

**PROGRAM REVIEW SELF STUDY**

**DEPARTMENT of THEATRE ARTS & DANCE**

**ACADEMIC DIVISION: SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

**DATE: April 2016**

Introduction	1
Basic Information	2
Self Study organization	4
Acting Concentration Self Study	4
Music Theatre	15
Dance Concentration Self Study	23
Technical Theatre Concentration Self Study	35
Theatre Studies Concentration Self Study	42
General Education	51
Minor Degree Options	52
Diversity	53
Institutional Support and Resources	57
University and Student Services	57
Instructional Studios, Classrooms and Performance Venues	59
Financial Resources	61
Staff	64
Assessment	68
Action Plan	70

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance currently has 85 majors and approximately 28 minors.

The Department continues to mount a full season of theatre and dance performances in the Evert B. Person Theatre and other venues on campus. Our seasons represent a balance of drama and dance that includes classical, contemporary, musical, operatic, experimental and student generated works. Currently, The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance has never been more productive, or more engaged in the education of its students and its service to the University and wider community.

The Department has 5.5 permanent faculty, 14 temporary instructors. The Department offers 74 courses over a two-year time frame.

## BASIC INFORMATION

Majors: 85

Minors: 28 (estimate)

Permanent faculty: 5.5

Temporary instructors: 14

Courses offered: 74

GE courses: 5 courses, 15 sections taught

Degrees offered: 1 Major (B.A. in Theatre Arts); Minor

Major Concentrations: 4 (Acting, Dance, Technical Theatre, Theatre Studies)

Department Chair: Professor Kristen Daley (Dance)

Tenure Line Faculty: Paul Draper (Acting, Theatre History, Directing); Anthony Bish (Technical Theatre); Christine Cali (Dance, Dance History); Scott Horstein (Dramaturgy, Playwriting, Theatre Studies); Judy Navas (Theatre Studies, Dramatic Literature) began FERP Spring 2015

Lecturer Faculty: Jeffrey Weissman (Acting, Improv); Olive McKeon (Theatre Appreciation); Danielle Cain (Acting, Voice, Theatre Appreciation, Audition); Doyle Ott (Acting, Theatre History); Heather Visser (Jazz); Jennifer Meek-Satoh (Contemporary Dance, Dance Ensemble); Tanya Bello (Contemporary Dance); Nichele Van Portfleet (Contemporary Dance, Dance Ensemble); Farrah McAdam (Hip Hop); Molly Fletcher Lynch (Choreography); Jennifer Jaffe (Ballet, Dance History); Peter Crompton (Technology), Juliet Pokorny (Technical, Stage Management), Jody Banks (On-Camera); Stan Anderson (Master Acting Classes), Scott Wells (Theatre Appreciation, Contemporary Dance)

### Vision

Our vision is for a world where the artist is transformative, essential and engaged.

### Mission

The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance offers students a home where they can seek their potential and develop their voices as artists, through the study and collaborative making of live performance.

### Core Values

- Student-centered: We believe first and foremost in creating experiences that serve our students' needs and passions.
- Rigor: We believe that performance training can inspire us to the highest standards of professionalism and personal achievement.
- Full Engagement: We believe in making work that has value beyond the dance and theatre world and that directly engages our campus and local community.

### Unified Major Course Goal

Acquisition of the skills, understanding, and appreciation of theatre and dance and theatre arts and dance practice.

### Discipline Specific Objectives

In the Acting Concentration, the student is expected to demonstrate a level of acting skills and artistry that enables him/her to pursue a professional acting career and/or advance to an MFA acting program or teaching credential.

In the Dance Concentration, the student is expected to demonstrate an acceptable level of movement, dance, and choreographic skills and artistry that enables him/her to pursue a professional career in dance or teaching and/or advance to an MFA degree program.

In the Technical Theatre Concentration, the student is expected to demonstrate a level of skills and artistry in design, construction, technical operation, and stage management that enables him/her to pursue a professional career in technical theatre or design and/or advance to an MFA technical theatre or design program.

In the Theatre Studies Concentration the student is expected to demonstrate an acceptable level of skills and artistry in directing, dramaturgy, playwriting and acting that enables him/her to pursue a professional career in theater and/or advance to an MFA degree or teaching credential.

The student in any of the four concentrations is expected to be conversant with a broad body of knowledge, with special emphasis on performance experience that pertains to his or her concentration including a working vocabulary of the director, playwright, choreographer, designer, actor, dancer, and technician.

### **Analytical and Communication Skills**

- The student is expected to demonstrate the ability to be collaborative, creative, resourceful, and persistent in problem solving.
- The student should be able to analyze and synthesize the diverse elements of theatre and dance practice that contribute to creating a unified whole.
- The student is expected to view and respond to theatre and dance from analytical, critical, cultural, production and historical perspectives.
- The student should be able to communicate effectively with an audience through mediums of acting, dance, choreography, design, and other contributing functions such as stage management, and dramaturgy

### **Relating Values with the Art of Theatre**

- The student should be able to work productively and cooperatively in collective and group efforts both in and out of theatre.
- The student should be cognizant of the power of theatre to transform and communicate.
- The student will be expected to demonstrate broad understanding of the contributions to world culture of non-Eurocentric and diverse American theatre and dance traditions as well as those derived from European origins.

- The student should be prepared to take artistic risks and embrace innovation.
- The student should be prepared to move to the next phase of life and career, whether in theatre or another field, with confidence in his or her analytic, critical, and communication skills.
- The student should be prepared to become an active, effective, and responsible member of society.

## **B. SELF STUDY ORGANIZATION**

Included below are individual self-studies prepared by faculty from each of the Departments program areas: Acting, Dance, Technical Theatre, and Theatre Studies. Each covers significant areas recommended in the self-study template concentrating on sections A, B (1-5), D, E, and H. This was done because each area has its distinct set of goals, methods, and concerns. In areas where we felt there was significant commonality across our four programs single sections applicable to all programs and the Department as a whole are addressed after the self studies. These are sections C, F, G.

### **ACTING CONCENTRATION SELF STUDY (B)**

At Sonoma State University the Acting Program in the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance teaches that theatre contributes to a social process and occurs within a social context. We help our students to understand that the theater artist is more than an entertainer, who is also an integrated human being who is a creative member of a community. We teach that the actor/artist is valued for what s/he offers society, and is deeply important to the expression of its relevant issues. We hope to instill in our actors a sense that each is an individual, not a commodity to be jobbed-in, but a unique, expressive voice.

We offer a conservatory style approach to prepare the student actor for the professional theater world through the development of a personal acting process, systematic skills training, performance in productions, and study of theater traditions and styles. We expose our students to multiple faculty voices, acknowledging that no one voice can fully communicate the various requirements and approaches to the development of a total actor. By providing a highly collaborative and integrated approach to actor training that prepares students to

- To enter the profession with hope, skills and purpose to succeed
- Compete for entrance into graduate programs where the students can develop their crafts, imaginative capacities, and the physical/vocal instruments
- Couple his/her training with fields and goals in other areas such as teaching, and other creative endeavors
- Be prepared for a lifetime of learning

No audition is required to be accepted into the acting program; a first or second year student registering at SSU need only declare acting as a major and are advised of the four-year sequence of courses. Students interview before acceptance to the upper division Acting Block sequence.

#### **We offer:**

- A Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Theatre with a Concentration in Acting

- An innovative conservatory-style curriculum, that includes contemporary writing, physical acting styles such as Commedia dell 'Arte, American and European Realism, Scene Study, on-camera exposure, improvisation, Shakespeare and verse acting technique, voice and speech, dance styles, and music theatre
- Close connection with a supportive and committed faculty as well as residencies, workshops and classes with professional guest artists
- Opportunities to perform dramas, comedies, musical theatre, experimental works, student writing and improvisation in a variety of venues from the first year through graduation
- Class sizes that allow for personal attention and individual feedback
- A community of theatre students in acting, dance, technical theatre and Theatre Studies majors who are encouraged and trained to work together and support one another
- Regular instruction through course work and residencies with Bay Area professional actors and directors supported by the Evert B. Person Endowment
- Performing Arts/Acting scholarships available through endowed funds
- Opportunities to collaborate with dancers, musicians, singers, and technicians
- A foundation for work in fields that require highly developed skills working in collaboration with others, especially projects that are large in scale, creative in nature, and accomplished to meet set deadlines
- Access to skilled advising and mentoring
- Classroom and performance facilities including a 475-seat proscenium theatre, 100-seat classroom studio/performance space, a 50-seat black box studio theatre, 2 dance studios, and an amphitheater

**We aim to:**

- Nurture individual artistic process by expanding technical skills and artistry
- Develop performance skills through a range of aesthetic approaches and processes
- Provide an effective range of physical and vocal training approaches
- Introduce a range of genres and dramatic writers
- Provide a safe environment to encourage risk taking
- Inspire passion for the art and craft of acting and for making theatre
- Teach young actors the value of training in order to become versatile, physically and vocally supple, and to be intellectually curious
- Teach actors to appreciate and develop abilities to inhabit multiple roles in multiple worlds
- Acquire facility for participating in improvisational processes
- Provide analytical tools for student self-evaluation in scene study, acting technique and performance
- Present the student with skills and perspectives of reading, analysis, and communication necessary for understanding the actors craft
- Look critically at acting and articulate personal observations
- Cultivate a collaborative working relationship with other Theatre Arts majors; actors, designers, directors, technicians, dancers, musicians, singers, and writers
- Foster an aesthetic appreciation of theatre and acting
- View, write and speak about the art of acting and making theatre

- Critique and accept critique, particularly by utilizing the Critical Response Process developed by choreographer Liz Lerman. <http://www.lizlerman.com/crpLL.html>
- Student Learning Outcomes:
- The actor takes artistic risks and actively engaged in a variety of styles and genres, including American realism, classical and verse styles, on-camera, and by working collaboratively.
- The actor gains a capacity to live in different imaginary worlds that depend on the specific voice and ideas of writer, a director's vision, relevant social context and/or historical period. The world of Oscar Wilde is different than the world of Irene Fornes
- The actor has learned to breathe diaphragmatically and to use breath to define and shape expression. Breath is the basis of all good acting work.
- The actor understands and acquires methods for working toward relaxation in mind, body, voice and spirit. Relaxation is necessary for all good acting.
- The actor's instrument (body, voice, imagination) develops as an expressive, responsive, bold, confident, presence, able to create believable characters, and to communicate with an audience.
- The actor is able to do many things without hurting him or herself.
- The actor has discovered a sense of insight and inspiration, and learned to be capable of being inspiration, and to inspire others through work habits and in performance.
- The actor has learned to read analytically and insightfully, and possesses the power of discovery through reading, not only dramatic texts, but also novels, news, history, writings on art and criticism—a range of writing that enables the actor to understand the world beyond the theatre in order to help him illuminate that world through his/her work on stage or in film. The liberal arts environment of Sonoma State is consciously recognized as a tool for the actor.
- The actor knows how to examine a text, and to string a series of actions on an overall intention.
- The actor develops a conscious score that will allow him/her to tap into the unconscious and find valuable secrets and treasures.
- The actor finds a reason why her/his character speaks.
- The actor has a personal process to which s/he can return, adapt and develop.
- The actor listens on and off stage—paying attention and responding truthfully in character may be the most important task an actor performs.
- The actor balances rigor with a sense of freedom and play.
- The actor gains an understanding of theater history and dramatic literature, and their value for an actor examining texts and building characters.
- The actor analyzes and breaks down text from actor's point of view.
- The actor is familiar with the process, vocabulary and tools of directors, choreographers, fight directors, designers, stage managers and technicians.
- The actor is ready to move to the next phase of his/her career with confidence and expertise, including:
  - Auditioning and competing for acting jobs for stage and on-camera
  - Gaining acceptance to graduate school programs
  - Teaching of acting in K-12 programs

- Potentially producing their own work

2. Rationale: The Acting Program appropriately sits within the School of Arts and Humanities and consciously advises students to access courses in related areas of study in support of their theatre training, and to expand their understanding of the world in which they create. In particular, first-year students are required to enroll in the newly-created Freshman Learning Community course (THAR 160) and actors are required to take Introduction to Shakespeare (ENG 339).

3. Dissemination of learning goals to students is accomplished through Moodle<sup>1</sup>, course syllabi, class meetings and critiques of scene work, written evaluations, production meetings, rehearsals, performances, course catalog descriptions, and the department web site:  
<http://www.sonoma.edu/theatreanddance/>

4. Core Curriculum sequence:

- Fundamentals of Acting (THAR 120B, 2 units)
- Text and Scene Study (THAR 220A, 2 units)
- Characterization (THAR 220B, 2 units)
- Voice for the Actor (THAR 145A, 1 unit)
- Speech for the Actor (THAR 145B, 1 unit)
- Acting Block sequence (THAR 320A, 320B, 420A, 420B, 5 units each)
  - Shakespeare and Verse
  - Commedia and Physical Theatre
  - Non-realistic styles
  - Exposure projects
  - Residencies
  - Foundations (in conjunction with the Dance Concentration)
    - Fundamentals of movement
    - Fundamentals of breathe work
    - Alexander Technique
    - Ballroom Dance
    - Fencing and stage combat
    - Physical conditioning, gymnastics, and circus skills
    - Movement and contact improvisation
    - Musicality
    - Anatomy
    - Yoga
    - Effort shape

Additional required course work

- Intro to the History of Theatre and Dance (THAR 202/203, 4 units each)
- Three courses in technical theatre (THAR 143A/B-144A/B), 2 units each
- Theatre in Action (THAR 300, 3 units)
- Directing Workshop (THAR 350, 2 units)

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<sup>1</sup> Moodle is the standard online learning platform at Sonoma State

- Early Plays (THAR 370A, 3 units)<sup>2</sup>
- Modern Plays (THAR 370B, 3 units)<sup>3</sup>
- Theatre of Today (THAR 400, 1 unit)

#### Acting Electives

- Comedy Improv (THAR 116, 1 unit)
- On Camera: Acting & Production (THAR 224, 2 units)<sup>4</sup>
- Audition Workshop (THAR 325, 2 units)
- Contemporary Plays and Playwrights (THAR 275, 3 units)
- Race, Gender and Performance (THAR 375, 3 units)
- Drama Ensemble Workshop (main-stage performances, 1-3 units)
- Musical Theatre Production (THAR 330, 1-3 units)

Lower division course work consists of three foundational courses, each progressively more demanding.

Acting Fundamentals teaches free play, relaxation, fundamentals of breath control and support, movement, and articulation. It seeks to instill in students that acting requires working with others, releasing habitual tensions in body and voice, and examining physical and vocal habits that often prove to be barriers to personal expression. The course also introduces principles of scene study. As an activity course, learning is almost entirely taught “on our feet”.

Text and Scene Study examines how an actor sees and places him or herself within imaginary circumstances as dictated imagined by a playwright. American Realism is the usual default source material for this course. Actors learn principles of psychological realism such as intentions, tactics, actions, and obstacles. The primary instrument of learning is the presentation and critique of prepared scenes, supported by journal writing and written exercises in text analysis.

Characterization focuses on the creation of characters that are distinct from the actor herself. Again principles of psychological realism are applied and reinforced while the added dimensions of character super-objectives, physical, and psychological traits are explored. Again the primary instrument of pedagogy is the presentation and critique of prepared scenes drawn from the plays of European realists Chekhov and Ibsen. Journal writing and written exercises in text analysis are also utilized, and students typically do research projects related to the socio/political/cultural contexts in which Chekhov and Ibsen wrote.

Voice for the Actor and Speech for the Actor acting students take these courses in their first year. These are foundational courses, and are in no way adequate to the needs of our actors. An actor requires at least 4 years to break down vocal habits and replace them with healthy techniques that are based in breath support, understanding the anatomy of vocal production—diaphragmatic breathing, lung capacity and control, resonators and articulators. Our program was forced to cut one unit of instruction from each of these courses due to budget cuts that hit in 2001-02.

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<sup>2</sup> Or approved substitution

<sup>3</sup> Or approved substitution, normally THAR 375

<sup>4</sup> Course number would change to THAR 324 to make its eligible for UD Block units.



In the coming year (2016-17) there is a good possibility the department will conduct a tenure-track hire of an Assistant Professor of Acting with expertise in voice, vocal anatomy, vocal production, International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), dialects and accents, rhetoric and speech. In addition to teaching stand-alone voice courses and coaching main stage productions, this hire would be responsible for integrating voice work across the acting program in all its course offerings.

Other expected skills are specialized movement techniques for actors such as Alexander, Laban, Lecoq, Viewpoints, Circus, and Commedia. Movement skills would also support contemporary and modern dance training, particularly in the cross-disciplinary Foundations portion of the Acting and Dance Blocks.

Should this hire go forward, a significant advance in the training would occur. Not only will new content and pedagogy come to the program, but also a permanent second acting faculty will allow for a consistent year-over-year process for voice and movement can be established. In addition, students will have another full-time mentor / advisor in the program.

Acting Block (THAR 320A & B; 420A & B) is the heart of the Acting Program. This four-semester cycle that assumes the actor has significant experience and facility with realistic acting prior to entrance into the Block. Students take five prerequisites that lead to an expected successful interview to enter the Block in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year at SSU. Approximately 15% of Block students come to the program as 3<sup>rd</sup> year transfers from other institutions. Although these students sometimes are required to take one of the 220 courses concurrently with the Block in order to succeed with the cohort that began at SSU, the infusion of energy and diverse perspective is always most welcome.

Originally implemented as an experimental class in 1998, the Acting Block provides the junior/senior acting concentration majors with a more intensive training ground for their discipline. It now provides a rigorous, demanding, professionally orientated class. It fits between a broad liberal arts degree and conservatory training in acting.

The Block meets four days each week from 9:30-11:50 AM. The first 50-minute portion of each day is dedicated to building physical, vocal and experiential foundations. Four semesters of this work encourages and enables the actor to break down interpersonal, emotional and physical contact barriers that hinder unfettered communication between actors, and between actors and the audience.

Here actors and dancers students come together to develop body, mind and spirit and prepare students for their discipline specific work that begins at 10:30. Dancers and actors share two days of foundational work each week. The other two days actors and dancers work within their own cohorts. Across foundation rotations, instruction on the shared days is divided equally between acting and dance so that each discipline experiences the other from its own perspective.

The Acting Block cycle currently consists of four content areas:

1. **Physical Theatre** techniques designed to teach the actors to express themselves through their bodies and to move beyond verbal language and voice as the actors' primary tool. Commedia dell 'Arte and circus skills currently comprise the majority of content in this block.
2. **Verse Drama** teaches the actor how to read, analyze and activate dramatic text written in verse form. Study in Shakespeare comprises the majority of work in this block. ENG 339 is a prerequisite to this Block.
3. **Non-realistic Drama** examines 3-5 different dramatic styles other than realism. Writers normally include Buchner, Wilde, Shaw, Brecht, and Beckett. Other writers explored might Churchill, Durang, Shepard, Pinter, Kane and Fornes, altering based on cohort make up and area of expertise for instructors assigned in a given semester.
4. **Exposure** is the fourth Block semester. Here professional residencies offer the student actor exposure to contemporary approaches to making theatre. Until the 2014-15 year a second focus of this semester was on-camera technique. The instructional time now freed up will allow for adding specialty topics such as period manners and movement, comedy technique, Viewpoints, and others.

