Dear Theatre and Dance Students,

We know that this has been a very trying time and we hope that you are staying healthy and safe!

We miss you all so much and are grateful for you all and the wonderful community of our department. Although our year was cut short, it is important to take a moment to reflect on the abundance of opportunities and achievements we had, thanks to the incredible work of our faculty, staff, and most of all, thanks to YOU.

We had a full year with our productions throughout the department: Real Women Have Curves, Shakespeare’s Asylum, Tommy, Dogfight, Monsters We Create, A Christmas Carol en la Frontera, Saturday Night Fever,and New Voices in Dance with several local artists and national guests; our wonderful guest speakers and performers Paula Vogel, Jesus I. Valles, Josephina López, Ruben Polendo, Austin Dean Ashford, and Egyptian folk dancer Karim Nagi; and the events that our department was able to host and attend, including KCACTF, the El Paso Strong Reading Series, and Tec de Monterrey and the Festival of Monologues.

We also want to acknowledge all the amazing students that won prizes and scholarships during the 2019-2020 school year at Bailando Dance Festival and KCACTF; we are incredibly proud of you! Students listed below.

While all of these are fantastic accomplishments, we want to make sure you stay excited about what is happening **NEXT YEAR!** We are collectively working hard to ensure some of the things scheduled for this Spring will take place in the Fall, as we are continuing to build the national standing of our programs. We hope that sharing the exciting plans we have in store for you for next year will energize your spirit, and we look forward to safely experiencing all of this with you!

First, we are glad to announce that Dr. Tawanda Chabikwa will join our Department as an Assistant Professor of Dance with a joint appointment in African American Studies. Tawanda is bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience both in traditional and contemporary African dance, as well as in urban studies, as he continues his scholarly research on contemporary African dance artists and Africana theories. We are also delighted to welcome back Visiting Professors of Practice, Neri Torres for the Fall and Georgina Escobar for the whole year, as they continue to build upon the great work they did this year.

Regarding our production **SEASON**, we open on September 22 with the student-directed Love Song (you asked, we listened!) The Spring Dance Capstone performances have been rescheduled for October 8-11. The following week (October 15-17), we host the Texas Dance Improvisation Festival (TDIF) and have the immense fortune to welcome two special master teachers: dance icon Jennifer Monson, and Puerto-Rican artist Nibia Pastrana. For more info on this festival:  <https://www.tdif.dance/>.

As always, we have a superb season of musicals at the **UDT**, and a fun Side Dish student production Bare-A Pop Opera directed by Romanti Mata opening on September 22. Starting October 22, we’ll finally enjoy Into the Beautiful North, with a host of great community events thanks to the NEA Big Read Grant.  Theatre students, Romanti Mata and Joseph Fernandez will have their capstones on November 3 and 4 and we will also have the ReUnión rEvolución: A Latinx New Works Festivalin November (dates TBA) followed by Titanic which opens on November 13. We press on into December, where we will present our holiday season favorite: Christmas Carol en la Frontera,this yeardirected by Greg Thompson. And what better way for our design students to work on the productions and tech classes than in the newly refurbished computer lab, with 20 new MAC computers!?!?!?

We are also working on several exciting opportunities for both theatre and dance students to experience some cutting-edge artists and scholars like: Steve Volk residency, Gesel Mason and Cuerva Urban Folklorico amongst others.

We are committed more than ever to supporting our students during these difficult times. Currently, here are some valuable opportunities and ways to stay connected:

Current Student Scholarship Auditions, deadline May 23:

<https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/theatre-dance/resources/scholarships.html>

The Department of Theatre and Dance **CURRENT** **STUDENT RELIEF FUND.**The faculty voted unanimously to have funds available for students needing extra assistance to continue their education.

Send an e-mail with the following information: Name, Major, Classification and how you plan to utilize these funds to continue your enrollment at UTEP by May 1 in order to be considered for a student service award to assist you with verified UTEP expenses. Theatre students e-mail: [adrianad@utep.edu](mailto:adrianad@utep.edu), Dance students e-mail: [mmelpignano@utep.edu](mailto:mmelpignano@utep.edu)Students will be notified by May 8.

**Theatre and Dance Grill-Off**! A fun, creative way to keep us all connected. Submit by April 30! Details attached. A tech portion will be coming up soon!

We know that you are working extremely hard and have adapted to the challenges of our new reality. We cannot wait to see you again! Please make sure that you have completed **ADVISING**for the Summer/Fall; we cannot wait to work with you!

Take care and know that we are available to assist you!

Department of Theatre and Dance Faculty & Staff

**STUDENT AWARDS**

Jensen Springer and Daniel Molina-Garcia were honored at the Bailando Dance Festival

Bailee Rodriguez: Musical Theatre Intensive Dance Participant & Musical Theatre Intensive Finalist (top 20): KCACTF

Bryant Webb: Musical Theatre Intensive Dance Participant: KCACTF

Jorge Blakely: Musical Theatre Intensive Dance Participant: KCACTF

Isabella Candelaria: Musical Theatre Intensive Dance Participant: KCACTF

Zaid Zavala: Musical Theatre Intensive Dance Participant: KCACTF

Hannah Perches:  Musical Theatre Intensive Finalist (top 20): KCACTF

Valerie Santos: Festival Developed Devised Performance: KCACTF

Brandon Salgado: Festival Developed Devised Performance: KCACTF

Lindsay Hearon: Excellence in Festival Management, Stage Management Intensive: KCACTF

Camila Hernandez Hernandez: Excellence in Festival Management, Stage Management Intensive: KCACTF

Zach Spencer: Excellence in Properties Design: KCACTF

Bianca Taylor: Irene Ryan Acting Competition Finalist (top 16 out of 167): KCACTF

Aaron Herrera: Irene Ryan Competition Finalist Partner: KCACTF

Mariana Baidon Carrillo: Outstanding Collaborative Team Dramaturgy by Design: KCACTF

Athziri Morales: Excellence in Lighting Design: KCACTF

T'Keyah Roberts, National Stage Management Fellowship & Stage Management Intensive: KCACTF

Itzel Martinez, Excellence in Festival Management, Stage Management Intensive & Excellence in Arts Administration/ASPIRE Initiative: KCACTF

<https://www.utep.edu/newsfeed/campus/kennedy-center-honors-two-utep-theater-students.html?fbclid=IwAR0_Rqfo112Frw_FGPVHkoM8AWXQ_sLM-5c77fyXtKJsRXpS3WSjw_011Xw>