

# National Association of Schools of Theatre

## SELF-STUDY

In *Format-A*

Presented in consideration by the  
NAST Commission on Accreditation

By  
The University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
(479) 575-2953

<http://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/theatre/>

Degrees and/or programs for which Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing are sought:

Bachelor of Arts in Theatre – Performance Concentration  
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre – Design & Technology Concentration  
Master of Fine Arts – Acting  
Master of Fine Arts – Directing  
Master of Fine Arts – Playwriting  
Master of Fine Arts – Costume Design  
Master of Fine Arts – Lighting Design  
Master of Fine Arts – Scene Design

The data submitted herewith are certified correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Reporting Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title of Reporting Officer)

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# **PREFACE**

## **Our Purpose**

In addition to seeking national accreditation through NAST, the process and completion of this study will provide a comprehensive review for program improvement.

## **Our History & Location**

Founded in 1871 as a land-grant college and state university, the University of Arkansas established its campus on a hilltop overlooking the Ozark Mountains. There were few facilities and little money that first academic year, but the eight students and three faculty members who gathered for classes in 1872 showed the same dedication to learning and commitment to excellence that has carried the University of Arkansas into the 21st century.

More than 140 years later, the university's enrollment is more than 26,000 and its students represent all 50 states and 120 countries. The university is the state's foremost partner and resource for education and economic development. It serves as the major provider of graduate-level instruction in Arkansas. And its public service activities reach every county in Arkansas, throughout the nation, and around the world.

## **Our University**

A comprehensive public land-grant institution with a mission of teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement, should likewise have a comprehensive focus to guide its priorities—but a focus also rooted in the strengths of the institution and attuned to areas for continued growth and improvement. The University of Arkansas has long demonstrated its ability to attain greatness in these core mission areas and is poised to continue this trajectory to become an even better institution. The following priorities for the U of A were crafted through a collaborative process that involved meetings with faculty and staff in our academic units, discussions by committees of faculty and staff organized around our mission areas, and input from the academic deans and our students. These discussions included assessments of our strengths, challenges, opportunities and aspirations as an institution—the work was collaborative and imbued with a shared sense of optimism and excitement for the future of the University of Arkansas. From this input, eight priority areas have emerged, which are briefly described here:

### **1. Advancing Student Success**

Maximizing the success of University of Arkansas students is our highest priority starting with their recruitment and ending with their transition to careers or further education. We will work to maximize the success of our students, with special attention to first-generation college-going Arkansans, by increasing financial assistance for those who need it, easing the transition into the university, improving retention and graduation rates, and providing career planning and career transition assistance.

### **2. Building a Collaborative and Innovative Campus**

The University of Arkansas is a comprehensive university with many individual units and disciplines that contribute to teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement. The world of higher education, however, is becoming increasingly more

interdisciplinary and collaborative in these mission areas, which reflect the world around us. To be a leader, we will work to foster a university environment that embraces collaboration and interdisciplinary pursuits while also stimulating innovation in our approaches to creating and disseminating knowledge.

### **3. Enhancing our Research and Discovery Mission**

The creation of new knowledge and creative activities is a defining feature of a research university. We will work to increase and enhance our research activity across the broad spectrum of areas that make up this comprehensive university and in the process, define signature areas where we can excel as an institution.

### **4. Enriching Campus Diversity and Inclusion**

We believe that diversity should permeate the very fabric of the University of Arkansas. We will therefore work to diversify along many dimensions our faculty, staff and students and at the same time create an environment and atmosphere that is welcoming and inclusive for all.

### **5. Investing in Faculty Excellence**

A great university recruits, hires and retains a great faculty. To ensure that we can hire and retain an outstanding faculty, we will work to increase the salaries of existing faculty, provide competitive salaries for new faculty and for staff that provide support to faculty and students, enhance support for teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement, and provide a supportive environment for academic pursuits.

### **6. Promoting Innovation in Teaching and Learning**

High quality faculty teaching and student learning experiences have been defining features of the University of Arkansas for many years. We will work to maintain this high level of teaching and learning and at the same time promote the creation of timely and innovative academic programs and learning experiences, domestically and internationally.

### **7. Reaffirming our Land-grant and Flagship Responsibilities**

Our current chancellor has made this a top priority as we move forward. The University of Arkansas is unique in that it is both the state's flagship university and a land-grant institution. With this unique status comes a responsibility to engage, collaborate, and provide outreach to the citizens, businesses, governmental and civic entities of the state to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. We will define what it means to be a land-grant and flagship university in the 21st century and augment our outreach and engagement efforts, broadly defined, across Arkansas.

### **8. Strengthening Graduate Education**

Graduate education is an important part of a research university and graduate students make significant contributions to the research and teaching missions of the university; and key to the university's impact on economic development. We will work to enhance and improve graduate education at the University of Arkansas by intensifying the recruitment and boosting support of

graduate students as well as making sure that our programs are preparing graduate students for a variety of productive careers.

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## **SECTION I. PURPOSES AND OPERATIONS**

### **A. Purpose(s) of the Institution and Theatre Unit**

#### *Mission, goals, and objectives*

The stated mission of the University of Arkansas Fayetteville campus is found in the annual catalog:

*The mission of the University of Arkansas is to provide and internationally competitive education for undergraduate and graduate students in a wide spectrum of disciplines; contribute new knowledge, economic development, basic and applied research and creative activity; and provide service to academic/professional disciplines and society, all aimed at fulfilling its public land-grant mission to serve Arkansas and beyond as a partner, resource, and catalyst.*

The stated mission of The University of Arkansas' Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences is found on their home page (Fulbright.uark.edu):

*The mission of the College comes from the writings of Senator J. William Fulbright: "...the highest function of higher education is the teaching of things in perspective, toward the purposes of enriching the life of the individual, cultivating the free and inquiring mind, and advancing the effort to bring reason, justice, and humanity into the relations of men and nations."*

The mission of the U of A is rooted in the authority granted by the State of Arkansas.

#### **Departmental Mission:**

##### **The Mission of the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre Program:**

*The Department of Theatre strives to create an environment in a diverse and international university community where students discover, experience and celebrate what theatre does best:*

*Inspire the imagination  
Illuminate the spirit and  
Awaken the intellect*

#### **Departmental Goals:**

In support of the mission, the theatre faculty has established the following 6 goals.

1. Offer a challenging undergraduate theatre education within a liberal art setting.
2. Provide students of demonstrated talent, skills, and intellectual abilities with a rigorous graduate education in preparation for professional careers.

3. To serve the campus and community by creating and presenting a diverse season of significant live theatre where we train student and engage audiences through high quality production.
4. Provide resources and support for the scholarly and creative activities of faculty and students.
5. Foster a creative atmosphere that will encourage faculty and students to take intellectual and artistic risks.
6. Develop cultural diversity in the Department of Theatre.
7. Continue to cultivate a broad donor and theatre support network.

### **Departmental Objectives:**

Theatre Department objectives, particularly in regard to the professional faculty orientation of providing strong leadership as teachers and active creative and scholarly researchers, would seem to be consistent with the mission statements of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences and the University.

More Specific departmental needs and near-term objectives that seem particularly relevant given our size, profile, location, and mission include:

1. Facilities improvements and additions – the main facility (Fine Arts Center) lacks adequate infrastructure, rehearsal, classroom, and storage space, and given its age, is in dire need of renovation/restoration.
2. The consideration of “School” status for a growing department at a comprehensive, “flagship” campus.
3. Faculty and professional staff lines, and in particular tenure-track positions, are missing in key areas.
4. Acquiring and designating full-time staff for public relations, development, and other production management responsibilities.

The program’s mission, goals, and objectives are aligned with the University’s given its student-centered and research based philosophy, along with its stated role as “the principal academic and cultural center of a multi-state region”. Additionally, the University’s mission supports “research and creative activities” and provides “an appreciation of the fine arts and humanities”.

At the beginning of each academic year, the theatre faculty engages in a 2-day retreat of meetings where we evaluate the departmental mission, goals and learning outcomes. All aspects of the program are discussed and reviewed including student learning, curricula, faculty loads, finances, procedures, productions, successes and needed improvements. Central to the discussions are quantitative results from student juries and qualitative responses from students during the end of the year majors’ meeting. After a careful review of all factors, the faculty updates and adjusts the program’s mission and goals and recommends curricular and budgetary changes to the administration.

## **B. Size and Scope (items 1-4)**

HEADS Report data in the Management Document Portfolio B. Size and Scope provide data on the current size of the department.

### **1. STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

As a unit within the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences in the state Land Grant, flagship institution, the Department of Theatre is a medium sized program. With a recent change to a Bachelor of Arts, Theatre with concentrations in both (1.) Performance and (2.) Design and Technology, specific enrollment data has not been made available yet.

#### *Degree Plan Enrollment (Fall 2016)*

Bachelor of Arts, Theatre – Performance Concentration – NA  
Bachelor of Arts, Theatre – Design and Tech Concentration – NA  
Bachelor of Arts, Theatre = 107

Master of Fine Arts – Acting	= 12
Master of Fine Arts – Directing	= 2
Master of Fine Arts – Playwriting	= 2
Master of Fine Arts – Costume Design	= 4
Master of Fine Arts – Lighting Design	= 3
Master of Fine Arts – Scene Design	= 2

Program growth, shared curricula, rotating course schedules and the efficient assignment of faculty have allowed for sufficient enrollments in all theatre classes and, at times, created enrollments that prompted crowding and therefore the creation of multiple sections.

Finally, it should be noted that as the University has grown slightly and consistently over the past several years. Enrollment was a total of 24,604 in 2011 and 29,806 in 2016. In the same time frame, the theatre program has gone from a high of 145 majors to approximately 107 majors.

### **2. FACULTY**

The theatre unit is comprised of 10 full-time tenure-track teaching faculty, 9 full-time non-tenure-track faculty (\* two of which are on a 3-year contract slated to end May 2019), 1 part time faculty instructor, (this varies passed on semester teaching needs), and 25 graduate assistants. 23 of the 25 graduate assistants are hard funded through the College of Arts and Sciences and 2 are funded through the Provost's Office and are not allocated directly to the Theatre unit. One specific area of concern due to minimal staffing is Theatre History/Criticism, with only one (full-time non-tenure-track) faculty member.

*See: MDP – I E ii & iii*

### Full-Time Faculty 2016/17

	History/Crit.	Performance	Design/Tech	Other
Jason Burrow		Musical Theatre Voice		Musical Direction
Susan Crabtree			Scene Painting	Professional Staff – props/paint
Mavourneen Dwyer		Voice/Period Styles		Director
Kate Frank		Alexander Technique/Directing		Director
Amy Herzberg		Acting & Musical Theatre		Director
Morgan Hicks	Theatre History			Director
Shawn Irish			Lighting & Design	Lighting Designer
Michael Landman		Directing/Acting		Director
Valerie Lane			Stage Tech I	Professional Staff – Costume Lab
Gail Leftwich		Dance		Choreographer
Patricia Martin			Costume Design/Tech	Vice Chair & Costume Designer
Jenny McKnight	Theatre App.	Acting		Director
Matthew Meers			Digital Tools	Professional Staff – Scene Lab
Tyler Micheel			Sound	Professional Staff Sound/Light ME
Joseph Millet	Theatre App.		Stage Management	Production Manager
Michael Riha	History of Decor		Scene Design	Chair & Set Designer
Les Wade	Theatre App.	Devised Theatre & Script Analysis		
John Walch		Playwriting		Playwright
Weston Wilkerson			Stage Tech II	Technical Director

### Part-Time Faculty 2016/17

	History/Crit.	Performance	Design/Tech	Other
Steven Marzolf	Theatre App.	Acting		Director

### 3. ADVANCED COURSES IN THEATRE

In general, undergraduate and graduate programs have sufficient enrollment and faculty support for viability, with dedicated advanced coursework as typically required by upper-level curricula

in degree programs. Undergraduates are permitted to take graduate courses in very rare cases – typically only if associated with Honors College courses and thesis preparation requirements. At the University of Arkansas, all students must complete 40 advanced credit hours. 3000-4000 level courses are designated as advanced. Advanced courses in theatre count towards the required forty hours and are sufficient in meeting degree requirements for all theatre degrees offered by the program.

