

SRJC Theatre Arts Department Career Education (CE) Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 5, 2025

Prepared by: Shannon Jaeger

Begin 9:06am

In Attendance via Zoom. No in-person meeting.

SRJC Faculty and Staff:

Laura Downing-Lee, Shannon Jaeger, Kyle McHarris, James Newman, Justin Smith

Advisory Board Members:

Peter Callender, Nathan Crocker, Laxmi Kumara, Anne McAlexander, Debbie Weber

Note: Debbie Weber attending as proxy for Derek Duarte.

Welcome and Introductions

James Newman welcomes everyone.

Meeting called to order.

Previous Minutes Approval

2023.2024 advisory board meeting minutes approved.

Department Updates

James Newman:

The technical department is growing and balancing the performance side.

Announcing the 2025.2026 Season:

- The Comedy of Hamlet! (a prequel)
- Ride the Cyclone
- Boeing Boeing
- Hello Dolly!

Note: all participants in a show are also enrolled in a class.

Peter Callendar: Requests to be invited to the shows. James Newman will pass along the advisory board member list to the box office manager.

New Business Discussion

Justin Smith: Has questions about the program dilemma of balancing the pedagogical and artistic elements. Response is that this is a common issue with theatre programs.

Laxmi Kumara: This is also an issue when it comes to academic credit transfer from different schools.

Core classes (undergrad) help set the student up for transfer success, but students also want diversity in their training.

Nathan Crocker: This can depend upon the program. It is about variety of experience, classical vs. contemporary, and skill with musicality and text.

Peter Callender: Advocate for all actors at all levels. Supports doing Shakespeare in addition to more contemporary works just for the exposure at the very least.

Justin Smith: Explained that the SRJC Theatre Arts club self-produced a Shakespeare play for exactly this reason.

James Newman: Appreciates the club stepping up in this way. He is very proud of the students' initiative.
Debbie Weber: Once the GE requirements and introductory theatre classes are taken care of at the community college level, there are many opportunities for students at the upper division transfer levels.

Unfinished Business.

No unfinished business.

Public Comment

Certificates

Justin Smith: The department has been working on developing mini-certificates in tech. Certificates are good to build a foundation in tech. Good to keep evolving with students' interests and needs.

Certificates are very important now, especially for those students that don't want to transfer to 4-year schools.

James Newman: Supports smaller-requirement certificates. Mentions that the musical theatre class is very popular.

Anne McAlexander: Knows that musical theatre certificates are becoming more common, and that musical theatre is a very popular course of study.

Justin Smith: Questions whether certificates have the same merit equal to an AA in the work environment.

Laxmi Kumara: Thinks that certificates are helpful because they provide a specific focus of experience and training. And show practical experience as well.

James Newman: Another area is stage management. Certificates provide very practical and valuable experience for those wanting to enter the job market.

Summer Repertory Theatre

Justin Smith: Summer Repertory Theatre (SRT) is under 3.6 review. Is there value in trying to bring it back?

James Newman: The SRT certificate is a good tool for showing actual work in the field.

Nathan Crocker: Was involved in SRT for a number of seasons as an acting student and director. He thinks it is valuable experience for actors, both musical and non-musical.

A vote is taken by the board. All board members agree that SRT was of valuable and should be considered for restoration.

Mask Work

Peter Callender: Asks if the department does any mask work with the actors. Believes it promotes physicality with acting, and character development via the body. Discusses experience of the Suzuki method and encourages actors to explore it.

James Newman: He also took Suzuki method classes. Associate faculty member, Reed Martin, does teach a Movement and Mask course.

Laura Downing-Lee: In her experience, students don't see Suzuki-type experience as relevant.

Nathan Crocker: Agrees with Laura. He experiences that many students have disconnect from the body and feelings. But still feels it is a worthy challenge to work in this way.