

## STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY (SDC) DIRECTING INITIATIVE GUIDELINES - KCACTF, REGION II

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SDC is an opportunity for students to explore the craft of directing with professional directors, educators, and peers. Students in Region II choose a scene from the nationally selected scenes and then, at festival, cast, rehearse, and present the scene, which is responded to by our guest directors. Through the initiative, students engage in a formal process of script analysis, rehearsal, and scene presentation. At festival, one student director finalist and an alternate will be selected to participate in the national festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC in April. The award includes travel, lodging, per diem expenses, and master classes at the National Festival.

**Candidate Eligibility:** *To be eligible for the SDC Directing Fellowship Program, a student must:*

- Attend a school which has entered at least one production in the regional festival at either the associate or participating level;
- Be a bona fide student at the time of the regional festival;
- Be nominated by a faculty member at their school;
- Submit a completed registration packet by Sunday, December 1, 2019.

### **Application Process:**

Submit the following materials via email to Suzanne Delle, SDC Coordinator, at [directing@kcactf2.org](mailto:directing@kcactf2.org) by **Sunday, December 1, 2019**.

1. **A Statement of Intent** (1-page max.) 1-page max) addressing the reasons for your interest in the SDC Directing Initiative Program. Have you directed in the past? What successes and challenges have you faced? How will participating in this program contribute to your growth as a director? If you haven't directed in the past, why are you interested in directing and what do you hope to learn in the program? Please affirm your ability to attend the entire festival (Festival 52: Tuesday, January 14 through Saturday, January 19, 2020 at the University of Maryland) and include if you or any member of your company will take part in the Irene Ryan Scholarship Program as either a nominee or partner.
2. **Faculty/Nominator-of-Record Letter of Recommendation** which speaks to the student's directing accomplishments and potential. The letter should provide information about the student's record as a student of directing, including coursework and practical directing experience, imagination and artistic vision, communication skills, and ability to collaborate with others. In addition, the letter should provide the faculty member's assessment of how participation in this program may benefit the student. Please affirm the student director's ability to attend the entire festival.
3. Complete the **Festival 52: 2020 KCACTF/SDC Online Registration Form**

### **What to Expect at the Regional Festival - The Total Experience:**

- Daily workshops in directing.
- Rehearsal time in the space, prior to the preliminary round and the final round. All candidates will be afforded rehearsal time in the space prior to initial presentment of their work in the preliminary round.
- Presentation of your scene followed by constructive feedback from a panel of respondents within the context of the SDC Directing Initiative Program.

### **Scene Rehearsal:**

- The scene must include bona fide student actors (see above).
- Directors may not act or be otherwise involved in the production of their, or another's, scene.
- Directors are encouraged to consider non-traditional casting for any of the scenes selected as can be supported by your concept.

### **Stages of the Program**

**Prior to the Festival:** All candidates are required to electronically submit a digital copy of the director's promptbook (see below) prior to the first day of festival and present a hard-copy at festival.

**Rehearsal Prior to the Preliminary Round:** All candidates will be afforded rehearsal time in the space prior to initial presentment of their work in the preliminary round.

**Preliminary Round:** A closed round (*not open to the public*). All candidates are required to attend the entirety of the preliminary round presentations. Professors who are the nominators-of-record are encouraged, but not required, to attend. Other than for the scene in which they are performing, actors are not allowed in the room. After the presentation, the guest directors/respondent will respond to the work in the closed setting.

**Interview Round:** Candidates will attend individual interviews with the guest directors/respondents and coordinator. At this time, the director's promptbook (see below) and approach to the scene will be discussed. Following the interview, the guest directors/respondents will select the candidates who will advance to the final round.

**Rehearsal Prior to the Final Round:** candidates will be afforded limited rehearsal time in the space to incorporate changes based upon the preliminary round presentation, the response, and the interview session.

**Final Round:** Open to the public. All candidates are required to attend the entirety of the final round. The final round will be scheduled to allow the director and actors to work on the scene based on the feedback from the preliminary and interview rounds. After the presentation, the guest directors /respondents will respond to the work in a public setting. The guest directors/respondents will then choose the recipient and alternate for the KCACTF/SDC Directing Initiative to represent Region II at the national festival; announced at the closing ceremony.

**Technical Considerations:** Candidates are afforded 15 minutes to set up, introduce, present, curtain call, and strike. The festival will provide set elements which consist of basic furniture items (two chairs, one table) and 4-6 rehearsal cubes (approx. 24" X 24" X 24"). There is no sound/lighting technical support. You may provide your own sound with your own equipment – no speakers or amps are provided (the director may not run the sound). There will be no light cues, you will be supplied a simple wash. Setup/Strike should be rehearsed and may be integrated into the storytelling. All props/costumes must be supplied by the company.

**The Director's Introduction to the Scene:** Candidates will introduce themselves and their scene. Introductions should be made without reference to school. It is expected that the director will speak to the given circumstances of the scene as well as 'fill-in-the-gaps' for the audience due to the technical limitations; paint the picture for us. It is suggested you rehearse your set-up and introduction with your company incorporating a cue for them to begin the piece.

