

# Dramat Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring

**Community** Yale University Dramatic Association, Inc. · P.O. Box 209037 · New Haven, CT

06520 · (860) 531-8224 Version 1: 12/1/20; Version 1.2: 2/19/21; Version 3: 5/12/23



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## **Introduction:**

The first edition of the Dramat Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring Community, which was released in December of 2020, had the goal of transforming Dramat theatre spaces from ones that upheld our practice of white supremacy into “anti-racist” theatre spaces, defining anti-racism as “the continued acts of actively fighting against racism”. The current Dramat Board understands anti-racism to be a larger and more active endeavor. Rather than seeking to create spaces without racism, we understand that anti-racism means creating spaces in which racism, which is present in all aspects of society, is not allowed to continue. This kind of work, which requires the dismantling and rethinking of all processes inside and outside of the theatre, takes time. We have compiled a list of action items for the next year, understanding that these steps are not the end goal of our work but rather the next logical step. This dismantling and rethinking process has been a focus of the Dramat Executive Board for the past semester, and will continue to evolve as the organization evolves in the coming years.

The second edition of the Dramat Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring Community seeks to expand upon and add clarity to the action items and overall goals from the first plan. In addition to many new action items, we have adapted some of the ways we talk about those of marginalized identities.

We have chosen to use the term “marginalized” in this document, not to simplify the complexities of marginalization, but rather to acknowledge that the language we use to describe people with marginalized identities is often flawed and exclusionary. Therefore, by using the term “marginalized” in this document, we seek to include those affected by hierarchical structures of oppression such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, among others. We recognize that individuals identify in different ways, and that, specifically when it comes to gender and sexuality, we wish to include any and all gender identities. As such, we want to create space in our words for those whose identities are undecided, undefined, or unnamed. This is not in order to equate all forms of oppression, but rather to create space for individuals to identify themselves as they wish.

Additionally, the Dramat has identified a goal of creating theatre that “celebrates diversity”, a phrase we do not take lightly. To the Dramat Board, celebrating diversity means celebrating the different identities and experiences that make our community. Because of this, we will place not only diversity but the celebration of such at the forefront of our future seasons, in the stories we seek to tell and the teams we want to tell them.

These changes, among many others, highlight the ways in which the Dramat has evolved over the past year. It is our hope that future Boards will continue these efforts, finding newer and more inclusive terms as well as finding new ways to code anti-racism, accessibility, and care into the basis of our organization.

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Lastly, we understand that, as a Board, we have a set number of experiences. The current iteration of this Plan was written by a Black, non-cis individual, and this has largely influenced the specific changes in the Plan. This is not the sum of all experiences, however, and we look to our wider community to provide feedback to better our efforts in the upcoming year. In asking this, we recognize that the labor to better this institution largely falls on the backs of those most negatively impacted by it, including those currently harmed by our practices. Thank you for your patience, care, and understanding as we work toward an inclusive and equitable future for this organization.

**Note:** Feedback forms have been inserted at the bottom of each section of this document. We are using these in order to continually improve future versions of this document and make additional commitments. Please fill these out if you have any questions or comments! You can also contact the Policy Director, or any current member of board with your concerns.

## **A Note on Implementation:**

The Dramat's Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring Community promises many specific action items. We realize these cannot be put entirely into action in the confines of one board's term; this work is a marathon, not a sprint. However, given the Dramat's past failures to act to expand and protect its community, we feel it is crucial to lay out how we envision making good on our promises.

Our first step will be requesting your feedback on this plan. Some of this feedback will be tweaks to our commitments; some will change how we implement them; some will require longer discussion, thought, outreach, and research, and may appear instead in the next edition of the plan—we already have a running list of ideas that fit this last category.

After responding to your feedback, we will track the steps to completion of each individual action item, set an implementation deadline, and assign a member of the Executive Board to take the lead. Much of this work involves writing new guidelines or updating existing written operating procedures and position packets, as we seek to make these action items part of our standard operating procedures.

Before each spring election, the Policy Director will release an update to this plan incorporating the lessons and feedback of the previous academic year. Goals may be deleted, archived, edited, or carried into our next semester. Goals from the previous year that have been deleted are permitted only when the action item is deemed no longer helpful or necessary to the Yale theatre community. Archived goals are ones that have successfully been integrated into the Dramat's standard practice, and are no longer aspirational, but instead have become standard

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operating procedures for the Dramat Executive Board and its teams. Edits may be applied to improve feasibility, clarity, or due to a new understanding of best practice. New goals will be added to the plan every year as goals for new Executive Boards. An archival version, with every current and archived action item will also be available on our website.