In its original iteration the Physical Theatre and Verse Blocks ran sequentially fall and spring. After several years of experimentation we determined that both students would benefit from two semesters of exploration in both of these Blocks. Several years ago we reorganized syllabi so that verse is now taught twice weekly over two semesters, while circus skills are now taught twice weekly in the fall and Commedia and masks occupy two days each week in the spring semester. Not only do students have more time to digest and develop in each of these areas, but also the physical work is more effectively supportive of Shakespeare scene study, particularly in the spring semester.

With the Acting Block sequential approach to actor training that is established in lower division acting courses is reinforced. The current structure has been successful because several approaches to actor training are linked in the course sequence. Students benefit because they have regular contact with several acting instructors whose individual strengths are paired with particular content and learning outcomes. Block instructors plan curriculum together, consider individual actor needs, strengths and challenges, and provide semester end written evaluations. This cohesion among instructors is a strength of the program.

Additionally, the acting curriculum has a natural extension into the season production choices, so that training leads to production, and production work extends classroom training. For example, in the planning for the current production season the rotation of Physical Theatre and Verse Blocks in 2015-16 drove decisions to mount *Hamlet*. Two years ago as an "exposure" project, block students did a studio production of *Comedy of Errors* with a guest director whose specialty is physical comedy. Season play selection also addresses the non-realism semester with titles such as *How I Learned to Drive*, *Ghost Sonata*, and *Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party*.

At present, the intermediate and advanced actors study concurrently. Depending on which year in the rotation a student enters the block a student will begin with the Physical/ Verse Blocks curriculum or the Non-realism/ Exposure Blocks. As the Acting Program grew, it was planned that two separate cycles will be taught for juniors and seniors. In fact from 2008-2012 enrollment

was such that separate tracks was possible so that during that period all actors began the Block with Physical Theatre/ Verse<sup>5</sup>. This is the optimal starting place, as the content and learning in these Blocks are predatory for the Non-realism and Exposure work. Moreover, we see that the senior actors tend to respond with a greater level of maturity to the Exposure Block where outside artists lead the course by doing experimental work with high professional expectation of the actors.

An aspect of the Acting Block that continually requires curricular planning is Foundations. A prime goal of this segment of the larger class is to find common ground in the training of actors and dancers. Foundations helps the students of each concentration find common language and fosters an environment where appreciation of the work and the learning process for each discipline can occur.

In part to maintain the valuable community that Foundations builds, and in part due to resource limitations, each semester dance faculty lead between 50 and 100% of the Foundation work. Dance and acting faculty have always worked closely to organize Foundation instruction to optimize benefits for both actors and dancers. It is not always possible, especially when the permanent dance faculty is limited in the time each can be assigned in Block. Content and scheduling is often determined by part-time faculty availability, rather than a systematic approach to dancer and actor training that serves both disciplines equally.

Nevertheless, what is valuable to actor training may be less so for dancers, and *vice versa*. In the past actors and dancers shared 4 days each week in foundation time, a decision was made five years ago to reduced that shared time to two days a week. This shift has proved beneficial to both disciples while maintaining cross-disciplinary exposure in areas of ballroom dancing, contact improvisation, Feldenkrais, Viewpoints, Meisner and production (in the spring of 2015 actors and dancers collaborated on a main stage production of an adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*).

Students enrolled in the Acting Block receive 5 units each semester over 4 semesters for a total of 20 of the required 48 units in the Acting Concentration major.

Each semesters Block curriculum normally broken into:

- Two content sets in scene study, taught by different instructors
- 2-4 content sets in foundations, half of which are jointly comprised of dancers and actors

### **Block Grading**

Instructor inputs are prorated by contact hours. Foundations sets are usually set at 5% of grade per set, with scene work sections dividing the remaining 80%, with some variance if a particular set requires more (or less) out-of class academic work.

### **Planned Acting Program Revision**

The Acting Block is now in its 18th year and while it has successfully moved the acting program from a collection of ad hoc courses to a stepped conservatory style course of study we believe it

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<sup>5</sup> With a cyclical enrollment contraction and budget reductions the Block returned to a junior/senior cohort.

is time to take a close look at the structure of the block with an eye toward diversifying student options while maintaining rigorous training for young actors.

A medium-size acting program within state university must always balance recruitment and retention against competition with larger and more equipped universities. Students come to us for a variety of reasons, and because Sonoma State is not in a position to be selective about its active court (nor does it desire to be so), the department takes all comers. We do not audition students into the acting program. Typically, there is a weeding out process that occurs as incoming acting majors find other paths in their college careers. We also see students join our program in their second years.

The result has often been a disparate cohort of junior and senior acting students in the Block traveling identical paths. Since one of our key values is that actors develop individual voices and processes, this lockstep approach to training seems at odds with that value.

In the last few years certain challenges to the Acting Block structure have emerged as students express a desire to experience a less rigid curriculum. And we believe the strict structure requiring 20 units to be earned over four semesters in a Monday through Thursday morning module has limited student engagement particularly in light of fewer general education course options and an increased pressure from the CSU to ensure graduation horizons of four years.

In response, the acting program seeks to

- Diversify content and class modules so that all acting majors are not required to take identical programs
- Open opportunities for theatre minors and other qualified students to engage in block content such as Shakespeare, circus and commedia, ballroom dance and stage combat without committing to the full Block sequence
- Regularize Foundations content rotations, particularly for “actors only” segments
- Open opportunity for sophomore level actors to participate in “actors only foundations content
- Provide discrete grading and student evaluation based on content set (currently the grade is an average of all content with inputs from 4-6 instructors each semester.)
- Open space in weekly schedules by making it possible to move some Block course work to afternoon modules
- Allow courses outside the Block sequence to apply toward acting major degrees. Courses might include On-Camera, Audition Workshop, Drama Ensemble Workshop.

With such a revision the Acting Block will acquire a less monolithic profile as individual acting majors gravitate to personal interest areas, even while taking core requirements with their cohorts. We believe the restructuring will energize and diversify the program by allowing individual pathways through the acting major. Popular courses such as On Camera, Drama Workshop and Music Theater Workshop will become eligible requirement credits.

## **Preliminary Plan**

In the revised Acting Program, majors would still meet the 20-unit requirement that now exists in the Block, and be allowed to fulfill those requirements with a combination of required content sets and electives. Some units would be defined as “Core”. Students would take a minimum of 14 units of Core coursework and 6 units in Foundations.

**Core content areas (14 required units)<sup>6</sup>**

224	2 units	<u>On-Camera</u>
302	1-3 units	<u>Drama Workshop</u>
320A	2 units	<u>Acting Shakespeare I*</u>
320B	2 units	<u>Circus and Tumbling</u>
320C	2 Units	<u>Non- Realistic Acting Styles (Buchner, Brecht, Beckett)*</u>
320D	2 Units	<u>Comedy of Manners (Wycherley, Congreve, Shaw, Wilde)</u>
340	3 units	<u>Musical Theatre Workshop</u>
420A	2 units	<u>Acting Shakespeare II</u>
420B	2 units	<u>Commedia dell Arte and Masks*</u>
420C	2 units	<u>Exposure Project</u>
420D	2 units	<u>Non-Western Theatre Practices</u>

**Foundations content (6 units required)**

323A	1 unit	<u>Core Technique And Practice*</u> (Feldenkrais, Alexander, Yoga, etc.)
323B	1unit	<u>Voice: IPA, Accents and Dialect*</u>
323B	1 unit	<u>Stage Combat</u>
323C	1 unit	<u>Ballroom &amp; Social Dance</u>
323D	1 unit	<u>Singing for the Actor</u>
310A	1 unit	<u>Actor / Dancer Collaboration I*</u>
410A	1 unit	<u>Actor / Dancer Collaboration II</u>

Consideration of this revision has already begun in department meetings. Planning will continue over the summer of 2016 with the expectation that a program revision will be vetted and approved in the department and be sent to the appropriate curriculum approval structures within the School of Arts and Humanities and University Governance in 2016-17. Implementation would follow in the 2017-18 year.

Through effective rotation of courses over two year cycles and the utilization of current allocation to cover 6.5 WTU per semester (1.3 of which is shared with the Dance Concentration,) we anticipate no net increase in WTU required to cover this revision.

Drama Ensemble Workshop (THAR 302) is the course students take when cast in one of our theatre productions. The course is taken for 3-units (3.9 WTU). If compared to other activities courses we teach, students would be expected to be in class (rehearsal) for 6 hours per week. In actuality, students spend upwards of 200 hours in rehearsal and performance. Yet students make this effort because the experience and exposure being in a show the reason for acting.

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<sup>6</sup> Courses with asterisks are required for all acting majors and minors. Some of the course numbers listed here do not as yet exist, and would be constituted as part of the revision.

Performance classes are the real laboratories where the actors put their classroom learning together in one place, apply to a worthy text, and test their development in front of an audience.

By comparison, a typical 2-unit activities course that earns faculty 2.6 units of WTU meets for 4 hours per week totaling 60 hours per semester. A 3-unit academic course meets for 2.5 hours per week for a total of 37.5 hours per semester. Using the activities course standard of 60 hours for 2.6 WTU, show directors should receive minimum compensation of 10.8 WTU for productions done in 2015-16 (*The Hummingbird Wars* and *Hamlet*). The department recently discussed long term remedies, which might include linking rehearsals to other pedagogies so that production work can earn students (and faculty directors) credit more inline with workload.

5. Teaching Strategies: Effective teaching strategies in acting are difficult to document, as the approach to teaching for all our instructors is a highly individualized. There are no standardized tests—rather success is observable in the work of actors on a stage in the classroom and in performance. How success is achieved is often a mystery—a mystery of discovery achieved through diligent work and earned inspiration. Often actors must go over ground repeatedly *en route* to making permanent advances in craft and technique.

For specific kinds of work we apply exercises in movement, stretching, theatre games, improvisation, breath expansion and control. We teach students how to score texts in ways that demonstrate their analysis of character objectives, tactics and obstacles. In Shakespeare we teach methods for scanning the verse on paper, and applying that scansion to speech and diction. We also teach a “close literal paraphrase” method for understanding Shakespeare’s language using Shakespeare dictionaries and lexicons. The scansion and paraphrase methods involve written assignments at first, though their true value comes when actors are on their feet in scene study.

In lower division classes actors learn to analyze dramatic texts from an actors perspective, in particular learning how scenes are structured around a series of “beat” changes, which in most plays are sequenced to create climatic effects. For many young actors transitioning from predetermined emotions to defining and acting upon character intentions is a most significant challenge addressed in page-to-the stage exercises where students are taught to make clear acting choices at moments of transition in scenes that they have already scored in their scenes texts. In lower division courses, students learn rehearsal vocabularies and protocols, techniques for being present through movement and voice, and begin to grasp the differences required for acting on stage as different from the acting models typically acquired from watching film and television.

In many classes, we have strengthened the academic components, added more specific and varied writing opportunities, required more research with higher citation standards in a wider range of sources, and encouraged critical thinking of plays and theater as they relate to contemporary and current issues. This has broadened the scope of the training to larger, not just personal, and immediate issues in the world because they require that students draw larger connections outside the discipline itself.

The acting faculty applies many, many teaching strategies developed through our own work with many of our own teachers and directors. Two texts are standard for the lower division acting courses: Robert Benedetti’s *The Actor in You* (Pearson Education, Inc, 2014) and Jon Jory’s *The*

*Complete Tips for the Actor*, (Smith and Kraus, 2013). These texts were selected by acting faculty to address what we saw as a need to standardize vocabulary among ourselves so that students would use a common vocabulary moving from one acting course to another, regardless of the instructor.

Our most effective teaching strategy is a time honored practice of our instructors paying deep attention to the moment-to-moment work of actors as they present scenes and monologues (both written and improvised) and providing a context for both peer and instructor response. In this way students develop a critical capacity to see deeply into each other's work and to make positive suggestions on ways of improving the work. Instructors are skilled facilitators in these critiques sessions often serving as moderators between seemingly opposing critical views, thus ensuring that the presenting actors comprehend both the successful and more challenged aspects of their work, and can move forward. Instructors also provide their own observations, and work "on their feet" to prompt actors discovery of how a scene can be shaped, or heightened.

On-Camera: Acting and Production is a course introduced in the fall of 2014. For many years the program has provided only a 3-4 week chapter on film and TV acting embedded in the Acting Block. Given that acting roles in media are bread and butter for career actors, a more robust approach was necessary for training and recruitment purposes. In the fall of 2015 an experimental course Acting for the Camera was offered for the first time. It was so well received that it was made a permanent addition to the catalogue, retitled as On-Camera: Acting and Production. The course is also available for film production students in the Communications Studies Department.

The course is a workshop in on-camera acting technique with emphasis on rehearsing and performing with cameras, microphones and lights in a studio setting. It covers production industry practices, how to respond to direction, location work, and production and post-production technology. The Fundamentals of Acting and Text and Scene Study courses are prerequisites for actors taking the class.

Key Student Learning Outcomes for the course are to understand differences between stage and screen acting, understand the basic processes and technology of motion picture and television production and most importantly to become comfortable working on set with cameras, microphones, lights and other gear. The course is not chiefly a scene study course, although scene work from film, television and plays are the materials that are rehearsed and filmed. Rather, it is a nuts and bolts class aimed at introducing students acting requirements in the film industry.

Going forward we expect the On-Camera course to bolster recruitment to the Acting Program, both for majors and minors, while supporting independent student projects.

Distance and distributed education courses are not applicable to the Acting Concentration.

### **Music Theatre and the Acting Major**

The Opera and Music Theatre Program at Sonoma State is housed within the Music Department, which underwent its own program review in 2006-07 as it applied for reaccreditation to the

National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The Music Department has deferred a revision of its NASM report until 2016-17. As the Music Theatre program is housed in that department, the discussion below relies solely on the previous NASM report.

That document is available in the Music Department office (Green Music Center, Room 2040) and in the Office of Academic Affairs. A full self study of the Opera and Music Theatre Program is included therein. For the purpose of this program review we treat those elements of the Music Theatre Program that bare on the Acting Program.

Each year 3-5 acting students study concurrently in the Music Theatre Program. They typically enroll in Music Theatre Workshop, take private voice lessons (occasionally supported by scholarship funding through Theatre Arts), and are regularly cast in musical and operatic productions. These students are enrolled as acting majors and take our complete set of acting courses as part of their degree requirements. Very occasionally, voice majors take the Fundamentals of Acting course and some go on to take Text and Scene Study.

Musical and opera productions are co-produced with the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance, and are sometimes directed by Theatre Arts Acting Faculty. This season the musical was *Into the Woods*.

From time to time there have been discussions between the Theatre and Music Departments regarding the feasibility of creating a Music Theatre Concentration housed in both departments. To date those discussions have led to adjustments in scheduling so that courses required for actors do not conflict with the Music Theatre Workshop.

We view these cross-fertilizing exchanges as integral to the Acting Program, our production season, and to recruiting. We look forward to developing an even more complimentary set of collaborations, and to complete work on a cross-disciplinary Music Theatre degree.

8. General Education: not applicable to the Acting Concentration

### **STUDENT BODY (D)**

Students applying to SSU may select the Acting Concentration as their major as the program is not a designated “impacted” one. There is no audition to declare acting as a major once a student is accepted to the University. The Department does regional recruiting at high schools, and sends faculty representatives to the annual Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland and Seattle. In 2014-15 the Department was awarded a Green Music Center Academic Engagement Grant to fund theatre faculty to teach in the acting classes at Oakland School for the Arts (OSA). This was to create a lasting partnership with OSA so it might become a feeder school for SSU. Little came of it, as from our perspective the partnership was valuable to SSU, though seemed less so to OSA, perhaps because its students generally look beyond the Bay Area for college programs. Still, our students choose us, and in recent years several incoming students have conveyed that their choice was determined by the reputation of the Acting Program.



Currently there are approximately 20 acting majors in their freshman and sophomore years, another 6 in their junior year. We will be graduating 10 actors this spring. In 2016-17 we anticipate requests for enrollment in the Acting Block to reach above 16 students, including the 6 current juniors and transfer students. The current ratio of women to men in the program is 3:1. The student population is primarily White / Caucasian with a recent increase in enrollment from Latino, African-American and Asian Americans. Approximately 25% of acting majors are from non-white populations.

The acting program is large relative to the set of Theatre Arts majors, representing approximately 43% of the current cohort. The Director of the Acting Program meets with every major at the start of their careers at SSU, and periodically based on need throughout their matriculation. Students are advised of the sequence of acting and major classes, and about timely completion of other requirements, particularly in General Education. The goal is always to have all majors meet their graduation timeline. Students seem satisfied with their advising, in part because there is regular contact with the Director of the Acting Program in classes and rehearsals. He often drops in on acting classes to make announcements regarding the curriculum and auditions, or simply to observe students work in progress.

Actors are generally vocal about their concerns and always find a way to communicate concerns. The acting faculty is proactive in addressing concerns whenever possible.

In the Acting Block (and sometimes in the lower division acting classes) tension does arise between students who see themselves as “more committed” and “others” in their cohort. This tension, though not encouraged, is perhaps normal when the reasons students choose to study acting vary. Some students clearly want to become professional actors, and understand the competitive nature of the field they are entering. They want to have every edge they can get. Others study acting because they find a place of personal expression or want to become teachers, or know that they love theatre and are looking to discover where they belong. SSU is a public university, and we have a duty to accept all students who meet entrance standards.

As students progress through the acting sequence they generally choose the path that is right for them. We provide a place where such self-discovery is possible; acknowledging that some will not pursue acting after their 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Others find their way in acting and “step up” as it were. In a public institution such as SSU we are not equipped or impacted enough to cherry pick. Rather, we encourage all our students to take a disciplined approach to acting, confident that effort consistently applied teaches our students as much about *how* to learn (a skill that is applicable in all walks of life) as about becoming an actor. Still, such internal tensions need tending. The semester end group evaluations are important to that task, as are meetings between individual students that faculty sometimes moderate.

Another management concern that affects coursework arises at times that each of our productions goes into technical rehearsals and performance. Evenings are late and mornings come early for the cast of each show. Finding time to rehearse with scene partners is scarce, and attendance can sometimes be erratic. The policy is that students must still attend classes and keep up with assignments. Still, we should look at managing assignments and assigning partners to

reduce the impact of the “tech week slump” on both the casts and the rhythm of their acting courses.

There is a class where career advising is built into the Theatre Arts major. This class is called Theatre of Today. This class is an orientation for the possibilities the student has for “living and working” in the theatre after graduation. This class brings all upper-division Theatre Arts majors together to explore career goals. Guests are invited to class to give the students an idea of working in “the real world” or to familiarize them with graduate studies. Theatre of Today helps the student with writing resumes, cover letters and preparing headshots; as well as suggestions on how to ask for letters of recommendation to balance your finances after graduation. The course is intended to be both practical and inspirational.

### **FACULTY (E)**

- One full-time faculty member (Professor)
- Five part-time faculty members (Lecturers)
- Specialty instructors in ballroom dancing, stage combat and singing
- Master Teacher of Acting (Volunteer)
- Regular instructional contact with Dance and Music faculty (All ranks)
- We need to maintain a balance of both fulltime and part-time faculty
  - Need additional expertise in faculty, particularly in vocal production, articulation, IPA, dialects and accents.
  - Need growth, continuity, consistency, and advising through full-time faculty. Given one tenure-line faculty in acting, the advising of approximately 50 students (acting majors and minors) each year rests with a single person and effectiveness is compromised.

