

## **LORT/KCACTF Central ASPIRE Arts Leadership Festival 2022**

### **What is the ASPIRE Leadership Fellows Program?**

The KCACTF/LORT ASPIRE Leadership Fellows Program is designed to cultivate a new generation of artistic and administrative leaders for the American Theater with a focus of engaging Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and members of other groups that are consistently underrepresented in the field. This diverse national cohort of fellows assembled from all of KCACTF's eight regions will engage in topics concerning equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism as well as leadership skills building, investigation of institutional challenges, and professional networking opportunities.

This week-long fellowship occurs as part of the annual national convening of the American College Theater Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The curriculum is designed and led by professionals from LORT institutions in partnership with staff from the Kennedy Center and the American College Theatre Festival Regional Chairs.

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/opportunities-for-artists/pre-professional-artist-training/kcactf/artsleadership/>

### **ASPIRE Regional Festival 2022**

In 2022, the eight regions will join forces to present centralized ASPIRE programming which will include workshops and discussions curated by all of KCACTF's ASPIRE Regional Coordinators, National ASPIRE Chair Stefanie Sertich and the National ASPIRE team. Regional festivals may still host workshops in arts leadership, but the selection process for this program to attend the National KCACTF Festival will take place through the centralized program.

Students interested in the world of arts leadership are encouraged to register for this program. Whether you hope to become an artistic leader or you are curious about how theaters operate, ASPIRE is a fantastic festival opportunity, and 2022 offers us the opportunity to connect virtually with fellow theater artists and leaders from across the country.

### **What to Expect**

ASPIRE Arts Leadership 2022 will include nine hours of gatherings on Zoom—not counting time participants spend creating their individual final presentations—over three weeks. Regional Coordinators will plan “homeroom” times discussion and examining assignments. Regional ASPIRE coordinators will check-in and debrief with each regional cohort before and after the Saturday workshops. Students will be led through immersive workshops

### **The schedule is as follows:**

**January 22nd from 1:00pm-5:30pm EST**

**Homeroom TBD**

**January 29th from 2:00pm-5:30pm EST**

**Homeroom TBD**

**February 5th from 2:00pm-3:30pm EST**

**Homeroom TBD**

**February 12th and 13th - One 30-minute slot from 1:00pm-6:00pm EST**

### **National ASPIRE Cohort**

One fellow from each region will be selected, based on the successful completion of the creative final presentation to a panel of selectors, to join the National ASPIRE cohort in Washington,

D.C. for a week-long fellowship. To be considered for the National Fellowship, attendance and participation in the professional development programming, both the synchronous national programming, and at the regional “homerooms” is required. All students will receive feedback on their work from faculty and professional theatre leaders, in the third week.

### **Registration**

Registration will open on **Monday, November 15**. You will only be asked to sign up; no need to prepare a resume or cover letter. You do not need to be nominated by a faculty member to participate.

**There is no registration fee to participate in ASPIRE.** Additionally, when you sign up for ASPIRE, you will automatically be registered for your regional festival for participation in other regional programming, **at no additional cost.**

For questions about the program, reach out to [stefaniekcactf@gmail.com](mailto:stefaniekcactf@gmail.com) or [yadavd@uwgb.edu](mailto:yadavd@uwgb.edu)

## **ASPIRE | THE CREATIVE PITCH**

ASPIRE students will create and pitch a theatrical season and/or a new theater company to a selectors panel of theatre professionals. Students are welcome to consider the current impact of COVID-19 on the performing arts industry. However, the current pandemic should not limit the student’s imagination in the creation of their company. This exercise will prepare ASPIRE students to think critically about leadership styles, programming, and models while demonstrating the student’s ability to think outside the box. The following is a set of recommended guidelines to help prepare an effective pitch:

- Students have 10 minutes to present their pitch followed by 5 minutes to take questions from the selectors; students will be responsible for allocating their own time accordingly.
- The presentation must include the name of the theater company, the mission of the theater company, where the theater company or theatrical season will take place (town, city, state, country), and play titles/authors (if known).
- Students are invited to be as innovative, creative, and practical as possible in their presentations and should pitch a compelling theatrical season/theater company using whatever resources are available to them.
- Students should articulate the role and relevance of their season and/or new theater company in terms of audience, community, and efforts towards greater diversity.
- Students should be mindful that while budgets, season calendars, and other higher-level elements of a theatre’s operations are important, the allotted time does not provide the selectors a chance to review these materials critically. **Emphasis on mission, values, season selection, and on audience and community engagement is strongly encouraged.**
- Students are encouraged to work independently and consider all the elements of producing and theater management necessary to support a theatrical season or theater company’s vision and infrastructure.

- Students should consider preparing their pitch during the various ASPIRE workshops at the festival.
- Students must also provide a resume for the interview

The selectors will be evaluating pitches based on the student's ability to effectively communicate a vision, demonstrate knowledge of theatre and arts management, and incorporate audience and community values into their mission. The finalists chosen by the selectors will move on to the second round of ASPIRE interviews to select one finalist to join the ASPIRE weeklong fellowship at KCACTF in Washington, D.C.