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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Illinois Wesleyan University has been recognized as one of five universities in the country to be an ETCP Employer, showing exemplary technical and safety practices for theatre and entertainment programs.

“The ETCP (Entertainment Technician Certification Program) is the standard-bearer in the theatre and entertainment industry regarding hiring practices and safety protocols in the workplace,” said the School of Theatre Arts Recruitment Coordinator, Lauren Warnecke. “For educational institutions, it is a sign that IWU is adhering to best practices found in the professional arena and acting in good faith as stewards of these standards.”

Administered through the Entertainment Services and Technology Association, the ETCP is a rigorous, industry-wide evaluation designed to assess professional technicians in the disciplines that affect the health and safety of crews, performers and audiences. Out of all theatrical electricians in the country, both in education and in the field, only 739 individuals have earned this certification as entertainment electricians.

The [School of Theatre Arts](#) employs two ETCP-certified electricians – Production Electrician Joseph Vitti and Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts Julie E. Ballard, earning the university the ETCP-Employer accreditation. Vitti completed the certification process in 2020 followed by Ballard who recently earned the title.

“Joe and I are extremely proud that we can pass on our knowledge to our students and take great pride in being an ETCP Certified Workplace,” said Ballard. “Our students can be guaranteed that they are being taught the best way to be an entertainment electrician.”

As a professional training program, the design tech program is one in which health and safety standards are of the utmost importance.

“Theatrical electrician work is specialized and can be dangerous if best practices are not followed. Being an ETCP-recognized employer means that our institution values high standards and passes these onto the next generation working in technical theatre,” said Warnecke.

Students studying Theatre Design & Technology have first-hand experience working on productions through the School of Theatre Arts. Those efforts will be evident in the upcoming production of [Airline Highway from April 6-10 at Wesleyan's Jerome Mirza Theatre at McPherson Hall](#).

Recently named the number one design tech program in Illinois by Prepler in 2021, Illinois Wesleyan's Theatre Design & Technology program is among the United States' leading undergraduate-level collegiate tracks committed to holistic and rigorous training in theatrical design, technical theatre and production stage management.

To learn more about the Design Tech program visit the [program description page](#).



By Kailee Galloway '23