

School of Drama
College of Arts & Sciences
University of Washington

Bylaws

Adopted June 11, 2025

Mission & History

Mission

The University of Washington School of Drama develops innovative and courageous artists and scholars poised to be the creative leaders of tomorrow.

Vision

As our contribution to creating a more just, equitable, and empathetic society, the University of Washington School of Drama seeks to cultivate a community of highly-skilled artists, scholars, and citizens who are engaged with the world and invested in theatrical storytelling—in all its guises—as a means of elevating and celebrating our individual and collective voices, promoting understanding, and nurturing compassion.

Values

Excellence, Accountability, Risk-Taking, Rigor, Courage, Community, Diversity, Access, Belonging, Equity, Integrity, Curiosity, Empathy, Kindness, Respect

Commitments

The School of Drama is committed to:

- supporting and nurturing the artistry and scholarship of every student, and honoring their identities, perspectives, and traditions
- creating an active learning environment which fosters meaningful work and contributes to a rich and lasting community
- promoting the development of strong character, expressed as individual responsibility, public involvement, and a continued commitment to personal growth beyond the university experience
- grounding our practice of experimentation, risk, and innovation in the study of longstanding theories and traditions
- extending the limits of those creative and analytical processes which continually renew the art

History

Introduction

The University of Washington School of Drama is one of this country's leading training institutions for theater artists and scholars. Eighteen faculty and eighteen staff members serve about seventy undergraduate majors and thirty graduate students. The School offers a four-year undergraduate liberal arts education, Master of Fine Arts degrees in acting, design, and directing, and a Doctor of Philosophy in theater history and performance studies.

Glenn Hughes' Vision

The School of Drama traces its origins to 1919 when Glenn Hughes, a young man from Nebraska and a recent graduate of Stanford University, joined the faculty of the Department of Dramatic Art, a part of the English Department. Though he came to the UW as a poetry fellow, Hughes soon became determined to create a first-rate drama school.

Hughes led the Department from 1930 to 1961. In 1940 the Department of Dramatic Art was renamed the School of Drama. Hughes wrote more than 60 plays, wrote and edited various literary and scholarly publications, launched one of the West Coast's first foreign film series, and established the drama program as the center of theatrical life in Seattle. The University of Washington came to be recognized as one of the leading institutions in the nation for professional training in theatre arts.

Hughes' vision included children so that he could develop the audiences and performers of the future. Training in the theatre arts also included the most comprehensive program in child drama and theatre in the United States, a program that attracted students from this country and abroad.

Nourishing Seattle Theatre for 65 Years

Under Hughes' leadership, the Drama program became a center of Seattle's theatrical life and a respected part of its cultural milieu. Since that time, the School has been known for providing Hollywood with such great talents as Ella Raines and Frances Farmer and, among today's celebrities, alumni Joel McHale, Rainn Wilson, Ron Simons, Lois Smith, Robert Culp, Patrick Duffy, Jean Smart, Pamela Reed, Kyle MacLachlan, Harry Groener, and Richard Karn.

In 1961, Hughes retired and was succeeded by Gregory A. Falls. Falls created the Professional Actor Training Program—a prestigious BFA program (now MFA) that placed the School among the nation's top professional acting conservatories—and initiated the Ph.D. program in theatre history and criticism. It was during this time that the stream of UW Drama graduates began pooling right

here in Seattle. Graduates and former faculty stayed in the city, founding their own theatres and establishing what is today one of the country's most active and diverse theatre communities.

The School's role in establishing Seattle's vibrant theatre life was pivotal. Founders and artistic directors of many of Seattle's leading theatres were first students or faculty at the School of Drama. Greg Falls founded ACT Theater. Duncan Ross became artistic director of the Seattle Repertory Theater for a decade. Alumnus M. Burke Walker founded The Empty Space Theater and former faculty member Arne Zaslove took over the Bathhouse Theatre. Alumna Jenny McLauchlan Carlson co-founded Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT). Alumna Linda Hartzell is a former artistic director of SCT, which is considered one of the leading children's theatres in the country. Ruben Sierra, alumnus, and former Drama faculty member, created one of the country's first ethnic theater companies, The Group Theater (now the Ethnic Cultural Center), which was later led by Artistic Director Tim Bond, a directing graduate of the UW who went on to become Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The enormously successful Oregon Shakespeare Festival was founded by alumnus Angus Bowmer.

