2025 SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATION IN ENTERTAINMENT AND ENGINEERING

SYMPOSIUM BOOK

JULY 25-26, 2025
WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

PURDUE UNIVERSITY® | Fusion Studio for Entertainment and Engineering

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SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

Friday, July 25, 2025

12:30 PM	Event Check in	Stewart Center, Room 278 (hallway)
1:00 PM	Welcome Remarks	Stewart Center, Room 279
1:15 PM	**Panel Session: Incorporating codes and standards in educational practice** *Panel Guests: Erin Grabe, Bryan Huneycutt, Bill Gorlin* *Moderator: Brian Smallwood*	Stewart Center, Room 279
2:45 PM	Break and Networking	Stewart Center, Room 278
3:00 PM	**Working Session: Teaching ethics and responsibilities in design practices** *Moderator: Brian Smallwood*	Stewart Center, Room 278
4:30 PM	Meet & Greet Reception	Stewart Center, Room 278

Saturday, July 26, 2025

8:30 AM	Event Check in	Stewart Center, Room 278 (hallway)
9:00 AM	Welcome Remarks	Stewart Center, Room 279
9:00 AM	**Panel Discussion: Developing collaborative relationships between academia and industry** *Panel Guests: Monica Ramsey, Megan Reiplinger, John Van Arsdale* *Moderator: Luna Lu*	Stewart Center, Room 279
10:30 AM	Break and Networking	Stewart Center, Room 278
10:45 AM	**Working Session: Creating project-based classroom experiences with industry partners** *Moderator: Matthew Merzdorf*	Stewart Center, Room 278
12:00 PM	Lunch Break and Networking	Stewart Center, Room 278
1:00 PM	**Panel Discussion: The future of innovation in the entertainment industry** *Panel Guests: Ian Hunter, Matt Jackson, Kasey Allee-Foreman* *Moderator: Rich Dionne*	Stewart Center, Room 279
2:30 PM	Break and Networking	Stewart Center, Room 278
2:45PM	**Working Session: Job skills, education in the arts, and lifelong learning: building effective job pipelines and career-ready students** *Moderator: Rich Dionne*	Stewart Center, Room 278
4:15 PM	Closing Remarks	Stewart Center, Room 278
5:00 PM	**Dinner** *(pre-registration required)*	East End Grill

SCHEDULE

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES
in alphabetical order

Kasey Allee-Foreman, USITT, University of Oklahoma

Kasey Allee-Foreman has served as Associate Producer and Production Manager for University Theatre productions in the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma for over a decade and is currently serving as the President of USITT (United States Institute for Theatre Technology). A short listing of her professional theatre/live entertainment credits include: SphinxCON, a conference promoting Diversity in the Arts; Canterbury Choral: Bernstein's Mass; Houston Grand Opera: Renée Fleming's premiere La Traviata (world premiere); Stages Repertory Theatre (Houston); Houston Shakespeare Festival; Shakespeare Festival at Tulane (New Orleans); Theatre West (Los Angeles). Professional film credits include: Mystery, Alaska; Lost and Found; Austin Powers: The Spy who Shagged Me. Kasey has been a member of USITT at the regional level and/or national level for over 30 years. She is proud to have served on the USITT Board of Directors as the VP for Conferences, the VP for Education and Training and as a Director, as well as on the board of USITT-Southwest. She has served USITT on the Conference Committee as chair and member, IDEAS Committee as chair and member, on the Awards Committee, Compensation Committee, Grants and Fellowships Committee. Kasey is the co-founder of USITT's Gateway Program and has been the Co-chair of the Women in Theatre Network. Kasey received her MFA in Costume Design and Technology and Lighting Design and Technology from the University of New Orleans and her BA in Theatre Arts from Furman University.

Rich Dionne, Purdue University

Rich Dionne is a Professor of Practice and technical director in the Department of Theatre in the Patti and Rusty Rueff School of Design, Art, and Performance at Purdue University. He specializes in scenery automation and show control systems while also serving as the department's production manager. He has a passion for both the art of theatre and the science and engineering of making theatre happen.