## **Executive Board Contact Information, Spring 2025:**

<b>President</b>	Elizabeth Stanish	she/her	<a href="mailto:president@yaledramat.org">president@yaledramat.org</a>	(603) 305-0802
<b>Vice President</b>	AJ Walker	he/him	<a href="mailto:vp@yaledramat.org">vp@yaledramat.org</a>	(646) 630-3446
<b>Treasurer</b>	Quincy Rosenzweig	he/him	<a href="mailto:treasurer@yaledramat.org">treasurer@yaledramat.org</a>	(650) 880-9010
<b>Secretary</b>	Victoria Mnatsakanyan	she/her	<a href="mailto:secretary@yaledramat.org">secretary@yaledramat.org</a>	(203) 832-0177
<b>Production Officer</b>	Carson White	they/she	<a href="mailto:prod@yaledramat.org">prod@yaledramat.org</a>	(619) 980-9930
<b>Special Events Coordinator</b>	Nandi Hildebrand	she/her	<a href="mailto:specev@yaledramat.org">specev@yaledramat.org</a>	(949) 338-0220
<b>Marketing Director</b>	Eden Feiler	she/her	<a href="mailto:marketing@yaledramat.org">marketing@yaledramat.org</a>	(917) 242-7585
<b>Policy Director</b>	Maya Evans	she/her	<a href="mailto:policy@yaledramat.org">policy@yaledramat.org</a>	(347) 405-3772
<b>Outreach Coordinator</b>	Robert Gao	he/hem	<a href="mailto:outreach@yaledramat.org">outreach@yaledramat.org</a>	(413) 379-3897
<b>Fall Mainstage Producer</b>	Dhruv Bhalla	he/him	<a href="mailto:ms1@yaledramat.org">ms1@yaledramat.org</a>	(203) 812-8659
<b>Spring Mainstage Producer</b>	Angelica Peruzzi	she/her	<a href="mailto:ms2@yaledramat.org">ms2@yaledramat.org</a>	(917) 562-1998

The glossary at the end of the document includes definitions of many of the terms and organizations mentioned in this plan.

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## The Stories We Tell:

Representation is more than who is onstage — it's also diversity in the stories they tell. Past Dramat seasons have been dominated by the work of white, cisgender, or male authors. Therefore, we're setting the goal that our season's straight plays represent and celebrate radical inclusion of historically underserved groups within Yale College. The Executive Board commits to centering stories written by BIPOC and authors of historically underrepresented groups for the shows we select, and encouraging Ex, FroShow, and Commencement applicants to submit proposals in line with the Dramat's mission of celebrating radical inclusion. Further, we understand that celebrating underserved groups on stage begins with amplifying underserved voices on and off the stage, which means paying attention not only to what stories we tell, but who we allow to tell them. We also recognize that, in traditional theatre training, plays written by authors of marginalized identities are often under taught and underrepresented onstage and, as such, we commit to amplifying these voices in our communities.

In keeping with the Dramat's goal to celebrate radical inclusion and diverse stories onstage, we will:

- Ensure the fulfillment of duties of the BIPOC Play List Manager, that is managing the [BIPOC Play List](#), which will remain open to community additions. This Associate Board member's responsibilities will include adding and maintaining plays to this running list, as well as working with various Executive Board members to publicize use of this document.
- Ask all Ex, Froshow, and Commencement teams to submit shows that align with the Dramat's objective of celebrating radical inclusion, both in their stories as well as in their production teams.
  - If needed, Board reserves the right to reject student proposed shows and ask for alternative show choices from teams if the show initially proposed don't align with our values of anti-racism and anti-discrimination
- Solicit community input, for selection of Dramat Mainstages, that aligns with our goals of radical inclusion and amplifying underserved voices
- Create a book club, open to members of the Yale community, that critically engages with plays written by authors of historically underrepresented identities to encourage community engagement with these under-produced shows.
- Maintain proactivity in providing opportunities to those within Yale College, wherein they are well-informed that the Dramat aims to not only include BIPOC theater makers but also uplift BIPOC stories.
- Create guidelines for student theater makers to follow and for Executive Board to consult in assuring that student-run productions are in accordance with the goals laid out in the points above

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## **Audition & Casting Practices:**

