

# **Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C<sup>®</sup>) Mascot Manual**

**INCLUDES MASCOT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

Tri-C Student Life and Integrated Communications Department (ICD)

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## Introduction

On Oct. 5, 2018, Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) announced the Triceratops as its first-ever mascot. In the following months, students, staff and community members selected “Stomp” as the mascot’s name.

The next phase was the creation of a costume that would bring Stomp to life. The costumed mascot drives student and alumni engagement with the brand, serves as a rallying point at athletic events and represents the College in the community.

Developed by Tri-C’s Mascot Committee, this manual is a guide to administering the College’s mascot program.

## Overview

The program requires six mascot actors. These are student positions, with \$300/semester stipends provided to each actor. Volunteer staff handlers accompany the mascot to all appearances.

Student mascot actors report to the Integrated Communications department (ICD). Volunteer staff handlers are scheduled by ICD.

## Management

### Scheduling and Maintenance

In the fourth quarter of each fiscal year, College staff must submit a list of College or community events at which they would like Stomp to appear in the following fiscal year, including dates and times. Requests must be submitted to ICD via campus managers.

ICD will review requests and schedule Stomp’s appearances based on significance, nature of the event and exposure. Scheduling conflicts and other practical matters are also considered when determining whether Stomp can appear at an event.

Significant, unscheduled events that arise over the course of the year (e.g., sports play-offs) are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Requests for Stomp to appear at these previously unscheduled events must also be submitted via KWeb (see link above).

Events should be large and high-energy (e.g., Commencement, JazzFest, New Student Orientation). The mascot actor can attend in costume for a maximum of one hour at any given event, with 15-minute breaks every 15 minutes.

Requesters must provide a private, locked room at the event location where the actor can change and secure their belongings.

Handlers are responsible for picking up and returning the costume in a timely manner. The handler will communicate with ICD in advance of an appearance to arrange for costume pickup and confirm the return deadline. Mascot costumes are kept at the Jerry Sue Thornton Center (2500 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St., Cleveland) and are available for pickup and drop-off during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Mascot Actors

The mascot actor represents Tri-C and provides entertainment and audience engagement at College, athletic and community events.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Display enthusiasm and high energy at all times.
- Meet and greet fans and attendees.
- Develop and execute skits to be performed at events, on the field or in dugouts to enhance the event or game-day experience for students and fans.
- Preserve the identity of the mascot without deviating from established character (i.e., body language/mannerisms, attitude, fan interaction, team/College representation).
- Work effectively in a team environment.
- Take care of costume and props when in your possession.
- Attend training events (details pending from Mascot Training subcommittee).
- Understand and perform a series of nonverbal signals to be used with mascot handler during appearances (e.g., break signal, distress signal, back away signal).
- Comply with Tri-C Student Code of Conduct at all times.

### REQUIREMENTS

- Able to work a flexible schedule, including nights and weekends.
- Good physical condition, able to lift 30+ pounds.
- Due to costume size, must be between 5'7" and 6' in height.
- Pass background check and drug screening.
- Currently enrolled at Tri-C.
- Dance or other performance experience preferred.
- Previous mascot actor experience a plus.

### COMPENSATION

- \$300/semester stipend for each of six student actors.

Applicants must pass a physical examination and complete the following forms:

- Insurance Questionnaire
- Medical Release and Authorization
- College-Mascot Agreement

## Mascot Handlers

The mascot handler is an ambassador and representative of Tri-C who accompanies the mascot to and from its performance area or venue and manages crowd interaction during the event.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Accompany mascot at all times, always within arm's reach.
- Answer questions and provide other responses for mascot as needed (Stomp does not speak).
- Manage crowd interaction (e.g., assist fans with taking pictures and obtaining autographs, answer questions about the mascot)

- Act as mascot actor's "eyes and ears" in regards to game progression, in-game scheduling, location visits, fan requests and potential hazards.
- Carry mascot supplies (e.g., autograph cards, T-shirts, signs).
- Take photos for Tri-C social media.
- Transport costume to and from appearances.
- Assist mascot actor with various duties that may arise.
- Assist actor with costume as needed.
- Be prepared to substitute as the scheduled mascot actor or arrange for a substitute.
- Attend training events (details pending from Mascot Training subcommittee).
- Understand and perform a series of nonverbal signals to be used with mascot actor during appearances (e.g., break signal, distress signal, back away signal).
- Comply with Tri-C Employee Code of Conduct at all times.

