

# SANGAMON AUDITORIUM



## **SANGAMON AUDITORIUM VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION (SAVA)**

### **TRAINING GUIDE 2011-2012**

Dear Sangamon Auditorium Volunteer Association Member,

Welcome to the 2011-2012 season at Sangamon Auditorium, and thank you for donating your valuable time! We appreciate your assistance in providing a quality experience for audiences of all ages as they attend performances throughout the season.

Dedicated volunteers are so valuable to our success. Whether you've been ushering for years or if this is your first time, we want to make sure you have the information you need to feel comfortable in fulfilling this important responsibility.

This training manual is intended to be a helpful overview of building information, general guidelines, and SAVA policies and procedures. We don't expect you to memorize all that is printed here, but you will need to be familiar with its contents and principles. You will learn most of the contents of this manual while serving in your volunteer role over the next few months. We recommend reading through all of this information once before your first assigned event each year so you are familiar with any changes that may have been made, and then after that just do a quick review of certain sections as needed.

So, welcome aboard, or welcome back, and thank you for supporting Sangamon Auditorium at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Please contact us through one of the mechanisms listed below if you have questions about any of this information. We welcome your input.

Sincerely,

Mindy McCaffrey  
Volunteer Coordinator

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## Sangamon Auditorium

*The mission of the Sangamon Auditorium is to present and support varied cultural and educational professional arts activities of high quality to the many audiences on campus, in Springfield, in Sangamon County and in the surrounding areas, reflecting a broad representation of music, theater and dance in all their forms.*

On February 20, 1981, the Auditorium opened its doors with a performance by Hal Holbrook in "Mark Twain Tonight." Since that time, our patrons have experienced the best in music, theater and dance. In addition to presenting performances by national touring companies, the Auditorium also acts as the performing home for the Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the Springfield Ballet Company. It is also available for graduations, meetings, rentals and seminars.

The Sangamon Auditorium seats 2,018 people on three levels:

Main Floor	
*Lower Orchestra	66
Orchestra	425
Loge	<u>595</u>
	1086
Mezzanine	564
Balcony	<u>368</u>
Total Seats	2,018

*\*This seating is not available for all performances. Seating capacity without lower Orchestra is 1,952.*

## Auditorium Facts

- The Main Floor (Lower Orchestra, Orchestra and Loge) features **continental style seating** which allows a maximum number of premium seats because there is no center aisle.
- On the walls, colorful acoustical banners hang at various levels. These may be adjusted to allow the sound to reverberate easily. Therefore, the house can be "tuned" to fit the requirements of the performance or speaker.
- The distance from the stage to the last seat in the Balcony is a remarkably short **110 feet**.
- The proscenium opening (the wall that frames the stage) is **60 feet wide**.
- The distance from the apron (the front edge) of the stage to the back wall is **47-1/2 feet**.
- The distance from the grand drape to the apron is **20-1/2 feet**.
- Offstage, the distance from side to side is **114 feet**.

## **Studio Theatre**

The Studio Theatre has been designed as a multi-purpose space to accommodate a diverse scope of events. It is essentially a black box theatre equipped with theatrical lighting, a large motorized screen, a sprung floor appropriate for dance performances, and four dressing rooms. It is managed, maintained, scheduled and programmed through Sangamon Auditorium and is managed in accordance with all University policies. The Studio Theatre is the home of the UIS Theatre performances and concerts by the UIS Music Program. It is also utilized by student groups, departments, and community organizations for various functions including lectures, movies and dinners.

The Studio Theatre seats 375 people on two levels with 318 fixed seats arranged in a  $\frac{3}{4}$  round configuration:

Main Floor	
Center Wagon	60
Right Wagon*	56
Left Wagon*	56
Chairs on the Floor	<u>57</u>
	229
Balcony	<u>146</u>
Total Seats	375

*\*Certain configurations require that one section of the right and/or left wagon is collapsed, removing 16 seats per wagon for a capacity on the floor of 197. Seating capacity without chairs on the floor with full wagons is 318.*

## **Public Affairs Center (PAC) Building Information**

The Public Affairs Center at UIS was essentially a triangle before the Auditorium was added onto its west side in 1981. The three points, or “Towers” as they are more commonly called, contain elevators, stairs, a water fountain and restrooms. Tower 1 is by the coffee shop, Tower 2 is by the House Left entrance and Tower 3 is by the House Right entrance. Patrons can travel to any level of the PAC through any of the Towers.

### **What’s on each level?**

#### **Level One:**

Studio Theatre  
Valet Parking- Teardrop  
Food Emporium  
PAC Restaurant  
Conference Center  
Bursar’s Office  
Vending Machines  
ATM Machine (in teardrop entrance)  
Parking Services Office

#### **Level Two:**

Auditorium Lobby  
Ticket Office  
Coat Check  
Lobby Bar  
Capital Perks Coffee Shop  
Orchestra Seating  
Loge Seating

#### **Level Three:**

Mezzanine - Rows A-G  
Atrium Lounge  
Auditorium Office PAC 397

**Level Four:**  
Mezzanine Rows H-R  
Balcony Rows A-F

**Level Five:**  
Balcony Rows G-M

### **Rest Rooms**

Patrons are most familiar with the facilities that are located in each tower and on each level (2, 3, 4, and 5) just outside the Auditorium. All restrooms in Tower 1 are wheelchair accessible.

- Level 1 has additional restrooms located just outside the double doors as you exit the Food Emporium and head toward the Grand Staircase.
- Levels 2, 4, and 5 have additional restrooms located inside the Auditorium, between the inner and outer set of wooden doors. HL = women's facilities, HR = men's facilities.
- Please remember – the largest set of bathrooms (both men's and women's) is located inside the Auditorium on **level 3**, just up the short flight of stairs behind the tech booth. Patrons should be directed here to avoid long lines during intermission at the other facilities.

