

Producing Mamet at WPI's Little Theatre

A Major Qualifying Project Report:

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Abstract

Effective leadership, communication, and organization in any theatre production is vital. The Producer appoints all production positions and guides the crew throughout preparations for the show. My three years of theatre involvement at WPI provided me with the responsibility, experience, and interest in fulfilling the duties of Producer. This portfolio documents the challenges and successes of M.W. Repertory's C-term showing of *Speed the Plow* and includes recommendations for future Producers.

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Executive Summary

The winter of my junior year was unbelievable. As of a few short months ago, I had no MQP project, no advisor, no forms, and I had no idea. Today I am only days away from opening night of the production. So how did this whole project come about? How did I become the producer for M.W. Repertory's C-Term show?

Very Carefully.

M.W. Rep. selects its C-term productions in the following way. A Director-Producer team presents a brief play synopsis at an open selection meeting at the end of B-term. Along with the summary, the cost of scripts and royalties are submitted. The people attending the meeting vote on each show, and the winning piece becomes the C-term production. Because this meeting hadn't happened, I did not yet know what the production was or who its Director would be.

The first week back from A-term break, I began talking to Nick Bebel (a potential Director) about the C-term show. I became very interested in getting involved. Throughout the next week I met with Nick as well as Dominic DiGiovanni, EJ Massa, and Jamo Hanlan (the remaining potential Directors) and became the Producer for each of their shows. At this point I was virtually guaranteed the position of Producer, and began thinking about turning the project into my MQP. As a double major (Industrial Engineering and HU&A), I have to do two MQPs, and avoiding having to do both simultaneously was a very attractive option. The next steps were to find an advisor (even though it was over a week into B-term), register the unit of course-work in a manner that avoided overloading, and pass my forms in very quickly. The end result was that I

retroactively started my MQP, which was registered as 1/3 B06, 1/2 C07, and 1/6 A07, as producer of M.W. Repertory's C06 show.

In WPI Theatre, the Producer has a lot of pressure and responsibility riding on her shoulders. Every position on a production crew has a fallback. If someone fails to do his job, there needs to be someone else there to take over and make sure it gets done before the show. That fallback, for every person on the crew, is the Producer. The Producer is ultimately responsible for all technical and logistical aspects of a production. For example: the Producer must make sure that the lights are hung, the space is reserved, the set is built, and, to put it crassly, that there are "asses in the seats" (*Speed the Plow*, Gould, page 53). The Producer makes sure all of these tasks are accomplished by delegating work to other people, but when things go awry, it is her job to remedy the situation.

As Producer, I planned on being very clear. I wanted my crew to fully understand my wants, needs, and expectations of them. I planned on having an extensive calendar that showed everyone's deadlines and how these affect one-another. I wanted things to get done on time, and I wanted people to be honest with me if they were having trouble so I could find a way to help them. I also aimed to avoid a huge crunch in tech week. Anything that could be done in advance would be. The last thing we needed was the entire cast and crew going crazy at once and getting unnecessarily frustrated. But what Producer doesn't want those things? I knew that my success with this production was going to be much less influenced by what I do than how I go about doing it.

As soon as the Registrar's Office had my forms, I began filling my production list. This was surprisingly easy considering I didn't even know what the show was yet. I did, however, get the impression that that no one had tried to fill slots quite so early. It was

only two weeks into B-term, everyone was busy with the current production, *Our Town*, and no one was ready to think about C-term yet. I looked at this as an advantage.

There were two shows happening in C-term (a Masque production and an M.W. Rep. production), neither of which was announced at the time. Working with two shows at once, especially in the same space, can be very difficult. To make things even more complicated, the two organizations have many overlapping members. As soon as the two production titles are announced, stiff competition opens up between the Director-Producer teams to secure strong casts and trustworthy crews. There is also a frantic rush of members who want to be involved with only one show or the other. Most of the time, both casts and crews end up speckled with their fair share of all-star, competent, overlapping, and inexperienced people.

Working around a second show created additional demands on my vision of a perfect production crew. First, I wanted to keep the core list small. Theatre can sometimes have too many production positions for its needs. Each job can be split up with minute detail and divided up among various people. This was probably the last thing I wanted. I didn't want to have to micro-manage 40 different people. It is much easier to communicate with a smaller group.

Micro-managing is a whole other issue. I did not want to have to micro-manage people. In an ideal world, that is not what the Producer should be doing. I wanted to fill my crew with people I knew and trusted to do their work. My thinking here was that if I trust people, I won't be compelled to do everybody else's work myself; this would potentially happen because I am a die-hard perfectionist and I have a hard time giving irresponsible people responsibility. I need to know that the progress I am being told about

has actually been made. This is why I needed a trustworthy production team; especially for my MQP degree requirement.

Back to my “vision of a perfect production crew.” In my experience, the more important the job you give someone, the more seriously he will take it. If someone is given a seemingly “unimportant” job, it is easy for him to feel like his completion of it (or lack-there-of) would go unnoticed. I hoped for a crew that would feel dedicated to the show that I was working on. I wanted to give people enough work to do that they don’t feel obligated to take positions in both shows. On the contrary, and in favor of the Masque show, I did not want to occupy all of the “all-star” theatre people and leave them “sloppy seconds.” (Not to say that there aren’t enough “all-stars” to go around, or that I was cool enough to “occupy” them all; but it was just the principle of the thing.) In my search for an intimate yet dedicated crew, I wanted to combine some of the standard positions.

Originally I thought about merging the following:

ASM with Run Crew Chief,
Tech Director with Master Electrician,
Lighting Designer with Light Board Operator,
Sound designer with Sound-board Operator,
Scenic Designer with Master Carpenter,
Props with Costumes,
and Photographer with... Something.

Then, after thinking about it a little more, doing some research, and talking with past producers, I realized that although logical from an outside perspective, combining

some of those things creates either a major conflict of interest, or a logistical meltdown in our space.

For instance, the notion of the ASM being the Run Crew Chief: this sounds fine. This is how things are done in many other theatres, but remains completely impossible for us to do here. The ASM needs to be on headset in the green room. The Run Crew Chief needs to be near the stage making sure props and set pieces are properly placed. Clearly not compatible.

Next was the Tech Director also being the Master Electrician: another problematic pairing. Originally I looked at the position of Tech Director, and it seemed kind of silly. The Master Electrician has to be in the space anyway, why not just merge the two positions? Well, the answer to that one is simple. The position of Tech Director is vital because he is charged with enforcing the legal, safety, and the other rules of the space. The Master Electrician has the important job of preparing technical equipment and may want to break those rules to save time or effort. This pairing would never be appropriate.