Strict audition requirements and a lack of sensitivity among creative teams have discouraged marginalized theatremakers, and those with little to no formal training, from participating in our shows. These unwelcoming conditions result in homogenous audition pools that are not reflective of the diversity of our student body, and ultimately, uphold white supremacy. To promote comfort, communication, mutual respect, and understanding in our audition processes for all members of the Yale community, the Dramat will:

- Create a [guide for production teams](#) outlining the Dramat’s anti-racist casting goals.
- Provide recordings of vocal parts with lyrics and accompaniments for our Fall Mainstage and Commencement musicals in order to expand accessibility to students with limited or no experience with reading music.
- Provide recordings of choreography prior to dance call for our Fall Mainstage and Commencement musicals in order to expand accessibility to students with limited or no formal dance training.
- Arrange personalized audition workshops for incoming auditionee pools, ensuring that dates, workshop leader, and other relevant information is communicated to prospective auditionees well before the workshops are to be conducted
  - Audition Workshops must take place between the initial release of audition packets by the production team and the last day of first round auditions; additional workshops may take place between the release of callback decisions and the last day of callbacks
  - Audition workshops should be a space for auditionees to ask questions, understand the specific audition process/requirements of that show, and meet the team in an informal way; it must have no bearing on casting.
- When able, arrange music office hours for musical auditions in an effort to provide equitable support to auditionees with a lack of formal experience in voice and music.
- Monitor auditionee pools to ensure they are conducive to building diverse casts representative of Yale’s student body. This takes many forms, spearheaded by the Outreach Coordinator’s work with production teams to conduct audition outreach to Yale’s Cultural Centers, resource offices, and student groups for each production, to ensure that the auditionee pool is large and diverse.
- Provide guidelines/templates for audition notes to show teams to ensure equity in their evaluation of auditionees
- Create a welcoming environment for auditionees by providing a person to “table” outside of each

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audition block who will send auditionees into the room, answer questions they might have, and provide water

- Create and publicize guidelines for students, outlining restrictions and limitations on their commitment to non-academic events and organizations when working on a Dramat show (particularly Mainstages), known as [Dramat Guidelines for Honoring Production Commitments](#)
  - Strongly recommend that actors agree to uphold these guidelines during the audition process
- Solicit feedback through the Policy Director about auditions, callbacks, deliberations, and casting for all auditionees involved in Dramat shows.
- Ensure that a member of the Policy team takes note of any incidents or general comments about the audition process using standardized audition reports that are shared with Board

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## Rehearsal Practices:

The rehearsal room is inherently a vulnerable place for actors. Performers are frequently asked to navigate extremely emotional and intimate narratives. Such demanding work is challenging enough when students are in a supportive environment, but when met with an unsupportive or apathetic creative team, this work is nearly impossible to complete in a safe and fulfilling manner. It is especially difficult as white creative teams may not understand the additional emotional toll material can hold for marginalized actors, particularly when the subject matter may reflect real-world experience of discrimination and oppression. To establish the rehearsal room as a space that protects and empowers these students, we will:

- Create additional guidelines on scheduling rehearsals with sensitivity to the many demands on students' time and mental health. This specifically includes guidance on making rehearsal scheduling compatible with student jobs.
- Emphasize to stage managers that rehearsals must consistently be scheduled well in advance of when they actually occur (at least three days in advance), or else actors reserve the right to reject them
- Require teams to be conscious of religious holidays and other extenuating personal conflicts when it comes to missing and/or scheduling rehearsals
- Work with [Undergraduate Production](#) (UP) to ensure that all fight and intimacy coordinators can give adequate time to Dramat shows and are given anti-racism training
- Work toward an eventual goal of guaranteeing fight and intimacy slots for every Dramat show, if needed
- Provide additional guidance to [Stage Managers](#) and the [Production Officer](#) on being advocates for the health and safety of their cast

