

Student Performance Project Guidelines

2022/23

Please read this packet carefully. Failure to comply with the policies within this manual in any way could result in the loss of privileges for yourself and/or the group you are representing.

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Introduction

The Production Coordinator (PC), **Gianna Carter**, is your point-person and resource for the process. Schedule an appointment to introduce yourself and go over the guidelines.

We count on you to choose experienced designers and light/sound board operators, in addition to your volunteer stage manager, house manager, and run crew as needed. You must submit your full team to the PC by the beginning of your show quarter.

Your project does NOT get build time in the Wirtz Center shops. You may rent items from the Wirtz Center. If you are using Wirtz Center technical equipment, the PC must approve and sign off on your designers (especially in Sound and Lighting).

All items in your production must be struck nightly after rehearsals so that the theater can be used for classes during the day. For this reason, we encourage you to focus on text and acting without the use of a set.

At the end of your production, we ask that you complete a brief survey about your process. Detailing the successes/ areas for improvement in your piece, as well as any suggestions, comments or concerns regarding the overall SPP process.

A Note about Covid-19: All Wirtz productions, including SPPs, are subject to changes in government and university guidelines. If your show is no longer able to open, we will do our best to offer you alternate solutions or a postponed slot.

General Timeline

Quarter Before the Show

- **Director and/or Producer** speak to the PC about copyright permission or licensing.
- **Director and Producing Team** make an Appointment with the PC to review Student Performance Project Guidelines and discuss production designs. Come prepared with:
 - Prop List
 - Lighting Materials List
 - Costume List
 - Load-in and Tech Schedule
- **Director and Producer** confirm the production team for the show. Complete a contact list and submit to the PC. The goal is to choose team members that will get approval from the PC to use equipment.
- **Director and Scenic Designer** submit a ground plan in accordance with guidelines for approval from the PC.
- **Producer requests rehearsal space in 25Live.**
- **Director/Producer** may sign out a first-floor combination locker with PC.

- **Director/Producer** may obtain copy code from PC for Wirtz Center copier. Keep in mind that this may come from your production budget.

Beginning of Show Quarter

- **PC** will provide a tech calendar outline for you to make a detailed plan. This detailed plan must be turned in within one week of the beginning of the show quarter. You cannot change start or end times without prior approval.
- **PC** will provide a pre-tech check list.
- **PC** consults with Technical Supervisor and Acting Faculty for approval of Scenic and Lighting Design. Once approved, no changes can be made without approval from PC.
- **Director** confirms space requests in 25Live.
- **Director and PC** maintain weekly meetings to discuss production issues and solutions.
- **Director** leads weekly production meetings with the Production team and PC, and emails notes to the team.
- **Director/Designers** meet with PC to request tax exempt forms for purchases.

At Least Two Weeks Before Load-in

- **Director/Designers** confirm rental appointments with shop heads as needed and make arrangements for storage.
- **Director/Designers** make itemized schedule for load-in, tech, performances, and strike and submit schedule to PC.
- **Producer** gives the PC an updated list of run crew with contact information.
- **Director** completes and returns Box Office form to PC.

Load-in/Tech

- Technical work in the theater cannot begin earlier than the Monday prior to load-in.
- Work in the theater must stop at 10:30pm to allow for clean-up before 11:00pm.
- Production staff must clean-up the theater at the end of each day. The stage must be clear of items and chairs and rehearsal props reset to classroom conditions. No scenic elements, furniture, props, or prop tables may remain on or backstage.
- **Director** confirms plan for strike with Shop Heads and the PC including storage from Sunday to Monday.

Performances

- Performance schedule may contain one to three performances. Typical performance schedule is as follows: Friday at 7:30pm, and Saturday at 2pm and 7:30pm.

Strike

- The Load-in/Tech week schedule must include a strike call in which ALL company members, including actors and designers, attend and participate.
- **Designers** will lead strike in their areas and meet all conditions established by shop staff.
- All production elements must be cleared from the theater during strike.

- On the Monday after strike, **Director and Designers** must confirm with each shop area to ensure that all production materials have been safely returned. Failure to do so may result in loss of deposit.
- Always try to leave the theater better than you found it!