The following merges were not so bad: the Lighting and Sound designers being their own respective Board Operators. Some would argue that this is a conflict of interest, however I would disagree. If the case were that the Stage Manager position did not exist, conflicts could arise. The Board Operator, thinking as the Designer, could try to place cues to accentuate his own style or skills. If the cues are not placed where and how they fit into the plot, this could distract viewers' attention from the performance. With the Stage Manager in place and calling cues, this shouldn't be an issue. Benefits of the combination are that the designers would immediately know if there is a problem with the equipment and know how to use/fix it if push comes to shove.

The third poor combination is the Scenic Designer also being the Master Carpenter. This is a major “no-no” in the world of theatre. It is too easy for the MC to compromise safety, budget, or feasibility in order to force the construction of the amazing set he designed. It is also common for a Scenic Designer in this position to invent a set that is too “inside the box.” The Designer would already be thinking about how it would be built and back off from difficulty.

Next comes the grouping of Costumes and Props. I still think that this is a great idea. There are a lot of areas where the line between costume and prop gets fuzzy. Why not just have one person do both? Enough said. If the workload were unbearable, a Co-Manager, Assistant-Manager, or Props and Costumes Crew could be found. The important factor here is that one party is responsible for both jobs.

Finally, we bring ourselves to the Photographer. This seems like a pretty straightforward position; however the Photographer needs to know how to work with theatre lighting, the goals and style of the set, and the Director’s needs. Although complicated, the position does not run into any conflicts, so almost any position could double up with this. The photographer could also be someone who has not previously worked with theatre, as long as he is experienced with the other elements of photography.

So to summarize, I was definitely looking to fill the following positions for my production staff:

Stage Manager,
Assistant Stage Manager,
Run Crew Chief,
Costumes/Props Manager,

Tech Director,
Master Electrician,
Lighting Designer/Board Op,
Sound Designer/Board Op,
House Manager,
Publicity Manager,
Photographer,
and Master Carpenter.

In addition, I was prepared to find a Scenic Designer and a Projection Designer/Opp in case they were necessary based on the show and director selection.

The MW Repertory voting meeting took place the Wednesday before winter break. At that meeting only one director was in attendance. It was decided after 30 minutes that Jamo Hanlan was the C06 Director, I was the Producer, we were doing a play by David Mamet, and we had a week to decide on a script. After a few days, Jamo chose Mamet's *Speed the Plow*.

In conclusion, I had an MQP project, I had an advisor, and I was about to open a great production in WPI's Little Theatre. That was February, 2007.

Producing for Academic Theatre

A Producer for the theatre is typically defined in the following way. A Producer is the person responsible for the financial and administrative aspects of a stage production. He acts as the general supervision of a production and is responsible chiefly for raising money and employing the technicians and artists required to stage a play. Although this is true, a producer in WPI's Little Theatre is much, much more.

As a primary task, the producer must find and oversee crewmembers to create the non-actor pieces of the production. In my opinion, there are two different types of crew positions; internal and external. Internal positions cater to the theatre company. External positions cater to the audience. Both types are essential in a successful production.

External positions focus on how the audience thinks, feels, and watches the show. The lighting, sound, house, prop, costume, publicity, and set designers, fall under this category along with the director. It is their job to get the audience in the space and enjoying the performance to its full potential. Sensory pieces are used to adjust the viewer's attitude and mood to reflect what is happening on-stage.

Internal positions are all about building, hanging, and organizing. The tech director, house manager, stage manager, and their respective crews are focused on internal affairs with the producer. These positions make sure that the day-to-day in the space runs as smoothly, safely, and efficiently as possible, while supporting the needs of the external positions.

Here at WPI, the producer has additional tasks outside of filling and overseeing crew positions. The producer must act as the production's liaison to the outside world. He must exercise good judgment when working with school administration in the interests of

publicity, safety, and the organizations he represents. For example, because many needed spaces are shared with other campus organizations, room reservations must be made for all meetings and rehearsals. Even when reservations are made, mistakes and confusion can sometimes arise. In these situations, having a good attitude and a respectful relationship with other organizations is vital for a smooth fix.

It is the producer's responsibility to find knowledgeable mentors for the assistance of inexperienced crewmembers. Not only is having a mentor good for learning theatre tips and tricks, but it is nice to have someone to help you build confidence and guide you on your way. It is also important in helping the crew balance theatre with schoolwork and life in a way that is productive and healthy for students. WPI theatre, although tense at times, is a wonderful and educational experience, and it is important to help members reach their full potential.

The producer must always be ready with new and exciting ideas. In academic theatre, there is always room for suggestions. Most people working on shows in this setting have limited experience with what they are doing. Helping the crew come up with new and innovative ideas to execute for the production is great.

Molding the raw materials needed for a successful production into shape is an experience unlike any other. Watching personal labors come to life in the form of a performance is incredible. Producers in WPI's Little Theatre have an important, complicated, and very rewarding position.

The Top 10 Things Any Producer Must Do or Have

Listed

- 1) Crew
- 2) Communication
- 3) Contact List
- 4) Expectations
- 5) Realistic Deadlines
- 6) “Fudge Factor”
- 7) Clear Reporting Order
- 8) Calendar
- 9) Never Make Assumptions
- 10) Great Attitude

Descriptions

1) Crew

What is a Producer without her crew? Useless. Finding a dedicated crew for your show is probably the most important piece of being the Producer. Without a staff, the Producer IS the staff.

2) Communication

Communication is essential for any project. In order for a large group to stay on task without hindering the work of its own members, a special level of communication is needed. The Producer must be sure that each person on the crew is on the same page with her.

Holding regular meetings with the key members of the crew is very important. Simply getting together weekly for a question and answer session is not enough. A meeting must be structured and have clear objectives in order to be short and successful.

Create a meeting agenda 3 days before the meeting and send it to everyone who will be in attendance. Include a list of discussion topics, and what attendees are expected to bring to the meeting. This ensures that people have an idea for the length of the meeting and are prepared.

Allowing crew members to add to the agenda up until 24 hours before the meeting is a great idea. With WPI's short terms and production preparation timeframes, it is optimal to take care of all issues as soon as possible.

Waiting even a week can set multiple people back in what they have to do.

An agenda from *Speed the Plow* can be found in the appendix as an example.

This brings us to the meeting. Make sure to find an appropriate space to have it. I feel that using visual aids is helpful for clarification and organization. Because of this, I made sure that every room scheduled for a production meeting had a computer projector. This allowed me to put the agenda or handouts on the overhead for everyone to see and verify instead of handing something around.