The Director of the Acting Program is the sole full-time faculty person teaching in the program. He currently serves as Director of Sustainability for the University as well, and sometimes teaches courses that are outside the acting sequence. The 4-unit course buy-out allowed for the sustainability position allows the department to hire lectures with particular expertise such as voice, on-camera and audition technique. The number of part-time faculty fluctuates depending on the classes that are offered in a particular semester. Courses offered are directly related to Block sequence and resources. These circumstances have impacted the program greatly.

Moreover, since lecture faculty, dedicated as they are, are not compensated for the work of developing learning outcomes across the program, and for coordinating materials and methods across the acting curriculum, a less than ideal “top-down” process exists. In a field coordinated effort is necessary and a curriculum that depends on collaboration a second tenure line faculty member in acting would lift the program immeasurably. We hope this hire will go forward in 2016-17.

Our courses are not a set of independently taught, discretely focused courses, but a web of student centered experiences taught by a team of dedicated professionals who guide students from beginning courses to advanced accomplishment.

One of the most positive aspects of having many part-time teachers is that the Acting Program is able to provide high levels of diversity, professionalism and expertise. Students are stimulated and challenged by diverse set of teaching styles and strategies. Still, the program cannot sustain itself on the goodwill of faculty who are not compensated for curriculum development, planning and assessment that should occur across the curriculum.

There is little structured faculty development, because the limited resources available to support faculty are earmarked for tenure-line faculty. Little is left to support the lecturers who carry so much of the teaching load.

The Director of the Acting Program has been quite involved in governance at the Department, School and University level. Until 2006 he was the long-time chair of the General Education Subcommittee and was instrumental in developing the FYE course. Now he serves as the University's Director of Sustainability. At the Department level he is a member of the season planning team. He is a member of the School Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion Committee, and served on a recent tenure-line hiring committee and hiring committees for the University's Director of Development. Part-time lecturers teach in the Freshman Learning Community course (THAR 160) and served on the Scholarship Committee.

Acting faculty members continue to receive high marks on the Standard/Student Teaching Evaluations (SETE.)

### **ASSESSMENT (G)**

- Performance—embedded assessment with constant feedback from faculty, peers and audience
- End of Semester Block evaluations and assessments—written evaluations provided by each instructor to each student
- End of Semester group evaluation where all instructors hear from the Acting Block cohort.
- Regular feedback loops between students, guided by instructors, as well as instructor to student loop are utilized as the primary assessment tool on all acting and voice classes
- Quizzes based on required reading
- Research projects based on specific plays and course content
- Written scene analysis projects work to develop text scoring, scansion and paraphrase skills
- Journals required in lower division acting classes, and some sections of the Acting Block

### **Standards and Grades**

Below are the standards for evaluation (assessment) and grading in the Acting Program. They were written originally for the Acting Block course sequence, and the principles are now used for all other courses in the Acting Program.

Our goal is to develop artists. To do so we want to train students to be lifetime learners, dedicated to their craft, the field they are training for, and to their own futures in those fields. We urge them to take responsibility for their own development, and are eager to help them do so.

Student work is assessed by the following criteria:

- Being present and on time
- Being actively engaged and fully committed to work of the class
- Individual growth in fundamentals of movement, voice and acting
- Level of ability in fundamentals of movement, voice and acting

**Being present:** Students should be present every day and able to work in class to her/his top capacity. Course design builds exercise upon exercise, skill upon skill leading to an increase of individual ability to bring an appropriate and artistically resonant stage life to a performance, both physically and vocally. A missed day represents a missed opportunity, and a missed link in process building.

**Timeliness:** To support this goal, students are expected to be in the classroom and ready to work at 9:30 AM. If students arrive later than 9:40 they are not allowed to take that days movement / vocal foundation work, or to attend the acting section that begins at 10:30. If students arrive between 9:30 and 9:40 they will be counted as late. We believe these guidelines are in the best interest of the students' physical well being, as classes are designed to progress gradually and intelligently from the start of each class period. They are also in the best interest of the attention and commitment of peers.

While these standards on paper may seem overly tough, experience has proved that when these standards are consistently applied, attendance improves, as do participation, collegiality and student progress.

**Being actively engaged and fully committed to work of the class:** The standards for these criteria are based on faculty assessment of how well students

- Leave behind what is past or future, and engage fully in the present moment in class
- Pay attention
- Bring an attitude of engagement and commitment to one another
- Receive information with openness
- Process information fully - sensing, feeling and thinking
- Act with full commitment and follow through
- Enjoy their work: there is real pleasure to be found in committed, even difficult work that leads to positive results

**Growth:** Evaluations forms that are distributed every semester chronicle the distance a student travels from the starting point of the class to its conclusion based on increased comprehension ideas, improvement of skills, and development of personal artistry.

**Ability:** Evaluations forms that are distributed every semester document students level of actual achievement concerning comprehension, skills, and artistry.

Acting faculty provide grading particulars for actors as requested and based on specific assignments. The Director of the Acting Program based primarily on classroom contact hours with students averages the grades from each instructor. Absences and lateness are considered after inputs are averaged to determine a final grade for each semester. We believe that grades are

a tool for measurement, not the thing being measured. Our experience shows that when students work well, their grades will reflect their work and progress.

In the Acting Block a B- or better is expected for continuation in the sequence, except in unusual circumstances. Our grading standards are:

A = excellent work    B = good work    C = average work    D= poor work    F = failing.

Students are given the opportunity to meet individually with instructors at mid-semester to discuss their progress, and to voice questions, concerns and perceptions of how they feel they are doing. This opens a conversation as to how students might best approach their work in the second half of the semester. At the end of the each semester, students have another opportunity to meet with instructors to discuss how the semester's work has gone, and to identify directions students may want to be headed in the subsequent semester. At this time students also complete Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) that include responses to a range of standard questions that are averaged by SSU Office of Institutional Research.

### **Evaluation**

We believe that grades and evaluations are two very different assessment tools. A grade is a summative statement about a student's overall output in relationship to scene work, assignments and requirements. Evaluations (both individual and group) are periodic reviews of students' capacities and growth. Thus a student can be working quite diligently on certain aspects of the actor's craft and earn a high semester-end grade and yet see a low assessment in certain areas such as "Demonstrates ability to play off and respond to scene partners and given circumstances of the scene". The grade reflects a student's output and commitment toward process and skill development. Attendance, timely completion of assignments, and achievement in quantifiable areas (quizzes, research projects, paraphrase and scansion, scoring texts into relevant beats) are applied against grading standards. The evaluation provides critical feedback that validates growth or sets targets for future growth.

Questions we consider in the evaluation are:

- Has the actor changed?
- Can the actor collaborate?
- Is s/he learning to depict real behavior?
- Is the actor's vocal and physical instrument developing at an acceptable pace?
- Is there an estrangement between the actor and the character?
- Would we want to cast the actor, or recommend him for a role?

### **Other considerations**

Theatre education is a broad field because its subject matter is the problems of being human. Although we have developed course sequences, we also look to revise as we learn more about our own efforts and the needs of our students.

We try to instill in our acting students a sense that the training here is not an endpoint, rather it is an introduction to being a good actor and perhaps a great artist. We acknowledge that the acting processes we offer will affect each student differently, and we encourage students to access their own past experiences, and to gain new windows on the world through the kinds of non-theatre

classes they take and the kinds of work and living situations they encounter now and in the future.

We stress that a character starts with the actors self—but it doesn't end there. Because each individual is limited by (among many factors) their background and personal experiences we therefore try to teach actors to become character actors who are capable of transformation. Through the act of imagination, the actor can reach beyond her/ his personal limitations and make audiences believe the character is created role distinct from the actor playing it, with a different past, hopes, posture, voice, set of gestures and a different set of motivations. She has transformed herself to another being temporarily inhabiting another world.

Through our training methods we continually try to exercise and build the actors imaginations like muscles, believing that if imaginations are used they will grow, and when they are ignored, sat upon, or overly directed, they will atrophy. We consciously develop the actors spirits and help them feel important to society by helping them to understand there are elements to training that are more important than theatre games and pleasing others. At the same time we acknowledge and teach that the sense of play leads to a sense of purpose, and without the pleasure of the work there can be no true expression.

We try to teach that becoming a good actor is a joyous process and that some growing pain is normal and necessary. Resistance is part of the growth process. Discovery of the psychic source inherent to all artists involves confronting personal past and present fear, and coming into contact with ones fears, and working through them is the energy of creativity and responsiveness.

We teach respect for the authority of teachers and directors. We know the value that our own teachers and directors had for us. We try to teach this respect by respecting our students, and by supporting their successes as well as risk-taking-even when it is not successful. Only in risk does an actor find true opportunities for discovery and growth. We acknowledge that our students' success adds life and value to our own work, and to the acting profession as a whole, both of which we love and respect.

## **ACTION PLAN (H)<sup>7</sup>**

Proposed program revisions

### A. Teaching-learning

- Complete tenure track hire in Voice and Movement (2016-17)
- Complete Acting Program revision (2016-17), implement in 2017-16

### B. Course Content

- Lower division Movement for Actors course
- New courses needed to supplement and improve the program
- Connect more directly the contemporary plays read for Contemporary Plays and Race, Gender and Performance courses with the Directing Workshop class. In a given semester, several students will overlap in the two classes. As these students read contemporary plays, they get excited in their discussions, and frequently want to see how the plays work off the book and on the stage. They want the

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<sup>7</sup> Based on findings and recommendations of this Program Review this action plan will be adjusted.

opportunity to work scenes. It could be a successful link to have a common assignment between the classes.

- Discrete courses in Stage Combat and Social Dance Styles, as envisioned in the program revision
- Advanced Speech course (IPA, Dialects, Accents)

#### C. Learning Objectives

- Technology—faculty development in this area to increase student learning. Resources for a video room where acting for the camera can be institutionalized.
- More specific learning objectives in the Acting Block and Foundations.

D. Recruitment and Mentoring- Better connection with the local acting community specifically at Santa Rosa Junior College and other local high schools.

#### E. Assessment

Our assessments as currently executed, particularly with the addition of the CRP Method in classroom critique of scene work, are robust, appropriate, and adequate.

F. Advising and mentoring in the major, in GE (if applicable)- Advising and mentoring in the Acting Program is comprehensive and successful.

#### G. Other areas: facilities

At the time of the Music Departments move into the GMC (2011) Ives Hall Room 119 was repurposed as the principle studio classroom for acting and directing classes, as well as rehearsals for productions. It is occasionally used as a performance venue. The change allowed the smaller Ives 76 studio to become a permanent black-box performance venue where annually at least two main-stage productions are mounted.

- Room 119 has a serious problem with temperature control. Often the room is extremely cold or overly warm. There is no independent thermostat in the room. Oddly, temperatures in the room are often at great variance with the rest of Ives Hall.
- Improved and regular maintenance of Ives 119, currently our primary acting studio. The floor needs weekly sweeping and mopping.
- Outside groups regularly use Ives 119 and often violate “no food” policy in the room. On such occasions acting students must do clean up duty just to start classes or rehearsals.

### **DANCE CONCENTRATION SELF STUDY (B)**

Sonoma State University’s Dance Program is committed to offering contemporary approaches to dance with special attention to the integration of mind, body and spirit.

#### **We aim to:**

- Develop and expand the technical skills and artistry of a dancer
- Nurture performance skills with a wide range of aesthetic approaches and processes

- Cultivate dance as an art form founded in the intelligence and joy of human movement
- Inspire and develop dance artists as creators as well as interpreters of meaningful work for these times

**We offer:**

- B. A. in Theatre with a concentration in Dance, with innovative curriculum, including performance criticism, dance history, choreography, performance ensemble, contemporary dance, ballet, jazz, contact improvisation, and hip hop dance styles
- Close connection with supportive faculty, as well as workshops and classes with professional guest artists
- Ample opportunities to dance, choreograph, collaborate, and perform from freshman to senior year
- Class sizes that allow for personal attention and individual feedback
- A community of dancers that support one another
- Performing Arts/Dance scholarships available through the endowed funds
- Professional guest artists and companies who stage repertoire or create original work on SSU dance students supported by the Evert B. Person Endowment Fund
- State-of-the-art facilities including 2 dance studios with spring hardwood floors, 475 seat proscenium theatre, outdoor sites and studio performance spaces
- Opportunities to collaborate with musicians, actors, singers, and technicians
- Regular involvement and attendance in March with ACDA (American College Dance Association)
- Foundations for performance or professional track, graduate studies, creative work, teaching or a life lived with the love of dance

1. Learning Objectives

- To encourage the craft and artistry of dance for the recreational and professional dancer
- To encourage a better understanding of the human body through dance technique, anatomy and somatic disciplines
- To foster an appreciation and understanding of all dance forms
- To build an atmosphere of group learning and exchange with observation, support, question and reflection
- To provide analytical tools for student self-evaluation in technique and performance
- To present the student with skills and perspectives of reading, analysis, and communication necessary for understanding the artists craft and choreographic philosophies as well as providing the student with a clear understanding of dance history
- To articulate formal thoughts in relationship to artistic work and recognize perhaps a particular viewpoint: political, aesthetic, cultural, moral, and abstract
- To identify ground-breaking choreographic investigations in its historical context
- To construct the socio-political climate of a particular era and identify the art it created.
- To recognize and examine the changing aesthetics and ideologies of the art form



- To cultivate a collaborative working relationship with other Theatre Arts majors; actors, technicians, writers
- To support an experimental and bold approach to studying and creating dance
- To foster an aesthetic appreciation of dance
- To develop technical skill and artistry in a dancer
- To view, write and speak about the art of dance
- To be able to articulate and facilitate Liz Leman's Critical Response Process, constructive tool for giving and receiving feedback.  
<http://www.lizlerman.com/crpLL.html>

2. Rationale: For a liberal arts education an appreciation of art and more specifically dance is desired to help students pursue dance professionally after graduation. Hip-hop, jazz, ballet, somatic work done in Foundations and Dances of the World all offer diverse perspectives.

3. Dissemination of learning goals to students: Class syllabi, class meetings, production meetings, rehearsals, performances, course catalog descriptions, department web site:  
<http://www.sonoma.edu/theatreanddance/>

4. Structuring of curriculum to reach expected outcomes

### **Intermediate/Advanced Dance Block (THAR 310/410 A and B)**

Originally implemented as an experimental class in 1998, The Dance Block (THAR 310/410 A and B) provides the junior/senior Theatre Arts majors (Dance Concentration) with a more intensive training ground for their discipline. It now provides a rigorous, demanding, professionally orientated class without a conservatory feel. It fits between a broad liberal arts degree in dance and a conservatory training in dance.

The Block class meets Monday thru Thursday from 9:30-11:50. The Theatre Arts majors from the Acting and Dance Concentrations meet from 9:30-10:20 twice a week in a portion of the class called Foundations. The goal of this class is to find common ground in training with actors and dancers. Foundations has been successful in the past because it has helped the students of each concentration find common language. This portion of Block was designed to foster an environment where an appreciation for each other's work can occur. The Theatre Arts majors are actively working together in the creative process twice a week. This facilitates a stronger connection among the students and builds a broader sense of a theatrical community. The department aspires to move the Theatre Arts curriculum into the 21st century and thus has begun to question, analyze and discuss the significance of the Block in this updated/desired curriculum. An Action Item after the Program Review is finished would be to begin to work on a Program Revision, perhaps both at a department level and at the dance program level.

Since Dance Block has been instituted into the Theatre Arts major, other dance specific classes have been eliminated. Therefore some of the learning goals for dance are being compromised. The two classes that were deleted were Music for Dance and Dance Anatomy. To maintain their importance in a students dance education they are folded into the Dance Block and into Choreography III. But we question whether it is being taught thoroughly enough. The material is not being covered in as much depth as before. A core philosophy in the Dance Concentration is

an anatomical understanding of the human body; regardless of what career path the students follow.

With the two classes folded into other courses, the material is disseminated in a more experiential way, perhaps not necessarily offering concrete learning and testing outcomes. Ideally it would be great to have both a lecture and experiential component to both courses (Music for Dance and Dance Anatomy.) It would be ideal to have both classes back in the Dance Concentration and still continue with the Dance Block. If this were to occur there would have to be a retooling of the Dance Concentration so that the units needed for graduation would not shift too dramatically. This perhaps would bring up some budgetary concerns as well.

In the Dance Block, as in all our dance technique classes, attendance is required. The students must be physically accountable—which means showing up, being 100% present in each moment. We trust that this philosophy will serve the students in anything they do in the future. The Dance Block allows the dancer an opportunity to work every day on/in their craft. This rigor is inherent in the arts and helps the student become, ideally, a self-disciplined and contributing citizen of the world.

Dance is a social art. Working with people and being a member of a community is vital. In the Dance Block with support from each other and the faculty, the students work to develop a community—a pre-professional learning community. In the Dance Block students are encouraged to solve problems and create together. By supporting one another's diverse interests we hope to be fostering well-rounded citizens. Sonoma State University's mission of creating a community is inherently built into the Dance Block. And perhaps the most significant outcome of the Dance Block is that the community continues past the clock time.

Since initiating the Dance Block, it seems more students are entering the professional dance field as a performer and/or teacher as well as continuing their studies in graduate school. Because of the Dance Block we feel the dance students are more prepared, competent, and confident. The Dance Block also generates excitement, which helps with recruitment in the freshmen and sophomore classes. The energy and enticement of the Dance Block trickles down through the major. For the lower classman there is incentive to get ready for the Dance Block—they must work hard, be committed and grow artistically.

- Intermediate and Advanced Dance Block (THAR 310/410 A and B)—junior and senior years, 4 semesters, two and one half hours four days a week in the discipline of dance. See above description.
- A focus on dance history, with Introduction to the History of Drama and Dance (THAR 202 and THAR 203), History of Dance (THAR 371A and THAR 371B) courses; a focus on performance analysis and criticism with Theatre in Action a focus on career advising with Theatre of Today.
- Freshmen and sophomore Theatre Arts majors (Dance Concentration) are required to take Contemporary Dance Levels I and II (THAR 210 and 211) before they move into the Dance Block.

- Theatre Arts majors (Dance Concentration) are also required to take three levels of Choreography (THAR 240, 245, 345.) Each level is offered for a full semester. This helps support the craft and artistry of dance.
- Theatre Arts majors (Dance Concentration) are required to take Stagecraft (THAR 143A) and two technical theatre courses, Costumes, Design or Lighting (THAR 143B, 144A and B.) This supports the holistic approach to making theatre that the department strives for and a deeper understanding of what the art of dance entails.
- We believe our students get ample opportunities to perform. Each semester Dance Ensemble (THAR 301) is offered. The fall concert consists of student choreographed and student performed work. This helps in developing the student's artistic voice, generating excitement in the program as well as serving as an excellent recruiting tool. In the spring the students audition to be part of Spring Dance, which is choreographed by Theatre Arts faculty and Guest Artists. This Guest Artist program works on both a local and national level. We often have Bay Area dance artists creating work, which gives the student contact with their local dance community. We also have visiting artists that come from New York City, Seattle, Utah, Washington DC, New Jersey, etc. This gives the students an opportunity to experience the dance that is being created outside of the Bay Area. Both are valid and important parts of their dance education. Both THAR 301s give the students plenty of opportunities to both choreograph and perform.
- Electives offered are Dance Fundamentals (THAR 110), Dance Styles: Hip Hop (THAR 115), Dance Styles: Contact Improvisation (THAR 115), Dance Styles: Jazz (THAR 115), Ballet I and II (THAR 161, THAR 261.) These classes are quite significant, because they are considered service classes to the university as well as providing diverse styles for the dance students, an important foundation for their training. This is the dance programs connection to the greater university community. The Dance Program has not been unable to offer Contact Improvisation for over ten years now. It is now often embedded in the Foundations portion of Block and/or in the Choreography courses.
- Dance for Children (THAR 470) is an upper division class primarily serving students who are interested in teaching careers. This class due to budget constraints has not been offered since 2011. The department does not foresee it coming back anytime soon.