Prior to coming to Purdue, Rich was the production manager and resident sound designer at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, where he mounted numerous productions at various indoor and outdoor venues, including a nationally-recognized educational touring company. Additionally, he has served as the technical director for Berkshire Theatre Festival, Alpine Theatre Project, Weston Playhouse Theatre Company, and Dorset Theatre Festival, mounting critically-acclaimed productions including The Whipping Man, Barefoot in the Park, Amadeus, Night of the Iguana, Avenue Q, The Illusion, and Death of a Salesman. Rich's book, Project Planning for the Stage: Tools and Techniques for Managing Extraordinary Performances, focuses on the application of project planning techniques for theatrical production, was recently published by Southern Illinois University Press. The ninth edition of Theatrical Design and Production, for which he is a co-author with Michael Gillette, was recently published by McGraw-Hill.

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES
in alphabetical order

Bill Gorlin, McLaren Engineering Group

William Gorlin serves as McLaren Engineering Group's Vice President of the Entertainment Division. A graduate of Cornell University in engineering (Bachelor's and Master's), he is registered as a Professional Engineer in twenty-six States.

His 38 years of experience include engineering of scenic, entertainment and amusement structures, staging, rigging, theatrical infrastructure, buildings, show action equipment, scenic elements, theme park attractions, architectural theming, sculptures, and other frameworks, worldwide.

Mr. Gorlin is a member of the ESTA Rigging Working Group, including serving on its Performer Flying and Temporary Structures Task Groups; American Society of Civil Engineers; ASTM Committee F24 for Amusement Rides and Devices; Structural Engineers Association of New York; and Cornell Society of Engineers. He has published articles in Architecture Week, Structural Engineering Forum, and ASME Journal, and is a frequent lecturer at various universities and industry conventions. Bill received the 2024 Backstage Legend and Master Award from the Broadway Technical Theatre History Project and was named "Engineer of the Year" in 2018 by the New York State Society of Professional Engineers. Bill is the author of the "Structural Behavior" chapter in Entertainment Rigging for the 21st Century, Ed. Bill Sapsis, Focal Press, 2015.

Erin Grabe, ESTA

Erin Grabe is the Executive Director of ESTA, the Entertainment Services and Technology Association. ESTA is responsible for creating some of the most vital programs in the entertainment and live events industries, including the Technical Standards Program (TSP), the Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP), and the quarterly technical journal, PROTOCOL. Erin's background is in lighting and live event technical production, with a Bachelor of Technology in Entertainment Technology from New York City College of Technology. Erin, wife Jane, and son Bo call Chicago home, where proximity to the airport is key to travelling for work and play.

Bryan Huneycutt, Halo Solutions, HuneyBadger Entertainment Consulting

Bryan Huneycutt brings over 35 years of rich experience in the performing arts field, encompassing a variety of roles in performance and leadership. Throughout his career, Bryan has managed stage shows, touring productions, music festivals, fireworks displays, and Emmy-winning parades. Bryan led the Entertainment Safety division for Disney Parks and Resorts Live Entertainment, overseeing all U.S. and Asia based entertainment activities. His expertise spans across continents, with significant involvement in projects in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

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Academically, Bryan holds a Master of Tourism Administration Degree from George Washington University and a Master of Science in Psychology from Grand Canyon University and is currently pursuing a Doctorate to deepen his knowledge in the field.

Bryan is actively engaged in various industry initiatives, including co-founding the Safety Advisors Forum-Live Entertainment (SAF-LE) and contributing to the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Steering Committee for the Behind-the-Scenes Foundation. Additionally, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Event Safety Alliance, reflecting his commitment to improving safety standards in the industry. Furthermore, Bryan's dedication to enhancing safety extends to his involvement with the No More 10 of 12s Working Group and his previous roles within the United States Institute for Theatre Technology.

Driven by the personal mantra "People First, Safety Always" his passion for inclusive leadership and a firm belief in prioritizing people's well-being and safety, Bryan founded HuneyBadger Entertainment Consulting. Currently, he holds the position of Vice-President of Operations (North America) for Halo Solutions, where he continues to contribute his expertise to shaping safety and operations in the industry.