Once in your meeting, stay on-track by following the revised agenda. This will help you remember everything that you and the crew members need to go over. Take notes on important announcements and discussion points and e-mail them out at the conclusion of the meeting. This is helpful for people who missed part of the meeting or did not take notes. Everyone will leave the meeting with the right information. An example of meeting minutes from *Speed the Plow* can be found in the appendix.

Beyond “all-hands” meetings, regular communication with individual crewmembers is essential. Daily or benchmark-based updates are important to make sure things are running smoothly.

Using clear and frequent communication will prevent both confusion and surprises in your show preparation.

3) Contact List

Having a contact list for everyone involved with your show is essential. You need to be able to contact your staff outside of scheduled

meetings and rehearsal. Each production position should be listed with the person's name, e-mail address, and cell phone number. A hard-copy for the list should be given to everybody working on the show. In addition, a web or electronic version should be accessible for convenience. This allows crew members to ask each other questions directly instead of having to ask you. *Speed the Plow's* contact list can be found in the appendix.

4) Expectations

Clear and realistic expectations are very important. If the Producer and staff understand each other's needs, things will run more smoothly. All expectations should be discussed and clearly written. Be clear that when expectations from either side are not met, actions will be taken.

5) Realistic Deadlines

Many positions in the crew of a theatre production overlap or rely on one another. When making deadlines, work backwards. For example, think about how long it will take to hang the lights before telling the lighting designer how long he has to make the plot. The lighting designer's due date must give the master electrician enough time to hang.

Let crew members suggest their own due dates. Instead of defining for them that "This is how long you will need," ask them. Chances are that your workers have a better prediction than you do because they have either

done it before or have insight into specific design plans. Reaching an agreement on a reasonable deadline will make everyone happier.

6) “Fudge Factor”

Always add in a “fudge factor!!” It is much better to get things done early than to be crunched for time at the last minute. Make sure to schedule in a surplus of work-time for everyone with a buffer between related jobs. This way if something unfavorable happens, the delay can be stopped within that single process and not negatively affect anything else.

If a plan like this is followed, the production staff will be much more happy come show week. Nobody will be panicked, rushed, or sleep deprived. Eliminating these emotions is a major step in creating great crew chemistry.

7) Clear Reporting Order

It is helpful to clearly define the crew’s reporting order. Different Producers may structure and coordinate things differently, so don’t leave any room for assumptions. Make a list of who each position is responsible to and for and hand it out to everyone. This avoids power struggles within the crew and ensures that the correct people are contacted for questions and permission. Each production also has its own personality and needs, so structure can vary. Provided in this report are the crew hierarchies that I used for *Speed the Plow*. They can be found in the appendix.

8) Calendar

Create one combined calendar for everyone on your production staff. This not only makes the Producer's life easier, but it is good for everyone else as well. With every crewmember's deadlines in the same place, it is easier to see why the deadlines need to be met. The added and important weight on getting work done makes the crew members more accountable to the Producer as well as each other. The final calendar from *Speed the Plow* can be found in the appendix.

9) Never Make Assumptions

Many things that go on in the theatre have been passed down from production to production over the years. When it comes to safety, legal, and other external regulations, make sure to check with your advisor or the proper authority. Never just assume that the previous show did exactly what you need to do. Making assumptions can also limit you from thinking "outside the box" and coming up with new phenomenal ideas.

10) Great Attitude

Have a great attitude. Enough said. In your time as Producer, there will be both fun and stressful times. Keeping calm and genuine in tough situations will undoubtedly be the best for everyone involved.

Play List

Author	Title
Anderson, Erica M.	<i>Floral Arrangements</i>
Aristophanes	<i>Lysistrata</i>
Auburn, David	<i>Proof</i>
Barrie, Sir James	<i>Peter Pan</i>
Carley, Ryan	<i>Unauthorized Transactions</i>
Ciaraldi, Michael J.	<i>Hunted</i> <i>Red Line</i>
Cruz, Nilo	<i>Anna in the Tropics</i>
Darensbourg, Catherine	<i>Attic</i> <i>Passing</i> <i>Daddy's Girl</i>
Durang, Christopher	<i>Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You</i>
Euripides	<i>Medea</i>
Feller, Samuel Frank	<i>Living with Them</i>
Fierstein, Harvey	<i>On Tidy Endings</i>
Gilbreath, Dan	<i>Intent</i>
Given, Jacob	<i>Empty Bed Frame</i>
Guare, John	<i>Marco Polo Sings a Solo</i>
Harrower, Shannon (Haz)	<i>Raccoon a la Mode</i> <i>The Princess and the Body Snatchers</i> <i>Union Station</i>
Hayes, Hilary Lohnes	<i>Transaction Completed</i> <i>Heaven is Filled with Toasters</i> <i>Break a Sweat</i>

Ionesco, Eugene	<i>Rhinoceros</i>
Ives, David	<i>All In The Timing</i>
Jackson, Shirley	<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i>
Kaufman, Moises	<i>The Laramie Project</i>
Kopit, Arthur	<i>Wings</i>
Lapine, James	<i>Table Settings</i>
Leonard, Jim Jr.	<i>The Diviners</i>
Lozada, Amanda	<i>Island of the Cat People</i>
Mamet, David	<i>Speed the Plow</i>
Margulies, Donald	<i>Dinner with Friends</i>
Martin, Steve	<i>Picasso in the Lapin Agile</i>
Messier, Paul F. & Remby, John	<i>Skylines</i>
Mill, Eric	<i>Mr. Black</i>
Miller, Arthur	<i>All My Sons</i> <i>Death of A Salesman</i> <i>The Crucible</i>
Moliere	<i>Tartuffe</i>
Nakama, Adam R.	<i>A Comedy of Politics</i>
Nowack, Amanda Jean	<i>Stuck in a Moment</i>
O'Donnell, Dean	<i>25</i> <i>Footsie</i> <i>Home</i> <i>Poetic License</i>
O'Neill, Eugene	<i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i>
Parent, Jesse	<i>Daddy</i>