5. There is a daily assessment that is inherent in both dance technique and choreography classes. Students are constantly given feedback on expected outcomes on a daily basis. The student's performances give physical demonstration to the successes of the program. Exams, quizzes, class projects, research papers, journals, mid-semester evaluations, plus student evaluations give written documentation of perceived outcomes.

6. Not Applicable

7. Not Applicable

8. Description of GE courses and how these meet the GE area criteria.

Dances of the World (THAR 373) is an upper division General Education class satisfying the C-4 category of the GE requirements: Comparative Perspectives and Foreign Languages. This class due to budget constraints has not been offered since 2012. Again the department does not foresee

this course being offered anytime soon. This class looked at selected dances from other cultures in order to examine the relationship between culture and dance and to more fully understand and appreciate the differences between diverse cultures and the common ground we share through the art of dance. The class tended to attract a diverse student body, a proportionally higher number of foreign students and students with culturally diverse backgrounds than the campus norm. This innate diversity within the classroom provided an opportunity to get to know first hand about different cultural traditions through dance. It created a natural cauldron to identify Eurocentric patterns in dance in regards to race, class and gender by listening to experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is disappointing that this class has not been offered, due to budget constraints, in over four years.

### **STUDENT BODY (D)**

1. The Dance Concentration, as predicted, is primarily made up of young (18-22 years of age) female students. The program works tirelessly to try to encourage men to participate in dance. At the moment we have more men in the dance program than we have had in twelve years. The classes that often attract the male student are hip-hop and dance fundamentals. From these classes, we recruit and encourage men to continue participation in the dance program. We try to offer a broad perspective of dance—the idea of dance as an art form, with integrity—primed to express contemporary ideas and cultures. We strive to expand the students’ knowledge of dance and hope that they engage in a deeper understanding of its power. We support an investigation into movement so that the student can explore and begin to develop their own artistic voice. The dance program currently has 21 majors and 14 minors. There is no audition to declare dance as a major once a student is accepted to the University.

For advising, the full-time dance faculty members meet with every major and most minors each semester to have a conversation about what works best for them. The faculty members not only guide them in the major/minor, but also within the General Education requirements. The dance program is quite small and intimate and the faculty sees the majors on a daily basis. Because of this we believe we have quality contact with them. We know what is going on, what classes they are taking, what jobs they hold off campus and any struggles or successes that are occurring.

The student body is quite pro-active—if they are not getting what they need they voice their concerns. If they believe the standards of their classes or the program in general are being compromised, if their needs are not getting met, they are open and vocal about their issues. The faculty conduct quick “check-ins” on a daily basis in the Dance Block, Choreography and Ensemble courses. The dance program is a family, with unconditional acceptance—and we encourage the students to talk about anything they need.

We believe the dance program is pro-student, working to educate, support and challenge the dancer. Also inherent in dance is discipline; the students are advised of the rigor and hard work needed to be successful in the art form. Because of this discipline the students show up and are active participants in the creative process—whether in a lecture class, studio class, rehearsal or performance. You must physically be in a dance class to get the material or the lesson of the day, you can’t get notes about it from a friend and you can’t download it off of the internet. It is a social discipline that requires attendance in the studio. This is one way that we are able to track

and advise our students, because of the extensive number of contact hours on a weekly basis. We see them everyday and we hear from them everyday. We believe this is why we rarely lose majors and have a good graduation rate.

There is a class where advising is built into the Theatre Arts major. This class is called Theatre of Today. This class is an orientation for the possibilities the student has for “living and working” in the theatre after graduation. This class brings all upper-division Theatre Arts majors together to explore career goals. Guests are invited to class to give the students an idea of working in “the real world” or to familiarize them with graduate studies. Theatre of Today helps the student with writing resumes, cover letters and preparing headshots; as well as suggestions on how to ask for letters of recommendation to balance your finances after graduation. The course is both practical and inspirational.

### **FACULTY (E)**

1. The dance program has two full-time dance faculty, including a full professor and a recently hired assistant professor who joined the faculty in the fall of 2015. The number of part-time faculty fluctuates depending on the classes that are offered in a particular semester, it ranges between 6-8 part-time instructors per semester. The classes offered are directly related to resources. Currently one of our tenured full time faculty member is the chair of the department. The other tenure track faculty member has a “new hire” course release. Due to these two circumstances much of the instruction in the concentration has been by part-time faculty.

The positive aspect of having many part-time teachers is that the concentration is able to provide high levels of diversity, professionalism and expertise. The students are being stimulated and challenged by all the various movement styles being taught. The part-time instructors have little burnout because their workload, at least at SSU, is manageable.

The Dance Program is delighted to have a new tenure track faculty member who joined the department in August 2015. Previously a part-time faculty member this new hire was able to jump right into the department and program and has taken on teaching, advising, recruiting and is instrumental in the day-to-day decisions of the dance program. Both full time faculty in dance have begun to discuss a Dance Program Revision and aspire to move the dance program into the 21st century and respond better to who our student body currently is and will be. Having another full time faculty member in the Dance Program offers great stability, clearer learning outcomes, and curricular standards in the major.

a. Pedagogy: There is little structured faculty development, because there are few resources to support this type of program. Much of the faculty development is done by faculty on their own with their own money. This ranges from taking continuing education courses to working one-on-one with specialist in their field, to participating in workshops, to sitting in on colleagues classes in the department and the university. Because the full-time dance faculty teach a diverse number of classes, many different hats are worn. This requires a great deal of knowledge and research as one prepares to enter a class with little experience. There is a great deal of advising and mentoring among the dance faculty, particularly for junior faculty. There is always a sense of support, encouragement, inspiration and knowledge generously handed out. The full-time dance faculty participates every year in the American College Dance West Region. This is a 4-day

dance conference usually in March. This conference is a great resource for networking, recruiting, student and faculty development. The travel, room and registration are supported by the Department and School of Arts and Humanities Professional Development Fund. Since the departments last Self-Study there has been a significant increase in faculty development funds at the university level. Since 2008, the dance faculty have received full funding for participation, travel, room and registration to ACDA's West Region Conference. Over the last four ACDA West Region Conferences, the SSU Dance Program has been selected four times for participation in the Gala Concert. This year SSU student Hannah Ingwerson's dance *For Example* was selected to represent the 2016 West Region at the American College Dance Associations (ACDA) National Conference at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, June 7-12, 2016. This is an incredible honor and feat for a Dance Program that is so small.

Many instructors have taken advantage of the Faculty Center. This center, offers a myriad of workshops pertaining to academic excellence.

b. Participation in governance: The dance faculty is quite involved in governance at the Department, School and University level. Positions are held at the University level in the: Educational Policy Committee, Arts & Humanities Curriculum Committee, Arts & Humanities Chairs/Deans Council, International Study Abroad Interview Committee, GMC Faculty Vision Committee, Advisors for the two student clubs, Blue Baronz and the Modern Dance Society; and at the Department level in the: Person Scholarship Committee, Season Planning Committee, Library Liaison, Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion Committees, Cumulative Review Committee, hiring committees, end of year part-time faculty evaluations, etc.

c. Professional Contributions: Both of the full-time dance faculty members continue to receive high marks on the Standard/Student Teaching Evaluations (SETE). The two full-time dance faculty members participate and teach annually at the American College Dance Associations West Region Conference. Kristen Daley, Professor and dance program director is a founding member of SoCo Dance Theatre, a professional multi-generational dance company based in Sonoma County. She has performed, taught and presented her work in Sonoma County, San Francisco, Southern California, Seattle, WA, and Scottsdale, AZ within the last five years. Christine Cali, Assistant Professor runs a professional dance company based in San Francisco, CALI & CO and has presented her work and performed in the Bay Area and around the country. Many of our part-time lecturers have their own successful dance companies and are award winning choreographers and teachers. Both our part-time and full-time dance faculty continue to perform, choreograph and teach locally, nationally and internationally.

## **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES (F)**

The Spring Dance Concert is performed in Person Theatre for a two-week run in April or May almost every spring semester. Performing for two-weeks on such a professional stage is a wonderful learning experience for the dance students. Having the chance to run their show more than three or four times allows the students a chance to deepen their performance skills in front of a live audience and discover a level of artistry not as readily available in just a weekend long show. Person Theatre offers a more professional experience, not just in the dancing, but also with the students contact in other areas of the production. The costumes, lights, sound and in some

cases scenery are created by a wonderful professional staff and creative Theatre Arts students. The Fall Dance Concert was relocated to Person Theatre in 2010. This has been quite a successful change. Prior to 2010 the show was performed in PE1, which had limited seating and many students, friends and families were turned away at the door. Since Fall Dance is so inclusive, diverse in styles and has anywhere from 50-60 performers the show currently comes close to selling out, each night 300-350 people attend the concerts. Fall Dance for our students is definitely a highlight of their year whether their role is as a performer, choreographer or both. The sense of pride, responsibility, artistic ownership they feel is an important part of their education at SSU.

### 3. Describe and Assess: Human Resources

[See section F below]

### **ASSESSMENT (G)**

- Performance—embedded assessment with constant feedback from faculty, peers and audience
- End of Semester Block evaluations and assessments—one-on-ones with student and all Block instructors—15-20 minutes per student
- Choreography I and II has a middle of the semester one-on-one feedback session—with each student and the instructor of record, students often complete self-assessment forms
- Implementation of Liz Leman’s *Critical Response Process*, a practical, informative and constructive tool used for giving and receiving feedback.
- Many of the technique classes also do a mid-semester written informal evaluation---three questions asked—What is working? What isn’t working? What do you want to work on in class that hasn’t been addressed?
- Constant feedback in dance technique and choreography classes
- Regular feedback loops between students, guided by instructors, as well as instructor to student loop are utilized as the primary assessment tool on all acting and voice classes
- Periodic quizzes based on required reading
- Research projects based on specific course content
- Journals required in lower division dance classes and in the Dance Block
- Dance students self-produce senior dance projects, not a requirement of the major, but we have had six senior dance projects over the last three years (2014-2016).
- Dance students have the opportunity to choreograph their own work for presentation in the Fall Dance Concert in Person Theatre to audiences of 200-300.

### **CHANGES IMPLEMENTED AFTER 2008 PROGRAM REVIEW**

#### 1. Program Changes

##### a. Teaching-Learning

- Suggested in 2008: Expand the use of technology in Choreography, Dance Technique classes so the program stays current with contemporary dance trends.
  - Currently: All choreography projects are filmed and often posted on Moodle or individual instructors I-pads or private YouTube channel. Dances that are created for main-stage productions are filmed and easily accessible on the department’s private YouTube channel.

- Suggested in 2008: Expand video library—find the resources to update old videos and purchase new videos/DVDs.
    - Currently: Not necessary as so many videos are available on YouTube.
  - Suggested in 2008: Request for a range of musical voices in the dance program—in 2008 the dance program had only one accompanist. More accompanists on staff would add diversity to the program.
    - Currently: The dance program has at the moment 3-4 dance accompanists which adds diversity to the program and offers a range of musical voices.
  - Suggested in 2008: Need for a range of teaching styles and different artists or teachers—not just one or two voices (two full-time instructors in dance)—two voices do not provide a complete learning experience offering different perspectives.
    - Currently: The dance program has a diverse and wide range of teaching styles offered and discipline specific instructors that add different perspectives. The program has anywhere from 8-10 instructors during an academic year with expertise in Ballet, Jazz, Hip-Hop, Contact Improvisation, Performance Criticism
- b. Course Content
- Suggested in 2008: Implement a kinetic component to the dance history course.
    - Currently: All dance history courses (THAR 160, 202, 203, 371A and 371B) have a kinetic component that begins to address embodied intelligence—learning through the physical body— the idea of uniting and teaching to the body, mind and spirit.
  - Suggested in 2008: New courses needed to supplement and improve the program
    1. Anatomy for Dancers, embedded in Foundations, still desire a stand alone course
    2. Music for Dancers, this class has not been created or addressed
    3. Choreography IV, this class has not been created, due to resource neutral program revisions needs, it is unlikely that this course can/will be created
    4. Improvisation, this is embedded more specifically in all choreography courses and Foundations course
    - Currently: None of these courses are offered.
  - Suggested in 2008: General Education course that links a beginning dance technique class with a history class. Lecture class with an activity component. In the General Education curriculum as it stands in the university there is no required kinetic component. If we are trying to educate the whole student, attention to movement must be addressed. Value embodied intelligence—learning through the physical body— the idea of uniting and teaching to the body, mind and spirit.
    - Currently: THAR 160 was created three years ago. This course is a year-long GE course that looks at the Artistic Process. THAR 160 has a movement/dance class scheduled every fall semester, and several improvisational assignments that are beginning to address kinetic/embodied intelligence.
  - Suggested in 2008: Implement different levels of ballet, jazz and hip-hop. At the moment we have a very small offering of these classes. These classes serve the larger dance and university community.
    - Currently: Not feasible because of budget constraints. No new courses have been offered in the dance program since 2003.

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST PROGRAM REVIEW**



## GRANTS, AWARDS and GUEST ARTIST RESIDENCIES

### Green Music Center/Academic Integration Grants Awards

- *Preserves Soundscape Project*, Authors: Kristen Daley, Tony Bish, Jack Ou, Farid Farahmond, Co-Authors: Bernie Krause, Claudia Luke, 2013
- *Oakland School for the Arts Collaboration*, Author: Kristen Daley, Co-Author: Juliet Pokorny, 2013 and 2014
- *You ARE HERE Project, USA/Korea International Dance & Live Music Exchange*, Author: Kristen Daley, Co-Author, Tony Bish, Christine Cali, Matt Langlois, 2015-2016

### Sonoma County Community Foundation; Field of Interest Grant: Small Grant for the Arts

- *Preserves Soundscape Project*, Sonoma State University, Author: Michelle Covington, Advisors: Kristen Daley, Claudia Luke, 2013
- *The Cherry Orchard*, Sonoma State University, Author: Michelle Covington, Advisors: Kristen Daley, Paul Draper, Juliet Pokorny, 2013.

### Guest Artist Residencies in Dance with

- Dance Exchange, Liz Lerman, Alvin Ailey Legacy Project, AXIS Dance, SoCo Dance Theater, CALI & Co, Mark Haim, Wade Madsen, Rogelio Lopez, Risa Jaroslow, Scott Wells, Nancy Lyons, Jennifer Meek, Eric Handman

## CHANGES IN THE DANCE CURRICULUM

- Dances of the World and Dance for Children have not been offered in four years. The dance program is lacking courses in dance education pedagogy or teaching methodologies. The majority of our graduating students in dance go on to teach. The Dance Program desires courses in dance education.

## ACTION PLAN (H)<sup>8</sup>

### Proposed program revisions

#### a. Teaching-learning methods

- Re-assessment of how activities courses are weighted in the CSU system so that performing arts faculty see a reduction in student contact hours. Presently, the CSU code butts up against a lack of resources. WTUs can be adjusted but the department cannot afford to pay people the re-adjusted unit allotment.

#### b. Course Offerings

- Implement different levels of Ballet, Jazz and Hip-Hop. At the moment we have a very small offering of these classes. These classes serve the larger dance and university community

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<sup>8</sup> Based on findings and recommendations of this Program Review this action plan will be adjusted.

- Courses in Anatomy and Pedagogy should be part of the core dance curriculum offered alternate years. Ballet should be a requirement in the concentration, though it need not be offered more than two times per week
- Desire to develop more cultural diversity in curriculum...other styles with Africanist aesthetics, increase in hip-hop curriculum.
- Reassess Foundations and Block model, need Ballet Technique, Experiential Anatomy/Dancer Wellness in the curriculum.
- Summer Programs and workshops...summer intensive that is community-based resulting in a performance and critical writing component.
- Resources for a video room where dance for the camera can be implemented. Still desire a dance for camera course.

#### c. Learning Objectives

- More specific learning objectives in the Dance Block, Foundations and Choreography I, II, III
- Feedback from our 2008 PR suggested we identify a sequence over four semesters for Foundations, so each semester has a specific component—somatic work, musicality, anatomy, and improvisation. This has been done, spring foundations is anatomy and somatic work centric, fall Foundations is typically ballroom and improvisation centric. It could be disseminated to and clarified for the student better.
- Feedback from PR 2008, Choreography—make sure each class is aligned so that nothing is duplicated and all learning objectives for the three semesters are covered. More aligning could happen this will now be possible due to the new hire in the dance program. Choreography III is now music/dance specific, co-taught by dance instructor and staff accompanist/resident composer in the department.

#### d. Recruitment and Mentoring

- In 2008 one of our action items was a better connection with the local dance community specifically the Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa Art Quest and other local high schools. Since then dance faculty in the program have taught master classes at ArtQuest and at various Sonoma County high schools for High School Dance Festivals. One faculty member created a “Day of Dance” with her professional dance company, SoCo Dance Theatre and the THAR department. Three high school dance programs, SRHS ArtQuest, Maria Carillo and El Molino visited campus for master classes in dance technique and choreography and then all three schools performed on Person Stage that evening. The Dance Program would like to create a better connection with Santa Rosa Junior College, perhaps looking to a creative collaboration in Spring 2018 or 2019.
- The Dance Program would like to ramp up its recruitment and aspires to work on strategies to build the program.

#### e. Assessment

- The Dance Program would like to create a hard-copy assessment tool and rubric that can go along with the one-on-one Block evaluations. The Dance Program would also like to request, with help from the university, more formal training in assessment strategies and rubrics particular to the performing arts.

f. Advising and mentoring in the major, in GE (if applicable)

g. Other areas

- According to the National Association of Schools of Dance, a minimum of two large dance studios should be provided in a dance program. I cite the NASD studio specifications below (see NASD handbook online, p. 56)
  - *g. An adequate dance studio meets or exceeds the following specifications: (1) Unobstructed space, providing a minimum of 2400 square feet overall, and Providing a minimum of 100 square feet per dancer; (2) Ceiling height of at least 15 feet; (3) Floors with the necessary resilience for dance (i.e., sprung or floating floor) and with surfacing appropriate to the nature of the dance activity; (4) Adequate fenestration, lighting, acoustical ambiance, and ventilation; (5) Adequate mirrors and barres; (6) Adequate locker rooms, showers, drinking fountains, restrooms, and access to first aid*

The Dance Program would like to grow. The program has not been able to offer any new courses since 2003, and has actually lost three courses since that time. We have a robust program with committed, dedicated and hard-working students. The dance faculty would like to give the students more, so that they are prepared for a life of dance in the 21st century.

Since it is clear that allocation will not dramatically increase the only way to change, innovate and hopefully grow is through curricular revision. This would mean that some courses currently required for a dance major might cease to exist or might get folded into another course. Re-examining course requirements with attention to the university climate, student body and the 21st maker model would benefit the dance program. The dance program has had many successes since the last PR review was written, both on a regional and national level. The program has graduated students who have gone on to pursue dance as a career either in performing or teaching or both. We are confident in our teaching, but would welcome more growth and innovation through curricular revisions.