Ian Hunter, The Shalleck Collaborative, Inc.

Coming from a family legacy in the broadcast business, Ian has been involved with various forms of production for nearly 30 years, including extensive work in live events and with professional AV rental/production companies.

Ian's education includes a BA in Theatre Production from Brigham Young University, and an MFA in Sound System Design from Purdue University. Ian's work in the live production sector is extensive and includes both live and recorded entertainment work. Ian has provided large-scale event production for many national touring live music acts, and has designed and mixed over 100 theatrical productions, in venues ranging from 50-seat cabarets to 2,000-seat outdoor amphitheatres.

Since joining The Shalleck Collaborative in June 2005, Ian has designed facilities, AV systems and provided general project management for hundreds of production, event and meeting facilities, including the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, ACT Strand Theater (San Francisco), Berkeley Rep Theatre, Paramount Theatre (Oakland, CA), Castro Theatre (San Francisco), Sands Parisian Theatre (Macau, China), Southern Utah University Concert Hall, and many more.

Ian is a Certified Technology Specialist/Design (CTS-D), as administered by AVIXA (Audiovisual and Integrated Experience Association), and is a member of the United Stated Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT).

Matt Jackson, Adirondack Studios

Matt Jackson is an accomplished Project Portfolio Director at Adirondack Studios, where he has been instrumental since July 2008. His extensiv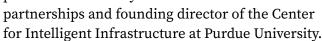e experience encompasses roles in technical design, project management, and team leadership, with a focus on fabrication and construction management. Throughout his career, Matt has successfully managed high-profile projects for renowned clients, including Universal Studios, Disney Worldwide, and notable theaters such as the Washington National Opera and the Lyric Opera.

Prior to his current role, Matt served as a Senior Project Manager at Big Show Construction Management from 2000 to 2008, overseeing significant projects like Madame Tussauds New York and the Sony Museum in NYC. He began his career as the Director of Technical Design at SFI (now Showman) from 1998 to 2000, where he led fabrication design teams for major broadcasters and prestigious institutions such as the American Museum of Natural History.

Matt holds a BFA in Scenic Design from Keene State College and an MFA in Technical Theater from Ohio University, equipping him with a robust foundation in the arts and technical fields.

Luna Lu, Office of Industry Partnerships, Purdue University

Luna Lu is the Indiana ACPA Professor in the Lyles School of Civil Engineering with a courtesy appointment in the School of Materials Engineering. She is vice president of industry partnerships and founding director of the Center for Intelligent Infrastructure at Purdue University.

Her research interests lie in novel nanomaterials and IoT devices for energy harvesting and infrastructure sensing applications. Lu has transferred technologies from her research lab into engineering applications and is a founder and CEO of Wavelogix Inc. a venture-backed, high growth startup company that provides REBEL™ IoT sensors for smart infrastructure solutions. She has also authored over 150 peer-reviewed publications, two books, six book chapters, and holds 10 published and provisional patents. Lu is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Her work has garnered many prestigious honors, including the 2014 National Science Foundation CAREER

Award, 2019 Purdue Faculty Scholar, 2020 Vebleo Scientist Award, 2021 ASCE Gamechanger,

2022 ASCE Alfred Noble Prize, the best invention of 2023 by TIME magazine, the 2024 Edison Award and more.

When she is not working, Lu likes to build LEGO sets with her daughter. She also enjoys reading biographies of tech leaders, playing piano, and hiking in the woods.

Matthew Merzdorf, Office of Industry Partnerships, Purdue University

Matthew Merzdorf serves as Director for the Purdue Office of Industry Partnerships within the STEM/Hi-Tech team. This team of professionals provides industry connections with a unique gateway to Purdue University's technological and academic sectors, facilitating interactions and conversations within the areas of recruiting/career programs, research, philanthropy, campus presence/investment, and student/classroom engagement. Merzdorf's focus is primarily on the intersection between the semiconductor and telecommunications industries.

