

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BACKGROUND

The Fisher Center at Bard develops, produces, and presents performing arts across disciplines through new productions and context-rich programs that challenge and inspire. At once a premier professional performing arts center and a hub for research and education, the Fisher Center supports artists, students, and audiences in the development and exploration of artistic ideas and perspectives from the past, present, and future.

Designed by architect Frank Gehry and opened in 2003, the Fisher Center is the most ambitious capital project in Bard's history, and embodies the College's commitment to the arts as a cultural and educational necessity. The Center presents more than 200 world-class events and welcomes 50,000 visitors each year. It supports artists at all stages of their careers and employs more than 300 professional artists annually.

The Fisher Center is a powerful catalyst of art-making regionally, nationally, and worldwide, with a strong emphasis on development, research, innovation, and rediscovery. Every year, the Fisher Center produces eight to 10 major new works across disciplines, including opera, classical music, theater, dance, performance art, and cabaret. Over the past five years, its commissioned productions have been seen in more than 100 communities and at leading arts centers around the world. During the 2018-19 season, six Fisher Center productions toured nationally and internationally. In 2019, the Fisher Center won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical for Daniel Fish's production of *Oklahoma!* which began life in 2007 as an undergraduate production at Bard and was produced professionally in the Fisher Center's SummerScape Festival in 2015 before transferring to New York City.

The Fisher Center houses two theaters: Sosnoff Theater, which seats approximately 800 people and features a proscenium stage with a concert shell insert that accommodates opera, music, dance, and theater; and LUMA Theater, a fully flexible venue which seats up to 200 people. The Fisher Center also comprises rehearsal studios, production facilities, offices, and alternative performance spaces. In the summer, the Fisher Center operates the Spiegeltent, a freestanding cabaret venue which has delighted SummerScape audiences for more than a decade.

The Fisher Center offers outstanding programs to many communities, including the students and faculty of Bard, and audiences in the Hudson Valley, New York City, across the country, and around the world. The Center's major professional programs are:

- *Bard SummerScape* – One of the most ambitious and highly anticipated performing arts festivals in the country. In July and August, SummerScape comprises the annual Bard Music Festival (BMF), now in its 31st year, and seven weeks of opera, dance, music, theater, cabaret, and film related to the BMF's theme, focusing on a different composer

each year. SummerScape has been acclaimed by London's *Times Literary Supplement* as "the most intellectually ambitious of America's summer music festivals" and described by the *International Herald Tribune* as "seven weeks of cultural delight."

- *Live Arts Bard (LAB)* – The Fisher Center's interdisciplinary residency and commissioning program, LAB provides long-term support for cutting-edge American artists and ensembles to develop new work. Many LAB performances premiere at the Center before going on tour. Current and recent LAB artists include Tania El Khoury, Beth Gill, Sarah Michelson, Claudia Rankine, Will Rawls, Emilio Rojas, and Pam Tanowitz (currently the Fisher Center's Choreographer in Residence). LAB also produces a biennial festival, thematically programmed and interdisciplinary in nature, which creates broad engagement across the Bard campus and network and in local and national communities.
- *Fisher Center Presents* – A fall and spring season that includes music, theater, spoken word, and dance. Recent presentations have included American Ballet Theatre, authors such as Neil Gaiman, Susan Orlean, and Alan Cumming, jazz artists including Aaron Diehl and Cecile McLorin Salvant, and contemporary artists such as Suzanne Bocanegra and Anna Deavere Smith.

The Fisher Center is also home to the Dance and Theater and Performance Programs in Bard's undergraduate Division of the Arts, and works closely with the Conservatory of Music, The Orchestra Now, and the Vocal Arts Program, among other excellent and diverse arts programs at Bard.

ABOUT BARD COLLEGE

Founded in 1860, Bard College is a four-year residential college of the liberal arts and sciences located 90 miles north of New York City. With the addition of the Montgomery Place Estate, Bard's campus consists of nearly 1,000 park-like acres in the Hudson River Valley. It offers bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, and bachelor of music degrees, with majors in nearly 40 academic programs; graduate degrees in 11 programs; nine early colleges; and numerous dual-degree programs nationally and internationally. Building on its 159-year history as a competitive and innovative undergraduate institution, Bard has expanded its mission as a private institution acting in the public interest across the country and around the world to meet broader student needs and increase access to liberal education. The undergraduate program at the main campus in upstate New York has a reputation for scholarly excellence, a focus on the arts, and civic engagement. Bard is committed to enriching culture, public life, and democratic discourse by training tomorrow's thought leaders. For more information about Bard, visit <http://www.bard.edu/>.

THE POSITION

The Fisher Center's Executive Director is responsible for the overall operation and financial sustainability of the Center and strategically leads and manages all administrative and production functions, as well as the critical, externally-facing fundraising and marketing and audience services departments. The Executive Director will serve as a strong and strategic partner to the President of Bard and the Fisher Center's Artistic Director of Theater and Dance to implement the artistic vision in alignment with the Center's mission and goals. The Executive Director will also actively support and collaborate with the numerous Bard College programs that are resident in the Fisher Center.

