DeSales University
Theatre Department
2011-12 Student Handbook

Division of Performing Arts
Theatre Department
2755 Station Avenue
DeSales University
Center Valley, Pa 18034
(610) 282-1100
http://desales.edu/
(Revised 6/6/11)
University Mission Statement
It is the mission of DeSales University to provide men and women with quality higher education according to the philosophy of Christian humanism as developed by Saint Francis de Sales and his spiritual heirs. The University imparts knowledge about, and develops talents for, personal, familial, and societal living. DeSales University enriches the human community and enhances the dignity of the individual through its educational endeavors. In its work, the University fosters a vital and respectful dialogue between Roman Catholic faith and human culture.

Mission Statement of the Division of Performing Arts
Believing that creativity endeavors to illuminate truth and elevate the human spirit, our mission is to shape pathways of discovery that challenge and inspire students to fulfill their artistic, scholarly, and professional capacities.

Philosophy of the Division of Performing Arts
The Division of Performing Arts was founded on the notion that creativity is a gift from God. We strive to educate students according to the philosophy of St. Francis de Sales, using our talents in celebration of beauty and the quest for truth. By modeling excellence in the classroom and production, and by providing thorough foundational training, we aim to develop artists who contribute to the enrichment of the human community.

Mission Statement of the Theatre Department
With a firm belief in the value of a liberal arts education, the mission of the Theatre Department of DeSales University is to provide students with ample and varied opportunities to grow as artists, as scholars, and as maturing human beings. This is accomplished through thorough foundational training, rigorous investigation of academic content, and a multitude of practical experiences. We seek to create a learning environment in which our students can test their talents, skills and vocation against professional norms, so that they can discover and make informed decisions about an appropriate career path.

- The mission of the design/tech major is to establish and strengthen professional level discipline, communication and expression of innovative and critical thinking in the fields of theatrical design and technology.
- The mission of the musical theatre major is to establish and strengthen professional level discipline and performance skills in the field of musical theatre.
- The mission of the acting/directing major is to establish and strengthen professional level discipline and performance skills in the fields of acting and directing
• The mission of the **STEP-communication/theatre major** is to establish and strengthen professional level discipline and performance skills in the field of theatre education.

*Welcome to the Theatre Department of DeSales University!*

This department began in 1969 under the founding leadership of Father Gerard J. Schubert, OSFS and Bill Callahan. It was originally housed in what is now Dooling Auditorium with scene and costume shops in Billera Hall. In 1982, the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts was built, and at that time it housed the Theatre and Dance programs. Today, it is the home of four of the most dynamic programs in the university: Theatre, Dance, TV/Film, and Music.

In 1991, Father Schubert and the theatre faculty founded The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival which is the professional outgrowth of the Theatre Department. Each summer, this Festival recruits professional actors, directors, designers, managers, and technicians to work alongside our theatre students to produce classical and modern theatre of extremely high quality. Internships are available each year for our students who wish to participate. These paid internships include performance, technical, and management opportunities.

This handbook is designed to communicate aspects of the philosophy of the department, and also to spell out important departmental policies. These policies are designed to help each student succeed and thrive in a department rich with opportunities. They are also designed to enable all of us to work together productively as a company to foster the best educational experience and produce the highest quality work possible.

*Philosophy of the Theatre Department*

First and foremost, we firmly believe that the *academic program is the most important component of our department*. The commitment to being a strong theatre artist begins with rigorous study of our art and craft with a solid grounding in the liberal arts; this is the preparation that is absolutely necessary for personal growth and development as a practicing theatre artist. It requires discipline—getting to class on time, being prepared for the day’s work, meeting assignment deadlines, organizing work and study, and being concerned with living a healthy lifestyle.

Key information about the academic program may be found in the *university catalog*. Make sure you understand the university’s academic regulations and pay careful attention to the section on the Theatre Department and curriculum. If you are theatre/communications major, make sure you study the requirements in the section concerning the degree program in Education. Your *academic advisor* is a resource for you if you have questions and to help you plan your course curriculum as you develop your own personal and artistic goals.