### **Advanced Core Theatre Courses**

THTR 3001 – Production Practicum (2 credits)

THTR 3683 – Stage Management

THTR 4233 – History of Theatre I

THTR 4333 – History of Theatre II

### **Advanced Theatre Performance Courses**

\* THTR 2483 – Stage Movement for the Actor (Fa)

THTR 3433 – Stage Speech (Sp, Fa)

THTR 3653 – Directing I (Sp, Fa)

THTR 3663 – Acting III (Sp)

THTR 4063 – Playwriting (Sp)

THTR 4683 – Acting IV: Shakespeare Fundamentals (fa)

(Although this course is a 2000 level course, because there is a required prerequisite, it counts toward the 3000+ level course)

### **Advanced Theatre Design and Technology Courses**

\* THTR 2513 – Drafting for the Theatre (Even years, Fa)

THTR 3213 – Costume Design (Even years, Fa)

THTR 3733 – Lighting Design (Odd years, Sp)

THTR 3903 – Theatrical Makeup (Odd years, Sp)

THTR 4123 – Rendering for the Theatre (Even years, Sp)

THTR 4653 – Scene Design (Odd Years, Fa)

THTR 4833 – Scene Painting (Odd years, Sp)

(Although this course is a 2000 level course, because there is a required prerequisite, it counts toward the 3000+ level course)

### **Advanced Theatre Elective Courses**

THTR 3243 Costume Technology

THTR 3923H Honors Colloquium

THTR 399VH Honors Thesis

THTR 4153 Musical Theatre Performance

THTR 4463 African American Theatre History

THTR 490V Independent Study

THTR 491V Special Topics

THTR 492V Internship

THTR 4953 Theatre Study in Britain

Over the past several years' enrollment in theatre courses has been sufficient to support most advanced courses in theatre. To allow theatre faculty to take on more advanced courses, the University has assisted by adding part-time faculty to cover sections of the general core course: THTR 1003 – Theatre Appreciation and entry level acting courses. The MFA candidates in the performance track have also been trained to teach all of the Acting I (THTR 1683 & 1883) courses.

#### **4. PRODUCTION**

Attaining a professional standard has been and continues to be the goal for each production the Department of Theatre produces in its three primary spaces – the University Theatre mainstage, the Global Campus Theatre, and in our classroom theatre, Kimpel Hall Studio 404. Although our production facilities and faculty offices are spread across campus in three unique facilities, we strive to maintain the highest level of production continuity possible. Our scenic, lighting, properties, and costume laboratory spaces are all housed in the Fine Arts Center, which is also the home of our primary performance venue, the University Theatre. Production involvement by our full-time faculty is abundant and frequent. We also hire guest artists to serve in the roles of director, choreographer, designer, and in rare occasions, performer. Our graduate designers serve as leaders in our production laboratories under the direct supervision of our eight, full-time production faculty.

In regard to the process used for production selection, a committee, made up of at least 3 faculty members along with student representatives from the graduate and undergraduate program, make recommendations for the Department of Theatre's four show mainstage season. Careful consideration is given to student learning outcomes, scheduling, genre, artistic challenges, budget, current social and political influences, and other programmatic needs. As is the case in many programs, there are never enough roles and artistic and production positions for all students who are interested. However, we work very hard to accommodate as many capable students as possible with the understanding that we must maintain high standards in all production ventures. Once the committee's recommendations are solidified, they are then given to the chair and vice chair of the department for final approval. To supplement production and performance opportunities, the department supports an additional 2 - 4 smaller, studio productions each academic year. These productions and their scale and level of production support are determined based on the performance and production needs of the students once the mainstage productions have been cast and staffed. Additionally, students that are struggling academically in the program's curricula are usually not cast or assigned to running crews.

The department has maintained an established number of graduate (25) and undergraduate majors and minors (combined total ranging between 140-165) over the past 7-10 years, which

has allowed us to keep the number of productions at a consistent number each year. In 2008, we decided to restructure our mainstage productions from five per academic year to four to focus on quality as opposed to quantity. Concurrently, we increased our studio season offerings from 1 per semester to 2 smaller productions each semester allowing for more student participation and leadership. We now schedule up to ten events (between studio series, staged readings, and classroom projects) in any given academic year. The smaller scale studio productions allow more undergraduates the opportunity to “test the waters” by taking on production and performance opportunities at a more frequent rate.

With the ever-rising cost of production materials as well as the limited rehearsal and studio space available to the department, the faculty continues to evaluate and discuss the impact production has on student time and learning outcomes. We also continue to discuss the time-consuming nature and the need to balance it with teaching, service and professional research/creative ventures that are required of all tenure track faculty members. A history of our productions from 2012 to the present can be viewed in the appendix.

*Appendix H 1.*

**Areas for improvement and plans or means for addressing them.**

- Our primary area of concern that needs to be addressed is the issue of space. Additional information can be found below. We currently are at maximum capacity on room usage when it comes to classes, rehearsals, and production support. With an MFA company of 25 artists, we simply do not have studio and/or office space for any of the graduate students which tends to hamper their ability to consistently develop their projects and productions. A true, black box theatre with seating for approximately 150, Rehearsal spaces, designer studios, and offices are at the top of the list when it comes to space needs. See Appendix C for a space comparison with peer institutions.
- Hardworking, creative and collaborative, the theatre faculty is dedicated to every aspect of the program’s mission. This dedication has fueled the program’s success and growth; however, the reality is that more students means more classes, productions, and hours = a consistent overload for some theatre faculty and staff. Through ongoing meetings and discussions, the faculty will continue to work to create a balance of teaching, research/creativity and service; but when it comes to handling the size and scope of the program, serious consideration should be given to adding professional staff and faculty positions in support of costume technology and design, sound design, acting, and box office, marketing, and front of house management. As a Research I institution, the demands placed on tenure track faculty are great and with a teaching load that is somewhat higher than other departments within the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, we are continually challenged to find adequate time to dedicate to professional research/creative ventures. Most full-time, tenure track faculty at the U of A who are on a 40/40/20 work load teach 3 courses per semester with a course reassignment for directing, designing, or technical directing a mainstage or studio production. The Department of Theatre full-time tenure track faculty are still on a 3/3 course load while being held to very high standards in regard to research and creative work.
- Though the theatre program has maintained a steady number of majors, our declared minors have increased substantially. Only recently have we been tracking minors, but

there are currently 50+ declared Theatre minors. One speculative reason for the leveling and/or slight decrease in Theatre Majors can be attributed to three factors:

A.) recruits opting to attend community colleges to save money (our tuition continues to rise.

B.) increased competition from other Arkansas and out of state theatre programs that can offer competitive scholarships and

C.) the pressure from parents to enter a field that may espouse greater employment opportunity and financial stability. Although it hasn't been a great deterrent, the fact that Northwest Arkansas is quite far from Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, and other theatre hubs, being isolated in the middle of the country does seem to be a consideration for some potential students when holding interviews and providing tours of the campus. To respond to these challenges the theatre faculty has been exploring new recruiting opportunities and has begun to make more connections with high school and community college theatre programs within a 150-mile radius.

*See Appendix E 3.*

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## **C. Finances**

*See MDP C – Finances*

### **Program Budget**

The University of Arkansas' Department of Theatre has had a history of receiving excellent financial support from the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. Using a variety of funding options, the University has supported the program's mission by providing faculty salaries, Teaching Equipment and Laboratory Enhancement (TELE) funding for equipment and laboratory supplies, facilities, student travel, and repairs.

Several individuals are involved with the development and control of each year's budget. After annual review and planning, individual theatre faculty members make financial requests and recommendations to the department head, who then communicates those recommendations to the Dean of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences and so on until final financial decisions are made by the Chancellor and/or Provost.

The chair for the Department of Theatre has fiscal and reporting authority for all accounts in the department, but on a daily basis the theatre faculty coordinates production allocations, spending, and reconciling through the technical director (and Costume Lab Manager for all costume and makeup related record keeping) who serves as budget manager for all productions.

Reliable funding for the Theatre Program comes from four sources:

1. Departmental Maintenance Budgets
2. Course Fees – THTR Expendables Fee (new in the fall 2016)
3. Global Campus Revenue Sharing
4. TELE Fees (Teaching Equipment and Laboratory Enhancement)
5. Endowments and Patron Gifts

The theatre program has historically received a portion of state funding per the department's major academic fund. As a state account, the amount to work with has been consistent over the

past 20+ years. Allocated funds from the Departmental Maintenance Budget have always covered theatre faculty and staff salaries, program telephones, long distance, computers, travel and copier services. Depending on a variety of factors, some Theatre Maintenance funding has provided wages for student workers, some equipment and consumable supplies.

The Fiscal Year 2015 Maintenance budget was \$1,278,837 for theatre salaries (sans benefits), \$6,535 for student workers and outside labor, and \$409,270 for equipment and supplies. For FY 2016, the Maintenance budget was \$1,356,643 for theatre salaries (sans benefits), \$4,626 for student workers and outside labor, and \$365,326 for equipment and supplies. The maintenance budget for FY 2017 is \$1,411,023 for theatre salaries, \$14,192 for student workers and outside labor, and \$503,961 for equipment and supplies.

Beginning with the fall 2016 semester (FY 2017), a THTR courses were approved for a Student Expendables Course Fee at \$20 per credit hour. The fees are used for the purchase of all production expenses related to university theatre productions, classroom and studio consumable supplies, student labor, student travel to conferences and professional development opportunities, and applicable consumable tools and safety equipment germane to courses and productions. Charged per student per course, the fees are expended the same semester. Course fees will generate a budget of approximately 40K per semester. Students are also encouraged to utilize the fees for all consumables related to the creation of production designs, prompt books, printing costs, scale model supplies, and other departmentally sponsored production out-of-pocket expenses.

For many years, the University has provided funding for theatre productions through the TELE (Teaching Equipment and Laboratory Enhancement) fee associated with all on campus students who are enrolled at the University of Arkansas. Each College has a unique rate at which their students are assessed the fee. All Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences students pay \$13.07 per credit hour taken within the College. Administered by the Dean of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, TELE Fees are awarded based on historical needs within each department as well as their ability to apply for and secure outside funding in the form of grants and gifts. For many years, the theatre program has received generous support from this allocation. Recent amounts include \$90,000 for FY 2014, \$90,000 for FY 2015 and \$90,000 for FY 2016.

Up until the fall of 2016 (when a new departmental fee was established), most the TELE allocation was used for consumables attributed to producing shows within the Department. Scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, and show royalties were paid out of the TELE cost center leaving very little to invest in equipment and technology enhancements. Ticket sale revenue also support some production costs; however, since U of A students (approx. 50% of our audience) do not pay for tickets, the amount collected has typically generated between \$18,000 and \$24,000 annually.

Student Expendable Fees are allocated to the department with only one condition: free admission to all program productions for all university students. The Theatre Program is proud to comply with this request. Ticket sales revenue is enhanced by additional funds allocated from what was once a campus wide "Cultural Activity Fee" (CAF) supported by all students. CAF was established to provide all U of A students with free admission to University Theatre productions by providing the equivalent of those ticket sales up front. (This works well. Our student attendance has increased notably since the establishment of this fee system.) This revenue stream

(that was once a separate student fee) has been since discontinued and now the approximately 30K that we have been allocated comes out of a portion of the student's tuition and is used primarily for hiring guest artists. We bring to campus an average of 6-10 guest artists per academic year with expertise in a wide range of theatre skills.

*See Appendix G*

The system works well enough in theory: activities that take place in the theatre that are extensions of the classroom "laboratory" curriculum is supported by the academic allocations. Production expenses: scenery, costumes, royalties, publicity, production related labor and similar "show-related" items are supported in part from box office revenue, in part from the, now defunct CAF fee, the Department of Theatre Expendables Fee, and in part from private donations.

The shortcoming of this system is the unpredictable nature of ticket sales, private donations, and the continuation of the, now defunct, CAF fee. Because our play season must serve an academic mission as well as one of public entertainment, it is almost a given that some plays will draw bigger audiences than others. Thus, it is difficult to predict in advance what ticket sales will provide. Coupled with ever-increasing competition from local fine arts events, the rising costs of production materials and labor, the fixed nature of budget allocations and the uncertainties of the "will" of the patrons, leads to a degree of uncertainty and therefore inefficiency in our overall financial effectiveness.

Hope for the future always lies in the hands of those who allocate funds appropriate to the academic mission of the department and to the optimism of growing larger audiences for more performances. Reality says that in our current economy neither of the above is likely to occur soon.

While it is true that the Student Course Fee has only been in place since the fall of 2016, it is already apparent that the additional 70-80K will be an incredibly freeing addition to our production support. We will be able to provide the financial support needed for student and faculty designers the opportunity to explore techniques, materials, and procedures that once were financially out of reach for our limited production budgets. Additionally, it will allow us to utilize the TELE fee for what it was always intended – purchasing state of the art intelligent lighting, sound, costume, and projection equipment along with other classroom technologies.

On an annual basis, balance of revenue to expense for all cost centers generally targets a zero or break even balance. There are two exceptions to this rule. The TELE fee cost center allows for a rollover option with a positive balance if there is a plan in place to exhaust the funds in the upcoming fiscal year. The second is a cost center that is attributed to courses taught through the Global Campus (web series of courses). The Department of Theatre does not offer a great deal of web based courses so this cost center tends to generate less than 10K annually.

### **Fundraising**

The Fulbright College maintains a "Development Office" which coordinates major fundraising efforts within the college and guides the process of seeking other sources to assist the department with increasing its operating funds, developing scholarships, and capital improvements. Within the department, initiatives are undertaken with community groups and targeted donors in the arts.

