CONTENTS

Letter to the Reader

Written by Kelly-Ann Corrigan, C’14.................................................................3

1 Producing

Written by Kelly-Ann Corrigan, C’14.................................................................4

2 Directing

Directing (General)

Written by Zach Saint Louis, C’15.................................................................20

Directing a Musical

Written by Kate Herzlin, C’14.................................................................24

Music Directing

Written by Chris Burcheri, C’14

With Contributions from Chris Gurr, C’14.................................................................32

3 Stage Managing

Written by Rebecca Adelsheim, C’13.................................................................40

4 Treasurer/Business Manager

Written by Layla O’Kane, C’14.................................................................62

5 Designing

Set Design & Build

Written by Carson House, SEAS’16.................................................................69

Costume Design

Written by Trevor Pierce, C’14.................................................................72

Makeup Design

Written by Amanda Shur, C’16.................................................................84

Properties Design

Written by Jeremy Berman, C’14.................................................................86
Light Design
Written by Devin Barney, C’15

Sound Design
Written by Abby Case, C’14 & Chris Gurr, C’14

Graphic Design
Written by Sohee Cha, C’14

6 Miscellaneous

Publicity
Written by Russell Abdo, C’14 & Jessica Schwarz C’17

Dramaturgy
Written by Kate Herzlin, C’14
Dear Reader,

It is my sincere hope that this handbook serves as a useful guide for all of your theatrical endeavors at Penn. I know that my time involved in Penn theatre as well as my time as Theatre Arts Council Chair has been extraordinarily exciting, fun, and rewarding. When I first began stage managing, designing, and producing at Penn, there were few resources available to me other than upperclassmen themselves. For the most part, I figured positions out for myself and learned from my mistakes. While there is no replacement for experience and learning from one’s mistakes, it is my hope that this handbook will both minimize your mistakes and help you to be the most efficient and effective production member you can be. Please keep in mind that all of the chapters in this guide were written by different students who were very experienced in the specific position they wrote about. Thus, though all of the sections are presented in an organized manner, they are all presented in slightly different formats. Credit has been given to the students who originally wrote and made major contributions to the chapters. However, it is my hope and expectation that these chapters are modified and added to by TAC-e members of future classes. While I urge you to read chapters in their entirety and heed our advice, please remember that this book only serves as a guide. Every designer does and should have their own unique style and spin on a position. Bringing new ideas to the table is always encouraged, and this book should in no way be a detriment to creativity. I hope you find this book to be an immense resource, and enjoy and savor every minute of Penn theatre you partake in. Four years goes fast, and I couldn’t have asked for a better community to spend it with; I know you will feel the same.

Warmest wishes,

Kelly-Ann Corrigan, C’14

Theatre Arts Council Chair 2013-2014
ONE
Producing
Kelly-Ann Corrigan, C’14

PRE-AUDITIONS:

Rights: Secure rights, and make sure the contract goes out in time (especially for musicals who need books). Go through the Director of Student Performing Arts (Laurie McCall, lmccall@exchange.upenn.edu) if necessary (i.e. for MTI).

Professional Instruction: Ask your director if he will need a fight choreographer or any other professional instructor – you will need them to sign a contract and talk to the Director of Student Performing Arts – sometimes it takes a while for the contract to clear.

Advertising: Make Facebook Events to advertise audition and tech interviews. Find other ways to advertise such as Events@Penn or via quarter sheets and posters.

PAC REQUIREMENTS:

Pre-production meetings: Producer’s must attend pre-production meetings which will be held at the beginning of the semester at some point.

PAC Handbook: Producer’s must read the PAC Handbook. It has more information that groups must follow.

AUDITIONS:

Audition Forms: You must print audition forms – about 80 (see appendix A at the end of this chapter).

Sides: You are responsible for printing all audition and callback sides.

Audition Room: If there is no stage manager already selected, you are also the primary organizational person present in the audition room. Go to the Stage Manager Chapter (Chapter 3) to see how you can be most helpful in the audition/casting process. It is useful to put everyone into a master spreadsheet as they audition.

Babysitting: Send out a google doc to your board with audition AND callback times so they can monitor auditions and give auditionees sides.

Casting Meeting: You must have character descriptions and a summary of the show ready for the casting meeting. NOTE: YOU MUST BCC ALL CALLBACK AND CASTING E-MAILS.

TECH INTERVIEWS:

Tech Interview Forms: You must print tech interview forms – about 40 (see appendix B at the end of this chapter).
Attendance: Make it a point to attend tech interviews with your tech director – your duties will overlap a lot, and it will be good for you to have a sense of the technical staff you are taking on.

Tech Meeting: You must have a summary of the show ready. NOTE: YOU MUST BCC ALL TECH E-MAILS.

POST AUDITIONS/INTERVIEWS:

Scripts: You must photocopy all of the scripts! It’s nice to have hard copies; use Platt – printing is free; every designer, cast member, and rehearsal staffer should have one.

Listservs: Make a production listserv and a cast listserv.

Contact Sheet: Send out a contact sheet for everyone to put their name, position, e-mail, and phone number.

REHEARSALS:

Space: You are responsible for confirming and releasing rehearsal space with the TAC-e chair, tace.chair@gmail.com and Associate Director of Student Performing Arts, Maria Dietrich, mariafu@exchange.upenn.edu. YOU MUST RELEASE REHEARSAL SPACE THAT YOU WILL NOT USE. Failure to do so on a first offense will result in an absence. On a second offense, you will lose rehearsal space for the remainder of the month.

Designer's Run: You must work with the Stage Manager and director to schedule the designer’s run – this will ideally be as soon as everyone is off book. Usually about three to four weeks before load-in.

FIRST PRODUCTION MEETING:

Miscellaneous: You are responsible for coming up with an agenda and relevant ice breakers. Usually, the first production meeting should consist of expectations of the production. The director should have a vision statement prepared, and everyone should go around and introduce themselves. Set designer deadlines!

Suggested Deadlines:

Lights: A light plot should be due three weeks before load-in. Two weeks before the show you must submit a form on the PAC Shop website two weeks before load-in for any extra lighting equipment that you need:

http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/order.html.

Set Design: You should have three or so deadlines for set. The preliminary deadline should be done ASAP for rehearsal blocking purposes. Ideally a week or two after your first production meeting. A director should give feedback, and a second draft deadline should be set for a week after the first deadline. Lastly, a final draft should be due no
more than 3-4 weeks before load-in. Have you and your set designer talk to your space share as well.

**MC:** Your MC and set crew should get into the shop around 5 weeks prior to load-in or before. Again, this may vary. You must schedule shop hours with Peter/Michelle (usually Sunday-Thursday 7-11PM) - pacshop@dolphin.upenn.edu. See when the set crew is available and work around that.

**Sound:** Your sounds should be sent to your director, stage manager, and producer (with options sometimes, i.e. two types of telephone rings) by one week prior to load-in. By load-in, final sounds should be confirmed.

**Props:** Requested rehearsal props should be obtained ASAP. Final props check should occur one week prior to load-in if possible.

**Costumes:** Costume measurements should take place 4 weeks prior to load-in. Fittings should occur two weeks prior to load-in. Final fittings should occur one week prior to load-in or at load-in.

**Makeup:** If you do not have a makeup designer, combine this category with costumes. Your make up designer should make sure to discuss any special needs with the director. Make sure you know you should be at tech week definitely during the tech run, dress run, and every performance.

**Graphics:** The graphic t-shirt design should be due four weeks prior to load-in. Final draft should be due three weeks prior to load-in so t-shirts can be ordered. Poster graphic should be due two weeks prior to load-in, and the final draft should be due one week prior to load-in. If the graphics designer is responsible for the program, bios should be due at load-in and sent to the board that night. Have the entire board double check the program, and double check for simple things (i.e. someone missing in the cast list).

**Publicity:** Chat about responsibilities. Do they want a promo video? How long before the show? They are responsible for hanging posters on load-in, and sending e-mails to any RAs/programs that may be interested in the show (usually about one week prior to opening night). Sometimes the publicity manager is responsible for the program (see Graphics for more info).

**Tech Week Reminders:** Explain to designers that they are expected at the tech and dress run. Stay on top of your designers! Have designer meetings with designers prior to draft due dates – either at or outside the production meeting. Note: if you are having full production meetings, let the production staff go before you do designer meetings – just have the designers speak to the cast about cast-specific things before you dismiss them.

**Receipts & Budgets:** Talk about receipts! Receipts must be itemized in order to get reimbursed. They should be handed in to your treasurer labeled with a person’s name. Larger purchases should be made with the Pcard! Designers MUST stick to their budgets! If you have questions about how the system works, talk to Jan Kee-Scott.
**Mandatory attendance:** Talk about load-in and strike! These are mandatory for all production staff members.

**Social Fees:** Explain social fees, and what they are for!

**SHOWTIMES:**

*Setting Times:* Take into account what events are going on (i.e. something like homecoming), and if you want to have a matinee so you can be done with strike early. Then, if you have a space share, speak to them before finalizing times.

**SPACE SHARE AGREEMENTS:**

*Google Doc:* You must submit the electronic google form for space share agreements two weeks before your performance (aka one week before you load-in). Any issues you are having must be brought to PAC Exec at this time. Failure to submit space share agreements on time will result in an absence.

**SIX WEEK MEETING WITH PETER:**

Every group must have a six week meeting (six weeks before load-in) with Peter. Your director, producer, and tech director must be there. Your set designer/MC and stage manager may want to attend as well. Try to arrange the meeting to occur with the group you’re space sharing with – if applicable.

**FOUR & TWO WEEK MEETINGS WITH ANNENBERG:**

*Tech Requirements:* You must meet with the Annenberg student tech representative four and two weeks before you load-in to discuss tech requirements. Your director, tech director, stage manager, and producer should attend.

*Online Sales:* Ask for details on who to e-mail with your graphic to make ticket sales available online. You must have the full name of the show, group presenting it, an up to date website, two high-res images at 300 dpi in these dimensions: 440 x 320 pixels and 120 x 90 pixels, and 4-5 sentences about the show.

**TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO TECH WEEK:**

*Lights order:* If applicable, you must place an order for lights at [http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/order.html](http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/order.html).

*Tech rider:* You must fill out tech riders two weeks before load-in at [http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/tech_rider.html](http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/tech_rider.html). You must fill this out with your space share if you have one.

**ONE WEEK PRIOR TO TECH WEEK:**

*Comp Tickets:* E-mail your production staff, and ask who wants comp tickets and for what night. Keep a record.
Ushering: Also ask them if they have any friends who would be interested in ushering – they will get a free comp ticket for doing so.

Load-in details: If another group is loading in their set on the same day as you, arrange a schedule so you both plan to arrive to the shop at least one hour apart. Confirm load-in times with Peter/Michelle. Order the UHaul! The most convenient location is at 50th & Chesnut. Talk to your MC and set designer about what size truck to get. TAKE OUT INSURANCE FROM UHAUL (THE BEST INSURANCE PACKAGE). * *Unless you have someone who is on board who is 21 or over, and they have taken the Penn Uhaul course – then, you are covered by Penn insurance.

Walkshifts: The Friday prior to load-in you must go to the Office of Student Affairs in Houston Hall to reserve poles for walkshifts! You need to bring $25 dollars to put as a deposit on the poles. You will get it back at the end of the week when you return the poles! Send out a walkshift google doc a week or a few days prior to load-in so people can fill it out. At the production meeting the night of load-in, you can fill in missing walkshifts.

Photo call/videotaping: Get someone to do photo call and video tape the show!

Tickets: Order tickets if needed (i.e. most venues outside of Annenberg).

MISCELLANEOUS:

Make sure you have gaff tape, spike tape, batteries, and mic tape for load-in/tech week!

LAST PRODUCTION MEETING BEFORE LOAD-IN:

Safety Meeting! Talk about load-in and appropriate shop clothing, etc; you should make up a safety sheet with rules (see appendix C at the end of this chapter) – your board most likely has one. You should also distribute a load-in schedule with crew assignments and a tech week schedule at this time (see appendix D at the end of this chapter).

LOAD-IN:

Food: Make sure someone on your board is responsible for getting the bagels, coffee, orange juice, knives, cups, napkins, cream cheese, butter, sugar, stirrers. Note: You can pre-order from Dunkin Donuts the night before, and it makes life so much easier.

Reminders: Make sure someone takes sand bags, paint, and tools (these are the most often forgotten items in my experience)! Order the strike Uhaul! It will have to be picked up and parked most likely before strike actually starts. Send lights to the space early so they can get started.

Banner: Make sure someone goes to get a sheet (from the Sheraton or Inn at Penn usually) to make the banner for walkshifts!
**Parties:** Ask if anyone is willing to have the opening night or closing night party at their house!

**Publicity:** Have people change their profile picture to the graphic, and make the Facebook event (this can be done prior to Tech Week if you want & can be done by the board secretary or Publicity Manager as well). Have everyone invite their friends! E-mail the tace.chair@gmail.com details so they can send it out to the TAC-e listserv.

**TECH WEEK & PERFORMANCES:**

*Your Presence:* You should be present at tech week every night! As many people in your board should be as present as possible.

*Tech Week Production Meetings:* Hold a production meeting the Sunday of load-in, and attempt to fill in any walkshifts that have not been taken for the rest of the week- tell people if they fill them in now, you will not have to have production meetings for the remainder of the week (just designer meetings).

*Parties:* If you need to buy certain items for the cast/strike party, do so in advance.

**POST-PRODUCTION:**

*For Ammenberg:* Make sure you collect your money from them. E-mail the box office manager and assistant manager until they arrange a time for you to pick it up – they should not be taking any cuts from your profits.

*Show Review Forms:* Must be filled out by two weeks after your final performance – failure to submit these will result in severe penalties. If you do not submit it by the deadline, you will receive an absence. If you do not submit it by one week after the deadline, you will go on probation. If you incorrectly fill it out (i.e. write things like: “I’m not sure how much we made, something like ___”) you will automatically be put on probation. It is VERY important that you fill these out correctly.

*Post mortem:* Have post-mortem one or two weeks after closing night at your normal production meeting time. Post mortems are important! They allow you to discuss issues that may have occurred that you can fix later.

*DVDs:* Find out who wants DVDs, and provide the videographer with a number.
APPENDIX A

Theatre Company’s *Name of Show*  
**Audition Form**

Name: 
Cell phone number: 

E-mail: 
Year: 

Previous Theatre experience (acting parts/technical positions):

Are there any parts you would not be willing to accept?

Would you be willing to take a technical position?

Read the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preproduction:</th>
<th>December 1st-December 10th &amp; January 14th-February 13th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rehearsal Sunday thru Thursday, 7pm-11pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production meetings: Tuesdays at 11:15pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tech week:

LOAD-IN: Sunday February 16th, 9am-11pm
Monday, February 17th – Saturday, February 22nd, 6-11pm
PERFORMANCES: February 20th – February 22nd

Do you have any weekly conflicts?

Do you have any specific conflicts in that time period?

How did you hear about these auditions?

Do you have any special skills? Dance experience? Accents? Do you play an instrument?

Callbacks are on Monday, November 25th from 7-11PM; do you have any conflicts during this time?

All TAC-E groups must visibly post this policy at their auditions and technical interviews. All groups must ensure that every person who auditions or interviews has read and agrees to this policy.
WHEREAS:

- It is very important that groups have stable casts and production staffs for their shows;
- Acceptance of a role or position is a serious commitment;
- Time constraints make it unfeasible to recast shows or find new production staff positions after the common audition and interview process.

THEREFORE:

Any individual, when cast in a production or offered a position on a production staff, has the right to refuse or accept the role or position. If the person accepts that role or position, he or she cannot work for any other production whose rehearsals or performances conflict with the original production unless both groups agree to share that individual.

If a person later gives up a role or position that he or she has already accepted, the individual becomes ineligible for participation in any other production having a conflicting schedule until after the conclusion of the original production.

This policy applies to all people auditioning and interview for all TAC-E groups.

I have read and agree to the TAC-E Audition Policy

X___________________________
APPENDIX B

Theatre Company’s Name of Show

Technical Form

Name:                     Cell phone number:
E-mail:                   Year:
Previous Theatre experience (acting parts/technical positions):

What technical positions are you interested in? (Circle all that apply.)

Assistant Stage Manager  Sound Designer  Props Designer  Costume Designer

Makeup Designer            Set Designer    Publicity Manager  Graphic Designer

Light Designer             Set Crew       Props Crew       Lights Crew

Sounds Crew               Costume Crew   Make-up Crew     Publicity Crew

Dramaturge                Master Carpenter Mentor _______ (indicate design element)

Master Electrician

What positions would you not be willing to take?

Read the following schedule:
Preproduction: January 15th-February 15th

Rehearsal Sunday thru Thursday, 7pm-11pm
Production meetings: Tuesdays at 11:15pm

Tech week: LOAD-IN: Sunday February 16th, 9am-11pm
Monday, February 17th – Saturday, February 22nd, 6pm-12 midnight
PERFORMANCES: February 20th – February 22nd

Do you have any weekly conflicts or one time conflicts? (Specifically applicable to tech week.)

How did you hear about these interviews?

All TAC-E groups must visibly post this policy at their auditions and technical interviews. All groups must ensure that every person who auditions or interviews has read and agrees to this policy.

WHEREAS:

- It is very important that groups have stable casts and production staffs for their shows;
- Acceptance of a role or position is a serious commitment;
- Time constraints make it unfeasible to recast shows or find new production staff positions after the common audition and interview process.

THEREFORE:

Any individual, when cast in a production or offered a position on a production staff, has the right to refuse or accept the role or position. If the person accepts that role or position, he or she cannot work for any other production whose rehearsals or performances conflict with the original production unless both groups agree to share.

If a person later gives up a role or position that he or she has already accepted, the individual becomes ineligible for participation in any other production having a conflicting schedule until after the conclusion of the original production.

This policy applies to all people auditioning and interview for all TAC-E groups.

I have read and agree to the TAC-E Interview Policy

X___________________________
APPENDIX C

Theatre Company Name

Load-in Safety Guidelines

1. The Master Carpenter and Producer are in charge. Listen to them and do what they tell you to do.
2. **DO NOT come late to load-in.** Load-in begins promptly at 10 AM Sunday (Friday) morning. Failure to come on time to load-in will delay the entire process.
3. **DO NOT** come to load-in hungover, drunk, stoned, rolling, on any other drugs, or in a bad mood. You’ll make the process slow and painful, and we won’t think you’re cooler because of it.
4. Long hair must be tied back.
5. It’s not a good idea to wear jewelry to load-in.
6. Wear comfortable clothes that aren’t baggy. Make sure you’re wearing clothes you’re willing to get dirty.
7. Everyone must wear shoes, preferably sneakers (no sandals) at all times.
8. Don’t bring a backpack or expensive stuff with you to load-in. The rooms will not be locked and there may not be someone around to watch your stuff at all times. You may want to bring a book or some work in case there’s some downtime.
9. When lifting set pieces or other heavy equipment, lift with your legs, not with your back.
10. All tools must be tied to your body if you are on the grid, a ladder or genie.
11. If something is going to fall and hit the ground, yell “heads.” If you hear someone yell “heads,” duck.
12. NO ONE may leave the theater during load-in without notifying the stage manager.
   **This is very important. We must know where you are at all times.**
13. Breaks will be designed around people’s individual schedules and how load in is progressing. For a Friday load-in we **DO NOT** require you to skip class or any other prior obligations.
14. Don’t bitch, and don’t be a whiny baby!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td>Everyone meet at the shop (breakfast provided), load truck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-1:00PM</td>
<td>Finish loading truck, head to Annenberg, unload truck, begin build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM-2:00PM</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00PM-6:00PM</td>
<td>Set Work/Light set up/Sound set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-7:00PM</td>
<td>Dinner break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-11:00 PM</td>
<td>Light focus/sound test/set building continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 PM</td>
<td>Production meeting in Harrison M20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D (Page 2 of 4)

CREW ASSIGNMENTS

**Lights/Annenberg Crew (go to Annenberg at 10AM)**
- Sarah Selger
- Pranshu Maheshwari
- Jeremy Newlin
- Zach Baldwin

**Props**
- Elly Mohamed Hyffny
- Aish Kumar
- Becca Kaplan

**Sound**
- Sohee Cha
- Russell Abdo

**Set**
- Sarah Tomberlin
- John Johnston
- Jeremy Cole
- Michael Jorizzo
- Chance Sanchez
- Jennifer Yoo
- Will Connell
- Rebecca Adelsheim
- Chris Burcheri
- Oscar Serpell

**PR**
- Hannah Brown
- Nicole Holtz
- Jen Wu
- Isaac Garcia

**Costumes**
- Trevor Pierce

Excused until return: Reni Ellis, Anna-Lara Cook, Tyler Carson, Connie Sperakis

If you run out of things to do at any point or you have to leave the theater, make sure to let our stage manager, Rebecca Adelsheim, know!

*IF YOU ARE NOT LISTED UNDER SET - ONCE YOU HAVE FINISHED HELPING YOUR RESPECTIVE TEAM, ASK JOHN OR SARAH WHAT THEY NEED. EVERYONE MUST HELP BUILD THE SET.*

Important phone numbers:

Kelly-Ann Corrigan (producer): 646-354-9041
Rebecca Adelsheim (stage manager): 412-303-3406
APPENDIX D (Page 3 of 4)

Theatre Company

Name of the Show

Tech Week Schedule (Subject to change)

Load-in Date-Strike Date

Monday, March 19th
3:00PM-6:00PM Work Light Hours
6:00 PM Call for actors (tech call TBD)
7:00PM-11:00PM Q to Q
11:15PM Production Meeting

Tuesday, March 20th
3:00PM-6:00PM Work Light Hours
6:00PM Call for actors (tech call TBD)
7:00PM-11:00PM Tech Run
11:15PM Production Meeting

Wednesday, March 21th
3:00PM-6:00PM Work Light Hours
6:00PM Call for everyone
7:00PM-7:30PM Final clean up (spacing/tech/other)
7:30PM-11:00PM Dress Run (with Photos)
11:15PM Production Meeting

Thursday, March 22nd
5:30PM Call for everyone
7:00-10:00PM OPENING PERFORMANCE!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00PM</td>
<td>Cast Party (location TBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, March 23rd</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30PM</td>
<td>Call for everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-10:00PM</td>
<td>Performance #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday, March 24th</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30PM</td>
<td>Call for everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00PM-10:00PM</td>
<td>CLOSING PERFORMANCE!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00PM-12:00AM</td>
<td>Strike/get out of space!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00AM-completion</td>
<td>Strike continued and then Strike Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding a Stage Manager

Before you begin the audition process it is often helpful, though not required, to find a stage manager to assist you in the audition process. This individual should be someone willing to dedicate the time to rehearsals each week and someone who you feel comfortable working very closely with. This person will be helpful in taking notes and planning the schedule of auditions. If you are unable to find a stage manager prior to auditions, you can find one during the tech interview process.

Audition Process

First Audition: Decide which roles/scenes you would like to see people perform and choose appropriate sides that demonstrate what you are looking for in certain characters. Sides should contain enough to give you a good idea if an individual is right for a given part, however should be very short so that each audition you have enough time to see every person. Ideally, each audition should take no more than 5-7 minutes. Give the page numbers of the script to the producer so that he/she can make copies and have them ready to go at auditions.

Take Notes: Throughout the auditions you should take notes on each individual and what you liked/didn’t like about each person who auditions. Then, decide whether or not you would like to see them again for a callback audition. You can also have a producer and/or stage manager who is in the room with you take notes.

Callbacks: Design your callbacks in a way that will help demonstrate the actors compatibility with the characters. Generally speaking, callbacks can be a bit more involved than the first audition, which is typically just reading a side (for a straight play). However, make sure that the callbacks can feasibly be completed in the amount of time you have scheduled.

Make a List: Throughout the callback process you should make a list of your top 5-7 choices for each character and take detailed notes on each individual. After all callbacks have finished, you should talk with your producer and/or stage manager and decide on the official ranking of your choices for each part.
Double Casting: You should note before auditions if any two parts in the show could be played by one actor and if so, you should keep this in mind while watching auditions and making lists.

Casting Meeting
Following callbacks, you will attend a casting meeting with your producer and/or stage manager (whomever was in the audition room with you) and all of the directors for every other TAC-e show to decide which characters

Finalizing the List: You will need to bring your list of official choices (in order of preference) for each character to the meeting with you. You may be asked to submit this list to the person running the meeting (usually the TAC-e chair) prior to the meeting to make the process faster. Take note of any double casting options while making this list.

Character Descriptions: You should have character descriptions readily available for every character in the event that an individual is offered more than one role and must decide between two.

