

Mississippi Theatre Association
Minutes
Long Range Planning Retreat
May 16, 2009

Opening: Intro./Welcome 8-8:30 am (Stacy & Stephen)

Stacy and Stephen welcomed everyone to the retreat. The members introduced themselves and the division which they represent.

Members present: Stephen Cunetto, Stacy Howell, Deborah Craig, Judy Meyers, Francine Reynolds, Chris Roebuck, Tom Booth, Kevin Malloy, Rhona Justice-Malloy, T- McKay, Barbara Smith, Jennifer Amos, Dex Edwards, Juniper Wallace, Ken McDade, Tom Hardy, William Biddy

Stephen introduced Holly Wagner.

Holly began the retreat with an overview of fundraising. She posed the question of “how to leverage limited resources by choosing programs that matter (vs. wish list).”

In choosing “programs that matter”, we must specify who, what, when, how?

Define “who you are” and “why you matter” before you can begin any fundraising.

You must be realistic: put on paper & monitor

Holly asked us to brainstorm to identify what we would do as an organization (by division) if money was NOT an issue.

1st breakout group: At 8:45 Each division meet separately to brainstorm

At 9:30 each group returned to share and prioritize the results.

Below is the list that each division created as a part of this exercise. The asterisk (*) indicates those that we thought were the most important (reality).

Professional Theatre

*Assist development of semi & professional theatres

Encourage develop of professional theatre artists

Give scholarship or stipend for professional to attend national conferences (TCG)

Promote professional theatre

Stronger relations with state festival

Identify adjudicators for auditions and festivals

Research other state organizations relationships with professional theatres

*Increase diversity

Offer professional resources

Fund interns

Develop relationships with road houses & performing arts centers

*Increase awareness of professional theatre identify

College/Universities

Totally fund ACTF participation

Fund major scholarships from MTA to attend MS colleges/universities

Conduct more workshops for secondary teachers

Identify more connections with secondary

Community Theatre

Personnel

Host more regional workshops to increase the artistic quality and the management of community theatres.

- Professional
- Provide stipends to attend training
- Discuss basics of scheduling rehearsals and lining up a production
- Building of spaces/theatres. City provided vs independently owned
- Assistance with props & sets
- Marketing – print, tv, web 2.0

Touring to underserved/underprivileged areas

Increase student awareness

Send MTA Board Members in CT to Regional, National and International festivals and workshops

Secondary Theatre

Bigger scholarships for seniors

“Cappies” (theatre critic program “How To”) [Theatre – Journalism]

Grant to high schools to help new programs

Programs (after-school) for smaller schools and home schooling groups

*Mentorship! Teacher networking

Community Outreach – Theatre events to elementary schools

Offers of advocacy to help high schools establish support programs

DVD program that talks about “how to compete”

Part Two of the Retreat: Stephen reviewed the long term goals from the 2006 document. Each goal was discussed. The following are some of the questions that were raised, followed by the organized responses that were collected by Holly.

What can MTA do to have the largest transformative impact?

What organization(s) can you target to get involved through “face to face” contact?

What can we all do to remedy the membership drops? target a limited # of (Community theatre, colleges) and make personal contact to join.

Who are professional artists in state? How many? What does it mean to be a professional (as an individual or as an organization?)

Community Theatre

Education

- Workshops – funding for attendance at conferences, etc (2 per year)
- Facilitate & encourage touring of shows
- Mentorship/networking/resource list for teachers

Secondary

- Theatre educator’s continuing education – tied to curriculum, etc.
- Development of lesson plans
- Involvement in rewriting frameworks (division chair) 2010
- Drama Festival “How-To” Video
- Mentorship
- Connection between schools
- Multi-school organization (Sharing facilities)

College/University

- Exploring opportunities to offer CEUs
 - Film the workshops, connect with new colleges
- Workshops for students

Professional Division

- Create collaborations
- Create a better understanding of how professional theatre works / what are the opportunities for students and adults

The next section of the Retreat focused on visibility through marketing and outreach. “Visibility is a mechanism to expand outreach.”

“Information should be sent to entire database, not just members.”

We should incorporate newsletter, Facebook, and our own DVD.

“Here’s what you don’t know about MTA.”

Visibility

1. Identify marketing experts
2. National visibility of MS theatre programs
3. Public Services announcements
4. Refreshing image
 - a. Educating potential members on services, programs
5. Community Regional Festival
6. Adjudicators / CT Feedback
7. Online calendar/MTA ads in programs
8. MTA discounts

Outreach

1. Diversity (outreach to HBCU and theatres Barbara Smith (start adhoc committee)
2. Membership Drops (determination/re-recruiting) including chancel drama from churches, invitations – make personal.
3. Expansion (in community theatre outreach & membership)
4. Secondary –
 - a. more active high schools
 - b. More sustained involvement

5. Professionals membership drive (get professional in the state involved)

There was a break for lunch at which time Holly met with the Executive Committee to discuss more detailed fundraising strategies.

After lunch we discussed Goal #3