COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS | THEATRE

THE OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II CENTER FOR THEATRE STUDIES

February 5th, 2021

Dear Second Year Theatre Managers and Producers,

First and foremost, I hope this email finds everyone and their loved ones well and at the start of a happy and healthy 2021. Thank you again for your letter.

I have been in discussion with the Deans and with Steven Chaikelson, your Concentration Head, in regard to the issues and concerns that you have brought up, specifically in terms of the challenges of this year and the possibility of extending your time at Columbia into an additional fourth year.

TM&P students are strongly encouraged to complete the majority of their thesis work during the third year and to not put off their research and writing to the fourth year. As is the norm for TM&P students, by the end of the spring semester of the second year, students are expected to finalize their thesis topic and transition into a research/writing mode. If we assume that the industry will open up more and more during the 2021-2022 season, the sooner you complete the thesis requirement, the better positioned you will be to accept full time employment as offices and theaters are staffing up. Also, at this time, all TM&P are encouraged to complete their required internships by the end of the 3rd year of study.

That said, TM&P students who have not completed their thesis or whose opportunities to engage in experiential learning via internships or other employment opportunities were deferred due to COVID-19 will be eligible, with the consent of their Concentration Head and Chair, to register for a Thesis Completion semester or year following their 6th semester of study (i.e. following their Research Arts year).

As you may have heard, and as is detailed in the attached PDF, Thesis Completion is a special status that has been created for students whose thesis and related work has been interrupted or delayed due to COVID-19; it grants MFA Theatre students full-time status with access to continued thesis advising and eligibility to be considered for required production opportunities. As far as production work, please keep in mind that 1st, 2nd and 3rd year TM&P students will be given priority in producing assignments over Thesis Completion students who have already fulfilled the production requirements for the MFA.

The current policies governing Thesis Completion eligibility, registration, tuition, fees, health insurance, health services, eligibility for scholarships, loans, service positions and on-campus work are attached, and here is additional information in response to your remaining questions:

Your Concentration Head will ensure that students who are registered for Thesis Completion are provided with thesis advising and mentorship regarding career development and employment opportunities. Such advising/mentorship for students registered for Thesis Completion may be provided by Tory Bailey and/or members of the adjunct faculty.

The Director of Academic Administration will ensure that students registered for Thesis Completion also have appropriate access to co-curricular events. And, to compensate for the loss of viewing New York professional theatre productions in 2020 and 2021, the DAA will extend our complimentary ticket program to all Thesis Completion students, as well as to all Theatre alumni in the classes of 2021, 2022, and 2023. We will extend this access through to May of 2024.

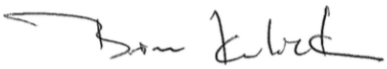
While students registered for Thesis Completion cannot audit a course for R credit, to sit-in on a course, they must obtain the special permission of the instructor and their Concentration Director, who set the parameters for attendance and may take into consideration many factors, including the number of students registered for credit, the class format and the nature of the material being taught. MFA students do not receive course credit when they sit in on a class, nor will it appear on their transcript.

Students in Columbia University Housing who request an extension to remain in University Housing for a Thesis Completion year cannot be guaranteed such an extension, as approval will be based on availability of space.

Our goal is for the London trip to occur in January 2022, and for both second and third year students to go to London together. However, at this point in time, we cannot make any firm commitments.

I hope the above information, and the attached policies governing Thesis Completion answer your initial concerns. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have any further questions, and thank you again for your patience and generosity of spirit as we try to work this all out.

Sincerely,



Brian Kulick
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