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Senior Seminar

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Career Research Plan

1. Self SWOT Analysis

Strengths: I have had a strong vision for what I want to do with my career since I arrive at MTSU. I recently re-visited the career plan assignment I completed my freshmen year for Into the Theatre Studies and discovered that my objectives there for long term goals, have not really changed. Everything I have done here has been in an effort to reach those goals and I have accomplished the activities I listed as steps towards the goal. I feel confident in my sense of career planning in that I know what I want and am actively pursuing it through whatever means necessary. I have taken strides in networking through conferences and summer work to supply me with the resources I feel will be necessary in this path. The networks I have built with professionals in Chicago, D.C., and Florida will help me along every step of my journey. I have pushed myself to both physically and psychologically further with each new endeavor. The most important thing that I set out to accomplish in my time here was to take a variety of classes and further my understanding of all areas of performance, tech, design, and creation of theatre. I feel that I have achieved this and have gained skills and knowledge that have and will continue to serve me for the rest of my life. This training and these experiences allow me to be a competitive

asset in a variety of positions and will help me get my foot in the door with many different companies.

Weaknesses: Something I was recently told by Brandon Bruce, Artistic Director for Birmingham Children's Theatre, is that I am incredibly organized and prepared. He made sure to reassure me that this is a good thing, but that as a director I may want to introduce a little chaos into the room. It made me realize that perhaps I have taken some planning and things a bit too seriously. That's not to say I think one shouldn't plan and prepare for a number of things, but rather to make these plans and do the preparation, but see what happens with some more spontaneity. I shy away a bit from that. He was specifically referencing a rehearsal room, but I think it can apply to the greater scheme of planning as a type A individual. It's my hope that I can release a little bit of that anxiety and control and introduce some spontaneity.

I have pushed myself a bit too far physically and psychologically perhaps, resulting in exhaustion. This has happened through stubbornness and again, that inability to relinquish some of that control. Largely, I feel the need to do things myself and I struggle to let others help me. This causes issues in such a collaborative art form.

Opportunities: I have been incredibly fortunate to experience an abundance of opportunities in my time here, and to have some lined up already. I have been able to work in professional theatre every summer since freshmen year holding different positions with different companies. I have also been incredibly fortunate to experience such varied opportunities at MTSU. These different opportunities have

introduced me to new places and people that have influenced my career planning and shifted the specifics a bit. I've gained incredible skills, knowledge, and abilities that I otherwise may never have found. The training and experience gained in these opportunities has opened so many doors for me already as I leave undergrad. I have accepted a position as the Education Intern for Florida Repertory Theatre for the 2017-2018 season. This position is providing me with even more incredible and unique experiences that will continue to contribute to my knowledge, training, and experiences in ways that I would not find elsewhere.

Threats: The major threats to my career plan are both external and internal. As I have discovered, it is entirely possible to get exhausted and burnt out on theatre. You can go a period of time where you feel unfulfilled or a period where you feel like you couldn't possibly do more theatre. This is the biggest internal threat to me in my pursuit. I can't allow this feeling to stop my momentum and to hinder my performance. Directing is incredibly competitive and even more so for young directors. The only way I will be able to keep on progressing, it to persist through these exhausting times and continue planning ahead and working towards the next goal.

Other young directors are the other threat to my career. There is only one director for production and there is one assistant position and there are only a handful of directing internships or artistic fellowships of that nature. And all of us are after all of them. This competitive nature is a huge threat to my career, which is another reason I can't become complacent. I have to continue to work and further

myself or I will fall behind these other directors. And the second I fall behind, it will be incredibly difficult to catch back up.

Goal 1: Three years – My goal is to gain experience and connections as a director with major regional theatres.

Objective #1: I need internships with major regional theatres.

Activities: 1 year

-I have accepted an internship with Florida Repertory Theatre as Education Intern.

2 years

-I will apply for directing and artistic internships, apprenticeships, and fellowships with theatre like Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Olney Theatre Center, and Studio Theatre.

-I will use my connections through working for Florida Rep and The Olney to fight my way into these positions.

-If I am unable to get another internship I will attempt to stay hired on at Florida Rep and move up there.

3 years (Assuming I complete an internship with a theatre referenced above)

-I will apply for artistic apprentice positions with equity houses in Chicago including The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Writer's Theatre.

-I will use my connections with professionals from The Goodman, Halena Kays, Steppenwolf,

Santiago Sosa, and Writers Theatre, Lauren Sale, to try and fight my way into these positions.

