

Annual Report 2022-2023

Executive Summary

UVA Acts, a theater-based faculty development program launched in 2018, successfully re-launched in its first full academic year back to Grounds since COVID-19. With the creation of the Appetizer micro-workshop paradigm, UVA Acts was able to reacquaint and/or meet for the first time a significant number of faculty and staff with the program's unique qualities. Recurring attendees and/or bookings, along with survey data, suggest UVA Acts has a valuable impact on the UVA community in creating more inclusive spaces to work and learn.

Mission

Through performance and dialogue, UVA Acts promotes preventative practices that foster vibrant, equitable spaces for working and learning at the University of Virginia.



Description

Drawing on practices from Theatre of the Oppressed, Theatre for Dialogue, and community-based performance, the UVA Acts Ensemble performs original, interactive workshops for an audience of faculty, as well as staff, post-docs, and graduate students who serve UVA in an instructional capacity. The workshops incorporate different types of theatrical performance: a single story that is told over time, brief introductions to several different characters, a variety of scenes woven together, and elements of direct interaction with the audience, such as Q&A between characters and audience or audience members engaging with the characters to change the outcome of the scene by practicing intervention strategies. Our programming is developed and delivered with a focus on faculty and staff practices that promote equity in the workplace and the classroom.

Our programming has expanded since UVA Acts began at the very end of 2018. Below is a brief listing of our programming with designations to clarify those that were either already established or created during 2022-2023 and those that are anticipated to be developed and performed during 2023-2024 (marked with an *). All existing works, in collaboration with the UVA Acts Ensemble, have been adapted based on the actors involved, the audiences involved, and/or the relevance of the content. See the table below with descriptions of each workshop offering, along with the length of each session and its overall reach in 2022-2023.

Series	Workshop Title	Length (minutes)	Brief description	# bookings	# attended
Building an Inclusive Culture:	*In the Moment: Trauma-Informed Approaches	75-90	Develop awareness and learn trauma-informed practices to prevent and/or address heated moments in the classroom.	n/a	n/a
Building an Inclusive Culture:	Saying No: Finding Confidence in the Decline	90	Interactive workshop that empowers faculty to not feel obligated to say yes.	1	6
Building an Inclusive Culture:	*We Can Sort This Out: Gender Equity in STEM	90	Witness the impact of microaggressions and find ways to challenge moments of gender bias within STEM.	n/a	n/a
Building an Inclusive Culture:	With Respect to That: Ally Intervention Strategies	75-90	Consider how small changes and intentional practices can counteract belonging uncertainty. Strategize and practice ways to interrupt bias, affirm impact, and build a more inclusive culture.	9	117
Inclusive Teaching Toolkit:	First Days (aka First Impressions)	75	Step into a student's shoes to observe Dr. Timmons and Dr. Erickson's course introductions and reflect upon your own teaching practices for the first day of class.	2	84
Inclusive Teaching Toolkit:	Small Groups (aka Leading Small Teams)	60-75	Learn how transparent assignments and groupwork facilitation can provide a more inclusive working environment for all students.	5	46
Inclusive Teaching Toolkit:	Lectures (aka Building Belonging)	90	Consider how small changes can allow students to feel they belong in your classroom, at UVA, and in your field of research.	4	44
Leadership & Development:	Flying Colors: Addressing Accountability	75	Colleagues meet with their supervisor and watch as accountability, boundaries, and collaboration are handled.	1	40
Leadership & Development:	*Feedback Needed	75	Managers engage in two-way feedback, building a culture of communication and care.	n/a	n/a
Leadership & Development:	*Here to Support You: Addressing Conflict Management	75	Finding and practicing mediation strategies in moments of conflict	n/a	n/a
Search Committee Signals:	Implicit Bias in Academic Hiring	90-120	Follow along with this quirky search committee as they learn to align, intervene, and plan throughout their recruitment and hiring process.	6	97
Search Committee Signals:	*Implicit Bias in Staff Hiring	90-120	Follow along with this staff search committee as they learn to align, intervene, and problem-solve throughout their hiring process.	n/a	n/a
UVA Acts Appetizer:	*It's Not a Trend: Pronouns	25-45	Watch two faculty discuss how and why pronouns should be used and respected. Unpack intent vs. impact.	n/a	n/a
UVA Acts Appetizer:	You Can Call Me: Name Pronunciation	25-45	Watch as the discomfort around pronouncing "difficult" names mounts in a first meeting. Engage with characters as you learn about intent vs. impact.	16	485