We believe that a “hands on” approach to learning theatre through a strong production program that has high, professional standards is an essential part of a theatre education. To that end, we have developed an intense and diverse production program. This program has an enviable reputation for quality and for fostering strong educational and professional values. Our theatre alumni are working all over the country in every aspect of theatre and the media. Many (about a
third) have gone on to graduate school or professional training. Approximately two-thirds have gone on to professional work in the theatre or in related media. Most of our graduates have spoken of the value and depth of the broad based training they received here at DeSales.

**Terminology Used in this Handbook**

There may be some terms used in this document that may be unfamiliar to you. Here are a few that you will need to know:

**Main Stage Theatre:** This is our main large theatre in Labuda. It is an extremely well equipped 473 seat theatre.

**Schubert Theatre:** This is our second stage space, a “black box” theatre that may be configured as a three-quarter thrust (audience on three sides) or Schubert Theatre (audience on all four sides).

**Studio Theatre:** This is our small 100 seat theatre located in the new wing of the Labuda Center. Most of our acting/directing classes, rehearsals, and student directed projects occur there.

**Second Stage:** Second Stage productions are produced in the Schubert Theatre theatre and are smaller in scale than main stage productions. They adhere, however, to the same quality standards as the Main stage productions and are produced for a paying public audience.

**Head of the Division of Performing Arts:** John Bell is the head of our division who supervises the chairs of the individual departments of theatre, dance, and television/film as well as the music program and all of their faculty and staff. He administers all of our academic programs and also acts as the producer for Act 1 productions in Theatre and Dance. Most importantly, he provides the key leadership and responsibility for all of the division’s activities including academic, recruitment, outreach, and production.

**Theatre Department Chair:** Dennis Razze is the chair of the Theatre Department. He administers the theatre academic program and acts as the artistic director for our productions, overseeing all theatre main stage and second stage productions. He provides leadership for the faculty and staff of the Theatre Department through the development and evaluation of courses, programs, personnel, and policies.

**Facilities Manager/Production Manager/Resident Lighting and Sound Designer:** Liz Zernechel, a member of our full-time faculty, holds this position. As manager of the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts, she oversees the upkeep and safety of our facility and its equipment. She also schedules the use of the facility’s main spaces: the main stage theatre, the Schubert Theatre, the theatre studio, the television studio, the conference room, and the Labuda dance studio. The Facilities Manager is also our resident lighting designer. She oversees the lighting and sound components of all of our Main stage and second stage productions. Her office is located in the scene shop.
**Head of Design:** Will Neuert, a member of our full-time faculty, holds this position. The Head of Design oversees the Design/Technology Program and supervises all scenic design aspects of our ACT 1 productions. He also supervises the prop and paint areas. The full-time design and technical faculty and staff include Ms. Amy Lobmeyer, Ms. Liz Zernechel, Ms. Heather “Digger” Feeney and Ms. Anna Light.

**Head of Acting:** Patrick Mulcahy, who is also the Producing Artistic Director of The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, is also the Head of the Acting Program. He works with the other acting teachers to create goals, curriculum, and methodologies for actor training here at DeSales. The full-time acting faculty includes Ms. Anne Lewis, Mr. Steven Dennis, and Mr. Wayne Turney.

**Resident Costume Designer:** This position is held by Amy Best, a full-time faculty member. She designs the costumes for Main stage productions and oversees all student costume designers and technicians.

**Costume Shop Manager:** Samantha Southard is the staff costume shop manager who supervises the work in the costume shop and who also supervises rentals from our stock.

**Technical Director:** Heather “Digger” Feeney, a member of our professional staff, is the technical director who supervises all work in the scene shop. She also is in charge of all backstage technical work for our main stage and second stage productions. Her office is located in the scene shop.

**Box Office Manager:** This staff position oversees the box office and all patron services including group sales, house management, and ushers. Dael Jackson holds this position.

**Assistant Box Office Manager:** Nicole Moyer is the assistant box office manager who also supervises sales for The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival.

**Director of Marketing:** Roseann Schatkowski is in charge of all of the publicity, programs, and publications for the division and its many activities.

**Departmental Secretary:** Amy Diehl is the Division Secretary who assists the Division Head and the faculty and staff of the Division of Performing Arts and is also the business manager for Act 1. She also supervises the concessions stand in the lobby.

**Practicum:** These are required one-credit courses taken by theatre majors to award credit for ACT 1 performance and production experiences.

