
2015-2016 Wimmer Faculty Fellowship for the development of Teaching Grant Proposal - Leadership In Theatre: Ethics & innovation

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1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“The School of Drama’s mission is to produce theatre artists who will become the innovators and leaders of an ever expanding performing arts profession.”

In service of that mission I am working to develop a course that integrates modern leadership studies into the management of theatrical productions through the use of innovative techniques and a strong understanding of the ethics of leadership and management. The importance of leadership is woven through out all of the classes in the Production, Technology & Management program in the School of Drama. What this course would accomplish is allowing students to focus specifically on leadership and develop a better understanding of the different areas of skill. It will assist them in finding ways to develop these skills through active project based learning in the classroom. I would also like to focus on giving them strategies to develop these skills outside of the classroom and into the future.

I am applying for the Wimmer Grant as a support system for this journey. This grant would allow me the focused opportunity to research several leading experts of varying schools of thought as well as attend conferences and training sessions. My intent is to use the research and training in conjunction with support from the Eberly Center to develop the course for the Spring of 2016.

2. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

There are many positive outcomes in training the students in the Production, Technology & Management program in leadership skills. Clearly a manager with strong leadership inspires people to follow them, not just to obey. Teaching a student how to both

lead and manage will improve their ability to manage collaborations, budgets, materials, schedules and every other area they involve themselves with.

A successful leader is one who inspires people to follow them to where they may not have originally wanted to go, but to where they need to go. Creating successful and inspiring leaders who have the ethical foundation of a service to art will have a profound effect on the students around them and drive them towards new ideas and further artistic creativity.

The function of a good leader is create more leaders, not more followers. Every show at the school of Drama is fully produced by the students. Every leadership position is filled by a student. These students will create more leaders in their interactions with other students, faculty and the theatrical industry outside this school.

3. EVALUATION PLAN

I have four ways in which to evaluate my success in this endeavor. First is to utilize the Eberly Center's focus group program during the first half of the semester to get a clear idea of what techniques and approaches are working and not working. Towards the end of the semester I would like to again work with the Eberly Center to create a survey to see what impact the material and skills learned in the course have had on the students professional and creative interactions. Third would be utilizing the FCE's to see what areas of the course structure and my teaching style were effective and which were not. Lastly through my work as a production advisor, overseeing students in leadership roles on shows I will be able to observe their development first hand and evaluate the process made by each student individually.

4. EBERLY CENTER SUPPORT

"Leadership is an action, not a position." - Donald MacGannon

This idea is at the core of how I would like to approach teaching this course. Leadership is not something to just read about in a book, it must be practiced and actively applied to life. I would like to work with the flipped classroom model and incorporate more guided practice into the classroom setting. I would also like to develop several long term projects that focus on the students self awareness of their leaderships skills and create opportunities for self guided development that they can take into the future. Working closely with the Eberly center to create a syllabus, active learning tactics for inside the classroom and project based learning would be invaluable.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In learning to teach students how to be better leaders I will be developing my own leadership skills. The study and research I do in this field will not only allow me to teach this course but will strengthen my ability to teach all of my classes.

6. FEASIBILITY/SUSTAINABILITY

Timeline:

My work on the development of this course will begin immediately.

Spring/Summer of 2015: Research into modern leadership studies focusing on the works of Robert K. Greenleaf, John C. Maxwell, Stephen Covey as well as reading more historical works such as those by Dale Carnegie and other historical leaders.

There are several conferences and workshops that I would like to consider attending. I would like to choose exactly which of these to attend based on the research I do over the next few months. Below is a list of possible events that would be worthwhile.

- FranklinCovey's Leadership Foundations - 1 Day workshop (multiple days throughout the summer)
- Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership International Conference (Date TBD in 2016)
- Servant Leadership Institute Annual Conference (March 2016)
- John C Maxwell Company Leadership workshops (Multiple dates during the summer and fall.)

September- October 2015: Develop syllabus and course schedule with assistance from the Eberly Center

October-December 2015: Create and develop lesson plans, active learning strategies and projects with assistance from the Eberly Center.

January 2016: Course Begins

February 2016: Conduct focus group through Eberly center.

April 2015: Develop Survey with assistance of the Eberly Center.

May 2015: Courses complete. Evaluation of process and class.

Budget:

This proposal will not cost more than \$3,000. I would like to use the funds to support my time to research this summer as well as workshop fees, travel and housing for the workshops/conferences I am able to attend.

Continuation:

Following the funding period I plan to use the information gathered from evaluations to hone and further develop the course for years to come. I hope to expand the course to be available to students outside of the Production Technology & Management program so that students in design, directing and even acting could benefit from leadership training. Once I have a solid foundation of leadership training and course development for students in the School of Drama I believe the possibilities are endless for partnerships with other schools within the university to use the creative and innovative approaches to leadership that are used in theatre to further their development. Inversely, there are as many opportunities to bring the approaches from other departments into what we do in theatre.

7. CONCLUSION

In the School of Drama we teach creativity, artistry, management and technical skills. We teach students how to do these things in a collaborative setting. By developing stronger leadership training that is specific to theatre and sustainable for the years to come we will create stronger collaborations, stronger art and stronger education. I am excited about the opportunity to work on the development of courses in this area and appreciate your taking the time to consider my application for the Wimmer Fellowship.