Parks, Suzan-Lori	<i>Top Dog / Under Dog</i>
Pavis, Sara	<i>Perspective Rocinante and his Two Donkeys Shot in the Heart</i>
Rowe, Aaron	<i>Bunker</i>
Rudnick, Paul	<i>I Hate Hamlet</i>
Russell, Willy	<i>Blood Brothers</i>
Sandofsky, Ben	<i>Five Minutes of my Life (For Ng) Convolution</i>
Servatius, Cecilia & Roberts, Brian	<i>Holy Spam!</i>
Servatius, Herman	<i>Situation Critical</i>
Shakespeare, William	<i>Macbeth Romeo and Juliet Hamlet Julius Caesar A Midsummer Night's Dream Much Ado About Nothing</i>
Silver, Nicky	<i>The Food Chain</i>
Simpson, Maxwell	<i>Fortune Cookie</i>
Sophocles	<i>Oedipus</i>
Sorkin, Aaron	<i>Few Good Men, A</i>
Taylor, Steven S.	<i>Black Pajamas There's No Way Out of Here; Well, Maybe One; Okay, Two, But No More</i>
Thomas, Robert	<i>Catch Me If You Can</i>
Wienstock, Jack & Willie, Gilbert	<i>Catch Me If You Can</i>
Wilde, Oscar	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Wilder, Thornton	<i>Our Town</i>

Williams, Tennessee

A Streetcar Named Desire

Wright, Doug

I Am My Own Wife
Little Red Riding Hood

Musicals

110 in the Shade
Annie
Beauty and the Beast
Blue Man Group
Chicago
Godspell
Grease
Jesus Christ Superstar
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
Les Miserables
Really Rosie
RENT
The Lion King
The Phantom of the Opera
Working

Appendices

The following appendices have been included to aid the reader's understanding of the work done on my project.

Hours Log

Date	Hours	Description
24-Oct	0.5	Talking with Nick (potential Director)
26-Oct	1	More talk with Nick (potential Director)
28-Oct	0.5	Talking with Dom (potential Director)
30-Oct	1	More talk with Nick (potential Director)
30-Oct	0.5	Talking with Jess, getting MQP forms, schedule meeting with Susan
30-Oct	2	Talking with Jamo (potential Director)
31-Oct	0.5	Meeting with Susan and passing in MQP forms
31-Oct	1	Talking with EJ (Potential Director)
1-Nov	4	Making time sheet and lists of what is needed/finding people
1-Nov	4	Tips from Dom and Jamo about Producing
2-Nov	6	Follow-up filling positions, e-mails, calls, journal, research
3-Nov	4	Follow-up filling positions, e-mails, calls, journal, research
3-Nov	1	Suggestions from Jamo about ME things
6-Nov	2	ME situation, filling positions
10-Nov	2	Follow-up filling positions, e-mails, calls, journal, research
11-Nov	8	Follow-up filling positions, e-mails, calls, journal, research
13-Nov	3	Follow-up filling positions, e-mails, calls, journal, research
16-Nov	2	Follow-up filling positions, e-mails, calls, journal, research
20-Nov	0.75	MWRep Voting Meeting
20-Nov	5	Errands with Dom and Jamo for the show
21-Nov	1	Events office to book stuff
26-Nov	6	e-mails, calls, journal, research
28-Nov	2	e-mails, calls, journal, research
29-Nov	0.5	e-mails, calls, journal, research
30-Nov	2	Taking steps to reserve the LT
		Meeting with Jamo, Cate, and Lucas, e-mail request of scene
1-Dec	4	shop
4-Dec	2	E-mails, paperwork
5-Dec	2	Meetings with Lucas, Jess and Jamo
5-Dec	3	Back to the Events Office, meeting with Cate
6-Dec	2.5	Planning of production meeting
7-Dec	3	E-mails, paperwork, meeting with Susan
8-Dec	1.5	Production List things
10-Dec	4	Production List things
10-Dec	3	Auditions
11-Dec	4	More Auditions
12-Nov	3	Callbacks
13-Dec	4	Prep for production meeting
13-Dec	5	Production Meeting and Rehearsal, follow-up minutes + e-mails
14-Dec	2	Production Timeline

21-Dec	5	Room Reservations, e-mail, Preparation
23-Dec	4	Preparation, e-mail
27-Dec	6	Preparation, e-mail
10-Jan	2	Preparation, e-mail
11-Jan	8	Room Reservations, e-mail, Rehearsal, Calendar, Meeting with Jamo
12-Jan	9.5	Room Reservations, e-mail, Preparation, Calendar, Organization, Deadlines
13-Jan	1	Calendar, E-mails, Prep
14-Jan	4	Calendar, E-mails, Prep
15-Jan	6	Calendar, E-mails, Prep, Rehearsal, Reservations
16-Jan	9	Deadlines, Communication, ProdMtg Prep, Meeting w/ Susan, Rehearsal, PM
17-Jan	4	Budget, Communication, Meeting with Sara (Publicity)
18-Jan	5	Budget, Communication, Rehearsal, Publicity, seating
19-Jan	3	Budget, Communication, Publicity
20-Jan	3	Communication, MTG Prep
21-Jan	5	Communication, MTG Prep
22-Jan	2	Communication, MTG Prep, Rehearsal
23-Jan	7.5	MTG prep, Meeting with Susan/Jamo/Mandi, Rehearsal, Prod Mtg
24-Jan	1.5	Communication
25-Jan	4	Communication, Rehearsal
26-Jan	2	Budget, Communication, MTG Prep
27-Jan	3	Budget, Communication, MTG Prep
28-Jan	5	Budget, Communication, MTG Prep
29-Jan	6	Budget, Communication, Rehearsal, Prep for Susan's MTG
30-Jan	11	Prep for Susan's Mtg+ProdMTG, Meetings, Rehearsal
31-Jan	6	Communication
1-Feb	8	Communication, Rehearsal
2-Feb	3	Communication
3-Feb	10	Meeting Prep, Cue 2 Cue, PM, Café shopping
4-Feb	4	Communication
5-Feb	7	Communication, publicity
6-Feb	8	Tech
7-Feb	10	Prep, Dress Rehearsal, PM
8-Feb	8	Prep, Performance
9-Feb	5	Prep, Performance
10-Feb	8	Prep, Performance, Strike
24-Aug	1	E-mail
26-Aug	1.5	Make Calendar
27-Aug	0.5	Pass in Calendar
4-Sep		Prep, Meeting with Susan
6-Sep	3	Abstract, Exec Summary, Play List, Top 10
9-Sep	3.5	Abstract, Exec Summary, Play List, Top 10
11-Sep	2	Prep, Meeting with Susan

13-Sep	4	Revisions
15-Sep	0.5	Producer Paper
17-Sep	1	Producer Paper
18-Sep	3	Various
19-Sep	1	Producer Paper
20-Sep	1	Producer Paper
21-Sep	2	Top 10 Description
22-Sep	3	Top 10 Description
24-Sep	2	Top 10 Description
25-Sep	2	Prep, Meeting with Susan
26-Sep	1	Rough Draft
28-Sep	1	Rough Draft
29-Sep	6	Rough Draft
30-Sep	2	Rough Draft
1-Oct	3	Finishing Touches on Rough Draft, Print, Hand in
2-Oct	3	Final Draft
3-Oct	2	Final Draft
4-Oct	1	CDR
5-Oct	2	Final Draft
6-Oct	2	Final Draft
7-Oct	5	Final Draft
8-Oct	4	Printing, Binding, Handing in

TOTAL 359

Production Calendar

This calendar is complete with the show dates, production deadlines, and rehearsals for *Speed the Plow*.