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

- Currently employed at Tri-C.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Able to relate to fans of all ages and backgrounds, especially children.
- Punctual, with good time management skills.
- Basic Tri-C knowledge and campus familiarity.
- Able to accompany the mascot for extended periods of time (up to one hour).
- Clean and well groomed, with appropriate dress (Tri-C shirt provided).
- Access to a cellphone when accompanying, traveling with and spotting mascot actor.

#### **COMPENSATION**

- Handlers do not receive compensation beyond their normal salary or pay rate.

## **Recruitment**

### **Communications**

The Mascot Committee works with Internal Communications, Student Life and ICD's interactive and social media coordinators to prepare recruitment notices for the six mascot actors. Notices will typically be posted each fall. Staff volunteers are selected to serve as handlers.

## **Talent selection**

### **Mascot Auditions**

Applicants who meet all mascot actor requirements (see Appendix) are selected to participate in auditions. A panel of Tri-C staff and Mascot Committee members serve as judges.

To be considered for an audition, interested students must complete and submit a Mascot Interest and Qualification Form (see Appendix) along with a resume. Auditions may include improvisation, dancing and interview questions.

The Mascot Committee will coordinate with the ICD event manager and other College personnel to plan and execute auditions for mascot actors. This includes identifying dates, recruiting judges, booking rooms,

disbursing information and forms to candidates, collecting and tracking participant information, and providing initial tips and guidance to maximize audition success (see Appendix).

## Training

Staff volunteers must complete a training session (one day or two half-days) in order to serve as a mascot handler. Additional mascot training opportunities may occasionally arise via local professional sports teams. Advance notice will be given for these mandatory trainings.

## Basic Stomp Rules

No matter the situation, there are commonsense rules that every mascot actor should follow.

These include:

- Be clean when wearing the costume, but avoid perfumes and other scented products.
- Always appear in full dress, and only use approved accessories.
- Stay in the Stomp character at all times. Only break character once you're completely out of public view.
- Signal handler and walk away if confronted by an aggressive or belligerent individual.
- Always be friendly, courteous and animated.
- Never speak or make noises in costume.
- Do not remove any part of your costume in public.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink while in costume or partially dressed.
- Do not be seen entering/exiting restroom.
- Do not show anger or frustration.
- Do not scare or intimidate people.
- Do not remove clothing or accessories (e.g., hats, sunglasses) from audience members.
- Do not lift or hold anyone, including babies, children, adults or animals.

## Distress

From time to time, the mascot actor will encounter a child who is frightened by the costume. The best way to deal with this is for the mascot to back away slowly from the child. The mascot actor should stay in character, shuffle away, then engage the child from a safe distance.

## Actor Safety

The mascot actor has limited vision when in costume, mostly seeing through the mouth. While the hands are quite dexterous, the oversized body and tail can inhibit the actor's awareness of their immediate surroundings. The handler is there to help with this.

When performing — especially outdoors in hot weather — actors should take water breaks every 15-20 minutes out of any possible view of the audience.

## Alcohol and Drugs

- Mascot actors and handlers must not smoke in or near the costume.
- Mascot actors must not wear the costume while intoxicated or hung over.

- Mascot actors may not handle alcohol containers (e.g., beer bottles or cans) even if they appear in costume at an event where alcohol is present and permitted.

## Accepting Gifts and/or Monies

Mascot actors and handlers may not accept money or gifts of any significant value. Under no circumstances should mascot actors or handlers accept money for photo opportunities.

## Political and Religious Activities

Stomp will not attend events that are political or religious in nature. The costumed mascot will appear at sporting and community- or College-related events only.

## Protecting the Brand

### Personal Use and Social Media Conduct

- Do not take personal photos of yourself or anyone else wearing the costume or parts of the costume unless authorized.
- Do not take the costume off the storage property unless authorized.
- Always be camera-ready when in public.
- Never take any part of the mascot costume off when performing or in public.

## Protection of Mascot and Property

### Storage Location

Jerry Sue Thornton Center  
2500 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

### Repairs and Damage

Actors and handlers should do their best to return the costume in the same condition as when checked out. Any damage should be reported to ICD immediately. All actors and handlers must acknowledge this policy by signing the Mascot Costume Usage and Damage Agreement (attached).



