



MILLIKIN
UNIVERSITY.

**SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND DANCE
ANTI-RACISM/RACE EQUITY ACTION PLAN**

May 2022

SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND DANCE

MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

Millikin University's School of Theatre and Dance (SOTAD) is committed to becoming actively anti-racist. We understand that this will require learning, unlearning, and discomfort. SOTAD will center [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color \(BIPOC\)/Global Majority \(GM\)](#), while also [decentering whiteness](#) to re-imagining structures and systems that have long existed in the fine and performing arts and within institutions of higher education. An action plan serves as a vital step forward in this process. Before reading the SOTAD Anti-Racism/Race Equity Actions outlined in this document, it may be helpful to read the following statements and messages.

MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” – Lao Tzu

The pages that follow include Millikin’s School of Theatre and Dance (SOTAD) Anti-Racism Action Plan. We acknowledge the past harms we have caused due to our lack of knowledge and education. We strive to embody the lessons learned from our past mistakes and put the work of anti-racist action squarely on our own shoulders to truly support diverse and marginalized communities. In recent years, many institutions and organizations have posted diversity statements on their websites; while those are important first steps, we felt it necessary to go beyond that and create a plan for actionable change.

We have taken time, and will continue to make time, to process and engage in this necessary work. For example, in SOTAD faculty bi-weekly meetings, readings such as *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo, “Dear White American Theatre” (a letter from ALAANA¹ theatremakers), and other critically oriented texts framed our discussions in 2020-2021. Then, in the following year, 2021-2022, we hired consultant Joshua Rashon Streeter (’06 B.A. Theatre), who lead us through training on “Building an Anti-Racist Culture”. During that process, SOTAD formed a sub-committee of faculty to create the action plan that follows. This action plan is a living document that will change and grow as we change and grow.

We acknowledge that we will stumble at times as we grapple with these urgent issues and therefore commit to learning from these challenges as we try to sustain the work in the subsequent years. Most importantly, we want our words to be coupled with action – we intend to DO these things. We aim to be accountable to these goals and transparent with our progress or lack thereof. We will continue to listen to our community and respond with care, compassion, and understanding. We understand that this work will require collective action in collaboration and partnership with students, staff, faculty, the university, and the larger Decatur community. We hope this document and the actions that come from it will encourage genuine, honest, and authentic conversations with one another to heal our community – both within SOTAD and the world at large.

All the best,

Angela F. Miller

¹ African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native American (ALAANA)

FRAMING

The Anti-Racism/Race Equity Action Plan and this accompanying document share SOTAD's current and future steps, illustrating intentional and reflective practice. During the development of this plan, the faculty engaged in year-long anti-racism training. Students were invited to participate in training as well. However, we are aware that while conversations might lead to actions, they are not actions. Rich dialogue has led us to this point, and we invite you into the conversation as we work together to take action together and create lasting and needed change within our school and at the university.

SOTAD's Action Plan focuses specifically on anti-racism and race equity, compared to other issues of diversity. We created ongoing (short- and long-term goals) and systemic (people, policies, practices, programs, and place) anti-racism objectives. Most importantly, the goals outlined in this plan serve as a point for reflection, direction, transparency, and accountability, and specifically focus on creating a culture shift by [centering the most marginalized](#). The plan works to [end the "Grateful Guest Syndrome"](#), identify how the [White supremacy characteristics](#) show up in SOTAD, and [offer alternative ways](#) that SOTAD could work. The goals do not contain all the steps, tasks, or tactics to attain the objective or illustrative examples of what could be, as this will be decided by SOTAD's leadership, faculty, staff, and/or students throughout the next 5 years.