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- Institute Show Support, a weekly or bi-weekly office hours-like session, led by the Policy Director, where those involved in the show can air serious grievances about the process and receive the necessary support to move forward
- Dedicate a segment of production meetings to providing updates about the state of the process to the Policy Director
- The Policy Director and Production Officer will hold a community compact meeting before each show begins rehearsals in order to read through the Protocol For Depicting Sexual Content, Consensual Sexual Touching, and Depicting Scenes of Sexual Assault, Discrimination and Depictions of Discrimination, and Actors: Advocating for Yourself documents, and create a mutually agreed upon Community Compact of guidelines for each show in our season.
  - Focus on the incorporation of the Actors: Advocating for Yourself document in these meetings, as it tends to be neglected
  - Ensure that all three of these documents are physically posted in rehearsal spaces or easily accessible to actors online
  - If a student breaches the Protocol For Depicting Sexual Content, Consensual Sexual Touching, and Depicting Scenes of Sexual Assault, we will recognize our limitations as a student-run group by not acting as a force of arbitration; we will follow Yale University policy and seek guidance from University offices if needed

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## **Production Practices:**

We believe that every member of a Dramat production deserves to be treated with dignity, care, and respect. The Dramat has routinely failed to live up to this belief, especially for our production team and cast members with marginalized identities. We've perpetuated a production grind culture that especially harms marginalized theatremakers—either burning them out or preventing them from getting involved—and we've centered white standards for lighting, costumes, makeup, and hair styling. Maintaining production practices that center white, cis, and able-bodied performers results in the needs of our marginalized theatremakers being overlooked, minimized, or neglected in the production process. To address these failures, we will:

- Recruit and select production teams, crews, and orchestras that are representative of the Yale College community.
- Host more mixers that allow for proposal teams to form well in advance of proposal deadlines
- Emphasize the Dramat's ability to support and provide resources for teams of new theatremakers,



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such as matching new theatermakers with mentors, providing shop trainings (and other technical training), etc

- Incentivize teams to add production members to proposals when the Executive Board comes to the consensus that additional members are needed in order to tackle a steep workload
- Be conscientious about overtaxing the BIPOC theatermakers that are already engaged with us and prioritize their care over our diversity goals. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Refrain from selecting shows, for the sake of diversity, that exploit BIPOC suffering and/or put an intense burden on BIPOC actors
  - Refrain from placing dramaturgical duties onto BIPOC students when producing BIPOC-centered shows
  - Refrain from expectations of BIPOC performers to compensate for a lack of knowledge about appropriate makeup, hair, and costuming by providing show teams with resources on how to appropriately style BIPOC actors
- Establish expectations for lighting designers (professional and student) to be educated on how to properly light skin of all colors
  - Commit to providing lighting workshops, hiring and retaining lighting designers of color, and providing intermediate online resources to work toward achieving this
- Ensure all stylists are trained and knowledgeable about BIPOC hair and makeup and are provided adequate show-related hair and makeup products needed by BIPOC actors, which includes ensuring that show budgets allocate adequate funds toward makeup for BIPOC actors
  - Part of this includes allocating funds in order to provide lav mics, when used, for all types of skin colors
- Create costuming guidelines that accommodate diverse body types, and require that costume designers send design ideas to actors previous to tech week to accommodate different actors' comfort levels. This includes guidelines for costume designers to refrain from reading actor measurements aloud or sharing measurements without permission, and providing alternatives for actors that wish not to be measured.
- Mandate regular breaks for production teams in order to facilitate healthy working practices
  - Create a document that outlines specific guidelines on the maximum amount of hours that tech crew can be called
- Work with UP to provide peer mentors for the crew heads in our Ex shows.
- Expand (and heavily promote the expansion of) the amount of shop calls we provide to reduce the

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burden of load-in, build, and strike on show crews

- Respect and uplift other theater groups on campus by following the rules and guidelines set by the Yale Drama Coalition

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## Employing and Collaborating with Professionals:

Over the past several years, the Dramat has made a concerted effort to hire professionals that share students' identities. In doing this, we recognize that white supremacist hiring processes prohibit and discourage professionals with marginalized identities from applying, and that our goal to improve diversity in the professionals we hire begins with our hiring practices. We want to codify our policies about employing professionals to ensure that the Dramat continues to practice just and equitable hiring practices. As such, we will:

- Seek out and employ artists with marginalized identities. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Soliciting applications from databases specifically geared toward finding professionals with marginalized identities
  - Forgoing blind recruiting practices in favor of conscious hiring in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, class, etc.
  - Empowering marginalized artists by expressing the importance of the Anti-Racism Plan and broader anti-racist sentiments in the Dramat's show selection, hiring, and casting processes
- Upon hiring of professionals, offer detailed information and resources about securing housing in New Haven, if needed; the current President should consistently check in with professionals about housing to prevent any lack of communication and provide any assistance necessary in their search
- Reevaluate hiring processes along with the [director onboarding document](#) (as needed) each semester prior to recruiting professionals, in order to ensure practices and protocol align with the ever-developing values of the Executive Board
- Be conscious about the inherent differences in experience when viewing students' applications in conjunction with professionals and commit to being deliberate about hiring practices when applications are open to students
- Create an open source, living document with resources for finding and hiring marginalized professionals

