

# **Guidelines for Russell Auditorium Student House Managers (SHM) and Student Technical Specialists (STS)**

## **Approved July 13, 2006**

### **Guidelines for Russell Auditorium Technical and House Support**

Russell Auditorium is not only a high demand facility, but it is also a highly complex facility with sophisticated lighting and sound systems and stringent fire safety and ADA/504 requirements. *Failure to follow the auditorium's ADA/504 guidelines could result in serious injury or death to facility users and audience members.* (For ADA/504 guidelines, please see the Guidelines for the Use of Russell Auditorium found at <http://www2.gcsu.edu/ps/russell.html>.) In addition to the potential for injury, operation of the theatre's sophisticated lighting and sound equipment by untrained event organizers could result in damage to expensive equipment. **For these reasons, all users of Russell Auditorium must utilize the services of Student Technical Specialists (STS) and Student House Managers (SHM) trained by Theatre faculty and made available through the Department of Public Services.** (Waivers of the Student House Manager requirement may be requested when event organizers can provide trained theatre professionals or university employees who will be on site and in charge before, during, and after performances. However, even in such cases, all fire safety and ADA/504 rules still must be adhered to.)

Contact Lisa Castillo, Coordinator of Office Services for the Department of Public Services, to obtain the services of Student Technical Specialists and Student House Managers.

### **The Positions**

The STS and SHM positions will be filled with advanced Theatre students who have completed the necessary training to be hired. Student Technical Specialists are trained by Russ Staples and Student House Managers are trained by the Theatre Chair for the Department of Music and Theatre. The students are responsible for the job descriptions, qualifications, and duties that are outlined in this document. They are supervised by the Department of Music & Theatre and the Coordinator of Office Services for the Department of Public Services.

### **Compensation**

Students will be paid according to the scale used for the Federal Work Study Program. Currently, that scale is \$5.50 per hour for freshmen, \$5.75 per hour for sophomores, \$6 per hour for juniors, \$6.25 an hour for seniors, and \$8 per hour for graduate students. Students will be paid a minimum of \$30 for each event they work, and should work no more than six hours per meeting.

### **The Process for Obtaining Qualified Student Workers**

The Theatre Chair for the Department of Music & Theatre has provided a list of qualified advanced Theatre students to Lisa Castillo, Coordinator of Office Services for Public Services. This list will be updated by the Theatre Chair at the start of each semester or more frequently if needed. Students must complete the appropriate Human Resources payroll paperwork prior to their first work assignment.

As events are scheduled in Russell, Lisa Castillo will inform event organizers of the need to obtain Student Technical Specialists and Student House Managers, and will provide contact information for the students to the event organizers. It will be the responsibility of the event organizers to contact the appropriate students, discuss their technical and other support needs, and agree upon the number of hours that must be worked. Event coordinators should then communicate this information to Lisa Castillo. After the event concludes, but before payroll paperwork is submitted, event coordinators should inform Lisa Castillo of any changes in the number of hours actually worked.

For internal (GCSU) events, the event organizers should provide Mrs. Castillo with number for the account that will be charged to pay the student workers. Mrs. Castillo will then submit paperwork to have the student employees paid through standard campus procedures.

External (non-GCSU) users of the auditorium will be billed by Public Services for both rent and student support. Public Services will then submit paperwork to have the student employees paid through standard campus procedures.

## **Job Descriptions, Qualifications, and Duties**

The following outlines the job description, expected qualifications and duties of the Student Technical Specialist (STS) and the Student House Manager (SHM).

### **Student Technical Specialist (STS)**

The focus of this position is to aid event organizers by providing specialized technical support for Russell Auditorium. GCSU strives to equip the facility with knowledgeable and proficiently trained staff to ensure the best results technically. This position will help keep the equipment in proper working order, and lower the maintenance costs that plague the lighting and rigging systems of Russell Auditorium.

### **Major Responsibilities/Duties:**

- Meet with event organizer and help work out technical needs in terms of lighting for the production, meeting, conference, or event
- Make sure that the House Speech Tape is in good working order and ready to use at least two days before the event
- Insert the House Speech Tape into pre-show duties and make sure it is played at every event once the house is closed and the program is ready to begin
- Form a crew as the needs specify and work out the number of hours each staff member will work in conjunction with the Theatre Program TD and the event organizer
- Ensure mandatory enforcement of all rules and regulations for Russell Auditorium as specified in the *Guidelines for the Use of Russell Auditorium* document.

