

## **Welcome**

Scott Adams, Chair of the Theatre Arts Department at Sierra College welcomed the group. After introductions and offering an overview of what would be shared and discussed, Scott reviewed the role of the Technical Theatre Advisory Committee for Sierra College and Folsom Lake College.

## **Sierra College Updates**

Scott then shared updates on Sierra College enrollment, including a benchmark study that showed spring enrollments down 12% from this time last year and down 27% as compared to this time in 2018. As a result, the department has had to cut class offerings, change some modalities options to online, and limit the number of sections to avoid canceling classes after they have been posted. The Theatre Department was one of the few programs on campus to be given the opportunity to teach all of the technical and performance classes on ground. Scott also mentioned that coming back from being online for two and half semesters, brought an enthusiastic, energetic, and talented crop of new students, which is exciting for the future.

Scott next reported on how the first semester of using the newly reconfigured multi-use space in classroom T-2 went for the fall. The space was used for both lecture and performance classes, but has capabilities such as LED lighting instruments, hung speakers for sound, a sprung floor, black curtains surrounding the space, a mirror, and smart room capabilities. Scott shared that the room will be used to expand the production season in the spring, particularly with the added new class – one act workshops that will produce student directed one-act plays, which has good numbers for enrollment already for the spring. The space can also be utilized for a lighting lab to support the Stage lighting class.

Scott next mentioned the department's intention to increase units and hours for the Production Crew class. Debra Hammond reported some of the reasons behind this choice and shared thoughts on our approach to adjusting the class moving forward, such as in addition to training students on how to do their assigned crew positions for the production, to cover one area (e.g. costumes, props, sound, lighting, deck crew, etc.) in depth for all students from the beginning to the end of the semester. She also mentioned an inequity for the crew class only being able to receive 2 units instead of the 3 units that the rehearsal cast receives. This of course stems from the number of hours spent.

Scott added on, stating an issue that had been arising for students who take on the role of Assistant Stage Managing. Those positions require students to be in rehearsals the same number of hours as the cast, but they are still only earning 2 units. Christian Johnson from Broadway Sacramento asked to clarify if students were being included in

the build of the show, for example, at least working with the designer to enter the cues into the sound program. Debra replied that Sierra was doing this to an extent, but not completely. Christian followed up by stating the value of this exchange. Debra further explained that students are included on changes that occur during technical rehearsals and she brought in one of the attending students, Charlie Adams. Charlie responded that the lighting designer/instructor included the students in the conversation and training if and when any program changes were happening for the fall show. Stephen Jones from Sac State Theatre and Dance jumped into the conversation stating he was curious about the issue of hours for the crew class. He is considering making lab hours mandatory for crew members to take part in, for example, the lighting hanging, which would be considered part of the build of the show and not just the running of the show. Debra asked Stephen if they do the focus and hang in their lighting class, because that's what Sierra does. Stephen responded that lighting students do some of the hanging and focusing of lights, but that the lion share of the work falls back onto the staff, especially when students miss lab hours, which seems to occur a lot.

There was a lengthy exchange among the group initiated by David Harris' inquiry about the advantages or lack thereof and requirements of earning an ADT. Christina Overmiller explained the benefits of earning the mandatory 60 units including general education providing incentives to transfer to a 4-year institution. She clarified for the group that some institutions requirements do not always match what the two year degree school offers the students.

Scott then asked Thor Tivol to report what Sierra received through CTE grants. This list included 12 source color four retrofits. We also received costume design software for our costume construction class that Debra stated would help for pattern drafting and for production designs moving forward. Next Thor reported about an exciting new Creative Connors push-stick mini, which allows for moveable staging options that will be brand new for the Sierra program. Thor then said Sierra has ordered 3 small Cannon cameras and wireless mics and green screen kits to begin experimenting with remote kits, should the need arise. Then, Sierra also received through the CARES funding some video equipment with the ability to livestream with a switcher of multiple camera set-up. Lastly, Thor reported that the division approved funding for a new Orchestra shell and updated risers.

### **Folsom Lake College Updates**

Ian Wallace reported that FLC also was mostly all on-ground for class offerings this fall, including their Stagecraft class which was in person for the first time in a year and a half.

Ian next discussed their fall production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He said given the uncertainty of the environment going into the semester, that they presented it as live cinema that included three roaming cameras that could be streamed at home and edited live, but was also presented in front of a small in-person audience. Ian shared a quick trailer of that production with the group on his screen. As a follow-up, Ian mentioned it was the largest student crew they have ever had, which was mostly due to the video equipment required for this style. Lastly, Ian announced their spring production would be the musical – *Rent*, which will be an entirely live and in-person option only. The lighting and costume construction classes will be back on-ground in the spring at Folsom Lake College.