### **Long-range Financial Planning**

For all academic year requests regarding equipment and/or technology improvements, all faculty and staff are given an opportunity to submit a proposal at the beginning of the fall semester. All

submissions are carefully considered and ranked based on budget restrictions, and student impact. In regard to guest artists, academic calendar, artist availability are additional factors in making recommendations and final approvals. For all long-range personal or area projects within the department, appeals to the Chair are the normal process by which most projects requiring extended (exceeding the current academic year) planning are funded. Projects involving guest artist (for example) often involve funding from other on campus sources (McIlroy Endowed Professorship, student government, cultural affairs, etc.).

### **Areas for Improvement**

Financial policies typically fall under the category of administrative responsibilities of the chair, which tends to streamline the process. An effort to establish a consistent and regular schedule for bringing guest artists to campus is a growing need for a program such as the Department of Theatre. As a landlocked institution, located in the middle of the country, it is imperative to the training that the students receive professional training from industry leaders. A consistent influx of artists and scholars who are currently working in the theatre and entertainment industry is vital to the reputation and continued growth of the program.

Developing a solid, specific, and clearly defined relationship/partnership between the Department of Theatre and the local professional theatre, TheatreSquared is also vital to the health of the program as we continue to recruit students who have expectations of having opportunities to serve as interns, understudies, designers, crew members, and front of house staff. A clearly defined relationship is needed as we move forward.

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## **D. Governance and Administration**

*See MDP D – Governance & Administration*

### **Governance and Administration – University & College Level**

Since the inception of the original campus in Fayetteville in 1871 (then called the Arkansas Industrial University), the University of Arkansas System now extends to 6 universities, a college of medicine, and two schools of law. The main campus was established under the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862.

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville  
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff  
University of Arkansas Pulaski Tech  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
University of Arkansas at Monticello  
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith

In addition, there are 5 community colleges in the UA System, as well as the Arkansas School for Math, Sciences, and the Arts, and the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service.

The Administrative offices for the University of Arkansas System are in Little Rock. The Board of Trustees is the governing body. The administration of the University of Arkansas, under the authority of the Board of Trustees, is unified in the Office of the President.

Programs and activities of the University of Arkansas System are governed by its Board of Trustees, which has been accorded constitutional status for the exercise of its powers and authority by Amendment 33 of the Arkansas Constitution. The Board of Trustees has delegated to the president the administrative authority for all aspects of the system's operations. Administrative authority is further delegated to the various campus chancellors, who have the responsibility for the programs and activities of their respective campuses.

The governance and administration of the University of Arkansas is traditional in its structure and practice. The institution's administration is open to input from and communication with the faculty through committees, faculty meetings, the faculty senate, and an open-door policy that is shared by the administration. This environment of communication and frequent access generates decisions that fulfill the mission of the University and the theatre program.

Fulbright College is a major subdivision of Academic Affairs, and its constituent departments, offices, and centers are aggregated by discipline. The College is administered by a dean. The primary academic organizational unit of the college is the department. The departments house faculty, degree programs, and courses, as well as supporting the assigned teaching, research, service and advising efforts of faculty and staff. Specific to the department of theatre, all theatre faculty members are members of Fulbright College, and all undergraduate theatre degrees are awarded in Fulbright College.

Beyond the Dean, the college maintains 3 Associate Deans – Associate Dean of Social Sciences, Associate Dean of Fine Arts & Humanities, and Associate Dean of Natural Sciences. It also employs the following staff members:

- Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration
- Assistant Dean for Academic Integrity
- Senior Director of Fiscal Operations
- Director of Academic and Administrative Operations
- Director of Human Resources and Diversity
- Director of Budget and Planning
- Assistant Director of Administrative Operations
- Assistant to the Dean for Instructional Programs
- Assistant to the Dean for Administration
- Senior Assistant to the Dean for Administration
- Administrative Specialist III
- Business and Program Coordinator
- Fiscal Specialist

In the Fulbright College, administrators (chairs) are assigned 4-year terms that may be renewed. The Dean of Fulbright College solicits faculty input yearly regarding the chair's effectiveness by use of an evaluation questionnaire to all faculty. The departmental tenure-track faculty make recommendations to the Dean regarding continuation or renewal of the chair contract at the end of each 4-year term. After this round of advisement, the Dean makes a recommendation to the

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who in turn makes the actual appointment. A new or re-appointed chair is not necessarily the choice of the majority of the faculty. The Theatre Department Chair receives 50% load credit for administrative duties; a breakdown of additional duties routinely expected of the Chair is included in the MDP D ii.

Administrative policies are determined by the college and/or university. Policies to be determined at the departmental level are the responsibility of the chair, and are discussed with appropriate advisory committee(s) before action is taken. Educational policies are generally determined by the faculty led by the departmental Curriculum Committee. Normally, a departmental committee or the chair (after consulting with the appropriate committee) presents a motion to the theatre faculty, who discuss, vote when appropriate, and act accordingly.

*See Appendix D 3.*

### **Governance and Administration – Departmental Level**

Using a consensus model, the theatre faculty reports, recommends and requests all educational, artistic and financial needs to the department chair. The department chair reports to the dean of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, who reports to the provost, who finally reports to the Chancellor of the institution. This process has, for many years, created stability and continuity for the theatre program. Program growth and stability over the past four years has been possible thanks to an accessible and supportive administration.

The consensus model is successful for the program due to the theatre faculty's use of constant communication. Monthly faculty, meetings, coupled with weekly production meetings, constant one-on-one or small group exchanges (our offices are, for the most part, next to each other's), emails and skypes (during the summer) plus review/planning sessions towards the end of each semester make consensual decisions possible on all educational, artistic and financial issues. I have been a member of the faculty since 1992 and I can say without reservation, the faculty, although some of the members have retired or moved on, get along exceptionally well and clearly support one another as instructors, artists, and campus community members. It is a pleasure to serve as the chair of such a collegial group of committed theatre artists.

*See MDP D – Governance & Administration*

Arkansas Code §6-61-214 requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) to establish standards for the academic programs offered by Arkansas colleges and universities and to create a seven to ten-year review cycle for all existing academic programs. The existing academic program review policies (AHECB Policy 5.12) were adopted in 1988 and revised in 1995 and 1998.

In April 2008, the AHECB directed the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) staff, in cooperation with the public colleges and universities to revise the existing program review process to ensure quality academic programs that support Arkansas's economic development goals; to identify and remove non-viable programs from the AHECB approved program inventory, and to reduce barriers to graduation.

### **Areas for Improvement and Plans or Means for Addressing Them**

- Scholarships for students are also desperately needed to remain competitive with other state and area institutions. The Department of Theatre awards upwards of \$30,000 each academic year to approximately 15-17 students. The program has several named

scholarships and scholarship endowments but the amounts have not kept pace with rising tuition and fees. This is a crucial issue given the competitive nature of collegiate recruiting for theatre programs within the state as well as Missouri and Oklahoma. We are losing students due to a lack of scholarship support.

- Gifts from University Theatre patrons have decreased over the past 6-8 years. Although no statistical data has been collected, it is fair to say that the decrease is in part due to the growth of the region in professional theatre offerings and other high profile entertainment options that have been added to the Northwest Arkansas area. The Department of Theatre used to be the “only game in town” when it came to high quality live theatre. Now, with the Walton Arts Center in their 20<sup>th</sup> year and a strong Broadway Series as part of their season, the emergence of TheatreSquared, which is a local professional regional theatre with a six-show season, the Amp outdoor music venue, and various independent theatre companies throughout the Northwest Arkansas area, we are challenged to compete for the live theatre entertainment dollar. The program needs to be patient, allow the greater giving to occur, and continue to communicate with the development division within the college about ideas and needs.
- Initial faculty travel budgets are quite limited; however, the department chair and dean’s office have been very supportive in finding additional travel funds for the theatre faculty when those funds are available.
- The theatre faculty is concerned about the recent changes in upper administration. Over the past 4 years, the University will have seen 3 chancellors and 3 provosts. Though a usual occurrence in higher education, due to the extreme need for additional rehearsal, studio, and laboratory space, the process of reeducating new administrators seems to halt momentum in regards to securing new and/or additional physical resources.

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## **E. Faculty and Staff**

*See MDP E iii. Theatre Faculty Vitae*

*See MDP E iv. Faculty Teaching Assignment Sheets*

*See MDP D v. University of Arkansas Faculty Handbook*

The Department of Theatre is honored to have an active, distinguished and committed faculty and staff who spend days, many nights and several weekends providing the best possible university theatre experience for our undergraduate and graduate students. The program’s 19 full-time faculty/professional staff are supported by departmental administrative support specialist, a business manager/marketing director, and an administrative assistant/publicity assistant.

The Department of Theatre’s full-time faculty received their terminal degrees (MFA and PhD) in theatre from accredited institutions and have worked in a variety of professional venues as designers, technicians, actors, directors, and choreographers. Collectively, the full-time theatre faculty has garnered a Distinguished Professor Appointment, and three Teaching Excellence Awards from the University of Arkansas, numerous regional performances and many awards in design, directing and technical direction from the American College Theatre Festival.

### **Qualifications, Number and Distribution**

Curriculum vitae for all theatre faculty are available in **MDP E iii.**

An assignment chart for theatre faculty is available in **MDP E ii**.

### **Appointment, Evaluation and Advancement**

All the institution's fulltime faculty members are evaluated on an annual basis. The evaluation process begins in mid-December with each faculty member's electronic submission of their Fulbright Annual Update, Highlights Sheet, and Curriculum Vitae submitted to the Personnel Committee. The report documents activity and achievements in instructional responsibility (teaching), intellectual and/or creative contributions (Research/Creative), and professional service. The personnel committee conducts classroom visits for all full-time faculty to evaluate their classroom preparation, interaction, and classroom experience. The chair of the department (not a member of the personnel committee) conducts a series of classroom visits as well to witness effectiveness of each faculty member. The chair of the department then receives the personnel committee reports on each faculty member and adds his/her comments and scores accordingly based on the departmental standards. The chair then delivers a quantitative and qualitative annual evaluation to each faculty member. The department chair then provides an opportunity for each faculty member to meet with and discuss their evaluation.

**See Appendix D iv.**

Each year's evaluation by department head is the indicator of performance for each faculty member. Tenure-track faculty members who meet or exceed departmental standards are eligible for annual merit pay and, after five years in rank, application for promotion and tenure. Tenured faculty must also meet departmental standards. At the present time, there is no formal procedure for post-tenure evaluation; however, the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences is considering developing a procedure for tenured faculty members who fall below departmental standards. It is the desire of the department of theatre that the post-tenure review be accompanied by a developmental plan that will, hopefully, assist the faculty member achieve. Tenured faculty who meet or exceed departmental standards are eligible for merit pay and, if applicable, promotion. Please see Appendix D 4. for more information about Theatre Departmental Standards for Faculty see MDP D iv and the University of Arkansas Faculty Handbook for complete information on faculty appointment, evaluation, and advancement.

### **Teaching Loads**

Teaching loads would seem to be largely in accordance with NAST guidelines. Academic class loads are determined by the needs of the department, and are often uniquely distributed from semester to semester. Theatre fulltime faculty load is 9 credit hours per semester. 6 of the hours are instruction (usually 2, 3 credit hour classes) and 3 of the hours can, and often are, reassigned time for the direction, technical direction and/or design responsibilities for university productions. The reassigned time is uniform despite the number of production assignments per semester. Reassigned time is recommended and approved by the department chair and is in keeping with university policy as stated in the University of Arkansas Faculty Handbook.

At the time of writing, the student/faculty ratio is approximately 16 students to 1 faculty member. Classes in lecture-based subjects (theatre history and Introduction to Theatre) generally have enrollment at 25-30 students. Classes in creative work (acting, design) are usually capped at 16 students; however, due to limited size of the MFA programs, some senior faculty members have student to faculty ratios as low as 3 to 1. This, however, is not an uncommon occurrence for many small to medium sized MFA programs.

## **Faculty Development**

Consistent with Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board and board of trustee's policy requiring student evaluation of teaching, each semester the teacher and course evaluation process at the University of Arkansas begins with email notification from IT Services. Evaluations are managed through the CoursEval online system and are scheduled to be given the last week of classes, with scores and comments returned to faculty members once all final grades have been turned in.

Sabbaticals (Off Campus Duty Assignments – ODCA) are available for faculty in either one or two semester arrangements, with specified salary contingencies. An OCDA is generally available for tenured faculty after seven years of service. No budgetary accommodation is made for covering classes for faculty on OCDA.

All faculty members are expected to take part in teacher and course evaluations each term and follow the policy guidelines except for Law School faculty, those providing individual instruction, or courses with an enrollment fewer than five.

Additional evidence of the University's focus on teaching and learning resides in The Wally Cordes Teaching and Faculty Support Center (TFSC). This office was established in 1992 to assist the faculty with their scholarship of teaching and to act as a resource center for new teaching techniques and programs. Representing a part of the university's commitment to excellence in teaching, the TFSC provides a central facility to assist departments, faculty, and teaching assistants in the continued improvement of learning and teaching.