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Merzdorf is a dual-degree holder from Purdue University who has served the Purdue Research Foundation and the Purdue For Life Foundation through his knowledge of the extensive programs offered through Purdue's College of Engineering. In 2019 Matthew Merzdorf was appointed to serve as Director for Corporate Partnerships within the Elmore Family School of Electrical and Computer Engineering. He filled this position for well over two years, during which time the program grew to encompass 36 distinct partners and saw the launch of three planned industry-centered events. Matthew has served the Purdue For Life Foundation as Associate Director of Donor Relations, representing and providing technical/professional services to the School of ECE as well as the School of Industrial Engineering. He is also a serving member of the Purdue Gateway Project's action team.

Monica Ramsey, Children's Museum of Indianapolis

Monica Ramsey is the Vice President of Experience Development and Family Learning for The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, where she leads the creation of innovative and immersive exhibitions and programs for intergenerational audiences. With a background in the performing arts and an MA in Museum Studies, Ramsey has dedicated more than 20 years to the Museum, serving in roles across the institution, starting as a production assistant for the museum's on-site children's theater and eventually becoming Director of Exhibits and Interactive Media before taking on her current role as Vice President. Monica is driven to create experiences across the arts, sciences, and humanities that respond to the needs of communities and visitors, provoke exploration, and build bridges across divides.

Megan Reiplinger, TAIT

In addition to spearheading internal learning, skill-building, and talent development strategy at TAIT, Megan also oversees public-facing training endeavors to support both new TAIT projects and existing clients' teams and venues. She also encourages and enables training for anyone looking to gain new skills in entertainment automation and the TAIT group's automation platforms – Navigator, iQ, and Vector.

Megan joined TAIT in 2021, leading efforts to enhance the customer training experience and excited to combine her passion for theater and live events with over 15 years of professional experience in Learning and Development. In 2024, her role evolved to include the development of TAIT's first Learning & Development Center of Excellence, providing additional support and training resources to TAIT team members. She holds an undergraduate degree in Theater and a Master of Arts in Instructional Design and Technology, both from the University of Central Florida. Megan has designed, developed, and implemented programs and coursework on a wide variety of subjects, including software applications, sales methodology, effective communication and leadership skills. Her blended learning approach to solving challenges through training has brought success to customer service, sales, and technical teams.

"When people think about entertainment automation, we want them to instantly think of TAIT," Megan says, "and a huge part of that is providing the right education and resources for new or established entertainment professionals to be successful." These resources include self-paced online training, instructor-led classroom and onsite training, and customized, unique training solutions to meet learners where they are.

Brian Smallwood, Safe Makers

He, with co-founder Matthew Miller, is the co-president of Safe Makers, a 501(c)3 registered nonprofit with the purpose of fostering and fueling a culture and practice of safety onstage and backstage in Secondary Education, Higher Education, and industry venues environments

Brian worked for 10 years in New York City. During that time, he project-managed as a Technical Director and Production Manager for dozens of Off and Off-Off Broadway companies. He co-founded a production company called No Time for Love Productions, which served companies including the Ma-Yi Theater Company, New York Musical Festival, and New York Photo Festival, and Second Stage.

Brian graduated with an MFA from the Yale School of Drama (Now the Geffen School of Drama at Yale) in 2013.

In 2013, Brian taught at Arizona State University as a Clinical Assistant Professor/ Technical Director, and then as Assistant Professor/ Technical Director at the University of Nevada Las Vegas from 2014 to 2019. He is currently a tenured Associate Professor and Production Manager at the James Madison University School of Theatre and Dance. Brian's research interests include structural engineering for production, theatre safety, and increasing productivity through employee wellness.

Brian has also a doctoral candidate at the James Madison University School of Strategic Leadership Studies. If you see him, wish him luck on his dissertation.

Brian's book: *Productivity Through Wellness for Live Entertainment and Theatre Technicians: Increasing Productivity, Avoiding Burnout, and Maximizing the Value of An Hour* was published by Routledge in 2020.

John Van Arsdale, PRG Scenic Technologies

John is the Director of Project Management at PRG Scenic Technologies in New Windsor. Having joined PRG in 2015 as a Technical Designer, he later moved into Project Management where he developed his technical foundation alongside a passion for people, communication & collaboration. In his current role, he leads the project management department in providing scenery & automation to Broadway, Theatrical Tours, Concert Tours, and other live events. John received his M.F.A in Theater Technology from the University of Wisconsin.

