

# Sex + Consent on Campus: Devising with Undergrads in *Roleplay*

AATE Conference 2020

Saturday, July 25, 2020 @ 1p EDT

Presented by Alex Ates

Panel: Jenny Mercein (Tulane University), Dr. Denise Frazier (Tulane), Darci Fulcher (University of Kansas), and Chris Kaminstein (Goat in the Road Productions)

***Good Day!***

Please put your:

1. Name
2. Role + Institution
3. Location
4. + any additional information you'd like to provide about yourself

***In the chat.***

***We'll get started soon.***

# Structure of this Presentation

1. Welcome
2. Norms
3. Introduction to the Context + Topic
4. Panelist Introductions
5. Interview
6. Q&A

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Grace Graugnard and Miranda Kramer in "Roleplay" at Tulane University. (Photo by Josh Brasted)

FEATURE | LIVE AND LEARN | OCTOBER 1, 2019 | 0 COMMENTS

## How 'Roleplay' Reflected Tulane's Experiences With Assault

With the help of Goat in the Road Productions, Tulane students shaped a play in response to an assault crisis on their campus.

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BY ALEX ATES

## Some things to keep in mind:

1. Feel free to keep your camera off, if you need to
2. If you have your camera on, feel free to do tasks, move around, cook, eat, or stretch
3. Please mute yourself when you're not speaking
4. Feel free to use the reactions feature during this presentation
5. The chat bar is a place to share responses or ask questions, if you're comfortable engaging there

As has been noted in prior sessions, this panel discussion will be operated transparently.

If we were working live in the room, we would have the benefit of eye contact, side-talk, and body language.

Technical glitches are likely.

We will communicate with each other openly through Zoom.

While this conversation will center around topics of a theatrical process, it may reference topics on:

- Sex, harassment, + assault within institutions of learning
- Power + toxicity
- Heteronormativity + homophobia
- Gender-based violence
- Substance abuse
- White supremacy + colonialism
- Racism + anti-Blackness



# Power of the Egress

(Dr. Christina Marìn via Rives Collins)

The Power of the Egress states that **if for any reason a participant wants to opt out of an exercise or discussion, they can do so.**

**No one has to say why** they're invoking the Power of the Egress, but they may share if they would like to. **They can come back into the exercise whenever they're ready.**

**In 2017, 41 percent of female-identifying and 18 percent of male-identifying students reported experiencing sexual assault at Tulane University in New Orleans.** Since those stats were released, there have been town halls, support groups, class discussions, consent campaigns, and institutional initiatives. There was also a play, which a group of students devised in response to the staggering statistics.

*Roleplay* was performed on campus, free of charge, Sept. 5-15, 2019. It was coordinated by Tulane educators and members of the New Orleans devising ensemble Goat in the Road Productions.

I grew up a few blocks from Tulane and spent more than a decade working at the university's theatres. There are a few things you should know: **Tulane is an elite university and a large employer.**

For a school in a bend of the Mississippi River, the campus' older architecture is dissonantly reminiscent of New England. Feral cats dot the grounds, icons of campus counterculture. On an outer quadrant of the campus is Newcomb, a former women's college absorbed within the last decade by Tulane.

On the edge of Newcomb is a mix of school-owned, residential, and commercial property. It's a well-known hotbed for public drinking in a city with no laws prohibiting open containers.

**Crammed within a few blocks are frats, sororities, dives, and the school's various denominational religious centers.**

There's a paraphernalia store called the Mushroom above a bar called the Boot. After midnight, at "Boot-o'clock," some blocks fill up with people like it's the French Quarter.

**McWilliams Hall, home to the university's Department of Theatre and Dance, is in the elbow of it all.** The Boot is half-a-block away. A few doors down from the theatre is a fraternity house that used to host "Old South" balls and recently erected a "Make America Great Again" wall.

Along with its academic prestige and low acceptance rate, **Tulane's unique social culture affects its allure.** *The Princeton Review* consistently ranks Tulane as one of the nation's top party schools.

As the original home of the influential journal, TDR, *The Drama Review*, formerly the *Tulane Drama Review*, **the school's Theatre department is entwined with the history and training of the American theatre institution.**

To quote Dr. Denise Frazier,

**“This university has a deep colonial history.”**

As Dr. Frazier and Dr. Jeffery Darensbourg note, **Bulbancha**, the area called “New Orleans,” has been historically characterized by cultural interactions of people from distinct linguistic communities including, but not limited to the following Nations: Houma, Choctaw, Chitimacha, and Biloxi.



Africans, Native Americans, and all mixtures of these two groups were wrongfully enslaved for centuries in these lands.

Tulane was founded in 1834.

In 1886, Tulane established Newcomb as a sibling school, admitting women.

In 1963, Tulane accepted its first Black students.

In 2016, Tulane's undergraduate  
body was 80 percent white  
in a city that is 60 percent Black.

In *Roleplay*, both the students and the professionals had to learn from each other.

The professional artists needed to learn about the student's experiences, and the students needed to learn about how a play is made.

**Stories are personal, first drafts are imperfect, stakes are high, conversations are necessary, and confrontation, in theatre, is key.**



Film by documentarian/ethnographer Katie Mathews; please note video quality distorted

**NOTE: This video has yet to be transcribed for captioning**

**NOTE: This film contains language that is not bleeped**

Entwined in conversations about sex  
and power on college campuses, are  
intersectional factors of racism,  
white supremacy, heteronormativity,  
+ social class.

In a time of radical reckoning and reconstruction, we reopen this project to dig into the process, the problems, the achievements, + the lessons learned.

In a moment, this screen-share will end and our panelists will introduce themselves.

As they do,  
their bios will be pasted into the chat.

**The chat box will be utilized for sharing links for the remainder of this presentation.**