

DAVID ROMÁN

Job title

Independent Equity Committee member



PROFILE

My name is David Román and I am a Professor in the Department of English and the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. I have devoted my career to the diversification of the profession on several fronts. As a scholar, I have worked to diversify my two primary scholarly fields: theatre and performance studies and American studies broadly conceived. My scholarship has focused on the literary, visual, and performing arts of under-represented communities, especially those determined by race, ethnicity, and sexuality. I have published several award-winning books in these fields.

Throughout my career I have worked to reform the curriculum to include the works of under-represented groups. Since the beginning of my career in the mid-1990s, I have been hired with the expectation that I would contribute and advance the discussions of diversity on campus. At Yale University, for example, I was the first hire in the Larry Kramer Initiative for Lesbian and Gay Studies, a position created to introduce what was called at the time (1994) Lesbian and Gay Studies into the curriculum. I taught courses on queer theatre, Lesbian and Gay history, AIDS and the arts, and a course on 'minority' discourse, which was designed specifically to respond to the lack of undergraduate courses available on critical race theory, queer and feminist studies, and the arts at Yale. At USC, where I have taught for the past twenty-five years, I teach in both the English Department and the American Studies and Ethnicity Department, the primary unit for scholars of colour working on race, ethnicity, and culture from transnational, hemispheric, and post-colonial methods.

Finally, let me conclude that my anti-racist and pro-diversity efforts extend beyond the academy. I have served on multiple theatre and community non-profit boards, and I have used my position to advocate for the arts, especially the works of under-represented and marginalized communities. For many years, I served as the Scholar-in-Residence at the Mark Taper Forum, the premiere regional theatre in Los Angeles, working closely with the Latino Theatre Initiative under the direction of Diane Rodriguez (appointed to the National Arts Council by President Obama) and Luis Alfaro (A MacArthur Fellow and playwright) to outreach to the extensive Latinx community in LA. In 2021, I joined the Board of Directors of Labyrinth Theatre in New York City, which was created in 1992 as their mission boldly proclaims, “to deliberately interrupt the racial status quo by giving voice to artists of color.” I am proud to be the first scholar invited to serve on the board in their near thirty-year history. LAB is the artistic home of Stephen Adly Guirgis, one of the most critically acclaimed contemporary US playwrights, and has an ensemble of over 100 artists. I have a long history of hands-on and on-the ground experience working with administrators, educators, scholars, and artists. I have dedicated my life to these issues, and I plan on continuing these practices for the rest of my career.

I am honoured to join the Independent Equity Committee at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. I served as a Visiting Fellow at Central in 2018 and was impressed with the intellectual and artistic communities I met during my residency.