

Lafayette College Theater Department
Scholarship Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion
Effective July 1, 2026

The Theater Department members have agreed that the Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE), which represents faculty from all disciplines within Theater, including directing, design, theater technology and traditional publications, is the appropriate body to look to in creating scholarship guidelines for tenure and promotion for our department, particularly since they have created and posted Tenure and Promotion Guidelines which were most recently updated in 2021 and which were approved by ATHE's Governing Council.

The preamble to ATHE's document notes that:

In the theatre, academic freedom and responsibility may overlap with issues of public taste, public tolerance, and public consumption. All of these issues increase the pressures on academic theatre to teach truthfully and to present and perform work with ethical and pedagogical rigor. The considered and even-handed application of tenure guarantees the freedom to teach and perform in our students' best interest. (pg. 3)

We agree that this is of foundational importance for the field, and more specifically, for our Lafayette College Theater Department. In addition, we want to acknowledge that the strength of our Theater program is the diverse skill sets of its faculty, while also noting that creating comprehensive scholarship guidelines for the broad range of scholarly and creative activities that our department members undertake is challenging.

In accordance with ATHE's guidelines, we expect that all members of the Theater Department will be engaged, both as teachers and as researchers and/or practitioners, with the Theater Department at Lafayette College and with the theatrical community, either academic, professional or both, beyond the College. As theater is a multidisciplinary field, we recognize that theater scholarship, as noted above, takes many diverse forms. While many theater professors engage in multiple modes of scholarship, we recognize that both breadth in scholarship in theater, with work and expertise in areas ranging from publication of articles to technical direction of theater productions for public performance to grant writing, and depth in scholarship, which includes a significant body of work focused on one area, which might include publication or direction of theater productions for public performance, are equally desirable for Theater Department members. The Theater Department, like our professional colleagues in ATHE, considers public performance to be an act of creative scholarship. ATHE puts forth the Boyer Model, which our Department also supports, which says that the "scholarship of discovery" is an important element of any artistic work. This scholarship comprises, among other things, the research process for directing, designing, choreographing, acting in, dramaturging, or technical directing a production. Research and creative production scholarship requires

substantial historical and technological investigation, analysis, expertise, a synthesis of information, collaboration, imagination, creativity, skill, talent, and professional experience—all leading to public presentation validated by peer review. This scholarship is ultimately reflected in the creative product, the production, and/or in the portfolio, which might include director's notes, blocking, designs, videos, photographs, musical recordings and other supporting materials. This scholarship for production work both at Lafayette and beyond Lafayette is appropriate for inclusion in tenure and promotion files. Note that when faculty work with students on campus productions for which they receive a course release, and for which they supervise students earning credit, that portion of their work, rehearsal or production work with students, should be assessed as teaching, as is the current department process. The DRC will thus assess it as such in their evaluations.

The Theater Department follows the ATHE guidelines and expects that Department members will pursue scholarship or creative activity in one or more of the below areas. All scholarship will be peer-reviewed, either by readers of, or reviewers for, journals and presses and/or by professional colleagues at conferences and workshops and/or by invited theater professionals who will assess the work presented in public performances either in-person or online and will be included by the candidate in their scholarship materials for faculty midterm and promotion cases.

Areas of scholarship:

- Directing, devising, producing, and/or choreographing public performances;
- Acting and/or dancing and/or singing in public performances, including recitals, solo works, films and commercials;
- Lighting, costume, sound, makeup, hair and/or set design and execution for public performances;
- Technical direction for public performances;
- Intimacy direction and/or fight choreography for public performances;
- Playwriting or adaptations of existing works, as evidenced in public staged readings, workshops, public performances, and/or publication of plays;
- Dramaturgy for public performances;
- Researching, writing, editing, and publishing of articles and reviews in peer-reviewed journals and/or chapters in edited volumes and/or monographs;
- Researching, writing, editing, and publishing of books and/or monographs;
- Researching, writing and publishing internet-based resources for public scholarship;
- Grant writing;
- Attending, presenting, chairing, or moderating at conferences; delivering invited lectures; teaching master classes; participating in seminars & presenting at festivals.

Professional peer review for Theater production work is uniquely challenging and as a Department we want to acknowledge those challenges and lay out the best practices the Department has gleaned from the ATHE documents, and from previous practice. The challenges of peer review for theater production include the following:

- Live theater is best experienced in-person, and while peer reviews can be done remotely or via recordings, etc., those do not fully capture the entire live, in-person experience.
- Licensing constraints do not always allow the recording of live theater productions, particularly of musicals (unless the shows produced are in the public domain).
- Photos do not always capture kinetic art forms like dance and some aspects of design.
- Some processes, like intimacy coordination and devising, are by their nature private, and introducing outside observers may compromise the work.
- There is a limited pool of local reviewers available to consider theater productions in-person, and our Department resources are not sufficient to support travel expenses for reviewers who are further afield. Also, our department encourages community outreach, which means that we often network with our local theater colleagues in area colleges, professional and community theaters. This networking necessitates that Department members might know reviewers personally. Also, while in the past, the department could rely on newspaper reviews or reviews from visitors from the American College Theater Festival, extreme cuts to local newspapers have severely limited available newspaper reviews (which we can not request), and ACTF has stopped the practice of offering faculty reviews.

We propose the following solutions for these challenges, in accord with ATHE's, and other industry practices:

- We will prioritize in-person review of productions whenever possible. This means that we will continue to ask local reviewers to assess creative work in person even though they might be known to the faculty they are reviewing. When faculty submit work to a journal or press, the same reviewers may encounter them, and we expect that they will be able to maintain a professional distance to assess the work. At Lafayette, Department colleagues are asked to review our colleagues regularly, even though we have existing personal relationships with them. We believe our professional colleagues in the area can offer reviews not biased by personal relationships, though we will aim to select reviewers who do not have significant personal involvement with the faculty member under review. We will particularly prioritize in-person review when licensing constraints dictate that productions can not be filmed. While we will consider a range of reviewers, the same reviewer, if necessary, can review different work by the same faculty member, though we

will make sure faculty members have more than one reviewer represented in their tenure and promotion files prior to critical reviews.

- When productions cannot be reviewed in-person, and when video/photo or other appropriate evidence is available, we will pursue reviews completed online. This will always be our second choice for production review.
- In the case of aspects of productions, like intimacy direction and devising, which are by nature private and not able to be peer reviewed as noted above, we will turn to the best practices of individuals in those fields, whose place in academia is still in development.
- We will continue to return to the ATHE Tenure and Promotion Guidelines for how to conduct individual peer reviews of creative work, especially for types of creative work that have not previously been considered as part of tenure files.