College Auditions & Interviews Exit Report

*2010 Info*

* 207 students registered for acting auditions; 48 registered for technical interviews.
* Due to weather or other various reasons, 16 actors and \_\_\_ technicians did not show.
* Auditions were scheduled to begin at 8:15a.m. and end at 6:00p.m, with 23 or 24 auditioning each hour. We actually wrapped up just before 5:00. The tech interviews ran according to schedule beginning at 9:15 and ending at 3:30. 16 technicians presented to college reps in each 90 minute session.
* 37 colleges registered to participate, 6 or 7 cancelled due to weather. 3, maybe 4, were first time participants.

*What Went Well: things to continue*

Binder Prep

* At the beginning of each group of resumes we included two copies of the audtionee group list. This allowed the college reps to turn one in to us and keep an additional copy for their records.
* We called the groups by letter and within the letter, numbered each student 1-24 (acting) and 1-16 (tech). This system helped the college reps and ourselves to keep track of students. Also the students were able to keep in line as well while waiting.
* When an auditionee’s resume was not included we put a piece of paper that said “No resume was submitted for this student.” in the binder at the place in order where his or her resume should have been. This place holder helped the college reps to not skip ahead or inadvertently switch students.

Student Meeting

* At the meeting two of the monitors found a table to bring in where we place a copy of the groups printed out and students signed in before or after the meeting.
* In the binders we’ve included a copy of the notes we used for the Informational Meeting. We stressed coming on time and being prepared with music and cutting at 2 minutes.
* Three of the monitors who would be with us at the start of the day attended the auditionees’ meeting. We appreciated being able to go over last minute details with them the night before rather than first thing in the morning.
* We informed the students to come to Fest Gear for their call back letters no earlier than 3 hours after their audition group ended. Our monitors were able to deliver the letters to Fest Gear within that window. The monitors were creating the letters with a mail merge system set up by Jeff and executed by David. We were very pleased with their initiative and follow through.

Communication with college reps

* The committee members at the Exhibitor Check-in reminded representatives of the colleges and universities of the audition times. It is important to make sure that they are reminded that the start times are different for tech and acting auditions.
* In the morning, we informed the college and university reps about the expectations the festival has of the kids (time limits, types of monologues, portfolio requirements, etc.). They appreciated knowing the parameters as well as the guidance we gave the students ahead of time. It helped them to know what to expect.

Friday

* Although we had a little trouble getting into the spaces at the start of the day on Friday (doors were locked), we were early enough that we were able to start on time.
* In the acting audition we were firm about the two minute total audition time rule, this kept the day moving ahead of schedule. The timing did begin at the start of their introduction, not the start of the selection.
* While collecting the sheets at the end of each session. We updated the reps on students that had dropped, moved, or were added.
* The refreshments served to the representatives was plentiful, tasty and delivered on time.
* The quality of the student monitors was exceptional, particularly David \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The ISU staff was incredibly helpful throughout the day. Peter Guither was available the day before and the day of auditions for last minute assistance.