**Production Program**

The Theatre Department has a huge variety of performance and production opportunities designed to help students develop in their specific field of interest as well as in the art and practice of theatre in general. The following are the main components of the theatre production program here at DeSales:
• ACT 1: Act 1 consists of our main stage and second stage productions. Normally, we undertake four main stage and two second stage productions per academic year. The main stage productions are defined by their high performance/production values and are attended by a paying audience. The second stage allows us the opportunity to produce less mainstream plays as well as original works. It also has the potential for utilizing student designers, choreographers and, on occasion, directors.

Theatre Practicum credit is given for involvement with Act 1 productions only.

• ACT 2: Act 2 consists of student directed work that comes from the fundamental and advanced directing classes. On average, over seventy-five student projects are produced each year.
• ACT 3: In the spring of their final year, the senior theatre majors form their own fully self-contained theatre company, which produces a children’s play for approximately twenty-five performances entertaining and enriching over 5,000 children.

Independent Projects

Independent projects are productions organized by one or more theatre students normally to be produced in the Schubert Theatre. Normally, one slot is reserved each semester for such projects. These projects are often student directed plays, staged readings, musical revues, or performance pieces.

If a student (or group of students) wishes to produce such a project, he/she must make a proposal to the Director of Theatre during the semester previous to the one in which the project will be produced.

The proposal should include:

• a script;
• a proposal for the number of students to be involved including performers, designers (if necessary), and any support personnel;
• how and when the production will be cast;
• a proposed rehearsal and performance schedule including where rehearsals will be held;
• proposed cost of mounting the production including royalties (if applicable), and production budgets;
• technical requirements of the production with proposed solutions;
• independent study forms if any of the students desire to work on the project for credit (TR 499)

It is understood that such projects must have very limited budgets (supplied by the department) and that in most instances, all technical resources such as costumes and properties, are to be supplied by the students. In some cases, limited availability to ACT 1 stock may be permitted, but only with permission of the design/tech faculty. Each project
must have a faculty advisor who should sign off on the proposal and monitor its progress. The Theatre Department chair acts as producer for these projects and may also be the faculty advisor.

*The Notion of “Company”*

Since the very beginning of theatre as an art form, there was the notion of company. A company was a group of artists who banded together to produce plays. In the earliest days, theatre artists “multi-tasked,” that is, they worked in many of the areas of theatrical production. Many wrote plays, performed and managed, worked backstage, composed or played music, designed and directed, as well as many other combinations. A company was seen as a group of artists with a variety of skills who banded together for a common goal—to make theatre.

Here at DeSales we do just that. At any given moment in the semester, the entire corps of theatre majors is involved in working on one of our main stage or second stage productions. It is our firm belief that through four years of working in a variety of areas, both onstage and off, each student will begin to reach his/her full potential as a theatre artist. In other words, the more you learn about the totality of theatre, the better you will be at doing what you love the most. In fact, you may discover that you enjoy working in several areas of theatre, (or Dance, or TV/Film), which only improves your odds at finding work after graduation. You may also discover that the specific area that initially attracted you to the theatre becomes secondary to a new found passion! Many students come with a strong desire to be performers but leave going on to careers in design, arts or stage management, education, etc. And yes, there is the occasional technician turned actor.

*The Notion of “Ensemble Performance”*

An eighteenth century British actor named David Garrick has been given credit by theatre historians for creating this concept. Garrick grew up in an age where there were star actors who took center stage most of the time; smaller roles in the play were played by less skilled actors and who got much less focus and little rehearsal. Garrick changed all that. He believed that, in order for a production to be successful, even the smallest roles required strong actors, and that the emphasis shifted from role to role as each moment in the play required.

A hallmark of our productions is quality in every aspect and in every moment of the play. All of the roles and all of the support elements are given careful attention and rehearsal.

*Understudies*

Part of this notion of ensemble is having a strong understudy program. Unlike most high school and community theatres, we normally assign student understudies for all of the key roles. These are not thankless jobs, but real learning opportunities as well as part of a commitment to production quality. Understudies often have to go on because we have fairly substantial runs—our understudies strive to be the equal to the actor who has been cast in the role.