### **TECHNICAL THEATRE PROGRAM SELF STUDY (B)**

#### **We aim to:**

- Develop collaborative artist/entertainers
- Develop and expand the craftsmanship and technique of each student
- Expose students to multiple facets of the theatrical experience
- Develop each students written, verbal, and visual communication skills

#### **We offer:**

- B. A. in Theatre with a concentration in Technical Theatre
- Main stage and studio design opportunities in sets, lighting, costumes, and sound
- Technical opportunities in

- Light and sound board computer programming and operation
- Stage management
- Technical direction
- Stage carpentry and painting
- Costume construction
  - Property construction
  - Stage electricity
- Close connection with supportive faculty
- Class size that allow for personal attention and individual feedback
- Scholarships in technical theatre available through the Evert B. Person Endowment
- Professional guest artists and company residencies who stage repertoire or create original work at SSU, supported by the Person Endowment Fund
- Training in performance venues that includes a state-of-the-art 475 seat proscenium theatre, 200-seat auditorium, outdoor amphitheater, a 50-seat black box studio, and a dance studio
- Opportunities to collaborate with musicians, actors, singers, and dancers
- A foundation for professional careers, graduate studies, creative work, and teaching careers

### **Curriculum:**

During the first two years technical students take 15 units of instruction including sets, lights, costumes, and stagecraft and stage management. Through the Stagecraft course, students crew a main stage show running lights, sound properties, sets or costumes. The Stage Management (THAR 230/231) course sequence students are required to manage or assistant manage a main stage show. Students learn to create immediately by doing three theoretical designs in Sets Lights and Costumes. Introduction to the History of Drama and Dance, Acting Fundamentals and Dance Fundamentals round out the freshman and sophomore years. Students may substitute advanced courses in dance if the technical student has permission of dance instructors. Introductory drawing classes Art Fundamentals (ART 101 and 102), offered through the Art Studio Program in the Art Department are suggested. However, since the Studio Arts remains impacted a full cross-listed departmental sharing is not available at this time. Technical students are able to enroll in these courses on a “seat available” basis.

Several courses are missing from our program. The most urgent need is for a course in technical direction, which would help build advanced shop skills such as welding and rigging. It would also teach skills in budgeting, procurement and the management of production builds (sets, props, light, sound.) The department owns the necessary equipment to mount such a course, but lacks the funding needed to create a regular course. Students working on projects that could be integrated into productions would enhance the department. Absent new funding, the Department would need to rotate existing courses in technical theatre. Such rotation is currently deemed as a barrier to the matriculation of all theatre majors because courses in the THAR 143-144 sequence are requirements for all theatre arts majors in dance, acting, technical theatre and theatre studies.

Of the 48 units required for a Technical Theatre Concentration, 23 are taken in a technical major students junior and senior years.

Core to the upper division courses is Design for the Stage (THAR 344A/B.) In the junior and senior years this design and practicum course Technical Production (THAR 303) are coupled with a Foundations (THAR 321) course in theatre tech/design. Five years ago the technical concentration was removed from the Foundations portion of the Block, as the department was not successful in finding ways to integrate the movement and voice work that dominated Foundations with the drawing and building foundational needs of tech majors. Now tech students work separately on skills that include: painting (watercolor, acrylic, ink, and airbrush), sewing, hand and CAD drafting, live drawing (hands and feet), digital design and programming (CAD, Photoshop, QLab) welding, lathe turning, sculpting, modeling, and rendering. We are looking to add a photography assignment in the coming semester (fall 2016).

History of Ornament (THAR 444) strengthens the students period design knowledge. Finally, Advanced Block (THAR 421) and Coordinated Projects (THAR 480) complete the students' theatrical experience by auditioning with their portfolio for design opportunities inside the Departments main stage shows.

Theatre in Action, and Directing Workshop develop students' theatrical vocabulary, understanding of collaborative process and performance analysis and criticism. Theatre of Today focuses on career advising, featuring resume writing and career choices and guest speakers currently working in the profession.

### **Disseminating learning goals to students**

Since the last program review, Student Learning Outcomes were added to all technical course syllabi. An achievement relative to SLOs is demonstrated through semester end portfolio presentations to technical and design theatre faculty, and is evaluated for their strengths and weaknesses. The critiques then form the basis for student foci in subsequent to build on strengths and address areas of challenge.

Regular Theatre Arts faculty and season planning meetings, as well and bi-annual retreats have produced wonderful adjustments to the curriculum. The current program review is a prime time to adjust and redefine the curriculum.

In the last program review the shops personnel wished for students to put more time in the scene and costume shops building and working on shows. Since then, we have doubled the time in which students enrolled in the Stagecraft course contribute to the making of production elements in the scene and costume shops. We increased class time dedicated to f the Advance Technical Design course for painting and building of main stage productions to 8 classes of 2.5 hours each semester. We continued to participate on one "hang and focus" of lights for production each year. Increasingly these courses are becoming more practical and therefore less theoretical.

While students do gain invaluable hands-on experience in service of the department's productions, the department wonders if a proper balance is lost. Or, is the technical theatre program emerging as a dedicated concentration in the technical aspects of theatre production since we have not been able to hire a tenure track faculty dedicated to design and aesthetics.

The most accepted criticism of the Technical Concentration is that the students need to hear more than one voice, giving the Technical / Design majors multiple viewpoints. In the last program review, outside reviews both argued for design additional faculty (one suggested a full Tenure Track hire, the other suggested at least .5 position).

The Director of the Technical Concentration would like to see a new tenure track hire sound and light design. Should funding materialize for a design hire, the full department faculty would consider carefully the areas where this hire could most address this program deficit as well as how the technical concentration could best leverage its current strengths to improve recruitment and student engagement, particularly in the design aspects of the program.

In any case, a new position in design would complement and support all concentrations inside the Department and throughout the School.

Since the last program review, the tech program has taken steps to improve design instruction by offering an average of about one course per semester that is taught by lectures. Part time faculty has added greatly to the technical faculty pedagogy and design expertise. However, because of limited funding allocation for new classes it has been hard to request additional elective technical courses when the department is unable to offer all required classes.

One such class that has been regularly requested is a Technical Direction and Costume Production class that would center on building and crafting the main stage production. This class would be a great learning experience for the Advance Technical Design students and could also help the shops with physical labor. Such a course, while certainly a valuable addition to the current set, would necessitate reallocation away from design-oriented course work, and is only possible with a tenure hire allowing for expansion of technical courses, and the establishment of a dedicated design track.

### **Assessment**

The quality of a students work is demonstrated each time they participate in a department production and when mentored by SSUs professional staff and guest designers. These contacts have become increasing valuable educational relationships for our majors. Yet because they are someone outside the classroom experience assessment is hard to achieve. Some students leap at the opportunity to work with seasoned pros. Others less so, and in a few cases have withdrawn from design opportunities mid-show.

In course work, exams and quizzes, class projects, and student evaluations provide written evidence of student achievement relative to expected outcomes. We continue to read and assess student comments to refine students' needs, and when necessary change curriculum and teaching methods to give the student the best chance to attain each courses goals. For example, a desire to tie the learning outcomes in the Costumes course to the real work of the costume shop led the department to transfer the teaching of the course to the now-retired shop director, which allowed Director of the Technical Concentration to take on other coursework. With the retirement, that course has reverted to its previous arrangement.

The number of students accepted into graduate programs and professional companies can also demonstrate the quality of a student's performance. Our technical students have been accepted to the University of Illinois, University of Nevada - Las Vegas, UC San Diego, Arizona State University, Temple University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, California Institute of the Arts, San Diego State University. Former SSU students, now graduates of those programs are earning their livings in design, stage management and technical fields.

The technical theatre program has lost students when the SSU Music Department discontinued the Sound Recording minor from its program due to budget cuts, which necessitated the closing of the recording studio in Ives Hall. That studio has now been restored. We look for an opportunity to bring more students to SSU to learn recording skills to add to their post-graduate toolboxes.

Although there is no General Education related course presently taught in the technical concentration, we believe that the History of Ornament (THAR 444) could be applicable in the General Education area. This course is a slide tour through Western art history, focusing on architecture, furniture, and ornamentation.

### **STUDENT BODY (D)**

Most of our technical theatre students continue to identify as Caucasian/ white. We currently have 35% (4) freshman; 25% (3) sophomores; 25% (3) juniors; and 15% (2) seniors. In the past it appeared that technical theatre was a field dominated by males at SSU, with a reported 9:3 male to female ratio in 2008. That has changed in the last several years. Our current ratio is 1:1 male to female.

The program is successful to the degree that we can assess and teach to individual goals, expectations, and needs. Students self-select areas of interest (stage management, sets, costumes, lights, sound). Introductory courses provide grounding in each of these areas for all tech students, after which each student pursues an area of particular interest. These interests are developed in advanced course-work, as well as hands-on assignments as stage managers and designers for departmental productions and classroom projects. We often create projects that are

tailored to the student in order to challenge all tech students to expand their abilities with every project.

The program plan calls for each student to begin their careers doing small scale design or stage management assignments in the black box studio, or assistant design or stage management assignments on the Person Stage, then moving on to more advanced work on larger scales, though this is not always possible. Due to the number of productions the department produces relative to the size of the tech program cohort, big projects are often the starting place. While such assignments are great for some students, they are not always the best way to start. Small-scale projects allow for students to get their feet wet and learn how to work with directors, shops and more advanced students. This prepares them to do better in larger scale assignments. It is hoped that a second tenure track faculty to broaden the scope of the design aspect of the concentration, and to help organize the sequence of production projects would not only improve student learning, but would lead to greater numbers of students coming into the concentration.

It is hard to tell when advising begins and teaching ends. Our one technical theatre faculty member has a one-on-one advising/teaching relationship with all technical students. He advises each of them based on their educational and life goals. Bi-annual advising ensures that students remain on track to graduate in a timely fashion, normally four years.

#### **FACULTY (E)**

- One full-time faculty member (Professor)
- One part-time faculty members (Lecturer)

#### **OTHER instructional support**

- Technical Director
- Costume Shop Director
- Production Manager

Each of these staff provides significant instructional support to classes when students are sent to shop to do production related projects. Often these projects rely on staff to supervise the class work, although they do not grade.

#### **UPDATE**

The Department has one tenure-line Technical faculty at the rank of full professor, Anthony Bish. He holds a terminal degree of an MFA in Scenic Design and Technical Direction from Temple University. For the first 11 years of his tenure at SSU his appointment was 50% as faculty and 50% as Technical Director. Beginning in the fall of 2007, his appointment was converted to full-time faculty, and a new full time Technical Director was hired. This shift has allowed him to focus solely on teaching. By way of professional development he regularly attends to US Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) annual conference. We look forward to the fruits of this kind of professional development.



Additional lecturer faculty include a faculty member and designer employed at Santa Rosa Junior College who teaches a portion of Advanced Design (THAR 344) and the Departments Production Manager who recently started teaching the Stage Management course (THAR 230/231).

### **Pedagogy**

As in all areas of the department we teach both from educational background and from professional experience. The full time faculty member in the Technical Program is confident teaching rendering and drafting work by hand, a process that all technicians and designers need to know how to do. However, theatre design in particular continues to shift toward computer-aided design (CAD), and we need to continue expanding the software and hardware options in the Program to attract new students. Through professional development our technical faculty member will continue to expand his abilities in handling the newer programs and techniques that students are being taught in graduate school today, particularly in teaching sound design.

### **Participation in governance**

When Professor Bish started here 18 years ago, he was ½ time as a staff member serving as the departments Technical Director and ½ time as teaching faculty. His particular appointment exempted him from university committee work because of his workload as TD. Because of the unique nature of his appointment, Professor Bish was also not expected to fulfill the normal 3 units of advising and committee work. Any committee work, advising or other service he provided was viewed as additional service to the University, not as the minimum required to fulfill his job expectations.

Still, he contributed to the Grievance Committee, The Holocaust lecture series, the SSU Critical Thinking Conference, Faculty Convocations, Project Censored, Pre-College Programs and has supported Associated Students. For the School of Arts and Humanities he helped the Communication Department with equipment, backdrops for the Language Department and has rigged two Art Department shows.

As a member of the Faculty for the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance he has been a member of all tenure-line search committees and many RTP committees. Additionally, he designed for eighteen main stage shows, most recently in Spring Dance (2016), where he designed lights and costumes. He will continue in these roles going forward.

### **Facilities**

The primary classroom for classes in the technical concentration is Ives 46, which was created in 2008 as a stand-alone studio. Other classrooms are effectively the Person Theater shops and performance venue, as well as Ives 119, 76, and on occasion, Weill Hall in the GMC. Ives 46 is quickly becoming too small and cramped and can no longer accommodate costume and lighting

courses that are typically larger than the 20-person room capacity. Fortunately, projects for these courses can be accomplished in Ives 76 and Person Theatre.

### **ASSESSMENTS AND FINDINGS (G)**

The primary assessment tool employed in the Technical Theatre Concentration is a portfolio created over four years that demonstrates students' abilities and craftsmanship. Within an upper division "Technical Block" sequence of 4 semesters the curriculum functions much like a conservatory where technical theatre students learn to work collaboratively with the faculty and their peers to design, manage, and produce live events. The material production of prompt books, renderings, light, costume and sound plots, blueprints and elevations, as well as archival videos of a student's set of productions worked on at SSU contribute to the portfolio. Portfolio reviews are done each semester by the technical theatre faculty. Each spring other department faculty and guest directors also review technical portfolios, and this review doubles as a means for selecting student designers for the following years design and stage management assignments.

### **ACTION PLAN (H)**

For over 16 years the technical theatre program has requested the hiring of a second tenure line faculty member. The request is urgent and ongoing.

Funding prohibits the creation of several courses that are necessary to the technical degree

- Advanced Costume Design
- Advanced Light Design
- Mentored design internships
- Technical Direction
- Sound design
- CAD

## **THEATRE STUDIES SELF STUDY (B)**

### **PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY (A)**

The Sonoma State Theatre Studies program provides equal parts professional theater training and liberal arts education. Students prepare to pursue theater careers in directing, education, dramaturgy, playwriting, drama therapy, or management, but regardless of specific professional training, the concentration provides the intellectual and academic rigor and imaginative excitement necessary to any liberal arts degree. Students learn to make theater as a fundamentally collaborative story told among artists and community, and to investigate theater as a site of personal growth, healing, and social change. The model is the "Renaissance" person who wants to view theatre from a rich vantage point, poised to comment and act in the world.

We believe that this kind of training prepares the student to become the ideal global good citizen, engaged with theater as a means of ritual and democratic conversation, and focused on full inclusion of all cultures and identities.

Until 2013-2014, this concentration had been called “General Theater” with a somewhat hodgepodge curriculum and a somewhat unclear identity (p.44 of previous self-study). We have since renamed the concentration “Theatre Studies,” a specific and commonly recognized label in our field (p. 45 of previous self-study.) We have also restructured the curriculum to focus students more specifically on dramatic literature and criticism as core training for playwrights, directors, dramaturgs, teachers, stage managers, or administrators. Curriculum is more rigorous but remains purposely open-ended (see p. 42 of previous self-study).

## B

### 1. List of learning goals for Theatre Studies

We aim to:

1. Provide classroom and production training in how to use genre and form to help conceive a project from text to performance.
2. Synthesize theory, analysis, and research through dramaturgy, the art of structuring a dialogue between the world of the play and the artists making it, as well as between the artists and their community.
3. Train students to write analytically and clearly about the place and role of the theater event in its community.
4. Investigate theatrical storytelling as a ritual, mythic medium, as well as a site of social change and political engagement.

We offer:

- A Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Theatre with a Concentration in Theater Studies
- A wide-ranging curriculum in topics in theatre history, dramatic literature, theater for children, world theater, and issues of cultural, ethnic, and racial identity in theatre
- A program of study with a rigorous core that at the same time allows students to create a personalized path
- Numerous opportunities for students to serve as production dramaturg on main stage shows, allowing them to take a leadership role in collaboration with a faculty or guest director
- A sequence of playwriting courses that provide a small-group, workshop environment
- An annual festival of readings of student-written new plays, allowing students from across the department to learn about the process of creating new writing
- Workshops with visiting guest playwrights (recent guests have included Adam Chanzit, Anne Garcia-Romero, Cynthia Gates Fujikawa , Robert Greygrass-Owens, Carter Lewis, and Lynn Manning)
- Close connection with a supportive faculty
- A community of theatre students in acting, dance, technical theatre and theatre studies majors who work together and support one another
- Opportunities for participation in KCACTF (Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival). Recent Theatre Studies graduates have won prestigious national and regional

awards in the KCACTF Dramaturgy and Playwriting competitions, including students in two separate years winning the national Dramaturgy competition.

## 2. Rationale for learning goals and outcomes

“Theatre Studies” is a standard category of theater training in the university setting, allowing a balance between general and specialized study. Our Theatre Studies program has multiple, linked emphases centering around dramaturgy and dramatic literature, which is fairly common. More politically progressive programs (of which we aim to be) share our goal of using dramaturgy’s wide focus to explore theater as a fundamentally intercultural act between multiple cultures and identities.

Our depth of focus on dramaturgy at the undergraduate level is rare, but most holistic approaches to theater training include at least some kind of exposure to the practices or discipline of dramaturgy. There are a couple of BFAs in dramaturgy in the country, and they are relatively recent developments. It is the philosophy of our department that dramaturgy training for undergraduates is worthwhile but not to the point of specialization featured in a program like a BFA. There are trends in web-based dramaturgy that students are not exposed to here, though these are not essential for training at the undergraduate level.

As for our playwriting program: Undergraduate playwriting programs are common but typically modest, with limited course offerings and modest production opportunities. There is generally no BA or BFA in playwriting, as opposed to the BA or BFA one might find in Creative Writing in an English department. The rationale here is to avoid early specialization for aspiring playwrights, so that they may learn the essential building blocks of acting and technical theater before trying focusing exclusively on playwriting. The scope of our playwriting program, which is energetic but limited in course offerings and events, is therefore in line with accepted practice. Our increasing ambitions for this program will hopefully mark it as exceptional among similar programs at other schools.

Anecdotal evidence since last review suggests that Theatre Studies consistently attracts and develops majors and minors who after graduation pursue a professional trajectory in Theatre Studies-related work, internships, and graduate study.

## 3. Dissemination of learning goals to students

Class syllabi, class meetings, production meetings, rehearsals, performances, course catalog descriptions, department web site: <http://www.sonoma.edu/performingarts/theatre>

## 4. Structuring of the curriculum to reach expected outcomes

The Theatre Studies program is the only one of the four concentrations in the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance that does not schedule instruction according to the “Block” schedule. Courses are typically offered in the afternoons after Block meets, allowing concentrators from across the Department to take both Theatre Studies courses and department-wide required courses taught by Theatre Studies faculty. These include the THAR 160 Theatre and Dance

Humanities Learning Community; THAR 202 & 203, our Theatre/Dance history sequence; and THAR 300, Theatre in Action (a theatergoing class). Theatre Studies faculty have a small number of Theatre Studies concentrators to serve, and their training and background lends itself to instruction in these courses, so they are often asked to serve the department as a whole by teaching these courses. Descriptions of these courses can be found elsewhere in this Program Review.

Courses that are regularly taught and are more specific to the Theatre Studies concentration are as follows.