Travel support for professional conferences is generally provided annually through the Deans Office. The amount has varied somewhat, but is generally approximately \$1000 for a single conference per fiscal year.

See link: <http://teaching.uark.edu/>

## **Departmental and Marketing Support Staff**

The theatre program has three full-time staff members who provide leadership and office management. The first position is that of the state appointed, classified Departmental Administrative Support Supervisor. Reporting to the department chair, this administrative position is responsible for tracking all departmental student files, tracking all departmental scholarships, daily communications by phone, fax and email, copying, standard mail services, supervising the department's student workers (if any are needed), assisting the department chair with all departmental purchases and budgets, assisting faculty with travel arrangements, book orders, student evaluations, course scheduling and supplies.

The second member of the support staff is our full-time Business Manager & Director of Marketing. This individual works remotely as we are currently out of office space to house her on site. The fulltime business manager oversees marketing and publicity, manages box office staff and ticket sales, runs front of house for all productions, and negotiates contracts for rights and licensing. She also handles non-academic public relations both on and off campus, serves as the department's webmaster, manages social media accounts for the department, and generates periodic financial reports regarding box office income and production spending. Furthermore, she works with the Department Chair and faculty to coordinate special events throughout the year.

The third member of the support staff is the full-time Publicity Manager, Graphic Designer, and P-Card Administrator for the department. The position's official title is that of a classified position with the state appointed title of Administrative Specialist III. This position handles processing p-card receipts, employee reimbursements, hourly payroll, and assisting customers in the box office during daytime hours. It is also responsible for creating all print and online advertisements, special announcements, and posters, as well as setting up the programs for each show. She works directly with the Business Manager, as support for any assistance within that area as well as support for the departmental Administrative Support Supervisor.

### **Professional Production Faculty**

Production aspects of the program are assisted by 4 full-time production support specialists. In order of responsibility, the department has a Scene and Light Lab Manager, Costume Lab Manager, Properties Master/Charge Artist, and a Master Electrician/Sound Engineer. The Scene and Light Lab Manager assists the Technical Director, oversees the organization, function and safety of the scene shop, assists in the supervision of student staff and practicum workers, orders materials and supplies for the various shops of the theatre program and coordinates repairs with the University Physical Plant. The Costume Lab Manager works with the faculty costume designer in overseeing the execution of all costume elements, supervises the costume student staff, is responsible for ordering supplies and equipment, maintains costume equipment, oversees the safety of the costume lab, tracks the costume budget, as well as managing costume rentals, donations and costume inventory. Due to the advanced project work being done by MFA candidates, the need for additional costume support for studio productions, it is recommended that an additional fulltime professional staff cutter/drafter be added to the professional staff.

Recently the request was made for a total of 5 professional production staff members to serve in the areas of properties manager, sound engineer, master electrician, cutter/drafter, and scenic charge artist. The Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences granted us 2 positions and asked that we combine duties where possible. This led to the hiring of a full-time instructor who serves as the properties manager/scenic charge artist, and a full-time instructor who serves as the master electrician/sound engineer. The second individual also serves as the head of our projection area and maintains all sound, lighting, and projection equipment. The properties manager/scenic charge artist coordinates all properties for both the mainstage and studio series productions, handles all properties rentals, trains student properties designers, and oversees construction, purchase, and rental for all properties and furniture for all university theatre productions. This position also serves as the departmental charge artist. This individual oversees and manages the paint shop, conducts purchases of all scenic paint, assigns paint crews for production, and serves as the liaison between scenic designer and technical director.

These two positions have been guaranteed for a three-year term with the possibility of renewal at the end of the 2019 academic year. In addition to their 100% appointment to production support, they have both volunteered to teach a course in their respective areas to further enhance the design and technology curriculum. Their contribution to the program has already exceeded our expectation regarding student involvement, quality of production details, and overall efficiency of the production process and if they were unable to be retained, it would negatively impact our production efficiency and quality.

Additionally, five to six students are selected each year for paid production positions with the theatre program. The positions pay minimum wage for ten to twenty hours a week in areas such as purchasing, lighting, scenery, costumes, properties, sound and front of house. Funding for these student positions comes from the student service fees that are received each year for program productions.

### **Areas for Improvement and Plans or Means for Addressing Them**

- Having transitioned to an R1 institution some years ago, there are concerns regarding teaching load and expectations for high level research/creative opportunities. For many years, university assigned directing, designing, and technical direction were all considered to be part of the research/creative portion of a fulltime, tenure track faculty member who was under the 40/40/20 classification. Now that there is greater university importance placed on regional and national recognition and participation, those departmental production opportunities no longer automatically fulfill the research/creative component of the faculty contract. The department needs to more clearly articulate expectations regarding this area as well as in the area of teaching in order for faculty members to understand the guidelines for achieving positive faculty evaluation scores.
- Uniform reassigned time of three credit hours per semester (25%) of load needs to be reviewed. The uniform reassigned time is awarded regardless of teaching load, administrative duties, or the number of productions per semester that a faculty member directs, designs, supervises or performs. Design and technology faculty, who design or technically direct as many as three productions per semester, are the most overloaded by inadequate reassigned time. The costume designer, scenic designer, and lighting designer (all tenure track or tenured faculty members) either design or supervise the designs for all program productions. Current reassigned time is inadequate given their many hours of research, planning, rendering and building for so many productions. The theatre faculty should encourage further discussion on the issue and seek the administration's assistance in the hiring of part and fulltime staff to ease the production overloads.
- The technical director carries an overload of at least 6 hours each semester. This position is responsible for teaching Stage Technology II (16-18 students per semester), all Production Practicum Lab course (up to 4 sections with 5 students in each section per semester), and one graduate level technology course per semester (3-6 students). He is also involved with every theatre program production, and is responsible for maintaining security and upkeep of the theatre side of the fine arts center where he serves as building executive. The technical director's load should be reviewed and discussed with the department chair and dean to seek options for assistance and/or load reduction.
- There is concern that our program is quite heavy regarding the non-tenure track teaching faculty. The department is challenged when it comes to maintaining excellence across the curriculum due to several unique factors. First, when the university grew at a furious pace between 2007 – 2013, the university's answer to the need for more courses was to hire non-tenure track faculty. With the use of so many non-tenure track faculty, it has further burdened the tenure track faculty in the area of service. This, coupled with the high demand for excellence in research and creative activity by all tenure track and tenured faculty members (as an R1 institution), has exponentially increased the amount of time the tenured faculty are spending on managing the programs through numerous committee commitments. Although an additional faculty member or two would be ideal, converting

some of the current non-tenure track faculty members into tenure track would eliminate some of the service demands that current tenure track faculty members are covering.

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## **F. Facilities, Equipment, Health, and Safety**

*See MDP F Facilities, Equipment and Safety*  
*See Appendix H a. Stage Management Handbook*  
*See Appendix H e. Practicum Syllabi*

This is perhaps the most troubling area for the Department of Theatre. The primary performance venue for the Department of Theatre is the proscenium theatre, University Theatre, located in Edward Durrell Stone's Fine Arts Center. In 1950, this facility was already considered to be a state of the art performance venue and was on the cutting edge of integration for college campuses where it supported the idea that Art, Music, Theatre, and Architecture should be housed under one roof in an effort to encourage collaboration between the disciplines. The reality is that the building no longer functions as an effective production and performance facility and is in dire need of improvements and repairs. Aside from several inherent safety and handicap accessibility concerns, the space is too small and ill equipped to serve the needs of a contemporary, pre-professional theatre-training program.

As we look to the future, one of the major challenges the Department of Theater faces is the lack of performance, laboratory, and rehearsal spaces. In examining peer institutions with similar programs such as Indiana University in Bloomington and the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, it is clear to see the disparity between total square footage with the primary gap in the scenic and costume production areas.

Also, another area of great concern is in support for independent undergraduate and graduate artistic opportunities. Identifying proper rehearsal and design space is a constant challenge due to the lack of dedicated spaces. With around 30 square feet of lab and performance space per student compared to Indiana University's almost 74 square feet per student, it is easy to see the impact it has on student access to rehearsal and production venues.

*See Appendix C*

Another serious and safety based concern simply fall into the category of age and use. The Fine Arts Center was completed in 1950 making it over 67 years old with most of the equipment in the building being original. There have been some upgrades over the past 25 years to the seating and the fly system (mostly cosmetic), but the infrastructure remains the same and simply, it's worn out and in some cases, dangerous. Theatre technology has also improved greatly over the past 20 years in both function as well as safety and this building is in desperate need of a major renovation if it is going to continue to serve the students at the U of A.

The current location of the costume shop which also serves as a classroom is on the second floor in the University Theatre building. The building is not ADA compliant and there is no elevator to the second floor or to the costume storage area housed on the third floor in the mechanical rooms. The costume shop has by necessity has made due by storing and working in an adjacent and down stair dressing room. Furthermore, while there is a laundry room/craft room it is not

large enough to allow both laundry and craft making to happen simultaneously and it makes teaching courses in costume crafts and dyeing difficult.

Ultimately what is needed for a school this size is a dedicated Fine Arts Center that can house all the Department of Theatre's production, performance, and office needs. Simply put, Kimpel Hall is an academic building that serves many disciplines. However, when acting classes, musical theatre classes, and movement classes are scheduled next to World Language, English, Communications, and Journalism classes, let's just say the pedagogy differences are abundantly clear.

Although we have very strong relationships between the other departments that are housed in Kimpel Hall, I know they too would be happy to see us in our own home one day.

*See MDP F*

### **Areas for Improvement and Plans or Means for Addressing Them**

- New Fine Arts Center with contemporary theatre spaces, faculty offices, design and technology studios, performance studios, etc.

## **Health and Safety**

Health & Safety practices and procedures are covered in the freshman level introductory courses, Stage Technology I and II by the instructors and the lab instructors associated with these courses. Students proceed through a documented training process with each piece of equipment that is then kept in either the scenic or costume lab. Students are expected to arrive with appropriate attire and wear requisite PED per the instructors, and grade penalties are used as the method for enforcement. Both courses are prerequisites for advanced classes therefore vetting the department as they arrive as Freshmen.

*See Appendix H e. Practicum Syllabi*

The Graduate Assistants and four lab instructors monitor continued practice in safe procedures during all times of operation.

### **Health & Safety – Fine Arts Center:**

The main hub of THTR operations, the Fine Arts Center is a sixty-seven-year-old facility in various states of repair, modernization, and unfortunately neglect. Upkeep of systems and installation of new system largely falls to THTR to manage and upgrade. The Department of Theatre has taken the following steps to address some of the concerns regarding health & safety issues:

- Up to date and accessible MSDS sheets have been installed
- Installed and stocked first aid kits
- Installed a central dust collection system in the scenic lab
- Added LED worklights to the stage to improve visibility
- Labeled all operational parts of the fly system
- Replaced nonstandard clamps which had formerly supported the electric battens
- Purchased modern equipment like a Sawstop brand table saw

The Fine Arts Center lacks the following contemporary health and safety systems common to modern facilities:

- Spray booths in either the costume or scene shop
- Eye wash stations
- Functional fire curtain and smoke vents
- Freight elevator for transporting heavy equipment to different levels.
- Elevator to second floor classroom space.

The following items within the building's infrastructure fail to meet contemporary standards:

- Width of operating and loading floors of catwalks
- Working load limits of the stage floor
- Illumination/visibility on the perimeter of the stage
- Main fire alarm panel with its public-address annunciator system is in the basement and accessible to house management through three doors with two keys and a one to two-minute walk.
- Costume Storage area with elevator.

The following significant health and safety issues exist:

- Stage floor traps weigh more than 150# and fall short of applicable deflection standards
- Orchestra pit cover panels weigh more than 250# and fall short of applicable deflection standards
- There is no forced air ventilation in the basement causing black mold to form on HVAC lines approx. every eighteen months
- The make-up air system in the scenic lab for welding works intermittently
- The roof of the stage house has several leaks directly over the battens
- The fire escape for the operating level and loading floor of the fly system has been locked shut to THTR.
- The basement leaks through the walls and ceiling
- The smoke hatch system has been screwed shut
- The fire curtain (original 1950 asbestos curtain) has been locked off.
- The ceiling of room 120 (the seating area of the auditorium) is made of asbestos impregnated plaster and abatement procedures must be employed whenever the ceiling is penetrated or damaged.
- A January 2017 fly system inspection yielded the following results
  - T-Track on the fly rail is bent causing lines to get stuck.
  - The handrail is too short on the loading floor.
  - No safety rail or lines are present to prevent a 54' fall from the grid.
  - Tension blocks are installed upside down.
  - Fly rail arbors are not safely accessible to those under 7' tall
  - Lift lines are improperly spaced relative to contemporary standards.
  - Inadequate number of spreader plates on the arbors.

The same inspection also noted that the lift lines are not properly terminated, the operating lines are damaged, and that the rope locks are failing. It was recommended that the above items be replaced immediately and that the entire system be replaced in the near future.