*Participation in ACT 1 (Main Stage and Second Stage) Productions*
All theatre students are required to participate in ACT 1 Productions.

Participation includes work as an actor, understudy, designer, technician, production staff, or crew member. Normally, all acting/directing concentrators are required to audition for ACT 1 productions and all design/technology concentrators apply for key positions as crew heads or design assistants. Theatre/communications concentrators may choose to audition or work in production or management. Any concentrator may apply for positions in stage management or assistant directing.

Each semester, (except the first and last semester) a student receives 1 practicum credit and a grade for this participation. Successful completion of six semesters of practicum is required for graduation. Senior practicum in the second half of the last semester is part of their TR 452 requirement.

Performance/Production Practicum: TR 361.1, .2, .3 and Advanced Performance/Production Practicum TR 362.1, .2, .3

Supporting the department’s philosophy that the theoretical approach to theatre must be supplemented with practical experience, students are required to complete six semesters of Practicum in order to successfully complete a theatre degree. Participation in Practicum may be in either performance or production, or in a combination of the two. This course is not normally taken concurrently with TR 143, TR 363, or TR 369. (An exception to this may be in the case of a transfer student who is trying to fill their requirements in a shorter time span.) Please note that all three TR 361.x or TR 362.x practica must be taken in order for the university to recognize TR 361 or TR 362 as a 3 credit course.

Students who audition for productions but are not cast will be assigned by the technical faculty to production crews based on experience and production requirements. Requests for particular production assignments will be accepted up to the day the cast list for a production is posted. Requests for particular crew assignments should be given to Amy Best. Crew assignments will usually be posted on the callboard one or two days after the cast list is posted.

Students cast in a production will be expected to attend all rehearsals, meetings, fittings, and performances as scheduled by the director and the production stage manager. Actors average around 25 hours of rehearsal per week.

Students working on production crews work an average of 12 hours per week and if they are assigned to a run crew they must attend all technical and dress rehearsals as well as every scheduled performance. Schedules will be determined by the crew supervisor or crew head and will be posted on the callboard. Students are responsible for keeping abreast of changing crew schedules as required by the needs of the project.

Strike
The cast and run crew of each production are required to strike their show. Other acting/directing and theatre/communications students are expected to participate in the strike of one theatre production per semester and will be assigned to one of the shows by the Technical Faculty. Design/technology track majors are required to participate in all theatre production strikes. ACT 3 productions are struck by the senior theatre majors in the ACT 3 company. Failure to attend a strike to which you have been assigned may result in a failing grade in practicum for that semester.

Notes:

- For main stage productions, requests will be accepted by the technical faculty to work on a particular strike in a given semester.
- Lab hours for theatre courses with lab requirements plus x practicum hours will not exceed 12 hours per week under normal circumstances. Work study hours are not included as part of practicum and do not count toward the total required hours.
- Practicum hours take precedence over work study hours and ACT 2 rehearsals.

Production Crew Policy

- All crew hours and services must be documented. Forms, reports, or timecards should be filled out on a daily basis and returned to the appropriate place. See your crew head or supervisor for details.
- Your weekly schedule should be determined in advance. This facilitates planning.
- Don’t be LATE! Lateness will affect your practicum grade.
- You will not be excused for homework, oversleeping, or rehearsals for studios, scenes, or other projects.
- Any absence should be arranged in advance with your supervisor when possible.
- Missed hours must be made up by the end of the semester.
- Any unexcused absence or missed time will be made up at double the time missed.
- Call in if you are sick. Illness will require proof.

Other Important Crew Policies

- Dress appropriately and safely. Clothes may get dirt or paint on them. Sandals or bare feet are not permitted.
- Run crews will need to dress entirely in black (including socks and shoes) for tech rehearsals and performances.
- Because they deal directly with the public, Front of House crews will need to dress as specified by the Box Office Manager.
- Observe safety rules. Do not attempt to use a piece of equipment with which you are unfamiliar. You might hurt yourself or damage the equipment.
- Report damaged or broken tools or equipment.
- Report observed safety hazards to the appropriate supervisor on stage and in the shops.