- Contemporary Plays and Playwrights (THAR 275, 3 units). A literature seminar where student read and learn to analyze a range of contemporary plays, mostly American. Students write analytic papers and do performance projects.
- Production Dramaturgy (THAR 304, 1-3 units). This is a supervision class for faculty to mentor students closely when they serve as production dramaturg for a department show. This mentorship lasts over many months and ranges from helping the student prepare materials for the cast to shadowing the student in rehearsal to instructing best practices of how to give staging notes.
- Drama Ensemble Workshop (THAR 302, 4 units). Offered once a year, this course number is for the faculty directing a main stage Department show.
- Chicano/Latino Drama (THAR 365, cross-listed as CALS 365, 1 unit). A combined studio and literature class leading to the creation of original, short agit-prop performance in the spirit of Luis Valdez's *El Teatro Campesino*.
- Early Plays: Evolution and Innovation and Modern Plays: Evolution and Innovation (THAR 370A/B, 3 units each.) This dramatic literature seminar features close reading of canonical plays from the Western tradition, allowing students to go beyond the survey knowledge they may acquired from THAR 202/203.
- Theater of the World (THAR 374, 4 units.) A survey via play text and video of global performance traditions outside the United States, with some assignments in creating performance.
- Race, Gender, and Performance (THAR 375, 3 units). A seminar teaching basic theories of race/gender surveying contemporary dramatic literature and performance dealing with gender/race issues, such as personal identity and casting. Students create performance projects, write analytic papers, and practice frank conversation about race/gender in the work we make and support.
- Playwriting I/II (THAR 376/377, 3 units each). Students enrolled in either course number attend the same class session but with different requirements for their writing. Focus is on contemporary approaches to freeing the imaginative voice, then finding structure via dramaturgical approaches. Major project for course is the annual *Super Mega Molten Hot Lava New Play Festival*, a festival of rehearsed play readings from the

Playwriting class. Following performance writers rewrite, modeling an authentic play development process.

- Story Analysis (THAR 378, 3 units). Students learn to break down a dramatic text and test it with dramaturgical questions. Multiple methodologies of breaking down and scoring a dramatic text are modeled and practiced.
- Research Practice for Theatre & Dance (THAR 379, 3 units). Students choose a play from the Department season of the upcoming academic year, and spend the term researching it, using different library methodologies. The final products are a dramaturgical protocol and a research-based program note (some of these are then published in the show program for the show). The course focuses on research as a poetic act rather than a journalistic or academic one, and guides students to using research as inspiration rather than problem solving, so they can develop a nuanced dramaturgical conception of the plays structure and how that structure operates in production.
- Theatre for Children (THAR 460, 2 units). Teaches young children to create theatre via student mentorship. The course often enrolls students planning a career in teaching. It has not been offered in 3 years.

## CHANGES SINCE LAST REVIEW

Issues raised in previous self-study of being “second-class citizens” in terms of department support and funding are less relevant now. Department supports with resources and in spirit the playwriting and dramaturgy programs, and Theatre Studies production slot and budget have been guaranteed and formalized via a revamped department season planning process. The concentration officially changed its name from “General Theatre” to “Theatre Studies” for the 2013-2014 year, with curriculum restricted to create a basic core of courses with a wide range of electives, allowing students to have a clear Theatre Studies identity and also to shape their curriculum to support their specific theatre interests.

Theatre Studies has added a production dramaturgy program, consisting of a regularly offered research course (THAR 379); an occasionally offered Story Analysis course (THAR 378); and a supervision course (THAR 304) to allot credits to students for production dramaturgy work. Additionally, students can apply to be production dramaturg on season productions, and work closely with faculty or guest directors and cast, advising on the production and creating program notes and related audience engagement materials. SSU production dramaturgs have consistently received national recognition and won top national honors at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF).

Previous self-study had hoped for more coursework that addresses a “holistic, global perspective.” Several projects have addressed this in a robust fashion:

- A new course in Race, Gender, and Performance (THAR 375)
- Theatre Studies-led productions *Facing Our Truth: Ten-Minute Plays About Trayvon, Race, and Privilege* and *The Copeland Creek Project: A Theatrical Journey*, exploring issues of identity and community as well as practicing ensemble methodologies

- *Water Works*, a cross-campus, interdisciplinary season of coursework, events, and performances, which Theatre Studies helped to plan and implement
- The current Arts Integration Initiative for faculty engagement with campus art events, an initiative run out of the School office via a course release for Professor Horstein.

Despite the renewed identity of the program, Theatre Studies students can sometimes feel isolated from department community, since as a cohort they do not follow the Block schedule of instruction, and since they have varying professional goals. The Mega Hot playwriting fest has provided some unity, as do the upper-division literature seminars they are all required to take.

## UPCOMING CHANGES

We are considering a number of adjustments to the concentration curriculum, for three main reasons. One, full Professor Judy Navas will retire as of 2019-2020 and there are no plans to replace that tenure line in the concentration. In principle a single tenure line for Theatre Studies in a department our size could be sufficient were the line devoted simply to instruction (see D below).

Two, the standard in the School of Arts & Humanities for academic courses is 4 units, rather than 3. Unlike the rest of the Department, Theatre Studies teaches mostly academic (rather than studio) courses, but the department has arranged these to be 3-unit courses. The result has been Theatre Studies faculty, in particular Associate Professor Scott Horstein, teaching a load of 4 3-unit courses rather than the School standard of 3 4-unit courses. As Professor Betsy Cooper advised on p.9 of her 2008 outside review, “It should also be a goal to work toward a 3-3 teaching load in Theatre Arts and Dance.” There is a risk of burnout, not from boredom with repeating courses but from having to sustain four different instructional programs each term. Furthermore, structuring the course load in this way adds significantly to the challenge for faculty in pursuing and scheduling professional work. Admittedly, these problems, of overtaxing faculty by reducing units/course and therefore obliging faculty to work additional courses, are not specific to Theatre Studies

Three, since the hire of Professor Horstein and the advent of new courses corresponding to his expertise, there have in fact been too many Theatre Studies seminars competing with each other for enrollment. We are seeking to consolidate our offerings and also to cross-list with other departments to increase enrollment in Theatre Studies seminars. However, dependable cross listing depends on our courses being on the same 4-unit standard as the rest of the School of Arts & Humanities. For example, a previous attempt to cross-list THAR 378 (Story Analysis, currently a 3-unit course) in Fall 2013 with the English department failed because English majors could not use our 3-unit course to fulfill any of their 4-unit English major requirements.

For all these reasons, as we look forward, we are looking to adjust the curriculum to accommodate fewer offerings, both due to impending senior faculty retirement and due to the need to move to a 4-unit standard. Some ideas on the table:

- Turn required upper-division literature seminars 370A (Early Plays) and 370B (Modern Plays) into a single 370 course, 4 units, Topics in Dramatic Literature, and have reading list be changeable so students can take twice for credit.

- Move Playwriting I (THAR 376) and Playwriting II (THAR 377) from 3 units to 4 units
- Integrate Research Practice for Theatre and Dance (THAR 379) with Production classes (THAR 301/302/303/304) as a way to require it for all THAR majors
- Combine Contemporary Plays & Playwrights (THAR 275) with Race, Gender, & Performance (THAR 375) to make a new Contemporary Plays and Cultural Identity (THAR 275), make required for Acting concentrators, obtain General Education designation for it, make 4 units
- Dropping Theatre of the World (THAR 374)

The pending retirement of the senior faculty member means available instructional units for Drama for Children (THAR 460) are in jeopardy, though this course is critical to preparing our many majors who plan on teaching.

5. Documentation of effective teaching strategies for helping students achieve expected outcomes.

There is a regular assessment that is inherent in Theatre Studies classes. Students are constantly given feedback on expected outcomes and on assignments and performance exercises. The students' participation in productions gives practical demonstration to the successes of the program. Exams, quizzes, class projects, research papers, plus student evaluations give written documentation of perceived outcomes.

## **STUDENT BODY (D)**

It is common in undergraduate programs for Theatre Studies to have a limited number of majors. Early in their careers most theatre students are attracted to the most fundamental of theater disciplines, acting and technical theatre, though there are some who gravitate naturally to Theatre Studies. Students in the Theatre Studies Program are by their nature a diverse group both in educational goals and ages. Previous self-study indicated 8-10 Theatre Studies majors in any given year; this number has fallen to 3-7. Department students as a whole are more involved in the program through increased course offerings (which will reduce upon retirement of Prof. Navas) and through the playwriting and dramaturgy programs. However, a greater focus on both on- and off-campus recruitment would help the concentration sustain its activity, as would more cross listing with other SSU departments.

The reasons for choosing Theatre Studies are as diverse as the population of students who seek it out. Each student that enters the program is advised and mentored very closely because their individual profiles must always be known and acted on.

## **FACULTY (E)**

Theatre Studies hired for 2009-2010 one new TT faculty in Dramaturgy & Contemporary Theatre, giving TS two TT lines for several years. Professor Scott Horstein recently received Tenure and Promotion and is currently an Associate Professor. Senior faculty member, Professor Judy Navas began a half-time pre-retirement program in 2014-2015, and will go into full



retirement after the 2018-2019 academic year. There are no plans to hire a second TT faculty for Theatre Studies at that time.

With Professor Horstein slated to serve as interim chair of the department in 2016-2017 and possibly in the future, it is unclear exactly how he can use his single tenure line to perform chair responsibilities; fulfill School responsibilities for the new Arts Integration program (with their attendant course releases); and oversee the Theatre Studies production slot, lower division GE courses, and upper division seminars. Previous self-study had anticipated this kind of conflict between administrative and pedagogical duties, which is endemic of the campus as a whole with its overall decrease in the tenure-track population (pp.44-45).

#### a. Pedagogy

TT faculty have been heavily involved in a new Arts & Humanities Initiative, the Freshman Learning Communities, for which our department now teaches a year-long course on Theatre and Dance, THAR 160. The university offered some training to help faculty learn to teach the course. Since Professor Holstein's hire a whole new opportunity for Theatre Arts & Dance students to study dramaturgy and playwriting has occurred. Faculty development has been limited, though the Department provided annual funds towards Professor Horstein attending a conference or workshop each summer.

#### b. Participation in governance at Department, School and University

Since the senior faculty member in TS is in an early retirement program and only on campus part-time, governance at the Department, School and University level is limited. The other faculty member is involved in Department, School and University service. In service to the University, Professor Holstein's work on committees and programs come from a personal focus on issues of race, gender, ability, cultural identity, and difference. His contribution to the Academic Planning Committee created a new School of Extended and International Education policy in 2014. He has and continues to work with Associated Students Productions bringing performers to campus who focus in particular on race, gender, ability, cultural identity, and differences. This co-curriculum approach strengthens diversity in our culture by giving students from many classes across campus the ability to see performances and the opportunity to meet the performers at a "talk back" after the show. In 2014, he started working with the School of Arts & Humanities Audience Engagement workgroup, and is chairing a Senate sub-group devoted to revamping classrooms on campus.

Besides advising Theatre Studies students, Professor Horstein serves as an informal dramaturgy and literary manager in service for the department, helping to drive season planning and writing copy for department documents and publications.

#### c. Professional Contributions

In Professor Navas' own words, "As for accolades in the field, while my work has received good adjudications, I have never won any prize for excellence in my field. While this would have been nice, I have humbly concentrated on the day-to-day work. My world theatre class has

benefited from my travels, some of which has involved theatre research and workshop taking. I am a prolific reader in my area of study, as well as, in literature, the humanities and beyond. My studies have always supported and inspired the work I've done in the Theatre Studies program.”

Professor Horstein is a professional in his specialty of Dramaturgy, taking on the role of national leadership as well as engaging in various roles as Dramaturg for local, statewide and national theatre productions. He has furthered his national profile by co-chairing the development of Employment Guidelines and Sample Contracts for Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). His work has also been favorably reviewed and profiled in important trade magazines, such as *Backstage*. His work in cross-campus and co-curricular engagement includes *Water Works* (2012-2013), linked performance and academics around the theme of inland water flow as resource, image and metaphor, as well as his current Arts Integration initiative, creating opportunities and support for faculty to use the arts on campus as a teaching tool in their classroom.

## **ACTION PLAN (H)**

### a. Teaching—Learning Methods –

Almost all instruction has come from the two Theatre Studies faculty. We will be looking for opportunities to bring in more outside instructors, playwrights, and dramaturg to expand the range of voices to which students are exposed.

### b. Course Content

Significant changes to course content are not generally anticipated. We continue to look for ways to create a hybrid performance classroom, one that combines academic rigor with studio-based games and performances. Additionally, we will maintain our efforts to integrate a range of voices from different cultural backgrounds for our course materials.

### c. Learning Objectives

For 2016-2017 we are introducing a new version of our new play festival, with fully produced productions of student-written plays, directed by students. This will allow us to focus more on director training and on students taking a leadership role in creating their own work. The various pressures on our students keep them from taking advantage of producing work via our student producing club. Introducing a faculty-run play festival as part of our main season will hopefully provide this opportunity for students in a way that works into the flow of their schedules.

### d. Recruiting and Mentoring

We are working on building a recruiting relationship with Los Medanos College (a community college) in Pittsburg, California, roughly an hour from Sonoma State. We are also increasing on-campus recruiting via our Freshman Humanities Learning Community.

### e. Assessment

There are no specific plans to change assessment methods. The main consideration is making sure students take on production work, as production is an excellent means of assessing students’

progress. THAR 301/302/303/304 was required in the old General Theatre curriculum and we should make it so once more.

f. Advising and mentoring in major

Advising in general is not an issue for the small cohort of Theatre Studies students, however advising and mentoring could be improved by creating regular gatherings for Theatre Studies students, who unlike other Department students do not have a regular gathering opportunity such as Block students have.

## **B. 8. DESCRIPTION OF GE COURSES AND HOW THEY MEET GE AREA CRITERIA**

The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance offers 5 GE courses (15 sections) annually. The aggregate seat count for our 15 GE sections is 400.

### **The Department of Theatre Arts & Dances GE offerings:**

The Department has aligned each of its GE course offerings to the GE Mission, Goals and Objectives passed by the Academic Senate in the spring of 2003.<sup>9</sup>

The Department's GE course offerings are:

- Theatre, Dance, the Artistic Process, and You: Humanities Learning Community (THAR 160, 4 units Fall and Spring). Theatre and dance create spectacle from darkness and light, time and space, words and gesture, and from life and death itself. In this year-long course students will explore the magic of the stage and its ability to transform. Through live attendance at campus performances and video viewing of great performances from the wide world of theater and dance, students will witness first-hand then analyze the process by which theater and dance artists create powerful work. Written and oral critical thinking assignments will deepen analysis. Students will also explore the transformational power of their own first year in college, and explore the parallels between your own journey and those of the artists and characters studied. THAR 160 is a "Learning Community," a year-long course that allows freshmen to study a particular subject in depth, and also helps them make the transition from high school to life in the university. After course completion the students receive 4 A3 category GE credits and 4 C3 category GE credits.
- Introduction to the History of Drama and Dance (THAR 202, 4 units). This course is the second in a two-course sequence that introduces students to the history of Western theater and dance, with some added focus on some non-Western traditions. Surveying periods from ancient Greece until 1800, this course examines how performative conventions in different periods shaped and were shaped by society. This course also aims to reinforce fundamental university methods of scholarship for first- and second-year students. Student will use the subject matter, dance and theater history, as an opportunity to model methods of note taking, research, and outlining. This is a General Education course that satisfies category C1, History of the Fine Arts.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.sonoma.edu/senate/resolutions/ge\\_mgo.html](http://www.sonoma.edu/senate/resolutions/ge_mgo.html)

- Introduction to the History of Drama and Dance (THAR 203, 4 units each). This course is the second in a two-course sequence that introduces students to the history of Western theater and dance, with some added focus on some non-Western traditions. Beginning with the 1800s and ending near the present time, this course examines how performative conventions in different periods shaped and were shaped by society. This course also aims to reinforce fundamental university methods of scholarship for first- and second-year students. Students will use the subject matter, dance and theater history, as an opportunity to model methods of note-taking, research, and outlining. This is a General Education course that satisfies category C1, History of the Fine Arts.
- Theatre in Action (THAR 300, 3 units). A required course for all Theatre Arts majors. An investigation of technique, form, and content in drama and dance performances. Attendance at oral discussion and written critiques of 8 departmental, local, and Bay Area productions will develop articulate understanding of contemporary performance and its relation to theatre history, the arts, society, and culture. The class aims to deepen critical thinking and writing skills while investigating how the performing arts provide a vital form of expression of culture and contemporary society. Satisfies upper division GE Area C1 (History of the Fine Arts.) For juniors and seniors only.
- Theatre of the World (THAR 374, 3 units). This course is an exploration of theatre traditions from around the world. Theatre is examined as the expression of specific cultures. Students learn how theatre practice influences theatre making in both Western and Eastern Cultures. This course is required for General Theatre Degree majors and also satisfies upper- division GE Area C3.

### **Minor in Theatre Arts**

The minor in Theatre Arts consists of 24 units of theatre arts courses. Students may choose a minor concentration in acting, dance, technical theatre or general drama. Six of the elective units must be upper division. Students contemplating a minor in theatre arts consult the Theatre Arts Department full-time faculty and establish a curricular plan. For example, Choreography I is a core requirement for a dance emphasis, while three levels of acting are required in the acting emphasis.

There are three Minor Core Requirement courses in areas of history, performance and criticism:

- Intro to the History of Drama and Dance: 1800 to the Present (THAR 203)
- Theatre in Action: (THAR 300)
- Dance or Drama Ensemble Workshop or Technical Theatre Workshop (THAR 301, 302, or 303)

The minor core make up 10 units of instruction (12 for dance), another 14 (12 for dance) elective units complete the minor degree.

The Department estimates that there are 28 current minor degree candidates.

## C. DIVERSITY

The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance is proactive and proud to address diversity in many ways. Our diversity profile speaks to our worldview that the making of theatre and dance performances is by their nature of inclusive, and reflects our humanistic philosophy of teaching and learning. Diversity comes from a mixed set of cultural, ethnic, gender, age and ability influences, in a diverse set of faculty, staff and students and in experiential and content representations. We strive to create such diversity in recruitment of faculty, staff and students. Moreover, we consciously include a set of materials that are presented, produced and taught in our coursework and performances.

In several areas in our program design diversity is intentionally presented and examined. These include

- Play selection
- Choreographic themes
- Guest artists and residencies
- Course content and pedagogy
- Campus engagement and community outreach
- Hiring
- Recruitment
- Casting

With the selection of a tenure line faculty person in “Contemporary Theatre/ Dramaturgy” in 2009 the Department explicitly sought a colleague able to bring a strong background in diverse theatrical expression and practices to our students. The POA described the department as “Seeking a theatre instructor at the Assistant Professor level with deep knowledge of contemporary and multicultural theatre, including performance trends and practice in theatre and dance”. During the search for an Assistant Professor of Dance last year, the Department sought someone adept in “mentoring and guiding students in their own creative process, and be willing to engage in diverse ideas surrounding the practice of art and dance making.” Through both hires the Department consciously sought to increase diversity in the experience and content we offer our students.

Contemporary American theatre is varied in its conception, and the wide diversity of voices that write, direct, choreograph and perform. With the hire of Professor Scott Horstein the Department made permanent its commitment to diversity. In the years since he came to the University he has strengthened our curriculum, brought new writers to us for consideration on season planning, re-written or created new courses (THAR 200, 160, 275, 375) and sharpened our sense of the experience of the “other” in our day to day work.

