



Seattle's ACT Theatre Announces Significant Board of Trustees Restructuring Resolution

Resolution pioneers a more equitable non-profit leadership model, allowing the board and staff greater collaboration to work in alignment with organizational values.

SEATTLE, WA (August 11, 2022) - ACT - A Contemporary Theatre today announced that its Board of Trustees approved a resolution to restructure its board, a strategic and deeply thoughtful decision made to create a more equitable non-profit leadership model for the organization. Inspired by these goals, all ACT Trustees have collectively stepped down from their posts excluding three positions required by law to remain seated – the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer – in an exciting moment of transition as they examine what it means to best serve the needs of the organization in a deeply partnered way. Over the next two months, these Trustees in collaboration with ACT staff will execute a plan the organization has pioneered to allow themselves to stand in alignment with their stated values.

The new Board will be comprised of between 10–15 Trustees. There will be no committee structure, and it is expected that all Trustees be fully steeped in all aspects of the organization and Trustee responsibilities providing fiduciary oversight, strategic guidance, and risk management. The officer structure will remain (Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) meeting both the lawful requirement and further facilitating the streamlining of staff communications - and these officers will undergo the same process of re-joining the Board as any other returning Board members or new-to-ACT Board members.

Artistic Director John Langs and Managing Director Anita Shah said, “The Trustees have taken the time to listen to the many constituents of ACT, to educate themselves around non-profit board service, and to study the landscape of today’s national non-profit theatre organizations. We recognize that this moment represents a rare and unique opportunity to disrupt the status quo and lead the institution towards necessary change. By doing so openly, we hope to be a part of the long overdue cultural shift in our field. We are proud to do this work in partnership with the Trustees who have taken a proactive step to implement change in ACT’s board structure that will better align with our mission and values, and can more strategically work in service of this storied institution. Our goal is to make this process as efficient and equitable as possible, avoiding the pitfalls of hierarchical dynamics, and ensuring maximum transparency.”

HOW THE NEW BOARD WILL BE FORMED

The staff has been empowered to form a twelve-person working group to assemble the new trustee cohort. This working group will be comprised of ACT executive leadership, Staff, Core Company, Trustee Officers, and Advisory Council and Foundation Board Members. The group will conduct conversations with all Trustees that have just stepped down, as well as individuals whom we may wish to join this newly restructured Board, in order to re-populate the Board and

present the new roster of Trustees. New officers will then be elected by the newly assembled ACT Board of Trustees.

BOARD RESTRUCTURE TIMELINE OVERVIEW

This work begins immediately with actionable steps to move forward and complete the work no later than September 28, 2022. Here is an overview:

- August 11 – 17: Senior Staff to Select Advisory and Foundation Board Representatives
- August 12: Staff, Core, & Trustee Representative Elections
- September 20: Final Cohort Decisions Made
- October 12: Officer Elections

Board Chair Dr. Eric Bennett said, “What is happening at ACT is the result of unprecedented collaboration between the ACT Trustees and ACT’s world-class staff leadership over multiple years. Given that there’s no blueprint for this type of organizational equity and change to draw from, this has meant answering fundamental questions together to chart our path forward. The ACT Board’s restructuring is about trusting that, through equity, we’ll be a more vibrant, thriving theatre and able to bring audiences the most authentic contemporary work.”

The three board members who will remain seated:

- **Dr. Eric Bennett**, *Chair*
- **Gary Houlahan**, *Treasurer*
- **Maribeth Harper**, *Secretary*

In the coming weeks, ACT will have updates available on the website. To learn more, visit: ACTTheatre.org.