**SDC Guest Directors/Respondents:** respondents are skilled directors who have a strong track record of responding to directing and are out-of-region colleagues or local professionals who are not affiliated with regional institutions. They will respond to the rounds of presentations, participate in the interview round, and decide which student director will advance to the national festival in Washington DC. At least one member of the respondent team will be an SDC member.

**The Promptbook - Quality of work, not quantity of work:** Candidates must prepare a written analysis of their scene in the form of a director's promptbook. The promptbook is the director's way of presenting their perspective of the scene and how the scene functions within the play. It should contain essential elements that articulate the process of selecting, analyzing, researching, preparing, designing, and rehearsing the scene. The director's promptbook will be submitted, electronically, to the KCACTF/SDC Directing Initiative coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the first day of festival and present a hard-copy at festival. The promptbook is an important factor in deciding who will advance to the final round of presentations.

**Essential elements to be included in your promptbook:**

**-A Cover Page** with your name only, name of play, the scene presented, and a cast list (character and actor names).

**-A Resume**

**-Director's Statement:** The director's written statement provides the personal, analytical and intuitive framework for the scene. It is a combination of script analysis, research, creativity and personal connection to the text. The statement should address the themes, images, and specific lines of text that guide the director's work, including the context of the scene; where/how the scene fits into the play.

**Include the following:**

- \*Your directing philosophy and goals as a director.
- \*Why you chose this particular scene/play.
- \*What you are trying to achieve with your approach to this scene?
- \*How would you present a fully produced version of the play?
- \*What were your successes and challenges as a director.

**Identification:**

- \* Title of play, playwright, date of writing, date of publication, first production, production history, and relevant playwright biography.
- \* A simple, one sentence telling of the story.
- \* A metaphor that expresses the essence of the play.

**Given Circumstances (of the play and the scene):**

- \* Place.
- \* Time: Date: year, season, time of day.
- \* Environment: Social, Political, Cultural, Economic.

**Plot (action/beats) & Working Script:**

- \* Provide a copy of your script divided into units of action and beats. Give a title for each beat.
- \* Detailed breakdown of the action. Separate the action into beats and provide an active present-tense verb for each character within each beat. (Example: *A entraps and B pleads.*)
- \* Indicate the key events for the scene (discoveries, complications, reversals, etc.)

**Dramatic Action:**

- \* Describe the scene's basic conflict in a concrete sense.  
(*example: Edna wants Joe to join the striking cab drivers but Joe is afraid.*)
- \* Provide a concise analysis of the events of the scene.
- \* Describe any significant previous action that occurs before the scene begins.
- \* Describe how this scene's basic conflict integrates with the basic conflict of the play in an abstract sense.  
(*example: Edna and Joe's conflict reflects the basic conflict of Waiting for Lefty which is an exploration of the struggle of the working class against capitalist greed, etc.*).

**Character:**

- \* List the characters, and provide an overall character breakdown and objective for the scene.
- \* Identify the obstacles between each of the characters and their objectives in the scene.
- \* How do the characters change over the course of the scene?

**Language:**

- \*Discuss how choice of words, images, phrases, sentence structures, the pace and sound of the dialogue, etc. reveal character, contribute to the storytelling and provide meaning within the scene.

**Vision/Concept:**

- \*What is the importance of the scene to the play as a whole?
- \*How does this scene reveal, highlight, detail, or expand upon one or more of the thought and/or ideas that the playwright intends to communicate to their audience through the play as a whole?

**Spectacle/Design:**

- \*Visual materials (ground plan, blocking diagrams, image portfolio, etc.)
- \*List a series of imagistic words (or other communication) that conveys your aesthetic sense of the look, sense and “feel” of the scene and the play. These words could include colors, textures, ornamentation, relevant metaphorical images, light and shadow, composition, degree of detail, etc.

**Additional materials** may include a rehearsal journal and research.

**What are the Guest Directors/Respondents Looking?**

**Analysis and understanding.** Is there evidence of clear dramaturgy regarding the playwright, the play, and the nature of the scene?

**Communication, collaboration and understanding.** Is there evidence of collaboration and communication within the company?

**Action & Storytelling.** Does the scene have a dramatic arc? Can we clearly follow the action of the scene? Does the scene begin and end with purpose? Is there a unity of approach and execution of artistic choices?

**Theatricality.** Does the director solve challenges presented by the scene in an inventive and purposeful way?

**Casting.** Was the scene well cast?

**Actor Coaching.** Are character relationships clear and compelling? Are the actors/characters in the same dramatic world

**Staging and use of space/ground plan.** Is the space thoughtfully and imaginatively used to tell the story of the scene? Does the staging help clarify the story? Does the director understand the fundamentals of staging?

**For more information about the KCACTF/SDC Fellowship Program contact Region II Coordinator, Suzanne Delle at [directing@kactf2.org](mailto:directing@kactf2.org)**