### **General Requirements:**

- Must be knowledgeable in all aspects of the technical workings of Russell Auditorium
- Must be proficient with the artistry and craft of lighting design, scenery construction, and repair
- Must be knowledgeable of the communication system (headsets) in Russell Auditorium
- Must have received training as a stage manager and be proficient in all areas of the position including competence in aiding the event coordinators to organize their productions, meetings, or conferences
- Must exhibit tremendous patience and a good sense of humor
- Should demonstrate continuous effort to improve operations, decrease turnaround time, streamline work processes, and work cooperatively and jointly with all departments involved in the operation of Russell Auditorium in order to ensure quality customer service
- Must have good supervision skills especially with peer groups such as student crews, and the ability to take charge and manage performances and people even when the parties involved may be older adults or faculty
- Must be able to manage stressful situations and meet deadlines

**Specific Requirements/Qualifications and Experiences:**

- Must be able to climb a ladder to 20 feet
- Must be able to focus lights and willing to climb into the theatre ceiling to focus
- Must be proficient at reading blueprints and have the ability to draft blueprints or plans as needed to support events
- Must be first aid trained and certified
- At the minimum, should be at the sophomore level or have sophomore transfer level credits
- Must have completed stagecraft, lighting design, and scene design with a minimum of a C or better
- Must have completed at least two Production Workshop Practicum courses in the area of lighting or stage crew and obtained a Satisfactory grade
- Must have logged in hours with the Theatre Department with a minimum of three load-in sessions and three strikes
- Must have the ability to set up and program light board without the aid of the design faculty or the TD
- Must have experience with and proficiency in the operation of the winches and the rigging of the battens to enable event organizers to fly signs, banners, and other approved items

### **Student House Manager (SHM)**

The SHM is responsible for overseeing the operation of the Front of House (FOH). It will be the SHM's responsibility to supervise event organizers while they are using the facility, including the enforcement of ADA and Fire Safety regulations. They will supervise event ushers. When tickets are taken, event organizers are expected to supply box office personnel and two ushers and one ticket taker per every 100 expected patrons. The SHM will coordinate opening of house with ushers, stage manager and tech crew.

### **Time Commitment**

The SHM is expected to arrive early prior to event organizers and the times should be coordinated before the event. However, as a rule, the following schedule should apply:

- Performance (where tickets are sold): arrive 1.5 hours before curtain time
- Lectures and meetings: arrive .5 hours before curtain time
- Ceremony, convocation (or event of this type): arrive 1.0 hours before curtain

### **Major Responsibilities/Duties:**

- Overall operation of the Front of House
- Assist in coordinating the FOH needs of event organizers
- Know and enforce all Fire Safety and ADA requirements with event organizers in Russell Auditorium
- Maintain the ADA listening devices and coordinate their use as needs arise
- Maintain a professional, safe, and healthful environment for patrons
- Be knowledgeable of Public Safety rules and regulations, and be prepared to use their services as needed
- Maintain accurate records of any accidents or incidents
- Be a university ambassador to the public

### **Specific Requirements/Qualifications and Experiences:**

- Must have a minimum of sophomore level or sophomore transfer level credits
- Must have completed the Stage Management course with a grade of C or better
- Must have completed a minimum of two Production Workshop Practicum courses with a Satisfactory grade and at least one should have been in the area of House Management
- Must have ushered at least two productions with a minimum of two evenings per production
- Experience working in a theatre environment is essential
- Must have excellent interpersonal skills, an even temperament, and the ability to supervise effectively
- Must have practical knowledge of theatre operations and a commitment to activities and productions
- Should have strong organizational and management skills
- Must be first aid trained and certified.

- Must have a recommendation from GCSU Theatre Faculty or Staff

**Performance Competencies and Criteria:**

- Must have the ability to relate effectively with staff, event organizers, and the public and to efficiently manage the Arts
- Successful completion of all FOH operations
- Shall include factors related to the process of doing the job, as well as achievement standards related to tasks set out in the position description, annual major objectives, and special assignments
- Dependability, outgoing and friendly personality with a desire to be helpful to audience while effective in following procedures
- Should have excellent problem-solving skills
- **Must dress professionally**

**SHM Duties Related to Ushers:**

- Make contact with event organizers and inform them what the proper attire for their ushers working in Russell Auditorium is and train the ushers when they arrive.
- For each 100 patrons where tickets are sold, the event organizer should provide two ushers and one ticket-taker.
- Relay the following rules for ushers to the event organizer:
  1. Arrive at the theatre 1 hour before performance (30 minutes before the house opens). **DO NOT BE LATE.**
  2. Dress appropriately. You do not have to be overly “dressy,” but please no blue jeans or T-shirts. Please remember you are representing the GCSU to the public.
  3. If you are unable to usher, please find your own suitable replacement and notify the SHM.