#### **Health & Safety – Studio 404**

The theatre is stocked with a first aid kit and has limited production support. The only true safety concern is that production has an odd and lengthy path to access the space and must often transport heavy scenery through small personnel elevators and/or up four flights of stairs.

The building is open from approximately 6:00am to 10:00pm. There is no staffed security presence in the building at any time.

### **Health & Safety – Global Campus Theatre**

The theatre is stocked with a first aid kit and has limited production support. The only true safety concern is that production has an odd and lengthy path to access the space and must often transport heavy scenery through small personnel elevators and/or up four flights of stairs.

The building is open from approximately 8:00am to 5:00pm, and ID cards control access. This facility is off campus located in downtown Fayetteville. Bus lines cease operation before typical productions come down and students who live on campus must walk approximately one mile to dorms or find alternate methods to get home. There is no staffed security presence in the building at any time.

### **Repair, Maintenance and Upgrading**

Major repair and maintenance of the FAC is the financial responsibility of the University's Physical Plant. Examples include repair and adjustment of the building's electrical infrastructure, and the repair of leaks in the University Theatre fly space, trap room, and offices. Smaller repair and maintenance items are handled by the theatre staff or reported to the Physical Plant, who then charges the theatre program for labor and materials. Of great concern is the non-ADA compliant Costume Lab & Men's Dressing room. Classes are taught in both spaces; however, due to the fact that the theatre side of the fine arts center is accessible by stairs only, it is of great concern if and when we are faced with accommodating a student, faculty, or staff member who may need access but is unable to use the stairs.

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## **G. Library and Learning Resources**

*See MDP G. Library and Learning Resources*

### **Requirements and Administration**

The main library for the University is the David W. Mullins Library. The resources and personnel of the Mullins Library are available to the faculty and students of the program seven days a week. The library's resources meet the academic needs of the program's students and faculty and the library's personnel are more than supportive of the mission of the University and the theatre program. Based on its substantial holdings, hours of operation, additional resources and professional staff, the David W. Mullins Library meets NAST Standards in support of the UARK Theatre Program.

In addition, the Mullins Library contains multiple branch libraries, including the Fine Arts Library and the Performing Arts and Media Library, which serve both the general population and students in the theatre and other fine arts.

The Dean of University Libraries belongs to the Academic Deans' Group, chaired by the provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Chancellor's Administrative Policy Council. Membership in these two bodies gives University Libraries a voice in setting policies at the highest level.

### **Collections and Electronic Access**

The University Libraries do not currently have a library-wide policy on collection development; however, there is a detailed materials budget allocation structure that sets specific amount of spending on books, print journals, e-journals, and media materials. The annual budget allocations serve as a general guide for subject librarians who work with the academic departmental faculty liaisons to prioritize the acquisitions and subscriptions of resources. Specific policies regarding adding new journals and replacement of missing or damaged materials do exist and applicable across all the subject areas.

More than 200 databases and thousands of electronic journals are accessible from anywhere with a University ID. Librarians onsite assist in locating and using library resources, or students may send questions by email, phone, or 24/7 chat. Subject librarians are also available for one-on-one research consultations tailored to individual research questions, whether onsite, over the phone, or even remotely by video software. Librarians conduct orientation sessions on research methods and software throughout the semester and Writing Support has a satellite location inside Mullins Library. Resources relevant to theatre have been acquired around the subject areas – dramatic literature, history, and criticism; and theatre and dramatic presentation. Most of the publications are cataloged by the Library of Congress classification scheme between PN1560 and PN3307.

### **Personnel, Services and Facilities**

The University Libraries currently have 37.75 (FTE) professional Librarians and 74.75 (FTE) professional and paraprofessional staff. The librarians of the University Libraries are members of the university faculty.

Services of the Mullins Library include reference assistance, library instruction, check-out privileges, interlibrary loan services and remote access to its electronic resources to UARK students, faculty, and staff on the main campus. These services are also provided to UARK distance-learning students. Collectively, these services meet the needs of the theatre program as they are offered seven days a week.

With 216,883 square feet of space, Mullins Library offers seating for 2,354, a learning commons on the second floor featuring a consolidated circulation/interlibrary loan desk, information/research desk, and information technology service desk. The Learning Commons also includes a computer lab of more than 150 work stations, 3 digital scanning stations and a writing tutoring center. Wireless network access is available on all levels of the building.

### **The Performing Arts and Media Library**

The Performing Arts and Media Library is located on the first floor of the Mullins Library. It is an enclosed facility offering specialized services to theatre, dance, music, and film studies students and faculty. It has its own hours of operation and the print collections and service is accessible only during the hours it is open. However, the library has embarked on a significant transition from a library of physical collections toward a digital library with which users have immediate online access to digital reference tools, e-books, and tens and thousands streaming sound tracks and videos from anywhere at any time.

Inside of the PAM library, there are 6 PC computer stations loaded with audio-visual viewing and editing software, 3 iMac computer stations, three DVD/VHS playing stations, and three audio-video tape/cassette conversion stations. Outside and in adjacent to the performing and Media Library there is a large media viewing room with seating capacity of 40, (reserved through and managed by the Performing Arts and Media staff), and a training and instruction room with 30 PC stations (reserved through and managed by library instruction department). The facility is home for the music CD collection, a VHS collection, a DVD collection, a multi-media kit collection, the multi-disciplinary CD-ROM collection, the university concert recording archive, and the music score collections. An extensive LP collection is kept in the compact shelving that is within close proximity of the Performing Arts Library. Books and bound journals pertaining to dramatic literature, theatre, music, and dance are shelved outside on the first and four floors as integral parts of the central library stacks.

The staff of the Performing Arts and Media Library consists of two full-time employees—the head librarian and the service desk supervisor, and 8 to 10 part-time employees. The head librarian is responsible for collections, instructions, and information access and delivery policy/services.

#### **Areas for improvement and means of addressing them.**

- Though there is an active and positive educational partnership with the library and its staff, the theatre faculty needs to increase its understanding and utilization of the library and be vigilant in requesting new materials.
- The faculty needs to do more to encourage students to avail themselves of the resources of the Performing Arts Library, both through visits and via online opportunities.

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## **H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement**

### **University Recruitment and Admissions**

#### **Theatre Recruitment**

Similar to many large university theatre programs, the department actively engages in ongoing student recruitment efforts. Ways in which this process takes place include:

1. The Department of Theatre participates in recruitment on a micro level primarily due to budget restraints and staffing limitations. We visit 6 – 8 area high schools where we present workshops, seminars, and lectures either by our MFA candidates or our faculty.
2. We also extend invitations to all area schools for discounted tickets to all University Theatre productions.

3. One MFA Graduate Assistant is dedicated to “recruitment” as their assignments which allows for a consistent contact person between the department and the area schools.
4. The department also works very closely with Fayetteville High School in the capacity of production support. Each year the Department of Theatre provides costumes, properties, furniture, and design assistance for all FHS productions.
5. MFA student designers often work closely with the high school students training them on programming lighting cues, scene painting techniques, and general production support, which serves to be a wonderful recruitment tool.
6. The department recently published a new undergraduate brochure that is part of our recruitment efforts when we meet potential incoming students. The document is student centered featuring quotations and statistics that highlight the undergraduate student and program.
7. The department maintains an up-to-date website. This seems to be the initial portal into which students make considerations about attending a university.
8. The department has placed a number of theatre graduates in local and statewide high schools through teaching internships/observerships, and full-time teaching positions. These graduates serve as advocates and in turn direct a number of their students up to the University of Arkansas.
9. Each year, the faculty organize and participate in an all-day recruiting event (Theatre Career Day) held each spring term. Over the past 3 years the numbers of registered and participating junior and seniors has dropped. Last year’s attendance was approximately 21 high school students with our most successful year having close to 60 students in 2013. Through an informal survey of the high school teachers, we believe the reduced participation has been due primarily to a very busy academic schedule for the high schools. Spring semester weekends tend to be filled with forensics and athletic events making it difficult to schedule a campus visit. For the upcoming academic year, we have elected to move the event to the fall semester with the hopes that participation will increase.
10. Theatre Career Day (TCD) is scheduled to coincide with a University Theatre production, which allows all who participate an opportunity to end the day by attending one of our productions. Productions tend to be our greatest form of recruitment due to the high-quality production values and outstanding performances. Area high school theatre teachers are contacted during the preceding spring semester with an email promoting the fall TCD, and they are reminded once the fall semester begins. Juniors and seniors who want to participate in TCD send an RSVP to the coordinating graduate student who then uses those numbers to finalize workshops, lunches, and presenters.

### **Admission-Retention**

A student who would like to pursue studies leading to a degree in theatre must be admitted to the University of Arkansas. Due to the nature and structure of a liberal arts degree, there is no application or audition process for undergraduates. Any and all students who attend the University of Arkansas are welcome to participate and/or major/minor in theatre. On rare occasions when scholarship money is available, performance and/or technical auditions are held to determine who will receive the scholarship.

### **Admission to Graduate Programs**

Students applying to the department for graduate studies are required to apply to the Graduate School. This admission process is straight-forward, and is determined on the basis of the

completed undergraduate degree. The Theatre Department, upon receipt of the admission packet from the Graduate School, determines admission to a specific program, and may require remedial work of incoming graduate students based on undergraduate transcripts, interviews, auditions, and/or portfolio review. While the GRE is not required for admission to graduate studies in theatre, the graduate school may require a standardized test score if the applicant's GPA is below 3.0. Specific requirements for graduate admission are specified in the 2016-17 University Graduate Catalog.

*See MDP A i. for Graduate Online Catalog*

***Acting:***

In addition to the Graduate School application requirements, all applicants must participate in either a digital (recorded) or onsite acting audition with performance faculty and/or the Head of Performance. Applicants also undergo a series of interviews with faculty, current MFA candidates, and in some cases, recent graduates from the program. If there is time, applicants will also participate in performance classes during their onsite audition.

***Playwriting:***

In addition to the Graduate School application requirements, applicants to the MFA playwriting program should prepare to submit two completed scripts, at least one of which must be a full-length play. The second script may be a short play, a screenplay, or another full-length. Please also submit a theatre résumé, listing playwriting activity, workshops, readings and productions, as well as any related theatre experience. Include a statement of purpose (600+ words) explaining why you want to pursue an MFA at this time and what you are looking for and would hope to achieve in an MFA program.

***Directing:***

In addition to the Graduate School application requirements, applicants to the MFA directing program should submit the following: a statement of purpose that addresses your goals in pursuing an MFA and includes your significant artistic inspirations and aspirations; a theatre resume; a DVD or online video link up to 15-minutes in length showcasing your directing work, either from one production or a compilation of several productions; a list of plays you're excited to direct, as well as any adaptations or other projects of interest; copies of all college transcripts; and three letters of recommendation. In addition, you may submit up to 15 production photographs.

A limited number of applicants will be invited to interview on-campus. Your visit will include: directing two of our graduate actors in an observed rehearsal of a brief scene/fragment from a full-length play (we'll suggest both the fragment and the play); your presentation of two contrasting 1-to-2 minute monologues; interviews with faculty including the head of directing, the head of acting, and the department chair; and interviews with current MFA directors and other graduate students. As time and availability permit, applicants are encouraged to observe directing and performance classes, evening rehearsals, and performances.

***Design – Costume, Lighting, and Scenery:***

In addition to the Graduate School application requirements, all applicants must submit either a digital portfolio or link to a current design website. Upon examination of the applicants work, an onsite portfolio presentation and interview with the design faculty and immediate area head mentor will be scheduled. Interviews are often times held at national and/or regional theatre

festivals and/or conferences when applicants are unable to visit the campus. It is highly encouraged that the candidate visit and participate in graduate classes, attend a performance of a departmental production, and meet with current design candidates whenever possible.

### **Retention**

The University of Arkansas takes retention and graduation very seriously. With that in mind, the university's website features several academic resources to assist students in both retention and graduation. Please follow the link below for many academic resources available for all U of A students, faculty and staff.

<https://admissions.uark.edu/academics/academicresources.php>

Additionally, the university has another student service in the recent creation of CLASS+ – The Center for Learning and Student Success. This center works with students to refine and strengthen the academic skills necessary for success at the University of Arkansas through tutoring, private academic coaching, and writing support mentors. Focus areas include time management, study strategies, note taking, reading and understanding textbooks, studying for tests, managing test anxiety, and overall adjusting academically to the University of Arkansas. Although it is primarily a resource for the student body, faculty also utilize the resources available through CLASS to help manage and organize courses.

See link: <http://class.uark.edu/>

### **Undergraduate Theatre Major/Minor Retention**

Starting in the spring of 2017, all new theatre students (freshmen and transfer) will participate in an informal jury late in the fall semester and all sophomores, juniors and senior theatre students are juried late in the fall semester. It is our belief that by implementing the freshman, sophomore and junior jury procedure, it will improve our ability to track student progress and interest as well as perform a useful assessment that can aid in program retention.