Production Schedule for <i>Speed the Plow</i> -- Last Revised 1/16						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January is in GREEN STAY OUT of LT 5-10pm February is in PINK <i>Red is for specific people!!</i> <i>Blue is for crews + help</i>		R = Rehearsal PM = Production Meeting LT = Little Theatre Times should be assumed afternoon unless stated "am"		11	12	13
				R: 6-8 CC Hagglund Room		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	R: 6-8 OH107	R: 6-9 SL104 PM: 9:00 <i>@PM Set Design DUE!</i>		R: 6-8 LT		Set Build
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Set Build	R: 6-8 AK116 Set Build: < 5 + > 10	R: 6-9 SL104 PM: 9:00 Set Build: < 5 <i>@PM Lighting Design DUE!</i>	Set Build	R: 6-8 LT Set Build: < 5 + > 9	Set Build	Set Build Light Hang: (around Set)
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Set Build: 3 LT Light Hang: (around set) <i>Set Build DUE!!</i>	R: 6-8 OH107 Lights: < 5 LT	R: 6-9 SL115 PM: 9:00 <i>@PM Program Info DUE</i> Lights: < 5 LT	<i>Tickets DUE!!</i> (from publicity to house) Lights: < 5 LT Set Install: > 10	R: 6-8 LT <i>Costume/Prop+ Seating+ Set Install+ Sound DUE @ R-6:00</i> Lights: > 9	Lights Debug for Sunday (Ops Use Equipt, etc) <i>Lights DUE!!</i>	Dry Tech / Cue to Cue: 1:00 Actors: Ln Thru PM: Soon After
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(if ready) <u>Tech Day Off!!</u> <i>Sleep in, Hang out, GET SANE!</i>	Dress Rehearsal: 6:30 Call	<i>Vestibule/Café/ Program DUE!</i> Tech FINAL Fix (Actors Day Off)	Dress Rehearsal: 6:30 Call PM: Soon After	Final House Set-Up: 1 SHOW: 8:00 Call: 6:30	SHOW: 8:00 Call: 6:30	SHOW: 8:00 Call: 6:30

Contact List

Position	Name	E-mail	Cell #
Producer	Allison DiNitto	adinitto@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Director	Jamo Hanlan	boondockjamo@gmail.com	(deleted for privacy)
<i>Assitant Director</i>	<i>Johnny Prudente</i>	<i>jjp@wpi.edu</i>	~
Stage Manager	James Johnson	jsquared@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
ASM	Lauren Ferrechio	lmferr@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Run Crew Chief	Corey Randall	crandall@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Costume/Props	Cara Marcy	cmarcy@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Tech Director	Cyle Hawkins	cylehawk@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Master Electrician	Alex Lewy	alex.lewy1@gmail.com	(deleted for privacy)
<i>Mentor to ME</i>	<i>Sean Waithe</i>	<i>swaithe@WPI.EDU</i>	~
<i>Mentor to ME</i>	<i>David Stechmann</i>	<i>stech@wpi.edu</i>	~
Lighting Designer/opp	Chris Kingsley	kingsley@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Sound Designer/opp	Colin McCarthy	cwm@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
House Manager	Steph Kavrakis	stephk@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
<i>House Help</i>	<i>Amy Castonguay</i>	<i>amyjeane@gmail.com</i>	~
<i>House Help</i>	<i>Brianne O'Neill</i>	<i>theslowkid@gmail.com</i>	~
Strike Manager	Dominic DiGiovanni	dominicd@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Publicity Manager	Sara Gouveia	dudegouv@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Photographer	Evan May	hoolakin@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
Master Carpenter	Matt Hustle	mhoustle@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)
<i>Mentor to MC</i>	<i>John Remby</i>	<i>jremby@gmail.com</i>	~
<i>Mentor to MC</i>	<i>Cara Marcy</i>	<i>(see above)</i>	~
Set Designer	Dominic DiGiovanni	<i>(see above)</i>	<i>(see above)</i>
	EJ Massa (Gould)	wopsicle@gmail.com	(deleted for privacy)
Actors	Dominic DiGiovanni (Fox)	<i>(see above again)</i>	<i>(see above again)</i>
	Carol Wood (Karen)	carol@wpi.edu	(deleted for privacy)

Budget

The following is the outline of the budget for the show.

Total Budgeted	Total Spent	Sample Budget	Asked For	Budgeted Left	Actual Left
\$500.49	<u>\$399.81</u>	\$800.00	\$400.49	\$299.51	\$400.19

WHO	POS	WHAT	ASKED FOR	BUDGETED	SPENT
Allison	Producer	Scripts	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Matt/Dom	MC/Set Designer	Sheets	\$30.00	\$130.00	\$33.00
		Floor Molding	\$60.00		
		Crown Molding	\$30.00		
		Hardware	\$10.00		
		Fabric			
Alex Levy	ME	Gels	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$24.25
Sara	Publicity	Tickets Printed	\$8.00	\$27.49	\$23.00
		Posters	\$15.00		
		Mailbox + Flyers	\$4.49		
Evan (Lauren)	Photography	Hax Cardboard Cutout	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$16.00
Cara	Costumes/Props		<100	\$100.00	\$60.50
Steph (+me)	House	Café Food + Drinks	\$150.00	\$200.00	\$203.06
		Paper+Printing+mailboxes	\$50.00		



Amt Made:	\$1,261.06
Amt Spent:	\$399.81
Total Profit:	\$861.25

Crew Hierarchy

There were two different structures or reporting order in our production.

The first was a vision hierarchy. In this arrangement, the director has input into and control over all of the sensory pieces of the show. He can mold designs to fit his needs.

The second is a deadline hierarchy. In this setup, the producer makes goals and deadlines for every member of the production crew.

Both configurations work together to create an appealing, yet organized production.