**Pre-Show Procedures:**

- SHM should arrive one hour and thirty minutes before curtain.
- Make sure that the front porch lights are on. If the timer is not operating correctly, manually override the system so that the porch is lit.
- Turn on the lobby wall sconces.
- Check the house, alcoves, and lobby to make sure that everything is neat and in order. Turn on all the lights in the lobby.
- Make sure that the doors to the House are closed.
- Make sure theatre doors are unlocked.
- When the event organizer arrives, make sure you have enough programs at each door.
- Set up ticket stub holders.
- Have the ticket-taker place stubs in the ticket slot and immediately after the house closes present the torn stubs to the event organizer.

- Check with the event organizer to see if there will be audience members with special needs (wheelchairs, visually or hearing impaired, etc.).

**At 15 minutes before the house opens (45 minutes before curtain):**

Communicate with event organizer to determine what his/her late seating preference/procedure is and inform the ushers.

Greet the ushers, introduce yourself, and provide the following training information:

- Identify the place you remain in the lobby during the performance/event.
- Ushers are responsible for maintaining the house during performances; if there is an emergency (medical, weather, etc.) or if a patron has a need, ushers must be “on duty” and eager to help them.
- Ushers are representing the university; they should remain pleasant, helpful, and courteous.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the theatre.
- If a patron brings a baby and the baby begins to cry, ushers need to quickly, quietly, and politely ask the patrons to take the baby to the lobby.
- No cameras or recording equipment of any kind are allowed in the theatre. (This requirement may be waived for certain events such as Community Dance Program performances, culminating performances of summer camps, etc. Check with the event organizer to determine. Even if photography is allowed, no flash photography should be permitted.)
- Patrons may leave cameras or recording equipment with the SHM for safe-keeping and pick them up after the performance.
- Inform the ushers if there are audience members expected with special needs (wheelchairs, visually impaired, etc.). Show them the handicap entrance, and inform them that they may need to meet disabled people at that door and arrange for their seating.
- Be sure your ticket takers know what the tickets for that performance look like, and that they **MUST** keep one half of the ticket in the box, and return the other half to the patron.

**At 30 minutes before the curtain:**

- Check with the **STS** and the Stage Manager (if one is present), as well as the Guest Box Office to see if it is clear to open the house.
- If it is clear, make sure the House doors open **into** the theatre (they should open in the direction that the majority of the patrons are walking so when they enter they should open in, when they exit they should open out).
- Begin seating patrons.
- Be visible and available to troubleshoot; help patrons with questions, assist ushers if they need it. Look for food or cameras being carried into the theatre, etc.
- Maintain communication with the STS, SM, and the Guest Box throughout the seating period.

**At curtain time:**

- Be sure the lobby and restrooms are clear of patrons.
- Communicate with the STS, Stage Manager, and event Box Office when the house is ready to be closed and the show may start. Try to keep to the scheduled curtain time but accommodate the event Box Office whenever possible. DO NOT close house until everyone is in agreement.
- Quietly close inner and outer doors to the theatre.
- Make sure the ushers are seated near the doors at the back of all three sections of the house. Strategically position one usher at the back of the house to seat any latecomers.
- Remind the ushers to handle any problems in the house, or to come get you.

**After the show begins:**

- Work with the event box office manager to secure Public Safety to escort them to the bank or back to the appropriate office where funds can be placed in a safe.
- Fill out a performance report.
- Be available to ushers if a problem arises in the house, or if the STS or Stage Manager need you.
- Quietly escort any latecomers into the house and to the usher handling the late seating.
- The usher should seat latecomers at the back of the house and inform them that they may take their reserved seats after intermission. (This applies if the show has reserved seating. However, most events in Russell are general admission.)

**At intermission:**

- Open the inner and outer doors (the correct way).
- Communicate with the STS, Stage Manager and event organizer when you are at 5 minutes to curtain and then flash the lights.
- Check the lobby and restrooms to be sure that they are clear of patrons.
- Communicate with the STS, the Stage Manager, and the event organizer that the house is ready to be closed and the show may start again.
- Close the inner and outer doors.

**After the show is over:**

- Open the inner and outer doors (the correct way).
- After the theatre is empty, close inner doors.
- Check the house for programs and ticket stubs and throw them away.
- After the lobby is empty, turn off the lobby lights and lock the outer doors.
- Turn off lobby wall sconces.

- When both the HM and the STS are ready to leave the building, the HM should phone Public Safety to make sure that the building is secure and to escort them to their vehicle if necessary.

**Contact Information:**

Theatre Chair, Department of Music and Theatre,  
445-4226

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