### **Further Questions about Covid masking protocols**

Thor asked Ian how FLC handled masks in the fall. Ian responded that all people wore masks during rehearsals, but the actors did not wear masks during performances. Everyone else other than the actors did wear masks during performances. Ian said everyone involved with the production had to be vaccinated, and the audience had to show proof of vaccination as well. He said the protocols within the Los Rios District currently varies from campus to campus. Debra chimed in to share what Sierra College did for their fall show, which included being required to be in masks at all times. Debra said Sierra did receive approval to use clear masks that were fabricated to lay more securely against the faces of actors, with the understanding that actors would have to be tested daily. David Harris asked the industry advisors present about the industry standards they were following currently to abide by Covid-19 protocols. Ed Lee from Capital Stage responded to David's question with regards to how the technical staff have been operating. He said they are required to wear masks all the time during rehearsals and performances. Their crew must be fully vaccinated and tested twice a week, specifically Thursdays and Sundays. Ed added that on top of that everyone who enters their building must have completed a health screening form confirming no symptoms or history of contact with Covid cases. Carols chimed in on behalf of Capital Stage adding that only actors were permitted to go without masks during performances, as long as they are 6 feet away from audience members at all times. David Harris clarified if the 6 feet rule for actors was set by Actors' Equity, and Carlos confirmed that. Christian Johnson with Broadway Sacramento joined the discussion sharing information about the opening of the Safe Credit Union Performing Arts Center formerly the Sacramento Community Center with their first show of *Hamilton*. Christian described the protocols, which included all stagehands must be vaccinated. No one was allowed backstage without being vaccinated. Stagehands all wear masks while being on the property. The performers were the only ones without a mask during the performances only. The production of *Hamilton* also tested every three days, according to Christian. The next productions coming in via tour have very similar procedures according to Actor's Equity policy. Lastly, Christian added that their audiences were required to have a negative test or show proof of vaccination at the door. Debra asked

Ian to clarify about their audience protocols, and Ian said they had to be vaccinated, except those under 12, so just testing wasn't enough to get in the door over the fall. Ed Lee said for Capital Stage, they operated the same and additionally per Actor's Equity guidelines, they had to designate a Covid safety manager at all performances. So in effect, if anyone was not adhering to the guidelines, they would have to report to this manager. Steve Jones echoed they were also allowing actors to go onstage without masks with the same guidelines as had been shared earlier by others.

Scott asked the group how the group had observed technical students, teachers and staff were fairing with online learning modality versus on ground learning. Rob Johnson responded that they had just proposed offering the introduction to entertainment industry and media production classes that are very lecture heavy to be taught more consistently online. But Rob iterated that they're working very hard to get all of the technical lab classes fully on ground, although some of them in commercial music and video event production are still currently taught as hybrids.

Scott asked the industry advisors if they were seeing any new trends that would help us guide our students differently than last year. Ed Lee said there was only so much that could be taught digitally without being in person. He said it's easy to teach someone how to do editing software and Q lab over Zoom, but he can only set up so many cameras and microphones to get them to hear what he's doing. It makes imperative tasks like balancing EQ onsite impossible under the current state of things. Christian added that technical employees are still hard to come by during the pandemic. They find work out-of-state any way they can. So, this is affecting the number of hireable people in the technical industry right now. David Harris gleaned from Christian's comments that this is a good time for us to be sending our graduated students out, as long as they are vaccinated and ready to work. Finishing up that conversation, Scott asked folks to define what "I.A." meant for the student present, since several folks were using that acronym. Christian said he was referring to the local 50 Chapter of IATSE (International Alliance of Technical Stage Employees), and that graduates could call them and become a member to receive "calls" for paid local gig events.

Toward the last part of the agenda, Scott opened the floor of discussion for interaction between students and professional advisors present. Nick from Folsom Lake College spoke first and commented to Debra that he really liked her idea with the Production Crew class mentioned earlier of going in depth on a particular area each semester. Nick said he's "a lighting guy" who designs with schools and local theatre companies for the past four years, and he said he never really felt like he had the full in depth look at the entire job. Morgan Crenshaw, a student from Sierra College expressed that she agreed that adding units to the Production Crew class would be a really good idea.

After Morgan expressed her interest moving forward in lighting and sound, Scott asked Steve Jones if Sac State had a class in design, and he replied that they do have an upper division course in lighting and set design, but that it was being revamped into a lower division scenography course. They also will be adding an upper division advanced scenography class. Steve said he was enjoying hearing about our programs, and felt the community college courses will be feeding nicely into where they are tailoring their technical classes. Their program is working toward having students design for their mainstage productions instead of faculty or staff. They will be mentored, but will be out there. Morgan asked Steve Jones for more information on the workshops he mentioned earlier. Steve said they would be on Vectorworks, and that they are open to anyone. They plan to invite manufacturers to do some demos on lighting. Steve briefly talked about wanting to start a Northern California Chapter of USITT, and he and Thor said they would like to talk about coordinating this effort.

Christina Overmiller spoke for a minute introducing herself and her role as the K-12 Pathway Coordinator, who helps facilitate alignment between the K-12 and Community College partners to help find students livable wages in their prospective industry.

### **Next Meeting**

Folsom Lake College will host the spring meeting, which is usually held in late April or early May. We will wait for confirmation of date and time from Ian Wallace.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned after 2 hours and nine minutes.