### **Water Fountains**

One water fountain is adjacent to every rest room, except for those located inside the Auditorium on Levels 2 and 3.

### **Soda Machines**

Located on Level 1 in Towers 1 and 2, and in the Food Emporium area.

### **Stairs**

The Grand Staircase (main center set in the lobby) connects Levels 1 & 2 on the HL side across from the Studio Theatre & Capital Perks.

The "inner" red carpeted staircases go from Level 2 to Level 5 on both HL and HR inside the Auditorium lounges.

The "outer" concrete stairwells in each of the 3 towers allow access from Level 1 to Level 5.

### **Elevators**

Located in all 3 towers. The HL Tower 2 elevator is used by emergency medical personnel when necessary as it is the only space which will accommodate a gurney.

### **Public phones and first aid supplies**

#### **Studio Theatre: Level 1**

Tower 2 – campus and pay phone

Studio Theatre House Right Concourse – campus and pay phone

#### **Sangamon Auditorium Lobby: Level 2**

Ticket Office - first aid kit

Coat Check – campus phone, first aid kit and AED Machine

House Left and Right – campus and pay phones

### **Public phones and first aid supplies, *continued***

#### **Atrium Lounge: Level 3**

Tower 2 – campus phone

House Left and House Right program stuffing stations - first aid kit

#### **Mezzanine: Level 4**

House Left and House Right Bookcase - first aid kit

Tower 2 – campus phone

#### **Balcony: Level 5**

House Left and House Right Bookcase- first aid kit

Tower 2 – campus phone

### **Smoking Policy**

In compliance with the Illinois Clean Indoor Air Act, smoking is prohibited in all UIS campus buildings. This **NO SMOKING** policy includes the Auditorium, lobby areas, lounge areas, restaurant, cafeteria, conference rooms, and restrooms.

The designated smoking area for the PAC is located outside the automatic doors which are on House Left directly across from the patron coat room. During intermission, please have patrons exit through the lobby and proceed through the automatic doors to the designated smoking location.

Voluntary compliance with this policy is expected. If a violation occurs, Ushers are expected to inform the violator and seek voluntary compliance. Disciplinary action by Campus Police in the form of a ticket may occur for continued violations of the policy or for those exhibiting blatant disregard.

### **Parking Information**

#### **FOR PATRONS**

Convenient free parking is available in lots B, C, and D. If these lots are full and the event is in the evening, they may also park in lots F, I and A. Valet parking is available at the teardrop entrance for \$8 per car and premium parking is available in lot E for \$5 per car. Accessible patron parking is also available by the Auditorium stage door, with additional spaces in Lot G, and also in the teardrop parking metered area.

#### **FOR VOLUNTEERS**

For parking purposes, volunteers are considered “visitors” and the following policies apply:

- For evenings and weekend events, lots A-I are visitor lots unless otherwise designated. Volunteers may park in these lots. Lot E will be used for Premium Parking for most events.
- For daytime events such as Class Acts, lots A, B, C-North, D, and I are visitor lots and are marked as such on the signs. Volunteers may park in these lots.
- Please remember that all residential lots require stickers and are to be used only by residents.

## **Sangamon Auditorium Volunteer Association (SAVA)**

Gifts of time and talent are essential to make Sangamon Auditorium's performing arts programming and special events possible. As a SAVA member, you share in the pride of supporting one of central Illinois' finest performing arts centers while you experience first-hand the excitement and passion that are inherent in live performing arts. Moreover, your role as a volunteer extends well beyond that of Usher or Manager, as you are also an ambassador of goodwill for the University. The highest level of customer service is expected of all SAVA members and is appreciated by our patrons.

Comprised of over 200 men and women of all ages and backgrounds, the SAVA volunteer corps works to strengthen community awareness and public appreciation of Sangamon Auditorium, contributes to its financial strength, and provides appropriate support services to its staff. The Front of House staff depends on SAVA Ushers and Managers to greet, direct, assist and ensure the safety and comfort of patrons attending performances and other events in Sangamon Auditorium and the Studio Theatre. Volunteering at Sangamon Auditorium means involvement with a broad spectrum of programs and activities. Ushers may take tickets, stuff and hand out programs at performances, direct patrons around the facility, lead patrons to and from their seats during a performance, coordinate bus parking for education programs, work in the administrative offices, work on special events and marketing, monitor the Coat Room, lead craft activities during Family Events, open, close and monitor house doors, or assist children as they discover the wonders of music and theater at our special school performances.

SAVA members share a sense of pride in their role and also receive benefits such as:

- Knowing they make a difference in the community.
- Meeting new friends, sharing a common bond.
- Sharing a sense of accomplishment and pride in being a part of the Sangamon Auditorium family.
- Invitations to social activities such as the Annual SAVA Picnic and Cookie Exchange.
- Meals are provided when working certain events which require a time commitment that crosses over a meal period.
- Having the opportunity to experience portions of live productions while they volunteer.

## **SAVA Advisory Board**

The Sangamon Auditorium Volunteer Association is governed by a Board that is elected from the volunteer Usher corps at the Annual SAVA Picnic. Nominations are made and accepted by the Nominating Committee and nominees are then approved by a simple majority vote. The Board consists of the following positions: Chairperson, Recording Secretary, Special Projects Coordinator, Manager Representative, Usher Representative, and Usher Liaison. All of the board members serve 2 year terms and can be re-appointed to two consecutive terms except for the Usher Liaison which is an annual appointment.

The SAVA Board meets monthly and functions in an advisory capacity. Board members assist with: recruiting and training volunteers; making policy and procedural recommendations to Auditorium staff; serving as the liaison between the Usher corps and Auditorium staff; conducting peer reviews of the performance of new and returning Ushers and Managers; and the planning of social activities.