Vision Hierarchy

- Director
 - Actors
 - Costumes/Props
 - House Manager
 - Lighting Designer
 - Photographer
 - Publicity Manager
 - Scenic Designer
 - Sound Designer
- Producer
 - Stage Manager
 - ASM
 - Board Ops
 - Run Crew Chief
 - Run Crew
 - Tech Director
 - Master Carpenter
 - Master Electrician
 - Crew

Deadline Hierarchy

- Director
 - Actors
- Producer
 - House Manager
 - Photographer
 - Publicity Manager
 - Scenic Designer
 - Stage Manager
 - ASM
 - Board Ops
 - Costumes/Props
 - Run Crew Chief
 - Run Crew
 - Tech Director
 - Lighting Designer
 - Master Carpenter
 - Master Electrician
 - Crew
 - Sound Designer

Meeting Notes

Taking notes is an integral part of a successful meeting. Notes are important not only for record-keeping, but for remembering what needs to be done.

Advisor Meeting Notes

9/11 – Meeting w/ Susan – 12:00

- Exec summary
 - Rearrange first paragraph
 - Tenses... use past tense!
 - Verb agreement- page 60 in book.
 - Pronouns– page 31 (rule 21)
 - Use “he” instead of “they” for singular.
 - Ellipses – don’t use them in formal document (Wiki)
 - Bottom of page 1 – “released” = not right word.
 - Photographer- revise, .
 - Don’t make anything sounds silly, stupid, or easy – it is insulting.
 - Make a visual list on p2 about positions
 - “9days” – fix tense and add an ending to it.
 - Refer to top 10 in conclusion
- Abstract
 - Refer to top 10- make Susan’s changes
- Top10 = awesome
- Play list
 - Musicals need separate list
 - Don’t repeat authors
 - Play Categories- make sure I have something in each

Production Meeting Agenda

1/16 - Production Meeting Agenda

1. Calendar

2. Production contact list

- a. (If you have a problem with everyone having your cell#, and e-mail address... that is fine, but TELL ME NOW!)

3. Theatre Rules

4. Get updates

- a. Scenic Design = Finalized
 - i. Dom = Please bring a copy to show everyone at the meeting and send me one electronically for the minutes.
- b. Everyone else = Please be prepared to briefly discuss your ideas and what you have done so far.

5. Possible Scheduling of Things

- a. Please Bring your Planners!!

Production Meeting Minutes

1/16 - Production Meeting Minutes

➤ Calendar – attached

- Who needs to be at blues?
- Who is accountable for what Reds?
- House – Notice the “final set-up” time.
 - Everything must be either in the vestibule, neatly stacked in Riley, in the “backstage” area of the theatre, or somewhere else until 1:00 on opening night. PLAN ACCORDINGLY!!!
 - I was able to book Riley solid from 8am Wednesday 7th until Strike EXCEPT 12-1pm Thursday due to a Palates Class
- Expect minor changes... Revision dates will always be on the top... use the most recent one at all times!

➤ Production contact list - attached

- I am in direct contact with the people in black font.
- People in grey font are under the previous name in black. THEREFORE if they are YOUR grey people... they are your responsibility to keep in the loop and coordinate. They update you; you update me. They have questions, they ask you; if you can't answer, you ask me.
- You can have as few/many people on your crew as you want... YOU are still responsible for getting the work done. Keep track of your people for the program! (give Spell-checked list to Steph @ 30th PM)

➤ Theatre Rules – Not Attached... yet... but You'll get 'em...

- Read them aloud
- Whose responsibility?
 - EVERYONE

➤ **Budget**

- Everything you spend comes out of my pocket.
- If you spend without specific approval from ME (Allison), it comes out of YOUR pocket and does not get reimbursed.
- Send me your budget ASAP
 - Figure out how much money you want, expect to get much less, figure out what you NEED, and send me that number with a breakdown of what goes into it.

➤ **Jobs you might not have thought of**

- MC
 - umm... build it?
 - Safely... VEEEEEEERY safely.
 - If you keep the floor SPOTLESS, we don't have to repaint it black... this saves a large percentage of the budget.
 - I have a couple drop cloths... and I think there's more stuff in the scene shop... Hell, paint as much as you can in the shop and bring it in
- Photography
 - Go to a sampling of everything on the calendar plus all dress rehearsals to photograph everyone doing stuff

- Take headshots of actors (wearing black) for the Program
 - Have good pictures of the Producer and Director for the Program
- Sound designer/opp
 - Knowledge of LT's sound equipment
 - Sounds for show
 - Opening/Intermission/Closing Music
 - Testing it on Equipment
- Lighting designer/opp
 - Lights for show
 - Knowledge of LT's lighting equipment
 - CLEAR method of displaying where/what is already available for a fast and less painful 6Degrees turnover
 - Collaborating with 6Degrees (Cara) to help WITHOUT sacrificing or hindering what you need/want to do in any way.
- Tech Director
 - Be around whenever people are building, hanging, etc
 - Make sure things are safe, rules are followed, etc.
 - For Example, NO FOOD IN THE THEATRE... even if people are pouting.
 - I'm going to try to get you a key. You will let people in and lock up when they leave.
- Publicity
 - Tickets Printed

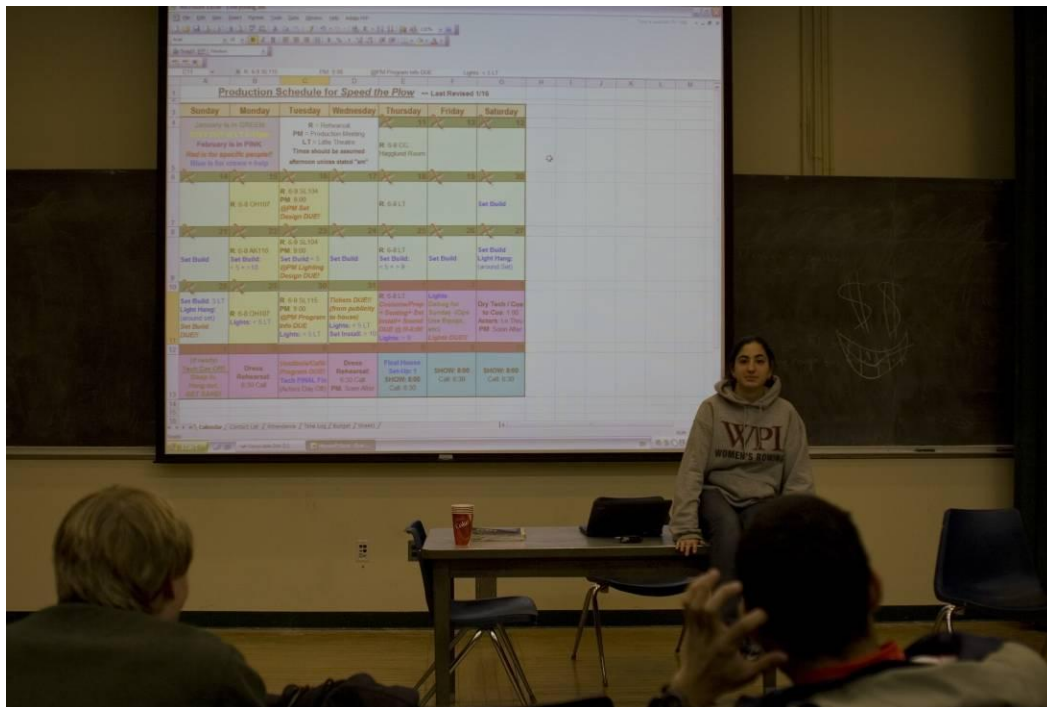
- Reservation Line
- Table-sitting
- Mailbox stuffing
- Posters
- Press Release
- Table Papers
- ME
 - Prep for a painless 6Degrees turnover.
 - CLEAR method of displaying where/how/to what things are cabled.
 - Things need to be cabled to the nearest plug, not in order they are hung.
 - Minimize crossed cables.
 - Installing KGB for Booth and Green Room
- Props/Costume
 - Get everything ASAP... Filter stuff into rehearsal as you get it.
- House
 - Tickets after getting them from publicity
 - Might need to be punched or stamped for different nights?
 - Non-fixed seating in LT
 - Riley Commons Seating, Decoration
 - Café
 - Program