The theatre jury process will be discussed in detail in Section III.

*Appendix E 6.*

### **Graduate Theatre - MFA Retention**

Graduate program retention and completion typically follows GPA guidelines (2.85 minimum), with 42 (of the 60) semester hours in residence required for graduation, as well as a thesis, a major project (performance role, play, or design) and a successful defense of the thesis and project.

*See Appendix F*

### **Record Keeping**

Once enrolled, each student's comprehensive academic record is kept by the Office of the Registrar. This electronic database is secure and accessible only to the student and his advisers. The file is updated promptly by the Registrar's Office after the collection of each semester's grades or any needed transcript evaluations. The information is always available to the student through the online UASuccess, which links to UAConnect (enrollment services and transcript information), Blackboard (online classes and course support), student email, and university announcements and services. Student data is also available to faculty and advisers through the UAConnect, which interfaces with UASuccess.

There exists a minimal amount of assessment data for the purposes of retention records within the department of theatre. Academic courses provide reasonably objective criterion grading (of record), and performance, design, and technology areas require students to perform a “jury” every year with those records maintained in individual student files within the department.

There is no departmental policy that results in an undergraduate student being asked to leave the theatre program, and with the newly formed underclassmen “jury” in place, data tracking student retention has not yet been established.

Student participation in production is not currently tracked.

Copies of Graduate Student Theses are in the collection of the library as well as an in the Department of Theatre main office (Kimpel 619).

### **Advising and Advising Effectiveness**

As a unit within the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Theatre participates in the college’s “centralized” advising system. All students who are participating in one of the 19 units throughout the college are advised by one of the 15 full-time advisors. Before students can enroll in courses, they must first schedule an appointment through the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences Advising center through their Blackboard account. Freshman (first year students) can schedule an exploration session by calling the office to make an appointment. All sophomores thru seniors can select a time by logging onto UASuccess where they can view their advisor’s calendar to select a private appointment. They are also able to stop by and wait for the next available advisor if the schedules are full.

Students who are majoring in Theatre can download the appropriate Standard and Departmental Honors Major Worksheets where they are able to track the University Core requirements, college requirements, and major requirements.

*See Appendix E 6*

<http://fulbright.uark.edu/advising-center/degree-requirements.php>

Additionally, members of the Faculty advise students in theatre during the undergraduate reviews and a once a semester advising fair. At this time, the Faculty review progress, attendance, and ensure that each student is aware of the coming course offerings as they relate to the classes requisite for graduation paying special attention that pre-requisites be done in the desired order as outlined by the Theatre Curriculum Committee.

### **Accordingly, the following aspects of our system need improvement.**

- A record of production participation at the undergraduate and graduate level.
- An archive of the visual elements associated with a given MFA Thesis presentation.
- A greater emphasis on documenting undergraduate progression through the degree plan.
- Most theatre faculty do not have access to or training for the student data systems used by Admissions or Advising Services. Faculty should seek training to provide consistent services for students.
- Record keeping for advising by theatre faculty is inconsistent and needs to be formalized.

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## **I. Published Materials and Web Sites**

*See MDP I.*

Over the past five to seven years, information dissemination has gone through a substantial change here at the U of A. University undergraduate and graduate catalogs are published online only and available for download as a pdf file. Final deadlines for changes prior to electronic publication dates are mandated by the Dean's Office though curricular change for the catalog and schedules – while still meeting required committee approval processes and deadlines – is an ongoing process. A students' "catalog year" and consequent requirements continue to become a more fluid construct.

*See MDP A.*

Overall, the program's webpages and published materials meet NAST Standards but the review process has indicated the following areas for improvement.

### **Areas for improvement and means of addressing them.**

- The University website is complex and it requires several "clicks", lots of scrolling and an understanding of academic structure to access theatre program information and images. The University recently redesigned the website, which has revealed some areas within the Department of Theatre home page that need updated information.
- Throughout the website, academic labels, descriptions and requirements for all theatre degrees need to be corrected and updated. Theatre faculty will work with online personnel during the Spring of 2018 to provide necessary updates.
- The program's webpages need updating: images, program descriptions, facilities, and alumni information. Again, faculty will use of the Spring of 2018 to make corrections and updates.
- The Departmental Stage Manager Handbook is not being used consistently. Also, it needs updating and editing and a single and easy to find location on the theatre program website. The faculty will edit and update the handbook during the Spring of 2018.
- The undergraduate Program brochure is very pleasing and has been a successful recruiting document; however, one is still needed for the MFA program. Plans to create a graduate brochure will be discussed at the Fall 2017 faculty retreat with a target date of August 15, 2018.

## **J. Community Involvement**

The Department of Theatre presents four fully mounted mainstage productions, between 2-4 studio productions and a number of other site-specific projects for the campus and community at large where all community members are encouraged to attend. The Department also provides over 200 pair of tickets to City of Fayetteville, Springdale and Rogers employees free of charge to introduce them to the exciting productions on campus.

In an effort to reach more area middle and high school students, the Department of Theatre creates special performances opportunities of many productions throughout the mainstage season with talkbacks following the performances. Faculty members and graduate students of the Department of Theatre have visited high school classrooms to share their expertise in design, directing and acting.

Additionally, representatives from the Department of Theatre visit Butterfield Trail Village, a retirement community in Fayetteville, AR, where we present short performances and provide discounted tickets. We also serve as a resource for local theatres, colleges, church groups and high schools requiring scenic and costume elements needed to mount their productions and often provide them free of charge or a nominal fee to cover dry-cleaning, and/or restocking costs.

The Department of Theatre has many partnerships with local theatres in Northwest Arkansas. We provide these organizations with the talents of our design, technical, directing and acting faculty, staff and students. These companies include:

- TheatreSquared – Fayetteville’s professional theatre company
- ArtsLive – Fayetteville’s non-profit professional children’s theatre
- Arts Center of the Ozarks – community theatre in Springdale
- Trike Theatre - professional children’s theatre for youth in Bentonville
- Arkansas Staged – a local theatre company focusing on staged readings
- Classic Edge Theatre – a theatre company bringing Arkansas free professional, family-friendly Shakespeare in the park, classical theatre and educational outreach.

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Morgan Hicks served on the Arkansas Department of Education committee to revise the competencies for Drama 7-12 Programs to be used by institutions of higher education in the state of Arkansas. She also collaborated with the Department of English and ARCare (a service organization in the Delta) to create and execute a one-week residential creative writing and performance camp that culminated in a public performance with 14 participants from five high schools in the Delta region of Arkansas.

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## **K. Articulation with Other Schools**

Per the Arkansas State Legislature, all four-year colleges in Arkansas have a common “core” curriculum that is transferable among state-supported schools in Arkansas. *The University of Arkansas participates in the Arkansas Common Course Index System for the purpose of facilitation the transfer of general academic courses between higher education institutions in Arkansas. It is an index of the State Minimum Core courses that are common across all Arkansas institutions.*

The common core is now synonymous with the “state core” and departments have identified specific courses beyond the state core that faculty believe are essential in their individual degree programs – essentially moving some of the core courses into the departments.

The following policies control the granting of credit for course work taken at other institutions:

Transfer credits are subject to a two-stage evaluation process. First, the eligibility of the hours for transfer is evaluated by the Office of the Registrar. Theatre specific courses are evaluated by the Chair in consultation with the appropriate faculty. The second stem in the evaluation, performed by the academic dean’s office or department responsible for the program of study,

determines which hours evaluated will satisfy degree program requirements. Grades earned at other institutions are not calculated in the student's grade-point average earned at the University of Arkansas, and general transfer credit is awarded for courses in which a grade of "C" or higher has been earned.

*See MDP A Undergraduate Online Catalog*

At the graduate level, the University allows a student to transfer up to 18 hours for those students already holding the MA degree in theatre or drama.

*See MDP A Graduate Online Catalog*

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**L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community**

– N/A

**M. Operational Standards for All Institutions for which NAST is the Designated Institutional Accreditor**

– N/A

**N. Operational Standards and Procedures for Proprietary Institutions**

– N/A

**O. Operational Standards for Branch Campuses and External Programs**

– N/A

## SECTION II. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS PORTFOLIO

### Section II.A. Introductory Information: Theatre Program Components

*See MDP A.*

See <http://handbook.uark.edu/code-of-student-life/>

#### **Published Policies for Undergraduates**

The University of Arkansas Department of Theatre complies with NAST Standards concerning published policies for undergraduate students. Available on the University's online catalog, information concerning credit hours, the awarding of credit, transfer credits, degree continuity, time requirements, residency, student course load, tuition and fees, study by correspondence, first-year programs and many other procedures, policies and guidelines can be viewed and printed at any time at: <http://catalog.uark.edu/undergraduatecatalog/>

For ease of reference, applicable pages from the 2015-2016 online catalog is available in **MDP A Catalog-General** as follows:

- U of A Catalog-General
- President's Greeting
- Admissions
- First-Year Success Programs
- Procedures and Policies
- Tuition and Fees
- Exemptions and Waivers
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Housing and Meals
- Campus Life
- Student Services and Support

Issues regarding campus life, student concerns, grade appeals, disciplinary actions, records, privacy, the Student Bill of Rights, hazing, harassment, the Academic Integrity Code, traffic and parking plus rules and procedures for students are published in the annually updated *University of Arkansas Code of Student Life*. The document is available online through the Office of Student Affairs.

See <http://handbook.uark.edu/code-of-student-life/>

Academic information and policies in the catalog pertaining to baccalaureate degrees, the liberal arts, course descriptions, the structure of credit hours, and majors in the program are provided in **MDP A Catalog-Academic** and are listed as follows:

- University of Arkansas Catalog-Academic
- University Core Curriculum
- Bachelor Degree Requirements (Credits, Time, Continuity)
- B.A. Theatre
- M.F.A. Theatre
- Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
- Department of Theatre
- Theatre Course Descriptions
- Honors Program

Additional online resources that document and assist undergraduates with time on task, credits, and program consistency include the Curriculum Guides (discussed in Section II.B.) and the course rotation for all Department of Theatre classes.

<http://catalog.uark.edu/undergraduatecatalog/collegesandschools/jwilliamfulbrightcollegeofartsandsciences/theatrethtr/>

### **General Studies at the University of Arkansas**

All baccalaureate degrees offered by the program share a core curriculum that furthers each student's foundational knowledge of the sciences, math, English, communication, culture, the arts, language, and the social and behavioral sciences. Mandated by the State of Arkansas, the core curriculum complies with NAST Standards for the liberal arts since the University of Arkansas core fosters inquiry and analysis, ethical reasoning, teamwork and social responsibility. Additionally, writing, problem-solving, technical applications and skills for life-long learning are threaded throughout the common core.

Please refer to *MDP A* for a detailed listing of the core curriculum. See Fulbright Advising Center for listing of core requirements for Standard degrees, Departmental Honors and College Honors at: <http://fulbright.uark.edu/advising-center/degree-requirements.php> For descriptions of and details pertaining to University State Minimum information see:

<http://catalog.uark.edu/undergraduatecatalog/academicregulations/universitycore/>

A brief summary of the current core curriculum follows.

UNIV Perspectives	(1 hour)
Mathematics	(3-4 hours)
Natural Sciences	(2 courses w/matching labs – 8 hours)
Fine Arts	(1 course – 3 hours)
Social Sciences	(3 courses from at least 2 fields – 9 hours)
English Composition	(2 courses – 6 hours)
U.S. History & Government	(1 course – 3 hours)
Humanities	(1 course – 3 hours)

Also, most baccalaureate degrees have additional requirements that further the liberal arts and general studies. Students pursuing the BA degree in Theatre take up to six hours of a world language six hours of additional social sciences and/or humanities.

Several theatre faculty teaches in the common core. THTR 1003 – Theatre Appreciation gives the Department of Theatre the opportunity to be a part of the general studies atmosphere at the University of Arkansas. Taking part in the core curriculum allows many of the faculty the chance to connect the art and craft of theatre with issues and ideas from literature, sociology, science, history, psychology, engineering and several other disciplines.

Of note is the fact that theatre majors are not allowed to take THTR 1003 - Theatre Appreciation for the common core; instead, in the spirit of the liberal arts, we advise them into art lecture,

architecture lecture, Film Lecture, Movement and Dance, Music Lecture, or The American Landscape.

Committed to the common core and its improvement, the University is participating in a review process for all common core courses with the goal to have all learning outcomes published in all common core syllabi as part of a recommendation by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education Board. The new initiative will go into effect for the Fall 2017 semester's syllabi. Engaging in this process, the theatre faculty reviewed and submitted a revised THTR 1003 – Theatre Appreciation for the new core during the coming academic year.

### **The Bachelor of Arts Degree at the University of Arkansas**

The program's theatre degree is grounded by a foundational and comprehensive collection of classes labeled as the theatre core. This core complies with NAST Standards for content due to its support of the program's mission and its broad-based nature. Grounded in textual analysis, the theatre core introduces students to plays and playwrights, genre, style, basic acting, foundational design, initial technical skills and basic production. Including eleven hours of upper-level credit, the theatre core furthers each student's knowledge of theatre history and requires advanced abilities in production.