Sharing an Actor: You should be aware of any parts in your show that you feel are small enough that an actor could have that role and also be in another show in the event that another director wants to cast the same actor in his/her show.

Casting Individuals: Throughout the meeting when your top choices become available to you (ie. other directors no longer need them) you will be able to call the person and offer them the part in your show. If more than one director offers an actor a role, the individual running the meeting will call the actor and offer him/her both parts to choose from.

Casting meetings are often long, stressful, and frustrating. Remember to breathe and stick to your list and whatever happens...your show will be great!

Rehearsal Time
Read Through: Your first rehearsal should be a read-through of the script with all of the actors presents. Take this rehearsal as a chance for the cast to meet one another and get acquainted as well as a chance to hear the script for the first time in their voices. Make sure you give the script to the producer so every actor has a copy, along with the stage manager.

Scheduling Rehearsals: Each week, you should meet with your stage manager to schedule rehearsals. Your stage manager will have a list of all the actors conflicts and will be able to make a schedule based on what you want to work on. You should establish the work
you want to do at the beginning of the week, figure out what actors you will need, and give that plan to the stage manager so that he/she can then make a schedule.

**Utilizing Time and Space:** While seemingly long, tech week will undoubtedly be here before you know it. Make sure that you are using your time in the rehearsal room effectively in order to be the most productive as possible. While some breaks from rehearsal are good, generally speaking you should try to utilize the entire 7-11 block of time each night in order to get the most work done that you possibly can. If you do cancel rehearsal, make sure to tell the producer so that he/she can release the space.

**Off-Book Date:** Set an off-book date with your stage manager at the first full rehearsal so the actors know very early which day they will have to have the script memorized. You should be fairly strict with this deadline as it is important to be off book to get the most out of the rehearsal time you have.

**Taking Notes:** It is helpful to take notes for your actors during rehearsals, either by writing them down or simply giving them verbally at the end of rehearsals. These notes will be sent out in a rehearsal report each night by the stage manager. It is important to note any special technical elements you think of in rehearsal (set/lights/costumes/sound/etc.) because designers will also read rehearsal reports.

**Cast Bonding:** It is highly recommended that you organize some cast bonding events throughout the rehearsal process to bring the group closer together and to have fun. After all, it is student theater!

**Working with Designers**

**Deciding on Designs:** Before the first production meeting, you should think about what you would like the design of the show to look like. It is not necessary to have fully formed or specific ideas, but a general thought of what you would like to see is helpful to tell designers. This includes set, props, sounds, lights, costumes, make-up, and graphics.

**Communicating with Designers:** You should stay in communication with designers throughout the process so that as they make preliminary designs, you can be a part of their process to make sure their vision for the show aligns with yours. You should make it a point to talk to each designer at every production meeting.

**Designers’ Run:** You should set a date with your stage manager early on for your designers’ run, where all of the designers will see a full run through of the show. This
should be after the off-book date and after all blocking has been done, however, it should be early enough to allow designers to change any aspects of their design if necessary.

**Tech Week**

**Spacing**: Once the set has been built you should take time with the actors to work out spacing on the stage make any changes based on anything that may be different from spacing in the rehearsal room to the stage.

**Cue-to-Cue**: During cue-to-cue, you should be looking at each sound/light cue and make sure it looks/sounds the way you want it to. If you would like to see something changed, you should let your stage manager and the designers know so that the necessary changes can be made.

**Props/Costumes**: You should look at all of the costumes and props for the show and approve them all early on in the week so that if any changes need to be made the designers can do so with enough time.

**Final Notes**: During the last dress rehearsals of tech week you should take notes on the performance to give final notes to the actors before opening night.

**Show Days**

By the time opening night comes, your job as director is essentially over. You should make sure your cast is warmed up and ready to go at the beginning of the show and then sit back and enjoy your hard work!
Hello, directors! Welcome to the wonderfully exciting world of directing a musical. Some people may tell you that directing a musical is basically the same as directing a play but with some music; in some fundamental ways, this is true, but for all practical rehearsal purposes, this is TERRIBLY untrue.

It’s true that there are some basic things about directing a play and a musical that are the same. Such as:

- Character development is key
- You will find character and blocking choices together with your actors; you should make some choices on your own, but ultimately you will collaborate with your entire team to make many final decisions.
- You are still telling a very important story.
- You will (most likely) have scenes to block that do not have music.

The differences, however, are:

- Your actors have to memorize lines and music.
- Casting considerations will include acting, singing voice, and possibly choreography depending on the show.
- You will work closely with a music director and possibly a choreographer. Both music and dance will have to be reviewed and run throughout the process in addition to blocking and scenework.
- Microphones, microphones, microphones.

However, don’t fear! Though there are various challenges that come with directing a musical, I promise that with sufficient organization, planning and flexibility, you will succeed!

THE PROCESS

STEP 1: SELECTING A MUSICAL
When selecting what musical you will direct at Penn, you’ll want to think about the vocal and dance talents of the TAC-e community at the time. Of course some actors will always come out of the woodwork for specific shows, but if you literally cannot name a single talented dancer in the TAC-e community, it may not be the year to direct *A Chorus Line*. That being said, do NOT pre-cast in your mind who will play specific roles, because just like any auditions, people will always surprise you, but you should make sure you choose a show that may highlight the talents of the community at the time. Shows that have ample opportunities for women are probably going to be a good bet, as there are typically, in theatre, an enormous number of triple threat women.

**STEP 2: CASTING**

This is one of the most difficult parts of the process. As outlined in the Directing chapter, you will attend the casting meeting, and should have multiple alternates for each role as well as for any chorus roles. And don’t forget – chorus members typically are just as talented, if not more so, than lead roles, as they often need to sing, act, and dance with full energy and communicate emotion often exclusively through song (with few lines to develop their characters), so don’t treat these as throwaway roles in your casting. If the show has a chorus, the chorus is probably the backbone of your show.

Everything as outlined in the Directors chapter should also be useful for you as a director of a musical. Here are the casting concepts to consider that will be a little different for your musical than for a play:

-Does this person have the appropriate vocal range for a role? If they don’t, it may be simply impossible to cast him or her in that specific role.

-Does the role require dance skill, and if so, does that actor have any dance experience? You may want to set aside time for dance auditions as part of your audition process in order to determine this. If you have a choreographer, talk to them about if they need to see actors dance or if they don’t feel it’s necessary.

-Just as in any other casting situation, does the person act well? Do they add something new to the role you might not have anticipated? Do they excite you? Do they respond well to your feedback?

-For call backs, you will want to select small bits of songs along with the music director and have time in call backs to teach actors the music in groups, as well as to hear individuals sing. You will want to send out recordings as well as pieces of the sheet music via email the night
before call backs. This will likely be the responsibility of the music director, but you should collaborate with him or her on the song choices.

A NOTE ON SHARING ACTORS IN A MUSICAL

It will probably be impossible to share your actor, if he or she is a lead role, with another cast; you may or may not be flexible on sharing chorus roles depending on how often they will need to be called to rehearsal, but you may want to be as flexible as you can reasonably be if your chorus has a specific requirement for the number of people (whether it’s total numbers of people or breakdowns of men and women), to make sure that you will be able to fill that number. Keep in mind that just as with all other casting decisions for the other plays, if someone is offered a chorus or small role in your show and a lead role in a play, they might choose the play, so you will have to consider who you can and can’t share and having as large a list of talented alternatives as you can possibly have. Is the role small enough that you can share that actor? Be reasonable; you don’t need to always be willing to share actors, but use your best judgment for each role.

STEP 3: THE MUSICAL REHEARSAL PROCESS

ON SCHEDULING: It is highly advisable that for a musical, you plan out much of the schedule as far ahead of time as possible, especially if you are concerned about not having enough time to block your show. Let me tell you now: you DO have enough time to block your show, but you have to be very organized in your scheduling, efficient and focused in rehearsal, and in VERY close communication with your stage manager. Though you may need to make new schedules to send out every week, you, the choreographer, the music director, and the stage manager may want to make tentative schedules several weeks ahead of time to make sure there is enough time to block your entire show and review and clean things before tech week.

FIRST REHEARSALS: Set aside one or two rehearsals to read through the script, listen to a recording while reading through the script, talk to the actors about your vision and about the rehearsal process, have the cast start to bond.

Over the next one or two weeks, I would advise that you exclusively use the time to teach music. This will of course depend on your music director’s schedule, but you really cannot choreograph or block songs until all of the music is learned or memorized.
After the music is learned, you should have some character work and blocking rehearsals along with choreography rehearsals. You will have to make sure you have a large rehearsal room, likely with a mirror, for choreography rehearsals.

You may want to block chronologically, or complete all of Act One and then complete all of Act Two, and have a stumble through of each act before the first runs of the show, or you may want to jump around in the script for different rehearsals depending on how feasible it is to block chronologically depending on your actors’ conflicts. As long as your actors are aware of the progression of the show in terms of vision and plot, it should not damage the process to block scenes out of order.

Your choreographer or music director may want to set up a weekly time to review dance or music; talk with them to see if they feel that that is necessary of they would prefer to wait to review until after the designer’s run.

**DESIGNER’S RUN:** Your designer’s run will probably be the first full run through after the show is initially staged. IT WILL BE MESSY. IT WILL NOT BE READY TO GO UP ON STAGE. That’s okay! Your actors may worry, and even if you are worried too you should express confidence that as long as everyone works hard, stays focused, and clears any unnecessary conflicts, you will have an excellent show. The designer’s run should be at least two weeks before tech week ideally. Don’t forget that this means you still have forty hours to review and fix. The point of the designer’s run is for the designers to see the basic staging of the show before tech week. If major changes are made, or if you have time, you may want to plan a second designer’s run after some fixes are made so they can see it closer to performance-ready mode. Your actors MUST be off-book for the designer’s run, though you may request an earlier off-book date.

**AFTER THE DESIGNER’S RUN:** Use this time wisely. Take specific notes and be very aware of what is left to do. Have scene transitions been totally forgotten about? Did that dance number that looked amazing suddenly look terrible because it’s been three weeks since it was taught? Did everyone forget the lyrics on the opening number? Don’t panic; just take the appropriate time in rehearsals to fix it. Did you hate the blocking of that one scene? Go back and change it; make use of this time. The actors know their characters better later in the process. You may even want to do more character work (though not too much) at this point to solidify and explore some more advanced character choices now that more discoveries have been made and now that everyone is off book. You should not go back and change everything, but this is your last chance to make major edits.
Be in close contact with your music director and your choreographer to find out how much time they need to review, clean, fix, and/or change previous choices. These are very important technical edits and it’s really the last chance for cleaning problem spots; make sure you give them the ample time that they need.

**ON COMMUNICATING WITH DESIGNERS**

Much of the design communications are the same as in the original directing chapter. The only difference is that you have to make sure of the following:

**Set design:**
- there is space for the orchestra
- there is space for choreography
- there is space backstage for costume changes

**Lighting design:**
- Do you need a spotlight? Be clear about this and be aware of whether or not it will be possible from early on.

**Sound design:**
MICROPHONES. MICROPHONES. MICROPHONES. Yes, there are sound cues, but MICROPHONES. We will get to that when we get to tech week. Just remember: microphones. The designer should feel comfortable working with mics.

**Costume design:**
- Make sure that the costumes do not constrain choreography, and that the shoes will be shoes that will be comfortable to dance in. Character shoes may be the best bet, depending on the show. Tap musicals require actors to also have their own tap shoes.

**IN GENERAL** it is best to be in close touch with your designers, ESPECIALLY your lighting designer, long before tech week. If your lighting designer is able to basically plan out most of the lighting cues for every scene before tech week (and this IS possible if you are in close contact with him or her about each scene’s expectations), your cue to cue can basically be a run during tech week.
SITZPROBE

The sitzprobe is a crucial part of the process; this is the first run through with the ensemble and the orchestra. You sing through all of the music in the show. This will probably be the Sunday night of load-in, though you may want to schedule it for the week before tech week if at all possible, since everyone will be tired at load-in. However, sitzprobe is really very exciting: your music director should have had several rehearsals with the orchestra, so when they come together with the singing ensemble, the show starts to feel really real and professional.

TECH WEEK

Though you do not necessarily have to stick to this schedule, this is what frequently works well for musicals at Penn:

SUNDAY NIGHT:
Sitzprobe and re-spacing. Now that you are in the space, many scenes and choreography formations may have to be respaced. Everyone MUST stay quiet and focused. It is tedious but absolutely necessary. You should also have a walk-through of the finished set so everyone can feel comfortable with it. You should have shown the set design to everyone during rehearsals, but now they can actually walk around it and feel the world of the show.

MONDAY NIGHT:
You may need to finish re-spacing on Monday. Hopefully your lighting designer may be able to simultaneously write some cues, if they haven’t finished during worklight hours. Monday night should also be your cue to cue. You may very well not finish your cue to cue Monday night, and that is okay: however, if you and your lighting designer have been in close communication, barring other major problems with tech you may be able to run cue to cue almost as a run. Or you may run cue to cue just from each light cue to each light cue, skipping large parts of scenes in which the lights do not change. That is entirely up to you and what would be most useful for you during tech.

TUESDAY NIGHT:
You will add on both costumes and mics and hopefully run the show. Microphones should have previously been assigned, and there may be mic switches throughout the show. It is very important that the actors are careful with their microphones, do not get make up on the microphones, and try not to get sweat or any water on them. Mic placement should be the same each night. You may need to finish your cue to cue before the run can happen. Sometimes you will not be able to complete a run on Tuesday night; do not panic about this, you will be okay.

You will also have to plan a sound check with both the orchestra and the singers to balance the levels. You may also have to have a fight call to practice any fight choreography. These should both happen before a run begins.

Make sure there is time to give notes (possibly after you are out of the space) as well as to get out of costume and mics.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT:**

This is your full dress run. With full make up, orchestra, costumes, lights, sound, props, etc. -- basically it’s a performance. Barring any safety issues for which you may have to call hold, this should be treated as a performance. It may not be as smooth as a performance – in fact, it may be terrible. And that’s okay! This is your last chance to give notes, and this is the first time to run everything. Hopefully all of the kinks will be worked out; this is the time for mistakes to be made.

**A GENERAL NOTE ON TECH WEEK**

DO. NOT. PANIC. Just don’t.

Everyone else will. You need to be their rock. You need to give them positive energy. Be strict and harsh when you need to be, but overall, you should try to energize them and remain a calm reminder that everything will be okay, because it will be! You have a great show on your hands – tech week is for TECH, not for the actors, so it makes sense that staging and technical kinks will throw people off in the new space. But that will be worked out by the end of tech week. If you have a great show on the Thursday before tech week, you will have a great show by your Thursday night of opening.

**ON COLLABORATING WITH YOUR MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER**

The show’s vision is ultimately yours, but the show is not yours alone. The music director and the choreographer should feel some artistic ownership over the show. You should not dictate their choices to them, but their choices should fit with your vision so that the final product is a
unified piece. They are not simply servants to your vision, but they should ultimately help fulfill your vision while incorporating their own artistic aesthetics and ideas.

**ON MICROPHONES**

They will present problems but make sure your actors do not get make up on mics, do not get water on mics, and **strictly follow the instructions of the sound designer**. Damaged microphones can disrupt an otherwise extraordinary performance!

**PERFORMANCES**

The show is now in the hands of the stage manager and performers! It’s not advisable to give notes after opening; the show is no longer yours, it’s theirs to give to the world. Be proud of your artistic team and of your own hard work.

Congratulations on directing a fabulous musical!
Congratulations! You are music directing a show for TAC-e. Music directing is one of the most exciting ways to be involved in a production. You will be responsible for teaching and maintaining the music for both the cast and the band, and will very likely either conduct or lead from the piano for the performances. There is a lot that goes into this process, and below I’ve broken it down into roughly chronological steps, with requirements and recommendations along the way. I recommend reading the entire thing before beginning the process; there is a miscellaneous section at the end which includes things that you need to know earlier. I hope that this guide is helpful to you!

**Auditions**

Once you find out that you will be music directing a particular show, you should begin to study the music. Find out if the materials will be arriving before auditions (they should be). Take a Piano-Conductor Score (PC score) and look at each song and voice part closely. Obviously a director can’t go into auditions without a vision and a plan for how to cast the right people; the same standard applies to you when it comes to the music. Know what each character’s vocal range is, and have ideas about what vocal qualities you’d like to hear. Make sure to have enough communication with the director before auditions so you know that you’re on the same page, and to get further thoughts from him/her. Also, decide what parts can be doubled, if any, and how many chorus/ensemble (of each gender) members you will need to cast.

Ask around for a good accompanist for the audition days. There may be someone in the TAC-e community who has accompanied before, and if so, reach out to them and see if they are available. Accompanying auditions requires strong musical theatre sightreading ability. If you have strong piano skills and would prefer to accompany auditions yourself, by all means feel free to. I have done this for TAC-e auditions without it being a problem. The only drawback is that you’ll need to split attention between your sight-reading and your critical listening, but there are benefits: you get to see the music they’re singing and interact with them musically right away.

In your note-taking, I recommend writing the song that they sang, along with their vocal quality, any parts they may be good for, and their vocal range. If you and the director are expecting a lot of people who you won’t know, photos are also never a bad idea. As far as the vocal range, sometimes you will get a clear top note/bottom note in the song that they sing; if not, range them so you know for sure (la la la’s ascending and descending). Note: be careful when testing ranges. Vowels and placement can be a big part of whether a note is reachable or not. Know the purpose of testing for their range, i.e. what character range do you have in mind. There is also a difference between range and “tessitura.” Just because someone can eek out a high A in auditions, doesn’t mean they will be able to hit it convincingly for two months of rehearsals and a week of shows.

**Callbacks and Casting**

Once you know the music of the show well think about which sections you would like to hear sung at callbacks. For auditions, people will come to you with whatever song they’ve
prepared; at callbacks, you will pick sections of music from the show you are doing to hear sung. You often do not need to pick a section of music for each character. Think about choosing one or two sections of music (16-32 bars usually) for male and female leads, and any other vocally distinctive characters. You will be able to cast ensemble members from hearing everyone sing the leads’ music, most likely.

When picking the sections of music for callbacks, consider: vocal range, emotional delivery, duets/trios, and relative ease to learn. If you know that your female lead spends a lot of time doing high belting, make sure you choose a section of music which includes high belting. If there’s a pair of characters who sing together prominently in the show, pick a section of music from one of their duets (or trios, etc.), and have them sing together in pairs. Lastly, don’t choose 16 bars of five-part jazz harmonies; basic harmonies are fine, but don’t go too crazy. The point is to hear them sing, not struggle with harmonies they just tried to learn.

Send your choices to your director for feedback, or for other suggestions. Once you’ve decided upon the sections, send them to your producer, along with a # of copies for each, and make sure they have your PC score (often you will receive two, so there may be an additional one they can copy from).

**How to teach the callback music:** you have a few options here. Some actors may have spent all day studying their section of music and now know it backwards and forwards without any help from you. Some others may still walk into callbacks without knowing it. If you have a friend who can help you, or an AMD/co-MD, they can review/teach music at a piano elsewhere while you are in the callbacks room. If not, send an e-mail to all those who were called back immediately after the casting meeting with PDF scans of all callback music and links to soundtrack recordings all attached and clearly labeled. Spend the time before auditions making callback sides. This will save you a lot of trouble after the casting meeting. If you want to see something additional after seeing everyone’s audition it will then only take a moment to tack it on. Attach scans of all the pages of music for callbacks, clearly labeled, AND recordings of each song. If the soundtrack matches your scanned version, great; if not, YouTube it and find a good video of a performance that does, and attach the video link. Make sure they know that you do not want them to mimic the recordings; they are simply there as basic points of reference for pitch and rhythm. **Make your e-mail to them as clear and easy to follow as possible.** This way they have until callbacks to listen to the songs, look at the copies, and learn them on their own. Yes, it is an extra step for you, and it might mean sending a long e-mail at 3am, but it makes their lives easier, which makes them more confident, which means you’ll have much better callbacks. Review the music once at callbacks so they can get comfortable with you playing. Beyond this, everyone should be ready.

Each director/MD team will collaborate differently when making casting decisions, so once you have heard everyone and need to make decisions, that will play out as it will. And then, pat yourself on the back…the show is cast.

**Assembling the band**
Be proactive with finding a band! What you’ll discover is that when it comes to the cast, there is a clear structure in place, where auditions are organized, rehearsal space is taken care of by higher-ups, and you just go and teach the music; and when it comes to the band, nobody tells you anything whatsoever and you’re completely on your own. This is how it is in TAC-e.
Fortunately, everything you need to do will be in this guide. Do things sooner than later; a band can’t be too prepared for a show, but it sure can be not prepared enough.

Even before the show’s materials arrive, you can probably start putting some instruments in place. 99% of musicals require a drummer. No pressure, but finding a solid drummer is really important. Some shows involve more rock drumming, some are more jazz drumming, and many will move between the two from song to song. Finding someone who is capable of playing in different styles and who can lay down a solid beat is going to make your job much easier, and make the band play that much better. A drummer’s flexibility must translate into their attitude as well. The conductor/MD and drummer need to be on the same team or the show will fall apart.

As soon as materials arrive, go to Platt and take all the instrument books. The act of finding musicians sounds very self-explanatory, but several instruments come with catches that I’ve learned from experience.

**PC score:** Decide whether you want to lead from the piano, or if you want to conduct. Shows tend to lend themselves better to one or the other; rock and groove-heavy shows lean towards leading from the piano, while older shows, jazz-heavy shows, shows with larger bands, or just straight-up more difficult shows are better off conducted. If you feel more comfortable doing one or the other, do that. If you will be conducting, you’ll need a pianist (here’s where that second PC score comes in handy).

**Bass:** Beware of the distinction between upright bass and electric bass. Many shows go back and forth between the two, some are exclusively one or the other. At Penn it will be much easier to find an electric bassist, but if the upright sound is important to the show, try very hard to find one.

**Guitar:** Unless you’re doing a rock musical from the 60s or 70s, odds are the guitar book will be difficult, including notated comping and melody. Again, with some exceptions, the ability to read music is a must. This shrinks the pool of potential guitarists quite a bit, but if there is notation in the book, your guitarist absolutely has to be able to play it. It doesn’t matter how well they can riff; if someone can’t read music, they can’t play in your band.

**Reeds:** Unless you’re doing a show from the 50s or earlier, you will probably receive a few Reed books, each of which contains a mix of saxes, flute, clarinet, and possibly oboe/English horn. These books are made for multi-instrumentalists. In the professional world, this is how reed players work; in college theatre, you are not likely to find many of these “doublers.” If you do, you’ve hit the jackpot. If not, be prepared to do a lot of photocopying. Get binders and prepare your own books for these instruments. This might involve taking the flute part thats spread across several books and making it into one book. Basically, you are tailoring a book to the musician, so make sure you know their abilities and commitment before you make it. Do all hole-punching yourself, so when you hand these out you are not just handing out a loose pile of papers.

**Percussion:** Many shows, in addition to drumset, ask for a slew of auxiliary percussion, such as bells, chimes, xylophones, vibes, whistles, maybe even timpani. You’ll probably cut most of it, and if there are spots where you need the auxiliary percussion called for, ask the drummer if he/she has them or knows anyone that might. You might also ask the Penn Singers Orchestra Manager, or
the Penn Music Department if you or your drummer knows people there. Synthesis from the keyboard is also an option.

**How to find people:** Networking and e-mails. Lots of e-mails. Reach out to members of as many music groups as you can think of. In my experience, Penn Band, Penn Jazz, the Glee Club Band, the Mask & Wig Band, Penn Flutes, and the Penn Symphony Orchestra have been good sources of talented musicians. Reach out to music directors of other recent TAC-e or Singers productions to get recommendations from the people they worked with.

Prioritize: drums, piano/keyboard (if you need it), bass, brass, at least one instrument of each reed type. Making sure you have the full timbral range is often very important to the musical styles. Once all sections are represented, then you can think about filling out the ranks.

Which leads me to this point: **know the reed books.** Know which reed instruments are more important than others, and in which songs each one plays. This will take some time, as you’ll need to sift through whatever reed books you have and piece it together, but it will make your decision-making stronger.

**Never hesitate to have auditions for the band.** If you are not sure about someone’s skill level, have them audition for you before committing them into the band. Often times, it’s better to not have a particular instrument than to have someone whose chops are not up to par.

Do all of this as quickly and efficiently as you can. Nobody will tell you to do any of this, but the last thing you want to do is start letting weeks go by without having a band. And don’t panic if it’s taking a while to find people! It will work out. My friend and I co-music directed Avenue Q for Quadramics, and six weeks out from the show we still didn’t have a guitarist. We were resigned to do the show without guitar when a chance conversation with a friend led to us finding a great guitarist, who learned the show quickly and was able to perform with us. But even had we not found him, the show would have gone on.

