



## Teaching Statement

One must create a solid educational foundation to provide students with the tools to create. Much of my focus in higher education has been spent realizing that goal through a myriad of curriculum and policy changes. While the reputations of the numerous professional theatres and venues at which I have worked are significant to sustaining my national profile, these productions are important to me because of the opportunities I have created to enhance student learning. I regularly engage students as assistants, giving over aspects of the production to challenge their skills while supervising their work. My mentorship of design students has shifted to an apprenticeship teaching model, as I have spent over half of my academic career as an administrator. This experiential learning model has resulted in a nearly annual internship for students at Stages, A.D. Players, or 4<sup>th</sup> Wall Theatre Co. in Houston, Texas. I have received nearly 30 College of Arts & Letters (CAL) Undergraduate Research Initiative grants to support undergraduate students to work alongside me as a professional scene designer on campus and throughout the states of Michigan, Florida, and Texas. Four of these students were honored with First Prize awards in the Humanities & Performing Arts category at Michigan State University's (MSU) Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum for their scholarship in professional venues.

Curricular innovation/renovation has also been central to my success as an educator, as curriculum best serves students when it is treated as a dynamic and ever-evolving process. After serving for five years on the CAL Curriculum Committee (two years as chairperson), I have dedicated my time to helping others with curriculum creation (Arts, Cultural Management, & Museum Studies, and Musical Theatre), renovation (Dance), and innovation (TransMedia/Digital Media Focus Groups) that is student-centered and in touch with the artistic and economic trends/concerns of these fields.

My recent teaching has primarily focused on aspects of the theatrical and arts/museum management professions for graduate and undergraduate students. My goal has been to prepare students who, through the analysis of texts and artifacts, as well as creative activities, can engage in different methodologies, philosophies, and practices in artistic making, construct reasoned arguments about their creative/scholarly processes, and communicate these inferences and conclusions through dramaturgical writing, dramatic performance, or design/technical execution. I strive to have my students use the creative process to serve as a source and contributing partner for the enhancement and expansion of theatrical expertise; To prepare students who are knowledgeable about different cultures and societal/political/economic backgrounds through the study, design, and performance of global texts; To prepare students who are active members of their community (local, national, and global) and who can connect with organizations through linking their "art" to the general public. My THR 492: Senior Seminar class has been used as a model course for student career assessment in CAL and MSU. The success of this class was presented at a Reaccreditation Assessment Workshop, highlighting the strength of my portfolio concept (writing, creative activity, outreach/engagement) as a method of branding the professional artist in the performing arts. Additionally, this course's longtime community engagement component, in which arts advocacy and arts for social change are central tenets, connects students with a wide variety of community partners (over 100 different organizations since I started teaching this course). My THR 834: Professional Aspects class expands on these concepts to prepare future professional artists and educators by focusing on grant writing, professional portfolios/auditions, and interviewing techniques. During my various administrative appointments, I have been a regular visitor, guest lecturer, responder to many design classes, and mentor of graduate and undergraduate designers, painters, and artisans in Department of Theatre productions.

Additionally, I have invested a great deal of time mentoring colleagues to expand online/blended-learning course development in theatre and integrative arts and humanities. In particular, I created [IAH 241E: Creativity by Design: Exploring diverse artists and designers and their process](#) and an ACM & MUSM

Experience Course on exploring MSU as a cultural campus. to connect creativity to the over 200 distinctive majors at MSU. I also co-created THR 421: Creative Dramatics (online), revamped THR 350: Plays as Film (online), and standardized a general education course, THR 100: Introduction to Theatre (online). Furthermore, I was instrumental in developing a hybrid theatre and society undergraduate general education course to offer 300+ seats per semester. Significantly, I instituted a team-taught faculty/grad model to provide students with an enriching and multimodal theatrical learning experience and an opportunity for graduate instructors to develop expertise with large lectures and online instruction.

As a leader of innovative educational opportunities, I co-coordinated an inaugural CAL Study Away program in New York City and served as the inaugural Creative Director for the CAL "Creativity Exploratory," which combined the diverse strengths of faculty and students to create unique digital projects and co-created the Certification in College Teaching for Performing Arts. As a mentor, I advised the first two theatre students enrolled in this certification in conjunction with industry professionals in New York City. I also served as the inaugural co-coordinator for the new musical laboratory program with Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, connecting Broadway professionals to develop new musicals at MSU.

Throughout my tenure, I have mentored and nominated numerous graduate students, many of whom received recognition and awards, including the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) – Excellence in Teaching Awards, CAL Varg-Sullivan Graduate Awards in Arts and Letters, MSU Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantships, Degree Completion Fellowships, and CAL Summer Support Fellowships. I was also the chairperson of over two dozen graduate guidance committees and a member of many others. Regarding undergraduate education, I have mentored and nominated numerous undergraduate students, many of whom received recognition and awards, including the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) – Midwest Founders Awards, MSU University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum – First Prize Award Winners in Humanities & Performing Arts, MSU Louis B. Sudler Prize in the Arts Awards, and CAL Alumni Association Student Group Grants.

To expand the student experience, I have written and received numerous grants from internal and external funders. I received a grant from the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation to engage the expertise of Joe Barros, Artistic Director of the New York Theatre Barn, for the new musical laboratory program. My MSU Office for Institutional Diversity & Inclusion Creating Inclusive Excellence awards include a grant for *The Monkey King* to bring artists from the Peking Opera, the *60/50 Theatre Project* to create a piece about MSU struggles and successes with civil and human rights, *Beethoven and Misfortune Cookies: The true story of Kabin Thomas* to present a production about discrimination and academic freedom, "Hispanic Theater Learning Experience I" to teach language acquisition through theatre, "New Play Commission" to develop a global diversity playwriting competition, and "Hispanic Theater Learning Experience II" to create new theatrical works in Spanish. I received a Provost Visiting Faculty Award to provide a one-semester residency for David Furumoto, an Asian-American Kabuki artist and director. These grants have showcased my commitment to diversity and inclusion as an educator and enhancing the student experience, as evidenced by the Excellence in Diversity Team Award for the *60/50 Theatre Project*. I have also been nominated for received several other awards for my innovative teaching and leadership style as outlined in my CV.

In no more significant way has my effort as an educator been more apparent than my work as a liaison through a two-year renovation project that modernized the massive WPA-funded MSU Auditorium Building that houses the Department of Theatre. My involvement with this multi-million-dollar project demanded that I be sensitive to the needs of faculty members and students as we created new smart classrooms, flexible and updated performance venues, and state-of-the-art design studios while also being mindful of budgetary and collaborative partnerships. My leadership throughout this process afforded me a deeper appreciation of the work of my colleagues, the needs of all students, and a deeper understanding of the educational needs of the discipline. What it also taught me is the ability to be innovative within renovation.