Hello and welcome to Run Crew for TAPS. Each semester, TA-3 students serve as the backstage and technical crew for one of the department’s productions that take place on one of the three stages (Stuart Theatre, Leeds Theatre and Ashamu Studio) of The Catherine Bryan Dill Center for The Performing Arts or at Rites & Reason at Churchill House. These productions include shows produced by Sock & Buskin, Senior Slot, Dance Concerts, and Rites & Reason Theatre. Everything you will need to know about serving as a member of a run crew is detailed in this information sheet. In addition, (when possible) you will have a two-hour orientation prior to the beginning of the technical rehearsal process to answer any of your questions and alleviate any of your concerns.

Introduction

The run crew for our shows executes all backstage action. The stage managers and assistant stage managers, with the help of our designers, our costume shop manager (Ron Cesario), our technical director (Tim Hett), and many others organize backstage activity. Specifically, they figure out how to coordinate scene changes, the movement of props on and off stage, the flying in and out of curtains, costume changes, and the movement of costumes from the dressing room to the backstage area during the performance. While the stage manager remains in the lighting booth to call the show and the assistant stage managers are on headset backstage, supervising the crew and communicating with the stage manager, the run crew (you) will be the ones actually assisting with the costume changes, moving props backstage so they are ready for the actors, executing the scene changes during blackouts or in between scenes and flying the curtains in and out as needed. Two TA3 run crewmembers will be stationed in the light and sound booths running the light and soundboards, respectively. Most shows also use at least one spotlight, which a not-afraid-of-heights run crewmember will operate. In addition to these responsibilities during the show, the entire run crew also assists the stage manager and assistant stage managers with general stage prep before the show begins (e.g. mopping and sweeping the floor, doing sound and light checks, presetting props and costumes).

The run crew is part of the lifeblood of the technical process. Having an enthusiastic and committed crew makes all difference in how the final week of rehearsals, during which all technical elements are incorporated, runs. Without you, backstage would be literally stagnant. The experience of being on run crew, however, is definitely beneficial on both ends. While you become invaluable assets to the productions, you get to be the cast of the technical ballet that is your responsibility backstage, and most TA3ers come out with a network of new friends and go on to work on other theater projects with many of the people they met during the run crew process. It is, without a doubt, the best introduction into the theater community at Brown.
Conflicts and Scheduling

Twice each semester, the department’s production director, Barbara Reo, will come to your TA3 class with sign-up sheets for the season’s shows. It is important that you consider your schedules carefully, as serving on run crew is a considerable commitment, and it is difficult to switch people from show to show after the initial sign-ups. It is important to note that only academic conflicts are honored after discussion with the Production Director (B Reo). Extracurricular and nighttime conflicts (e.g. a capella, sports practice etc.) will NOT be honored. The run crew commitment is part of the TA3 course requirements. Any nighttime ACADEMIC conflicts should be discussed with B Reo at the beginning of the semester. After the sign-ups are compiled, formal lists, along with the run crew schedule for the shows, will be posted on the door of the cave for your referral throughout the semester.

If at any time during the semester an illness or family crisis arises that will require rescheduling of your Production Assignment, you must contact the Production Director (Barbara Reo) ASAP to discuss a different show assignment. It is your responsibility to find a classmate in either yours or another section of TA-3 to switch with and clear that with the production director (B Reo) no later than TWO weeks before the start of tech.

Should a family emergency or illness prohibit you from completing your run crew requirement – you must discuss that with your TA-3 Instructor and B Reo. You will be granted an incomplete.

Incompletes are at the discretion of B Reo and your professor, they are not to be an expected alternative.

If you do not complete this run crew assignment this semester, you will not pass TA-3. Instead, you will receive an NC for the class.
Run crew Nuts and Bolts

- You can fulfill this requirement ONLY by working backstage on a show designated by The TA-3 Instructors – that is, the shows that are performed either in Stuart, Leeds, Ashamu or Rites & Reason Theatres. Working on a PW, Musical Forum etc., show will not count, as these are extracurricular theater organizations. **Being a part of the cast of a show does not fulfill this requirement.**

- It must be understood that run crew will conflict with other things in your schedule – it is important that this academic requirement will take first precedence for the week or two that you have signed up for. Tardiness and absence create problems in the rehearsal process and you will miss out on important changes and rehearsal time in the theatre that is part of your education in acting.

- It is important to adhere to the dress code for run crew for safety reasons. You must be in full black for every show. You must wear long sleeves, long pants, closed-toed shoes, and tie back loose hair.

- There will be an Orientation for run crew before tech week. You can expect a briefing in safety procedures from production director and/or her assistants. We also assign stage duties at this time so it is essential for you to attend Orientation.

- Run crew requires you to attend technical rehearsals beginning the week before opening night. The run crew schedules for this semester’s shows are detailed in the TA-3 calendar. Please note that each show has one very long tech day. This is known as a “wet tech” when every technical element of the show – costumes, props, light, sound etc. – is introduced and combined for the first time. This is the day where you will learn everything that you’ll be responsible for throughout your run on the show. Your attendance at all technical rehearsals is mandatory.

- You are also encouraged to attend a design run sometime towards the end of the rehearsal process. A design run is a run-through of the show specifically for the designers and tech staff to get a ‘Big Picture’ of how the show runs and to see it top to bottom from the audience seating rather than from ‘the Wings.’

- At the end of every production, the production director (B Reo) submits a report to your TA-3 instructor detailing how well each member of the run crew performed his or her assignment.
Alternatives to the Run Crew Requirement

Another way of fulfilling the TA3 run crew requirement is to assistant stage-manage, design sound or join the production team in some other capacity with permission of the Production Director. While these positions require a greater time commitment than run crew, they allow you greater immersion into the artistic process. Having design and/or assistant stage management experience is a precursor to more involved design opportunities and stage managing shows in the theater department. It is certainly something to think about seriously if you’d like to play more major roles in the theater department and community in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Reo at Barbara_Reo@brown.edu with questions or concerns about the run crew requirement, theater at Brown in general or anything else that you might have on your mind.

Have a great semester!