

# ***How to MemChair (A SHORTENED Guide)***

## ***Foreword***

Yes, this document has a Foreword. I am Bryce Miller, Membership Chair for the 85th Season, snarkist extraordinaire, and original author of this document. This guide represents my contribution to a club-wide attempt to better document (that is, to document at all) the roles and function of our leadership positions, including but not limited to: Officers, Technical Committee Chairs, and Production Leads. With an amount of luck, the effort of myself and my successors will make this document an invaluable resource to you, who presumably, will be Membership Chair, if you are not already.

Hey there Mem Chair! I'm Micaila, Mem Chair of the 86th season (2015-2016). Bryce did a good job writing up this document, but as is typical, things change. So I'm adding my comments in here in this lovely color so you know what I added (as if the way I type didn't give it away already.) Hope this is helpful.

Hello! And welcome to the wonderful world of Membershopping! I'm Fiona, the Mem Chair for the the 87th Season (2016-2017). My predecessors did a pretty good job with this, and with being MemChair. My biggest edit was adding the "Making Your Life Easier" Section where I detailed and wrote down a lot of the methods Bryce, Micaila, and myself have used to, well, make the job easier! A lot of it we've been using for three years now, so I figured it was about time to write it down. I hope it helps! Good Luck!

## ***The Structure of This Document***

1. General Officer Duties and Expectations
2. Schedule for Membership Events and Duties
3. Advice for Membership Events and Duties (Cut out of Shortened Manual)
4. Caring for the Membership
5. Making Your Life Easier (Cut out of Shortened Manual)
6. Relevant Documents (Cut out of Shortened Manual)

Undersigned

7.

## ***1. General Officer Duties and Expectations***

Hopefully, you already know that, as an Officer, you are a role model for this organization. I will not belabor the point; your actions matter.

Perhaps the Membership Chair's most important duty is that of recruiting: Players is an extraordinarily active club, and it needs new lifeblood to run its multitude of productions. The more people interested in Players, the more hands we have at work party, the more choices we have in selecting roles, the more butts we put in seats, and the more butts those butts put in seats.

From time to time– as often as you wish it, really– it falls to you to plan social events. We the Players are very privileged: we have a building that, while not technically owned by us, is cared for primarily by us. The Playhouse lobby is a perennial hangout spot for doing homework, chatting with like-minded individuals, and playing games. Capitalize on this asset: Players is a community as much as it is a theatre club.

It also falls to you to track attendance at General Meetings and Work Parties, in order to determine who you will Apprentice and Player at each Closing Night Party, and who has voting rights for show selection.

Finally, you should do your best to update this document, and the Master Membership List, as relevant.

Putting aside MemChair-specific tasks, the Executive Committee shares the burden of certain responsibilities. For the most part, you won't know what these are until they sneak up on you: disciplinary actions, for example. If you've been elected to this position, it means that a great many people have faith in your ability to handle these unexpected situations. Keep a level head, consult your fellow officers, and everything will work out fine.

## ***2. Schedule for Membership Events and Duties***

This section covers events that occur only once or twice in an academic year, usually in this sequence, and roughly in the months as-outlined. Many of them are integral to the operation of the club.

### **August**

- Navigating Rensselaer & Beyond
- Tour Training
- Fall Activities Fair

### **September**

- Welcome Back Event
- TIPS Training
- Van Training

### **October**

- Reunion & Homecoming Alumni Event
- Apple Picking
- EoP Show Selection
- Halloween Manhunt

### **November**

- Fall Show Closing Night Party
- Pre-Show Selection

### **December**

- Show Selection
- Lock-in
- Organize Elections Committee

### **January**

- Cabin?

### **February**

- EoP Closing Night Party

### **March**

- Elections

### **April**

- Tour Training Part Deux
- Accepted Students' Day

### **May**

- Spring Show Closing Night Party
- Players Picnic
- E-Comm Funday

## Summer Arch

### Variable

Blood Drive

Show Trips

Movie Trips

*For the shortened manual, section 3 has been removed. It details events. If you would like to see it, contact the Mem Chair for the full manual.*

## ***4. Caring for the Membership***

With all of the event-planning and quorum-tracking that goes into being the Membership Chair, it's sometimes easy to forget that this organization is a tremendous web of vibrant, artistic individuals, and these individuals frequently have problems. As the Membership Chair, you might find yourself in a position to help these individuals.