Woven into the theatre core are many opportunities for students to respond to what they read and observe. Written assignments, online chats, and in-studio peer critiques require students to judge, analyze, and respond in an ethical manner using established criteria.

The theatre core is, in many ways, the heart of the program and the fulltime faculty shares its development, instruction and assessment.

### **The Theatre Core:**

- THTR 1223 – Introduction to Theatre
- THTR 1313 – Stage Technology I – Costumes and Makeup
- THTR 1311 – Stage Technology Lab
- THTR 1323 – Stage Technology II – Scenery and Lighting
- THTR 1321 – Stage Technology II Lab
- THTR 1883 – Acting I for Majors
- THTR 2313 – Fundamentals of Theatrical Design
- THTR 1423 – Script Analysis
- THTR 3683 – Stage Management
- THTR 4233 – Theatre History I
- THTR 4333 – Theatre History II
- THTR 3001 – Production Practicum
- THTR 3001 – Production Practicum

In addition to the Theatre Core, all theatre majors must complete a Writing Requirement, which can be satisfied in THTR 4233 – Theatre History I or 4333 – Theatre History II.

Also, all theatre majors must complete 21 hours from one of the two concentration areas of study: Design and Technology or Performance. (7 courses = 21 hours) See Section II B. Special Curricula: Design and Technology Concentration and Performance Concentration.

### **Theatre Credit Hours, Time Requirements, and Time on Task**

College and university terms vary in length, with the most typical being semester, quarter or trimester. Some institutions use a pattern of two 8-week terms per semester instead of a 15-17 week semester. Whatever the term length, time spent in the appropriate mixture of lecture, laboratory, self-paced learning, team activities, and field work must bring enrolled students to the same required levels of competence, knowledge and performance. Typically, classes have met for 750 minutes or 12.5 clock hours in a term for each semester credit hour awarded in lecture classes with proportionately more time for laboratory classes.

The minimum semester length is 15 weeks of actual class time and examinations. A minimum of fifteen (15) fifty-minute class sessions, excluding laboratories, is required to award one semester hour of credit. Institutions may have terms of other than semester length, but the amounts of credit awarded must be adjusted in proportion to the length of term. There may be exceptions regarding length of terms and amount of credit awarded for specific circumstances such as workshops, seminars, and summer terms in instances where the instructional content and activities are selected appropriately.

The amount of credit awarded for a course is based on the amount of time in class, the amount of outside preparation required, and the intensity of the educational experience.

- A formal lecture course with extensive assigned reading or other out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 750 minutes or 12.5 hours of classroom instruction;
- A laboratory class with moderate out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 1500 minutes or 25 hours of laboratory instruction; and
- Clinical, practicum, internship, shop instruction or other self-paced learning activities involving work-related experience with little or no out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 2250 minutes or 37.5 hours of work-related instruction.

NAST Standards require a system of clear, consistent and reasonable time requirements for postsecondary degrees. The University of Arkansas complies with this requirement with a clearly established and well-documented system of credit hours as listed in the catalog under Course Descriptions (*MDP A.*) Most university courses (including most of the theatre curricula) offer and award three semester credit hours. These courses are formulated as 3 3 0 = three-hour credit, three-hour contact in lecture, and zero hours' lab. Also, due to their workshop nature,

practicum and advanced practicum are coded as 1 0 3 = one hour credit, zero-hour lecture and three hours contact in lab.

Again, most courses are three-hour credit and three-hour contact per week for a usual semester of fifteen weeks. Since the average student load is fifteen to sixteen credit hours a semester, the dominant formula of five 3 3 0 courses and one 1 0 3 course provides sufficient time for students and faculty to work with sufficient resources to complete course content, realize competencies, and assess each student's progress towards the program's learning outcomes. Based on this formula a theatre or theatre education student's usual semester would serve time on task as follows:

- 6 contact hours a week in general studies (90 hours)
- 3 contact hours a week in theatre studies/lecture (45 hours)
- 3 contact hours a week in theatre studies/lab (45 hours)
- 6 contact hours a week in theatre emphasis (90 hours)
- 
- 10 hours a week (assumed hours) for unsupervised practice and study in preparation for class discussions, examinations, analyses, presentations, and performances (150 hours)
- 10-15 hours a week, typically, for rehearsals and production preparations for those that are cast in a production or assigned to a construction or running crew for 4 to 8 weeks (40 to 120 hours)
- A weekly total of 30-40 clock hours is reasonable and more than sufficient to complete weekly assignments and possible production and performance objectives.

A semester of 460 to a potential 540 clock hours provides sufficient time for students to produce the competencies that are required in each general and major course plus enhance their theatre skills through production opportunities in the areas of construction, rehearsal and performance.

As described above, existing formulas and schedules meet NAST Standards since faculty use an effective combination of lecture and lab to meet the learning objectives of each course and, ultimately, the learning outcomes of each program.

### **Overall Program Methodology**

Beyond the effective use of lecture and lab, the theatre faculty achieves its program goals by cultivating knowledge and skills through rehearsals of productions and student projects, student research projects, group discussions, group projects, special workshops, and one-on-one coaching in acting, design, voice, movement and technology. An important feature of our program, one-on-one coaching is available every semester from every faculty member. Scheduled or impromptu, students can initiate a coaching session by text, email or an office visit. In a coaching session students receive individual attention that answers their questions, improves their technique, solidifies their knowledge, and encourages and/or challenges their development.

In addition to lecture, lab and one-on-one coaching, the program's overall methodology features an active production calendar that allows students many opportunities to put their knowledge and technique to the "test". Led and supervised by the faculty, several productions a year are staged

in the program's theatres. Culminating in live performances, our students receive valuable production experience in state of the art facilities.

*See Appendix H.*

Finally, overall methodology includes internships for interested and qualified students. Though not a program requirement, internships have been valuable in the acquisition of knowledge and experience beyond the confines of the campus. In the recent past, some University of Arkansas Theatre students have interned with professional companies in Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, and New Mexico.

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## **Section II.B. Specific Curricula**

### **For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing**

#### **Bachelor of Arts: Theatre**

##### ***BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance)***

*See MDP A*

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre (Concentration in Performance) is a broad-spectrum program that seeks to provide a foundational knowledge of drama, a comprehensive skill set for the theatre, and a concentration in performance within the context of a liberal arts education.

The theatre faculty realizes and is proud of the liberal arts education at the University of Arkansas. Understanding the competitive nature of a career in the entertainment industry, we believe in the importance of well-rounded students who have a knowledge of human cultures, the physical and natural world, and who have intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long learners and active and responsible citizens. Furthermore, we value and teach the many "intersections" provided by the theatre with art, science, history, literature and civic and social engagement.

Mindful of the liberal arts and the theatre core, the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) degree is grounded in the missions of the university, college and program, supported by its curriculum, and seniors are assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Theatre majors currently participate in Senior Progress Review, a capstone project. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every class, production and assessment towards the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

##### **Learning Outcome 1: Dramatic Analysis and Theatre History**

Theatre students should have the ability to comprehend a diverse and shared theatrical/cultural heritage by analyzing and understanding the major movements and works of the theatre.

#### *Introduction to Theatre*

*Script Analysis*  
*Theatre History I*  
*Theatre History II*

**Learning Outcome 2:** Technical and Design Aspects of the Theatre

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the technical and design aspects of the theatre by demonstrating safe and effective stagecraft, communicating an idea in visual terms and by creating innovative theatrical designs.

*Fundamentals of Theatrical Design*

**Learning Outcome 3:** Performance Aspects of Theatre

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the performance aspects of the theatre by demonstrating competencies in acting, voice, movement and characterization.

*Stage Movement*  
*Stage Speech*  
*Acting I*  
*Acting II*  
*Acting III*  
*Acting IV*  
*Playwriting*  
*Directing*

**Learning Outcome 4:** Theatre Production Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills by synthesizing culture, theatre technology, design, and/or performance in the production and rehearsal process.

*Stage Technology I*  
*Stage Technology II*  
*Stage Management*  
*Theatre Practicum*

**Learning Outcome 5:** Citizenship/Collegiality/Communication

Theatre students should demonstrate competency in communication, collaboration and creativity by being an effective member of our theatre company, our college and our university community.

*Theatre students also receive instruction/mentorship in all labs, performance spaces and rehearsals outside of the traditional classroom setting.*

**Curricular Table**

**Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Performance)**

*See MDP A*

The Curricular Table for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) reflects healthy percentages for Theatre Studies (26%) and General Studies (35%) and areas for Performance

(18%) and Electives or a Minor in another subject (22%). The components and percentages of the degree comply with NAST Standards.

All required courses are documented for students and advisers on the Degree Checklists and plotted over eight semesters on the Curriculum Guides. The checklists and curriculum guides are available online, from Fulbright Advising, from the main Theatre Office and during each semester's advising fair. The Degree Checklist and Curriculum Guide for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) are provided in *Appendix E 5*.

The BA in Theatre Curriculum has recently been overhauled at the University of Arkansas given our intention to meet NAST standards and improve graduation and retention rates. The graduation rate for theatre majors has been consistent at a 6-year rate for several years. The degree checklist was a menu of options that caused students to take courses out of the recommended order. This, coupled with a combination of department led and centralized advising created confusion as to the proper order of courses and the impact that not following the advice led to many students taking too long to graduate. Often conflicting information was being given to students by the department and central advising such as the order in which to take courses. To combat this, the department re-evaluated the BA curriculum to streamline the course offerings and to create areas of concentration in Performance and Design and Technology. The department also created the Advising Fair, every semester event that advertises courses, provides advising and gives soon to be graduating students a final assessment of their degree checklist. This has proven very successful for the students who avail themselves of it, and we are hoping the streamlined degree will help students graduate on time. The concentrations went live as of Fall 2016.

### **Content, Methodology and Levels of Achievement**

Content and methodology for the Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) degree meet NAST Standards, are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes. The varied contents and methodologies are best discussed by examining the theatre studies core then the concentration in performance.

The theatre core is foundational and addresses all five of the program's learning outcomes as it provides information on, and exercise and practice for the basic aspects of theatre. THTR 1223 - Introduction to Theatre provides hands-on experience in the artistic and technical aspects of theatre. Playwriting, directing, acting and design principles are discussed. Analytical, conceptual, and critical approaches to dramatic texts as well as genre identification are covered by lecture, discussion, writing and research in THTR 1423 – Script Analysis. The principle eras, major cultural forces, artistic movements, styles, playwrights (their influences and processes) and artists of the past are covered by lecture, discussion, writing, examination and research in the two theatre history surveys: THTR 4233 and THTR 4333. The elements of design and basic design concepts are covered by demonstration, research, creative projects, practice and presentation in THTR 2313 – Fundamentals of Theatrical Design, THTR 1313 - Stage Technology I: Costumes and Makeup provides basic costume construction and basic principles of theatrical makeup application, THTR 1323 – Stage Technology II: Scenery and Lighting introduces students to the basics of scenic construction, shop tools and shop safety as well as basic stage lighting principles. Both Stage Tech I and Stage Tech II have a laboratory component, THTR 1311L and

THTR 1321L respectively. Students apply their stage technology skills in the scene and costume shops and complete crew assignments in departmental productions. THTR 1883 - Acting I for Theatre Majors explores the physical, vocal, and imaginative processes required for performance of dramatic texts. Basic production skills and practices are demonstrated, supervised, practiced and synthesized during Production Practicum (THTR 3001) which guarantees each student's exposure to and involvement with the theatre production process. The final course that rounds out the Theatre Core is THTR 3683 Stage Management which relates issues of management and producing to the academic and professional process. Additionally, all theatre majors are subject to a Fulbright College writing requirement that can be fulfilled in THTR 4233, THTR4333, THTR 4453 or THTR 4733.

Advanced coursework for the Concentration in Performance begins with THTR 2483 - Stage Movement for the Actor. Instruction incorporates physical warm-up strategies and exercises designed to improve relaxation; develop flexibility, alignment, strength, kinesthetic awareness, and appreciation of mind/body unity; and to connect stage movement to imagination, character development, and text. Techniques covered include Alexander training, Michael Chekhov work, dance, theater games and gentle yoga practice. THTR 2683 - Acting II is an acting studio course deepening the exploration of techniques introduced in Acting I, including expanded work on characterization and script analysis through exercises, scene-work and monologue performance. THTR 3433 - Stage Speech introduces the basic skills of speech, voice production and communication for performance and broadcasting. Special focus on General American speech and the characteristics of speech regionalisms. This course explores breath control, resonance, articulation, pitch, volume, voice quality and stress management. THTR 3653 - Directing I examines the basic principles and techniques of play direction, including play analysis, audition and rehearsal organization, staging and collaborating with actors. THTR 3663 - Acting III is an advanced acting studio building on techniques introduced in Acting I and II. Intensive work on script analysis, emotional preparation, awakening the imagination, characterization, partner work and playing action. THTR 4063 - Playwriting introduces the fundamentals of playwriting culminating in the completion of an original play and THTR 4683 - Acting IV - Shakespeare Performance explores Shakespearean texts, with focus on scansion, verse and prose, poetry, characterization and voice and articulation. The Concentration in Performance prepares the actor for professional work in the industry, graduate studies and the education field.

