HANDBOOK: CONCENTRATION IN ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Introduction and overview

The MFA Theatre concentration in Arts Entrepreneurship and Management (AEM) teaches the skills of arts entrepreneurship, arts management, and arts marketing within the context of the MFA Theatre degree, also grounding the student in theories of performance, community-based arts, and theatre history and literature. Thus, students develop a holistic understanding of the role of arts managers as enablers of art-making. Students in the AEM concentration concurrently pursue the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership and Management (NLM), through which students gain a breath of knowledge in nonprofit studies, including finance and HR management. Finally, the concentration builds on the school’s existing strengths in arts entrepreneurship as evidenced by its Pave Program, which operates a student arts venture incubator, provides curriculum, present public programming, and publishes the first (and only) peer-reviewed journal in the field of arts entrepreneurship. Students will take coursework in entrepreneurship and substantially participate in entrepreneurial activities through collaboration with other MFA cohort members and/or individually. Participation in Pave activities is expected of all students.

The MFA Theatre (AEM) requires a minimum of 60 credits. Students completing the Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership may need to take 63 credits to complete the requirements of both the degree and the certificate.

Applying to the AEM concentration

Students must meet all admission requirements of the Graduate College. See https://students.asu.edu/graduate/apply In addition, the School of Theatre and Film requires a minimum of 30 undergraduate semester hours of course work in theatre, film, dance, music, art, or business with a minimum GPA of 3.20 overall. Students are admitted once every three years as a cohort and move through the program of study sequentially.

For the concentration in arts entrepreneurship and management, requirements also include:

1. Three letters of recommendation from professionals who can speak to the potential for success in arts entrepreneurship and/or management
2. Résumé
3. Sample of critical writing, such as a term paper or research project (in lieu of GRE scores)
4. Statement of educational and professional objective
5. Sample of materials indicative of the candidate’s potential to succeed as an arts entrepreneur and/or manager. These might include, but are not limited to: publicity materials, marketing plans, budgets, stage management prompt books, grant proposals, business plans
6. Interview (interviews may be conducted on campus or via teleconference; in-person interviews are strongly encouraged)

We review applications on a rolling basis, but applications received by February 1, 2016 will be given priority for both admissions and assistantship funding.
AEM coursework

The MFA Theatre (AEM) program requires courses in arts entrepreneurship and management, core theatre studies, nonprofit leadership, and creative practice, including an internship and an applied project (see the “Applied Projects” section, following.). The following courses are required

Arts Entrepreneurship and Management Required courses
THP550 Theatre Organizations and Management (3)
THP551 Arts Management (3)
THP552 Arts Entrepreneurship (3)
THP598 Topic: Arts and Public Policy (3)
THP598 Topic: Arts Marketing (3)
THP598 Topic: Legal Issues in the Arts (3)

MFA Theatre Core
THP500 Research Methods (3)
THP504 Studies in Dramatic Theory and Criticism (3)
THP520 Theatre History (3)

Nonprofit Leadership
NLM510 Foundations of Nonprofit Management (3)
NLM520 Financial and Resource Management (3)
NLM540 Human Resources in Nonprofit Organizations (3)
A minimum of two more NLM elective courses, pre-approved by program director or graduate committee chair. These may include Program Evaluation, Social Entrepreneurship, Grant Writing for Nonprofit Organizations, etc.

Theatre Practice
THP514 Projects in Community Based Theatre (3) [or pre-approved substitute in socially engaged arts practice]
THP517 Stage Management (3)
THP526 and THP527 Conceptualization and Collaboration I and II (6)
THP680 Practicum (1) [management of a collaborative project]

Internship (see information following)
THP684 Internship (1-3)

Applied Project (see details following)
THP693 Applied Project (3-4)

Total: 60-63 credits

Faculty

The AEM program draws on the expertise of faculty from the School of Film, Dance, and Theatre and the School of Community Resources and Development through the NLM
certificate. The program also draws on the expertise of professional practitioners from the arts and culture community to teach special topics courses. Additionally, frequent visits by guys, both in the class and through the Pave Program in Arts Entrepreneurship speakers series and symposia complement the classroom curricula.