Participation in Dance Concerts or TV/Film Projects
Theatre students are encouraged to participate in projects sponsored by the TV/Film and Dance programs. Work on these kinds or projects are excellent opportunities to develop your talents. Sometimes these projects have schedules that are not congruent with a theatre major’s other responsibilities. Usually, these conflicts in schedule can be worked out. It is important for you to realize that you are undertaking extra work and that it is your responsibility to inform the person you are working with in Dance or TV/Film exactly what your other commitments are. They, in turn, should understand that will have to work around these commitments of your major if they wish to involve you in their project. If issues arise that seem to be difficult to negotiate, you should discuss these with your advisor, the program director, or with the Division Head if necessary.

**Departmental Probation**

As stated previously, academic achievement is paramount to the success of a theatre student. In order to assure students make studying a priority, minimum standards for acceptable academic standing have been established for participation in performance/production activities. In order to participate in departmental performance/production projects a student must achieve acceptable academic standing. Students are said to be in acceptable academic standing if they earn the minimum applicable cumulative grade point average listed below:

- For 4 or more courses and 12 credit hours attempted, the minimum is 1.50. Students with fewer than 8 courses and fewer than 24 credit hours whose GPA is under 1.5 will receive an academic warning. They will not be placed on academic probation.
- For 8 or more courses and 24 credit hours attempted, the minimum is 1.60.
- For 16 or more courses and 48 credit hours attempted, the minimum is 1.80.
- For 21 or more courses and 63 credit hours attempted, the minimum is 2.00.

Failure to meet the above requirements will result in the student being placed on *departmental probation* until the situation is rectified. (Please note: midterm grades are not applicable to these requirements). Students on departmental probation are not permitted to be cast in main stage, second stage, dance concerts, or in studio theatre or TV/Film shoots. They may, however, audition for experience and growth. Students on probation are restricted to minimal involvement (limited crew hours) with production activities. Design/Tech majors on probation are also allowed only minimal involvement in production work.

The aim of this policy is to help each student accomplish their primary goal for being here: to successfully complete a university degree.

**Outside Work**

Work outside the university that inhibits a student’s ability to succeed academically or interferes in any way with their classroom, rehearsal, performance, or production responsibilities within the program is strictly prohibited. This includes involvement with outside theatres or producing agencies. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be made to the Chair of Theatre in writing before any such work is undertaken.
Outside Commitments, Conflicts, and Illness

Outside commitments that interfere with classroom, rehearsal, performance, and production responsibilities are prohibited. Exceptions to this policy are:

- In the case of an emergency (example: a serious illness or death in the family), exceptions will be made for missed work.
- Absence from rehearsal/work may be excused as the result of family weddings and anniversaries. Permission from your faculty supervisor should be obtained well in advance.
- Professional or graduate school auditions may also be the cause of being excused from rehearsal/work. Permission should be obtained from the faculty supervisor in advance, and under no circumstances should auditions/interviews be scheduled during technical or dress rehearsals or performances when a student is required to be present.
- If a student is too ill to attend rehearsal or crew, they will be excused. Some proof may be required according to the discretion of the faculty supervisor.

Note: Classroom absence policies are determined by individual instructors, so please consult the syllabus for the policy on absence or lateness.

- For all other conflicts, a student may request, in writing, an exception be made by the faculty supervisor. In the event that request is denied, the student has the recourse to request an exception by writing a letter explaining the circumstances to the chair of the Theatre Department.

Failure to Meet Theatre Department Responsibilities:

Excessive lateness, absence, or lack of professional behavior may result in being removed from a cast or crew and a failing practicum grade.

Callboard

The callboard, located in the airlock at the back of the main hallway, is the key conduit for communication within the program. Students should check the callboard at least twice daily for audition notices, cast lists and crew assignments, rehearsal and crew calls, and other important announcements.

Note: Students are responsible for information posted regarding Act 1 crew calls, fittings, and rehearsals.

Crews

Crew assignments are posted on the callboard a day or two after cast lists are posted. Usually, a first meeting of the crew is announced where schedules and requirements are specified. Please
note: these first meetings are mandatory and you should never have to be sought out to meet your crew responsibilities. There are two major types of crews:

- “Build” or Production Crew: These crews are generally involved with the preparation of the technical elements of a production and normally end opening night. These crews usually require each student to complete 12 hours of crew work per week.
- “Run” Crew: These crews may help with the build of a show but their primary purpose is the actual run of the production. Run crews generally attend all technical and dress rehearsals, as well as all performances. Please see your faculty supervisor for specific requirements and scheduling.