Procedures

Scheduling

1. You may not exceed the time allotted to your production as dictated by the Tech Schedule. No additional time will be available, and everyone must exit the theater by 11pm. Lab Theatre Staff will ask you to clean up by 10:30pm.
2. Typical performance schedules include one to three performances. Additional performances may be added **ONLY** when you set your performance schedule with the PC. Late-night performances are not permitted.
3. Rehearsal space prior to load-in may be requested in 25Live. There are no guarantees of space. Rehearsals may be required to take place outside of the Wirtz Center if no space is available.
4. PC will reserve space for load-in, tech, shows, and strike. Please confirm the schedule before rehearsals begin.

Staffing

Production Staff

1. **Run Crew and Stage Managers will not be assigned to your projects by the Wirtz Center.** The Director must recruit all necessary designers, stage managers, and run crew for the production.
2. Lighting and Sound Designers must be approved by PC and Peter Anderson prior to use of sound and light equipment.
 - Lighting and Sound Designers will be asked to send a brief list of production experience or resume to PC.

Lab Theatre Staff

1. The Lab Theatre Staff is responsible for ensuring safety and guidelines during the production. If Lab Theatre Staff deems anything “unsafe,” you will be asked to stop your work.
2. Lab Theatre Staff also ensures that the space is returned to the condition of a working classroom at the end of each day.
3. Lab Theatre Staff will provide access to the props shop and strike. Remember you may only pull and store items in the prop shop with prior approval from Chris Wych.
4. Lab Theatre Staff will provide access to ladders if the proper training has been completed.

House Management

1. **You are responsible for providing your own House Management.** House Management may be part of your production team.

Space Use

Rehearsal/Work Lights

1. The Lab Theatres include work lights that should be used for work calls.
2. Each theater also includes house and rehearsal/classroom light systems. They are controlled by a dimmer panel near the main entrance. Use these for rehearsals.
3. Rehearsal and classroom lights may NOT be re-focused, re-circuited, or altered in any way. These are not intended for production use and must remain set for classroom use.
4. Turn off all lights at the end of the day.
5. Lock Lighting and Sound Booth and turn off Lighting and Sound Systems and Dimmer Rack at end of each day.

Dressing Rooms

1. Mainstage dressing rooms are not available for use by Student Productions.
2. You will need to book a classroom for a dressing room on the second floor.
3. Nothing may be stored in the dressing room between rehearsals and performances. All costumes and costume racks should be clearly marked and stored in a designated area.
4. Valuables should be collected and locked in the control booth or storage cabinet by Stage Management.
5. Productions may use one costume rack. Costume racks must be clearly marked with the production name and out of the way of other production materials.
6. Valuable costumes should be locked in the Props/costumes storage cabinet.

Clean-Up

1. Production Staff must execute a daily clean-up of the theater, including clearing of the stage, resetting of chairs and rehearsal props to classroom positions, and disposal of garbage.
2. No scenic elements, furniture, props or props tables may remain on or backstage.
3. The Director is responsible for the security of all props/scenic elements used in the show. These items must be clearly marked and/or locked up so that classes during the week do not remove them.
4. Lighting/Sound Systems and Dimmer Rack must be turned off, and Control Room must be locked at end of each day.

Budget, Expenses, and Fundraising

1. Each production is granted a budget of up to \$500 for materials by the Wirtz Center.
 - i. This budget is intended for materials used in your show.
 - ii. This budget is not intended to pay individuals for services. **In the off chance you need to pay an individual for a service (e.g. photography or orchestra musicians), you must receive prior approval from the PC.**

2. You may raise additional funds, but these will have to be deposited into your own private account. You may make show-related purchases or reimbursements directly from your own fundraising money.
3. Remember that as you raise funds, you have very little time to accomplish your load-in. Size and scope of your production should remain small to accommodate the timeline.
4. **For on-campus purchases...**
 - i. The PC can place orders on your behalf.
 - ii. When arranging for Wirtz Center shop rentals, confirm the amount with the PC so that the PC can transfer funds accordingly.
 - iii. You may still be asked to use a personal check when placing a rental deposit with Wirtz Center shops. This will be returned to you after the items are safely restocked.
5. **For off-campus purchases...**
 - i. Keep receipts for reimbursement. The University cannot reimburse without a receipt.
 - ii. University cannot reimburse taxes. Please obtain a **tax-exempt form** from the PC.
6. **Submit receipts and a spreadsheet detailing each purchase within 7 days of closing your show.** Late receipts will not be processed.
7. Any items purchased with the Wirtz Center budget will become part of Wirtz Center stock and must be returned at the end of production.
8. Wirtz Center does not allow fundraising events that include alcohol.