Newly hired Assistant Professor of Dance Christine Cali brings a similar sensibility towards diversity to the dance program.

Several classes that intentionally expose our majors (and GE students as well) to diverse experiences are Freshman Learning Community, Theatre in Action, History of Dance, Theatre of the World, Dances of the World, Contemporary Plays and Playwrights and Race Gender and

Performance. In each of the syllabi of these classes a set of diverse offerings (film, readings, and live performances) are provided where the voice of the artist or artists emanate directly from the culture, ethnicity, gender identity or other sources that our society often defines as “diverse”.

As a faculty we work to use pedagogy that intentionally challenges students’ perspectives on diversity in reading, viewing, analysis, and communication necessary for understanding and accepting diverse cultural backgrounds, LGBT individuals as well as positions of privilege afforded the dominant culture. Our classes highlight the performing arts as a vital form of expression of culture.

It must be said that the arts, and in particular, the performing arts provide windows to the world through which people of all races, ethnicities, creeds, gender identity and sexual identity, as well as members of communities of the differently abled may project their experiences and values. Indeed so much of the performing arts profession depends on creativity and collaboration amongst and between diverse individuals and communities. Without diversity our profession would stagnate.

Productions such as *She Kills Monsters* directed by Professor Paul Draper and *The Hummingbird Wars* directed by Professor Judy Navas, *Facing Our Truth: Ten-Minute Plays About Trayvon, Race, and Privilege* directed by Associate Professor Scott Horstein and *The Copeland Creek Project: A Theatrical Journey* that brought LA artist Mark Valdez to campus in a joint project between the Acting, Theatre Studies and Technical Theatre Programs and new dance pieces such as the recent premier of *HERE* by Assistant Professor of Dance Christine Cali and the continual effort to bring persons of color into our performances and classrooms overwhelmingly demonstrate a central tenant of our Department that anyone can dance, act, design, choreograph, write and work in the theatre. In these project gender identity, racism, experiencing the other. We are the definition of inclusion in our philosophy of performance, and curricular focus.

The Departments history, critical analysis and practicum classes and performances address the cultural, ethnic and social diversity of our medium through many methods.

The Acting and Dance Programs both require kinetic learning and rely heavily on embodied intelligence. Students who may not have natural linguistic or mathematical intelligence can shine in dance and acting. Both disciplines often use different modes of learning—visual, auditory and kinetic. Because both are taught using various modes of learning, there is often an increased success rate in learning.

The Acting Program boast a track record of selecting plays for production that explore issues of class and gender and for so-called “color and gender blind casting.” For example, in the current production of *Hamlet* roles that have traditionally been cast with white males have gone to women and African Americans. With an observable increase in persons of color (African-American, Asian-American, Latino/a and Native American) in the last few years we are able to select projects that compliment these populations, as was the case in choosing *Abraham Lincoln’s Big Gay Dance Party*. *She Kills Monsters* explored closeted sexual identity through LARPing, and last seasons adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* dubbed *The Orchard Development* examined issues class and cultural displacement.

In the Acting Program coursework selections of scenes regularly calls for consideration of a diversity themes in plays as various as *Angels in America*, *The Flick*, *Stone Cold Dead Serious* and *Bullrusher*. And as part of the training progression, we consider that acting students must begin their work by examining characters close to their own backgrounds, and the to step into the background and experiences of characters different than themselves.

The Dance Program addresses the cultural, ethnic and social diversity of the SSU student body by offering a hip-hop class, a dance form that draws on a large range of cultural differences and experiences. But one class does not tell the story of the dance program. The Dance Program is open and available to all movers from diverse training and backgrounds, all shapes, sizes, ages, genders and identities. The majors and minor in dance come from fairly diverse backgrounds including many Asian American and Latino/Latinas. Is it connected to Blue Baronz as club advisor, which embraces an inclusive and diverse dance training, and an acknowledgment to the African Diaspora with an honoring of hip hop dance and its history and origin.

The Department laments that since 2011 it has not been able to offer Dances of the World (THAR 373) an upper division General Education class satisfying the C3 category in Comparative Perspectives and Foreign Languages. This class looked at selected dances from other cultures in order to examine the relationship between culture and dance and to more fully understand and appreciate the differences between diverse cultures and the common ground we share through the art of dance. The class tended to attract a diverse student body, a proportionally higher number of foreign students and students with culturally diverse backgrounds than the campus norm. This innate diversity within the classroom provided an opportunity to get to know first hand about different cultural traditions through dance. It created a natural cauldron to identify Euro-centric patterns in dance in regards to race, class and gender by listening to experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is disappointing that this class has not been offered, due to budget constraints and a shift in curricular emphasis toward Learning Communities in the School.

Should resources be made available the Dance Program is able to offer Dances of the World (THAR 373) in the future, and has the capacity to develop more cultural diversity in curriculum through inclusion of other styles with Africanist aesthetics or Afro-centric curriculum such as Afro-Cuban, Afro-Haitian, and Dunham technique.

The Dance Program has also worked with Associated Students Productions (ASP) to bring AXIS Dance Company to campus for an inter-disciplinary workshop and performance. AXIS Dance Company's "is to create and perform high quality contemporary dance that is developed through the collaboration of dancers with and without disabilities" The community workshop and performance presented by AXIS educated our students to the power of physically integrated dance.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.axisdance.org/>

Our Theatre of the World (THAR 374) course looks at selected performances from other cultures in order to examine the relationship between culture and performance and to more fully understand and appreciate the differences between diverse cultures through common terrain we share through the performing arts. Dances of the World (THAR 373) and Theatre of the World (THAR 373) tend to attract a diverse student body, a proportionally higher number of foreign students and students with culturally diverse backgrounds than the campus norm. This diversity within the classroom provides opportunities to get to know first hand about diverse cultural traditions through theatre. It creates a forum for identifying Eurocentric patterns in performance in regards to race, class and gender by listening to experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Technical Theatre Program addresses diversity in many ways. In the past technical theatre was considered a male dominated business. Now, the students who are majors in the Technical Concentration are 50% men and women. We acknowledge women are as strong in design/tech areas as men, and we rigorously recruit women to the program.

The major accommodation made for the diverse population in technical theatre is to ensure that anyone can do any job. We do our best to treat all students, teaching them how to use mechanical advantage machines, therefore brains and technique not brawn is needed to run our stage productions. No prior knowledge is required, we train anyone who wants to learn. The only special treatment is given to a student who has a disability.

We work in conjunction with disability services to find equipment suitable to their needs or include extra time and training in classes or productions. One such example was working with a student stage manager who was legally deaf. The Department purchased a special headset that was tied into our clear-com system to allow her to call a show.

Our rate of success in recruiting a diverse student population tends to mirror those of the campus as a whole. However, our efforts in this regard have been persistent and wide. We have actively recruited students from all local high schools and the local Santa Rosa Junior College and have established outreach efforts to Oakland School for the Arts.

Members of the faculty have gone to the annual Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle and seek out opportunities to increase diversity of our student population there. We encourage students from all socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural groups to come to Sonoma State. The Person Endowment has allowed us to offer scholarships to students who might not have the financial resources to attend SSU.

Perhaps the biggest barrier to bringing more diversity into the Department has been the perception that the performing arts and entertainment business is not a financially stable one. Statistics show that EOP students are primarily seeking economic advancement and career stability by graduating from college. Theatre seems to offer the opposite. Though theatre and



related arts can form the basis for a personally rewarding profession, to some degree the perception is a correct one. Due to the proliferation of media, cable and digital outlets there are in fact more jobs available to well-trained graduates of theatre and dance programs than ever before, though competition remains steep.

The ethnicity of the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance includes Caucasian, Hispanic/ Latino, African-American, Asian American, Native American, Eastern-European and Japanese students. We do not track statistics on gender identity although it is an absolute that students in our department are generally open about their individual preferences. We work to ensure and believe that our classroom and production environments are safe-havens, and those persons of diverse cultures, identities and abilities and welcomed, encouraged and protected.

In furtherance of these values, the Department has this year embarked on a “Cultural Integration Initiative” aimed at more systematically and deeply connecting issues of race, class, gender and orientation to our curriculum, season selection, and residencies, and to integrate our work with the efforts of Mark Fabionar, Director of The HUB<sup>11</sup>, with whom the Department collaborated this spring on bringing noted performance artist Dahlak Brathwaite<sup>12</sup> to perform his Spirituals on campus and conduct workshops in Theatre Arts classes. The Department looks to develop an annual series of 2-3 residencies in this mold.

## **F. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES**

### **1.a. The Schulz Information Center**

The library contributes to both the program goals and university goals by offering a diverse range of videos, DVDs, live performance recordings, books and plays in the library. The oversized book collection is a great resource for design students in particular. Faculty in all concentrations use it regularly and quite extensively for research projects in drama, dance and design. The large and comprehensive databases offer articles that assist the Theatre Arts student in current research. Workshops, media labs and study rooms all work to give the student the research and study skills needed to be successful in the Theatre Arts program and the university as a whole. In our two Introduction to the History of Theatre and Dance course and our one upper division Dance History course library days are built into the class schedule to make sure each student has had a proper introduction to the library and all of its resources. The librarians at SSU are always helpful, knowledgeable and gracious with students and faculty alike.

### **b. Computer Technology**

Moodle has been a great resource in the classroom for GE, acting, dance, theatre and dance history, performance criticism and technical classes. Faculty in all concentrations use it. It provides a great way to manage and organize ones classes. It also helps cultivate a more successful learning community by increasing opportunities for students to exchange ideas and resources of the course outside the classroom.

The Music Department moved to the Green Music Center (GMC) in 2008, which freed up some

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.sonoma.edu/hub/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.thisisdahlak.com/>

space in Ives for Theatre Arts & Dance. Ives 46 became a technical theatre lab serving as the primary technical theatre classroom, where PC and Apple computers and a copier/ scanner live. This supports our students and staff with an opportunity to creating sound designs using Pro Tools, Logic Surround sound, CAD drafting with AutoCAD, and VectorWorks.

### **c. Student Support Services**

The Writing Center is useful for both the Theatre Arts faculty and students. Some Theatre Arts instructors have scheduled appointments with the Writing Center director for help creating effective writing prompts, developing strategies for improving students academic writing skills, and going over ways to handle paper load: specifically how to respond effectively and efficiently to student writing in the increasingly limited time faculty has. The Writing Center offers information to faculty on ways to respond to students writing that will increase learning and retention. For students the Writing Center is a wonderful source for one-on-one detailed help with specific writing issues. It is a vital asset in building and fostering expressive and articulate writers.

The Health Center is used regularly as well. Our students frequently attend the Associated Students programs. This includes direct participation in shared program and lectures. Our season of dance and theatre production is supported, in part, by IRA funds, and our performances are free to SSU students. In this sense the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance is its own kind of student support service by providing access to entertainment options that also connect students to the academic life of the University.

The department has seen an increase in the need for students to visit CAPS (Counseling And Psychological Services). CAPS is a unit of the division of Student Affairs of Sonoma State University. CAPS offers confidential counseling to students experiencing personal problems that interfere with their academic progress, career or well being. It seems within the last few years the department has seen more students struggling with anxiety, depression and stress. Many of our students are double majors that also work part-time anywhere from 15-20 hours a week and are paying for all or some of their college education. Faculty have walked students to CAPS, and CAPS has always made room for drop in appointments. The staff is professional and diligent and provide great resources for our students.

Approximately two-three students each year apply to study abroad through the International Program. The advising center is less frequently used, as we do a good job in-house in advising our majors.

### **d. Faculty Development and Support Services**

Faculty members in the acting, tech and dance programs continue to do faculty development and continuing education often without financial support from the university. Both dance faculty attend annually the American College Dance Festival (ACDA) and our tech faculty went to the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT) conference (his first such University-supported conference opportunity in 12 years at SSU.) These opportunities were supported through the recently created Professional Development Fund. This kind of investment is most

welcome, and sorely needed, not only for junior tenure-line faculty, but also for our entire faculty, including part-time lectures who teach over 60% of our course load.

Participation in conferences and festivals such as ATHE, ACDA, and USITT are invaluable opportunities for faculty development. ACDA also offers student recruitment opportunity. A major aspect of faculty development that is inherent and embedded in the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance is the mentoring that occurs on a daily basis from a more experienced faculty member to a junior faculty member. There is also great collaboration within each disciplines program—just as the students collaborate and work together, so do faculty. Because we are often creating live performances together—communication and collaboration are at the forefront of any project that is produced.

Faculty development also occurs through creative work. In addition to our work in our Departmental seasons of performances, our faculty do choreography, direction, design and acting all around the Bay Area. This work keeps us competitive, knowledgeable and sharp, and allows us to bring new experience and materials back to our students.

## **2.a. Physical facilities: Instructional Studios, Classrooms and Performance Venues**

Evert B. Person Theatre is our primary performance venue. Here 5-7 main stage productions of drama, dance and music theatre are mounted each season. It is also used as a rental space for local theatre and dance companies, especially during the December holiday season. The University holds convocations and symposiums in the space as well.

The venue is a 475- seat theatre featuring a 40 x 20 proscenium arch. The stage house is 80x 38, with 35 line set batons and 3 electrical batons. The lighting system is powered by 200+ dimmers controlling 400 + lighting instruments. The sound system is an eight track recording pack with 32 tracks of input and digital surround sound speakers. The theatre upgraded to a digital light board and digital sound system.

The facility is in good physical shape. Acoustics are such that sound dissipates in the middle rows of seats (I-P), making spoken language difficult to hear in those seats. The lobby has new furniture, carpet, monitor and paint. The lobby art is now overseen by SSUs Art Department, displaying various art pieces from the university's private collection. The theatre itself has seen renovations, with newly upholstered and painted audience seating, new carpet, new main curtain, new paint inside the theatre, upgraded light fixtures, upgraded soft good, and a replaced cyclorama. There has been an upgrade and an increase in the number of projectors available in the space. This has been an important upgrade since many productions want to experiment with projections.

This architectural problem hampers attempts to teach actors and singers to project vocally without shouting or injuring their voices. The problem is so acute that for our musical theatre productions normally opt to use body microphones on the singers. Some faculty view this practice as giving singers and actors a false sense of their own capacities for vocal power, teaching them to rely on technology rather than their innate abilities.

The fly system is up-to-date and in good working order. The stage floor needs to be resurfaced from the stage lift all the way through the scene shop for safety and to reduce floor noise at an estimated cost of \$20,000. The scene shop needs some power tool upgrades, most notably a replacement to the old radial arm saw with a modern combination miter saw at a cost of \$1,000.

The stage needs a new Marley floor. Currently in the works for capital improvements are a Rigging Safety Inspection, Fire Curtain Inspection, Acoustics Analysis, and addressing the outside of the theatre. It currently is hidden behind trees. The department is looking at ways to make a more inviting pathway to the theatre.

Warren Auditorium was the original main stage venue for the Department before Person Theatre was opened in 1990. Warren was renovated in 2002 and is now used primarily as a lecture hall for large General Education classes. Theatre Arts teaches its large GE class, THAR 160A/B here. The space now includes Internet connected MAC and PC computers, DVD and VCR players, and digital projection on a large screen, and a microphone system for instructional use.

The venue has 230-seat, a 32x 18 proscenium arch and a stage house of 52x25. Curtains are dead hung, except for the show curtain. The upstage black curtain has a stain on it and should be replaced. The space needs include a cleaning of all seats, new carpet, new main curtain and legs, new cyclorama, and a new sound system. The Department occasionally uses this space for public performances.

Ives 80 is a dance studio, one of two studios used by the Dance Program —the other is PE 1. It features a sprung wood floor that was sanded and varnished in 2006. There is a mirror that runs 36 along one wall and we could use a curtain track with black curtains to cover it for some kinds of acting and dance work. The space has a low ceiling and is almost too small (48x25) for any technique class to occupy: therefore it is impossible to do large lifts or partnering work. Because it has no windows and little ventilation it is often too hot for comfortable work. In the Dance Program the room is used for rehearsals of small dance pieces and a place for dance instructors to prep their technique classes. The sound system is a portable boom box that is cabled to a steel shelving unit. Still it is often stolen or jammed and needs replacing regularly. This space is used for break out sections, lecture courses that have embedded movement into their course. It is also used quite a bit by clubs on campus.

PE 1 is a very spacious converted gym (84x 44) and has beautiful wood floors which most love dancing on. This studio is where the dance program lives, and where actors take their Foundations class as part of the Block. However, there is little to no natural lighting. Capital Improvements since 2009 in PE1 include a new bamboo sprung floor, upgraded lighting and upgraded heating/venting. Though the heater is quite loud and can often impair teaching. Heating is tied to the University wide system so users have no independent control except to turn the loud blowers on or off. The room still needs to be painted and a set of retractable drapes installed to cover the dance mirrors. Estimate cost for new drapes and labor to install them is \$10,000 - \$12,000. A new sound system was installed in 2008 and is a wonderful enhancement to the aesthetic experience of teaching, performing and viewing dance. The Department no longer uses the space for public performance.

Ives 119 is a 150-seat concert hall/ rehearsal room/ classroom that measures 54x 55 with a stage area of approximately 30x 36. It has a dead hung lighting grid in its 18 ceiling.

This space is a dedicated acting studio that can also be used for more intimate performances than those given in Person Theatre. Capital improvements in this studio include a built in projector, mechanical screen and soft legs to create various options for acting lab work. The space is a wonderful experimental performance space that has been used at least once a year for small productions.

Ives 76 is a “Black Box” that was created out of two classrooms and has 28x 12x 6” raised stage area and seating for 50 on risers. The ceiling is 10-6” high with a dead hung lighting grid above both seats and stage. This space has had significant improvements; all black soft goods/legs were replaced, dimmers were replaced and increased to 24. A computer was added for sound cue work for student learning and a Clear Com capability was added for better communication between front of the house and backstage. Occasionally faculty mount shows in the space as well.

Ives 46 is a laboratory/classroom for the Technical Theatre Program. Unlike classrooms that have individual chairs with desks, 46 is a classroom that has ten 2.5x5 tables as desks allowing for large paper layouts for draft work and renderings. The tables can fold up against a wall to allow the room to have space to layout large flats or drops. This also works when students do lighting projects. The space recently added a light grid rig from the ceiling to allow for hands on lighting projects and presentation. Up to seven sewing machines are brought in for sewing projects and a LCD projector are used for student presentations and for teaching.

The space could use some small upgrades. A sink or water for clean up would be very helpful to keep the class out of the restroom facilities. Right now the students go up one level to use the old scene shop sink. More electrical power would allow students to work simultaneously as opposed to working in a cue. The Technical Professor would like to bring in small power tools to help with model construction and projects or be allowed to use the old scene shop as a construction room for projects and clean up.

## **b. Financial Resources**

The Department is financed in a number of ways:

- Permanent faculty lines and part time allocation for course offerings
- Evert B. Person Endowment and other scholarship accounts income for student talent scholarships and professional residencies
- Instructional Related Activities (IRA) to support student assistants in the Theatre Arts office, scene and costume shops; production budgets; recruiting and marketing efforts, and general operation expenses
- Box Office receipts used to maintain the physical infrastructure for our performance venues and provide technology to our classrooms

The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance relies heavily on part time faculty for specific expertise in the field and for diversity of voice, also essential for arts education.