### **SAVA Membership Requirements**

- New Ushers are required to participate in a New Usher training session and to shadow Senior Status Ushers during the first season of assigned events while they learn the various tasks of ushering. This first season for new Ushers will be considered an apprentice period during which time the usher's skills will continue to be developed and evaluated for appropriate compatibility with the volunteer role.
- In accordance with University policy, every SAVA member is required to complete a Statement of Understanding form annually. This form serves as your agreement with the Auditorium and the University to fulfill the requirements and expectations of your role. The Auditorium staff and SAVA Board will evaluate volunteers based on these criteria.
- In order to retain active status in SAVA, a volunteer must return their sign-up sheet in a timely manner and work at least 3 events per semester.
- Attendance at a yearly training session is required of all active SAVA members so that everyone can receive consistent and updated safety instructions.
- For effective and timely communication, please notify the Auditorium office as soon as possible if any of your personal contact information changes, if a new medical condition develops which may impact your ability to complete certain duties, or to request an inactive status designation due to a personal situation which may conflict with the assigned event schedule.

### **SAVA Roles**

1. *New Usher* – a volunteer who has just completed the one initial required training session and is working his/her first season of events.
2. *Returning Usher* – a volunteer who has completed one full season of assigned events, has retained active status by attending the required annual training, and continues to work at least three events in subsequent seasons.
3. *Senior Status Usher* - a volunteer who has worked 15 shows in one year or 25 shows in two consecutive years. Those volunteers who achieve senior status will be recognized at the annual SAVA picnic and given a new nametag which designates this status.
4. *Floor Manager* - to become a Floor Manager, you must be either a Senior Status Usher or a Returning Usher with 2 years of experience. You can be nominated by a current Floor Manager or you can nominate yourself by mentioning your interest to any SAVA board member or the Volunteer Coordinator. The SAVA board will then carefully consider each nomination. All new floor managers will go through a training period by shadowing current floor managers in each specific area of responsibility

throughout the Auditorium. After you have successfully served as an assistant in each assigned area, you will then be able to serve as a floor manager.

5. *House Manager* – Certain floor managers are selected by the SAVA board and Volunteer Coordinator to become House Managers. You must have served at least one year as a floor manager and have completed a mentoring process with an experienced House Manager before you will be given sole responsibility in this position.

## **Dress Code**

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### **Female Ushers:**

White Blouse or dressy knit shirt (with sleeves)  
Black or Navy Skirt or Pants  
Black or Navy **Closed-toe** Shoes  
Red Usher Jacket  
Nametag  
Understated Jewelry  
Dark socks or hose

### **Male Ushers:**

White Dress Shirt  
Tie  
Black or Navy Pants  
Black or Navy Shoes  
Red Usher Jacket  
Nametag  
Dark Socks

Managers are asked to wear business casual attire with closed-toe shoes and nametag.

Please leave your pocket change at home and avoid wearing any type of clothing, fabric, or jewelry that may make additional noise as this can be disruptive to the patrons. Also, no one is permitted to carry a purse, wear a fanny pack, or wear binoculars while on duty. You should avoid heavy perfumes or colognes as the scent may cause an allergic reaction in some patrons or can linger on the shared red jackets.

Sangamon Auditorium provides the red Usher jackets in many sizes for both men and women. Please choose a jacket that best fits you and use the same hanger to store your personal coat during the performance. Jackets must be worn for the duration of the program and the entire time that you are in the Auditorium. If you feel hot during a performance, ask your Manager if you may leave your post to go outside and cool down, but continue to wear your jacket until you are outside. If your jacket is in need of mending, simply turn it inside out before hanging it back onto its hanger in the usher coat room. This will alert the staff to the fact that repairs are needed.

Exceptions to the dress code exist for certain events. For UIS Commencement at the Prairie Capital Convention Center, Ushers and Managers will wear white shirts and khaki pants. For marketing assignments, the Director of Audience Development will dictate any attire guidelines on a per task basis.

## **Communication Chain of Command**

The Sangamon Auditorium Staff on Duty (SOD) will function as the primary Front of House decision-maker for the Auditorium during shows. The Volunteer Coordinator will assist the SOD with pre-show usher coordination responsibilities. The House Manager and/or Assistant House Manager are responsible for the decisions made by the various Floor Managers including: House Right (HR); House Left (HL); Directions (DIR); Coat Room (CR); Mezzanine (MZ); and Balcony (BAL). Floor Managers are in turn responsible for the individual Ushers (New, Returning and Senior Status) working in their section. This chain of command assures that there is feedback on Usher skill development, that there are trained and seasoned individuals on each level of the house, that there is direct and immediate communication among Managers and with the SOD, and that there are sufficient people available to provide assistance in emergency situations.

If there is reason for concern regarding an usher, the responsible floor manager should address the situation first. The House Manager and the SOD have the authority to ask an usher to leave at any time. If an usher has a reason for concern regarding a manager, there are confidential evaluation forms available in the coat rooms. The Volunteer Coordinator will review the completed forms and determine appropriate follow-up.

## **Time Commitment**

Volunteers should arrive at the Auditorium promptly one hour and fifteen minutes prior to curtain time for most events. This is noted as “call time” on your assignment sheet. Depending on their role for the evening, managers are expected to arrive one hour and forty-five minutes to one and a half hours before the show starts. This allows the necessary time for the manager’s meeting to occur in PAC 397 prior to usher arrival. Event details will be distributed to the managers at this meeting so they can then prepare for the usher meeting.

Please note that by arrival time we mean that you are at the House Left doors waiting to be admitted to the Usher Coat Room; therefore, if it will take you additional time to find a parking space and walk to the Auditorium, please plan ahead. It is essential that you arrive on time so that you can sign-in, attend the pre-show meeting, and help prepare the Auditorium to receive patrons. The house will usually open at thirty minutes prior to curtain time. Ushers who are consistently late will not receive full credit for their shows.

Exceptions to the call times do exist for some rehearsals, ISO performances which are preceded by Concert Comments, and shows in the Studio Theatre. Any exception to the usual call time will be indicated on your assignment sheet at the beginning of each season.