Our teaching faculty includes, but is not limited to:

- **Linda Essig**, program head, Arts Entrepreneurship, Arts Management, Arts Policy
- **Tom Aberger**, Theatre Organization and Management, Stage Management
- **Greg Bernstein**, Legal Issues in the Arts
- **Lance Gharavi**, Theatre Theory
- **Mark Hager**, Foundations of Nonprofit Management
- **Mary McAvoi**, Research Methods
- **Laurie Mook**, Financial Management, HR Management
- **Jacob Pinholster**, Conceptualization and Collaboration (Director, SoFDt)
- **Jen Setlow**, Conceptualization and Collaboration
- **Stephanie Etheridge Woodson**, Community-Based Theatre

Recent guests of the Pave Program and/or AEM program include:

- Ruby Lerner, Founder and Executive Director of Creative Capital
- Diane Ragsdale, Jumper
- Jaime Dempsey, Deputy Director, Arizona Commission on the ArtS
- Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts
- Michael Rohd, Sojourn Theatre
- Claudia LaRocco, Artist, Poet, and NY Times critic
- John Sallot, Marketing Director, Desert Botanical Garden

**Maintaining “good standing” as an AEM student**

The advancement of each student through the AEM program is dependent upon a positive recommendation of the faculty and/or the Supervisory Committee, once the iPOS is filed. Each MFA student must maintain a 3.00 GPA to remain in good standing.

At the end of each semester, each AEM student will meet with program faculty for a semester review. These meetings serve both as a means of assessment and goal planning. Topics covered in these reviews include academic progress, artistic and pedagogic progress, professionalism, achievements and challenges, special projects, and so on. Teaching or research assistantship performance will also be discussed, as applicable. After the filing of the iPOS in the third semester, the student’s Supervisory Committee will administer reviews.

After the review, the faculty will make a recommendation to the graduate studies committee concerning each student’s continuation in the program. At this point the faculty may recommend that a student be removed from the program if satisfactory academic and professional progress is not being made or if a student is unable to otherwise meet program expectations. The students may appeal the decision directly to the School Director.
If the faculty identifies a lack of competence or progress, or any other difficulty in a student’s program, they may suggest to the director of graduate studies that the student be placed on probation for one semester. The faculty will outline clear expectations for improvement to the student, for the following semester. The faculty will meet with the student in mid-semester to evaluate progress; a final decision will be made at the end-of-semester review. In order to prepare for the review, MFA students must complete a written self-evaluation and distribute it to the faculty at least one week prior to the review date, noting academic progress, artistic and creative growth, special project evaluations, skill achievements, and goals updates. Self-evaluations should also include areas for future growth and exploration.

**Comprehensive exam review**

The AEM concentration does not require a formal comprehensive exam but does require an in-person formative review of progress in the semester in which the student will be completing her or his 30th credit of the 60 credits required for the degree and a follow-up review at the end of the following semester. At the first meeting, the AEM program faculty will review academic progress with the student, identify strengths and weaknesses related to degree completion and collaborate with the student to determine short and mid-range academic goals. The remainder of the program of study will be finalized to the extent possible at this meeting. The composition of the faculty program of study committee, which will also serve as the applied project (culminating project) committee, will also be determined. A comprehensive review will take place at the end of the following semester (usually the end of the second year of study) to discuss progress toward the short and mid-range goals.

**Internship**

Each student must complete a 1-3 credit internship during his or her course of study. Students are responsible for developing a list of internship learning objectives no later than the fourth semester of study. These learning objectives are the basis for finding or designing a suitable field-based internship. The organization hosting the internship must be party to ASU School of Film, Dance, and Theatre affiliation agreement. Internship requirements include maintenance of an internship journal, summative reflection on the internship experience and assessment of both by the supervising faculty member and evaluation by the site supervisor. Students are encouraged to pursue internships that both meet their learning objectives and pay a stipend. Examples of internship placements include:

- Mesa Center for the Arts
- Tucson/Pima Arts Council
- Phoenix Film Festival.

**Internship Procedures:**
1. Research internship opportunities
2. Submit internship learning objectives to advisor
3. Secure internship placement with advisor approval

5. Student meets with supervising faculty member to discuss internship requirements and complete the Internship Application, and Internship Statement of Compliance. Forms can be typed or neatly handwritten in ink. Note: Must have Affiliation Agreement form completed and signed by internship site.

6. Student submits all materials to the Director of the School of Film, Dance and Theatre for signature and final approval.

7. Students will receive an email from the School of Film, Dance and Theatre regarding the status of your application approval

8. Register for internship credit.

All students must file appropriate administrative paperwork with the graduate secretary prior to the formal acceptance of an internship. Each student documents the internship experience through a diary of activities, a daily journal, and an internship portfolio. This documentation is supplemented with evaluations from internship supervisors.

