PREPARING STUDENTS FOR UNIVERSITY THEATRE PROGRAMS

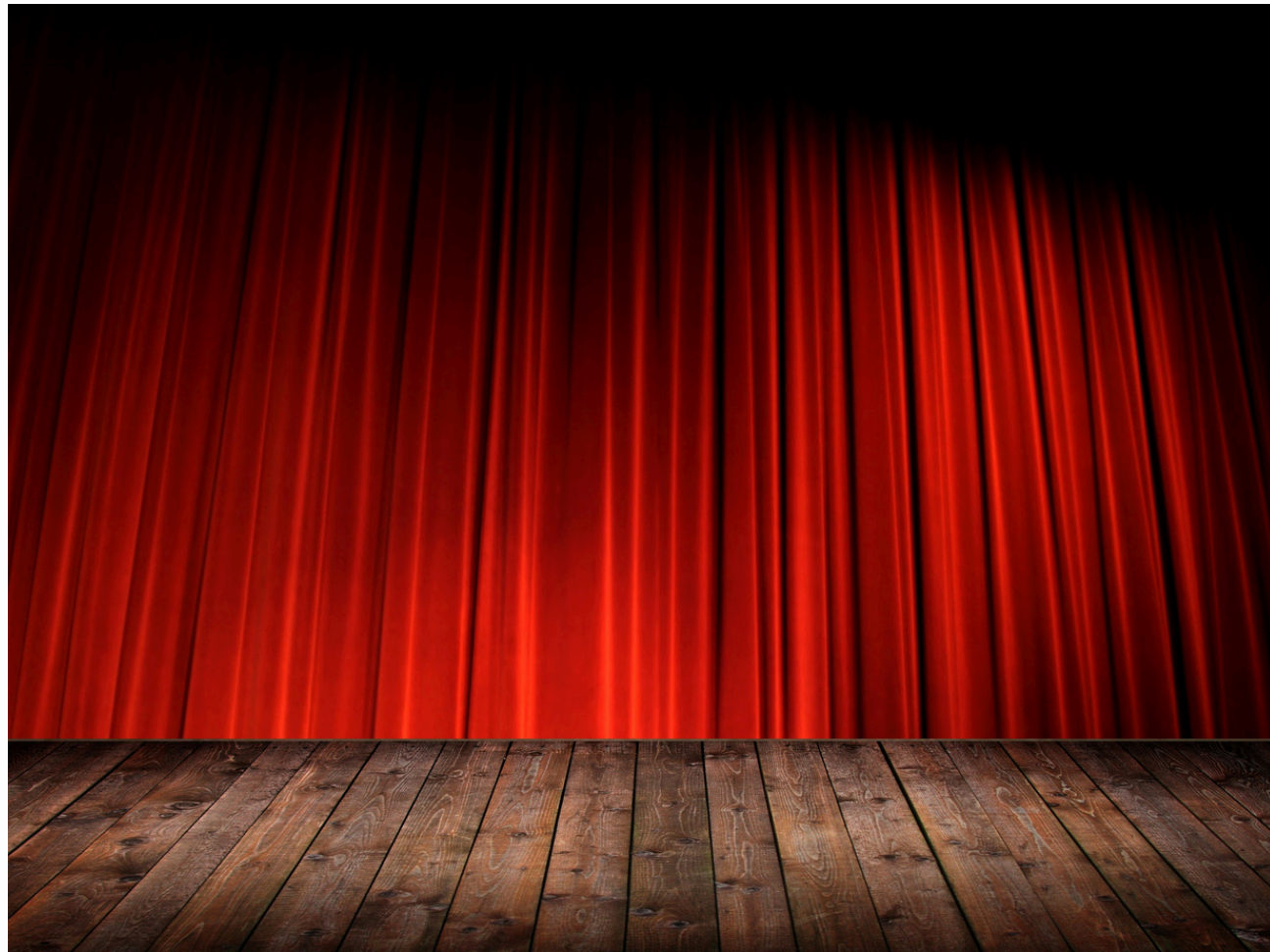DR. MARGO HICKMAN

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INTRODUCTION

I am an award-winning theatre educator and director. And an advocate for arts education that uses my platform to fight for arts programs in public schools across the state of Texas. I am a member of the Texas Educational Theatre Association, former chair for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, member of the Black Educators Theatre Caucus, American Alliance for Theatre & Education, Theatre for Young Audiences, and the Children's Theatre Foundation of America.