- Ushers, other show personnel
- Janitor/Police Fees?
- **Get updates – scenic design attached**
 - Scenic Design = Finalized
 - Dom = Please bring a copy to show everyone at the meeting and send me one electronically for the minutes.
 - Everyone else = Please be prepared to briefly discuss your ideas and what you have done so far.
- **Possible Scheduling of Things**
 - 2/6 Production Meeting Cancelled?
 - 2/4 + 2/7 INSTEAD
- **THINGS I FORGOT!!!**
 - Nothing?

Photos

Here is a selection of photos from the show.

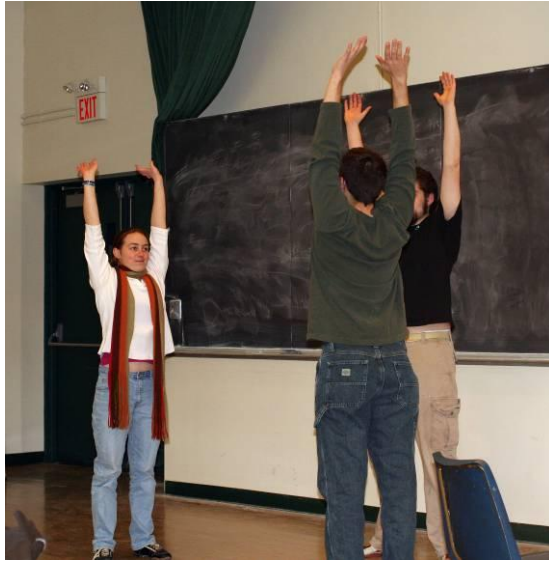
Meetings



Set-Up



Rehearsal





Cast & Crew



Program

Upcoming Shows

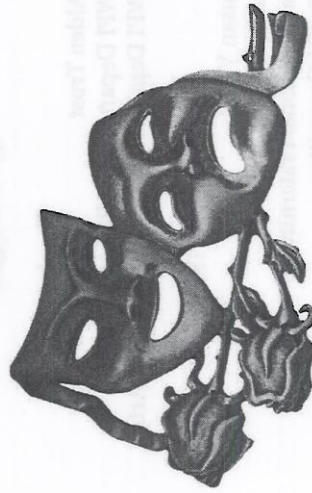
Masque presents
Six Degrees of Separation by John Guare
February 15th, 16th, and 17th

{Empty Set} presents:
Benjamin Franklin: Dinosaur Hunter
February 19th and 20th at 7pm in Flaud

New Voices 25

Come see original scripts written and performed by WPI students, faculty and community at the 25th year of New Voices.

Dates: April 12th - 15th, in the Little Theatre



WPI Department of
Humanities and Arts & MW Repertory
Theatre Co., Etc.
Presents

Speed the Plow

Speed the Plow Cast List

Bob Gould
 Charlie Fox
 Karen

EJ Massa
 Dominic DiGiovanni
 Carol Wood

Speed the Plow Production Staff

Producer
 Director
 Assistant Director
 Stage Manager
 ASM
 Run Crew Chief
 Costume/Props
 Tech Director
 Master Electrician
Mentor to ME
Mentor to ME
 Lighting Designer/ op
 Sound Designer/ op
 House Manager
House Help
 Strike Manager
 Publicity Manager
 Photographer
 Master Carpenter
Mentor to MC
Mentor to MC
 Set Designer

Allison DiNitto
 Jamo Hanlan
 Johnny Prudente
 James Johnson
 Lauren Ferrechio
 Corey Randall
 Cara Marcy
 Cyle Hawkins
 Alex Levy
Sean Waithe
David Stechmann
 Chris Kingsley
 Colin McCarthy
 Stephanie Kavrakis
Amy Castonguay
 Dominic DiGiovanni
 Sara Gouveia
 Evan May
 Matt Houstle
John Remby
Cara Marcy
 Dominic DiGiovanni

Additional Crew

MC Crew
 Cara Marcy
 Dominic DiGiovanni
 Chris Kingsley
 Cory Randall
 Dan Morehouse
 Chris Pardy
 Michelle Miller
 Mike Barone
 Colin McCarthy
 Nikki Clardy

ME Crew
 Andrew Wilkins
 Cara Marcy
 Chris Pardy
 Colin McCarthy
 Corey Randall
 John Kukla
 John Low
 Lauren Ferrechio

Run Crew
 Danice Chou
 Herman E. Servatius
 Christopher Pardy
 House Help
 Stephen Jakubowski
 Sarah Judd
 Alex Levy
 Lauren Ferrechio
 John Low

Bios

Allison DiNitto

Allison is a Junior double-majoring in IE and Hu&A at WPI. She has participated in 9 shows as a member of both Masque and MWRep. Allison is also an active member of the Women's Crew team, and SocComm.

Jamo Hanlan

Jamo Hanlan has been involved in WPI theatre both on and off stage since New Voices 22. Most recently, Jamo was producer for Our Town this last B term and was seen on-stage last A term. Before that Jamo had spent his summer at Wellfleet Harbor Actor's Theatre. Jamo plans on continuing his deep involvement in theatre and bringing joy to the masses.

Johnny Prudente

This is Johnny's, otherwise known as Johnny P., first time doing a show at WPI. He plans to graduate at the end of D-term 2007.