Box Office

1. Student Performance Projects may NOT charge admission.
2. If you wish to include a suggested donation, it must be approved one week in advance of your load-in by the PC.
3. Two weeks prior to load-in, fill out a Box Office form and return it to the AP.

Publicity

1. You are responsible for creating programs. There is no standard template, but you may contact the Marketing and Communications Manager for a program template.
2. **All show posters must include one of the following options:**
 - “The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts at Northwestern University presents the Student Performance Project Series”
 - “The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts at Northwestern University in association with [Your name or company name] present the Student Performance Project Series.”
3. Your show title and all other information must go beneath the above quote on the poster and credits of your program.
4. Your poster and program must be approved by the PC before it is printed or distributed. Allow at least a week to gain approval.

5. Be prepared to post audience warnings about: Nudity, adult language/content, peanuts¹, simulated cigarette smoking, gun shots (recorded or otherwise), strobe lights, smoke or fog.

Pre-Show Announcements

1. A pre-show announcement must be included at the top of the show in one of the following formats:
 - The Wirtz pre-recorded pre-show announcement.
 - A recorded pre-show announcement made by your own team.
 - A live pre-show announcement read by a member of your team each night.
2. Pre-show announcements must include emergency exits and show warnings.

Working with Wirtz Center Staff

1. Once you have discussed your production with the PC, you may make appointments for rentals with the Shop Staff.
2. **You MUST cc the PC on all email correspondences with Shop Staff.**
3. The Shop Staff requires one (1) contact person for each production area and will only work with the person listed on the contact sheet.
4. The designated contact person for each area should contact the shop head individually and set meeting times during office hours to work through materials lists and discuss production issues.
5. Keep communication concise and informative. For example, "*This is Hannah, the lighting designer for Hamlet in the Struble at the end of May.*" A lot of student theater happens on campus, and the Shop Heads have many projects!
6. Please use the actual dates, rather than week number (i.e. "October 22nd," NOT "Monday of Week 5")
7. Be considerate of the staff. You may have to restate the details of your project each time you talk to them.

Costume Rental Policy

The following items are NOT available for loan or rental:

- Wigs and facial hair
- Footwear
- Body padding (pregnancy pads, fat suits, etc.)
- Dancewear (tights, leotards, unitards, etc.)
- Underpinnings (corsets, camisoles, petticoats, bras, etc.)

¹ In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of patrons who have severe airborne allergic reactions to peanuts.

- Furs
- Hats
- Glasses
- Accessories (jewelry, fans, purses, parasols, gloves, etc.)

Conditions of Loans/Rentals

- All items are due back 14 days after the closing date of the show.
- All garments must be returned freshly washed or dry-cleaned.
- Any alterations must be reversible. Garments must be returned in original condition.
- Garments cannot be dyed, cut, painted, or glued in any way.
- The Costume Shop Supervisor reserves the right to restrict rentals on any specific period or item due to the needs of Mainstage productions.
- Costumes may only be used for indoor theatrical productions only. No outdoor performances or promotional events
- Payment arrangements must be made before any pieces can be removed from the Wirtz Center.

Appointment

Costume loans/rentals must be arranged through an appointment.

- Appointments may be scheduled by emailing the Costume Shop Supervisor at least 72 hours in advance.
- Costumes are available for selection and return only during scheduled times. No drop in Appointments will be accepted.
- Return appointments must also be scheduled in advance.

Deposit

A deposit is required before any item is released.

- The deposit is equal to half of the projected student group rental fee.
- Deposits will be accepted in cash or check made out to Northwestern University.
- Deposits will be held until garments are returned in proper condition.
- **NU reserves the right to withhold a deposit for the following reasons:**
 - Garments are not returned dry-cleaned.
 - Garments are not returned in a satisfactory condition with alterations removed.
 - Failure to abide by conditions of the rental agreement.
 - Costumes not returned on time per rental agreement.

Replacement Costs

- Designer will be held responsible for any missing or damaged article.
- Designer will be billed for all replacement costs as determined by Costume Shop Supervisor.
- Deposits can and will be used as payment, partial or in full, against replacement costs.

*For more details on costume rental policies, please contact the Costume Shop Supervisor.

Props Rental Policy

Property rentals and returns are **by appointment only** during posted hours. No exceptions to this rule will be made. Property rentals are to be coordinated through one individual representing your production. This person is responsible for both pulling and returning items.