## **Signing up for events**

The following criteria apply to the process of signing-up for and being assigned to events:

- Indicating availability for a particular show does not mean that you are automatically assigned or guaranteed a position at that show. Auditorium staff will make the final assignments and notify you of your season schedule.
- The rental events are not guaranteed to occur and information about them may not have been made available to the general public. They are included on the sign-up sheets for planning purposes.
- When signing up for any show, please note that Ushers and Managers are expected to be present and remain on duty from call time to completion, as determined by the House Manager and SOD, no matter what position they are assigned for the event.
- If an Usher/Manager must leave early, they should notify the Volunteer Coordinator ahead of time, if possible, and the House Manager and SOD before the event.
- We ask all Ushers/Managers to provide us with their email address. There will be more communication conducted in the future via email and the internet with Ushers and Managers especially regarding show additions, show cancellations and shows needing additional volunteers. Email addresses are for internal use only and will not be shared outside of the Auditorium staff and SAVA community.
- The maximum number of volunteers needed for a full Auditorium event is 68 in order to adequately cover the essential staffing positions in each area. Every event will require a different staffing number based on expected audience attendance and if certain levels of the house will be closed or not. The Volunteer Coordinator will occasionally staff some events with more than 68 volunteers to allow for training of new ushers.
- When you are assigned to work an event, you have made a commitment to volunteer at that time, and it is appreciated if you can keep that commitment. However, if you find that you are unable to usher at a particular show, please notify the office as soon as possible by calling the cancellation into the usher hotline at 206-8288. Early notification allows us to have the time to find a replacement, if necessary.

## **Pre-Show Responsibilities**

When you enter the Usher Coat Room, please write the time you arrived on the Sign In/Out sheet posted on the bulletin board. Check the message board to see if there is any noteworthy news for Ushers and if there are events which still need volunteer help. Note the floor position area to which you have been assigned. These positions are abbreviated as follows:

HL=House Left  
HR=House Right  
MZ=Mezzanine

BAL=Balcony  
DIR=Directions  
CR=Coat Room

(specific duties and positions for each area will be assigned by the floor managers following the pre-show meeting)

After you have signed in, choose a flashlight whose bulb is facing inward. If this flashlight is not working, please turn it around so that the bulb is facing out, and the staff will be alerted to the fact that batteries are needed. It is very important that each Usher have a good working flashlight to properly assist patrons in the event of an emergency. You should also take a plastic sandwich bag and a disposable glove (located on the bookshelf in each usher coat room) with you at this time. These supplies will be used to do a quick clean sweep of the Auditorium following the performance.

You are now ready to proceed to the Auditorium to prepare for the event! If you have been assigned to Directions or Coat Room, please report directly to the patron coat check area to meet with the coat room manager. These ushers are exempt from the pre-show meeting because they need to be in place earlier to assist patrons as they arrive before the house open time. *Please note: usher coat rooms are locked during performances and the ladies coat room is also equipped with lockers for storage of personal items.*

Event Checklists are available for ushers prior to every event on the wall/staircase leading up to the HL loge area. Ushers should check the program stuffing area (white shelves on level 3) to assist with preparing programs as needed for the event. Sometimes there will be an insert to place in the programs. For ease of distribution and to insure proper numbers of programs in each house location, programs need to be counted in stacks of 25. All ushers (except DIR and CR) are expected to assist with these activities until the start of the pre-show meeting.

### **Pre-Show Meeting**

The pre-show Usher meeting is your chance to meet the Staff on Duty (SOD), the House and Floor Managers, to learn more about the event, and to have your questions answered. Sometimes, a representative from the production company may also be at this meeting to inform you of any policies that the company may have. This meeting usually occurs one hour before the event.

By the end of this meeting, you should know the following information:

- Event running times
- Who the House and Floor Managers are
- The number of patrons expected
- If the lower Orchestra is being used
- If merchandise is being sold
- If the lobby bar is open
- If the coffee shop will be open
- If and where any receptions, meet and greets, or group activities are being held

- The types of tickets and ticketing procedures being used for the event
- Any security issues
- Any program changes
- Possible seating problems
- Accessibility reservations
- Whether backstage passes are being used

Additional information to be provided will include the use of strobe lights, the use of fog machines, the photography policy, special holds and late seating restrictions, whether there will be an interpreter, and upcoming shows needing more Usher assistance.

After the pre-show meeting, you will meet with your Floor Manager to be assigned your specific position and duties. Your Manager should provide you with a quick review of the location of the nearest restrooms, drinking fountain, emergency exits and the weather and emergency evacuation procedures for your area. Also, acquaint yourself with the seating and row numbers in your section and check the aisles for debris to be sure that the house is properly prepared for patrons.

### **Opening the House and Blocking the Doors**

The house doors will remain closed and locked until approximately 30 minutes prior to curtain (or as specified by the renter). Please note that some renters have strict clauses in their contracts about opening the house because admitting patrons prior to their approval may be a safety issue or it may spoil the atmosphere of the event. Under certain contracts (such as Broadway), the Auditorium may be fined a monetary fee if the house doors are opened prematurely.

The process for opening doors is as follows: the Tech Director will meet with the SOD or House Manager and let them know that the house can be opened. Managers must wait until the House Manager has completed a status check with each level of the house. The House Manager will then give the directive to open the house. At no time will an Usher open the doors and admit patrons until their Manager has given them the approval to do so.

When opening the house, Ushers should fully open the doors and place wooden blocks parallel to the thin edge on the bottom of the door. It is recommended to use your foot to wedge the block under the door until it is secured. There are different sizes of wood blocks, so please find one with the appropriate fit if you are having difficulty. Please avoid placing the block perpendicular to the bottom of the door. This creates a tripping hazard and could cause injury to other Ushers or patrons.