**Applied Project**

A three-credit MFA Applied Project, THP 693, overseen by a SoFDT faculty chair, is required of all MFA candidates. Depending on the scope of the project, students may undertake up to six credits of Applied Project work. Examples of project types include but are not limited to: business planning for a new arts organization; marketing plans for a new or existing arts organization; substantive grant proposals and development plans in support of a new or existing arts organization; development of a five-year development plan for a new or existing arts organization. Alternatively, the Applied Project can consist of field-work in an arts organization or original research on an arts entrepreneurship or management topic approved by the student's committee. All projects culminate in a written final report and an oral examination based on the student’s research/activities. The applied project committee (3 members) will be solely responsible for judging the quality of the report and oral presentation, and determining if they satisfactorily serve as the required culminating event for the MFA degree.

**Choosing a Chair & Committee.** Some of the most important people in the academic/professional life of a graduate student are the members of his/her culminating project committee. The committee chair is usually the director of the student’s research/creative activities and has a vested interest in seeing that the student does well and finishes promptly, but all members must be satisfied that the student has done a thorough and responsible job. The student-committee relationship should be one of mutual intellectual respect and stimulation, warmth, support, and understanding. Faculty often learn as much from good graduate students as students learn from faculty, and faculty reputations rest in part on the quality of their graduate students.

For all Applied Projects, the student’s chair MUST be drawn from SoFDT faculty (this includes both tenure track faculty and clinical professors or full time instructors); at least one member must teach within the AEM program. Students are encouraged to engage faculty from the NLM program for their applied project committee. Think carefully about what special knowledge or expertise each member of your committee can contribute to the
successful completion of the best possible final project. In addition to their research knowledge, methodological skills, and expert scholarship/creative practice, the ideal committee members also bring the ability to emotionally support you, challenge and extend you, help guide you through the system, and provide stringent editorial input. Aim for this mix of skills whenever possible.

**Development of Projects.** The student will collaborate with the AEM program director and the Applied Project committee chair to determine the most appropriate form for all culminating projects. The project should serve to both synthesize the skills and knowledges acquired during the course of study and launch the student into the next phase of her or his career as an entrepreneurial arts manager.

Once students decide on a general outline for the Applied Project, he or she will create a project proposal. This document should consist of the following sections (depending on relevancy) and be 6-12 pages in length, including references:

1. Executive summary of Project
2. Contextual Information: Topic parameters, specifics on scope and sequence of project; overview of pertinent information
3. Project participants information: Projects that include fieldwork should include specifics on the site and relevant information on organizational structure and specific site contact information
4. A general outline for the project including research methods as appropriate
5. Desired project outcomes and evaluation plan
6. Timeline for project completion (be as specific as possible)
7. Preliminary Budget

Once the Chair of the Project Committee has vetted the proposal document, the student will arrange a meeting of their full Applied Project committee. The Committee should be provided the proposal no later than one week in advance of this meeting. At the proposal defense, the committee will approve or disapprove the project proposal, suggest changes or require additional information. The proposal defense should be held one semester prior to the start of the project.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee Members.** Note: the student is responsible for coordinating proposal and defense meeting times and places, for providing all materials requested/approved by the Supervisor to be distributed to Committee members, and for communicating with Committee members about review timeframes in order to meet all graduate college and graduation deadlines.

**Supervisor (Chair) of the committee:**
- Meets frequently with student to develop plan of work and overall approaches to the project
- Provides initial review and guidance for proposal and final write up drafts
- Mentors student’s day to day activities as needed
- Gives approval for committee review of proposal and project defense
- Arbitrates contradictory comments from other committee members before and after defense
- Facilitates defense meeting on the student’s behalf
Committee Members

- Provide guidance to student during the proposal and project process on important sources and approaches relative to the Committee Member’s area of expertise, as appropriate in the development and implementation of the student’s project.
- Attend relevant student one-on-one meetings, comment and evaluate project proposal and final documentation
- Attend relevant culminating field experiences (in so much as is possible)
- Attend proposal and project defenses

Project Documentation and Report. The format for final project written report will depend on what kind of project students undertake. However, all students will maintain field notes or a process journal throughout project implementation. Using this data, students will create a summative overview of the process and their experience and learning. The committee, and the SoFDT expect to see evidence of careful attention to style and format in the document that you present as part of your culminating experience.

In general, the following additional information should be included:

1. Introduction to project, project goals and contextual/theoretical information to situate the project within the field (i.e. a review of relevant literature and practice)
2. Summative overview of the process that includes specific learning moments and personal reflection on learning objectives
3. Next steps, conclusions drawn and information gained—this section actively contributes to original knowledge within the field.
4. Works Cited & Bibliography of relevant material

Students will compile the documentation and provide electronic copies for the committee no later than two weeks prior to the Project Defense. Applied Project Material does not need to go through format approval at the Graduate College but is archived in the program director’s office. Each project is unique in scope, but it is expected that the final project document, without appendixes, will be 40-80 pages in length. Students are responsible for turning in their revised material to the AEM program director prior to their graduation.