When making an appointment, make sure there is enough time scheduled to complete your rental. Appointments can be scheduled with the Properties Supervisor or the Assistant Properties Supervisor. A trip to the Underground storage area may take up to an hour.

The Properties Supervisor or Assistant Properties Supervisor must approve all rental items. Not all stock items are available for rent. To view the inventory of stock furniture items, you can go to: www.nutheatrestock.org.

The following items are NOT available for rent:

- Weapons of any kind (e.g. guns, swords, night sticks)
- Silk flowers and foliage
- Paper props
- E-Cigarettes
- Items that need repair

Rental Fee for Items:

- \$10.00 per furniture item per week.
- \$10.00 per “box” of hand prop items. Box size is based on a typical paper box and to the discretion of the prop shop staff.

Final rental fee will be determined at the time of pick-up.

Scheduling an Appointment:

- Email Properties Supervisor or Assistant Properties Supervisor.
- Include your preferred date and time, in accordance with shop hours.
 - Use actual dates, not the number of the week in the quarter
- State that you are a Student Performance Project and include show title and your name.
- Include the list of items you need.

During Rental:

- Complete a rental form.
- Arrange a date and time to return props.
- Arrange payment for the rental fee in the form of cash or check made out to Northwestern University. You may also bring a receipt for Internal Budget Transfer.

- **Bring labor to pull your rental.** The shop staff cannot help you move furniture or large items.
- Arrive before your appointment to find a cart if you need one. The shop cannot guarantee that a cart will be available.
- Supply your own boxes for transportation of small prop items. The shop will not let you leave with unsecured armfuls of props.
- When you pull props, you may store them in the prop shop (one day only) until the evening of your load-in. The PC or Lab Theatre Staff can grant you access to the shop during your move.
- **Do NOT make any alterations to props without permission from the Properties Supervisor.** Any alterations made without authorization will be viewed as damage and you will be charged a replacement fee.
- Any lost or damaged items will result in an additional charge for repair or replacement up to the value of the item.

During Performances:

- All small hand props must be locked in the storage area. Stage Manager may obtain a combination lock from the PC.
- Extremely valuable items may be stored in the control booth between rehearsals and/or shows. Please inform the PC of any extremely valuable items in the theater.
- All furniture or large props must be stored in the specially marked area behind the seating risers. Plan in advance to make sure that items will fit in this area. No items may be stored in the wings or onstage.

During Strike:

- All props and furniture must be removed from the theater at strike.
- The PC or Lab Theatre Staff will be able to unlock the prop shop to store your items until your scheduled return time.

Returning Props:

- Leaving the props in the shop does NOT mean you are done.
- Assist the Properties Supervisor or Assistant Properties Supervisor in the safe return of props to their original locations.
- Do NOT wait until the day of strike if you need to reschedule your return time. If you know you will have to reschedule, do so as soon as possible.

Design Guidelines

Scenic

1. **Submit scenic designs to the PC no later than 6 weeks prior to load-in.** The sooner a design is submitted, the sooner the PC will be able to obtain approval from faculty.
2. All scenic elements will be limited to what can be stored easily. You may not build any type of set that cannot be struck completely and stored in the space each night (i.e. no hung scenic elements, installed backdrops, or large platforms). Furniture pieces and any scenic elements must be removed from the stage and stored in a designated area (about 8'x10').
3. No part of the stage may be painted. Chalk, or other mediums that leave residue, is not permitted.
4. Props must be able to be stored in the storage cabinet.
5. Seating configuration may not be changed. No additional chairs in the aisle or house floor are allowed. Audience members may not sit on the floor.
6. Wirtz does not rent out masking, and you may not hang masking from the grid in any space.
7. You may not paint in the space at any time.
8. Construction that creates dust or debris is not permitted at any time (including saws).
9. Ladders in the space may not be painted, decorated, or used as scenery or props. See the Lighting section for policies on using ladders.
10. The stage floor must be restored to normal. Remove all spike tape at end of production.
11. If you are discarding large pieces of garbage, notify the PC so that you can use the dumpster outside the scene shop.
12. Please reach out to PC with any scenic-related questions.