This plan is not the end; instead, it is a starting point. SOTAD will continue to revise the plan as the school and its community grow and evolve. Therefore, we consider this action plan a working document where actions may be edited and new actions can be added. This plan uses [A Framework for Action in Response to Moments of Outrage and Crisis created by OF/BY/FOR ALL](#) and S.M.A.R.T. Goals developed by Peter Drucker. Joshua Rashon Streeter, alumni and Anti-Racism Consultant, led SOTAD through training and development of the action plan, which was modeled after work done by Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director of Mass Cultural Council and a nationally recognized Anti-Racist/Race Equity Consultant.

School of Theatre and Dance (SOTAD) Millikin University

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Specific; Measurable; Attainable & Aggressive; Relevant (for BIPOC/Global Majority and Context); Time-Bound

Fall 2022 - Spring 2023

1. To promote the work of BIPOC/GM artists and scholars and diversity SOTAD's offerings and increase access, SOTAD will bring to campus at least one guest artist of color every year, starting in the academic year 2022-2023.
2. To align demographic representation accurately and highlight and center BIPOC/GM students, SOTAD will develop a social media and marketing plan during the 2022-2023 academic year for implementation beginning in Fall 2023.
3. To hold space, center BIPOC/GG SOTAD students, and better understand the needs of our current BIPOC/GM students, SOTAD will hold regularly scheduled forums (each semester or once a year depending on need/desire) for BIPOC/GM students starting in Fall 2022. The lessons learned will be shared with all faculty in a faculty meeting and edit/amend the anti-racism action plan accordingly.
4. To build an inclusive environment for all and shift the culture of SOTAD, SOTAD faculty and staff will engage in a yearly book club focusing on a particular cultural issue and provide those texts in the UC library and the script library starting in Fall 2022.
5. To open access to campus populations other than SOTAD students, SOTAD will consistently share audition announcements with non-majors in orientation and registration, posted in the Empowerment Suite, and shared through social media each semester, beginning in the Fall 2022.
6. To give SOTAD performers of color greater opportunity to work on texts intended explicitly for BIPOC/GM, SOTAD will offer an acting elective once every three years that is specifically about BIPOC/GM performance, open only to students who identify as students of color (from all degree programs), beginning in Spring 2023.

Fall 2023 - Spring 2024

7. To affirm the importance of active anti-racism work, hold ourselves accountable for it through assessment, and show ourselves to prospective students and colleagues as an organization they might wish to be a part of, we will install Anti-Racism as one of the central departmental Learning Goals in Fall 2023.
8. To allow accurate data to drive decision-making and promote transparency, SOTAD will gather accurate demographic data of our current student population beginning in the academic year 2021-2022 to be shared in the assessment report annually starting in the academic year 2023-2024. This data will be shared annually with the SOTAD community to measure progress (or lack of) and edit/amend the anti-racism action plan accordingly.
9. To communicate SOTAD's commitment to becoming a more supportive and diverse learning environment and to hold ourselves accountable for creating and upholding an anti-racist environment, all SOTAD faculty, staff, students, and student organizations will annually sign an Anti-Racism Value Statement; this process will begin in August 2024. Yearly goals follow:
 - Spring 2024: craft the anti-racism shared commitment statement; discuss with faculty
10. To create greater pathways for our BIPOC students to segue into the professional theatre industry, we will seek to create partnerships with local and regional theaters and artistic spaces designed to employ and support at least one BIPOC/GM student for a summer position. We will begin discussions to create partnerships in Spring 2024. If a partnership(s) is acquired, we will create the plan no later than December 2024.
11. To recognize that every member of our SOTAD community has a right to practice and participate in religious and cultural celebrations, SOTAD will write a policy that reminds individuals of their right to request time off from responsibilities to participate in religious celebrations, which will be added to the SOTAD handbook by the start of the semester Spring 2024.
12. To expand student opportunities and to connect to the BIPOC community around us, SOTAD will identify potential community partnerships. SOTAD will solidify 2-3

mutually beneficial community partnerships in Spring 2024, adding one new partnership each year starting in the academic year 2025-2026.