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- When our values align, continue our relationship with professionals we did not hire and keep a database of these strong candidates, especially those of marginalized identities, and encourage them to re-apply
- Promote financial transparency with professionals, in relation to budget line items, constraints, and flexibility
- Create and publicize behavioral guidelines to which professionals must adhere when involved in Dramat productions, known as Dramat Guidelines for Intolerable Conduct
  - Under the jurisdiction of these guidelines, the Dramat Executive Board will reserve the right to remove any professionals, deemed as showing intolerable conduct, from Dramat productions

The Dramat recognizes that our hired professionals are not always familiar with the Yale community, and this poses a potential risk of harm for both students and professionals. We also recognize that power dynamics present in the rehearsal room (especially when paired with the sensitive content in many shows) can create a harmful environment for all involved. By bringing in marginalized professionals, we have an added responsibility to care for their safety as well. The care of all members of our rehearsal rooms and production teams, whether professionals or students, is our first priority, and as such, we will:

- Take explicit and immediate action if discriminatory behavior is reported to the Dramat, the results of those actions potentially being as drastic as removal of one or more person(s) from a Dramat production
  - We will follow Yale University guidelines and turn to university channels to guide our response
- Create opportunities for professionals and students to meet prior to tech week for each Mainstage
  - Ensure that professional designers fulfill the part of their contract that mandates they host workshops/teaching opportunities for students
- Ensure members of production teams have all contact information for every current member of the Executive Board, as shared on each show's Contact Sheet, and during onboarding meetings, emphasize which Board members are relevant to contact in various instances
  - Ensure that Board meets with professionals after they are hired to introduce themselves
- Reserve the right to ask professionals to leave our shows should they violate Dramat policies around Discrimination and Sexual Content

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## **Leadership Development:**

We recognize the importance of leadership that reflects the diversity of the Yale student body. Cultivating a diverse Executive and Associate Board, and increasing BIPOC and other marginalized individuals in artistic and production roles in authority positions, serves to better the Yale theatre community at large. We also recognize that, as a production company, the Dramat has historically de-prioritized marginalized theatremakers, neglecting to provide adequate training in tech roles and encouragement toward Associate and Executive Board positions.

We seek institutional measures that will create opportunities for marginalized theatremakers to get involved with the Dramat, both on our Associate and Executive Boards and on our shows. To this end, we will:

- Recognize the implicit biases that exist during Executive Board elections, especially between white and nonwhite candidates, and implore the producing membership to reject these biases when voting during contested elections
- Mandate that all Executive Board members attend UP anti-racism training when offered
- Read and discuss anti-racist theatre texts with Executive and Associate boards each semester
- Provide clear, public information about the responsibilities and experience suggested for Executive Board positions
  - Host informational sessions each semester prior to elections in order to outline the roles of Board positions in greater detail
- Prior to elections, continue to release a Google Form for interested members of the producing membership to express their desire to receive one-on-one advising from current Board members
- Work with UP to utilize our Fall Ex and FroShow as training shows for crew and production positions, so that new theatremakers can learn the skills necessary to eventually hold leadership positions on production teams

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## **Audience Accessibility:**

The Dramat believes in the power of live theatre and wants everyone to experience it, especially those traditionally excluded from doing so. However, structurally discriminatory barriers and an exclusive, unwelcoming culture in theatrical spaces create predominantly white and able-bodied audiences. Prohibitively high ticket prices, a lack of accessibility services, and inadequate marketing and outreach to Yale and New Haven's communities are extant issues at the Dramat and theaters around the country. To ensure

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equitable access for all audience members and to shift our culture towards one that is welcoming and inclusive for all theatregoers, we will:

- Mandate that all creative teams complete a preliminary Content Advisory for all proposed/selected shows and that those advisories are completed either prior to hiring a director (for MainStages) or prior to submitting proposals (for all other shows). This Content Advisory should be regularly updated in all places (e.g., the website, YCA page, program, fire speech) throughout the show process to reflect any changes that may occur.
- In addition to our general Content Warnings at the beginning of all of our shows, we will provide more specific Content Warnings on our website and in our ticketing confirmation prior to the show that will be available upon request at the Box Office.
- Institute a closed captioned or ASL interpreted performance of any number of Dramat shows, in collaboration with the Yale Deaf community. Ensure the presence of an ASL interpreter either through university resources (when available) or outside services.
  - Connect with Yale SAS and/or external accessibility/interpreter services in order to streamline this process
- Continue to designate and better publicize one performance of each Dramat production as a “Pay What You Can” show
  - Iron out how to advertise “rush” tickets
- Commit to providing accessible ways to purchase tickets outside of our website
- Ensure that our website is accessible by including text-to-speech features, accessible fonts, etc.
- Form connections between Yale and the Dramat season that extend into the classroom; generate genuine links between the stories we tell and the teachings being offered across campus and use these links to provide students an entry point into the Dramat
- Assign a member of front-of-house staff to be in charge of handling accessible seating needs prior to each show, whether that be the House Manager, the Audience Accessibility Coordinator, or some other designated individual
- Specify the duties of the Audience Accessibility Coordinator, who works with the Vice President and Producer during Dramat shows. These may include:
  - Corresponding between the Dramat and the ASL department
  - Ushering shows in order to assist audience members with accessibility needs
  - Announcing content warnings before shows

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## Responsibility to New Haven:

Yale and its students rely heavily on the hundreds of New Haveners who put their time and energy into the University, and by extension, all its affiliated clubs and associations. However, Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital receive a massive tax break, which exacerbates the economic inequalities in the city. The Executive Board must be conscious of how the Dramat interacts with the city and how each outreach effort, statement, and production may impact the New Haven Community. While the Dramat's constitution makes a commitment to serve both the Yale community and the New Haven community at large, our actions and general practices have not always aligned with this mission. Therefore, the Dramat commits to using its resources and time to promote theatre education and appreciation. We will:

- Continue to make free ticket vouchers available at New Haven public libraries and other cultural and community centers for all Dramat productions
- Continue to make free ticket vouchers available to Yale Hospitality and Facilities employees for all Dramat productions
- Enhance promotion of free tickets for New Haven high school students via the Pathways to the Arts and Humanities program and local schools
- Seek out BIPOC students to participate in Dramat Acting Workshops via the Pathways to the Arts and Humanities program
- Provide a list (updated and maintained by an Associate Board member) of BIPOC-led theaters and performance and social justice organizations from New Haven and around the nation that our visitors can support; include this information in Dramat Bulletins, programs, on social media, etc.
- Increase outreach to the New Haven community when advertising the Commencement Musical; be mindful of appealing to New Haven residents when selecting Commencement shows
- Encourage our membership to attend events at local New Haven theaters by advertising it on the Dramat bulletin
- Hold regular discussions with Associate and Executive Boards about how best to support the New Haven community
- Expand one performance of each of our Mainstages to include a Dramat talkback and backstage tour for New Haven high school students, organized by the Special Events Coordinator
- Partner with the New Haven Arts Council in order to extend job opportunities to local artists; prioritize hiring professionals from the New Haven community when they apply
- Partner with the New Haven Arts Council in order to publicize a calendar of drama/arts-related events

# Dramat Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring

**Community** Yale University Dramatic Association, Inc. · P.O. Box 209037 · New Haven, CT

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happening in New Haven throughout the year

- Publicize this calendar on the Dramat website as well as in Dramat Bulletins
- Aim for at least 25% of all funds that go toward supplies for special events, including any catered events, to be used at local New Haven businesses
- Prioritize New Haven organizations/nonprofits in the donations collected in Dramat productions

[Click here to give us feedback on this section!](#)

## Transparency:

We acknowledge that, as an organization that occupies colonized land, using spaces created by the labor of enslaved Africans, our organization is complicit in histories of oppression, marginalization, and violence. We want to publicly acknowledge this fact and hold ourselves responsible to dismantle the systems that continue to harm marginalized groups. Honesty is necessary to make this progress, so we must be explicit with our past shortcomings and future plans to hold ourselves accountable in this work. To acknowledge the harm caused by Yale and the Dramat historically, we will:

