

Season Selection and Casting

UVU Theatrical Arts

Equitable Educational Opportunities

The UVU Department of Theatrical Arts believes in providing equitable educational and performance opportunities for all our students. Representation matters. We are working towards more equitable representation in the stories we choose to tell and in who has the opportunity to tell those stories.

Season Selection

Cultural Representation

Moving forward, the season selection committee will place a specific emphasis on, and increase its commitment to, exploring and nominating scripts by BIPOC playwrights. The committee will increase transparency around the selection process and support and amplify the contributions of student committee members. We aspire to produce at least one BIPOC-authored work per year, either as a department or in collaboration with the community.

Gender Parity

The committee will continue its commitment to gender parity by exploring and nominating titles by women and/or nonbinary playwrights, aspiring towards 50% representation in our seasons over any four year period, and providing opportunities for students of all genders to play interesting, complex, and fully human roles.

Casting

Informed Consent

At auditions and casting, actors will be notified of material that will include staged intimacy, violence, nudity, or other potentially triggering content and allowed to opt out of rehearsing or performing such material.

In an educational environment where students must perform in order to complete their degrees, directors must be willing to work creatively within students' personal boundaries and cannot enforce "non-negotiables" as one might in the professional world.

Special care will be taken around stories dealing with race. For some students who have experienced racial trauma, telling such stories may be empowering and important work. For others, it may be demeaning or retraumatizing. Students will be given the opportunity to express their boundaries around sensitive material.

A template for an informed consent survey is available here: [Audition Disclosure Form](#)

Cultural Competence and Anti-Racism

The Department of Theatrical Arts aspires to follow a policy of inclusive and color-conscious casting. For us, this means specifically acknowledging:

- Race is an integral aspect of identity;

- Race and other visible identity markers tell specific stories and impact relationship dynamics both for actors and the characters they play;
- There is no such thing as a “neutral” character.

For these reasons, we will endeavor to sensitively consider our actors’ visible identity markers and the impact of casting decisions on our storytelling, relying on the testimony and lived experience of our most vulnerable community members when we are unsure. We will especially look for ways to provide equitable opportunities for those whose identities are marginalized in our industry. We will avoid stereotyped casting. We will work to expand our imaginations regarding who belongs onstage and in what roles.

Some hypothetical concrete examples of inclusive practice might be:

- *Casting a Black actor in a role originally written for a White person when race is not central to the story being told, without asking that actor to “play White” or otherwise efface their racial identity;*
- *Casting a woman in a role originally written for a man when gender is not central to the story being told;*
- *Not casting a white actor in a role written for a person of color;*
- *Not casting BIPOC actors interchangeably - e.g. not casting a Latinx actor as an Asian character;*
- *Casting a visibly disabled actor in a role that is not about disability;*
- *Casting a deaf actor to play a deaf character;*
- *Etc.*

Dramaturgical Support

In some cases, it may be necessary for an actor to play a character whose marginalized identity they do not share, or for a director to work on a piece about people whose lived experience they cannot fully comprehend. In such cases, the production should solicit the creative collaboration of an individual or individuals whose lived experience can inform the storytelling.

For example, in a production about the Holocaust, non-Jewish actors can be dramaturgically supported in their portrayal of Jewish characters to ensure specificity and a respectful portrayal.

In most cases, this task should be handled by a cultural consultant from outside the company. This task should not automatically fall to a company member, even if that person shares the identity in question, without first establishing interest, expertise, creative empowerment in the production space, and appropriate additional compensation and credit.