Accomplishments

In 2022-2023, UVA Acts reached an audience of **791 participants** through **13** micro-workshop, called “teasers” or “appetizers”, and **31** full-length workshops, using both in-person and virtual modalities (Spring 2023 saw a major shift to almost all in-person bookings). While 13 of the full-length workshops were hosted by UVA Acts, as “public” university-wide programming, the remaining workshops and teasers were booked by UVA stakeholders:

School of Data Science*	McIntire School of Commerce
Batten School of Public Policy	School of Medicine
School of Nursing	School of Engineering*
School of Education & Human Development	School of Architecture*
UVA Library*	CTE’s Course Design Institute
CTE’s Teaching as Graduate Students*	New Faculty Orientation*
Undergraduate Research/ Citizen Scholar Mentors*	Leadership and Academic Matters*
Biocomplexity Institute*	Human Resources Business Partner Team
Women’s Center	EOCR
Division of DEI	

**Designates repeat bookings.*

Many of our bookings came about via word of mouth and/or participation in one of our appetizer micro-workshops.

In 2022-2023, UVA Acts expanded the Ensemble to include 12 local actors (6 of whom were original Ensemble members) and 11 student actors. Many of the local actors are alumni and/or emeriti. Over the course of the year, some ensemble members moved out of town, so recruitment will occur to replace those that were lost.

A strategy employed with the '22-'23 school year was the incorporation of an understudy system. Doing so has served UVA Acts in many ways: 1) has enabled members, especially early in their hiring, to become familiar with more pieces within the repertoire, 2) has provided valuable and often utilized back-up performers in case of illness or other immediate conflicts, allowing workshops to go on with minimal change rather than canceling, 3) it has provided an excellent source of immediate feedback, as those understudies who don’t need to perform take notes and share with the cast after the workshop concludes, 4) it encourages performers to consider new interpretations of moments/characters as they witness other actors embody roles they may have previously performed or will perform.



Budget

Given that 2022-2023 was a re-launch of UVA Acts and there was carry-over from the 2021-2022 year, funds were utilized in areas to promote and re-supply the program. This included various “swag” items that we distribute at public workshops and recruiting events, office supplies that aid the rehearsal and performance process, and re-designed ensemble t-shirts. We also used funds to pay for space rental and catering for our public workshops (events hosted by UVA Acts directly, open to university-wide audience). The majority of our budget went towards the wage employees that populate the UVA Acts Ensemble. Most of the performers earn \$17/hour, though a few of our “veteran” members (who originated roles in the development of inherited workshops from pre-Covid) earn \$19 or \$21/hour, depending on seniority, technique, and reliability. Below is a rough breakdown of the operational budget (excluding the Artistic Director's salary and benefits):

	2022-2023 (estimated)	2023-2024 (budgeted)
Personnel Wages:	\$50,000	\$52,000
Catering/ Space rental:	\$4,500	\$8,500
Cost Sharing – special programs (LAM, FM):	(\$5,000)	(\$8,000)
Office Supplies:	\$500	\$1,000
Marketing & Promotions:	\$6,000	\$3,500
Uniforms (t-shirts):	\$750	\$700
Software subscriptions:	<u>\$300</u>	<u>\$300</u>
Total:	\$57,050	\$66,000

Results

The survey data feedback about the full-length workshops was overwhelmingly positive. Faculty found the situations and characters relatable (from their portrayal of power dynamics to the different attempts one makes to navigate tricky moments). There were some (16%) who commented on the exaggerated quality of the performances, though many understood it as an educational tactic. Many believed they would change their behavior as a result of the workshop, while honestly sharing their hesitations or obstacles in doing so (time being the biggest barrier at 13%). Surprisingly, there was a notable number (10%) who mentioned fear of (or past experience with) retaliation. See Appendix A to review the data more fully.