James Johnson

James Johnson is happy to be working with MWRep again. He loves the show and all the people in it and is excited for everyone else to see it! He also hopes to be involved in more theater within the WPI community in the future. Break a leg all!

Lauren Ferrechio

Since B-term 2006, Lauren has been Co-Lighting Designer for *New Works*, Stage Manager for *Much Ado About Nothing*, Festival Stage Manager for *New Voices 24*, Master Electrician for *Wonder of the World*, & Dramaturg for upcoming NV25. With WPI Theatre She's played many new roles & met some amazing people.

EJ Massa

Edmund Massa is an ECE major in his junior year and loves acting as much as he loves breathing and waffles. EJ participates in many theatre related activities on campus including Empty Set, Guerilla Improv, and Masque.

Dominic DiGiovanni

Dominic left his home in Oakland, California in search of a BS in Biomechanical Engineering. What he found was an extra curricular Drama program second to none, friends in groups such as Guerilla Improv, and a true passion for the Theatre.

Carol Wood

Carol is a freshman from Hadley, MA. Speed the Plow marks her second performance at WPI after the A term production of *Sweeney Todd*. She is also in Guerilla Improv, Festival Choir and The Audiophiles.

Tonight's Show

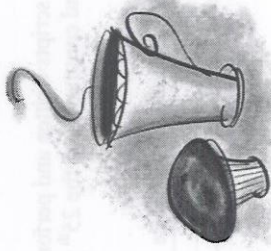
Please refrain from bringing food or drink in to the Little Theatre. Only bottled water is permitted.

No photography of recording is permitted during performances.

As a courtesy, please remember to turn all cell phones and electronic devices.

There will be a 15 minute intermission after Act I where we invite you to join us in Riley Commons for concession.

Thank you.



Thanks

The Alden Trust
The WPI Department of Plant Services
The WPI Department of Humanities and Arts

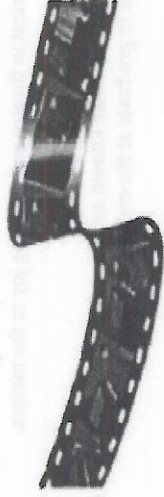
Special Thanks

Dr. Susan Vick
Jessica Sands
Sigma Pi National Fraternity
WPI Social Committee
Lens and Lights

Director's Notes:

Thank you all for coming to our production of *Speed the Plow*. Many talented people put their all into this production. Yet, I thank you, our audience. Your presence makes this all worthwhile for everyone involved.

Jamo



Producer's Notes:

This production has been a great accomplishment for me. My career here with WPI theatre started my freshman year on the run crew for *The Food Chain*, and since then, my positions and experiences have been as varied as the shows, culminating with this: my Major Qualifying Project as executive producer of David Mamet's *Speed the Plow*.

While I poured my time an effort into this show, I always had the reassurance of my cast and crew. Never have I had the pleasure of working with such an intimate, dedicated, and amazing production staff, and I could never have done this without them. WPI has a wealth of talented underclassmen that always seem to make the impossible a reality. I hope that they all find themselves where I am now: watching my labor come to life in the form of the most important show of my college career.

Bibliography

The following sources aided in my education toward this project.

Campbell, Drew. *Technical Theatre for Nontechnical People*. Second Edition. New York, NY:
Allworth Press, 2004.

Strunk, William, and White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. Fourth Edition. Needham Heights, MA:
Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

Theatre Resume

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

C07	<i>Speed the Plow</i> (MW Rep.) -Major Qualifying Project	Producer
B06	<i>Our Town</i> (Masque)	Photographer Run Crew Chief Strike Manager Publicity Crew Cafe
A06	<i>Wonder of the World</i> (MW Rep.)	Set Crew
C06	<i>I Hate Hamlet</i> (MW Rep.) - Sufficiency	Stage Manager
B05	<i>In Bad Taste</i> (Masque)	Sound Board Operator
	<i>Prime Time Crime</i> (Masque)	Assistant Stage Manager Dramaturg Sound Board Operator
D05	<i>New Voices 23</i> (Masque)	Set Crew Light Crew Publicity
C05	<i>Catch Me if You Can</i> (Masque)	Set Crew Run Crew Light & Sound Crew
	<i>The Food Chain</i> (MW Rep.)	Set Crew Run Crew Usher
B04	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> (Masque)	Set Crew Light & Sound Crew Publicity

Wakefield Memorial High School

Spring '04	<i>Charlie Brown/ Senior Show</i>	Girls' Dance Member Set Crew
	<i>Godspell</i>	Stage Manager Assistant Director Co-Scenic Designer Dramaturg Set Crew
Winter '04	<i>On Tidy Endings</i>	Assistant Stage Manager Set Crew
Fall '03	<i>Table Settings</i>	Assistant Stage Manager Props Manager Set Crew
Spring '03	<i>Good News/ Senior Show</i>	Run Crew
	<i>110 in the Shade</i>	Assistant Stage Manager Set Crew
Winter '03	<i>All in the Timing</i>	Set Crew Run Crew
Fall '02	<i>Haunting of Hill House</i>	Set Crew Run Crew
Spring '02	<i>Working</i>	Run Crew Chief Chorus Member Set Crew Tech Crew
Winter '02	<i>Really Rosie</i>	Set Crew Run Crew
Fall '01	<i>The Diviners</i>	Set Crew Run Crew
Spring '01	<i>Bye Bye Birdie/ Senior Show</i>	Run Crew Usher
Fall '00	<i>Rhinoceros</i>	Set Crew Run Crew

Wakefield Middle School

Winter '98	<i>Lewis and Clark</i>	Lead Actress- Sacagawea
Spring '00	<i>Charlie Brown</i>	Chorus Member

Other Theatre-Related Experience

A07 – Present	PLA for Academic Theatre at WPI.
B05 – D07	Work-study in the Humanities & Arts' Resource Library.
E04	Interactive Qualifying Project- Operations, Procedures, and Resources for the Little Theatre: Produced manuals and offered resources for lighting, sound, design, and campus systems for use with the newly constructed Little Theatre. Worked with the architects and engineers and faced frequently changing deadlines and decisions. Presented a variety of procedural recommendations for the Little Theatre that exist in both paper and web (www.wpi.edu/~lttheatre) form.

Theatre-Related Recognition

2004

- Recipient of WHS Drama Club award for outstanding work as Best Stage Manager.
- Recipient of The Vasiliki N. Kassanos 2004 Memorial Scholarship for outstanding excellence and dedication in the field of drama.
- Recipient of WHS 2004 Theatre Arts Senior Award for excellence in technical theatre for outstanding production work during the 2003-2004 season.
- Inducted to The International Thespian Society, honoring excellence in school theatre.