*Areas for Improvement: things to consider for next year*

Binders & Prep

* The group lists at the beginning of each section of resumes should be Xeroxed on a different color paper. The group letters and numbers should be written on each resume before Xeroxing.
* Keep the introductory letter in the front of the binder, but you might want to include a comment/feedback sheet in the back of the binder. This way they could jot down notes as they go along.
* Having students sign in at the Thursday meeting is sufficient. The google document with replies was only used by 150 of the 255 total participants.
* Since it will vary each year, the amount of time per student in the tech interviews should be revisited. A bit of math involving the number of representatives and students that need to connect in a ninety minute period. We were able to lengthen the time per student, even taking into account “travel time.”
* When scheduling the students for the tech interviews and acting auditions, consider arranging them in alpha order instead of by school. The representatives commented that in the tech auditions, they would interview several kids from the same school, one right after another, with basically the same story/photos/experiences. In the acting auditions, if a particular school had just produced a show, the reps would hear various songs and monologues from that same show in succession. This would require additional checks to make sure that students who were part of a Festival production would not be scheduled during their performances.
* If possible, it would be beneficial to have a separate location for the college representatives to gather before the sessions. This space would be available for eating, hanging coats, and the sharing of information with the representatives. (format, drops and adds, reporting system, etc.) This year, the representatives gathered in the same room and at the same time as the auditionees. It made it difficult to take care of the “business” of the day. A bonus, by noon, Peter found an empty room (CVA 118/College Conference Room?) for the lunch break. It would make the day run much smoother with a pre-selected space.
* The signage for the Festival in general was wonderful. It would be helpful to have more specific signage related to the auditions. The tech interview location was difficult to find and in the acting auditions, kids were showing up in the Green Room, before the Holding room, etc. Maybe a start here type of thing. Also, when at ISU, signs should be posted on the doors of Kemp lobby asking people not to enter the lobby to cut through. That space serves as a coat room and lounge for the college reps.
* Please make sure that all spaces are unlocked early enough for set up in the morning.
* If possible, check the rooms for the auditions the day before to make sure they are set up. We visited the locations the day before for the tech interviews. The tables were there, but not set up. I made the assumption that the room would be set up. Not, so. Fortunately, the college representatives that had arrived early for the interviews were gracious enough to help me set up the room.

Friday

* If space allows, as part of the table layout in the tech room, include an empty or “off” table situated every 5 or 6 students. Because of the weather, we had several students drop from the interviews. Rather than reconfigure the room, we left those tables empty and requested that the reps stay at those tables for the allotted time. The reps commented afterward that this was EXTREMELY helpful in that it allowed them a moment to take additional notes, etc.
* Make sure that the college & university representatives understand how the reporting and “call back” system works. We did this at the start of the day, but it would be worth repeating since we had some universities that changed representatives throughout the day and not all of them were aware of the system. One failed to turn in the “call back” sheet at the end of a session, which created a snag of the day.
* The duplication of the “call back” letter for the sponsors is unnecessary. The students share their results with their sponsors. We had a large stack of sponsor copies left unclaimed at the end of the festival.
* It was important to keep the original “call back” sheets from the representatives once the information was added to the mail merge. This enabled us to check for any discrepancies or confusion.
* Although it may make for a monotonous day, please request that the monitors that you start the day stay with you. The first group works out a system and it can be difficult to keep that system consistent when monitors switch out. Things to remember for the monitors:
  + The data entry monitors need a master list to indicate drops.
  + In the distribution of student monitors, you only need two for the tech interviews.
  + Bring a good supply of working stopwatches.
* **No students or resumes should be accepted past the Thanksgiving meeting with the exception of schools on waiting list.**

*Feedback from Colleges:*

* Although many reps and students expressed their gratitude at a well executed audition, to our knowledge, no official written feedback was gathered from the college reps. In lieu of a comment card, Larry hosted a meeting on Saturday morning in order to discuss any feedback and concerns that college reps have about the audition/interview process. We invited the college reps present at auditions this year to the meeting and included the information in an introductory letter in the front of the binder, but colleges that did not participate this year for one reason or another had no knowledge of this meeting. Therefore, the issue of GPA on resume has not been discussed with the schools that expressed a concern after last year’s auditions.
* In conversation with college reps it was mentioned that it might be helpful if students were to indicate on their resumes what type of program/major they are interested in. For instance, large lighting or stage design program, musical theatre and dance, general theatre degree, etc. This would help the reps in determining which students they should call back. Examples given were: A small liberal arts college may not have an extensive lighting design program, so it would not be worth the students or the reps time to call them back. If a student was interested in liberal arts/theatre program, then a large university setting is not going to be worth investigating. The following day, precious time spent visiting tables would be better utilized.
* If students were to indicate type of program desired on their resumes, instructions might need to be detailed on the “Audition/Interview” tip sheets found on the Festival Website. Perhaps an optional “complete this sentence” section.
* Another point made by reps in support of a change in scheduling to an alpha or random system would be that students from smaller high schools would be given a fairer shake. Example given was small, rural high school tech kid with limited resources following five students from tech power house school with digital portfolios.

Respectfully submitted,

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