**Appendix**



**Mascot Handbook**

## Costume Components

- 1 Head
- 1 Inner body
- 1 Outer body
- 1 Cooling vest
- 4 Ice packs
- 1 Jersey
- 1 Pair of sneakers

In case of medical emergency, dial **911**.

For mascot appearance emergencies:

**Dana Leidich**

216-987-4754 (office)

440-537-9305 (cell)

## Mascot Performer Audition Preparation

The secret to truly engaging an audience is to perform in a way that is appropriate for the character, the brand and the audience.

### What to Expect

Be prepared to audition in costume and run through some basic gestures.

### Audition Tips

Mascots do not speak, so the mascot actor must be able to communicate emotions and thoughts through gestures. Candidates will be asked to express a number of emotions such as joy, surprise and disappointment. They will also be asked to use gestures and perform a skit to generate audience engagement and enthusiasm.

### Common Mascot Gestures

**Waving** — Use your entire arm for a big wave in situations where you really need to stand out, such as at a sporting event or walking in a parade. Simply open and close your hand when waving to a small child in a meet and greet situation.

**Laughing** — Bring your hands up to Stomp's mouth and nod your head forward in a rapid motion to signal laughing.

**Blowing a kiss** — Put your hand to Stomp's mouth and then flat out in front of the head, with the palm up.

**Hugging** — Be gentle when hugging. Remember that children may feel shy or intimidated by Stomp's presence. A strong, forceful hug — especially to an adult or teenager — may initiate an aggressive or confrontational situation.

**I love you!** — Point to yourself, then use both hands to draw a heart in the air and point to the recipient.

**I'm scared!** — Run away, cover your eyes and shake your knees. Lifting one hand up to peek out can be comical and endearing.

**Aww, shucks!** — Give a little sweeping kick forward while hooking your arm in front of you.

## Mascot Interest and Qualification Form

1. Name
2. Phone
3. Email
4. S-Number
5. My primary campus is: (checkbox)
6. I am in good academic standing and am enrolled at Tri-C for Fall 2019: (Y/N)
7. I am 18 or older and between 5'7" and 6' tall, with the ability to stand for long periods of time: (Y/N)
8. I have reliable transportation: (Y/N)
9. I have high energy, enthusiasm and creativity: (Y/N)
10. I understand that, if I am selected as a mascot actor, I will be accompanied by a Tri-C staff handler at appearances and may be called upon to assist a handler with another mascot: (Y/N)
11. I understand that, as a mascot actor, I may be required to attend events at various times, including nights and weekends: (Y/N)
12. I want to be a mascot actor because:
13. I agree to a background check and health screening: (Y/N)

## Mascot Event Tracking Form 2019-2020

Date	Time	Performance Location	Changing Room Location	Event	Requester Name	Requester Cellphone	Status	Manager
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## Mascot Costume Usage and Damage Agreement

### Use of the Mascot Costume

When Cuyahoga Community College grants permission to you to use the *Mascot Costume*, you will use the *Mascot Costume* in a safe and careful manner and only for the purpose specified in this manual. You will not conduct or permit any other use or subject the *Mascot Costume* to any use that may cause damage. You may use the *Mascot Costume* only during the hours specified for your event.

You agree to take good care of the *Mascot Costume* and to maintain and return it in as good of condition as it was prior to your use. The College reserves the right to change the day and time specified for the *Mascot Costume* to be assigned and available to you in order to accommodate the needs of College.

You will not make or permit to be made any alterations, additions or improvements whatsoever to the *Mascot Costume*. You will not store or possess any hazardous substance near the *Mascot Costume*. Upon completion of your event, you will return the *Mascot Costume*. If the *Mascot Costume* is damaged or left excessively dirty due to your negligence, you agree to pay all costs of any damages, repairs or cleaning service upon receipt of an invoice from College.

You will comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, rules and regulations and all applicable policies and procedures of College while using *Mascot Costume*, including, without limitation, those relating to fire and safety and use of alcoholic beverages. You will abstain from smoking when in or near the *Mascot Costume* and will consume no food or beverages other than water while wearing the *Mascot Costume*.

Please acknowledge by signing below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_