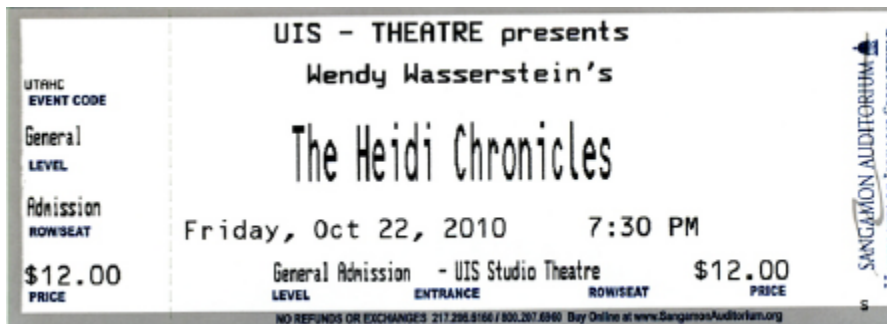
## Types of Tickets and Passes

Sangamon Auditorium's Ticket Office uses a computerized ticketing system to produce tickets for most events. Reserved seating tickets show the Auditorium level, entrance, row letter, and seat number. General admission seating tickets mean that the patrons may sit in any seat on a first come, first served basis—these are generally used for Studio Theatre events.

### Reserved ticket example



### General Admission example



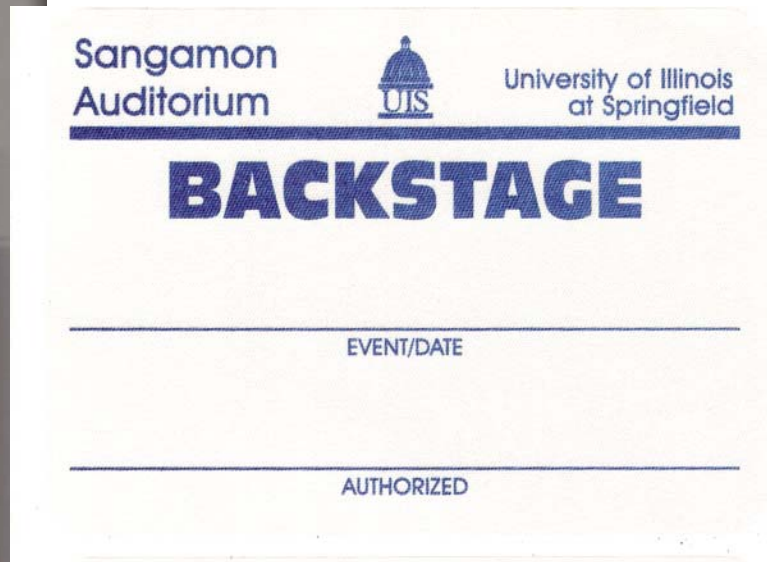
Sometimes, outside groups make special arrangements with the Auditorium management to print their own tickets. In such cases, sample tickets will be shown and explained at the pre-show meeting. Occasionally, certain types of events will be permitted to use raffle/roll tickets or click counters for admission and drop count. These exceptions are authorized on a case-by-case basis by the Auditorium Director and will always be announced to ushers at the pre-show meeting.

Auditorium policy states that everyone who enters the Auditorium must have either a ticket or proper identification. This policy includes babies and young children. Patrons who do not have a ticket for their infant should be directed to the Coat Room or to the SOD or House Manager to receive a **free** Infant Pass ticket. Those with older children

who can clearly occupy their own seat with a booster cushion should be directed to the Ticket Office.



Backstage passes (Authorized Stage Access lanyards) or all-access permits are issued to individuals affiliated with the company performing in the Auditorium. These passes are either worn by the individual or shown at the door to gain admittance to the Auditorium and to allow the person to pass through the red curtain to the backstage area.



The SOD and Tech Director are allowed access to the backstage area to assist as necessary with the event. Sometimes, under certain authorized instances, the House Manager will be asked to go backstage if the SOD is unavailable.

Usher nametags allow access to the Auditorium, but not the backstage area. Occasionally, ushers will be assigned to help monitor the stage door entrance and those volunteers would then be allowed to enter the backstage area to report to the post. Other University employees should not be utilizing their nametag or I-card to gain admittance to the Auditorium, this includes the valet staff, food service staff and building services staff (except for those who have been contacted by the House Manager or SOD to deal with a maintenance issue in the house). For events where security is pivotal (such as music concerts) private security staff will be hired, but for all other events it is up to the Ushers to enforce these policies and restrict admission to only those patrons with tickets and those service workers who are supposed to be in the house.

### **Taking Tickets and Seating Patrons**

Helpful hints when taking tickets and directing patrons:

- Accessible and special-needs seating is located on the Main Floor in rows J and K, and in the Mezzanine in Row R along the back wall.
- Please note whether or not the patron's seats are on House Left or Right and direct them to the appropriate entrance. This designation is printed on the tickets.
- Row S in the Loge section is the dividing line when determining whether to send patrons straight ahead down the hall toward the red curtain or up the short flight of stairs at the back of the loge. Rows A-R should go straight ahead and rows S-X should go up the stairs.
- Make sure that you match the number of tickets to the number of people in each group.
- If a patron does not have a ticket, politely direct them to the Ticket Office.
- Consult your floor manager if a patron has the wrong ticket for an event or if there is a duplicate seating issue.
- A stub count, or drop count, is required for every Auditorium event so that staff may accurately track capacity seating numbers and for emergency/insurance liability purposes.

The ticket taker is the only person who allows access to the Auditorium. Therefore, it is the ticket taker who must prevent patrons from taking cameras, recording devices, pagers, cellular phones, baby strollers or carriers, food, or drink into the Auditorium. Patrons with these items should be directed to the coat check. There are trash cans at each of the Auditorium entrance points for patrons to dispose of unfinished food or drink. The only exception is bottled water with a lid, which can be taken into the Auditorium. If a patron is carrying a bag that you believe is suspicious, it is your responsibility to inquire about the contents and remind the patron of the Auditorium policy. Once in a while, an event may allow cameras and recording devices, but you will have been informed of this at the pre-show meeting.