Once you have most of your band members in place, you should start thinking about rehearsals. The next two sections will be about rehearsals, first with the cast and then with the band.

**Cast Rehearsals**

Music rehearsals will probably be bunched up towards the beginning of the rehearsal process. These will be your primary music-teaching days. Depending on how the director and stage manager work, you may or may not be asked to create the schedule for these days. Obviously scheduling is up to you, but making lists of who sings in every song, and estimating how long each song will take to learn, will be helpful here. Err on the conservative side if you’re not sure (every song/show/cast is so different, it’s not possible to provide guidelines here).

Start each of these rehearsals with some basic warm-ups, then jump into teaching. The goal for these early rehearsals should be for everyone to get the pitches, pronounce words correctly, and get rhythms right. If you have one-on-one time with leads, or if your ensemble picks up music very quickly, you can begin to add “next-level” things like better phrasing, emotional arcs, dynamics, etc., but generally you’ll layer these on over the weeks/months of the process.
For some more difficult choral sections, the cast may benefit from practice parts. These are recordings which you can make on your own and send out, which include their part being played loudly over the soundtrack (assuming the soundtrack matches your music). There are several different ways to do this; GarageBand, Audacity, Logic, either directly MIDI from a keyboard to a computer or entirely acoustically…find whatever works for you, but the concept is the same: this will allow the cast to practice (or, if time is a factor, learn outright) their parts on their own time.

Be aware that, often, songs on the soundtrack will be anywhere from slightly, to very different than the way they appear in your materials: different cuts, they will be longer/shorter, etc. There will also frequently be music that you have to perform that is not on the soundtrack; this can be anything from quick scene change music to long songs.

It will be your responsibility to figure out what these sound like, and make recordings at the piano if those would be beneficial to the creative team.

Once the first round of music-learning days are complete, you will take a backseat to directing/choreography. If you are also the accompanist, you will still be going to rehearsal and playing whenever music is being done, but you will not be doing as much teaching. You should be given sporadic music review days, as needed, where you can spend time reviewing any music that needs it, particularly when choreography/blocking is added, and what were previously beautiful 6 part chords now become exhausted half-chords while the cast tries to remember their dance moves.

**Band Rehearsals**

E-mail your band members and find a time when everyone is free (hopefully you’ll find one). This will most likely be a weekend afternoon. For a standard TAC-e musical rehearsal period, I’ve found that three-hour rehearsals once a week starting around the same time as cast rehearsals is a good place to start.

Once you’ve found your regular rehearsal time, e-mail the Platt director who is responsible for rehearsal space scheduling (Ria Fumai Dietrich as of this writing; ask your TAC-e chair if you’re unsure) and see about reserving a Platt rehearsal room. Alternately, if you happen to have a section leader of the Penn Band in your group, ask if you can use the Penn Band room; it makes a great room for band rehearsals.

You may need access to amps and/or keyboards. Platt has several of both, which you can reserve use of; e-mail the same person you did for scheduling rehearsal space.

When it comes to how you actually run rehearsals, this part is up to you. There are ways I like to do things, and I’ve worked with other MDs who do things slightly differently; there is no right and wrong. Of course, you must also adjust based on the difficulty of the music, the amount of time you have, and the skill level of your players. As a guide, I usually like to e-mail out the soundtrack before the first rehearsal, so the players can become familiar with the music. Rehearsal #1 might be: introductions, then explain the story of the show (never take for granted that your musicians will know about the show, no matter how well-known you think it is), and sightread through it. However you decide to proceed from there, it is important that you’re always planning ahead. Each week, know exactly how many more band rehearsals you have scheduled, and plan your time accordingly. It’s a really lame feeling to suddenly realize that you actually only have two more rehearsals left, and you’ve only done half of the music.
**Sitzprobe**
The strangest-named, but most exciting, day in the musical theatre rehearsal process. Sitzprobe is a German word meaning “seated rehearsal,” and the sitzprobe will be the first day that the band and the cast combine to perform the music of your show. Pick the date of this in advance with your director. It is usually one nighttime the week before tech week. Make sure that your band members will all be free, since it will take place during a cast rehearsal (Sun-Thurs, 7-11pm). Hopefully your cast has been rehearsing in Platt, and you will therefore be in either 179 or 180. If not, e-mail the producer and see if a room in Platt can be arranged for this. It just makes things much easier to be there, presumably where all your music equipment is. E-mail the Platt assistant director and ask if you can borrow a few wired, handheld mics for your sitzprobe and an amplifier which will accept them. This is often overlooked but will be important. Without any mics the cast will not be able to hear themselves, you will not be able to hear them, and they may end up straining their voices. They would never perform the show without mics (most likely), so sitzprobe should be no different. You don’t need one per person; just a few that can be shared. *Get to sitzprobe early and prepare the room. You will be running the show tonight, and there will be a lot of people, noise and energy to contend with. Remind your cast and band to be on time and ready to play by a certain time (some band members will need to come earlier to set up equipment). Whether you’re conducting or leading from the keys, set up the room so that everyone can see you.*

**The purpose of the sitzprobe** is not to nail the music once and for all. The purpose is twofold: a) everyone gets to hear how the music will actually sound, which is always very exciting, and b) the band and cast can get on the same page as far as entrances, vamps, etc. It’s about “getting on the same page,” not “getting it perfect.” Only do lines which occur during songs, and don’t have the cast doing any choreo or blocking while singing. This will be your only chance to rehearse the cast and band without any other distractions, so take the fullest advantage of that.

---

**Tech week**

**Before Load-in:** Plan your band’s set-up. Think about how much space each person needs, where you will be situated, which direction you need to face, how many outlets/chairs/music stands/stand lights you will need, etc. Doing all of this planning in advance will make load-in day much easier. If you need anything from the tech staff make sure you request it before hand. Also, think about whether you want to mic any of your instruments. I would recommend this if your band combines rock instruments with reeds, in which case you should think about mic’ing your reeds. Any mics that you use should be separate from those on the sound board for the actors; send your signal into amps that are sitting with the band.

**Load-in:** Each show is different, but generally there is no real rehearsing on load-in day, so the band does not need to be called. Only call players who need to load-in equipment (namely, the drummer, who will need to set up his/her drumset).
You may need to move some equipment from Platt to the space (such as amps, keyboards, music stands, etc.). If this is the case, find out if the truck can be brought to Platt either straight from the shop or after it has been unloaded at the space. Once the set starts being built in the space, your focus turns to setting up the band space. Usually there will be chairs already in the space for you (sometimes music stands as well). TAC-e owns a set of stand lights which you can borrow for your tech week; talk to the Platt director (currently Laurie McCall) about these. These stand lights all need to be plugged into outlets. If the actors cannot clearly see you and you feel that this is important for your cuing, try to set up a camera and TV screen sending video of you to the actors (it doesn’t have to be fancy; we’ve done this where the TV just sat on a seat in the front row). If you have all of your musical equipment, chairs, stands, stand lights, etc. loaded in and set up by the end of load-in, you’re in good shape.

Tech week: Often times Monday will be a cue-to-cue, when tech is clearly the focus and you will end up jumping from spot to spot to practice light/sound cues. Unless you think the band really needs the chance to be together and practice, this is usually not a good day to call the band; you can simply accompany cue-to-cue by yourself. Tuesday and Wednesday, the band will be called for the entire rehearsal period. Once everything is on the ground running, in a way your job becomes easier. At a certain point (usually during Wednesday’s dress run), you realize that you’ve done all the work already. Now the show is living on its own. So have fun! For all performances, I recommend calling the band no less than 1 hr. 15 mins. early. They will all need to be in place for sound check, which takes place 60-45 minutes before showtime.

Strike: Customarily, the band is not asked to participate in the normal strike with the production staff. Bandmembers should, however, help to strike the musical equipment, and help return equipment to Platt, or anywhere else that it came from.

After the show: Sleep for about 18 straight hours. After THAT, e-mail the band so that you can collect their music back. Usually all of the materials need to be returned within a week or so after the final performance, but talk with the producer so you know when materials are due back. Ask your bandmembers to erase all pencil marks which they made in their books and return them to the Platt closet. At the end of the day, you are responsible if a music book isn’t returned, or isn’t fully erased, so make sure that you follow up on this and check to make sure that all books are returned and erased by the due date.

**Miscellaneous wisdom**

There is no such thing as a tech week conflict. Tech week is by far the most important rehearsal period of a show, and the cast and tech team are held to very high standards of attendance. The band is no different. As soon as someone commits to the band, make sure they know the dates of tech week AND the performances (remember to share performance times with the band as soon as they are decided upon). Remind everyone of all tech week/performance dates and times at the first rehearsal. It’s a difficult week for everyone, but with sufficient planning ahead, balancing work and other commitments with the show is very manageable. If a bandmember has a nighttime class, ask if they can get out of it that
week. Having a big project to work on that week, or having a work shift on Wednesday night, are simply not acceptable excuses to miss a tech week rehearsal. Always keep the band in the loop. This one took me the longest to learn, and it is so easily overlooked, but it is essential to make the bandmembers feel like a part of the production. Bandmembers are generally not added to the production staff listserv, and they are not required to attend production meetings or do walkshifts. Therefore, you must forward all pertinent e-mails to them. Speak with your producer about having the band pay social fees, then invite them to all social events. Make sure they can order a T-shirt, and a DVD once the show is over. Every single time you get an e-mail from the producer, think about whether it contains information the band should know about and whether to forward it to them. YOUR amount of action/inaction will determine how integrated with the production that the band feels, so be proactive and make them feel as involved as possible.

Last random info: you are always responsible for warming up the singers before rehearsals and performances, AND for making sure that the band is tuned before performances (the more experienced singers will know how to warm themselves up before the shows, but you should always lead a few, just to be sure. If anyone would prefer to warm themselves up instead, they may. Likewise, your band members should know to tune up before the shows, but you should always check with them and make sure).
The Center of all Human Knowledge – It’s our job to know EVERYTHING down to the last detail of the production. That’s why we spend so much time in rehearsal learning the show, doing paper work to track all of the details, and in meetings. People will ask you lots of questions; if you don’t know the answer you should know who to get the information from and be able to get it quickly.

The Liaison – Most frequently between the director and the cast. But also frequently between the rehearsal room/the director and various tech members. We look out for the good of the entire show and in doing so look out for the interests of the cast if they have problems with the anything that is going on with the show and to the director to keep things running smoothly in the way that he or she prefers.

The Bad Guy – We know the rules, follow them, and enforce them as we have to. Sometimes it sucks but someone has to do it.

The Leader – The cast will look to you as the leadership of the logistical portions of the show, especially as you head into tech week, you need to make sure that you know what is going on so that people can ask you questions and you know the answers.

Casting

So casting is rough. Just going to be straightforward on that one, it’s a huge pain and its stressful, but in the end you will be so glad that you were part of the process because 1. You will know the director so much better by the end and 2. You’ll have a very coherent idea of how the cast will interact with each other within their roles. So, yay for casting!

Basic casting job description:

- Collect audition forms and put them into audition spreadsheet (example below)
- Make sure audition sides are copied/supplied
- Read opposite people auditioning
- Keep track of significant director notes
- Make sure that director (especially non-students) is aware of anything necessary about the actor that they may not have gotten from the form
  - i.e.: This person is unreliable based on concrete past experience, this person will likely choose this show over that show and here is why, etc. No judgments on talent, just facts from past experience
• Maintaining the callbacks meeting spreadsheet and casting meeting spreadsheet (again, examples and more information below)
• Assisting with the callbacks schedule
• Making calls during the casting meeting

Other reminders

• It is INCREDIBLY important not to talk about casting/directors feelings, etc during the casting process or after the show has begun. It can start unnecessary gossip and drama, which makes the whole thing even more stressful
• It is not our job to offer opinions on the skill level of the actors/their fit for the role unless asked – sometimes directors want your opinion, sometimes they don’t.

Notes on the callback and casting meeting:

The callbacks meeting is relatively easy, here is the procedure:

1. Make a list of who you want to call back before arriving at the meeting, you should have some sense of other group conflicts from their audition sheets, so it might be helpful to mark those down
   a. TIP: Organize your call back chart so that it is easy to alphabetize by first OR last name
2. Make a rough callbacks schedule before coming into the room – basically who the director MUST see at the same time
3. At the meeting, each group will read the list of names of people who they are calling back (slowly), as they do so, if other groups have conflicts (meaning they are also calling that person back), they will say “conflict” and those conflicting groups will be written down by the TAC-e chair, they should also be recorded on your spreadsheet.
4. After the lists have been read, you will sit down with the other Producers/Directors/SMs and work out schedules so that all of the conflicted people will be able to go to all of their callbacks
5. Send out an email with a list of all of the people you are calling back to everyone who auditioned (Producer’s job), send a callbacks schedule the next day.

Casting meeting is more of a pain and is also more of something that you will learn as you go. Here are just some tips:

1. When making your priority lists for each character, do your best to avoid a gridlock situation (see examples below). Also make sure the person’s phone number is next to their name at all times, it will make everything go faster
   a. Play it safe and have a minimum of three people as choices for each role, for male roles have even more choices as it is difficult to cast guys in Penn Theater
2. At the casting meeting, lists will be read again, it is especially important that you pay attention to conflicts so that you can work with the other producers/SMs as necessary
3. Be flexible, but not too flexible – fight for the actors you want, don’t give people up prematurely, but be willing to offer actors choices and compromise with the other groups.

_Casting Documents_ (or: Excel magic!)

1. Header for Audition Spreadsheet with all information from forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Call Back Conflicts</th>
<th>Rehearsal Conflicts</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Y/N Callbacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Call back meeting spreadsheet with conflicts recorded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>FR, Q, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>FR, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>FR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Casting Orders (before casting meeting begins)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Role 1</th>
<th>Female Role 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Charlie 555-555-5555</td>
<td>1. Sally 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fred 555-555-5555</td>
<td>2. Lucy 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Role 2</th>
<th>Female Role 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Frank 555-555-5555</td>
<td>1. Sue 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Charlie 555-555-5555</td>
<td>2. Debbie 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sam 555-555-5555</td>
<td>3. Georgia 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So here, the boys are in a little bit of gridlock. You need to make sure you see where Frank stands before you call Charlie in case you have to decide which role to offer Charlie.

4. Casting orders (after casting meeting, explanation below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Role 1</th>
<th>Female Role 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Charlie 555-555-5555</td>
<td>1. Sally 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fred 555-555-5555</td>
<td>2. Lucy 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Role 2</th>
<th>Female Role 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Frank 555-555-5555</td>
<td>1. Sue 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Charlie 555-555-5555</td>
<td>2. Debbie 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sam 555-555-5555</td>
<td>3. Georgia 555-555-5555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yellow = conflict with another group. Green = cast (in our show). Strike through = called and chose another show.

Ex: You called Frank first, he took Male Role 2, hurray! TAC-e Chair called Charlie because he was the first choice for another group as well, offered him Male Role 1 and the role from the other group. He chose the other group. Sad. You called Fred and he accepted. Sally had no conflicts with other groups, so you called her and she accepted right away. Sue and Debbie, however, were both conflicts and as they came to the top of everyone else’s lists and choice calls were made, they chose other groups. However, Georgia accepted Female Role 2! Hurray, your show is cast! Go send a casting email.

Scheduling

Rehearsal scheduling varies for each director, for the most part scheduling by a weekly basis works pretty nicely. Your job is to collect and maintain the conflicts and remind the director of those conflicts they create the schedule. Make sure the actors run all of their conflicts through you. I find what works best is setting a deadline to submit all conflicts via email, create a spreadsheet, and work from there. Do your best to be strict about conflicts beyond the deadline, but there is really nothing you can do about it. Reprimanding actors works sometimes, but very few of them will actually react to it. Just to your best to stay ahead of and on top of conflicts.

Important dates to identify as ball-park dates on the initial schedule:

- Off-book date
- Designer’s run

Rehearsal Process

So the basics:

1. Make sure rehearsals run on time, everything gets accomplished (within reason) – this includes breaks (if the director asks you to keep track of that) and focus within the room.
   a. For big groups of people, this involves keeping everyone quiet. If you find a good way to do this, let me know.
2. Recreating the set in the rehearsal room
   a. This needs to be done at the beginning of every rehearsal so be sure to come in a few minutes early. Having a copy of the set design with you will help a lot.
   b. Ideally, you’ll set the dimensions of the room equal to the actual stage but that’s not always possible so focus on the spacing of things and keeping the setup consistent.
   c. Most of the time you’ll probably be placing a chair or music stand in place of a set piece.
3. Writing down ALL pieces of blocking in a way that you can understand and remind actors and the director of it later
   a. It helps to also make notes of set movement, scene set up, and prop use that the director mentions during blocking
4. Preparing and sending out rehearsal reports – making sure designers follow up on the notes that you give them (example format below)
   a. Some groups like to upload rehearsal reports to their website, so I make the reports in a Word document, copy the content to a body of an email and attach the Word document to that email and send it to the ‘all’ listserv.
   b. Some people don’t read rehearsal reports. It sucks. Sometimes we put trivia or quotes at the end of reports to give people an incentive to read the report. Quotes are fun.
   c. Important announcements (like production meeting times/locations, etc) can/should go in the report, but also make sure that the producer is sending out emails with these reminders well before the day of and on the day of these meetings.
5. Attending production/designer meetings so that you know what is going on with all aspects of the tech process
6. Line notes – it helps to do this earlier, sometimes even before the actors are off book so that they don’t memorize their lines wrong. Notes MUST start on the off-book date. Here are what mine look like (two examples):

*Ex: [title of show]*

p. 7 - **Hunter** - "We could put this exact conversation..." - changed

p. 7 - **Hunter** - "UH-HUH" - not 'yes'

p. 9 - **Jeff** - Missed "YOU KNOW the lyric is 'sweeter'

p. 12 - **Susan** - Missed "...closet full of marketing materials THIS MORNING..."

p. 14 - **Hunter** - Line is "I don't want to keep everybody too long tonight"

p. 14 - **Susan** - "Do I get to meet him if I do your LITTLE SHOW?" - not 'play'

p. 15 - **Susan** - "...I support an EXPERIMENTAL piece and you guys completely..." - not 'creative'

*Ex: Dead Man’s Cell Phone*

*Scene 1*

p. 10 - **Jean** - Missed "No, he's not. Can I take a message?" in the telemarketer phone call

p. 11- **Jean** - "I'm -- answering his PHONE" (not "his calls")

*Scene 2*
p. 14 - Jean - Line is "Help me to help the memory of Gordon" (not "Gordon's memories")

p. 15 - Ms. Gottlieb - "one or two SACRED places left in the world" (not "quiet")

p. 15 - Mrs. Gottlieb - Missed "Where there is no ringing"

---

Scene 3

p. 18 - Other Woman - "A BEAUTIFUL woman should walk into a room thinking.." (missed 'beautiful')

p. 20 - Jean - Line is "I'm very sorry about Gordon." (Not "I'm sorry to hear about Gordon")

p. 22 - Jean - look at "other women just - measured time - broke the day up" - you changed something

---

Notes in red are notes that have been given before. These emails should go out to the cast listserv (not to the ‘all’) listserv. Some people prefer to send actors individual emails with their specific notes, but I choose not to because it is a lot more work to sort through the notes. I find it hard to write notes in rehearsal, so I usually make notes on my script and type the notes up after rehearsal – that also helps me track what notes I have given before.

---

7. Generally, preparing for tech week is your most important job. There are paper work examples below that show what you should be thinking about as you go into tech. I find that it helps to be a part of most of the individual designer meetings with the director so that you have all of the information you need.

---

Paper Work

Okay, this next section is all examples of paperwork that I use to keep track of everything. I’ll try to explain as I go, but email me if you have questions!

---

Rehearsal Reports

- Sent out after every rehearsal (obviously), this one is based on the Arden rehearsal reports that Ben sent me. They change a little for each show, but I basically just copy old rehearsal reports and go from there. Here’s an example from Dead Man’s Cell Phone:

---

Dead Man’s Cell Phone
Penn Players

Rehearsal Report: #14 Date: February 17, 2011
REPORTED BY: Rebecca Adelsheim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REHEARSAL</th>
<th>7:00</th>
<th>8:08</th>
<th>8:40</th>
<th>10:15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>8:02</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>11:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REHEARSAL:

7:00 – 8:02  Gordon Monologue Work
8:08 – 8:30  Gordon Monologue First Run
8:40 – 9:28  Act I, Scene 6 set up
9:30 – 11:00 Blocking Act I, Scene 6 and Act II, Scene 2

LATE: Jess

NEXT REHEARSAL:
Sunday, February 20, 2011 – THIS HAS CHANGED!!
7pm – 11pm – Gordon’s Monologue/ Cell Phone Ballet Work/ Act II, Scene 6 Work and Blocking

Called: All

ARTISTIC:  No Notes.

PRODUCTION:  There will be a PRODUCTION MEETING at 11pm in the Platt Lobby, designers meeting after.

SET:  -What is the plan for the floor?

LIGHTS:  -For the mobile during Act I, Scene 6 (Snow Parade), we are looking for a stage light black
-For Act I, Scene 6 – they should be in a pool of light that only encompasses their playing space. More details at the designer’s run!

**PROPS:**
- Have you talked to any of the people at Drexel about the flat file cabinet?

- The mobile should both lower slowly into the scene and move into a slow circle (look out for an email on more mobile information)

- We will need a wooden chair for Act I, Scene 6 (stationary store). From the chair options text, the 3rd option (the black chair) painted to look like wood would be perfect.

- Stationary they play with in Act I, Scene 6 should be cardstock weight

**SOUND:**
No notes today, thanks!

**COSTUMES:**
- Jean and Dwight – Act II, Scene II – the next morning, same as Act I costumes. She will change
  
  before Hermia scene

**MISC/SM:**
The off-book date will be **Tuesday, March 1st** – prepare yourselves.

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT:**
No notes today, thanks!

**BEST AND BRIGHTEST:**

“We could get into the gravy, but that would just upset me.” – Michael
“This is going to be awkward” –Trevor / “No, it won’t be. We’re beautiful people.” -Jess

**Props Tracking**

Purpose: to make sure you know where all of the props are at all times. It’s most useful for setting up the prop tables, tracking backstage prop moves, and helping to make your preset check list and final run sheet. Two examples for you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>On</th>
<th>Off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 1</strong></td>
<td>2 soup bowls with spoons</td>
<td>PRESET on Café Tables</td>
<td>With Café Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 1</strong></td>
<td>1 coffee mug</td>
<td>PRESET on USR Café Table</td>
<td>With Café Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 1</strong></td>
<td>2 pencils (or pens)</td>
<td>PRESET on Café Tables</td>
<td>With Café Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 1</strong></td>
<td>Thank you note</td>
<td>PRESET on Café USR Café Table</td>
<td>With Café Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 1</strong></td>
<td>CELL PHONE</td>
<td>WITH GORDON</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 2</strong></td>
<td>Jean’s bag w/ CELL PHONE</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 2</strong></td>
<td>Paper with Dickens Reading</td>
<td>PRESET on Podium (on with Podium)</td>
<td>With Podium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 3</strong></td>
<td>Jean’s bag w/ CELL PHONE</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 3</strong></td>
<td>Other Woman’s bag w/ LIPSTICK and COMPACT</td>
<td>WITH OTHER WOMAN</td>
<td>WITH OTHER WOMAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 4</strong></td>
<td>Shrine</td>
<td>On w/ Scholl from SL hallway</td>
<td>Off w/ Scholl → SL hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Dinner Room Setting</td>
<td>With Scholl from SR hallway</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Place Cards</td>
<td>With Scholl from SR hallway</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>3 plates of meat</td>
<td>On during change - who?</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Carving knife</td>
<td>On during change with meat</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>2 plates of meat</td>
<td>On with Anna-Lana from SR</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Jean’s bag with:</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
<td>WITH JEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Salt shaker</td>
<td>In Jean’s bag</td>
<td>WITH HERMIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>In Jean’s bag</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I, Scene 5</strong></td>
<td>Spoon</td>
<td>In Jean’s bag</td>
<td>With dining room table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Run Sheet

This should be the comprehensive list of everything that happens in the show back stage, every movement, change, prop switch, etc. I just switched formats, so I only have one example, but I’m also including my Parade run sheet, which is the same idea with a different format. This should be posted back stage.