In addition, there is one other type of production crew:

- Front of House Crew: Box Office, House Management, Marketing and usher crews generally fall into this category. Normally, the understudies for a play function as the ushers (except the musical and other large cast productions in which the understudies are self-contained). These crews work hours as assigned by their supervisors.

**Crew Requests**

Students may request to be assigned to a specific crew by making a written request to Amy Best up to the day that particular play is cast. The technical faculty will discuss all submitted requests. All requests will be given due consideration, but not guaranteed, based on the production requirements and the student’s educational needs and experience.

**General Theatre Department Regulations**

- No smoking is allowed in any part of the building. University rules specify that any smoking must be done at least 15’ from an entrance. (Smoking may be allowed onstage in a performance space due to the play’s requirements with the director’s or instructor’s permission.)
- Food and drink are only allowed in the greenroom. Food and drink are specifically forbidden from any performance space except water in sealed containers for hydration.
- Smoking, eating, and drinking (except water) is expressly forbidden when in costume.
- The studio theatre and Schubert Theatre may be scheduled by students engaged in directing projects. This should be done in accordance with the rules specified in the studio theatre handbook and through the studio czar for that semester. All other scheduling of these spaces is to be done through the Facilities Manager. (Note: acting scenes may not reserve these spaces for rehearsal but may use them when available). Senior projects schedule the spaces though the instructor of TR 451. The use of any departmental spaces by independent projects is scheduled through the Facilities Manager.
- Use of the main stage theatre should be requested and scheduled through the Facilities Manager.
• The studio theatre handbook governs the use of the studio theatre by directing class students. This handbook specifies, among other things, how lighting, sound and stock scenery are to be utilized in the space. Please refer to it if you are in a directing class.
• Students may not borrow costumes from the costume shop or costume storage. Costumes may be rented with the approval of the Resident Costume Designer and Costume Shop Manager. Costume rental forms and requirements can be picked up in the Costume Shop.
• If a student misses a scheduled fitting they will have to make up the missed fitting plus work in the Costume Shop for the total amount of time allotted for the missed fitting. For example is a student misses a 30 minute fitting, the next day they would be scheduled for 1 hour-- 30 minutes for the fitting and 30 minutes of work in the Costume Shop.

Theatre Scholarships and Awards

The Theatre Department offers many scholarships each year to deserving current theatre students. Theatre majors may apply for these in the spring semester of each academic year. The process of applying for these scholarships consists of writing a formal letter to the faculty expressing your wish for consideration and the reasons you feel merit the granting of these one-year scholarships.

The deadline for these applications is the Wednesday following the conclusion of spring break. These letters should be turned into the department secretary at any time in the spring semester prior to that date.

The minimum requirements are as follows:

Mullin Scholarships:

Excellence in academic pursuits; minimum GPA of 2.75 overall and 3.25 in TR courses. Quality participation in ACT 1, ACT 2, and other departmental activities.

DeSales Scholarships:

Minimum GPA of 2.5 overall; GPA of 2.75 in TR courses. Quality participation in ACT 1, ACT 2, and other departmental activities.

The following class awards are given by the faculty to those students of outstanding quality in the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes. Nominations are submitted and voted on by the full theatre faculty for these awards. Listed below are the requirements for being considered for one of these awards:

Callahan Award:

This award is given to a junior theatre major who displays excellence in academic pursuits (2.75 minimum GPA) and quality participation in ACT 1, ACT 2, and other departmental activities.
Finiello Award:

This award is given to the sophomore theater major who displays excellence in academic pursuits (minimum GPA 2.75) and quality participation in ACT 1, ACT 2, and other departmental activities.

Hoff Houston Award:

This award is given to the freshman theatre major who displays excellence in academic pursuits (minimum GPA 2.75) and quality participation in ACT 1, ACT 2, and other departmental activities.

Gerard J. Schubert Award:

This award is given to the graduating senior in the theatre major in recognition of superior performance in academic studies.

ACT ONE Award:

This award is presented to the outstanding graduating senior in the theatre major in recognition of contribution to the ACT 1 productions of DeSales University Division of Performing Arts.