Objective #2: I need to add directing and assistant directing credits to my resume.

Activities:

1 year

-My position with Florida rep guarantees me directing and assistant directing credits with full length and Jr. productions

2 years

-If I do gain another internship I will continue to get more directing and assistant directing credits through that position.

- In the event that I do not get one of those positions, I will submit to direct readings in new play festivals or continue to work for Florida Rep and build my resume more there.

3 years (Assuming I move to Chicago)

-I will continue building my resume with an internship or fellowship listed above.

-If I am unable to acquire one of these internships, I will apply to direct new play readings with storefront theatres and assist with as many of those theatres as possible.

-I will seek to create opportunities for me to direct with my friends that live in Chicago and create our own work.

Objective #3: I need to make valuable connections and network my way into assistant positions that lead to greater responsibility.

Activities: 1 year

-At Florida Rep, I will be working with Kody C. Jones who has valuable connections to Actor's Theatre of Louisville, and Jason Parrish, who has valuable connections to a number of regional theatre in the northeast including Theater by the Sea.

-I have previously worked at Florida Rep with Lauren Sale, who has enormous connections in Chicago, and is currently Education Director for Writer's Theatre.

2 years (Assuming I have an internship with Actor's Theatre of Louisville)

-I will work with a number of equally young and striving theatre professionals that are seeking to break in and create exciting new things.

-I will create a network with Les Waters, Meredith McDonough, and Michael Legg, all of whom are notable and incredible artists.

3 years (Assuming I move to Chicago)

-I will continue to foster the connections I've made and create new ones at storefront theatres and equity houses.

-I will take advantage of other artist's I have met in my work that have moved to Chicago to break into different scenes.

Goal 2: Five years – My goal is to go to Graduate School and get an MFA in directing.

Objective #1: I need to make myself as appealing as possible to a grad program.

Activities: Years 1-3

-The activities for these three years are the same as the activities expressed in the previous goals.

-I will maintain a CV of the work I do.

-I will research MFA programs and discern what I will benefit most from.

Year 4

-I will continue collaborating with Chicago artists to build my resume and network.

-I will continue to market myself and invite potential grad programs to view my work as often as possible.

-I will attend SETC and interview for grad programs.

-I will apply and travel to schools as needed.

Year 5 (Assuming I am accepted into a grad program)

-I will attend graduate school and complete an MFA in directing

-I will take a pedagogy class to prepare me for the potential of teaching.

Objective #2: I need to get first hand experience of grad programs.

Activities: Years 1-2

-Attend SETC each year and lay ground work for graduate school by checking in with programs.

Years 3-4

-Go to visit campuses and meet with faculty of potential programs.

-Connect with students/alumni of those programs and discover what they enjoyed and disliked about the programs.

Objective #3: I need to gather marketable experiences related to directing, that aren't exactly directing.

Activities: Year 1

-At Florida Rep, I will be used in office/administrative work.

-I will push to assist in casting, literary management, and dramaturgy as often as possible.

-I will gain valuable experience in teaching artistry as well.

Year 2 (Assuming I have an internship like above)

-I will continue to work in casting, development, and dramaturgy, alongside directing.

-I will read educational texts regarding dramaturgy.

-I will shadow and assist Artistic Directors as often as possible.

Year 3-4

-I will continue to market my new skills to gain employment and continue furthering my knowledge of these other related areas.

Goal 3: Three years – My goal is to remain actively employed in theatre through whatever positions necessary.

Objectives #1: I need to scout jobs that aren't directing.

Activities: Year 2-3 (Following the internship with Florida Rep)

-I will check offstage jobs and artsearch weekly.

-I will reach out to former employers and collaborators to see what positions they may need or be aware of.

Objective #2: I need to develop my piano skills further.

Activities: Year 1

-I will practice scales, exercises, and sight-reading at least four days a week.

Years 2-3

-I will continue to practice at least four days a week

-I will apply for positions as a rehearsal pianist, accompanist, or music director

Year 3

-I will begin teaching private instruction piano to beginners.

Objective #3: I need to learn more about arts administration.

Activities: Year 1

-I will shadow and talk with the Associate Artistic Director and Artistic Director of Florida Rep as often as possible.

-I will maintain a list of questions and answers as I discover new things from these people.

-I will also reach out to other administration members and maintain this list regarding their positions.