Dead Man’s Cell Phone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>On</th>
<th>Off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #1</em></td>
<td>Playing cards</td>
<td>PRESET on bar table</td>
<td>w/ Kristen, Anna, Liz after #2 (exit DSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #1</em></td>
<td>Bar Props: Mugs, pitcher, trays, rag</td>
<td>PRESET on bar table</td>
<td>w/ Kristen, Anna, Liz after #2 (exit DSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #1</em></td>
<td>Fishing nets</td>
<td>PRESET along USR platform</td>
<td>INTERMISSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #1</em></td>
<td>Pole with buckets</td>
<td>With Robbie from USL</td>
<td>With Robbie → USL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #1</em></td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>With ROSE from DSL</td>
<td>With ROSE → DSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #3 (Dialogue)</em></td>
<td>Rose’s Basket</td>
<td>With ROSE from DSL</td>
<td>With ROSE → SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peppermint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snuff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>False Teeth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handkerchief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #3</em></td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>With ROSE from DSL</td>
<td>With ROSE → SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #5 (Dialogue)</em></td>
<td>Handkerchief</td>
<td>With OLD ADAM from USL</td>
<td>With OLD ADAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #8 (Dialogue)</em></td>
<td>Rose’s basket w/ items (especially apple)</td>
<td>With ROSE from SR</td>
<td>With ROSE → SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #11</em></td>
<td>Black bouquet</td>
<td>With MAD MARG from USL</td>
<td>With MAD MARG → SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Act I, #12 (Dialogue)</em></td>
<td>Rose’s Basket</td>
<td>With ROSE from SR</td>
<td>With ROSE → SL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRESET (On Stage)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL Café Table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR Café Table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL Café Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR Café Chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TRANSITION #1: I-1 → I-2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costumes: Jess quick change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Off |
|-----|---|
| Michael &amp; Trevor | |
| SL Café Table paper napkin | Props: Soup bowl, spoon, pen, |
| | ONSTAGE → SL Hallway |
| | ONSTAGE → SR Hallway |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SR Café Table</th>
<th>P: Soup bowl, spoon, mug, pen, thank you note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smiddy</td>
<td>SL Café Chair</td>
<td>ONSTAGE → SL Hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anya</td>
<td>SR Café Chair</td>
<td>ONSTAGE → SR Hallway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stombs</td>
<td>Pew/Kneeler</td>
<td>SL Hallway → Angled USL (Grey Spikes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholl</td>
<td>Podium (book)</td>
<td>P: Dickens reading SR Hallway → Angles USR (Grey Spikes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IN SCENE: Act I, Scene 2**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna-Lara</td>
<td>Q: End of Jean’s prayer – Q LIGHT</td>
<td>ENTRANCE: Audience L entrance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRANSITION #2: I-2 → I-3**

**Off**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna-Lara</td>
<td>Podium</td>
<td>ONSTAGE → SR Hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiddy</td>
<td>Pew</td>
<td>ONSTAGE → SL Hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stombs</td>
<td>Kneeler</td>
<td>ONSTAGE → SR Hallway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>Café Chairs</td>
<td>SR Hallway → Other Café area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td></td>
<td>SL Hallway → Other Café area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anya</td>
<td>Café Table Cloth</td>
<td>P: Table SR Hallway → Center, then sit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Parade**

**Act I**

**PRESET - SET**

D2 DSC, Parallel to proscenium (Projection spot)

On Platform: Table, chair (DSL corner of platform), (ledger book, yellow legal pad, small wooden box with coins)
Off Stage
L1: T1, Chair
L3: D1, Coffin
R2: FLOAT, 2 chairs
R1: T1, Short Bench, Trashcan

Preset - Props
Platform
Yellow Legal Pad
Account book
Pencils
Box/coin money

Trashcan
Newspaper

Act 1 Starting Mics
#2 – Veronica
#3 – Jackson
#4 – Tanvir
#5 – Vincent
#6 – Mary Lou
#7 – Maddie
#8 – Anthony
#9 – Will
#10 – Reza

Scene 1 - “Old Red Hills of Home”
Ensemble

**Jackson: D2 → L1**

On Old Soldier line: “The lives that we led when the Southland was free”

A. #3 – **JACKSON → JOAN** – After Opening, for Funeral (SR)
   #8 – **ANTHONY → ALLISON** – After Opening, for Funeral (SR)

**Scene 2 – Leo/Lucille Hat Pin Scene**

Leo, Lucille, Ensemble (on stage)

Blackout In:

- Will: D2: L1 → 1 door length away from wing (Home spikes)
- Veronica: T1, Chair to in front of D2, (Hat, pins) – Home spikes

Blackout Out:

- Will: D2 → L2
- Veronica: T1, Chair, Props → L1

**Scene 3**

“The Dream of Atlanta”

Ensemble

At start of singing

- **Jesse, Juanjo, Mario, Anthony**: FLOAT (Parade side, w/ Mic) R2 → USR at angle

“How Can I Call This Home?”

Leo, Ensemble

End of song (Into “Picture Show”) – On Applause

- **Jesse, Juanjo, Mario, Anthony**: FLOAT → R2
- **Reza**: SHORT BENCH R1 → angle off of R1 wing

B. #5 – **VINCENT → JESSE** – After “How Can I Call This…”, for Slaton/Dorsey scene (SR)

*Show Order*
Should be posted backstage in multiple locations to remind the actors of what comes next. Very simple lists:

*Into the Woods:*

**Act 1**

1. **OPENING**

2. **Cinderella at the Grave**
   Cinderella, Cinderella’s Mother (Off Stage)

3. **Jack/Mysterious Man Scene**

4. **Hello Little Girl**
   Little Red, Wolf

5. **‘Get the Cape’ Scene**
   Baker, Witch, Rapunzel (Off Stage)

6. **‘Get the Cow’ Scene/Guess This is Goodbye**
   Baker, Baker’s Wife, Jack

7. **Maybe They’re Magic**
   Baker, Baker’s Wife

8. **Rapunzel’s Prince sees Rapunzel**
   Rapunzel, Witch (tower), Rapunzel’s Prince

Sometimes it helps to include other details like costume changes for the actors:

**F. Richard and Rose…and Robin**
#7D – Richard/Rose Dialogue

#8 - “The Battle’s Roar is Over” (Richard, Rose)

#9 – “If well his suit has sped” (Bridesmaids, Richard, Rose)

#9D – Richard/Rose/Robin/Bridesmaids Dialogue

#10 - “In Sailing o’er life’s ocean wide” (Richard, Rose, Robin)

G. Mad Margaret

#11 – ‘Cheerily carols the lark” (Mad Margaret)

#11D – Margaret/Rose Dialogue

ROSE: Change to wedding dress

H. Gentry

#12 – ‘Welcome Gentry’ (Ensemble)

#13 – ‘Oh, why am I moody and sad?) (Despard, Ensemble)

MALE ENSEMBLE: Change to fishermen

I. Plotting and scheming

#13D – Despard/Richard Dialogue

#14 – ‘You Understand’ (Despard, Richard)

J. Act I Finale (Errybody)

INTERMISSION

COSTUME CHANGES

MALE ENSEMBLE: Change to Ghosts

DESPARD/MARGARET: Change

MIC CHANGE: Ruth (Theresa) → Roderic (Richard)
Act II

K. Robin and Adam

#16 - ‘I once was as meek’ (Robin, Old Adam)

#16D – Robin/Old Adam Dialogue

Spike Tape Cheat Sheet

Posted backstage. This is something you will have to make and post after spacing/cue-to-cue when everything gets spike. Create your own spiking system based on what you have, I find that it helps to spike by scene, but sometimes it gets tricky. Some examples:

Parade

YELLOW – TRIAL

PINK

SL: Hanging Chair

C: D1 perpendicular/D2 Opening, Flood platform

SR: Dorsey/Newt table (US), Rumblin’ Table/”Letter”spot (DS)

GREEN

SL: Leo/Lucille Home

C: All the Wasted Time (Bench and D1)

SR: Picture Show Bench

ORANGE

SL: Jail

C: Big News Door

SR: Parade platform, Big News Trashcan
Dead Man’s Cell Phone

**White** – Dining room table, bar, bar benches

**Grey** – Pew, podium, living room chairs, shrine table, other woman café table
   (X spike)

**Red** – café chairs, stationary store boxes and chair

Preshow Checklist

This is mostly just for you and your ASMs (it’s important that more than 1 person has this) to keep yourself organized before the show. It’s a little thing that helps a lot. Here’s part of one from Cell Phone (I made it shorter to fit on one page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SR Hallway</strong></th>
<th>Fri #1</th>
<th>Fri #2</th>
<th>Sat #1</th>
<th>Sat #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafe Table/Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickens book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dining room chairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench w/cover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun (on hook)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SL Hallway</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Café Table/Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench (Pew)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneeler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrine table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea light (s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon picture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue fabric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 dining room chairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prop Table</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bowls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 spoons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee mug/saucer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pencils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 thank you note/envelope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper napkin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablecloth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 glasses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table runner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 trays of meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carving knife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SL Wing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining room table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 plates, stacked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 napkins, stacked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop cloth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue light on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dressing Rooms (w/ actors)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jean’s Bag (Jess)
Cell Phone (Michael)
Other Woman’s Bag (Anya)
   Lipstick/Compact

Other Checks (Sheim)
Lights in SR Hallway (Brian)
Check bubble liquid
Q light check
Doors with carpets
   Tape – Audience Left
FIGHT CALL
   Headset on/check
   Sound board check
   Sweep/mop

Sign In
Mostly for big casts (Singers, other musicals) to put by the dressing rooms to help you keep track of who is here. Sometimes the actors ignore it, but it can at least give you a sense of who is around before you start tracking people down.

Sweeney Todd
Tech Week

Wooo, tech week! I have some subcategories but here are some important things to remember:

- **STAY CALM.** No matter what happens and what goes wrong, and things will go wrong, it is crucial to stay as calm as possible so that you can problem solve.
- **Focus on finding a solution.** Sometimes people can fall into a blame cycle. Don’t get sucked into it; once the problem has been identified move the conversation to finding a solution.
- **Write everything down.** Buy a small notebook that you can keep with you all of the time; people will tell you many things, most of which you will have to follow up on, writing it down will ensure you get it all done.
- **Pay attention to the actors.** Seriously, it sounds weird, but especially in the first few days you won’t see the actors very much because of all of the tech that needs to happen. Make time to check on them and answer their questions.
- **Schedule early, schedule often.** Make sure the tech week schedule is set long before tech week and that you stick to it and accomplish everything in the time you have. Also, make sure you have (at the very least) designer meetings at the end of every day.

Things that are your job:

- Making sure everything is running smoothly and on time
- Backstage organization and traffic flow (with the help of your ASM)
- Prop table set up
- Spiking and maintaining spikes (this means keeping them neat and putting packing tape over them so they don’t come up every time someone moves – packing tape during the day after you first spike)
- Making sure wires are gaffed taped down – tabbed against walls, fully taped across anywhere someone would walk
- Complete tracking of all light and sound cues and calling those cues
- Making sure all transitions are well rehearsed and staffed (getting run crew, if you need them) and posted backstage
- Running photo call
  - Getting a list from the director and making sure you know which light cues are associated with each picture and organize the list in a way that makes sense with costume changes
  - Tell the actors where to go, what costume to be in, what props/set pieces they should be moving
  - Communicate with the photographer about when the actors are ready and make sure the photographer tells you when they are done with the photo
  - Tell the light board op what cue you need to be in for each picture
  - Be looking ahead at the list and keeping track of time to see what you might have to cut
- And more…see below.
Load In

The preparation of the board and set team will largely define your job during load in. For the most part, your job is to help everything run according to plan, keep the production staff on task, and help troubleshoot and problem solve as issues appear. During the afternoon build time, lend a hand building, but that should not be your primary task. Work with props to get everything set up and float between tasks to make sure everything is happening according to plan. In the evening, the actors will usually go away for either a sitzprobe or rehearsal, get them started and make sure they are all there, then return to tech.

Paper Tech

After cuing is over, sit down with the lighting designer and sound designer and get all of the cues written into a clean copy of the script. Color code.

Work light/Tech Hours

So it is not explicitly your job to be at all tech hours. I find that it helps a lot to make sure that things get done. It is, however, your job to be on top of the worklists and work with the set team, props team, lights, and the producer to make sure that worklight hours are well staffed. Getting people to commit during the production meeting is the best bet. During the time itself, try to be there, and make sure people are working efficiently. Mis-used tech hours are one of Annenberg’s biggest issues with student theater.

Cue to Cue

Exactly how it sounds, get through all of the cues, work closely with lights, make sure you stay calm and clear with the actors. Sometimes this gets wrapped up with the tech run, and that’s 100% okay, it just makes for a slower tech run.
Tech Run

Again, something you run, how it sounds. This is the first time that all of the technical elements come together for the first time, so it will be rough and terrifying. You will call ‘hold’ a lot to clean things and fix them. It will go slowly. But that’s okay, it should. You will be terrified at the end of it, but the next day everything will pull together magically.

Calling the Show

People who should be on headset: you (you’re in charge!), lights, and someone backstage (preferably someone on both sides, but its not always feasible). Here is the script:

‘Standby lights 10’
‘Lights 10 go’

If things are happening simultaneously, make sure you let sound and lights know that so that the ‘go’ applies to both of them. If you have new people on headset, remind them that no one should speak during a standby and to let you know when they are going off headset. Make sure you make enough notes for yourself and practice enough to learn your cues.
FOUR
Treasurer/Business Manager
Layla O’Kane, C’14

As soon as you are elected:

1) Contact your financial advisor with the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) (located in 200 Houston Hall, which is on the second floor above Insomnia Cookies). The current financial advisor for all TAC-e groups is Jan Key-Scott, and her email address is keedzh@exchange.upenn.edu. Introduce yourself and let her know that you are the new treasurer/bizman for your group.

2) Start the process of applying for a purchasing card. This is extremely important as it takes at least a month for this process, and your group may not be able to front all the money that you need in that time. This entails taking a short online course (with a test at the end) and filling out some paperwork. All of the resources you need for this will be through Jan and the OSA so just ask Jan for the necessary documents and have her set up the process for you.

   More info on what the pcard is: http://www.purchasing.upenn.edu/card-services/

   How to apply: http://www.purchasing.upenn.edu/forms/purchasing-card-application.pdf

3) Take stock of your groups finances and have a meeting with the previous treasurer/bizman. Learn about what has been done in the past in terms of priorities and general policies that your group has. If the previous treasurer/bizman is a senior, make sure you meet with them before they graduate. They will be much less helpful once they no longer live in Philadelphia. Make sure you ask about any specific needs that your group has depending on your mission and the types of shows that you usually do. Sign up to be on the SAC listserv by sending an email to listserv@lists.upenn.edu with the message: sub saclist Your Name (leave the subject line blank). You should get a confirmation email.

4) If you are elected in the spring, you may have to submit a budget request with SAC. This may have been done by the previous business manager, but regardless, you will have to do it at least once in your tenure as treasurer/bizman, be it in the beginning or the end.

   SAC Budgets for TAC-e groups are split into the following main categories:

   Production

   Photocopies/Printing/Publicity

   Equipment/Supplies

   Honoraria/Services (if you have an instructor, or a professional involved who you will be paying)

   Costumes
Facilities

In order to submit a budget request, you will need to write down how much you need for literally every item you plan on buying that year. You will need to be very specific, so don’t plan on just being able to write “we need $1000 for costumes” without justifying it. SAC has its own specific rules and guidelines for budget requests and categories that you will need to follow. The budget request form can be found online, on your SAC online account. Possibly the most useful resource for you in creating your budget request will be the historical data available. On SAC online, you can see previous budget requests, and previous budgets. These will be great examples for how much you have requested in the past for all of the different categories. The specific SAC rules for funding can be found at http://sacfunded.net/policies/funding-2/. Read through these policies carefully before submitting your budget request. They will guide you on how much you are allowed to request, and what category different things go into.

Some of the more important SAC guidelines:

1) Costumes can be funded at a max of $30 per year per member with a max of 20 members. This means that the maximum you can get for costumes is $600.

2) We don’t request facilities budget, even though we require facilities. As of right now, in return for 20% of PAC ticket revenue, SAC funds all of our facilities. It used to be that SAC took only 10% of PAC revenue, but since the moratorium this has increased. It may change again, so just be aware of this. This means you will get reimbursed for facilities costs after your show by SAC automatically, so don’t bother requesting it. Because SAC representatives change, sometimes they don’t know that they are responsible for refunding your facilities costs (which can be extremely expensive). If at the end of a spring semester, you find yourself in a lot of debt because of facilities costs, don’t worry. Those will be reimbursed at some point in July or August. If SAC gives you a hard time because of this, remind them of this fact. If no one has reimbursed facilities from the previous school year by the time you are back in the Fall, reach out to your SAC liaison. You can find who that is on your SAC online account, in the “Contact SAC” section.

3) Honoraria and Services will only be useful if you are paying a person for services. Note that SAC will only fund up to half of your needs, so you will have to pay for the rest by yourself, unless the entire amount you request is less than $200, which is unlikely.

4) From the guidelines: “Production refers to all show or performance related expenses including script rights, set materials, and load-in and strike related costs. All collaborations (space share or actual group share) will be funded at 50% production costs.” So, the large majority of your needs will be funded by

Note that if you are requesting something that costs more than $500, you will be required to provide price quotes from 3 different vendors. Have these ready before you start your budget request. You can look at historical budget requests to get ideas for what vendors to use.
Your budget request will need to be approved by the Director of Student Performing Arts (Laurie McCall) before it goes to SAC executive board. On the budget request form online, there is a built-in way to do this.

Once your budget request has been submitted, SAC will review it. You will need to have a ten-minute budget meeting with the SAC executive board to answer any questions they may have. If your budget request is generally the same as it has been in the past, they probably won’t have too many questions.

You’ll receive your final allocation on SAC online once the entire process is complete. SAC will justify to you any difference in funding from what you requested. Expect to be funded less than you requested, but not my so much that your shows won’t be doable.

**Before auditions:**

1) **Create a budget** for your production. This entails taking the budget that you have been given by SAC and further breaking it up for the purposes of your show.

   One of the most important things to remember is that you’ll need to purchase the rights to your show, and that these can cost a lot. The president of your group, or the producer, is usually in charge of obtaining rights and scripts for the show. Be aware, however, that the rights to a musical can cost as much as $1400, so keep that in mind when creating a budget. As a general rule of thumb, if your group gets 1.5 shows a year (with the half show being a space-share or a collaboration), you should allot about 2/3 of your budget to your full show and about 1/3 to your half show. This is a good starting place, but will change depending on the show itself. If your group usually does one musical, that should always be thought of as your ‘full show’, regardless of whether you are collaborating or space-sharing that semester. Talk with your group about what they have done historically in terms of when they schedule larger or smaller shows.

   A budget for a typical full show may look something like the following:

   - **Costumes:** $400
   - **Equipment/Supplies:** $30
   - **Photocopies, Printing, and Publicity:** $125
   - **Production:**
     - **Set:** $700
     - **Props:** $130
     - **U-Haul:** $80
     - **Miscellaneous:** $100

   Keep in mind that the SAC budget categories are different than the budget categories you will want for your production. For example, you will have to split up the allotted “Production” budget into appropriate smaller budgets for Set, Props, etc. The only budget category on SAC
that is already allocated for something very specific is Costumes. As a reminder: you can’t use money in different budget categories of SAC for something not part of that category. So if you spend all of your allotted “Costumes” budget, you can’t start paying for more Costumes with your leftover “PPP” budget. Using up all of your funds in one category will mean that any more things that are in the same category that you need will come out of Non-SAC.

Non-SAC funds are made up of ticket revenue, donations, ad money, and any money that you had leftover from the previous year that was also not from a SAC budget category. You can use your Non-SAC money how you want, but keep in mind that you can’t use it for alcohol, hence it being important to have social fees, which will be discussed later. Non-SAC is useful for paying for things like pizza at strike, or show shirts (if you collect money from your production staff for shirts, this money will then go into Non-SAC).

Talk with the director and producer of the show about what they think will be their biggest financial need. If they have a vision that involves something particularly large or expensive, make sure they let you know. Also let them know where you stand with their budget so they can plan the show accordingly. You can adjust budgets, so best to start with a conservative estimate and keep money aside for contingency costs.

After tech interviews:

Email all of the designers with their budget information. Meet with all of the designers at the first Designers Meeting to go over this (as well as the reimbursement process) in more detail. As stated previously, best to start with a conservative estimate. Make it extremely clear that these are hard limits on spending. Also make it clear that as they purchase items, they should let you know immediately how much it cost and what it was so that you can keep track of their spending. Also tell them that it is their responsibility to ensure they plan well and can stay in budget. If they have an issue, they should set up a time to talk to you or meet with you. Explain the reimbursement process to them (detailed below).

Production meetings:

These are great times to collect receipts from people, as well as social fees and Tshirt fees if your group charges those.

Throughout production:

Reimbursements will be the biggest part of your job throughout the production. There are a few ways to pay for things.

By far the easiest way to purchase things is with the pcard. While this can be a hassle in some ways, it makes your life a lot easier in the long run. In order to pay with the pcard, you need to be present to make the purchase. This could mean calling a vendor over the phone and giving your pcard info, going with a designer to a store, or having designers send you links to buy things online. This is definitely the easiest way to manage money, and a nice thing to do for your designers, as no one has to front any cash or be stressed about going broke. If you
make a pcard purchase, all you have to do is fill out a quick form and turn it into Jan. The most important part of this is **you must get your receipts to Jan within 48 hours of purchase.** If you buy something online or have a digital receipt, all you have to do is email Jan the receipt and let her know what budget category it comes out of. This makes it super efficient and such that you don’t have to go into OSA so often.

The other way to purchase things is to have someone else purchase them with their own money and for you to reimburse them. There are two ways of going about doing this. If the total on the receipt is $35 or less, this can come out of petty cash. This means that you take the receipt in to OSA, fill out a petty cash form, and can then pick up cash for the receipt sometime soon after (either that day or later that week. They will let you know when your cash is ready). Something to keep in mind about petty cash is that if you have multiple stints of petty cash receipts going to the same person, they will want you to instead do the reimbursement on Concur, the online reimbursement system for larger purchases. So, if one designer purchases three things under $35, and you don’t want to deal with Concur, it is best to say that the purchases were made by three different people in order to get it in petty cash. Try and use petty cash as much as possible as it is fast and easy.

The third way is to use the online system called Concur. This can be found at [http://cms.business.sercices.upenn.edu/penntravel/](http://cms.business.sercices.upenn.edu/penntravel/). Whoever purchased the item will need to complete the Travel and Expense Reimbursement form before you submit a reimbursement request via Concur. If the person who needs the reimbursement has direct deposit set up, they should get the money in about a week. This is easy once it is set up, but has a fixed cost of forcing people to set up this account. You can make it such that all reimbursements on Concur need to be approved by you first, which is recommended, so that designers can’t just get money back on anything they pay for without you knowing about it.

Also note that the University does not reimburse for tax. This is because as a University we are tax exempt, and so shouldn’t be charged for tax in the first place. Tell your designers this. Also know that you when using your pcard you shouldn’t be charged tax. There’s a number on the back of the card that is your tax exempt number. Just tell cashiers about this and they won’t charge you tax.

**SAC meetings**

Another important responsibility will be attending SAC meetings. These happen once a month and are absolutely mandatory. **If you miss two SAC meetings, your group will no longer be funded by SAC.** If for some reason you can’t make it, send someone else from your group in your place. They usually last about an hour.

**Social Fees and Tshirt Fees**

Different groups charge different things for these. Talk about what your group has done in the past. A good standard for social fees is $10. You can either charge people a flat rate for tshirts (about $20 usually), or charge them exactly what they end up costing you (you usually won’t know till they are ordered, as it depends on how many people order). Another idea is to
give people a discount if they get a tshirt (so say if they purchase a tshirt, tshirt and social together are $25 dollars but only social is $10 and only tshirt is $20). Pretty much everyone should pay social fees except for a professional. If people have concerns, talk to them and work it out. Remember to be understanding of people’s financial situations. You aren’t allowed to have an official Venmo account for your group, but if you want you can have people Venmo you directly, as long as you keep track of how much belongs to your group versus to you personally in your account.

**Tech Week:**

You’ll be in charge of dealing with tickets and ticket revenue. Work with the producer to make sure that tickets get requested and to talk about prices. Consider implementing a group ticket rate. You will have to do this yourself and not through the Annenberg box office if that is where you are working. The best way is to have groups email you directly with a list of names of the group. Then, if you put that list of names in the cashbox on the walk, people will know to give group rate tickets to those people and can cross them off as they go. Make sure you make a form that indicates tickets sold at specific prices for each show time. Have people on walkshifts tally tickets they’ve sold. PAC exec get two free tickets each. You will need to provide this information to PAC, so it is best to record it as you go. Keep some change in the cashbox but empty it after every day of walkshifts so that you don’t risk losing a substantial part of your revenue.