When reviewing the survey data about the teasers (a new addition to UVA Acts created to amplify the program’s exposure and serve as a demonstration of the program’s unique approach to professional development training), the numbers again skewed heavily in a positive direction. The content was relatable, and the format was approachable. The best aspects of the teaser were found to be its brevity (21%) and its use of a student-actor (15%). Interestingly, the most popular suggestions for improving the teaser were a request for more time (15%) and to do nothing differently (15%). The contrast between the brevity and desire for more time comments is an indicator that the teaser is successfully meeting faculty’s needs by adapting to their limited availability and instigating dialogue around topics that need to continue beyond the session. See Appendix B to review the data more fully.



Testimonials from survey feedback and direct email correspondence:

“...enormously impressed by your team’s great work and the dynamics created through the interactive theater.”

“During that whole workshop, I was thinking about my students and how I might make the space I share with them more welcoming and affirming... made me feel so much what those students were feeling that I teared up realizing how much my child must have been feeling last year and just didn’t have the words to express that.”

“I loved the snippet format. Just enough to be thought provoking and not overwhelming. A great add to a meeting!”

“I thought it was a fun, approachable way to think about how we can create a more inclusive environment for our students - I was very impressed with the performance. It felt very inclusive and not scary when these topics can be hard to discuss.”

“This program actually teaches people how to intervene and allows them to practice intervention. It was a safe environment. It really felt like a learning experience... Excellent training!”

“An engaging way to reflect on challenges that many students are facing in our classrooms.”

“No need to feel mild dread about it, it was fun!”

“I learned so much and learned much more than a traditional workshop.”

“An essential part of an individual growth in relating to others, and in particular a key element in growth on the part of people of privilege in how to decenter their privilege and build spaces and relationships of belonging, welcome-ness and safety.”



Goals for 2023-2024

*Continue to explore opportunities to expand the scope of our audience (e.g., create a session targeted to graduate students and/or post-docs or entertain invitations to perform for individual classrooms if it’s turned into a chance for more faculty to get exposed to our programming).

- *Continue to expand the range of our programming (e.g., potential travel bookings or host a showcase of original work by ensemble members to entertain and engage stakeholders via more “traditional” 10-minute plays)
- *Continue to strategize hiring/ casting/ booking approaches to maximize actor availability, budget, and programming demand/ interest
- *Incorporate side-by-side evaluation more clearly see what’s working and what needs work.
- *Design follow-up interviews and surveys for 6-month and 18-month post-workshop assessment by stakeholders and attendees.