Please greet each patron with a smile and say “hello” or “may I help you find your seat?” When seating assistance is requested, please escort the patron to the end of the correct row and indicate the location of the seat within that row using the open palm method for

directions. Double check the ticket to make sure you have seated the patron correctly before you hand the ticket back to the patron.

If you are escorting a patron into the house who is using one of the Auditorium wheelchairs, please wheel them as close to their seat as possible. For general admission events, the Auditorium will try to reserve several additional seats in rows J and K for those patrons who might need wheelchair assistance. Please clarify for the patron that you can assist them to and from their seat in the wheelchair, but that they must be able to be transferred to an Auditorium seat for the duration of the program. Because we have a limited number of available wheelchairs and sometimes a high number of requests, we cannot allow patrons to remain seated in Auditorium wheelchairs for the duration of the performance. If you are escorting a patron to their seat via a wheelchair and do not work in that section, please inform the Ushers who are assigned to that section of the location of the person needing a wheelchair so they can assist during intermission and at the end of the performance.

Sign language interpreters will be requested in advance when needed and will be seated on a stool under the mezzanine overhang in row K on the HL side. There is a fixed light there that illuminates the interpreter and allows the patron to view both the signing and the stage simultaneously. For some rentals, the interpreter may be placed on a corner of the stage instead.

### **Late Seating:**

You will be informed of the late seating policy for each event at the pre-show meeting. These guidelines are always set by the artist and can be restrictive if there is an opening act or lighting sequence that cannot be interrupted, for instance. However, late seating policy is often indicated as 'no restrictions' or 'as available'. In those cases, please use your best judgment as to when it is appropriate to seat late arrivals and try to avoid disrupting other patrons as much as possible

Once the performance has started, the Ushers will leave only one set of house doors open per side per level. This means staggering the doors by shutting one inner and one outer set of doors so as to reduce any light and/or sound from the lobby that may distract the audience or performers.

During the show, leave the following doors OPEN: (as you are **entering** the house or **facing** the stage)

- HR:
- the far left outside doors (main doors to lobby)
  - the far right inside doors (main doors to Auditorium)
  - both outer doors that lead to the elevator on Level 3. (The inner doors are shut here to eliminate light. They also allow for easier and quieter entrance and exit while a performance is in progress.)
  - one door on level 3 by the stuffing station (leading to the inner staircase)

- HL:
- the far right outside doors (main doors to lobby)
  - the far left inside doors (main doors to Auditorium)
  - both outer doors that lead to the elevator on Level 3. (The inner doors are shut here to eliminate light. They also allow for easier and quieter entrance and exit while a performance is in progress.)
  - one door on level 3 by the stuffing station (leading to the inner staircase)

**All** doors in the mezzanine and balcony are **shut** once the performance begins. It is very important to keep the wing doors closed as light from these entrances can have a distracting effect on the stage.

Ushers should always use their flashlight to escort patrons to their seats or to an exit after the house lights have dimmed. The flashlight should always be pointed down and your body should be between the audience and the light to act as a shield. One of the primary functions of the Usher corps is to ensure the safety of the patrons. As the house lights are lowered during a performance and many shows have times when the stage lights are blacked out as well, we need the Ushers to be aware of patron movements. Ushers are assigned positions to assist patrons by providing additional illumination to stairs and aisles. Doing your job well helps prevent accidents and falls in the house.

### **Usher seating during a performance**

Please remember that you are still on duty during a performance. Remain alert and continue to be aware of patron needs throughout the event. After all the patrons have been seated, your Floor Manager will let you know when you may be seated. Ushers should sit in designated Usher chairs and stools as they are located as close to positions and service areas as possible while still maintaining fire code pathways. Patrons know to look for Ushers outside of the general Auditorium seating and Ushers should be visible and located in positions where they can be easily seen and found by patrons. In instances when attendance is low and Ushers are plentiful, the SOD or Volunteer Coordinator may give permission for Ushers to sit in patron seating areas. If you have been notified during the pre-show meeting that it is permissible to be seated in patron seats, please take those seats that are on the outside of the aisles and towards the back of the Auditorium. Please avoid sitting in one large group or passing in front of seated patrons to gain access to an open seat.

If you are standing, remember to stay out of the audience sight lines and maintain a professional profile by refraining from leaning on walls, railings, or columns. It is also your duty to keep the railings clear of coats, umbrellas, and other items.

***At no time will an Usher or patron be permitted to sit on any stairs in the Auditorium. Doing so is a violation of University policy and fire code.***

## **After the performance**

All Ushers should be at their assigned posts before the end of the performance. When the house lights come up, you should:

- Smile and thank the patrons for coming to the Auditorium.
- Prevent patrons from going onto the stage or entering the backstage area.
- Use the bag and glove in your pocket to pick up debris and discarded programs.
- Notify your Manager of any stains or spills or other maintenance items that may need attention.
- Return any unsoiled programs to the program stuffing area and help to box them up for recycling or re-use as will be noted on the event checklist.
- Give any lost and found items to the Coat Room or your Manager.
- After being sure that all duties in your assigned area are completed and checking out with your manager, proceed to the usher coat rooms. These will generally be unlocked by 10 minutes after the end of the program.
- Empty out your pockets and throw away any debris.
- Put your flashlight back into its proper slot. If it is not in good working order, turn it around so that the bulb faces out.
- Return your nametag to the appropriate place on the rack.
- Hang your red Usher jacket back on the correct size hanger, facing the same way as the others. If your jacket is in need of repair, turn it inside out before hanging it up.
- Retrieve items from lockers if necessary and sign yourself out.