**After production:**

Work with the producer to fill out the post-show review form. This is where all that ticket information will be necessary. If you work with Annenberg, whatever revenue they collect at the box office will automatically be put into your SAC account. You will still need to contact them for a breakdown of the ticket prices and tickets sold for each show to put this information into your show review form. This form is due two weeks after your show closes.

**Organizing yourself/tips**

1) Keep track of all expenses yourself in an excel spreadsheet. Human error is always possible and your SAC online account won’t necessarily be up to date. Sometimes people won’t charge the right amount on SAC for something, or will put it in the wrong budget category, so keep track of it yourself.

2) Photocopy or take pictures of all receipts. This is easy to do with your phone every time someone hands you a receipt.

3) Write the person-to-be-reimbursed’s name on each receipt you get so you remember. Also write the budget category if it isn’t clear from the receipt.

4) Remind people to give you their receipts promptly, and make sure all receipts are itemized.
5) Visit OSA regularly. Jan’s hours are from 5:30 am to 1:30 pm, so go before classes (and get breakfast at Einstein!). Jan is super helpful and is there to answer your questions.

6) Keep a folder or a zip-pouch for collecting receipts on you at all times.

7) Make yourself accessible. The best way to prevent people from going over budget is to be friendly and available for help or to make a purchase.

8) Use your judgment. If you don’t think something is absolutely necessary or that you can afford it, be ok to say no to people.

9) This is a great experience. Don’t be afraid to talk it up in interviews and make sure you put this on your resume.
Set building in TAC-e is a group effort. The two main roles are set designer and master carpenter (MC). Both people should be familiar with scenic carpentry and painting but especially the MC. Both people should acquaint themselves with the PAC Shop and should introduce themselves to Peter and Michelle, who run the shop.

**Design (Designer only)**

*Preliminary:* Read the script and start formulating your own vision for the set. Talk to the director about their vision for the set and begin sketching.

*First/Second Deadline:* Try to have a sketched visual and stage layout for rehearsals by your first deadline. Get director feedback and revise for the second deadline. Have one last formal sit down with the director to either confirm your current design or make final changes.

*Final Draft:* Ideally you will have a fully dimensioned final draft. The easiest way to do this is in Google SketchUp or some other CAD software but scale models or very detailed drawings can be used as well. Fully dimensioned means that you know the size of every set piece as well as their locations on the stage.

**Planning (Designer/MC)**

*Pulling Stock:* As soon as the designer knows what set pieces are needed, the designer and MC should go to the shop with a roll of masking tape and a sharpie and tag every piece of stock scenery that will be needed. In general this will be flats, platforms, furniture, stairs, and some miscellaneous items that may surprise you.

*Construction Drawings:* Once you have eliminated as many set pieces as possible with stock it is time to come up with construction drawings for the remaining pieces. Traditionally, this is the job of the MC but many designers will already have thought about it, so it is best to do this together. Once you have the drawings, figure out what lumber you will need to purchase and what you can pull from the scrap. I recommend buying lumber for any boards over three feet.

*Build Plan and Shop Hours:* Both designer and MC should agree on a general schedule for what is to be completed each week. Traditionally you would build for the first couple weeks and leave at least a week and a half for painting. For designs that are more painting intensive, you should plan accordingly. Check the PAC Shop website for a sample schedule. Once you know how much work there is to do you need to plan shop hours.
Get your crew’s availability. A normal shop hour schedule can have anywhere from 6 to 12 hours a week depending on how large your crew is and how much there is to do. If you are unsure, it is best to overschedule and cancel later. Tell Michelle and write your planned hours on the sheet in the shop.

Buying (MC)

Contact the treasurer/business manager of your group and ask them for the group’s credit card number and tax exemption code. You will need these to order material.

Lumber: Call Liberty Lumber (215) 468-3703. Tell them you want to order lumber to be delivered to the PAC Shop at 41st and Walnut. Once you have given him your order ask for a total and make sure it fits in your budget. Make sure to give him all the correct information, including the tax exemption code.

Paint: I recommend buying your paint at Monarch Hardware at 46th and Walnut. If you have a car, you may be able to get a better price at Home Depot. The shop has some brushes, but if you have the budget for it, buy your own, new brushes.

Other: Check the PAC Shop for a list of suppliers. If you can’t find something, talk to Peter.

Building (MC)

- Get to the shop early.
- Find an open workspace or ask another group to give you some space.
- Read the shop safety guidelines and be sure that you and your crew follow them.
- Teach your crew how to use drills, saws, staplers, etc. If you don’t know how to use a tool ask Michelle. NO ONE USES A TOOL THEY HAVE NOT BEEN TRAINED ON.
- Do work
- Stop working at least fifteen minutes before you plan on leaving, clean up, take out the trash.
- Peter and Michelle are in charge. Listen to them.

Painting

- Clean your brushes when you are done. Clean them until water running out of the brush is completely clear.

Load-in (MC/Designer)

Final shop hours: Gather everything that needs to go to the space in one place.

Before load-in: The MC and designer need to get to the shop about an hour before load in. Get the tool check-out sheet from Michelle and sign out the tools you need. Always
get both cordless and corded drills. **Pull jacks from the loft.** Cut small pieces of 1x4 to connect flats together and connecting flats to jacks.

*Loading the truck:* The MC should stay in the shop and be in charge of sending pieces to the truck. Figure out what order to send things so that the truck will be well organized. Don’t forget anything.

*Unloading/Building:* Get everything out of the truck and into the space. In Houston, the designer should layout the set with spike tape for the lights designer. Work around the lights designer to get the set built and the lights focused. In Annenberg or IGT lights can’t focus until the set is built.

**Tech Week**

There will be some stuff that you can’t get done during load in for one reason or another. Do this during work light hours.

**Strike**

As soon as the final show ends begin taking the set apart. Start sending people to the truck with pieces as soon as possible. When you get to the shop put all stock scenery back where it belongs. Take apart any new pieces that are not going to become stock scenery. Make sure that the shop is clean before you leave.
Costume Design
Trevor Pierce, C’14

Welcome!
You want to be a costume designer for a Theatre Arts Council production? Great. Here’s a handy guide to pretty much everything you need to know to help your cast dress to impress and provide stunning costumes that will steal the show. Costumes make or break a production, so your job is vital. Hopefully the information in this handbook however will help to ease any fears and prove that everyone (with a little hard work and perseverance) can be a terrific costume designer for any production.

Meeting With The Director
The key to quality costuming is being able to find a middle ground between the ideas and desires of the director, and your own vision as an artist. The relationship between a director and a designer is a tenuous one, as both are exhibiting artistic control over a production. It is important to understand the director’s vision for a show from the very beginning, and thus you can craft your artistic impulses accordingly. You may have a fantastic idea to costume a steam-punk version of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. However, if the director is looking for a traditional approach, this idea isn’t going to fly. Yes, it’s the responsibility of the costume designer to develop an artistic vision, but that vision must service the needs of the production, as outlined by the director. If you ever have an issue working with a direction, turn to your producer. They are there to help solve problems and keep everyone happy.

Sometime at the very beginning of the process, you will want to meet with the director to hear his/her vision. Often this will occur at the very first production meeting, where the staff will introduce themselves and the director will share their thoughts about the show you are producing. Collect as much information as you can to truly understand what the director is looking for as far as overall aesthetic is concerned. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and force the director to explain—they should be able to develop all the nooks and crannies of their ideas.

At this point, your work begins. You’ll want to get to work on your costume plot, idea board, and general sketches. Check out the sections below for more information on each of these tools.

Meeting with the Board
Soon after your meeting with the director (sometimes the same production meeting), you will have your first meeting with the executive board of the company. Get to know these individuals (especially the Producer, President, and Treasurer), as they will be your lifelines in helping to
pull off a successful product. The treasurer will presumably give you your budget for the production at this meeting. **Plan accordingly.** This is not to say you can never go over budget, but you must keep an open communication with the treasurer and the producer so that they are aware of your spending. If you want to buy 10 schoolgirl uniforms and blow your whole budget before you costume the other 8 members of the cast, you better run it by your producer and treasurer first to see if there are any extra funds you can grab. If not, prioritize. One, everyone needs to be costumed. So maybe those LL Bean uniforms (even if they were adorable) aren’t worth the price. **Many theatre companies will not reimburse you for purchases made over budget.** Be careful, many designers have lost a pretty penny to this rule. Always run large decisions by the board, and keep the producer updated of your status and budget.

**Working With Your Peers**

Often the costume designer will also serve as the wig designer (if such a position is necessary), but if they don’t you’ll need to become friends with this other designer quickly to make sure that your ideas work as a cohesive unit. This also extends to the makeup designer—remember: they are often designing components such as scars, blood, or costume makeup. These pieces need to work with the aesthetic as a whole. If you are ever unclear of what jobs are your responsibilities, speak with your producer. It can change depending on the organization or creative team.

**If the Shoe Fits…**

During the first week of rehearsal, you’ll need to take measurements of the cast. Create spreadsheets to help you keep track of this information, because it will be your LIFELINE. The size of the show determines what kind of measurements you’ll need to take. For a smaller show with more modern pieces, shirt, dress, pant, and shoe size might be enough. If you are renting pieces, you will need more sizes (such as head size, shoulder width, waist-to-floor, and more). Check out the rental form to see what you need… they often also have guides to tell you just how to measure your actors.

**Get To Work!**

It’s now time to start planning. You have your budget, you have your director’s vision, and it is time to start crafting the overall aesthetic that you want to portray through the costumes. The first essential piece to any operation is the **Costume Plot.** This document will serve as your lifeline throughout the design process, helping to keep you organized. In short, it is a breakdown of each scene in the play, with information regarding which characters are in that scene and what they are wearing. Here’s a small sample:
In that document, I can clearly see what each actor needs for each scene, and so can your director (if they have questions about the plotting). It is from this document that all decisions are made: if you decide to change the vision, change it on here. It should also reflect the most recent aesthetic.

However, before you can truly begin to decide what costumes each character will need in the show, you need to begin with some dramaturgical research. Creating idea boards will help you organize your thoughts, and also give your director a visual. These boards are exactly what they sound like: boards (or pieces of paper) that outline the general aesthetic you are aiming for. The example below is from a 1930s play (Awake and Sing). Some of the images are generic images from 1930s office-wear, while others are production shots from various regional productions. These boards help give you an overall sense of style and shape, aiding you in creating your own designs.
These boards are GREAT visuals for directors, and you should show your work at your second production meeting. The more physical evidence you can give of the work you’ve done, the better! Start to formulate ideas of how your characters might borrow from the ideas presented in your idea boards. The more visuals you have, the better. You want to draw inspiration from as many sources as possible, especially if your production is any way rooted in historical context (which most plays are). Talk to your dramaturg! Hopefully you met them during your first meeting. 😊

You must **know the show inside and out**. Read the script. Read it again. Read it three more times. Take notes about how many costumes each character needs, and if the script provides any clues as to what these costumes look like. Check out the stage directions AND the script itself… you never know what you might find. You need to have an intricate knowledge of the play in order to know what the characters would wear. The sooner you become familiar, the easier the entire process will be. Feel free to check out pictures from other productions, but remember, you are costuming this play. Not someone else. Don’t copy—use for inspiration. But ideas should come from your brain, not the web. The script will also give you information regarding **quick changes**. Some pieces may have to be quick-changed, meaning they are specifically altered so that an actor can put it on/take it off quickly. An example of this would be adding snaps to a button up shirt so that the actor does not need to button, and then sewing the buttons to the top layer of fabric so the shirt *appears* to be buttoned.

At this point, start sketching. You don’t need to be a professional artist. Sketches are helpful regardless of what kinds of skills you have. They will give you a chance to observe overall costume shape, as well as color and form. Attach swatches of fabric that you like… anything that will give the sketches something that resembles a useful tool around which you form your ideas. Here’s an example:
Still feel like you can’t draw? Here is another example:

These sketches help to make your thoughts materialize, and are the best visuals for directors to understand what you’re thinking and offer their commentary on the pieces/designs. While not essential to the costuming process, they do wonders in aiding you on your quest for the cleanest product.

*No sew? No problem!*

Not all costume designing requires extensive creation, or truthfully, any creation/construction at all. Knowing how to use a needle/thread is a must, but having the skills to operate a sewing machine is simply a plus. If you *don’t* know how to use a machine, it might behoove you to try and find a team member who does know.

QUICK ASIDE: team members! Every producer should assign you between one and three students to be on “team costumes”. These people are here to help you sew, collect pieces, alter, fit people, and generally do whatever you need them to do. Use them! Team Costumes likes to feel involved, and while it is easy to sometimes get caught up in your own designing and not ask for help, they are there to give it and are a valuable asset!
As far as sewing goes, don’t let it prove to be an issue. As mentioned, there are few shows that require any extensive sewing or costume construction. Most pieces can be found (whether in the PAC shop or at a local retailer… read on for more info) or rented if necessary. That being said, pieces that you construct from scratch can be fantastic. Take a look at the pink dress showcased below… In *Legally Blonde*, Elle Woods wears 14 different costumes. Thus the designer decided to find all but one—her final pink suit. That he constructed from scratch in order for it to represent his vision as closely as possible.

The PAC Shop (located on 41st street between Walnut and Locust) is the BEST resource for costuming. It is here that you will organize your pieces (make sure to **TAG a rack** at the beginning of the semester to ensure that the pieces you place on that rack won’t be stolen by other designers) and do any/all sewing construction. There is also a semi-extensive costume closet at the shop, run by Michelle. Once you have a general idea of what pieces you are looking for, scour this closet. Chances are you’ll find many of the pieces there. Pull ANYTHING you
think could be useful… you can always put it back later, but if someone else takes it, you’re out of luck.

Once you’ve exhausted the closet, it’s time to think about shopping and borrowing/renting. Check out the listing at the end of this handbook for some great resources when it comes to rentals and shopping. This list is only the beginning… explore Philadelphia! You never know what you’ll be able to find. And the Internet is always a useful tool… but remember to be conscious of shipping times… Renting is a great resource, especially for specialty pieces. **LABEL ALL ITEMS** that are rented or borrowed with masking tape… you CANNOT lose these pieces. Also, check in with the supplier on their stance on alterations. Most rental companies will provide you with already altered costumes, but if you borrow from a neighboring theater, you’ll have to do non-permanent alterations that you MUST take out before you return the pieces.

**Using the Shop**

The shop has many hidden secrets that you should be aware of… it’s a fantastic resource, so don’t abuse it! Always clean up after yourself and keep both the workroom and the closet in order. And check out the list below of helpful hints:

1. *The Bins.* The left wall of the workroom is lined with bins of all shapes and sizes. Use them! They are filled with the odds and ends that make every show a success. Cummerbunds, tutus, elephant ears, tribal scrubs, and more. Use this resource… too many naïve costumers simply buy these types of specialty items when they could just use the boxes. There are t-shirts, sweatpants, PJs, lingerie, and more.
2. *Pants.* Need pants? Most are stored in bins on the floor of the costume closet. It’s a bit messy, so try to keep it as neat as possible. There are lots of great pants here (from jeans to cords, pink hotpants, sweats, and more).
3. *Suits.* Looking for men’s suits, but it looks like the shop only has blazers? Check the pants bins! It’s very likely that these blazers belong to pants that have been chucked into the bins. Don’t get stuck buying suits… sort through the pants first. If you find a match-hurray! Now make sure when you’re done, you put the suit back in one piece to save future costumers the trouble of digging.
4. *Shoes.* The costume shop is also home to a collection of shoes. Use them! Having actors provide their own shoes only decreases from your overall vision and makes the show less special. These shoes are great and run the gamete in terms of style. Don’t worry if they are a little beat up… the audience won’t notice. Give them a little polish and you’re good to go.

**Spending Money**
Working with TAC-e groups can be slightly frustrating when it comes to money. Unfortunately, designers are not given school-issued debit cards to help purchase pieces. Due to SAC rules, each purchase must be itemized (so that SAC doesn’t think you’re stealing clothes). What this means for costume designers is that you will have to front the money that you use to make costume purchases. At the end of the process, the treasurer will walk you through the reimbursement process, and assuming that you have kept your treasurer apprised of your spending, you will receive all of this money back. **Keep a detailed budget.** This is crucial. The clearer your notes are, the easier it will be to get reimbursed at the end of the process. Save all your receipts. You never know what you’ll need to return or submit at the end of the show. The more notes you have, the better off you will be.

Keep in mind that any pieces you buy for your show now technically belong to PAC, and thus must live in the shop once the show is over. You will have actors who ask you to keep pieces, and unless they are willing to buy it from you (and thus you won’t be reimbursed for it from your theatre company), then it belongs to the shop.

**Fittings & The Parade**

You will spend the majority of the weeks of the show process collecting pieces (from the stores and rental companies listed below) and constructing outfits. Again, keep copious notes so that anyone on your team can figure out where you are in your process. Other members might want to come to the shop on a day you aren’t there, so make sure they know what’s going on and can be helpful. About **three weeks out** from load-in, you’ll want to start doing your first rounds of fittings. Fittings can be run in one of two ways. Either you will set up appointments when you will be at the shop, and the actors will come to you (via Google Doc or some other useful form), or you will bring costume pieces to a rehearsal (when the director has agreed to give you these actors so they can be fit in their costumes). Work with the director and the stage manager to see which option is preferred. Make sure the director knows that these are NOT viewings… they are fittings. The director should not be watching over your shoulder… you will present the costumes to the director at a future date. At this meeting, try the pieces you have collected on the actors. Try to determine how well they fit, and if any require alterations (i.e., darts in a jacket, hemming pants, sleeve length, etc). You may try a piece on an actor and decide you hate how it looks. **Take notes.** The more notes you have from your fitting, the easier it will be to decipher what you were thinking when you sit down later to work.

**One week out** from load-in, you will conduct **final fittings/costume parade.** In the interim, you should have been working on finishing the alterations you had from your first fitting, and collecting additional pieces. By the final fitting date, **all pieces** must be collected. The only exception would be specialty pieces that you have ordered and are in the mail, or rentals that do not arrive until one week before the show. On the final fitting, try all
pieces on you actors (even pieces that you fit the first time around). Now you should be seeing complete looks, and deciding if you like how the costumes wear and if they work well as a unit. Look at different combinations of characters together, as the costumes should speak to each other and work as a collective whole. At this time, you might want to invite the director to see the pieces you have collected—this would be called your costume parade. Inform the director that some alterations still need to be made, which is fine. Walk the director through your thought process, and discuss any changes that you might want. Listen to their comments—this is not the time to argue. Write down everything they think, as well as your own thoughts. Later on, you can go back over your notes and talk to the director at a separate (and private) time to discuss any changes to the pieces and/or overall vision. This is an important day, and it must run smoothly. You cannot be too prepared for final fittings/costume parade. Organization is key.

The Week of the Show, Y’all…

Tech week is long, stressful, and hectic… so the more you can do upfront to prepare yourself, the better. ALL ALTERATIONS MUST BE FINISHED BEFORE LOAD-IN. You don’t want to have to worry about altering pieces during tech week unless something rips or needs to be changed. Each portion of tech week has been outlined below to help you stay organized!

**Load-In.** This is the first day of tech, and serves as the major transportation of pieces from the shop (set, costumes, and props) to the theater. On the morning of load-in, assemble your team in the costume shop and begin preparing the pieces for transportation. Depending on the size of the show, you may be able to fit the costumes on the UHaul truck which is transporting the set. Talk to your producer BEFORE load-in to see if this will be a possibility. Costumes should be transported using the large laundry carts, NOT THE WHEELING RACKS. Those racks should stay in the shop—they are not meant to be wheeled through West Philly. The ONLY exception to this rule is if your show takes place in Houston Hall. If that is the case, then you will need to bring the rack with you, as there is no costume storage at your space. **All shop-owned pieces must be signed out.** This includes all clothes/accessories (though NOT things you bought specifically for this production, as they are not in the shop inventory yet), as well as costume aids (irons/boards, sewing machines, racks, carts, etc). Rented/borrowed items do not need to be recorded, though you should have your own records of exactly what pieces belong where. Michelle will provide you with a green sign-out form, which must be completed before you are allowed to leave the shop.

Once you get to the space, you are in charge of assigning and setting up the dressing room areas. In the Prince, the Zel, and Iron-Gate, these facilities are clearly marked. Houston is less clear, and usually actors are required to use the house as their dressing area until opening night, when the room next-door to the theater is reserved. However, for the other spaces, there are clear dressing rooms. Assign cubbies in each room (by writing actors names on masking tape and
marking their spots), and begin to file costumes accordingly. Baring unforeseen circumstances, this task should be finished by the end of load-in. In addition, work with the wig and makeup designers to set those materials up in the rooms as well, creating a clean and professional environment for the actors. By the time load-in is finished, all pieces should be properly filed. IF YOU HAVE ANY LAST MINUTE ALTERATIONS, they must be completed on load-in. You would undoubtedly have other issues you will need to attend to throughout the remainder of the week, and you cannot have alterations (which should have already been completed) taking up your time.

In addition, load-in is the time to get your actors familiar with their costumes. Walk them through their changes, and tell them when they will be wearing each piece. Help them try them all on and explain to them how each piece fits together. It is sometimes helpful to provide costume-tracking documents to actors who have many quick changes, so they know when to change and what costumes are involved. These can be as simple as lists, or as complex as charts and diagrams… whatever you think is best and helps to communicate the information.

**Tech Rehearsals.** Monday and Tuesday night will consist of tech rehearsals (where the tech components are introduced to the director and actors). Monday is usually not in costume, but most stage managers do expect actors to be in costume for Tuesday night’s run. This is the time to work out all changes, and determine if the pieces work for the actors and the show. The director will be taking their notes, but you should be taking notes as well. Notice how the actors move in the costumes (i.e., if they are having any troubles) and if they feel comfortable. Make note of any further alterations that must be made, or any pieces that you feel do not quite fit the overall aesthetic you were aiming for. Make sure you have members of your team available to assist with any quick changes. Discuss these positions with your producer, since there is a possibility they can be covered by ASMs.

**Worklight Hours.** Every tech week will have hours in the space when the cast is not called and rehearsal is not being held. These are worklight hours, and they are your time to take costume pieces and edit them if necessary. Combine the notes you take at the tech runs, as well as the notes given to you by your director, and make all adjustments that are necessary. Fixes MUST be made the day after the note is taken/given. If a director would like a character in a different shirt, and gives you that note on Monday, you MUST have at least 2 more shirt options to present to them by Tuesday’s run. No exceptions. It may seem as if you have no time (between class and life) to work on this type of schedule, but during tech week, you belong to the show. Your only job is to provide whatever is necessary to make the show succeed.

**Dress Rehearsal.** Wednesday night of tech week is the dress rehearsal, or rather, the final time that the cast and crew runs the show before opening night. All alterations and costume changes
MUST be completed before the run. Actors must know exactly what pieces they are to wear, and when they are to wear them. However, this is your final time to make notes about your pieces. If anything still seems to be a problem, make sure you write it down so you can fix it during the day on Thursday, before the opening night performance. Though at this point, there should be no further fixes (unless absolutely necessary), as any changes just add unneeded stress to the production.

**Performances.** Unless otherwise instructed, you do not need to be present for all the performances. Make use of your comp ticket and come see the show! And remember, if anything rips or breaks, it is your responsibility to fix it before the next performance. Otherwise, sit back and enjoy your hard work. You earned it.

**Strike.** Once the show closes, it is your responsibility to make sure all pieces are returned to their proper homes. Since you took copious notes during the process, you should have no problem sorting through all the pieces and determining what belongs to whom. This sorting process is easiest if done at the shop—when strike begins at the theater, simply get the pieces back into the cart and back to the shop as quickly as possible. Remember to give any pieces donated by actors back to those people before you sweep them up with the rest of the costumes. **CLEAN UP YOUR DRESSING ROOMS.** This is your responsibility as the designer. Keep them as clean as you found them.