I led my theatre students to numerous University Interscholastic League awards; advancing to regionals in 2013 and 2023 in One Act Play competition. I also coached students for several years in UIL Prose and Poetry Interpretation. My love for UIL manifested from my own experience as a high school theatre student after winning numerous best actress awards and advancing to state in 1983 in Prose Interpretation.

PREPARATION, PREPARATION, PREPARATION

As the parent of a professional actress, and high school theatre educator for 14 years. The one thing I have learned is the importance of preparation in order to assist students with the desire to pursue professional careers in theatre.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

Let's take a moment and reflect on our roles as theatre educators.

You have that one talented student with the ability to ignite the stage as a performer or technically.

They share their interest to become an actor, director, stage manager, etc.

APPLICATION

The **college application** process can seem intimidating, especially if students don't have parents or siblings who have already been through it and can offer advice.
Since there are several **steps**, such as **writing an essay** and obtaining **letters of recommendation**, experts say a good way for students to get started is to **create a to-do** list during their junior year of high school.

"Once you can see it visually, the number of tasks and a schedule to do them, it simplifies a lot of things," says Christine Chu, a premier college admissions counselor at IvyWise, a New York-based education consulting company. "It will take away a lot of the anxiety."
Though there is often prep work, students generally begin working on college application tasks the summer between their junior and senior years of high school, experts say. Here's what prospective undergraduates need to know about completing a college application.

The Step-by-Step Guide to Applying to College
Applying to College
- Complete the FAFSA
- Fill Out the Common App
- Write a Standout College Essay
- Ask for Recommendation Letters
- Learn the Ins and Outs of Financial Aid
- Decipher College Tuition Costs
- Find Scholarships to Pay for College

D E A D L I N E S

First are early decision deadlines, usually in **November**. Students who apply via early decision, or ED, hear back from a college sooner than their peers who turn in applications later. ED admissions decisions often come out by December.
However, students should be aware that ED acceptances are binding, meaning an applicant must enroll if offered admission.

Some schools also have a second early decision deadline, ED II, which is also binding. The difference is in the timelines. ED II deadlines are usually in January, and admissions decisions often come out in February.

Early Action

Early action is another type of application deadline that tends to be in November or December, though some schools set deadlines as early as Oct. 15. Similar to early decision, students who apply via early action hear back from schools sooner. The difference is EA acceptances aren't binding.

Regular Decision

Students can also choose to apply by a school's regular decision deadline, which is typically Jan. 1. Students who apply regular decision generally hear back from schools in mid-to-late March or early April. This is the most common way students apply to schools.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Common Application

One popular choice is The Common Application, which is accepted by more than 1,000 colleges, including some outside the U.S. Students fill out the Common App once and can then submit it to multiple colleges. However, in addition to the main application, Common App schools often have a supplemental section, Chu says. The supplement sometimes includes additional essay questions, so students may need to budget time for more writing.

What Do I Need to Know About the College Application Essay

As part of the application process, most colleges require students to submit at least one writing sample: the college essay. This is sometimes referred to as a personal statement. There's usually a word limit of around several hundred words for a personal statement. The main essay on the Common App should be around 650 words. The Coalition Application website says its essays should be between 500 and 650 words. Institution-specific supplemental essays typically have a word count of around 250 words.

What Are the Other Key Components of a College Application?

- Personal information
- High School Transcript
- Standardized Test Scores
- Letters of Recommendation
- Information on Extracurricular Activities
- Resume (theatre programs)
- College application fees (waivers)

PERFORMANCES AND PORTFOLIOS

02 digital portfolio submissions

01 Monologue performances

The right theatre program

- Acting
- Stage Management
- Production/ Technical
- Playwriting/Dramaturgy
- Theatre Education
- Dance

Your impact as the theatre educator

How can I help?

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