13. To honor the history of the land on which we perform and work every day, inform/educate students, audiences, and the community, and commit ourselves to indigenization, SOTAD will include decolonization and indigenization as part of its consistent and pervasive practice with fidelity. Yearly goals follow:

Spring 2024: read and/or provide land acknowledgment language before every performance or production; record new audio file

Fall 2024 - Spring 2025

9. To communicate SOTAD's commitment to becoming a more supportive and diverse learning environment and to hold ourselves accountable for creating and upholding an anti-racist environment, all SOTAD faculty, staff, students, and student organizations will annually sign an Anti-Racism Value Statement; this process will begin in August 2024. Yearly goals follow:

Fall 2024: add to website, handbooks, student org contract and social media; all faculty, students and staff sign

13. To honor the history of the land on which we perform and work every day, inform/educate students, audiences, and the community, and commit ourselves to indigenization, SOTAD will include decolonization and indigenization as part of its consistent and pervasive practice with fidelity. Yearly goals follow:

Fall 2024: develop surrounding programming to better educate SOTAD faculty, students and staff about decolonization and indigenization; add SMART goals to anti-racism action plan as necessary

14. To promote accountability, be transparent, and publicly acknowledge progress and areas for continued growth, SOTAD will assess and report progress on the anti-racism SMART GOALS and action plan annually starting August 2024, to be publicly posted and shared directly with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

15. To highlight the work of voices of BIPOC/GM artists and provide performance opportunities for SOTAD BIPOC/GM students, SOTAD will produce one staged reading a year of a play written by a writer of color, cast primarily with actors of color, starting in the academic year 2024-2025.

16. To allow more of our students to see themselves represented and reflected in our curricula, SOTAD will ensure that a specific percentage of all the texts, music, and other media taught/used in SOTAD classes are written/created by and/or telling the stories of BIPOC/GM, starting August 2024. Yearly goals follow:
2024-2025: increase by 8%
17. To ensure that SOTAD policies and practices create and promote an anti-racist environment, SOTAD will review the admission/interview processes (students, staff, and faculty), the SOTAD Handbook, and all shop handbooks during 2023-2024 to generate updated versions for Fall 2024.
18. To ensure more equitable power relations, provide an ongoing dialogue within the classroom and assess our Anti-Racism Learning Goal, the Anti-Racism Committee will develop a feedback tool that SOTAD faculty can use to listen, learn, and reflect with students as they edit and adjust their courses to align with ongoing anti-racism actions and efforts and decolonized pedagogies and practices, starting in Fall 2024.
19. To support reflection and aid in conversation about BIPOC/GM stories as presented in our season, SOTAD will incorporate educational discussion opportunities for the SOTAD student and/or community audiences in conjunction with at least one production in each season starting in the 2024-2025 academic year.
20. To provide value and meaningful engagement for Decatur Public School students and foster relationships with prospective students who identify as members of the BIPOC/GM community, SOTAD will select two mainstage shows per season that align with the state standard learning goals by the 2024-2025 season. SOTAD will develop a yearly School-Time Engagement (field trip program) that removes barriers for Decatur Public School students to attend SOTAD mainstage productions at least twice per year starting in the 2024-2025 season.
21. To make the SOTAD dance curriculum less Eurocentric, SOTAD will offer at least one class in a BIPOC/GM dance form (examples: hip-hop, Latin Dance, African Dance) per year, beginning in Spring 2025.

Fall 2025 – Spring 2026

22. To effectively recruit economically disadvantaged students, SOTAD will create and/or modify existing programs to allow students to take advantage of free community college programs and graduate on time by the 2025-2026 academic year.

23. To increase access to a Millikin Theatre degree, SOTAD will create and advertise clear transfer paths for all of our degree programs starting in Fall 2025. Degree-specific goals follow:

- a. Fall 2025 – BA Theatre & Performance Studies
- b. Fall 2025 – BFA in Acting
- c. Fall 2025 – BFA in Design & Production
- d. Fall 2025 – BFA in Stage Management
- e. Fall 2025 – BFA in Musical Theatre