Once you are back at the shop, begin to sort out rented/borrowed materials from shop/bought items. Determine what needs to be **cleaned,** and what can be put back as is. Any items of clothing that touched skin MUST be cleaned. Other items (jackets, blazers, etc) are up to your own discretion… but remember, other people will be using these pieces. If it has any sweat or makeup, it must be cleaned. There is a washer and dryer at the shop—make use of them! Michelle will provide you with detergent. Some things WILL need to be **dry-cleaned,** and if you know this in advance, write it into your budget! This is especially true for rented pieces, as it is usually part of the contract. For shop dresses and other items that should be dry-cleaned… just do it. **Cleanliness is important if you want to have a costume stock in the future.**

**And Everything Else…**

Once things are washed, put away, and returned, you’re done! Congratulations! Check in with your treasurer to see the status of your reimbursement, but it often takes a couple of weeks. The only thing left to do is attend your post-mortem meeting (with the entire staff and cast), and you have successfully costumed a show. 😊
To finish, here is a short list of places that might prove helpful when costuming for TAC-e…

- **Maxie’s Daughter** (724 S. 4th St) for fabric
- **Karlin’s** (8th btwn Market and Arch) for sewing and garment construction supplies
- **Evergreen** (3rd btwn Market and Arch) for wholesale goods, such as tshirts, socks, and sweats, in bulk
- **Zoll’s** (744 S. 4th St) for ribbon and odds-n-ends
- **PA Fabric Outlet** (758 S. 4th St) for buttons, zippers, and fabric
- **Ross** (8th and Market) for modern pieces (and cheap prices)
- **Modell’s** (1528 Chestnut) for sports clothing
- **I. Goldberg** (1300 Chestnut) for military uniforms/supplies
- **Walnut Street Theatre** (825 Walnut) for quality rentals of specialty pieces… speak to Stephanie
- **Arden Theatre Co** (40 N. 2nd St) for cheap rentals of all kinds of pieces… speak to Alison
- **CNY Costumers** (NY) for specialty pieces, rented to fit… best for musicals ([http://cnycostumes.com/](http://cnycostumes.com/))
- **Pierre’s Costumers** (211 N. 3rd St) for large scale rentals… best for musicals
**Makeup Design**
Amanda Shur, C’16

**General:** At the first production meeting, speak with the director about his/her vision for the show, time period etc. Read the script ASAP in order to gauge each character’s personality, and any stage directions, character descriptions, etc. that may add details about the character’s physical appearance.

Research typical makeup and hairstyles of the time period in which the play takes place. Find at least one image for hairstyle and one for makeup for each character to model off of. Show these images to your director as soon as possible for feedback and adjust accordingly.

As soon as you can, attend a rehearsal so that you may practice each character’s makeup on the actor. This is the time when you should speak to your producer if you find that you are in need of any new makeup products. Take any and all feedback your director offers regarding makeup and hair. You should attend at least one more rehearsal between the first rehearsal you attend and tech week to implement any changes that have been made.

At load-in, practice your tech week and performance makeup routine. Gather the actors so that you may practice their makeup and hair with the goal of finishing all that you need to do under the time constraints of a performance (generally, this will range from one to two hours from call time to places). Let your actors know if there is anything they can do to assist in the process, such as applying their own foundation, straightening their hair before call, etc. Ask your director how many runs will be occurring at tech week and for how many he/she would like you to be present. Try to be at as many nights of tech week as you can in order to practice your performance routine under time constraint.

Obviously, makeup should not break time-period. For example, if the play you are working on takes place in the Middle Ages, do not curl your actor’s hair, or use red lipstick.

**Basic Make-up Tips:** Everyone—regardless of character, age, sex—should wear foundation in order to smooth complexion and prevent shininess under lights. Foundation should generally be a bit darker than the actor’s actual skin-tone, as stage lights wash out actors’ faces. Each actor should have a designated personal makeup sponge for their foundation, and should only use their own sponge when applying makeup in order to maintain cleanliness and prevent the spread of germs. At the start of tech week, give each sponge an identifying factor (such as writing the actor’s first initial on the bottom) so that you may remember who the sponge belongs to. On top of foundation, translucent powder may be applied to prevent shininess. Lightly blow on the brush to remove extra powder before applying to the actor’s face.

Like foundation, each actor should wear some sort of lipstick, in order to define the lips and prevent them from being washed out under the lights.

Generally, actors should be wearing hairspray or hair gel to keep fly-aways back. If these are not sufficient for keeping hair down, you may choose to use bobbypins. Dirty hair is best to
work with (i.e. for curling, straightening, etc.) so you may want to ask your actors not to wash their hair between performances.

**Natural:** Light bronzer can be applied under cheekbones by asking the actor to make a “fish face,” or suck in their cheeks. In this position, brush bronzer in a light curve from the edge of the face starting at the cheekbone, and curving to just under the bone and into the center of the cheek. You may also choose to add bronzer LIGHTLY to the nose, forehead and chin for color. Essentially, bronzer should be used for highlighting the cheekbones, and for tanning (i.e. where the sun would hit the face). Apply blush on the apples of the cheeks by asking the actor to smile. Blush should be applied just to the apples of the cheek, but may be brushed back for blending.

(For Females): Some characters may not require eye shadow, but generally all female characters should wear some sort of eyeliner (preference of black/brown, liquid/pencil is up to you and your director) and mascara.

**Old Age:** In order to achieve realistic old age makeup, use a brown eyeliner (pencil or crème is fine, but liquid is not ideal). DO NOT USE BLACK EYELINER. You will be following the natural wrinkle lines on your actor’s face and should not create any new wrinkles that do not naturally appear. In order to find these natural wrinkle lines, first ask your actor to raise their eyebrows. This should create several long lines horizontally along the forehead. It is best to create these with shorter strokes, as the wrinkle lines are not straight even. Next, ask your actor to wrinkle their eyebrows, which should a few thick, short wrinkles around the eyebrows and the bridge of the nose. Ask your actor to smile and line the parenthetical-like wrinkles around their mouth, the wrinkles around their eyes (crow’s feet), and around the sides of the nostrils where the nose connects to the face. Lastly, ask your actor to pout and line the circular shape of their chin. These lines should be fairly prominent at this point. Gently blend the lines using the actor’s foundation sponge, but do not blend completely. The lines should still be apparent, but softer and more natural looking. The younger the character, the lighter the lines. Check with your director one last time to make sure you’ve achieved the look they aim for.
General Note

Welcome to props designing! This is a very enjoyable job, but not a simple one by any means. It’s like a puzzle, with the pieces of the puzzle being strewn about Philadelphia, and you, the director, and the script all have slightly different ideas of which pieces go where. The joy of props designing is tackling each piece separately and watching them eventually come into focus as one unified picture.

When designing the props for a show, it’s easy to let props slide until tech week. But this will only make things much harder for you. If you wait until the last second, you’ll make your life extremely unpleasant during tech week, as you still have to get everything, but under duress. So as you read this guide, remember that being proactive is your number one priority.

First production meeting and meeting with the director

At this first meeting, the director should pull aside all the designers to schedule one on one meetings with each of them. If the director does not do this, then you should suggest it.

The meeting with the director will be where you and the director go over the script’s prop list, and they will tell you which ones they want and which ones to skip. Note that they will change their minds during the rehearsal process, and they will leave some props out at the first meeting. Have the script’s prop list on you at this meeting to make things easier. (If the script does not have a prop list, then you’ll have to rely on going through the script on your own, which you’ll do anyway, and which we’ll discuss next) Discuss the problem props with the director, and start thinking about how you might be able to construct things that need constructing. The director probably won’t be able to help you here, but you’ll learn what needs to be made and what needs to be found/bought at this meeting.

Advice from Peter: Peter at the PAC shop is known to say that the designer can always veto anything a director asks for. This isn’t quite true, as the director is in charge of the artistic vision of the show, and some props are absolutely necessary. But the spirit of
what Peter says is that you don’t have to just say yes to everything the director says. If you disagree on anything, you can say so, and then the two of you will talk it out and maybe reach an understanding.

Making a Prop List

Reading the Script

The first thing you must do, ideally even before meeting with the director, is to read the entire script, writing down every single prop that is mentioned or implied in the script. This will be your baseline list. Even if the script contains its own list, the one you make on your own may be better.

Reading rehearsal reports

YOU MUST READ EVERY REHEARSAL REPORT. The Stage Manager will add props in as they realize that they’re necessary. There will be props that are never mentioned in the script, and no one will tell you about them if you don’t read the rehearsal reports. The reports will also mention rehearsal props that are needed immediately.

Your Google Spreadsheet

THIS IS CRUCIAL. Make your prop list as a Google Doc Spreadsheet with columns for the prop, a brief description of the prop, your ideas of where to get it, and where you actually got it. That’s four columns. Once you have a large number of props, this is the only way you’ll remember what belongs to the PAC shop, or Players, or which individual in the cast lent you what, or where you bought everything from. The list you send out to the cast (which will be discussed further down in the guide) is different, because the cast doesn’t need all this info.

Rehearsal Props

There are some props which will be needed for the actors to use in rehearsal. When the director or SM tells you to get one, you have to do it immediately. They should give you a few days in advance, hopefully, so you’ll have no excuse. They may ask for the exact props that they’ll have
onstage, or they may not. It might be impossible to get them the final props, especially if they cost money or are fragile. So you might have/want to get them “doofers” (as in “do for” now). Do not fail to deliver rehearsal props. They are integral to the rehearsal process.

**Getting the Props**

**The Prop Shop**

The first place to look is at the PAC shop, which is located at 4100 Walnut St. (215) 898-5823. You can call ahead if you’re not sure whether anyone will be there. On weeknights during rehearsal hours, you’ll definitely find people there. Ask Peter or Michelle (the people who work there) to give you a tour of the prop closet. Next to the prop closet are the prop shelves. Get there at the beginning of the semester so you can claim a choice shelf for your show. That’s where you’ll keep all of the props, even the ones you find outside of the shop. You’ll want to get as many props as possible here.

**Asking the production staff**

Once you have your full list, or even when it’s not full, email the cast and crew to ask if anyone has any of the props. Nag them about it. Ask them if they have a prop at home, and they can bring it over fall break, Thanksgiving, or spring break if any of those fall within your rehearsal period. Make a google spreadsheet with all the props where they can put their names if they have it. Also make them email you if they have it. Really nag them about this, because they might actually want to help you, but they’ll forget as soon as they read the email, because that’s what people do.

**Players and Underground Shakespeare**

Penn Players has an office in Annenberg where they keep a few props. Most notably, rings. Ask them if they have anything you can’t find. They probably won’t have it, but try. The Underground Shakespeare Company lives in the basement of Rodin. They’re not in TAC-e, but they’re really neat people, and they’ve lent us props before. They have a ton of props, because they don’t use the PAC shop ordinarily. [Note to Players: if you are props designing for Players, and you buy a prop with Players money, leave it in the Players office after the show. Otherwise
you usually leave props you bought in the prop shop, so that future prop designers will have an easier job]

**Making props**

You might have to make props from scratch. Don’t be afraid, and use your creativity. If you commit to it, this might be the part of props designing you remember most fondly. It can be really fun. Peter will be able to give you advice here, and the PAC shop is a great location to make props. Take things apart, tape or glue them together, paint them with leftover paint from the set. If you think outside the box, you can create incredible things.

**Online**

You use the internet only if you can’t find the props from any of the aforementioned places. But you will end up needing the internet for some things, almost certainly. Use Google Shopping and sort it from lowest to highest price. Amazon is also a good resource, and reliable. Order as soon as possible, once you know you can’t get props for free, as shipping can take longer than advertised. Have the treasurer of your group pay for the items, so that you don’t have to be reimbursed. If you send them the link to what you want, they can order it for you.

**Stores**

If you have to, you can go around looking at stores. If it’s a specialty kind of store and a specialty kind of item, check their website and call or email ahead to be sure they have it (like sex toy shops, etc.)

**Avista Custom Theatrical Services**

Avista is a huge prop warehouse out in Norristown who works with a lot of Philly theatre companies, and has worked with Penn as well. Getting there is a right hassle, so try to avoid it, but that might not be possible. If you need more guns and ammo than Peter has in the shop, then Avista is your place. They also have a lot of other props and set pieces that they rent for absurdly cheap, but again, getting out there and back will take your whole afternoon. Don’t go alone, or you’ll be very bored and you might feel unsafe. If you have a car, that’s great, but be wary of the Schuylkill Expressway’s traffic. Rush hour will turn it into a two hour trip each way.
Here is their website: http://www.avistacustom.com/ Email them and check out their online catalogue to see if they have what you want. Their address, phone number, and email are on the site. Ask them when they’re open, because they have weird hours, and you have to make an appointment. To get there by public transit, take the Market line all the way west to 69th (the westernmost stop), and then transfer to the Norristown Express line, which you will also take all the way. Once you’re there, it’s a 15 minute walk. The whole trip will be about an hour each way. Have exact change for both trains, so have lots of singles and quarters. Go to the McDonalds in Norristown (you’ll pass it both ways) if you need more change. The website does a bad job of saying where their front door is. When on Washington Street, turn onto McKinley Ave, and there will be a glass door on your right very quickly which does not say Avista on it. It has another business’ name. Go in, and the door to Avista will be down the hall. You’ll think you’re just in a neighborhood of sketchy houses until you find it, and then it’s randomly a huge prop warehouse with two women who work there. Please don’t go alone. And please go during the day. It’s safe, but you’re far from home and you always want to be overcautious.

Your Team

Props Crew

Props crew usually goes unused, and this is quite unfortunate. After all, this isn’t like set where they have to be building things every day. Because you’re usually capable of getting all the props on your own, you may not think to ask a crew for help. In too many shows, props crew ends up only doing anything on load-in, when they have to help you carry your props to the theater.

But props crew can be very helpful. One use for them is to accompany you on missions to center city or other stores, so that you don’t have to be alone and confused and scared when buying props. Another great way to use them is to choose the one or two props that you completely know how to make/find, but you’re just dreading going through the work of doing it, and giving each member of crew one of those props. And that will be their entire job. It’ll be a real task for them, but since they only have to do the one thing, it’ll be completely reasonable to ask it of them. This takes a lot of stress off of you, since you really didn’t want to worry about that prop, and it gives them something real to do.
Props Mentor

Do not be afraid to ask them any questions or go to them when you need help on a prop. That is literally their entire job. If you have a mentor, go to them any time you’re even slightly confused. Don’t be embarrassed about it. You’re justifying their existence when you ask them for help, so do it!

Other Props Designers

These people aren’t officially on your team, but it’s very likely that props designers in the past have spent ages looking for the very things that you’re looking for. If you’re stumped, or you can’t find anything without spending money, ask a former props designer, and they might know where to find it on campus.

Tech week

When loading out of the shop, sign everything out on the sheet that Peter or Michelle gives you. Sign out everything you got from the PAC shop, and nothing else. You can use your prop designer Google doc to remember where you got everything from.

Once you’re in the theater, find the props table (If you’re in Houston, have the producer ask for two tables from the Houston staff; the Prince and IGT should have them already) and bring masking tape and a sharpie. Lay out all the props, and make boxes for them with tape, with their places labeled. You will probably need a table on each side of the stage, so make sure the props are preset in the right places. It is the stage manager’s job to write the list of who needs each prop and when, not yours. Go over what the props are for with the SM and ASM (and maybe director) and then you and the SM will impart this information to the actors

You will also be asked to get more props during tech week that you didn’t know about. You will probably have also left some props until this point, which is bad, but it always happens. If the director asks for something ridiculously complicated on Wednesday night (like reupholstering the furniture), veto it. If they ask for a new prop on load in, you’re gonna have to get it. We’ve all been there.

Run crew
You should really do run crew too, as you otherwise aren’t needed during the performances, and shows usually need all the run crew they can get. A show which has their props designer on run crew has someone always there who knows the props intimately, and is therefore more useful than a run crew member who has never done anything for the show until load in. Run crew is by no means required for you, but working on the show each night of tech week will be fun, and you can help out the production immensely.

**Frequently asked questions**

**Q: Where can I find suitcases?**

**A:** If you climb the ladder in the PAC shop to the area above with the flats, you will find a sizable suitcase selection.

**Q: Where can I find prop guns?**

**A:** Go in the prop room of the PAC shop and look all the way at the back of the left wall. There is a whole box of fake guns and swords.

**Q: Where can I find guns that fire?**

**A:** You can’t use any guns which fire projectiles, but Peter has two guns with closed barrels which can fire blanks to produce a loud bang and some smoke and smell. For any more guns or ammo, you’ll have to go to Avista.

**Q: Where can I find flowers?**

**A:** There is a massive selection of fake flowers in several bins underneath the center table of the costume shop (right near the front of the PAC shop).

**Q: My show wants me to get food. What do I do?**

**A:** You or someone in the production will need to get fresh food every day before a dress rehearsal or performance if the food actually needs to be eaten. If you have a fridge, you can also keep food in reserve so you don’t need to buy it every day. However, don’t buy too much food upfront, as you never know if it’ll get cut or uneaten, and then you wasted the money. If the food
is not eaten in the show, but simply onstage, you may not need to buy more than one of everything.

**Q: What do I do about cigarettes?**

A: Electronic cigarettes blow real smoke, appear to be on fire, and are completely within all the rules! You can also have actors stick unlit cigarettes in their mouths, but that has gone by the wayside as e-cigs have become common. Just don’t use them too much before tech week, as they are not cheap and will run out. It is possible the PAC shop or Players will have some at any given moment, but be prepared to buy them.

**Q: What do I do about alcohol?**

A: Using mixtures of water, apple juice, iced tea and ginger ale, you can make most hard liquors. Usually choose just one of those beverages and water it down in order to make any one “alcoholic” drink. Ginger ale can also make a decent beer substitute. Grape juice will fill in for wine. Make sure all vessels which hold liquid are washed prior to every use by the actors. This means serving vessels and glasses (most of which can be found in the prop shop).

**In conclusion**

Good luck getting all the props! Don’t waste time, get rehearsal props immediately, and don’t leave too much to tech week, or you and the rest of the production will all regret it. We believe in you!!!!!
Light Design
Devin Barney, C’15

Congratulations! If you are consulting this current guide, then you have probably just been named a Lights Designer or Crew Member for one of the Theatre Arts Council (TAC-e) productions! These are very exciting and fulfilling roles, but can be very demanding, especially if you are doing it for the first time. In this chapter, you will begin to get a sense of the duties and responsibilities of the Lights Designer and Lights Crew in a TAC-e production. This guide will walk you through from Tech Interviews to Post-Production.

❖ Tech Interviews
➢ For those of you that are consulting this guide for tips on how to tech interview, the process is very simple. The TAC-e community is very open and highly encourages people of all technical experience backgrounds (i.e. experts to absolutely no experience whatsoever) to interview for any tech role that interests you.
➢ Typically, at a technical interview, present will be the production’s Technical Director and maybe the Producer or Director.
➢ You can expect general questions about your overall theatrical experience as well as questions about any potential conflicts you will have with the production calendar (e.g. tech week, designer runs, etc.).
➢ You can also expect to discuss a director’s artistic vision for a production and be asked how you can contribute to this vision. If you do not know the show at all, do not worry! It is just important for the production staff interviewing you to ensure that all their designers are excited by the artistic content of the show. If the one specific show in a semester does not excite you for certain reasons, there are always many other TAC-e productions to interview for!

➢ Lights Designer
■ For a Lights Designer interview, if you do have Light Designer experience, (aside from the general interview questions) you will be asked to discuss some of the technical design elements with which you are familiar implementing. This is a good time to discuss any experience/understanding you have with specific instruments, color application, and lighting different types of theatre spacesstage orientations. If there are things you wish to learn, be open and frank about these things as well. It is helpful to the technical director.
■ For those of you who have never designed, but have learned lights as a Lights Crew member, then this would be the time to share your experience
as a Lights Crew member, what you have learned and what you would like to learn. Be honest about what you still do not know because this helps the technical director know whether to set up a mentorship position.

• For those of you who have never designed, nor never crewed, the position of Lights Designer is still a realistically attainable position for you in TAC-e! Just be honest during your interview about what you do or do not know about lights design, and be prepared to discuss why lights is the design position for you. Lights Mentors are always available in the TAC-e community and your Tech Director will work with you to make sure you get the mentorship you need.

➢ Lights Crew Member

• Lights Crew Member interviews are typically very simple. They are less involved than the Light Designer interviews in that you will not be asked to really discuss design elements. You will still be given a description of the director’s vision for the production. Be sure that if you are interviewing for Lights Crew for the first time that you are not afraid of heights! The entire role of a Lights Crew Member happens during tech week in the lights grid!

➢ Tech Casting

• Tech Casting requires that you keep your phone on after the end of tech interviews, so that you may accept any tech role you are being offered.

❖ First Production Meeting

➢ The first production meeting is your time as a Lights Designer/Lights Crew Member to meet the production in its entirety. People you will want to make sure you meet in particular include: Full Lights Team (Designer, Crew, and Mentor), Director, Technical Director, and Producer.

➢ For Lights Designers, your main goal for the first production is to not only meet the staff, but also to get a more concrete sense of the Director’s goals/vision for the show and establish deadlines for yourself.

➢ Pro-Tip: It may seem early, but this is also a great time to discuss among yourself and your Lights Crew to find out who is available to operate the lights board for which shows. If you find that no one is available, then reach out to the production board and let them know as soon as you know, and they will help you secure show night light board operators.

❖ Typical Light Designer Deadlines
➢ **Deadline 1: Read the Script** -- You will definitely want to have read the script by the Second Production Meeting. Be sure to leave the First Production Meeting with either a copy of the script or the contact of someone who can send you a digital copy.
   - If you are a designer that can read a script one time through and design at the same time, do take notes in the script. If you cannot, read the script twice -- once for perusal, once to make notes.

➢ **Deadline 2: Set a Meeting with the Director and Tech Director** -- It is very helpful once you have read the script to sit down with the Director and Tech Director outside of the context of Production Meeting to really delve deep and discuss particulars about the design.
   - This should happen shortly after the Second Production Meeting, if not before it.

➢ **Deadline 3: First Light Plot Draft Deadline** -- Now you will really be getting into the thick of things. After your read-through of the script and conversations with the Director and Tech Director, you will want to formalize a draft of your lights in the grid, what we call a light plot. Drafting a grid means sitting down with a physical print of the light grid of your theatre space and mapping out what fixtures you are using for areas, specials, and colors. With your knowledge of the script, think big for this, then scale down ideas as needed.
   - It is highly recommended that this be done in time for the 4-Week Meeting. The 4-Week Meeting is a meeting 4 weeks prior to your production’s tech week in which the production staff members (i.e. Producers, Tech Directors, Directors) meet with members from your specific theatre (e.g. Annenberg, Perelman Quad). At this meeting, it will be helpful to know if you are going to need any special kind of fixtures. This would be information from your light plot. Special fixtures would include things like a ground row or spotlight.
   - You can find basic light plots of each Performing Arts Council (PAC) space on PAC’s Shop Website ([http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/](http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/)). Under Theatre Specifications and Drawings ([http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/Theaters/index.html](http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/Theaters/index.html)), specifically.

➢ **Deadline 4: Finalize Light Plot** -- 2 weeks after the 4-Week Meeting, start finalizing your light plot. Any special fixtures that will need to be moved into the space that can be ordered from the PAC Shop, will have to be ordered at the latest, at this point, 2 weeks before your production’s tech week.
   - You must order this from the PAC Shop’s Online Order Form ([http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/order.html](http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/order.html)).
■ **Pro-Tip:** Sometimes the Shop has newer pieces that are available for use that are not on the online order form. No online search can ever replace actually going to the shop and looking at the fixtures available to you. So definitely do that. The Shop is a wonderful place! (4100 Walnut St. on the 2nd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19104).

■ **Pro-Tip:** The Shop door is quite persnickety. Here’s a quick run-down of how to open it:
  - Type in the passcode -- 1&2 (at the same time), then 3, then 4.
  - Push the doorknob in as you twist it, then pull the door toward you.
  - It may take a couple tries, so be patient!

■ **Pro-Tip:** When you do decide if there are extra fixtures that you need, be sure to clear this with your production staff, so that they can be sure to load these things into the truck along with the set! You do not want to have to carry all of that stuff by yourself!

➤ **Deadline 5: Designer’s Run** -- Near this 2-3 week period before tech week, your production staff should have scheduled a Designer’s Run. This is a time in which all designers are invited to view the actor’s in rehearsal, as they complete a full run of the show. Sometimes a production will schedule Designer Runs of Act 1 and then Act 2 and then a full run. Be aware of these because they are invaluable to a design. You may come in to watch blocking that is no longer consistent with your design, and you will need to make changes.

  ■ Do take notes and ask question of the director during these runs. Also be sure to bring a physical copy of the script. It makes note-taking incredibly easy.

  ■ **Pro-Tip:** Around this time, it would also be good to remind your production staff to ensure that all necessary equipment to get you up into the lights grid in the theatre space is secured. If this means getting a ladder, make sure that is done. If this means charging the cherry-picker (or Genie Lift), have your production staff contact the space management to make sure that happens. Nothing stinks more than having to hold up an entire load-in to charge a lift.