- Make and improve land acknowledgments in all our programs and work with the David Geffen School of Drama to display them in performance spaces.
- The Dramat will research and practice ways to uplift Indigenous and Native peoples in our rehearsal rooms and performance spaces
  - This includes practices such as distinguishing Indigenous performers from white performers during casting cycles and rejecting Indigenous character tropes in performance
- Make labor acknowledgements in all our programs and work with the David Geffen School of Drama to display them in performance spaces. These apply to the unpaid and unrecognized labor of enslaved people that built this university.
- Following the selection of a MainStage, provide a brief statement from the Executive Board to the Yale community, explaining why the selected show was chosen as well as why the other shows were not chosen
- Reintroduce a Dramat Annual Report, published at the end of each semester by the president, outlining financial affairs, anti-racism progress, goals and achievements, etc.
- Hold Treasurers accountable for furthering financial transparency throughout their terms through the expectation that they release end of semester financial reports, monthly budget updates, post-show debriefs, and individual budget updates when needed/asked for
- Formalize processes/events that are aimed specifically to give community members a voice (such as

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community office hours)

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## **Accountability:**

Due to the biannual turnover of leadership, accountability has consistently been a challenge for the Dramat's Executive Board. Often, members of our community have felt unheard because the Dramat has not responded to their criticism in a timely manner or new board members have been unaware of prior incidents. In order to keep the Dramat accountable to the community, we are building new feedback and check-in procedures as well as new policies to respond to harmful incidents. We will:

- Ensure that show teams understand that both Board and the team themselves are obligated to uphold the goals outlined in this document to the best of their ability in every aspect of the show process
- Formulate a just and efficient way to respond to incidents of misconduct. We want to take our time to get this process right, but it will include a board review of the behavior in consultation with Yale University policy and/or offices, a response to the individual or a community-wide response guided by Yale University policies, and a report to be filed for future reference. More details will be outlined in the [Dramat Guidelines for Intolerable Conduct](#)
- Emphasize the purpose of anonymous feedback as an outlet for airing grievances including, but not limited to:
  - Acts of discrimination in any capacity
  - Issues with organizational practices during casting, auditions, production, etc.
  - Interpersonal conflicts between members of Dramat productions
- Publicize that our anonymous feedback system allows individuals the option to message directly with the Policy Director while remaining anonymous.
- After the closing of each Dramat show, conduct an anonymous performance review that will be sent to each member of the cast, crew, production team, and Board in order to evaluate our progress towards our goals of community care and anti-racism
- Meet with the director, stage manager, and producer and review the results of the performance reviews and their abidance by their use of Dramat policies in order to determine successes and shortfalls
- Conduct an annual review and revision of this document
  - Create a standardized process outlining when and how plan revision should occur each academic year



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- Establish a standard of accountability across Executive Board such that each individual member understands their responsibility for all major decisions and statements made by the Dramat (unless dissent is publicly noted) and that each Board member should behave as such when responding to the Yale community about those decisions and/or statements

[Click here to give us feedback on this section!](#)

## **Acknowledgements:**

We deeply appreciate the labor that BIPOC artists and organizations have invested in theatre accessibility and accountability. Specifically, this document was written in response to the [We See You White American Theatre](#) campaign created by and on behalf of BIPOC theatremakers. The Dramat is deeply appreciative of the artists and administrators who created their [extended demands document](#) and other anti-racist theatre resources. We also recognize the work of the BIPOC members of the Dramat community, both past and present, who have committed disproportionate amounts of emotional and physical labor making the Dramat more equitable even as they continue to be mistreated. We will endeavor to make the Dramat a more caring, equitable, and just institution so that Dramat members and members of the Yale theatre community are not additionally harmed due to their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, or socioeconomic status.

We would particularly like to thank 2022-2023 Executive and Associate Boards and all members of the Yale theatre community whose feedback (anonymously and otherwise) helped inform the current iteration of the plan.

[Click here to provide general feedback on the Dramat's Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring Community!](#)

## **Glossary**

***Ex Show:*** an abbreviation which stands for Experimental Show which is produced by the Dramat twice-three times each year, and is entirely student-proposed and produced

***Froshow:*** an abbreviation which stands for First-Year show, a production staffed, produced, and performed entirely by first-year students in Yale College (note: for all internal Dramat affairs, the Froshow is also considered an “Ex Show”)

***Mainstage:*** a show which is directed and designed by professionals and performed by students. The Dramat produces two, a Fall and Spring Mainstage

***Outreach Coordinator:*** a position on the Dramat Executive Board whose responsibilities include facilitating the Dramat's outreach efforts within and without the Yale community, including its

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collaboration with Pathways to the Arts and Humanities and its relationships with Yale’s cultural centers. The Outreach Coordinator was created in 2016 after two years of turmoil and racism that fostered increased scrutiny of the Dramat. The Executive Board then introduced the Outreach Coordinator to create a more diverse, more equitable, and more accessible Dramat and Yale theater community. This year, the Board made the conscious decision to spread out our equity and justice work to all of the Executive Board to better reflect our commitments. However, the Outreach Coordinator will continue to foster relationships with the Yale and New Haven community, manage our education and accessibility programs, and be a resource present at auditions.

