M.F.A. Program in Arts Leadership

Learning Outcomes

The MFA/Arts Leadership Program centers on the twofold focus of the student’s academic development in a university setting coupled with intensive experiential training in a professional theater – with the fundamental goal of generating future leaders capable of guiding institutions in a variety of arts disciplines. In order to develop these students into emerging leaders with the requisite skills and proficiencies, the Arts Leadership Program will concentrate on “leadership” as the primary learning goal, with all other goals and initiatives directly supporting the concept of leadership training.

Primary Goal: The student will master the skills and proficiencies required in effective arts leadership, with specific outcomes enumerated in the goals that follow.

Instrumental to this idea of “leadership” as the primary learning objective is the requirement to develop a “mastery” of specific skills and insights beyond the fundamental “understandings” of those same skills the students may have achieved through experience in the field or in their undergraduate education. The Program, through the balance and complement of graduate coursework with intense and profound experiential cultivation, seeks to realize the next generation of well-equipped and prepared arts leaders.

Goal 1: The student through his/her education and training will master specific skill sets as necessary tools in the practice of arts leadership.

2.1 The student will be able to work within an organizational vision
2.2 The student will be able to communicate, both verbally and in writing, at a superior level
2.3 The student will master the nature and dynamics of collaborative practice between and among artists, boards, personnel, and audience
2.4 The student will develop and master the skills of strategic planning
2.5 The student will develop and master the dynamics of personal and human interaction

Goal 2: The student will master the elements of basic business practices as a fundamental part of the day-to-day operations of a mid- to large-scale nonprofit performing arts institution.

3.1 The student will master the basic principles of finance, including budgeting and financial management
3.2 The student will develop a workable knowledge of law and legal procedures as they relate to the ethics of business practice, governance, and contracts
3.3 The student will develop specific proficiencies in marketing strategies as they relate to overall artistic programming and specific events
3.4 The student will understand and the dynamics that exist between Human Resources and employment relationships

Goal 3: Students, through their practical work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, will develop and master issues related to company structure and organizational growth

4.1 The student through direct participation will understand the specifics of facility management and resource allocation
4.2 The student will develop a practical knowledge of relevant labor relations and issues
4.3 The student will develop a practical knowledge of organizational hierarchy and organizational growth

Goal 4: Students, in mastering the specifics of the aforementioned learning goals, will develop a practical knowledge of both fundraising and development.

5.1 The student will understand both the history of the organization and its advancement
5.2 The student will through practical experience master the organization’s definitions related to marketing and promotion, institutional branding, and creative thinking, implementation, and evaluation

The integration of DePaul University coursework offered by the Theatre School, College of Commerce, School for New Learning, Masters of Public Services Graduate Program and the promise of effective and rigorous experiential training from Chicago Shakespeare Theater provide the platform for the leadership learning goals. This collaborative synergy will produce graduating students with the managerial tools and mastery of skills necessary for future leadership in the arts.