

EDUCATIONAL ARTS LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

As an arts leader, I believe in guiding with care, vision, and opportunity — building a department where students flourish, faculty collaborate, and the community sees the transformative power of music, theatre, and dance.

In my current role as Program Director at Old Dominion University, I have built programs that center students' real-world development. Through initiatives such as StageCoach, a student-run ride-share program connecting students to the vibrant Hampton Roads theatre scene, I have brought students into the local theatre ecosystem, forging partnerships with community companies and giving young artists direct exposure to professional practice. I also created a yearly Connection Fair, inviting regional industry leaders to campus to directly connect to students, share career paths and begin to cultivate a pipeline from ODU's training ground to the professional world of Hampton Roads. These experiences not only enrich students' learning, but also deepen institutional ties to the regional arts community.

But we haven't stopped there! Since September 2025, we've hosted national industry guests such as musical theatre's Adam Gwon and Sarah Hammond, during the Virginia premiere of their new musical *String* right here at ODU, and as part of this year's expanded Connection Fair, we hosted Broadway producer Mark Rozzano and Emmy-award winner, Jacob Young as part of a partnership with Next Generation Storytellers, an organization committed to tearing down barriers to access Hollywood for students from underrepresented communities.

Believing that community and physical interaction is fundamental to a thriving program, I've booked a monthly professional development workshop series dedicated to addressing important but often overlooked needs: audition preparation, summer employment, healthy boundaries, and career sustainability. By taking students to regional conferences like the Southeastern Theatre Conference to audition with pros, we have helped several secure their first professional jobs, strengthening our program's reputation and our students' confidence in entering the industry.

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My leadership in strategic planning and fundraising comes from experience in capital campaign management and education at the Virginia Stage Company among other regional houses. I understand the value of stewarding resources with artistic mission and fiscal responsibility. Operationally, I bring practical theatre management experience, from box office and group sales to house management and customer service, which informs how I run programs for both excellence and sustainability. Just as the classroom should be a laboratory for students, I believe that students interested in pursuing arts administration ought to have an inside look regarding promotion and management and am committed to supporting that endeavor.

Artistically, Musical Theatre is at the heart of my vision: it exemplifies the collaborative spirit of a Music, Theatre and Dance department, blending music, voice, text, movement, design, and prepares students to work across disciplines. My training in musical theatre uniquely positions me to lead an interdisciplinary department that empowers students to grow as industry professionals while supporting faculty from diverse backgrounds with wisdom and acknowledgment of their deep value and necessary contributions to a department's joint endeavors.

My vision is one of inclusive excellence: recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty; building curricula that reflects a broad spectrum of voices; and ensuring that every student, no matter their background, sees a path for leadership, creativity, and belonging. Wherever I go, I deepen community partnerships to produce work that resonates both on campus and beyond.

Leading with kindness, integrity, and hopeful pragmatism, I aim to sustain a culture where students and faculty can take artistic risks, build resilient careers, and contribute to my organization's identity as a regional leader in the liberal arts. My philosophy centers on creating not just performances, but people: artists who are grounded, compassionate, and ready to lead.

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