***Pathways to the Arts and Humanities:*** an initiative which invites New Haven high school students to Yale’s campus for a variety of arts and humanities-based programs

***Position Packets:*** role-specific informational guides distributed to all production team and executive board members. They offer detailed guidelines and recommendations to help the production team enforce a safe, productive, and respectful rehearsal environment

***Policy Director:*** the executive board member whose responsibilities include overseeing and revising the Dramat Plan for an Anti-Racist and Caring Community, ensuring that each all productions adhere to Dramat policies, assigning policy tasks to each board member, receiving and responding to anonymous feedback, and providing a point person for all incidents of harm. They work closely with the Production Officer to ensure that all Dramat productions are healthy for all individuals involved.

***Production Officer:*** the executive board member responsible for overseeing each of the Dramat’s productions, ensuring that each one adheres to Dramat and UP guidelines for the safety and well-being of everyone involved. They also serve as the primary liaison between the Dramat and DGSD/YRT

***Special Events Coordinator:*** a position on the Dramat Executive Board whose responsibilities include organizing events for the membership, such as cast parties, the birthday party, membership dinner, and DRAMATalks

***Stage Manager:*** the person who provides practical and organizational support to the director, actors, designers and crew. They ensure that rehearsals and performances run in accordance with UP’s and the Dramat’s Actor, Stage Manager, and Rehearsal Guidelines, and are one of the primary advocates for the wellbeing of the cast and the rehearsal environment overall

***Straight play:*** A performance piece which is not musical and relies on spoken word to tell the story

***Undergraduate Production (UP):*** a Yale College office which exclusively oversees all undergraduate performing arts events in theatrical spaces and works to provide training and technical support to ensure all productions are safely mounted

***Yale Repertory Theatre (YRT):*** the professional theatre in residence at the David Geffen School of Drama which features theatrical collaboration between students and professionals

***David Geffen School of Drama (DGSD):*** the graduate school of theater at Yale University offering

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professional training in every theatrical discipline. The Dramat shares its offices and theaters with DGSD and uses its inventory of production equipment, costumes, and properties

## Terms

**Ableism:** prejudice and/or discrimination in favor of nondisabled people, alongside the belief that neurotypical individuals and individuals with typical abilities (such as sight, hearing, and typical motor skills) are superior to those who are neurodivergent or have atypical abilities.

**Anti-racism:** the continued effort to create spaces in which racism cannot exist.

**BIPOC:** an acronym which stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. It is adapted from POC, the acronym for People of Color, to specifically acknowledge the unique violence and discrimination inflicted upon Black and Indigenous peoples in the United States of America.

**Disability:** a mental or physical condition which may affect one's movements, senses, or activities

**Equity:** the concept of giving proportional representation or resources to the group of people that needs it the most, especially in the case of marginalized or oppressed groups of people.

**FGLI:** an acronym which stands for First-Generation, Low-Income, referring to students who are the first in their family to attend college and/or who come from low income households

**Latinx:** a gender-neutral term used to describe individuals that identify as Latin American ethnically or culturally.

**Marginalized Peoples:** people with identities that have been historically or systematically oppressed, including but not limited to BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ folks, disabled folks, and religious minorities.

**Non-binary:** one term used for people who don't fall into the gender binary, but rather lie somewhere on the gender spectrum. Non-binary individuals may also be gender-fluid or agender, among other terms.

**People of Color (POC):** a person who is not white or of European descent.

**Sexism:** prejudice and/or discrimination on the basis of one's sex, alongside the belief that one gender or sex is superior to others.

**Systemic Racism:** racism encoded in laws, government, or other bureaucratic systems that operate to oppress people of color, in particular Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples.

**Racism:** prejudice, discrimination, or the inaction in the face of intolerance or bigotry against an individual of a different race, backed with historic or systemic power.

**White privilege:** the benefits or the lack of hardships that a white or white-presenting person is afforded based on the color of their skin.