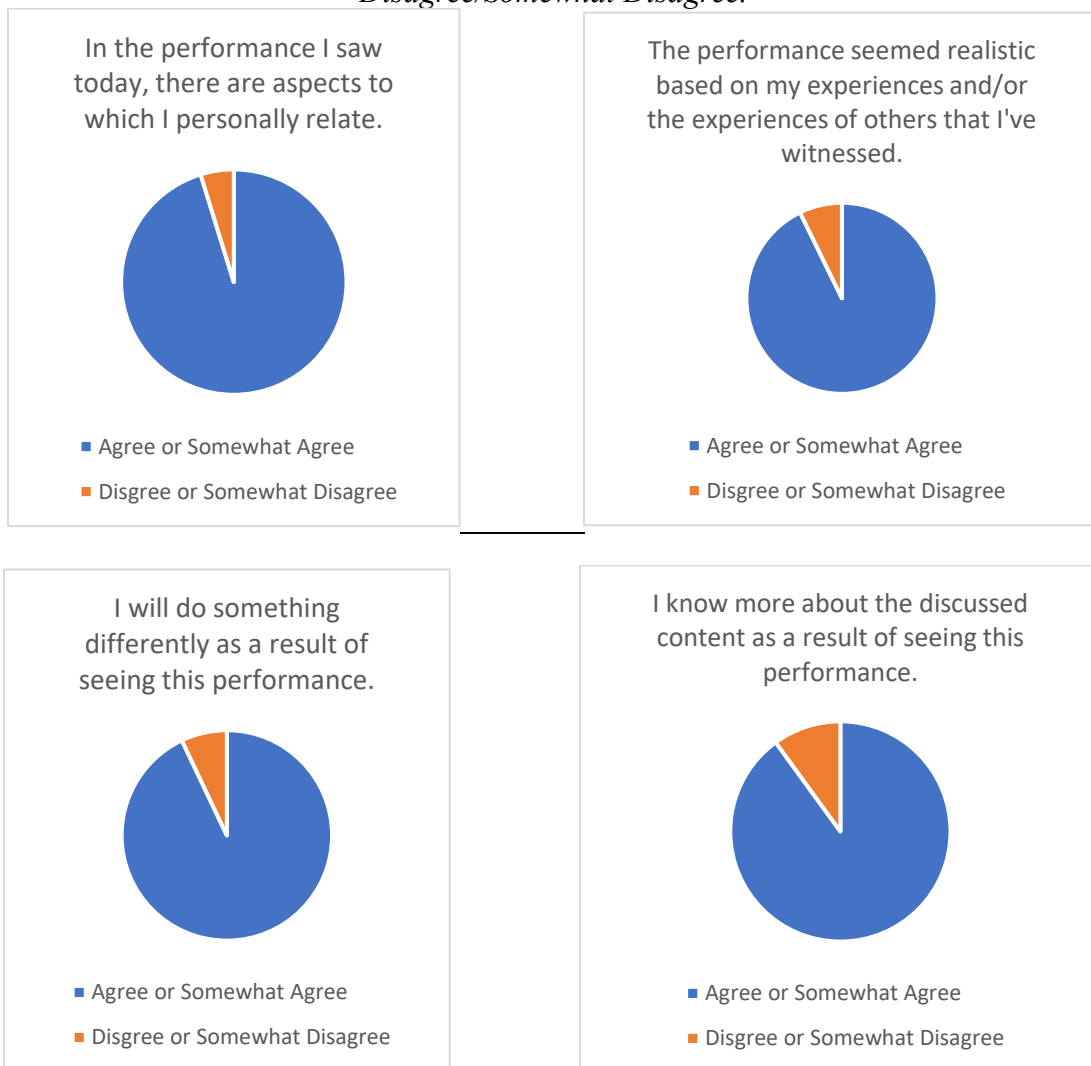
Appendix A: Survey results for full-length workshops in 2022-2023

Workshop survey data (27% response rate, 88 total)

The following qualitative questions were coded and the answers appearing more than six times are below:

What aspects did you relate to?	Count	What seemed unrealistic?	Count	What will you do differently?	Count	What might prevent you from trying some of the practices featured in this performance?	Count	How would you describe this program to a friend or colleague?	Count
power dynamics	20	was too extreme (some recognize why)	14	be intentional/ be bold/ be brave/ be aware	17	time	11	dialogue/ discussion	9
trying different approaches	13	nothing / it was realistic	10	CARE framework	17	anxious/ shy/ lack confidence	11	useful	8
feelings involved	10	topic wasn't broad enough	8	resource card	6	lack of power/ fear of retaliation	9	informational	8
						need clearer solutions	8	helpful	6
								worth the time	6

The following Likert scale questions were scored and divided into Agree/Somewhat Agree vs. Disagree/Somewhat Disagree.



Appendix B: Survey results for teasers in 2022-2023

Teaser survey data (15% response rate, 68 total)

The following qualitative questions were coded and the answers appearing more than six times are below:

What did you like most about this UVA Acts teaser format?		What would you do differently?	
brief / quick	14	nothing	13
use of student performer	13	wish the session was longer	13
interactive / fun	8	more tips / better handout	7
relatable	8	framing the conversation	6

The following Likert scale questions were scored and divided into Agree/Somewhat Agree vs. Disagree/Somewhat Disagree.