### **On Interpersonal Conflicts**

For better and for worse, not all arguments between members take place in the Playhouse, so it's sometimes difficult to tell when things might be awry. It's also a delicate job to know when it is and is not appropriate to involve yourself in a dispute. If you become aware of a conflict, use your best judgment: feel free to speak to the involved parties on personal terms or in an official capacity as Membership Chair, or let them know that you can act as a third party if necessary. I would say "impartial third party", but in an organization as tightly-knit as this one, a complete lack of bias is next to impossible.

*It should be noted that the Membership Chair serves as the Club Appointed Mediator. For one thing, this gets at the impartial third party aspect of the job. Bryce is correct, it is almost impossible to be completely unbiased. However, keeping a level head and making sure all parties are heard is a good start. Another aspect of being Club Appointed Mediator is that at any point any member of the RPI Players can request your presence at a meeting, and you have to be allowed at that meeting. If someone is uncomfortable or nervous, you can be there as back-up, a friend, moral support, a witness, or a mediator.*

### **On Serious Personal Issues**

Academically-speaking, RPI is a rigorous place. Someone actively involved in the Playhouse likely balances these stressful academics with production roles, sometimes while struggling with personal issues on top of it all. It's difficult to admit, but depression, suicidal ideation, and all manner of mental health disorders are all too common, and RPI students are the sort of people that frequently hate to ask for help. Keep an ear to the ground as much as possible. If you notice troubling signs, such as drastic changes in behavior, an

evident lack of sleep / food / et cetera, or an unhealthy dependency on drugs or alcohol, please do act. Approach the individual in question, if appropriate. Trust your fellow E-Comm members and our advisors: you do not need to confront these issues alone, nor should you have to feel fully responsible for any outcomes. [If you have any concerns, I would strongly encourage you to voice them to our Advisor, Dean T. This goes especially for interpersonal conflicts that have drastically escalated and safety becomes a concern. Not only is he full of knowledge and good advice \(likely he will be able to tell you exactly what you should do\), but it is also an issue of liability. It is always better that Dean T knows, than that he doesn't.](#)

### **On Gender and Sexuality**

The Players is, more than most clubs, home to people of many sexual orientations and gender identities. Straight, gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, cisgender, transgender, nonbinary: the vocabulary is endless. The general membership is generally very respectful towards this diversity: do what you can to ensure this remains true. There should be no discrimination within this organization, on any basis. In the case of nonbinary members, exercise correct pronoun usage; if you do not know their pronoun preference, don't be afraid to ask. [The Master Membership List is set up so that although official names need to be tracked, preferred nicknames are also recorded. This way, those members who identify with different names can sign in to everything with their preferred names and we won't have any trouble recordings.](#)

### **On Gatherings**

Gatherings of Like-Minded Individuals are an interesting beast. For some people, they are an opportunity to get drunk. For others, they are an opportunity to explore their sexuality. For you, the Membership Chair and an officer of the RPI Players, they are a grey area. On one hand, it is best if the Executive Committee is officially unaware of their existence. On the other hand, we want to ensure that the membership is safe, regardless of whether or not you plan to be personally present at a Gathering. Anyone drunk should not be walking home alone, and they obviously should never be driving. It isn't your job to coddle everyone who might wake up with a hangover, but we don't want anyone sick and alone after a night of drinking: the risk of personal harm is too great.

Additionally, it would be prudent to give newer members an idea of what to expect at Gatherings, and to impress upon them that there is absolutely no obligation to drink or participate in whatever physical activities may take place. We do *not* haze our members.

### **Other Notes**

[This year, the EComm made an effort to be able to deal with serious issues with club members better. It is recommended that you \(and the rest of the EComm\) but especially](#)

you, get Safe Zone Trained. We're also trying to get a similar training set-up specifically for our group. Feel free to open these trainings up to the general membership as well.

Our year, we continued to tackle serious issues and SafeZone training is strongly encouraged. Also, this year New York State, and therefore the Student Union, instituted a new policy that requires club officers to get trained in bystander intervention. As I write this it is still in flux what that actually means, but look forward to it.

## ***5. Making Your Life Easier***

**Membership Committee**

**The MemChair Digest**

**How Voting Rights Work (It's Weird)**

**Templates**

*For the shortened manual, section 5 has been removed. It details Membership Committee, the MemChair Digest, and other ways to make your term as Mem Chair easier. If you would like to see it, contact the Mem Chair for the full manual.*

## ***7. Undersigned***

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