## **Effect on individual concentrations**

The Dance Program currently has a number of excellent part time faculty to replace the 12 units per year from the full time dance faculty who is currently chair of the department and to provide expertise and diversity in the classroom.

This is also the case for the Director of the Acting program who will be in his fourth year of an annual 8-unit buyout to serve as the Director of Sustainability for the University. This buy-out allow the department to hire expert teachers in the Acting Program.

In a small department with so few full time tenure track faculty, we consistently work beyond a reasonable faculty workload for University and departmental service and to meet our goals of providing a Theatre Arts major and minor, 4 different concentrations (acting, technical theatre and dance) and numerous General Education courses.

**Essential need for expertise of part time faculty in the Performing Arts:**

In all areas of the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance, adjunct faculty are critical and core to our mission. We have one full-time tenure track position in acting, one in technical theatre, one in theatre studies, two in dance, and one retired tenure track faculty in theatre studies who is in the second year of FERP. We teach a broad range of courses from history, analysis and criticism, General Education classes, and skills classes including acting, voice, contemporary dance, a range of key dance styles, costumes, lighting, and set design and education classes. To expect one person to be the sole teacher of their discipline – effectively teaching theory, history and practice of dance, drama or technical theatre - is comparable to asking one person to teach all History of Art classes (Ancient to Contemporary), and all the studio classes in drawing and painting. What is essential to the integrity of a performing arts educational department is a faculty with complementary expertise who can bring the range of experiences and knowledge to students in the specific disciplines of drama, dance and technical theatre. Ideally, this would be a complement of several full time faculty in each discipline, with adjunct faculty for specific expertise. Without a full palette of expertise for each discipline, students will not receive the excellent education that the University proudly claims we offer.

**Essential need for multiple perspectives and diversity the part time faculty bring to the department of Theatre Arts and Dance:** Not only do students need the valuable expertise available only from the part time faculty, but for an education in the arts in todays multi-cultural, multi-perspective world, the students need to have more than one voice in their education. Regardless of the skill or capacity of the one full time faculty member in that discipline, it is still one perspective. For students to form their own views, they need more than one point of view to bounce up against. With only one tenure track position in three out of the four disciplines within the department, only one artistic perspective is available to students. It's comparable to eating only green beans – morning, noon and night. Green beans are healthy and delicious – but an exclusive diet of green beans does not make for a healthy balanced diet.

**Need for adequate faculty allocation to fulfill our commitment to Instructionally Related Activities.** The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance is a key player in the use of IRA (or Instructionally Related Activities) funds. This serves the University through productions and activities available to the entire student body. All SSU students are admitted for free to our productions, which serve as a vital opportunity for student life on campus.

The SSU Fee Advisory committee states in its “Criteria For Defining A Program As An Instructionally Related Activity”:

“Consistent with Section 89230 eligible activities are those that are considered to be essential to a quality educational program and an important instructional experience for any student enrolled in the program. Sonoma State University Fee Advisory Committee places a high value on program effectiveness and accountability. Establishment of learning outcomes and a plan for assessment of learning outcomes is an important element of IRA eligibility and funding consideration.

C. Music and dance performance: costs to provide experience in individual and group performance, including recitals, before audiences and in settings sufficiently varied to familiarize students with the performance facet of the field.

D. Drama and musical productions: basic support of theatrical and operatic activities sufficient to permit experience not only in actual performance but production, direction, set design and other elements considered a part of professional training in these fields.”<sup>13</sup>

When we accept these funds, we need adequate instructional resources to deliver on our promise of “quality educational programs” and the expectations of “program effectiveness” that come with acceptance of the resources. Inadequate faculty resources do not allow for adequate instruction in these highly visible performances.

Faculty—The issue of workload is a contentious topic with the campus community. Each full-time faculty member teaches 12 units and advises for 3—making for a 15- unit per semester load. For many SSU tenure line instructors such an appointment load means teaching three 4-unit classes each semester. In the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance 12 instructional units often requires full or proportional instruction in as many as 7 or 8 courses. One reason for this has to do with the CSU code for activity classes. 2-unit courses earn faculty 2.6 WTU, and 1-unit classes earn 1.3 units. Most of our acting, dance and technical courses are coded in this way. Another reason has to do with the fact that many of our classes are shared with other Theatre Arts instructors. Shared classes tend to increase the workload for each instructor, because instructors must co-ordinate and communicate with the other instructors on an ongoing basis. Co-teaching requires alignment of pedagogy, content and teaching styles in a manner that is cohesive and doesn’t confuse students. Classes that are often shared in the Department are THAR 202, 203, 373, 400, and sometimes Contemporary Dance Levels I and II and Choreography II. The Acting and Dance Blocks (THAR 310/410, THAR 320/420) positively depend on such co-teaching. In both these programs effective instruction (and it is highly effective) comes from the careful weaving together of multiple instructor influences into a

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<sup>13</sup> SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE -  
CRITERIA FOR DEFINING A PROGRAM AS AN INSTRUCTIONALLY RELATED ACTIVITY  
10/20/2006

tapestry of experience that moves students to do their very best, and to express themselves to their fullest capacities through the mediums of acting and dance.

Performers must develop multiple skill sets to support individual processes for creativity. The Department has often chosen to provide access to many instructional voices and methods rather than to take a more manageable route where one instructor teaches many things—even things s/he is less qualified to teach. The positive aspect of our decisions has been that students in co-instructed classes have access to the most qualified instructor for specific content, styles and methods. This kind of instruction takes time because it must be hand-made, as it were. Computer programs and lecture courses cannot substitute. But it is a heavier workload.

For example, at SSU, faculty who teach production classes (i.e., directing a play, musical or dance) are compensated with a total of 3.9 WTU for the semester. In truth, a director may spend 250 hours in the semester in rehearsal, production meetings, etc. (By comparison, a typical 2-unit activities course that earns faculty 2.6 units of WTU meets for 4 hours per week totaling 60 hours per semester.) The CSU mandated CS code for production classes provides 9 WTU to compensate for this work. Many years ago in the department, we changed the category for these classes from production to an activity, changing compensation to 3.9 units rather than 9 for the sole reason that if we gave faculty their full compensation for teaching this class, we would not have enough teaching units left to cover the curriculum. This CS code change has been in place for many years now at SSU, effectively causing full time and part time faculty who direct to work significantly below CSU mandated compensation. What appeared to be a strategic choice in lean times has proven to be a detrimental impediment to providing fair compensation for faculty in theatre arts.

### **Center for Performing Arts (CPA) and Department of Theatre Arts & Dance Staff**

CPA provides technical, facility, marketing, equipment maintenance, and staff and administrative support for all performance and production related activities of the Theatre Arts and Music departments.

The Center for Performing Arts has gone through significant change and restructuring since 2009 all to the benefit of the department, school and university. A new CPA Production Manager was filled in 2009 but was moved to the new Green Music Center, leaving Theatre Arts & Dance and the Music Departments without a PM. A new CPA PM dedicated to Theatre Arts & Dance and Music started in February of 2011. Part of this job required the new hire to look at how the staff was being utilized and restructure with the growth of both departments. Because of this new hire many positive changes occurred.

CPAs Production Manager works under the general supervision of the Dean of Arts and Humanities, with day-to-day direction provided by the Chairs of both the Music Department and the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. The PM works with faculty, staff, and students to fulfill the educational mission and artistic goals of the School and the University. Per the Production Managers job description

The PM plays a key role in planning and oversight of production coordination, including budgeting, scenery construction, scheduling of staff and venues, and



facilities management in collaboration with a team of experienced and diverse faculty, performing art professionals and students in a conservatory-style liberal arts university program. In coordination with the department chairs and the School Office, the PM actively participates in managing the production budgets, including labor and equipment, providing production cost estimates and securing and scheduling personnel, equipment, and services as needed. Specifically, the PM will interpret and also insure that provisions in artist contracts and technical riders in performance companies are met. The PM must plan in advance, coordinate with all involved, performers and participants, and implement required elements of multiple kinds of productions in various venues, sometimes concurrent with one or even a few others. The PM delegates on-site supervision of each event to other performing arts production staff. The PM manages all areas of production including, staff, budget, schedule, facilities, events and guest artists.

### **CPA Staff**

The Center for Performing Arts is the producing umbrella for all productions, concerts and student presentations created in the Departments of Music and Theatre Arts & Dance. It has a Production Manager who oversees a CPA Analyst, Part-Time Marketing Coordinator, Technical Director, Two Senior Scene Shop Technical Supervisors, Two Senior Shop Costume Supervisors CPA Tech Is, IIs and IIIs, CPA Accompanists, CPA Piano Technician. Since our last Program Review was completed in 2008, changes, additions and restructuring in staffing needs have occurred to address changes on campus and within CPA itself.

Those shifts and additions are listed below.

NEW CPA Analyst: Scheduler/FOH and other production related responsibilities; this full time position combined two part-time positions:

- PT/Box Office & Front of House Staff: In the past CPA had oversight of all box office and front of house in relation to Music & Theatre & Dance events, but there have been some new venues mostly at the GMC that have changed and shifted responsibilities
- Box Office: The University has opened two brand new concert halls (Weill Hall and Schroeder Hall at the Green Music Center) within the last few years. The University decided to pull all box offices into a University Box Office model and support all events on campus centrally.
- Front of House Staffing: For the new spaces, Weill and Schroeder Hall the University has created a Front of House Team that supports those performances.
- Person Theatre and Ives Hall Front of House: CPA has retained oversight of both Ives Hall and Person Theatre Performances.
- P/T Scheduler: In the past CPA had a p/t Scheduler that managed both the seven self-produced productions in Theatre Arts & Dance and the seventy-five self-produced concerts for Music for one academic year. Due to the changes of additional venues, CPA has increased its scheduling needs to support Schroeder Hall and Music Building set-ups.

NEW Part-Time Marketing Coordinator for Theatre Arts & Dance: This position was unfilled in 2008 and was handled by the departments chair as an overload. This position has offered great support to the departments production life, organizing advertising, marketing, program, press photos, press releases that were in the past done by the director of the production or the faculty. This position also has focused on campus life and exposure and has developed many new outreach ideas to increase audience attendance and engagement in the Departments main-stage season.

CPA Technician Is: Due to the expanded role CPA has been asked to fill in the University's new performance and sometimes classroom spaces, there are now about 15 Tech Is and 10 student techs that support classes in Schroeder Hall and other concerts/productions in all CPA venues.

CPA Technician IIs: There is a concerted effort to increase our Tech II to at least three (Scene Shop, Costume Shop, Music venues) to support oversight of the newly updated Walford Sound Studio and Schroeder Hall.

CPA Technician IIIs: This position has the greatest oversight of projects. CPA has three Tech IIIs, an increase from two in 2008.

CPA in-house Photographer: This position has been moved to University Affairs. The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance hires an outside professional photographer based in San Francisco to do all publicity photography. This addition has produced a unified and professional appearance to department and production images.

CPA Accompanists: There has been two accompanist per semester for dance and two for the music department.

CPA Piano Technician: This position remains part-time, overseeing fifty plus pianos in Person Theatre, Ives Hall, PE1 (Dance Studio), and the Music Building classroom labs.

### **Department of Theatre Arts & Dance Staff**

In addition to its Chair, the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance is supported by a full-time Administrative Analyst whose wide range of duties include all the usual Department recording-keeping and coordination (class schedules and rosters, faculty teaching assignments, budget maintenance, communication with students and parents, student and faculty records, etc.). Sometimes there is an overwhelming array of administrative responsibilities unique to the theatre performance area administration of a sizeable endowment and scholarship program, complex scheduling of a high-maintenance curriculum taught by a long roster of a part time faculty.) Our AA fields questions and tends to a myriad of problems presented by students and faculty alike, and does so amid the continual maelstrom of production frenzy. There is no doubt that Theatre & Dances wonderfully dedicated Administrative Analyst (together with Music AA) is by far the busiest on campus.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR PRODUCTIONS**

The Production Manager worked with the Chair of the department, the faculty and the directors of the shops to create a Long-Term Strategic Plan for Productions. This group worked initially with an outside facilitator to begin to create a plan. Previous to the work with the professional leadership coach both the faculty and season planning meetings occurred together in the same meeting.

The chair of the department separated those two meetings so that each meeting could focus solely on the needs of the faculty and solely on the needs of the production side of the department. We believe great work and successes came from this rescheduling and from the initial retreat. During a one year period the group focused on agreements and celebrated accomplishments, created and continued a 4+ planning grid, worked with a decision making matrix (identified decider, decision-making option and input team), each faculty member identified the ideal 4-year student experience for their focus area in terms of performance.

The department works diligently to schedule the performance season one year in advance to create an opportunity for the faculty to plan and partner in ways that were not possible when scheduling was less than 6 months in advance. This allows the PM to license and contract guest designers and directors both on and off campus in a more professional manner. This planning has created a more robust opportunity for staff/faculty mentoring with students. The departments fall shows are designed by the end of the previous spring, allowing the shops to build over the summer. One powerful idea/opportunity that came out of this restructuring and separating of meetings, was that it now allowed faculty and staff time for creative brainstorming, conversations around play/musical/dance ideas and around themes. This fosters trust and collaboration and time for input and reflection.

The department schedules a Season Announcement event in the fall (one year out). This has created a culture of inclusion and excitement. The students are able to read and research the plays that have been chosen and can discuss with faculty/staff. This then aligns with the technical students Portfolio Review, allowing directors and faculty to work in concert with the students on what show they are hoping to work on or align student designers to skills or challenges in their respective area. This all is to support the students experience at SSU, with a focus on breadth and depth in the curriculum and aligning their needs with the mission/vision of the department.

### **STUDENT INTEGRATION and ENGAEGMENT**

CPA has been a key part of a campus initiative/shift to increase art awareness (fine art, dance, theatre, spoken word, music). CPA members (PM and CPA Analyst) and faculty sit on a working group that has generated a two and five year plan to create clearer “points of entry” into the arts. This working group was inspired by a recent WolfBrown study that worked with nine universities on how to increase students’ awareness and interest in the arts. The SSU working group enlisted a group of Public Relations students from the Department of Communications to conduct a survey over a six-month period to find out what the barriers were to coming to see performances or visit galleries on campus.

Key Initiatives:

Focused on freshmen

- Made sure all freshmen stepped into as many of the performing art spaces as possible during their Summer Orientation
- Created a short promo film that is shown at Summer Orientation called *Go Play* that explains what is happening on campus, why and how they can participate.

Focused on better communication to all students on campus

- More sandwich boards
- Large banners
- Tabling in front of the student center
- Created campaigns like "Play it Forward" and "1FriendFree"
- Begon a partnership with the Weill Hall Series to allow students/classes to see productions as part of their learning

Focused on Faculty engagement

- Our Theatre Studies Associate Professor receives a course release that allows him to devote his time to outreach, communicating to faculty in all subjects and disciplines all the performance opportunities.
- Started incorporating performances in class syllabi
- Created a cross-disciplinary guest speaker initiative amongst departments and schools, art to business, business to theatre, music to math, etc.

## **G: ASSESSMENT** <sup>14</sup>

The Theatre Arts Department uses three primary strategies for assessing student learning at the program level:

### **1. Acting and Dance Block Assessment**

#### **Description:**

In the Junior and Senior Level Block classes (THAR 310 A and B, 410 A and B for Dance; 320 A and B, 420 A and B for Acting and 410A/B for Technical Theatre) learning assessments are on-going over the semester based on faculty and peer review of work at hand from week to week. Each concentration provides a summative evaluation (as distinct from grades) at the end of each semester. Each student meets with the core faculty member(s) who have been teaching that semester for evaluation of the student's work and to set learning goals for future courses work. These assessments are written and kept in the student files, and students are given copies.

#### **Justification:**

The Junior and senior level Block classes culminate the learning experience for the Theater Arts major concentrating in dance, drama or technical theatre. They have already taken the core courses and by the last semester of the senior year, have completed the major requirements. This evaluation process enables us to track their progress during the

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<sup>14</sup> See individual program self-studies above for programmatic assessments strategies.

last 4 semesters of their major requirements, and their senior year final semester evaluation is an effective way to assess departmental learning objectives.

## **2. Achievement in Productions and Auditions**

### **Description:**

Faculty members who audition students and direct student work in production and performance are constantly assessing the quality of students' work. While an assessment form may be useful (see included), in the Performing Arts assessment is typically more qualitative rather than quantitative, and requires a more comprehensive human fabric of knowledge than forms can calculate. Observing the various productions of student work (3 to 5 main stage shows and numerous student works) is the most effective tool of assessing how well the department is meeting their educational objectives.

As applicable, assessment of individual performer's production work is added to written Block Evaluations.

### **Justification:**

The culmination of a student's training is evident in the totality of the way that he or she auditions, designs, choreographs, stage manages, works backstage, rehearses, and/or performs. Engagement in the process of production reveals the student's acquisition of knowledge and skills in the classroom, and the student's understanding and abilities, including critical thinking, analysis and synthesis, ability to work collaboratively, acceptance of others' perspectives, and communication skills as well as the technical skills of his or her specific concentration. We can measure our progress toward our goals by observing how many of our students progress in their abilities to handle bigger and more challenging roles and responsibilities as they move from freshmen to senior year. To some extent, success in audition and performance process gives direct feedback to the student and teacher alike how well the educational goals have been met.

## **3. Embedded assessment**

- Description: For targeted classes, exams will include questions that will ascertain whether departmental goals are being met.
- Justification: Specific classes are often the most effective place to measure how well educational goals are being met.

The information generated through end of semester assessment of Block students, productions, auditions, and embedded questions in exams is summarized and reported to department faculty in faculty meetings within discrete programs and shared across programs through the Department's Scholarship Award Committee, bi-weekly faculty meeting, season planning meetings annual departmental and faculty retreats held each summer.

- Evaluations of seniors in the Advanced Dance, Acting and Technical Theatre Block take place midway and at the end of each semester.

- Faculty retreats, as described in Section E 1, take place periodically, most recently in January of 2016. The next retreat will likely take place in late summer 2017 to consider Program Review recommendations.

These might include:

- Development of the four educational tracks: acting, dance, technical theatre, and theatre studies
- Tenure track hires, should the department be permitted to conduct a search in the coming year
- Cultural Integration Initiative
- Organization and delivery of Introduction to the History of Drama and Dance (THAR 202 & THAR 203)
- Organization and delivery of Theatre in Action course (THAR 300)

Adding additional assessment tools and the resultant workload is beyond what is doable or appropriate to expect from 5 tenure line faculty in the near term. In the longer term, with appropriate training and support (including release time to organize and implement embedded assessments) the Department is confident it possesses the capability to expand its assessment tools and feedback loops. Our most effective assessment tool remains faculty and peer evaluation of student work in performance and studio courses, development in rehearsals and public performances and portfolio reviews.

## **H: ACTION PLAN<sup>15</sup>**

In each of the 4 self studies under “action plan” are items each concentration would like to accomplish or add. For the foreseeable future

- Complete tenure track hire in Acting /Voice and Movement (2016-17)
- See a tenure track hire in Design, and use opportunity to refocus Technical Theatre Program
- Complete Acting Program revision in 2016-17, implement in 2017-18
- Begin Dance Program revision 2017-18, implement in 2018-19
- Further implement Cultural Integration Initiative in 2016-17, adding 3 residencies in collaboration with the HUB.
- Complete course revisions for THAR 202, THAR 203, THAR 300, and THAR 400

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<sup>15</sup> See individual program self-studies above for programmatic action plans.