Costumes

1. The Costume Shop has a classroom storage area. Items from classroom storage may be loaned to Student Theatre productions.
2. Items may be rented from main storage for a fee.
3. Schedule an appointment with Serena Sandoval, Costume Shop Supervisor, to review costume rental guidelines for Student Theater Productions.
4. Garments and supplies must be obtained in advance.
5. Arrange in advance to meet with Costume Shop Supervisor the Monday after strike to return items. Soiled or damaged costume items must be cleaned and repaired before return.

Lighting

1. The PC will need to sign off on your lighting/sound designers in order for them to gain access to Wirtz Center equipment and control booth.
2. Please contact Peter Anderson to request current rep plot information for your space.
3. Color media, i.e. gels, can be borrowed from the light shop during shop hours if available.

4. Lighting supplies must be obtained in advance of technical rehearsals.
5. The rep plot cannot be moved, re-focused, re-patched, or re-plugged.
6. No additional instrumentation is available.
7. You may pull gel, gel frames, templates, and template holders from the lighting shop if approved by PC. No other accessories are available.
8. In 201 and the Struble, a Genie lift (MEWP) is necessary to make any adjustments to gels or hanging any additional instruments. The process for using MEWPs is as follows:
 - a. 2 weeks before load-in, **Lighting Designer** submits a plot and hookup with requested gel changes or additions to shop for approval/revision.
 - b. Shop works with **Lighting Designer/Producer** to schedule work time in the space prior to load-in, reserves in 25Live.
 - c. Shop staff or supervised MFAs/Work-Studies (who have completed MEWP training) perform all work in the MEWP. Unauthorized or untrained students should not operate the MEWP under any circumstances.
9. In 101 and other spaces, a ladder is necessary to access the grid.
 - a. Ladders may be taken from the scene shop with the assistance of the Lab Theatre Staff and must be returned to the scene shop at the end of each day.
 - b. Any student who uses ladders must read, understand, and agree to the [Risk Management Portable Ladder Safety program](#), and complete the [online ladder training](#).

Sound

1. The theaters have a stereo performance sound system which includes laptop/iPod input.
2. No Clear-Com Communication System is available.
3. No additional sound equipment beyond a playback source (laptop, iPod, CD player, etc.) is permitted.
4. Microphones are available for use depending on scheduling and availability.

Special Permissions

The following activities require special permission from the AP:

1. Video Recording
2. Smoke or Fog
3. Food and drink on stage
4. Weapons
5. Nudity – requires approval from Theatre Department Chair and Wirtz Center Managing Director.
6. **Smoking or open flame is not permitted.**
7. **Firing weapons are not permitted.**

Contact Information

Plan in advance to meet with staff. Their top priority is main stage productions, so be patient when waiting for responses.

Important Phone Numbers

Campus Police Non-Emergency: 847-491-3456
Campus Police Emergency: Dial 911

Wirtz Center Staff

Jorge Silva Managing Director/ Financial Coordinator	Wirtz Admin Offices	847-491-5146	jorge.silva@northwestern.edu
Valerie Tu Chicago Production Manager	Wirtz Admin Offices	847-467-3180	valerie.tu@northwestern.edu
Heather Basarab Production Manager	Wirtz Admin Offices	847-467-6932	heather.basarab@northwestern.edu
Gianna Carter Production Coordinator	Wirtz Admin Offices / Annie May Swift	847-467-0249	gianna.carter@northwestern.edu
Serena Sandoval Costume Shop Supervisor	Costume Shop	847-491-2583	serena.sandoval@northwestern.edu
Matthew Buettner Technical Supervisor	Scene Shop	847-491-2588	matthew.buettner@northwestern.edu
Chris Wych Properties Supervisor	Scene Shop	847-467-0346	c-wych@northwestern.edu
Jim Weber Scenic Artist	Scene Shop	847-491-2587	james-weber@northwestern.edu
Peter Anderson Sound and Lighting Supervisor	Light Shop	847-491-5385	p-anderson3@northwestern.edu

Student Performance Project Box Office Form

*Please fill out and return to PC via email or in person as soon as possible, **at least two weeks before your production**. If you prefer a digital copy, email _____.*

Show Title:

Affiliated Student Group (if any):

Director's name, email, and phone:

Show dates and times:

Running time (can be approximate):

Will you be posting any audience warnings (i.e. smoke/fog, nudity, strobe lights)?

Is the show age-appropriate for all children? If not, please list specific age recommendations and reasons (i.e. language, sexuality).

Please give us a short blurb describing your show. Attach another sheet if necessary.

Please list actors and production team members involved in the show (or attach a contact sheet).