

Unit Plan for Assessing and Improving Student Learning in Degree Programs

Unit: Theatre

Unit Head approval: Tom Mitchell

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SECTION 1: PAST ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Brief description of changes or improvements made in your unit as the result of assessment results since 2000.

The basic methodology of assessment has not materially changed since 2000, however the use of new technology such as email and the internet has changed how we disseminate the information. For example, alumni activity is shared immediately with the student body via list serve emails, and we are currently working a face book group for all incoming freshmen as well as on putting the alumni survey on our new website so we can use the current technology to look out at our graduates as well as allowing prospective students to look in.

SECTION 2: REVISED ASSESSMENT PLAN

(a) PROCESS: Brief description of the process followed to develop or revise this assessment plan.

A review of all available materials related to the activities of the department was undertaken by the Interim Director of Undergraduate Education. Then the pertinent information from these materials was extracted and prepared for review by selected faculty members. After the faculty members provided their responses, a final plan was prepared and reviewed by the department's executive committee.

(b) STUDENT OUTCOMES: List Unit's student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).

Undergraduate

Undergraduate students must demonstrate their ability to understand the basic production process in all areas of theatre; to become familiar with historical and cultural dimensions of theatre; to develop an understanding and appreciation of the concept of teamwork required for successful theatrical productions; to make informed assessments of quality in theatrical activities; to communicate effectively relative to the student's specific concentration; to understand the expectations and demands of the profession.

Outcomes for BFA in Acting: to prepare students for careers as professional actors.

Outcomes for BFA in Design/Technology/Management: to prepare students for entry level positions in the profession in the areas of design, technology, or stage management or to prepare them to enter graduate programs for additional training prior to enter the profession.

Outcomes for BFA in Theatre Studies: to provide students the opportunity to focus their interests and the opportunity for each student to select a specific area in which he or she can concentrate in order to prepare to enter a graduate program for additional training or to enter the profession.

Graduate

Graduate students must demonstrate their ability to: to understand the expectations and the demands of the profession, to develop research skills required for the specific concentration, to make informed assessments of quality in theatrical activities, to communicate effectively relative to the student's specific concentration, to perform at a professionally competent level or to present scholarship of high quality, to demonstrate individual creative or scholarly talents which will enhance the profession.

Outcomes for MFA in Acting: to prepare students for careers as professional actors.

Outcomes for MFA in Design: to prepare students for careers as professional designers.

Outcomes for MFA in Technology: to prepare students for careers as professional technical directors or technology specialists.

Outcomes for MFA in Stage Management: to prepare students for careers as professional stage managers or production coordinators.

Outcomes for MA in Theatre: to prepare students at an intermediate level for a career as a theatre teacher/scholar.

Outcomes for PHD. in Theatre: to prepare students at an advanced level for a career as a theatre teacher/scholar.

Through their teaching and advising the faculty of the department reinforce the competencies required of all college students, such as the ability to engage successfully in critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relations, speaking, and writing.

(c) MEASURES AND METHODS USED TO MEASURE OUTCOMES:

A. Capstone Activity: Each student entering the department must interview, present a portfolio, audition, or present written work, or a combination of these. With this information there is a starting point and an initial assessment of a student's abilities, and at the conclusion of a student's education there is a final project or activity reviewed by the faculty which demonstrates the achievement of the expected outcomes since the

student's arrival in the department. The various majors and programs have different requirements, but examples include: Showcase presentations for actors, portfolio reviews for designers and technicians; formal interviews for stage managers; independent projects in directing, playwriting, dramaturgy or theatre management for theatre studies students; comprehensive exam for master of arts' students; and dissertations for PHD students.

B. Intermediate Review: In each program, the students are formally reviewed after an initial time in the program. These reviews focus on the students' progress in their major and on the achievement of the expected outcomes as demonstrated by grades, written and oral reviews of their participation in the production program (except for MA and PHD students), and individual presentations and/or examinations.

C. Campus Information: Each year the campus surveys graduating seniors about their perceptions of their development and provides this information to the department. The ICES reports for each faculty member are shared with the Head who analyzes the results to ascertain if students' appear to believe they are making progress towards achieving selected outcomes.

D. Alumni Survey: Each year all alumni are sent a questionnaire requesting information about their activities. Information from these forms is then shared with the faculty and other alumni to help judge the level of success of graduates and analyzed for data that may reveal trends to which the faculty should respond.

E. Informal Data: Because of the public nature of the theatre profession, newspapers and other periodicals are reviewed regularly for reports of activities of alumni. These items provide valuable information about the success, or lack of success, of former students in achieving work in the profession.

F. Initial Employment or Graduate School Acceptance: The response to the annual Showcase in Chicago, graduate school acceptances for undergraduates and MA students, offers for summer theatre work, offers of positions in the profession and education for design/technology/stage management and MA/PHD students, and internship acceptances for students in all undergraduate majors provides a measurement of achievement.

F. Accreditation: Every ten years, 2007 being the most recent review, the department seeks accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). In addition, if the department makes fundamental changes in its curricula at any time, it must immediately seek approval from NAST. Successful accreditation requires meeting established and accepted goals which are compatible with the department's mission and outcomes.

SECTION 3 : PLANS FOR USING RESULTS

(a) **PLANS: Brief description of plans to use assessment results for program improvement.**

Each program of study within the department has either a chair or a coordinator. These individuals are either directly involved in the processes used to measure the development of their students or they receive regular responses to assessments by other faculty of their students. As a result, this information is used, in some situations almost immediately, to advise students on their programs of study.

The information provided by alumni and derived from off-campus sources assists the faculty in determining the merit of the curriculum and each year the faculty has regular and continuous reviews of their courses to ensure that they meet the needs of the students seeking to enter the profession.

(b) TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

The Department of Theatre is already fully engaged in assessment as a regular part of the faculty's activities.