## **Studio Theatre Performances**

Studio Theatre events, although similar in nature to Auditorium events, do exhibit some marked differences.

For instance:

- Ushers will still sign in/out and obtain their red jackets and flashlights in the Usher coat rooms of the Auditorium.
- Event checklists will be available in the coat rooms or on the chairs immediately inside the HL entrance to the Auditorium. The pre-show meeting will be held in this entrance area before everyone goes downstairs to the Studio Theatre.
- Tickets are usually general admission.
- There will be at most two Managers, a House Manager and a Floor Manager. The House Manager will assist the SOD in assigning the Ushers to more specific locations.
- There will be at most 15 Ushers scheduled for Studio Theatre events depending on the audience size and the type of event.
- Ushers will serve in the following positions: Directions, accessible ramp/door, ticket takers, programs, and Balcony and Main Floor seating.
- When seating patrons, be sure to shine your flashlight on the stairs and treads as there are no alternating colors like in the Auditorium.

- Always direct patrons to the front or to the seating locations specified by the renter/groups. If it is getting crowded on the main floor, direct people to the Balcony only after assuring there will be Ushers upstairs to assist them.

## **Class Acts Performances**

*Class Acts* Performances are held during weekdays for area school children. There are no tickets for *Class Acts*, but teachers will have a voucher for the group that will be given to the House Manager as they enter the building.

1. **Parking** - Lot E is used for buses *only* on days when there are *Class Acts* performances. (UIS staff, faculty, and students are not allowed to use the lot). Patrons arriving in cars must park in Lot D. Directions Ushers in the parking lot help instruct all buses to park facing west. This helps with speedy load-in/load-out of both students and buses.
2. **Special Needs** - Buses/cars carrying students with mobility or visual impairments may unload in the Auditorium receiving and loading area and then proceed to Lot D to park.
3. **Directions Ushers** - Directions Ushers help direct buses into the lot, help direct students into the building from the plaza, and help lead classes to House Left or House Right once inside. The Directions Usher in the parking lot should radio the House Manager with the names of schools as they arrive. The Directions Usher on the plaza should also let the HM know what school is on the plaza.
4. **Entering the Building** - Classes/students with mobility impairments enter the lobby from House Left exterior lobby doors. *All* other classes enter from the point plaza doors. This enables the House Manager to identify each school as they enter.

### **Check – In**

1. **Voucher** The House Manager or Assistant HM collects the school’s green voucher and marks them off on the roster. The HM sends the school to the HL or HR doors with a lobby Directions Usher leading the way. Ushers who are assigned to HL and HR will then assist the groups with seating once the doors are opened.
2. **Lunches** Schools with lunches may leave them in the lobby under the atrium overhang while they are watching the performance.

### **Seating**

1. **Seating Policy** “Seating for *Class Acts* is based neither on reservation date nor arrival time. In an effort to seat all patrons as promptly as possible, Ushers seat all three levels of the Auditorium concurrently.” *Please try to seat the Orchestra all the way to the Loge wall before beginning to seat Mezzanine and Balcony.* This helps make our seating more first-come, first-served.
2. **Special Needs** Rows J & K are reserved for students with mobility impairments. If we are scheduled to have students with visual or hearing impairments or if there

- is a sign language interpreter, Managers will let Ushers know what areas to reserve for these students. This especially affects the HL Orchestra.
3. **Front Rows** Because the children are vertically challenged and because they can potentially become frightened; do not seat the front row of the Orchestra, Mezzanine, or Balcony.
  4. **Capacity** The Ticket Office never sells more than 1775 tickers to *Class Acts* shows. This leaves for a little “elbow room” –allowing us to not seat the front rows and to avoid separating classes.
  5. **Grade Levels** On occasion, a *Class Acts* show may attract a wide range of grade levels. When this is the case, we will make every attempt to seat according to grade level so that all students can enjoy the performance.
  6. **Loading** In the Orchestra and Loge, students are loaded in from right and left sides and stop at the indicated mark in the center. In the MZ and BAL, students are loaded into sections. White tape marks with a number at the end of each row indicate to Ushers how many patrons to seat in that row. Two Ushers should count students as they load in to help get an accurate number. It is important to make sure that there are no empty seats in rows. If at all possible, each group of students or each school will be seated together. If this is not possible, seating is at the discretion of the Usher or Floor Manager.

#### **Monitoring during performance**

1. **Teachers are concerned, first and foremost, with the safety and welfare of their students.** This must also be our driving force for compassionate behavior toward the teachers, chaperones, and students. At any given moment, when one of our procedures directly conflicts with a teacher’s ability to oversee the safety and welfare of her students, we need to be flexible.
2. **Behavior issues.** It is at the Usher’s discretion as to whether or not a child’s behavior needs to be addressed. Keep in mind that the children may be very excited about seeing a live performance and that they may get nervous when the lights get dark. They may talk because they do not realize that their conversation is distracting. (It doesn’t bother the person on TV!) Many of the students may have never been to a theatre before. Use discretion when correcting their behavior and remember to have patience and be nice and personable to both the students and teachers. Try to help make the show a good experience for *everyone*.
3. **Teachers** Hopefully, the teachers and chaperons will assist you with student behavior. If you have been unsuccessful when correcting a student’s behavior, try to identify the student’s teacher and ask them to assist you.
4. **Usher’s Behavior** Remember to remain a good ambassador of the Auditorium at all times. Seek additional assistance if you need it when dealing with a situation.
5. **Bathrooms** Many times entire classrooms will need to use the restroom when they arrive at the Auditorium. The entire class may step to the side and use one of the lobby restrooms. Other teachers may prefer to get their class seated and then let students who need to use the restroom go. When a student leaves the Auditorium to use the restroom, use your flashlight to help light the way. Either follow the students all the way to the restroom door, or make sure that another Usher or teacher is aware that the student is in the restroom.