➤ **Deadline 6: Written Cues** -- Now that you have your plot completed, it is a good idea to begin writing out a sequence of the cues you will want in the show. Cues are merely a way of describing changes to the lights from one look to another look. (i.e. A cue from lights on center stage to lights on full stage or a cue from full stage lights to a blackout. These would then be numbered in your draft: Cue 1, Cue 2, etc."

  ■ From your various meetings, your cue draft should have already to begun to take shape, but the week or two before tech week is the time to really
take it from the abstract concepts you have been thinking of and into concrete plans.

■ Be sure to share this with your director and tech director at a production meeting to ensure that you are all in the same page.

➢ **Deadline 7: Preliminary Paper Tech** -- This is an optional deadline, but it makes tech week so much easier if you go ahead and paper tech with the appropriate Stage Manager(s) the week before tech week. Paper tech means sharing all of the cue moments you have taken note, with your Stage Manager(s). Some Stage Managers prefer to wait until tech week, but if you can get a meeting beforehand, you will have another set of eyes keeping track of your notes and intended design during what may be a very hectic tech week.

■ **Pro-Tip**: Often, you will find that you may have missed a cue moment and need to insert one in during tech week. Number your cues every other number (i.e. Cue 1, Cue 3, Cue 5, etc.) so that you are not dealing with really awkward Cues like 1.5 or Cue 2.245. It makes everyone’s job easier down the line.

➢ And then you are at tech week!!!

**Training/Mentorship**

➢ So before tech week is discussed, it is important to note that everything described above is written with the assumption that you will definitely have training and mentorship appropriate for your level of knowledge!

➢ For those of you without any experience, **you should definitely be assigned a mentor** and definitely attend all light board trainings and space tours that you can. Mentors are assigned by your production staff and light board trainings and space tours are provided by PAC. No guide can ever replace the experience gained from these resources.

➢ Also, if you have any questions that cannot be answered either here or with a mentor, then please reach out to the technical staff of the PAC Shop. You can contact Technical Advisor Peter Whinnery at pacshop@dolphin.upenn.edu.

**Tech Week**

➢ Ah, so here we are. Tech week. The first three days or so are all about you. The actors have had weeks of rehearsal to prepare for this. You have three days to put up this show. Let us begin.

➢ **Day 1**

■ **Call Time/Location**

- You can expect to be called for load-in generally much earlier than the general production staff. Team Lights is called as early as they are allowed into the space, and the call location is the space. This
is to ensure that you can begin working on focusing the lights without the set in the way of the grid. Normally, once a set goes up, you will have limited to no access to your lights. Make this time count.

■ What to Bring

● Wrench and Work Gloves -- Secure a set of wrenches and work gloves for each of your lights crew members.
  ◆ **Pro-Tip:** Have that on you way in advance of load-in, so that you can avoid a trip to the Shop in the morning and just go to the space to begin working.

● Light Plot and Script Notes -- It makes your focus 10 times faster to have your actual plans brought with you to the space. There are designers who forget them, and it is always painful to see them try to design from memory and implement something incorrectly.

● Gels -- If you are not satisfied with the gel in some spaces, or have special gels you prepped before tech week, remember to bring them!

● Set Designer -- You will not be able to focus your lights without knowing where on stage the set will be placed! Bring along the Set Designer or someone who knows the set plans well to help you spike out all the necessary pieces, and then you can begin focus!

● Spike Tape -- If there is something anyone on the production is going to forget, it is the spike tape you need to begin your focus. Avoid delays and messing up a good tech week schedule by making sure you have the spike tape on you.

● Breakfast -- Yes, yes, your producer promised you bagels and cream cheese, but guess what? It probably will not get to you until the truck arrives at your space. Avoid the three or so hours of hunger pangs while working and eat/bring your own breakfast. You can always have them buy you more food later.

■ Task for the Day -- **FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS**

● Once the Set Designer has bounded the stage dimensions to your liking, it is time to buckle down and have the Lights Crew Members focus the lights. Be sure to carefully adhere to the Lights Plot you have so painstakingly worked on. Make adjustments to it as necessary.

● **Pro-Tip:** Production staff members will always ask you throughout the focus about how much more time you think you will need. If you are just re-focusing lights already in the grid, you can give them an estimate of 15 minutes per remaining fixture. If you are
re-hanging fixtures, estimate 30 minutes per fixture. If you are implementing any special type of fixtures that require extension or something, then you may estimate upwards of 30 minutes per fixture. It may seem like a lot, but you always want to overestimate anyway.

➢ Day 1 - Day 3

- Task for the Days -- **CUE WRITING / Cue-to-Cue**
  - This guide is not meant to be a Lights Board Training, so do make sure you either brush up on those skills or learn during a Lights Board Training provided by PAC!
  - Remember those cues you wrote out and shared with your Stage Manager(s)? Now it is time to write them all out. You should expect this to take more time than your lights focus, and you should have patience with yourself. Cue-to-Cues are long processes and can be quite draining, so be patient with yourself, and set a good pace.
  - **Pro-Tip**: Make good use of your sliders. Program looks that you know you will return to often into a slider. It makes cue writing so much easier, if you can just cue up a slider.
  - **Pro-Tip**: Have that light plot with you at all times. Memorizing channel numbers and dimmer numbers and gel colors for every fixture, while possible, is daunting and can be frustratingly slow.
  - **Pro-Tip**: Remember that the actors will be drained by this experience and most likely distracted due to all the standing and waiting time. Do what you can to be as efficient as possible, and let the Stage Manager(s) know when some actors can have a break or something throughout the process.
  - **Pro-Tip**: If you have completed an Act, give yourself a break! You deserve it!

➢ Day 3 Onwards

- Now you are pushing closer to show time! Get excited! If you are board operating, then you will have the pleasure of seeing the show over and over again through all its iterations, so take joy and pleasure in that. If you are not, be sure to still show up to the space to clean up any cues the directors asks.

➢ Performances

- Stage blacks. Wear them.
- Be flexible through the course of the show, and always pay attention. Timing is everything in lights, and if a cue is early or late, then sometimes
whole parts of the story are lost/muddled. You are as important as the actors on stage in telling this story, so do not check out.

■ Have fun!

➢ Strike
  ■ Reset the grid to the House Plot.
  ■ Strike any extra fixtures you brought over.

❖ Post-Production
  ➢ Show up to Post-Mortem with any/all feedback! It is important for us to learn as a community on how to get better.
Sound for a Straight Play

As the Sound Designer, you will be designing, creating and executing the soundscape of the play. The Sound Designer collaborates with the Director to understand his/her vision for the overall production and how the sound fits in. The sound may be highly realistic (only sounds that would occur in reality), more atmospheric (akin to many movie soundtracks), or a combination of the two. On a conceptual level, it is your job to help suspend the audience’s disbelief and draw them into the world of the show and story.

That being said, this is a very technically-oriented role to fill. This manual provides you with many resources for learning this technology as well as tips for avoiding common mistakes. However, it is very important to do your homework and follow up on these resources. It will save you headaches down the line, and, plus, if you want this position you will probably agree that this stuff is sort of fun. And remember: every mistake takes the audience out of the experience a little.

A little preaching here: When all else fails, use Google. I promise no matter what the question is, someone has asked it before. Even, “What is that hissing noise with x equipment?”

Please enjoy!

Preparation (for meeting with the director)

Read the script fully and note where sounds are listed. They will usually not be denoted as sound cues, but in the stage directions. Ex “a phone rings. A bird calls.” In more ambiguous cases, the sound will be referenced in the dialogue or actions.

Use these notes to begin a list of sound effects you will need to find/create.

Come up with questions for the director as to whether a sound is your job or made on stage. Ex “A door knock.”

1st Meeting with Director

- Review your list with the director and confirm all sounds and their placement.
- Explore more details of the sound. Ex. If a phone is ringing, confirm if it’s a cell phone ring or a landline.
- Discuss any unlisted cues, such as artistic cues or weather cues.
- Add these cues to your list.
- Discuss your own creative ideas with the director based on his/her vision.
- Ask the director if there are any special requests, such as backstage microphones, onstage speakers or cues that have to be recorded by the cast.

Post-meeting

Re-read the script, adding or editing the markings you already have.

Follow-through with any special requests by speaking with the producer about your technical needs.

Finalize your list of cues.
Finding Sound Cues

A lot of sound cues, especially realistic ones, have already been created before for other productions and movies. Below is a list of resources where you can find royalty-free sounds. These artists are offering their work to the community for free, so please give credit where credit is due.

Take your time looking for sounds. Make sure to find the right one for the world and context of the productions. Which search terms you use can affect your results, so be wary. Try different combinations of words and synonyms to get as many options as you can (ex. engine, car, motor, low hum, truck, street etc.). If you can’t find one that’s just right, consider combining multiple sounds or recording your own (discussed later).

🚫 Do all sound design work on a good pair of over-ear headphones or on a good pair of speakers. The internal ones on your computer do not count. The sound is going to be played on large, professional-grade speakers which will project every perfection and imperfection.

You can find sound cues from the following locations:
- freesound.org (create a free account)
- Van Pelt (have sound disk libraries- ask the librarian at the help desk)
- GarageBand (stock sounds for Macs users; a more advanced option)
- Logic, ProTools (professional software a musician may have, also available on computers in the Music Computer Lab- Music Building)
- Youtube

You can find music in the following locations:
- Van Pelt (fourth floor, Eugene Ormandy Music and Media Center)
- iTunes
- Convert Youtube videos to MP3s at www.youtube-mp3.org

🚫 Be wary of sound quality and audio fidelity of youtube videos

Recording Sound Cues

Ask the producer and the production if anyone has a microphone or knows of a friend that does (full list serve is good for this). You are clearly not expected to buy your own microphone, so use the full resources of Penn and its community to your advantage.

Finding microphones for recording cues can be challenging but…
🚫 Use your computer microphone as the absolute last resort.

Programs to use for recording sound cues include:
- Audacity (for PC and Mac)
- GarageBand

🚫 Make sure you record in a quiet space. Background noise will come across on theatre speakers. Be careful of sounds you may no longer notice like traffic, radiators, fridges and florescent lights.

Compiling and Editing

The following programs are essential to designing a show. Become familiar with them as soon as you can. Their main advantage over regular media programs such as iTunes and Windows Media Player, is that you can play multiple tracks at once. So you can keep your background music going as the door ringing over it.
QLab (Mac)
The easiest program to use. If someone in the production is willing to let you borrow his/her Mac for tech week and the run, this is your best option
Download at: http://figure53.com/qlab/download/
Documentation: http://figure53.com/qlab/docs/
In the Penn community, Qlab is the standard for this type of work. It is my favorite as well. Learning how to use “follows” will be very useful. You can effectively layer sounds together on the fly by having them automatically flow into each other. So one tap of the space bar could play a crunch sound and a splat sound simultaneously. It is a good idea to use Qlab to edit in this way because changes can be made later on the fly. If you edit sounds together in a program like Garage Band, it will take longer to make a change which means a lot during tech week.

Other tips
- Learn how to change levels quickly - things will sound different in the theatre.
- Learn how to use pre-wait and post-wait to delay cues and string them together

Multiplay (PC)
http://www.ds-share.com/software/multiplay/

Google for FAQs

Go-Button (iOS)

🚫 Make sure your sound files and project files are all organized and in the same folder. It is a good idea to keep this folder on the desktop. That way if you move the project from one computer to another you can drop it on their desktop and it will be at the same directory. In Qlab you can bundle the workspace in the File menu.

Designers’ Run
Basically you get to sit down and watch the play to make sure everything you have makes sense. Take notes. If you haven't finished designing, it is between now and tech week when you should finish with the play fresh in your mind.
- Make sure your script is updated with your latest cues before Designers’ Run.
- Follow along and make sure all ‘holes’ are filled.
- Write down any more complicated cue timings (anything that might have unforeseeably overlapped).

Load-in and Tech Week
🚫 If you are in a space like Houston confirm that you have all the necessary equipment BEFORE the day of load-in. Confirm that it will dropped off on that Sunday or you will find yourself way behind.
- On load-in day, the sound designer does not have much to do but set up the equipment. Get yourself connected to the sound board with a 1/8th inch to RCA tape, or an 1/8th to quarter inch convertor (balanced). See connector guide for more information.
- Do a sound check by playing some music at the lowest volume on the board and raising it until it sounds comfortable. Then test the volume of each sound cue and make sure none are too loud or too soft.
🚫 When setting up your computer, have the computer volume just below highest point. This makes the amplifier in the board do less work and will decrease the risk of distortion and extra noise. If your software is distorting the sound, try different volume combinations to see what
comes out cleanest. Adjustable parameters are the computer volume, the board volume, the program’s volume, and the individual sound effects volume.

- It is always better to artificially lower volume in Qlab rather than artificially raise it. Even if it means lowering almost everything to compensate for one loud sound.

Write down the settings you used on your laptop and on the soundboard. If you come in the next day and start at a different place all this work will be erased.

- The rest of the week will most likely be spent editing and getting down the timing and levels of cues. Some new cues may be added mid process as well. Be prepared as some theaters such as IGT have no internet to work with on the fly.

**Paper Tech**

This may happen before or during tech week. Paper tech is a meeting between the designers and stage manager to sync up on cues. The stage manager leads and calls the cues during the performances, so they need to know where the cues occur and what they are. Generally cues are given numbers, and it is a good idea to match these numbers to your program such as Qlab. Qlab has a renumbering function under the cues menu to reorder when things go awry. ✅DO NOT use this after you have given the stage manager numbers. Any cues added during tech week will have a decimal point.

**Performances**

During performances either you or a sound board operator with click the space bar and set up the board. If you have a board op, try to get them to come in and watch you run the program during a run. If this is impossible, make sure you leave clear instructions. Qlab has a section for making notes above each cue if this helps.

✅Again make sure the set up parameters are consistent even when you are not there.

**Other Miscellany**

**House music**

- It is often requested for the sound designer to provide music while people are walking in. The director may want music from a certain time period or style, or you can use your creativity to enhance the mood leading up to the show. Try to talk to the director about this before things get tight.

**Common Mistakes**

- Volume inconsistencies across the show
- Make sure everything is pretty equal across the show with small adjustments for effect.

Nobody wants to be shocked by a telephone.

- Noisy recordings
- Tracks that are recorded too loud will crackle and buzz when played of the speakers. When you record make sure the mic is at the lowest possible input setting that picks up sound.

- See Musical manual for more technical descriptions
- On a mac, SHIFT+VOLUME CONTROLS prevents the popping noise. This will save many ears and tempers.

A sound designer for musicals is responsible for sound reinforcement (mic-ing the actors and potentially the band) in addition to the sound design responsibilities listed in the straight-plays section.
Preparation
II. Confirm with the producer how many mics are available, and which types of mics there are. (Ex. lapel, lavaliere, etc.)
In addition to reading the script for sound cue purposes, take note of how many mics the show requires. Note leads that need their own mics and smaller roles that may be able to share mics. Make a draft of a mic assignment chart that includes mic type and which actor(s) will use each mic.

Meeting with Director and Music Director
- Review your mic-ing ideas with the director and music director. Edit accordingly.
- Discuss the need for choral mics/hanging mics/floor mics. These are generally only needed for shows with smaller ensembles, loud bands, or special occasions. They often create more problems (feedback, etc.) than they solve. Use with caution.
- Review the band mic-ing and monitor needs (if any) with the Music Director.
- E-mail mic-ing and monitor needs to the Producer and Tech Director. These usually include:
  o Your microphone order
    □ microphones and receivers
  o Your speaker orders (you will likely want at least two for mic-ing purposes)
  o Your monitor orders (for the band- coordinate with the Music Director to determine these)
  o A sound board

Before Designers Run
For each scene, mark which microphones are on/off and who is using them. This is easiest to do in your script. You may want to ask the producer to copy your script to write this information in- it will save you a lot of erasing later.

Designers Run
- Carefully edit your mic plan through each scene. Pay attention to who is on stage and who is off stage. Pay attention to entrances and exits.
- It is equally important to note when you need to turn OFF a mic as it is to turn it ON.

Planning to test the Mics- Approximately 3-4 weeks before the show
- This is an aspect of sound designing for musicals that isn’t done frequently, but is CRUCIAL. It will make the performance stronger and your job easier.
- Often mics become dysfunctional after repeated (and sometimes improper) use. If you go to the shop and are able to identify specific mic parts that need replacement, Peter will work to replace them before tech week. He will not fix mics that you can’t prove are broken, which is why you need to go in and individually test each mic and mic pack yourself.
- Ask the producer to connect you with Peter so you could ask him if you could come in to test the mics. This testing is not routine in the TAC-e community yet, so be sure to explain your intentions.
- Set a date to test the mics that is after another group has used them but before your performance. You don’t want to get the parts replaced just before another show that might ruin them. Additionally you want to schedule a date where the mics will be in the shop (i.e. not another show’s tech week.)
Allow 3 hours for the testing and plan to bring someone who can help you. (You can split up the time - Ex. Two 1.5-hour testing periods.)

- **NOTE:** By consistently using good practices in caring for the mics across student productions, not as many parts will need to be replaced!

**Testing the Mics at the Shop**

When you arrive at the shop, ask Peter for assistance in gathering the mics that you will be using. Connect the mics one-at-a-time to the soundboard and speaker system in the shop. See below for more detail regarding setting-up the mics.

Suggested testing procedure:

- Have your partner wear the test mic. Set it up as you normally would for a performance, mic tape and all.
- Have your partner stand in the middle of the shop, furthest away from the speakers (and you) as possible.
- Speak and sing into the microphone.
- Note any crackling or other extraneous noises.
  - Could suggest a connection problem.
- Note low signal strength (would suggest problem with receiver/antenna).
- If problem occurs, use control variables to test where problem is. It may be with:
  - XLRs
  - the soundboard itself
  - mic cable & mic head
  - mic pack
  - receivers
  - channel (remember to be checking frequencies for radio interference)
- Show Peter the exact problems and send a follow-up e-mail detailing them.
- Pay attention to all details. Make sure there are clips on the back of every mic so the actors can attach them to costumes.

**Tech Rider**

You should work with your producer to fill out the tech rider. The tech rider will include all equipment you need. Do not leave out a piece of equipment because you assume it is there.

A sample tech rider list could look something like this:

- Mics - for actors
- Receivers
- Shure 58 mics - for the band or backstage
- XLRs - as many as there are mics to connect the receivers to the board
- XLRs - for handhelds/58s
- Sound Board
- Powered Speakers (w/stand)
- Monitor for the Pit
- Monitors for the Cast?
- Connection from board to computer
- Talk-Back or ‘God’ mic
- Power needs
Other Items for Purchase
You will be given a sound budget. You should consider:

- Batteries- For rehearsal and for shows. You should use new batteries for each performance. Duracell is best. Ordering online ahead may save some money.

- Mic Tape

- Condoms (Although this time, condoms are only a sometimes thing.) If the show involves heavy dancing (or just heavy sweating) consider purchasing non-lubricated condoms to protect the mics from sweat. The whole where the mic head cord attaches to the pack is incredibly vulnerable to corrosion, and by the end of a long week may no longer be functional.

It goes without saying that not all of these items will be needed and that every show has different requirements. Also, each theatre space demands different technology. Below is a list of the current spaces in use for musicals at Upenn and their unique qualities.

Theatres on Penn’s Campus

Prince (in Annenberg)
- Has its own sound board, speakers and monitors. They can supply you with microphones and cords as well, but it’s a good idea to request them on the tech rider, anyway, so they pull them out of the closet for you.

Iron Gate Theatre
- Watch out for broken equipment here. Hopefully this has changed since time of writing. You might need to use some control variables to find the problems. Even channels on the board can break.
- Because the stage is so far from the booth, set up the microphone receivers in the wings to ensure the strongest possible signal. There is a stage box on each side of the stage. A stage box is basically one end of a bunch of really long XLRs that run through the walls up to the booth.

Houston and Harrison Roof Top Lounge
- As multi-functional rooms, assume these venues have none of the equipment, including sound board and speakers.

Load-in
Your main priorities for load-in are to
- load the equipment from the shop and Visual Sound,
- connect all the equipment
- test that it all works.

To prepare for set up, make a connection diagram like the one below. This will help you logically lay out each cord, component, and connection to make sure everything is in order.
See below for explanations of how each component works.

**Tech Week**
Tech week for the Sound Designer is mostly troubleshooting and problem-solving. Hopefully this guide will have prepared you so that you have everything you need.

You will also be learning the show intimately. As the person operating the board, it is vital that you know the show down-pat by the time of opening night. You must understand the rhythm of the cues for sound effects and microphone switches. The board can be a complicated place to control, and it takes all week for it to feel natural.

With this in mind, please try to not use a board op as a sound designer for musicals. If a board op is necessary, they must be present for the designers run and several other rehearsals. They must be trained in the same way you were in running the board and sound checks.

**Sound Checks**
The purpose of a sound check is not only to make sure ALL equipment is fully operational, but also to get a base-level for the audio. The best way to be in control of a sound check is to be aware of every link in the chain: from the mic pack itself to the board and all the way to the output and speakers. Your first sound check will be the longest, so overestimate how long it will take.

Warning: Make sure all speakers AND monitors are on before you do a sound check.

**Mic Placement**
Mic placement effects sound quality a lot due to the many acoustical properties of the head. Optimal mic placement I have found is at the tip of the boney part of the cheek bone. There is a pinhole on the mic head which needs to point outward to get a less
muffled sound. **Make sure mic placement is consistent** all of tech week otherwise sound check will sound different each night. Take a picture when you get it perfect the first night so that whoever is putting the mics on will have a point of comparison.

**Beginning the Sound Check**

Start with everything at the lowest possible volume (except for the output on the receivers). Beginning at the gain’s lowest level, turn the gain up on the pack until you are getting a signal on the receiver. If the audio is going into the red, a lot it is spiking and it will sound distorted.

Next, turn the master volume on the sound board up to “U”, and then the trim up to “U” on the appropriate channel. Then adjust the fader (slider on the sound board) on that channel until you like the balance. This is the best way to get clean audio with limited risk of feedback.

Below are the main “ugly” problems that you will encounter. More specific issues deal with the sound quality after you have obtained a clean signal. The sound quality is up to the taste of Sound Designer and Music Director.

**Feedback**

Feedback occurs when a microphone picks up sound from the speakers or monitors, which it then broadcasts again creating a loop. The above method of soundcheck prevents feedback because the mic is picking up as little sound as possible. If the sound coming out of the speakers is too loud this won't matter and feedback risk will increase. Same thing goes for if an actor gets too close to a speaker or monitor. Consider this when planning your setup. You can also test a safe “feedback distance” with an actor who doesn't mind the sound when no one else is around.

Feedback does not occur when two microphones are close to each other. However, when two people are singing in each other’s face, their voices are being doubly amplified and are therefore louder coming through the speakers. This is what might cause feedback, so be aware of it in the blocking and turn each actor down slightly at that moment if you encounter problems.

Feedback is not just the stereotypical extended high or low frequencies. It can occur in short bursts over louder words or notes. This is what to listen for during sound check. It will sound like the sound or space is ringing unnaturally.

**Distortion**

**Clipping**

Another problem to look out for is clipping. Clipping “occurs when the capabilities of an amp are exceeded. The resulting sound is distortion.” So if a mic’s gain is set too low and you have to turn it way up on the board, the sound might distort because the amp is working to hard. This will be a crackling sound,
and the microphone will also be noisy because all the background sounds will also be amplified.

**Transient Inter-modulation Distortion**
If the gain on the mic pack too high, the sound will also be distorted. The mic pacs are a very sensitive type of microphone called a condenser, which can overload under too much pressure. You will notice this type of clipping/distortion during loud transient moments. If the board seems at a reasonable place, turn down the gain on the pac itself as your first step.

**Equalizer**
EQ is also another way to alter sound quality. EQ are the 3 or 4 knobs in the middle of the channel usually marked low, mid and high. Make sure these are set to the middle when you start a sound check. Feel free to play around with this during load-in or mic testing to see how they affect the sound. Using these knobs too heavily will result in an unnatural sound because you will be taking frequencies out of a person’s voice.

**Performances**
During performances, you will be:
- playing the sound effects in Qlab
- muting and un-muting actor’s mics
- adjusting mic volume and relative levels.

**Microphone Set-Up**
- Number the mics, receivers, and board channels with masking tape. Use consistent numbers or names.
- Plug in the power to each receivers and two antennas in the back.
- Connect each receiver to the back of the sound board with XLRs
- Turn on the first receiver and the first microphone.
- Use the receiver and the Shure frequency finder to find a radio frequency with no interference. This means that when the mic is off (or not on that channel) the yellow dots will be gone. When the mic is tuned to the same channel the yellow dots will be full. Pay attention to this as you test all the mics. Some frequencies might affect other mics interfere with each other.
- After the channel is set and tested, power lock and frequency lock the pacs. This prevents the power being switched off or the frequency being changed mid performance by accident.