Governance

I. Regulations

A. School of Drama members are governed by five interdependent sets of regulations

1. Federal and State laws and regulations
2. [UW policies and rules](#)
3. [Faculty Code and Governance](#)
4. [College policies and rules](#)
5. [Departmental bylaws and policies](#)

II. Voting

- B. Per the Faculty Code (Section 21-32), voting members of the School of Drama include everyone who is a voting member of the University Faculty. This includes Professors, Research Professors, and Teaching Professors (all ranks); Senior artists in residence and artists in residence (full-time); full-time Lecturers; Retired faculty serving part-time (with same voting rights as their title at retirement). Faculty on sabbatical or unpaid leave are ineligible to vote.
- C. The department shall decide all matters of department policy and practice delegated to it by the faculty code. Voting happens at faculty meetings, to be held regularly throughout each quarter of the Academic Year. Faculty may participate in voting remotely if prearranged with the Executive Director. A quorum of two thirds of the eligible faculty must participate for votes to be considered valid. Faculty may vote by proxy. Votes are decided by simple majority.
- D. If a faculty meeting cannot be scheduled for a vote, every effort will be made to circulate an electronic ballot with ample time for discussion and voting. If an electronic ballot cannot be circulated, decisions will be made by the Executive Committee. This excludes votes on hiring; reappointment, tenure and promotion, merit; and amendments to Bylaws and policy memos. These votes will be deferred until such time when the faculty of respective rank can convene.

III. School of Drama Leadership Structure

- A. The School of Drama leadership structure is determined by the needs of the School at the time a new Executive Director is appointed. The current structure, outlined below, with an Executive Director, a Producing Associate Director, and four areas with faculty heads, reflects the School's current needs. It is by that same token the expectation that the leadership structure and assignment of duties may be adapted with subsequent Executive Director appointments. Changes to the leadership structure will be reflected in amendments to the bylaws and adopted by the faculty.

- B. The Executive Director oversees the academic business of the School of Drama, including curriculum and scheduling; academic hiring, merit, and promotion processes; finances and budgets; distribution of scholarships and fellowships; issues related to climate, diversity, and inclusion; and issues related to discipline and safety. The Executive Director oversees the School of Drama faculty and its leadership, including chairing the Executive Council and departmental meetings. The Executive Director liaises with the College of Arts and Sciences, the University, and the broader community. The Executive Director supervises administrative assistants, engagement staff, and advisors. The Executive Director is appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
- C. The Producing Associate Director oversees the School of Drama production season; oversees facilities; oversees production budgets; supervises Production Manager, shop managers and staff, Program Manager of Production and Facilities, and Manager of Audience Development; serves as acting Executive Director in Executive Director's absence. The Producing Associate Director reports to the Executive Director.
- D. Area Heads serve as the leaders for each of the School of Drama's academic Areas: Acting; Design; Directing & Playwriting; and Theatre History & Performance Studies. Area Head duties include overseeing area curriculum, teaching, mentoring, and professionalization; serving on the Executive Council; recruitment and assessment of graduate students; conducting regular area meetings; administering funding; staffing courses. Area Heads are appointed by and report to the Executive Director.

IV. School of Drama Executive Council

- A. The Executive Council comprises the Executive Director, The Producing Associate Director, and Heads of each of the areas (Acting, Directing & Playwriting, Design, Theatre History & Performance Studies). The Production Manager serves as ex officio member to the Executive Council. The Executive Council is chaired by the Executive Director.
- B. Members serve on the Executive Council for the duration of their (ex officio) term. When unable to attend an Executive Council meeting or discussion (e.g., if they are on leave for a quarter), Area Heads must designate another area representative to serve in their place.
- C. The primary purposes of the Executive Council are to represent their Areas in matters of strategic planning and governance; advise the Executive Director on academic policy, and strategic planning; oversee School of Drama undergraduate and graduate curricula and course scheduling; participate in School of Drama assessment and review processes (departmental review, URTA, etc.); determine distribution of School of Drama scholarships; and serve as leaders in the School. Executive Council Meetings are called by the Executive Director. Any member of the faculty may request in writing that the Executive Council take up a particular matter.