6. **Evacuation** Your Floor Manager should review evacuation procedures with you and highlight any special instructions based on the age of the audience.

### **Load-Out**

1. **Special Needs** Allow students with mobility impairments and their escorts to exit the Auditorium first.
2. **Lobby** Discourage classes from exiting through the lobby unless they are going to eat lunch. Classes should exit out the HL & HR glass doors. Some classes may need to use the restroom before they leave---some have come from over an hour away! Follow manager directions for assisting the students with exiting the MZ and BAL.
3. **Curtain Call Chat** There might be a brief post-show discussion following some performances. You will be informed at the Usher meeting if there is a discussion. The discussion will take place one minute after the end of the curtain call (they can still stand up and stretch if they need to...) and then the chat will begin almost immediately. The chat will not last more than 5-10 minutes.

### **Usher Lunch**

If there are 2 performances, Ushers will be given a meal card to use in the PAC Food Emporium on Level 1 to eat a meal between the show times.

## **Emergency Procedures**

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### **Emergency Medical Procedures**

- Assess the nature of the emergency
  - Stay calm & ask for help from ushers, House Manager, SOD
  - AED machine near the coat check
- Contact Campus Police, 6-7777 or 911
- Never admit fault or state that UIS will pay

### **Fire Evacuation Procedures**

- If you detect a fire
  - Call Campus Police, 6-7777 and provide the building, location and extent of fire
  - Return to your post and wait for the announcement from the stage to start the evacuation
- When you are notified of a fire
  - Open all doors-- but don't open hot doors
  - Evacuate those with mobility impairments first. For those with mobility impairments on levels 3, 4, and 5, take them to the windowed lounges on either side of the Auditorium and then report to the command post and let the managers know how many patrons you have left in that area on which level and which side of the Auditorium.
  - Assist patrons with exiting and encourage them to move to the right of the stairs. The left side of the stairs is to be used as a "passing lane" so that faster patrons may get around slower ones.

- Exit after the patrons and close the doors
- Stay with your group and lead them to the designated meeting location:
  - Good weather – UIS Colonnade and quad area; command post for managers is the Colonnade.
  - Inclement weather – University Hall – fill classrooms on entry level, then on higher levels; command post for managers is the main floor entrance to the building that faces the colonnade.
- Do not let patrons use the elevators, return to the Auditorium or leave the premises

### **Weather Evacuation Procedures**

- If possible, a statement about the severe weather will be issued from the stage
- Evacuate those with mobility impairments to interior restrooms or usher coat rooms on level 2 and tower restrooms on levels 3, 4, and 5. Report to the command post and let the managers know how many patrons you have left in what area.
- Evacuate mobile patrons to PAC Level 1, using the Auditorium backstage areas, Studio Theatre Concourse, and the Conference Rooms as safe shelter locations. The Studio Theatre itself is not a safe shelter and patrons should not be allowed to enter into or remain inside of this venue during a weather emergency. The command post for managers is in front of the Studio Theatre near the grand staircase.
- Do not let patrons exit to areas where there is glass - i.e. level 3 & 4 lounges, lobby
- Do not let patrons use the elevators, return to the Auditorium or leave the premises

### **Bomb Threats**

- If you find a suspicious object, clear the area, notify your manager and work with your manager to contact Campus Police at 6-7777
- If you answer a phone call that turns out to be a bomb threat, keep the person talking and get as much information as possible including the time of call and the number
- Listen for the announcement from the stage and evacuate patrons according to the fire evacuation procedures

### **Volunteer Hours Credit System**

- Volunteers will be credited for the number of hours they have contributed to the organization for any activity which benefits the organization.
- Ushers will receive the total number of hours from call time until sign-out time of an event. The sign-in sheets posted in the usher coat rooms for each event will be utilized to track attendance and input of these hours into the database. For example, if usher call time is 6:45 PM and the sign-out sheet indicates that the majority of ushers left at 10:00 PM, then each volunteer who worked the event would be given 3.25 hours for that event.

- Volunteers who have received approval to leave early from an event would only receive credit for the actual number of hours worked.
- Volunteers who are assigned to assist with pre-show or post-show activities would receive appropriate credit for that time. For example, if a book signing lasts for an additional 30 minutes past the event end time, then the volunteers who stayed for the book signing would receive an additional .5 hours.
- The total number of hours for each volunteer will be tracked and maintained in our volunteer database system. This will be one factor that is used when considering the number of assignments that are needed to staff the most popular, highly-requested shows.

## **IRS Deductions**

This information is provided for the benefit of Ushers who itemize their income taxes and may be able to take advantage of one or both of these tax laws:

### **Out-of-Pocket Expense:**

You may deduct some amounts you pay in giving services to a charitable organization. These may include amounts you pay for transportation from your home to the place where you serve. You may deduct reasonable payments for necessary meals and lodging while you are away from home overnight giving your services to a qualified organization. However, you may not deduct the value of time or services.

### **Car Expenses:**

You may deduct out-of-pocket expenses directly related to services you give to a charitable organization, such as expenses for gas and oil for your car. You may not deduct any part of general repair and maintenance expenses.

If you do not want to deduct your actual expenses, you may use a standard rate of 12 cents/mile to figure your contribution. You may not deduct depreciation and insurance.

## **Auditorium Staff**

Auditorium Director - Bob Vaughn

Administrative Aide – Alice Bettis

Business Associate – Courtney McDaniels

Development Assistant - Brandy Stabler

Assistant Director of Stage Services - Wesley Abbott

Director of Audience Development & Communication - Carly Shank

Associate Director of Marketing -- Bryan Leonard

Marketing Graduate Assistant – Lexie Montgomery

Volunteer Coordinator -- Mindy McCaffrey

Audience Development Assistant -- Amy Zepp

Event Coordinator -- Elise Robertson

Ticket Office Manager -- Shannon Smith

Ticket Sales Assistants – Mandy Buchanan and Michelle Yenerall