The Executive Director reports to Bard's Vice President of Development and Alumni/ae Affairs and will play a visible and enthusiastic role as an ambassador and fundraiser for the Fisher Center. The Executive Director will build on the Center's reputation as the preeminent performing arts center in the Hudson Valley and as a recognized incubator of new works on the international stage in order to generate significant new sources of support in the region and beyond.

PRIORITIES

- Work closely with Bard's leadership, the Fisher Center's Artistic Director of Theater and Dance, and the Advisory Board in support of the Fisher Center's overall mission and goals;
- Translate artistic needs and values into institutional strategies and operating plans; ensure that artistic goals are commensurate with financial realities;
- Engage the Fisher Center's Advisory Board and inspire it to invest its best ideas, efforts, resources, and contacts; help identify, recruit, and engage new Board members;
- Hire, train, supervise, and inspire a dedicated team at the Fisher Center; maintain and nurture a positive and productive culture of excellence, mutual support, cooperation, accountability, open communication, and inclusiveness that allows staff and artists to thrive;
- Assume leadership of a multifaceted fundraising effort, working in partnership with the various stakeholders to proactively identify and engage new supporters and solidify relationships with existing ones;
- Further develop and execute the strategic vision for the Fisher Center, including the development of a new studio complex to support the Fisher Center's professional and academic needs;
- Nurture the learning environment fundamental to the Fisher Center's mission by facilitating an equitable, mutually beneficial, mission-aligned allocation of resources to support the programs and activities that are in residence, as well as the numerous other Bard College curricular, co-curricular, and student programs that make use of its facilities;

- Lead the Fisher Center's daily operations in a resourceful, efficient, and fiscally astute manner; know the financial impact of programming choices and mitigate risk through fundraising, sponsorship, and partnerships; develop and manage local and national partnership initiatives and oversee facility uses by external constituents; be creative and entrepreneurial in pursuit of earned-income opportunities;
- Work with staff to create an atmosphere of service and hospitality throughout the organization and ensure that front-of-house, backstage, and building operations personnel provide high-quality and valuable service to all constituents, artists, and audience members;
- Actively pursue collaborative opportunities with College programs to provide students, faculty, and staff with unique experiences that align with the Fisher Center's core values of innovation, excellence, and learning;
- Collaborate with Bard and the Fisher Center's senior leadership teams to build strategies for the performing arts in the College's expanding international network of campuses and partner institutions;
- Serve as a visible ambassador for the Fisher Center to a wide array of constituencies internal and external, including Bard administration, faculty, students, the media, business and civic leaders, donors, supporters, the general public, and arts communities locally and beyond;
- Work closely with College leadership to enhance relationships with the surrounding communities of the Hudson Valley, strengthening the Fisher Center's position as a vibrant nexus of cultural, educational, and economic activity;
- Maintain a transparent and productive operating relationship with the College; collaborate with centralized College operations (including development, finance, public relations, publications, human resources, buildings and grounds, and environmental services) in support of the Fisher Center's programs, activities, and initiatives.

THE PERSON

The Executive Director will be devoted to the Fisher Center's mission and have a passion for supporting leading-edge performing arts across disciplines at a flagship institution devoted to forging new paths in the arts and education. The Executive Director will have or be the following:

- Comparable senior-level management and leadership responsibility in a performing arts institution known for quality, excellence, and artistically forward-thinking work; a track record of successfully partnering with artists and artistic leaders in support of a shared institutional mission;
- An entrepreneurial, flexible, and strategic thinker, open to growth, change, and new ways of working; a proven track record of creating new platforms or expanding institutional boundaries; demonstrated success in generating earned income;
- Demonstrated financial and business acumen, combined with an understanding of producing and commissioning; a track record of success in managing people, facilities, operations, and budgets for an institution of significant size, scope, and complexity;

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- Demonstrated success as a proactive and accomplished fundraiser;
- Strong interpersonal skills; decisiveness, confidence, and an ease and empathy with others; ability to build trust in audiences, donors, and College leadership;
- Experience energizing and engaging a board;
- A sophisticated understanding of marketing, audience development, and customer service; digitally savvy with an understanding of how to employ technology in support of institutional goals;
- A grounded leader capable of inspiring, delegating, managing, mentoring, and empowering a dedicated, loyal, and collegial staff;
- A diplomat with a successful record of engaging, partnering, and building alliances with a wide range of constituencies, internal and external;
- Experience working within a university or higher education setting is preferred;
- A confident, collaborative, upbeat, and unflappable multitasker with the ability to maintain perspective and balance while fully supporting artists and the creative process.

The Fisher Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) and does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership, parental status, military status, or any other non-merit factor.

Please send applications or nominations to Becky Klein and Sarah James at FisherCenter@PhillipsOppenheim.com.