September. My one concern is sustaining funding for my joining the organizations, but jumping this first hurdle of securing funding this year will help in that it will gain me entry which is vital for my continued involvement.

Project Timeline:

April and May 2019

- Finalize my travel, lodging, and registration
- Discuss with faculty and professors recommended experiences for the New York trip

Summer 2019

- Continue planning and arranging logistics
- Engage in the benefits of my membership with both The Drama Teacher Resource Group and the Educational Theater Association (lesson plans, networks, etc) as I work with summer programming at Empowered Players and PVCC

September 2019

- Go to NYC and attend the National Conference
- Connect with folks at City College
- Attend Broadway shows
- Network with other artists and attend workshops outside of the conference time

Fall 2019

- Continue discussing with the Educational Theater Association about implementing regional programs in Central Virginia
- Secure logistics for future programming
- Maintain a strong connection with those I connected with on the trip and through the organizations

Budget

Conference Registration	\$499 (for members) \$595 (nonmembers)				
DTRC Membership Fee	\$444				
EdTA Membership Fee	\$30				
Lodging	\$260	\$260	\$260	\$260	
Food	\$70	\$70	\$70	\$70	
Travel	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	
Performances	\$60		\$60		
Misc. Materials and Workshops	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	
Total	\$1014	\$480	\$540	\$480	\$2514

Evidence of Participation in the Arts

Without a doubt, my involvement in the arts at UVA has been the most important aspect of my University experience. Each and every semester, I have continued to be involved at the arts at the highest level both on- and off-Grounds. Courses I have

taken or are currently taking include:

- CASS 1010 College Art Scholars Seminar *
- CASS 1011 College Art Scholars Seminar
 - Dance 1400 The Art of Dance
 - Dance 2210 Ballet I
 - Drama 3410 Acting II
 - Drama 4993 Independent Study
- Arts Administration 3100 Principles & Practices in Arts Administration
 - Arts Administration 3550 Ecology of the Arts
- Arts Administration 5200 Development and Board Management
 - Arts Administration 4559 Research Methods
 - Drama 3651 Directing I
 - Drama 3710 Playwriting I
 - Drama 4651 Directing II
 - Drama 4993 Independent Study (4 times)
 - DRAM 4599 Special Topics in Playwriting

In addition to a course load focused on dance, drama, and arts administration, I have also been involved in the arts through individual performance and directing. As part of an independent study activity, I served as dance captain and performed at Throw Your Head Back & Sing, a celebration honoring Maya Angelou at James Madison University. In my first year, I served as musical director for Virginia Players' Lab Series Festival, Identity: A Musical Cabaret. In the fall of 2017 I directed Black Monologues with the Paul Robeson Players, and in spring of 2018 I directed with the New Works Festival, devising and directing a piece called "Locked/Loaded." In that same spring, I performed in "Welcome to the Music Library: An Evening of Short Plays," part of the Making Noise series. In the fall of 2018, I assistant directed Shakespeare on the Lawn's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the spring of 2019, I returned to the New Works Festival, directing "I'm Game," a piece that was devised and that I, again, wrote and directed. Most recently, I music directed *Macbeth* with Shakespeare on the Lawn.

My arts involvement at the University also includes an internship with the UVA Office of the Vice Provost for Arts and serving as a guide with the UVA Arts Grounds Guide. Currently, I have served as a course assistant for a course in the Arts Administration program, and current serve as program's main student intern, helping organize artist residencies and working on developing the program. I also serve on the executive board of Kids Acting Out, a UVA CIO, working as a lesson leader at local elementary after schools. Finally, I serve on the Miller Arts Scholars executive board as the Drama representative. I hope to continue to be involved on the executive board in the future.