V. School of Drama Committees

- A. School of Drama Committees are formed by the Executive Director to help conduct the business of the School of Drama and differ in purpose from year to year as needed. Committee types include Standing Committees (for long-term, ongoing business) and Ad Hoc Committees (for short, one-time tasks). Membership on these committees is a form of service to the School.
- B. Examples of past Standing Committees include:
 - a. Belonging Committee
 - b. Season Selection Committee
 - c. Hiring plan committee
 - d. Merit review committees
 - e. Curriculum committee
- C. Examples of past Ad-Hoc Committees include:
 - a. Faculty and Staff Search committees
 - b. Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure
 - c. Policy Memo review and amendment
 - d. Graduation
 - e. Graduate Programs Steering Committee

VI. Meetings of the School of Drama

- A. Regular departmental meetings are called by the Executive Director, who serves as chair of the meetings. In the event that the Executive Director cannot be present, the Producing Associate Director will serve as chair of that meeting. There must be at least one departmental meeting per quarter.
- B. Departmental meetings consist of an open information session (announcements, general discussion of old and new business) and a closed executive session where proprietary matters are discussed and faculty voting take place. All School of Drama faculty and staff are invited and encouraged to attend the open portion of departmental meetings. Executive sessions are attended by voting members of the faculty. Voting faculty members are dismissed from discussions and votes on personnel matters (merit, reappointment, promotion, etc.) related to individuals of superior rank, per rules on voting eligibility in the Faculty Code (Section 21-32).
- C. Dates, times, locations, and agendas for a calendar of regular departmental meetings are published for School of Drama faculty and staff at least three University Days in advance of the first meeting and disseminated to the UW Office of Public Records. Dates, times, locations, and agendas for special meetings (not included in the calendar of regular meetings) must be disseminated to Faculty and UW Office of Public Records at least 24 hours in advance. Most meetings are announced at the beginning of the academic year and agendas are posted on the school's website.

- D. Minutes are kept for departmental meetings and shared with School faculty and staff to be approved at the following meeting.
- E. Two thirds of voting members must be present at any meeting in which votes take place for the votes to be considered valid. Members may attend remotely if prearranged with the Executive Director. Votes by proxy are allowed.
- F. Members of the School of Drama faculty vote on decisions related to hiring plans; ranking of candidates for new faculty hires; reappointment, tenure and promotion, merit, and retention; and amendments to the Bylaws or policy memos. In these cases, the Executive Director appoints a committee in advance for the purpose of making recommendations to the faculty. Committee recommendations are circulated prior to the meeting in which discussion and voting takes place. Discussion requires a motion and a second. Votes are collected by secret ballot.
- G. On occasion, voting faculty will discuss and vote on matters that come up in meetings and are not circulated in advance. In these cases, there must be a motion from the floor and a second before the matter can be discussed and voted upon. Votes will be conducted by voice vote unless the Executive Director recognizes a call for a secret ballot.
- H. All voting members of the School of Drama faculty vote on recommendations for a new appointment, at any rank, including new emeritus appointments. Recommendations for reappointment, renewal, or merit increase, are voted on by those voting members who are superior in academic rank to the person under consideration as determined by the Faculty Code.

VII. Amendments and Additions to the Bylaws

- A. School of Drama Bylaws are reviewed and approved by faculty vote every five years.
- B. Any member of the voting faculty may propose amendments to the Bylaws. Proposed amendments must be circulated in writing in advance of a departmental meeting. Amendments require a motion and a second, discussion at a faculty meeting with a quorum of voting members present, and approval by a majority vote. Successful amendments will be included with the dates of adoption at the bottom of the Bylaws document.

VIII. Institutional Record

- A. Approved Bylaws are posted on the School of Drama website and shared with the College of Arts and Sciences. All policies in the Bylaws adopted by the faculty are considered in effect absent a faculty vote to revise or eliminate a specific policy or procedure. Other policies and procedures are listed in the School of Drama's Policy Memos. In cases of conflict, the Bylaws supersede the Policy Memos.