**A Note on Handing Mics**
As you know, microphones are expensive and sensitive. You should always take extra caution in handling them, and you should lead the production team and cast in taking caution as well. It is very easy for cast members to hastily wrap mic cords after performances or over, **but this must not happen**. Mic cords should be carefully taken together, following the natural bend in the cord. Do not force the cord to bend against its nature as this may damage its connection. Be careful with liquids around microphones, and do not have them sitting in risky locations. Do not have actor’s wearing mics when they do not need them.

Pay particular attention to auxiliary channels. These are how you send sound to the band and cast monitors. You can change the balance in the monitors to be different from what the cast is hearing. So if the music director requests more of the lead vocal in his monitor you can turn up only that auxiliary knob. There is a button below the aux rows that usually says “pre.” When this is pressed, the mix will go to the monitors before it goes to the channel faders. Make sure this is not pressed because this means if you mute a vocalist, they will still be broadcasting through the band and cast monitors.

A good general principle with sound boards is to work from the top to the bottom and from the right to the left. Boards are set up in the order of the signal flow. So you can imagine the sound coming in, hitting the trim, them the aux channels, then the EQ, then pan, and then finally the faders. Knowing this order can clear up some confusion.

As always keep all links in the chain in mind.

**Glossary:** From “Soundcheck” by Tony Moscal

**Clipping:** Occurs when the capabilities of an amp are exceeded. The resulting sound is distortion.

**Distortion:** Any change in audio signal causing the wave form to appear differently at the output than at the input.

**Equalization:** The manipulation of tone by increasing or decreasing frequency ranges through tone controls, filters, or equalizers.

**Fader:** A potentiometer that controls the signal level in a mixer’s channel. Can be rotary or slide control.

**Feedback, Acoustic:** The regeneration of a signal from the output that reenters the input and can cause a squealing sound.

**Gain:** An increase in signal strength or amplitude usually specified in decibels.

**Headroom:** refers to the difference between the nominal operating level and the maximum level at any point in the audio system.

**Input level:** Refers to a device’s acceptable signal input. Rated by maximum level (above which distortion would occur) or nominal (the average level sent to the input for normal operating conditions).

**Jack:** A receptacle for connection of a cable’s plug.

**Level:** The value of a signs relative to a given reference expressed in decibels. Signal strength or amplitude.

**Loudness:** Sound level as perceived by the human ear. The ear will hear different frequencies at different levels.

**Overdrive:** When the signal source exceeds the capability of the device it is driving. Usually, a level at which clipping occurs.

**Transient:** An abrupt increase in signal level.
THE CONNECTORS OF THE AUDIO INDUSTRY

Cable Connector

Mating Panel Connector

1/4" Phone Plug (Unbalanced)

1/4" Panel Jack

XLR Male Microphone Connector (Balanced)

XLR Female Panel Connector

XLR Female Microphone Connector (Balanced)

XLR Male Panel Connector

Dual Banana Plug

Universal Dual Binding Plug

RCA Plug (Phono Plug)

RCA Panel Jack (Phono Jack)

Stereo 1/4" Phone Plug (or T/RSP Plug - Tip, Ring, Sleeve or Unbalanced Quarter)

Stereo 1/4" Jack

Neutrik Speakon Connector

Speakon Panel Jack

Spade Lug

Terminal Strip

Guitar and Bass Connectors

- 1/4" Phone Plug

Microphone Connectors

- XLR Female
- XLR Male
- 1/4" Stereo
- 1/8" Stereo

Patch Connectors

- All

Speaker Connectors

- 1/4" Phone Plug
- Dual Banana
- Speakon
- Spade Lugs
In addition to setting channel and master equalization, another critical point to running sound is setting proper signal levels. This can be accomplished by a technique called unity gain. There are several stages in a mixer where the signal can be amplified: at the input, at the channel, and where the channels are grouped together in the master section. At each of these areas gain must be maximized in order to obtain a good signal to noise ratio and to prevent distortion. We will take each section separately.

In order to set levels, it is necessary to send a signal through each channel being set. This can be accomplished by singing into a microphone in that channel or playing an instrument which is plugged in. If a microphone is used be sure to sing in a stage voice, not a meager "check, check."

At the input of many mixers is a switch or rotary control labeled trim, attenuation, input level, pad, or gain. This control adjusts the level of incoming signal so it is acceptable to the pre-amp. If too much signal enters the mixer, distortion will result. If this occurs, the mixer operator needs to reduce the incoming signal level with the Trim control. If a weak signal enters the mixer, signal should be boosted or else there will be excessive noise mixed with the signal.

Many mixers feature an LED light for this input area to notify the operator when the input signal is correct. If this light is constantly lit, too much signal is overpowering the pre-amp and distortion is present. The light should flicker occasionally on the loudest music peaks. If the mixer does not have an LED light, input level setting must be done by ear. (It can also be accomplished with a volt/ohm meter or by reading the mixer's output meters but this is much more difficult.)

Adding excessive equalization on a channel may also trigger the input LED peak light. If this occurs, the trim control must be reset or equalization should be reduced. Conversely, if the equalizers are greatly reduced, more gain should be added via the trim control to compensate for the drop in signal level.

The control which determines the level or volume for each channel usually does not add gain, but merely reduces the level that is there. This volume control should not be turned up all the way for starters, however, or else there will be no way to make that channel louder. The volume control should be set at a level where the operator can boost or cut volume during the performance. On many mixers this nominal operating area is designated by 0 dB or some graphic element indicating a normal operating level. If the mixer is not labeled as such, turn the volume control halfway up. This will allow boosting or cutting as needed.
GENERAL NOTES:

Communication: As a designer of a TAC-e production, you will be reporting back to the Producer(s) and Technical Director. While you will mainly be communicating with the Director during the whole design process, the Producer(s) and/or Tech Director should be copied on your emails so that they are kept in the loop. The final versions of the T-shirt, Poster, and Program (if applicable) should be sent to the Producer(s), Technical Director, and Director. **Important:** Make sure you read the script so you can bring your own ideas to the table!

Deadlines: The Producer(s) and/or Tech director will be contacting you about your deadlines within a couple of weeks of your first production meeting.

T-SHIRT DESIGN:

Design: While some designers choose to create an image for the front and/or back of the shirt, you may also decide to also use a quote from the play. **Always consult with the Director first** on what he/she may want for the T-shirt design. The Producer(s) will schedule your deadlines, so be sure to talk with your Director well ahead of time. During the preliminary stages, **having three to five options** (i.e., sketches, design ideas) is recommended to show the Director.

Information: The information is usually put on the back of the T-shirt, and it includes the following: Name of TAC-e Group, Title of Production, Writer, Lyricist (if applicable), Director, Music Director (if applicable), Producer(s), Show Dates & Times, Location, and Ticket Prices (optional/if available at this time).

Customink: Use customink.com and upload your design onto a T-shirt. You may choose any style of T-shirt (Gildan Softstyle T-shirt is recommended). Try limiting yourself to **two ink colors**; the more colors you use, the more expensive the T-shirt will cost. When you are finished, try mocking up an order (e.g. 10 Smalls, 8 Mediums, etc.) to gauge how much each T-shirt would cost. The average price per T-shirt for a TAC-e show is normally around $15.

POSTER DESIGN:

Poster Logistics: Posters are typically set to the **Tabloid size** (11x17 inches) with a **Resolution of 300 dpi**. Make sure your final design is saved as a **PDF** in the **CMYK Color Mode** (for Print). Keep in mind that when posters are sent to print, the ink comes out darker on paper. If your design is particularly dark on screen, **brighten** the entire poster a little before sending the final version to print.

Design: **Always consult with the Director first** on what he/she may want for the Poster design. The Producer(s) will schedule your deadlines, so be sure to talk with your
Director well ahead of time. The Director may want to include a play quote into the design. During the preliminary stages, having three to five options (i.e., sketches, design ideas) is recommended to show the Director.

**Information:** The poster must include the Name of TAC-e Group, Title of Production, Writer, Lyricist (if applicable), Director, Music Director (if applicable), Producer(s), Show Dates & Times, Location, Ticket Prices (e.g. $8 at walk, $10 at door), Who Funds the Show (show-dependent, but it is usually PAC and SAC), and “No alcohol permitted at this event”/”Alcohol is prohibited at this event.” If the show is PAC and/or SAC funded, you can find their logos online (SAC: [http://sacfund.net/](http://sacfund.net/), PAC: [http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pac/what.html](http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pac/what.html)).

**Facebook:** Make sure to send the Producer(s) a version of the poster that everyone can use as their Facebook profile pictures. For the best results, change the file to a smaller size (resolution: 96 or 150 dpi) and change the file mode from CMYK (print) to RGB (web) and to a JPEG format.

**Program Cover:** You are responsible for sending the Program Designer and the Producer(s) a graphic to be the cover of the program. You may send a Black & White version of the poster design, or, if your design is not suited to be in Grayscale, simplify the poster design as needed. The person responsible for the programs varies from show to show, so consult your Producer(s) beforehand. Sometimes it will be the graphic designer’s duty to design the program as well. If this is the case, read the section on Program Design.

**PROGRAM DESIGN:**

**Information:** The program should include, not necessarily in this order: a Cover with a design (see Program Cover above), Names & Roles of Cast and Crew, Names & Roles of Board Members, Director’s Note, any other information that the Director wants to include (e.g. Play/Writer History, Synopsis, Musical Score, any explanations, etc.), Bios from Cast and Crew, Parent/Friend/Company Ads, Special Thanks. Check with the Producer(s) and Tech Director if any other information is needed (e.g. special announcements).

**Bios & Deadlines:** Make an announcement during production meetings starting 1-2 weeks before Load-In that bios should be emailed to you. Send reminder emails as the bio deadline approaches. You are in charge of when bios are officially due, as the completed program design should be sent to the TAC-e group board the night of Load-In. The board members will be double-checking the program and sending any final changes that need to be made.

**Special Thanks:** Unless noted otherwise by the Producer(s) and/or Tech Director, the Special Thanks will always include the following: PAC, SAC, TAC-e, current Director of Student Performing Arts and The Platt Performing Arts House (Laurie McCall), Peter Whinnery, Michelle Moller, the current TAC-e Chair, any other staff (e.g. Annenberg
Staff, Houston Hall Staff, etc.), and any other people who helped with the production. Email the production listserv to ask if anyone else needs to be added to this list.

**LOAD-IN:**

*Banner:* Unless the Producer(s) or Tech Director says otherwise, you are responsible for painting an eye-catching banner for walkshifts. Sheets can be taken from Sheraton or the Inn at Penn (though sometimes the PAC Shop will have extras that you can use). All the information on the poster should be included in the banner (see Information section under Poster Design).
So you’ve signed on for publicity manager, huh? It’s a fantastic position that can be as much or as little as you’d like it to be. Make sure you start your new role as publicity manager by talking to your director and producer to establish what your exact and specific needs should be for each show. And though each show is different, there are a number of things that need to happen in any show!

**Budget:** The biggest thing to figure out before you begin any of your publicity manager duties is your budget. Talk to the organization’s respective treasurer to ensure the exact amount of money that you have to spend.

**Before load-in:** While a lot of advertising can be done the week of the show, it is never too early to get started! Tech week is crazy for everyone, so the more you can plan in advance the better.

**Social Media:** Facebook will be your best friend! Get creative and utilize it. Before you create an event, post information on the TAC-e group’s facebook page. Posts range from information about your production, dramaturgical information, pictures from rehearsals, and interviews of production staff members… the bottom line is, if you think people will read it, post it! If you stimulate interest early, people will set the dates aside on their busy Penn calendars. Pick a hashtag for your production and encourage other production members to post. Your biggest job in the beginning of a production is encouraging the other staff members to get excited about spreading the word. Create a selfie competition for the production staff early on in the production! Let your supporters on Facebook know what everyone is up to 😊

**Parent emails:** Parents and family members, organizations and local businesses are some of the best supporters that Front Row has. Use the show’s contact form to collect individual’s parent emails. A google doc is a great way to collect people’s associations and emails that we can use to get in contact with friends and organization liaisons. In addition, take advantage of other TACe groups that can use ads to advertise their shows and upcoming auditions. These ads can be of 3 different sizes, ¼ page, ½ page, and a full page ad. Below is a sample email that could be sent to parents or supporters in hopes of getting advertisements:

Hi there!

My name is YOUR NAME, publicity manager of ______ Theatre Co.’s fall production, SHOW TITLE HERE. At this point in the production process, I’m sure you’re well aware of all the fantastic things going on with our show. Everyone is working extremely hard and having a lot of
fun, but now we need your help! If you are interested in supporting your child and our production, you can buy a parent ad that will be included in our program. Ads featuring your best wishes and congratulations (and even a picture!) can run a quarter page, a half page, or a full page. The pricing is as follows:

- $20 for quarter page advertisement
- $40 for half page advertisement
- $60 for full page advertisement

*(check prices with your producer)*

I am attaching a sample of each type of advertisement. If you choose to purchase one, all ads must be emailed to me by DATE DECIDED BY PRODUCER. Checks can be made payable to Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and can be mailed to the following address:

Treasurer’s Name  
Treasurer’s Street  
City, State Zip

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL. Thank you so much for your time and support! And don't forget to come SHOW TITLE HERE, SHOW DATE HERE right here at UPenn!

Best,  
YOUR NAME & THEATRE GROUP

A similar format can be adopted for Penn affiliated organizations. It is oftentimes best to reach out to the Penn groups the members of the production staff are involved with. It is best to send out a Google spreadsheet and ask production members to fill in the groups they are involved with and the contact information for those groups.

These ads will be put in the show’s program, to be explained below.

**Making the program:** It is the publicity manager’s job to put the program together for the show. This should feature the following information:

- The cover should feature the show’s program.
- The inside cover should feature the show’s relevant information again. It is also likely that you will need to include a director’s note and sometimes a dramaturgical note (generally a half page each, but can vary).
• A page should be devoted to listing the cast by character name and the tech staff by position.
• Bios should be in the center of the program, listed in alphabetical order.
• Ads should follow the bios
• Special thanks: These are thanks that are placed in a program to recognize help from Penn staff, organizations, Visual Sound or location staff, and other students that were not officially involved in the production but helped in some manner.

**Bios:** It’s the publicity manager’s job to collect biographies (bios) for the show’s program. A bio should be a few sentences and take the following form:

**Name** (*Position in show*) is happy to be working as part of TAC-e this semester.

Each member of the production staff is entitled to a bio. They can be as funny or serious as the individual chooses. As publicity manager, read these bios for spelling errors in addition to any edits that must be made in order to make the bio appropriate for people to read (nothing too explicit). Bios should be in a few days before load-in, but most will not be in until load-in at the latest. Send an email to the prod staff a few weeks in advance and as load-in approaches to start collecting these. This process is unfortunately quite difficult, so start early. One approach may be to provide incentives to people who hand them in early/on time. After all, meeting your program deadline is dependent on their submissions…

**Creating the facebook event:** In might be your job to create the facebook event for the show, though you should double check with the group’s secretary and the show producer to make sure you aren’t both creating events. Frequently the event is created about two weeks before opening night.

**Promotional Photos:** While promo photos of the actual production cannot be taken until the week of the show, it is sometimes a good idea to have a photo shoot the week before. If you can coordinate a date and time with the director, costume designer, and make-up designer to take photos (perhaps in different locations around campus like tableaus…) the pictures oftentimes come out really well! Additionally, promo videos either of footage from the show or photomontages are a great way to catch people’s attention on Facebook.

**During tech week:** This is your chance to go crazy! Do some promo photos. Post them to the facebook event. Work with stores on campus to advertise your show (Williams Café is a great resource ;) They’ll make a drink of the week just for you). Create a hashtag that everyone in the production staff can use to tease the show’s arrival. Stage a flash mob! Go above and beyond and do everything you can to make this show a GREAT ONE!

**At the shop:** On load-in day, it’s important that you follow the directions of the producer and stage manager. In addition, there are a few items that you need to ensure are brought to the space. These include staple guns, staples, a white sheet for the banner, and paint for the banner.
Posters and Quarter Sheets: Most of the time, the graphic design of a poster will not be part of your job description. However, you will have to get posters printed for the show. Make sure to do the following:

- Head to Campus Copy, located at 38th and Walnut
- Have the design in PDF form on your email or on a flash drive
- Pull up the image on a computer and print anywhere from 75-100 copies (make sure to check with your producer and treasurer to see what number is necessary and affordable).
- Print these posters in 11 x 17 size, with the cheapest paper possible. These should be in color.
- Ask to print the same poster at 4 to a page. These will function as ‘quarter sheets’ that will be handed out on Locust Walk. Again, make sure to check on the exact number, but 400 is a pretty standard number (100 copies, 4 sheets per page). Sometimes the producer may advise you to print and cut quarter sheets in Platt. It is more work, but free!!!

Posterising: Putting posters up across campus during load-in is an essential job of the Publicity manager and team. Your producer’s will let you know who in the production staff is on your publicity team. During load-in, when the publicity team is released by the stage manager or producer to go poster, split your team up into groups. Give them staple guns, extra staples, and a list of locations on campus where they should poster. I would encourage having half of your team go to the west side (past Hunstman) of campus and the other half the east side.

West side would consist of the following locations, though feel free to add your own places:

- All of the highrises (on every other floor, making sure they are on the NON-house affiliated side of the hall). Pay special attention to Arts House in Harrison, Fresh Ex and the Front Row hall of Harrison, and Rodin’s Theater Floor.
- Gregory
- Commons
- DuBois
- Hillel
- Mayer
- Locust Walk hubs

East side would consist of the following locations:

- Houston
- Van Pelt
- The Quad
- Hill
- Stouffer
- King Court/English House
- Locust Walk hubs
**Painting the Banner:** The sheet that you took for the shop, in addition to the paint, should be used to paint a banner that will be hung on Locust Walk. Frequently, the graphic designer will help you design and paint the banner. Fold the sheet in half hamburger style, and use the same information on the show poster (show, author, director, producer, date and time, location, ticket prices, times). Please remember to include “SAC FUNDED” and “PAC.” Then, pass this banner along to the producer so they can coordinate with the first walk shift individual.

**Additional Advertising Ideas:** Some other forms of advertising can range from coffee cup sleeves to banners to display cases! Don’t be afraid to pitch new ideas to your producer.
Hello, Dramaturgs! Here you will find what I hope to be a useful guide for all TAC-e dramaturgs.

**What is a dramaturg?**

A dramaturg (there’s no E at the end, even if Microsoft Word tells you there is) provides relevant and useful historical and production background to the actors, director, artistic/design team and the audience. For new play development, dramaturgs are also key to the process of helping the playwright edit his or her work. As the dramaturg on a typical TAC-e production is not working on new play development, I will only spend a brief period of time on that area of dramaturgy.

**How does one do dramaturgy?**

The first thing you need is: **THE SCRIPT**.

Once you have the script, you should comb the script for the following areas:

- terms or references you or others may be unfamiliar with
- words in another language that are not translated in the script, or in old English, etc.
- location names in specific countries or states, etc., that may be unfamiliar
- clues to socioeconomic background (work, finances, living conditions, etc.)
- clues to the social condition of various characters (For example, are there gay characters in this play? Is that acceptable in the society of this character?)
- time period, place
- general areas of potential research; things that without further research would be unclear, things that you as the dramaturg are interested in finding out about

After marking your script up, the next step is to meet with the **DIRECTOR**.

Find out what the director’s needs are. Ask him or her to develop a list of questions or uncertainties about the play, which may or may not ultimately overlap with your own (but you should research both your questions and the director’s). Share your list with the director as well so he or she knows what you are already planning on researching. Some directors will have a great sense of the time period and location, etc., of the play, and others will have very little knowledge. Together, you should be able to develop a list of useful research topics.
Additionally, you should always plan to research the production history of the script, a bit about the playwright, how it has changed it various productions, etc. The research on this does not have to be extremely extensive, based on the director’s needs, but you should find some basic information on these areas, as it can shed light on various pieces of the script that may be very helpful to the director or others on the artistic team.

**OKAY, I KNOW WHAT I AM RESEARCHING. NOW WHAT?**

Now is the time to do research! Develop a timeline with the director to plan on giving a presentation to the actors. This should be relatively early in the process – not in the first week, but in the first few weeks of rehearsal ideally. The cast should not be totally unfamiliar with the script, but it’s useful if it’s early on in their character development.

Research is not too different from academic research, except that it’s way more fun. It’s very useful that you go to Penn, because Penn has an extraordinary amount of research. Use e-resources on the library website, type the different research areas into the Van Pelt search for books, and take out a ton of books from the library; at least ten, most likely. You do not need to read all of these books in their entirety, but go through and corner pages, skim, photocopy some relevant chapters, underline key pieces of information. Seriously – you do NOT need to read these books in their entirety, but you should skim through lots of different sources so you can verify your research and find different accounts of events. Personal accounts and primary resources can be particularly useful, but make sure you also have some historical and secondary resources.

If you have any time to go to New York, the Lincoln Center Library is INCREDIBLY useful for any and all theatre research. Also, The Drama Book Shoppe may have rare theatre history books and biographies you may find useful (and generally it’s a fantastic store).

**GREAT, I HAVE ALL THIS AWESOME RESEARCH. NOW WHAT?**

Present it!

First, you will go into rehearsal with the cast and present it to them. If there is information that may be relevant to designers and the general production staff, check with the producer and director and see if you can should send different materials or pieces of research to different designers, and if so what would be the best way to communicate with them (you may want to meet after a production meeting, or email the costume designer with a really cool image of a 1920s dress you found that may inspire them, etc.).

You may present it as a powerpoint to the actors if that’s the format you like. Encourage them to take notes. Then make sure you field questions. Collect these questions and then conduct some more research to answer these questions for the actors and director. Plan about an hour or so for
dramaturgy, depending on the amount of research you have compiled. You may want to share images, or specific quotes from your research with the cast; anything you think would be helpful to their character development and generally interesting. Depending on the schedule for rehearsals, either plan to come in a second time in the rehearsal process with the answers to their questions or respond via email to their questions. Check in with the director and stage manager to see what will work best with their rehearsal timeline. Continue to be in touch with the director to see if there is any new research throughout the process that would be helpful for him and her.

**OKAY, THAT’S ALL DONE. NOW WHAT?**

The final group of people who will benefit from dramaturgical research: the audience. Depending on how much historical research you have compiled, and how relevant the information would be for the audience, you will probably need a dramaturg note in the program. This may be a half or a whole page, or for a Shakespeare or similar era play it may include a plot summary if the plot is not entirely clear from watching it. Again, check in with the director and program designer to see how long the dramaturg note will be, but basically include anything you think would be interesting, relevant, and might shed light on parts of the play to really enhance their meaning for an audience member given the time period and location of the play.

**WHAT ABOUT NEW PLAYS?**

If you are the dramaturg for a new play, congrats, cause that is an INCREDIBLY fun job. Seriously. In addition to all the other designers/director/actors etc., you are a key assistant to the playwright. You will help him or her edit his or her play. The important thing to keep in mind, always, is that you are not rewriting your own play, you are helping the playwright write the play that he or she is trying to write. So for example, it’s not about if you don’t like how the play ends, but if how the play ends is consistent with what the playwright is trying to accomplish and is consistent with the characters and the world of the play the playwright has set up. In addition to all of the other background and historical research that the playwright, director, and actors will find useful, you may help keep track of the changes in the script, help advise the playwright on script changes, and generally be there to provide feedback on rewrites. It will always ultimately be up to the playwright if he or she makes script changes, but you should provide the best advice you possibly can. And often, the best advice is in the form of asking the playwright questions: What are the characters trying to accomplish in this scene? Do they achieve more or less than you want them to? What are you as a playwright trying to accomplish with this character choice? Do not ask them leading questions: “Is that really the right ending?” is probably not useful, but “What are you trying to accomplish by the ending? Do you want this character to change or not by the ending?” etc., are the best kinds of open but specific questions, so the playwright can make discoveries about his or her play that neither of you had anticipated before.
And always – have fun! Being the dramaturg is an incredibly awesome job. It’s basically the only really fun parts of being a student; researching things you are genuinely interested in, getting to practically help others by sharing your research, and generally being on an intellectual and artistic hunt for new and interesting information. So, don’t forget to have fun!
The Theatre Arts Council Handbook was originally compiled by Theatre Arts Council Chair, Kelly-Ann Corrigan, C’14 during the 2013-2014 academic year. Original authors and contributors are credited though revisions by others are likely to occur (and are expected) over the course of several seasons.