Year 2

-I will apply for arts administration positions including areas such as persona assistant, casting, marketing, development, box office, and audience services.

Geographic Area/Budget Research

WHY: As of now, I believe that I will be happy living and working in Chicago. I find the city to be much friendlier and more interesting than New York for a number of reasons. I like the architecture and infrastructure of the city, and find that the people there are more excited about supporting other artists, than the aggressively competitive nature of New York. The theatre “scene” of Chicago is also significantly more diverse. There is a wider array of less commercial theatre including Shakespeare, improve/sketch comedy, straight plays, musicals, new plays, readings, and so on. The theatres themselves are more diverse. There are the big name Equity houses, but then there are so many smaller storefront houses and small companies all over the city. While these, exist in New York, I don’t feel that they are nearly as viable as they are in Chicago due to the sheer commercialization of theatre in New York. Its hard for something “independent” and “artistic” to exist as vibrantly in New York against the backdrop of Broadway, whereas in Chicago the people want to support those new indie pieces. I also already have a handful of strong connections in Chicago, and will continue to build more through those connections. In a business where it’s all about who ya know, it feels safer to move to a city where I actually know working professionals.

JOB MARKET: As stated above, there is a wider variety of theatre available in Chicago. Obviously, all shows need a director. That being said, there is no lack of directors in Chicago. There are an abundance of apprenticeships with reputable companies that allow me to build my resume and get my foot in the door with some of these companies.

The even more fortunate thing about all these different theatres in Chicago, is that they are always looking for administrative assistants and project manager types of positions. My primary focus of thrival jobs are positions in arts administration. Searching on leagueofchicagotheatre.org, I have found a multitude of listings for assistants to the production and artistic team of major productions. I feel confident and qualified to serve these roles while still trying to squeeze my way into the scene.

These positions will even help me get there that much faster by collaborating with other artists and gaining their trust.

COST OF LIVING: According to expatistan.com, the monthly rent for a 900 sqft furnished accommodation in a “normal” area is \$1,461. I have no doubt I would live with a roommate so this would be roughly \$730 a month in rent. The utilities are estimated to be \$90 a person per month, internet is roughly \$45 dollars and assuming it is also divided with a roommate it would be \$22.50. With some rounding, its safe to assume that just the cost of my basic living in an apartment would be almost \$1,000 a month. All that being said, it is a safe assumption that I would seek either rent that is less that what is listed above, or another roommate or two.

I try not to eat out too much and to do be efficient in my cooking and management of groceries. I would expect to spend about \$250-\$300 a month on food and drinks. As for transportation, expatistan.com estimates \$103 a month on public transport. Ideally, I would be in such a position that I could walk or bike to and from most places. However, I do prefer public transportation over trying to park a car.

Student loan payments will factor in to be roughly \$100 a month for 120 months. There is my ongoing phone bill to consider, basic life essentials, any entertainment I may want to consider, and unexpected expenses. It’s probably safe to assume another \$150-200 a month for these things.

Expense Budget

HOME

Based off a listing on Zillow.com for 5550 N Glenwood Ave (2 bedroom, 1 bath)

\$1,650 per month divided by two people = \$825

Owner pays for trash, water, sewer, heating. Tenant pays cooking gas, electric, wifi.

\$22.50 for wifi + \$30 cooking gas and electric = \$52.50

Total Cost of HOME = \$877.50

FOOD

Grocery store every two week = \$75 per visit = \$150 a month on groceries

Factor in additional \$150 for going out to eat a month.

Total Cost of FOOD = \$150 + \$150 = \$300

STUDENT LOANS

Based on federal student loan structuring

\$100 a month

TRANSPORTATION

Living in this apartment in Andersonville would almost certainly require taking the train and other public transit systems.

CTA/Pace 30-Day Pass = \$100

BASIC LIFE ESSENTIALS (Hygiene products, medicine, haircuts, etc)

Based on the products I use and how long they last in my current life

\$30 a month

ENTERTAINMENT (Night out with friends, movie, theatre, new technology, etc)

A night out of dinner and drinks can quickly become \$40 (Factored in FOOD)

Average movie ticket is \$12 a piece

Average cost of a cocktail is \$10

Based on my current lifestyle and partaking in "entertainment"

I would estimate spending **\$125 a month**

EMERGENCY/UNKNOWN EXPENSES

\$150

TOTAL PRESENTED ABOVE: \$1532.50 (Safe to round up to \$1600.00)