SYMPOSIUM WORKBOOK

Undoubtedly, most everyone here has attended other conferences, and find them to be a source of inspiration and re-invigoration. It is our sincere hope that this event will have the same effect for you as well. It is also our experience—and a swath of education research on learning supports this—that active and goal–centered participation in your individual learning aids in "stickier" retention and improves personal achievement more so than passively receiving information or "hoping" you will get something out of your invested time.

Our lives are very full these days and our brain's ability to keep all of the important "bits" of information—even the most important ones—can suffer recall problems. To that end, we would like to offer the following reflective prompts and organizational pages as a first step toward encouraging you to actively engage with the symposium and its participants and presentations. The following pages were designed to help you manage your newly formed connections, jot down ideas and concepts, or make note of items you want to act on or investigate more fully.

We have shamelessly borrowed elements of this concept from other workshops and conferences, including the Lilly Conferences on Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning held across the country each year. We encourage you to consider attending a Lilly Conference, as they can be exceptional experiences.

Intentional Symposium Goal

In a brief sentence, set one personal goal for your attendance at this symposium:

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What **one word or image that you can create in the space below** captures the essence of this goal?

NETWORKING

Of all the people I met at the symposium, when I return home **I just have to send a follow up email to**:

Name	Institution/Email	Notes/Reason for Follow-up

SESSION 1: INCORPORATING CODES AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Points of Interest and Follow-Up Action Items

WORKING SESSION: TEACHING ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN DESIGN PRACTICES

To what extent do you incorporate standards & codes into your classes (academia)/ training programs(industry)?

What barriers do you face with regards to effectively incorporating standards & codes into your classes/training programs?

WORKING SESSION: TEACHING ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN DESIGN PRACTICES CONTINUED

What ethical concerns do you think students/early career folks should be more mindful of?

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How can industry partners help validate what instructors teach in terms of ethical considerations?

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SESSION 2: DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

Points of Interest and Follow-Up Action Items

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WORKING SESSION: CREATING PROJECT-BASED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES WITH INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Reflection and Exploration: Understanding the current landscape and identifying new engagement possibilities.

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If you had no budget or institutional constraints, what kind of industry partnership network would you build?

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What does collaboration/partnership look like from industry's perspective?

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Next Steps: Moving towards implementation

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SESSION 3: THE FUTURE OF INNOVATION IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Points of Interest and Follow-Up Action Items

WORKING SESSION: JOB SKILLS, EDUCATION IN THE ARTS, AND LIFELONG LEARNING: BUILDING EFFECTIVE JOB PIPELINES AND CAREER READY STUDENTS

What do students studying at the intersection of theatre, engineering, and entertainment technology need to have when they graduate? Consider skills that might fit into three broad categories: "what do they know?," "what can they do?," and "how do they think?".

For the answers you listed above, get specific about the level of achievement or mastery a student should achieve by the time they graduate to create student outcomes: should they be a novice, capable, proficient, or authoritative? For each, also list what level of achievement it would be reasonable to expect a student to begin a program at.

WORKBOOK

WORKBOOK

WORKING SESSION: JOB SKILLS, EDUCATION IN THE ARTS, AND LIFELONG LEARNING: BUILDING EFFECTIVE JOB PIPELINES AND CAREER READY STUDENTS, CONT.

Pick one skill/outcome from above. Brainstorm potential projects/experiences that could be used to measure a student's achievement of a skill at the required level of mastery. Consider all the levels you would expect a student to progress through in a program. (Note: at higher levels of achievement some skills might have many facets to measure.)

For the skill/outcome above, identify and describe three to five learning activities (i.e. lectures, laboratory experiences, studio/experiential work, internships, etc.) students should experience to help them learn/develop/hone it.

POST-SYMPOSIUM FOLLOW THROUGH

Of all the possible follow-up action items, **the one I will act upon in the next 10 days is**:

Of all the points of interest in the symposium, **one that I want to share with a colleague** at my home school/work/professional group is:

NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

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