### **Senior Progress Review:**

All theatre majors are required, in the semester before graduation, to successfully complete the Senior Progress Review, a faculty assessment of each student's accomplishments in performance and production. This is currently the only assessment tool used by the department to evaluate a student's readiness for graduation and to assess the fulfillment of the Learning Outcomes outlined above. The department is in the process of defining new assessment avenues and will implement them beginning in the spring of 2017.

*See Appendix E 7.*

### **Underclassmen Juries:**

In their freshman, sophomore, and junior years, students will be invited to have a conversation with the faculty team about class work, production work and college life in general. The student will be instructed to bring their up to date degree checklist, so that the team can make sure that the student is on the correct path for graduation.

The faculty teams will consist of at least one member from each theatre discipline, i.e. Performance, Design, Technology, Analysis and Criticism.

With teams of faculty in place at each assessment session, we will effectively speak to a student's coursework, backstage and crew assignments, onstage and production work and citizenship. The following outcomes can be used as a guide to determine whether the student is on track, falling behind or should be placed on probation. The faculty can also use the information learned to determine adjustments to courses and production assignments; i.e. are we teaching what we say we are teaching?

Students will sign up online for a time slot and will be sent an email confirming the slot and giving them a room assignment. The faculty teams will use the provided form to assess the student's progress as they matriculate through the program. To achieve the greatest degree of success, the Advising Fair will be a major part of the assessment process. See Appendix E 6.

### **Results**

Enrollment in the degree program concentration is unknown as it has only been in place since the Fall of 2016. Official figures will be available Fall of 2018. Unofficially, we have reason to believe we have approximately 70% of our theatre majors pursuing the Performance Concentration.

*See MDP B I Heads Data Report 2016-17*

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to a liberal arts core, electives, has a comprehensive theatre core, a well-structured emphasis, strong enrollment, a quality regional presence, actively engaged students, excellent facilities, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- Undergraduate performance students need access to rehearsal spaces on weekends and evenings. This is currently unavailable.
- In order to take greater advantage of summer and/or career performing opportunities, the program needs to develop consistent strategies and funding to help performance students overcome barriers to summer work.
- Recruiting efforts require scholarship funds that will go hand in hand with the positive reputation of the program. At present, the program cannot compete with the generous scholarships of other institutions.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.
- Currently the theatre department facilities are spread across campus building and stretch to downtown. A more facility that allows theatre practitioners to collaborate more immediately is a pressing need.

### **For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing**

#### **Bachelor of Arts: Theatre**

## ***BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology)***

***MDP A.***

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) is to provide a foundational knowledge of drama, a comprehensive skill set for the theatre, and a concentration in design and technology within a broad-based liberal arts education.

The theatre faculty realizes and is proud of the liberal arts education at the University of Arkansas. Understanding the competitive nature of a career in the entertainment industry, we believe in the importance of well-rounded students who have a knowledge of human cultures, the physical and natural world, and who have intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long learners and active and responsible citizens. Furthermore, we value and teach the many “intersections” provided by the theatre with art, science, history, literature and civic and social engagement.

Mindful of the liberal arts and the theatre core, the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) degree is grounded in the missions of the university, college and program, supported by its curriculum, and seniors are assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Theatre majors currently participate in Senior Progress Review, a capstone project. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every class, production and assessment towards the program’s learning outcomes.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Dramatic Analysis and Theatre History**

Theatre students should have the ability to comprehend a diverse and shared theatrical/cultural heritage by analyzing and understanding the major movements and works of the theatre.

*Introduction to Theatre*

*Script Analysis*

*Theatre History I*

*Theatre History II*

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Technical and Design Aspects of the Theatre**

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the technical and design aspects of the theatre by demonstrating safe and effective stagecraft, communicating an idea in visual terms and by creating innovative theatrical designs.

*Fundamentals of Theatrical Design*

*Scenic Design*

*Lighting Design*

*Costume Design*

*Theatrical Makeup Design*

*Rendering for the Theatre*

*Drafting for the Theatre*

*Scene Painting*

**Learning Outcome 3: Performance Aspects of Theatre**

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the performance aspects of the theatre by demonstrating competencies in acting, voice, movement and characterization.

*Acting I*

**Learning Outcome 4: Theatre Production Skills**

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills by synthesizing culture, theatre technology, design, and/or performance in the production and rehearsal process.

*Stage Technology I*

*Stage Technology II*

*Stage Management*

*Theatre Practicum*

**Learning Outcome 5: Citizenship/Collegiality/Communication**

Theatre students should demonstrate competency in communication, collaboration and creativity by being an effective member of our theatre company, our college and our university community.

*Theatre students also receive instruction/mentorship in all labs, performance spaces and rehearsals outside of the traditional classroom setting.*

**Curricular Table****Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology)**

*See Appendix A*

The Curricular Table for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) reflects healthy percentages for Theatre Studies (26%) and General Studies (35%) and areas for Design and Technology (18%) and Electives or a Minor in another subject (22%). The components and percentages of the degree comply with NAST Standards.

All required courses are documented for students and advisers on the Degree Checklists and plotted over eight semesters on the Curriculum Guides. The checklists and curriculum guides are available online, from Fulbright Advising, from the main Theatre Office and during each semester's advising fair. The Degree Checklist and Curriculum Guide for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) are provided in **Appendix E 5**.

The BA in Theatre Curriculum has recently been overhauled at the University of Arkansas given our intention to meet NAST standards and improve graduation and retention rates. The graduation rate for theatre majors has been consistent at a 6-year rate for a number of years. The degree checklist was a menu of options that caused students to take courses out of the recommended order. This, coupled with a combination of department led and centralized advising created confusion as to the proper order of courses and the impact that not following the advice led to many students taking too long to graduate. Often conflicting information was being given to students by the department and central advising such as the order in which to take courses. To combat this, the department re-evaluated the BA curriculum to streamline the course offerings and to create areas of concentration in Performance and Design and Technology. The

department also created the Advising Fair, every semester event that advertises courses, provides advising and gives soon to be graduating students a final assessment of their degree checklist. This has proven very successful for the students who avail themselves of it, and we are hoping the streamlined degree will help students graduate on time. The concentrations went live as of Fall 2016.

All required courses are documented for students and advisers on the Degree Checklists and plotted over eight semesters on the Curriculum Guides. The checklists and curriculum guides are available online, from Advising Services and from each student's theatre adviser. The Degree Checklist and Curriculum Guide for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) are provided in *Appendix E 5*.

### **Content, Methodology and Levels of Achievement**

Content and methodology for the Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) degree meet NAST Standards, are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes. The varied contents and methodologies are best discussed by examining the theatre studies core then the design and technology emphasis.

The theatre core is foundational and addresses all five of the program's learning outcomes as it provides information on, and exercise and practice for the basic aspects of theatre. THTR 1223 - Introduction to Theatre provides hands-on experience in the artistic and technical aspects of theatre. Playwriting, directing, acting and design principles are discussed. Analytical, conceptual, and critical approaches to dramatic texts as well as genre identification are covered by lecture, discussion, writing and research in THTR 1423 – Script Analysis. The principle eras, major cultural forces, artistic movements, styles, playwrights (their influences and processes) and artists of the past are covered by lecture, discussion, writing, examination and research in the two theatre history surveys: THTR 4233 and THTR 4333. The elements of design and basic design concepts are covered by demonstration, research, creative projects, practice and presentation in THTR 2313 – Fundamentals of Theatrical Design, THTR 1313 - Stage Technology I: Costumes and Makeup provides basic costume construction and basic principles of theatrical makeup application, THTR 1323 – Stage Technology II: Scenery and Lighting introduces students to the basics of scenic construction, shop tools and shop safety as well as basic stage lighting principles. Both Stage Tech I and Stage Tech II have a laboratory component, THTR 1311L and THTR 1321L respectively. Students apply their stage technology skills in the scene and costume shops and complete crew assignments in departmental productions. THTR 1883 - Acting I for Theatre Majors explores the physical, vocal, and imaginative processes required for performance of dramatic texts. Basic production skills and practices are demonstrated, supervised, practiced and synthesized during Production Practicum (THTR 3001) which guarantees each student's exposure to and involvement with the theatre production process. The final course that rounds out the Theatre Core is THTR 3683 Stage Management which relates issues of management and producing to the academic and professional process. Additionally, all theatre majors are subject to a Fulbright College writing requirement that can be fulfilled in THTR 4233, THTR 4333, THTR 4453 or THTR 4733.

Advanced coursework in Design and Technology begins with THTR 2513 - Drafting for the Theatre which covers basic technical drawing and graphic skills necessary to communicate design ideas to fellow artisans. Both production and design-oriented drafting will be explored

using both hand drafting and computer techniques. THTR 3903 - Theatrical Makeup offers the techniques and skills of theatrical makeup and design involved in the creation and execution of character makeup for the stage. THTR 4123 - Rendering for the Theatre provides the fundamentals of visual communication for theatre in a variety of media and techniques. It includes the investigation of traditional drawing and painting methods and materials used by theatrical designers and the application of computer technology and software training in creating documents necessary to the theatrical process. THTR 4833 - Scene Painting is a studio class in painting techniques for the theatre. Exercises in color, textures, styles, and execution. THTR 3733 - Lighting Design is the study of the practical application and technology of stage lighting including history, electricity, conventional and moving lighting instruments, dimming systems, consoles and control systems and related paperwork. THTR 3213 - Costume Design explores the art and practice of stage costume design. Emphasis is on the expression of character through costume and the development of rendering and research skills. Finally, THTR 4653 - Scene Design studies theory and practice in the art of scenic design, including historical and contemporary styles and procedures. The Concentration in Design and Technology prepares graduates for the competitive entertainment industry, professional design fields and graduate studies.

### **Senior Progress Review:**

All theatre majors are required, in the semester before graduation, to successfully complete the Senior Progress Review, a faculty assessment of each student's accomplishments in performance and production. This is currently the only assessment tool used by the department to evaluate a student's readiness for graduation and to assess the fulfillment of the Learning Outcomes outlined above. The department is in the process of defining new assessment avenues and will implement them beginning in the spring of 2017.

### **Underclassmen Juries:**

In their freshman, sophomore, and junior years, students will be invited to have a conversation with the faculty team about class work, production work and college life in general. The student will be instructed to bring their up to date degree checklist, so that the team can make sure that the student is on the correct path for graduation.

The faculty teams will consist of at least one member from each theatre discipline, i.e. Performance, Design, Technology, Analysis and Criticism.

With teams of faculty in place at each assessment session, we will effectively speak to a student's coursework, backstage and crew assignments, onstage and production work and citizenship. The following outcomes can be used as a guide to determine whether the student is on track, falling behind or should be placed on probation. The faculty can also use the information learned to determine adjustments to courses and production assignments; i.e. are we teaching what we say we are teaching?

Students will sign up online for a time slot and will be sent an email confirming the slot and giving them a room assignment. The faculty teams will use the provided form to assess the student's progress as they matriculate through the program. To achieve the greatest degree of success, the Advising Fair will be a major part of the assessment process.

### **Results**

Enrollment in the degree program concentration is unknown as it has only been in place since the Fall of 2016. Official figures will be available Fall of 2018. Unofficially, we have reason to believe we have approximately 30% of our theatre majors pursuing the Design & Technology Concentration.

*See MDP B Heads Data Report 2016-17*

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to a liberal arts core, electives, has a comprehensive theatre core, a well-structured emphasis, good enrollment, a quality regional presence, actively engaged students, excellent facilities, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- Though there are always many performance students to audition and interview, design and technology students graduating from active high school programs are few. Competition for these students is extreme. Accordingly, University of Arkansas Theatre needs the scholarship resources and recruiting funds to compete for these prospective students.
- To take greater advantage of summer and/or career opportunities in theatre design and technology, the program needs to develop consistent strategies and funding to help design and technology students overcome barriers to summer work.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.
- The program does not currently have adequate laboratory spaces for the undergraduate population.
- Currently the theatre department facilities are spread across campus building and stretch to downtown. A more facility that allows theatre practitioners to collaborate more immediately is a pressing need.

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## **Graduate Studies – Master of Fine Arts – Theatre**

### **For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Acting**

*See Appendix F 5.*

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the field of acting, as a professional actor or teacher of acting.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to create and realize characters in a broad range of genres and roles. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of acting through

project work and performing in fully supported, high quality productions. MFA acting students learn in the classroom through rigorous project work and training in a variety of techniques. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Acting degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in acting with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market by helping them develop a body of acting experience and training, a headshot and resume, a website, connections and interactions with theatre professionals, opportunities to teach, and mentorship in areas of specific interest that support a professional career.

### **Credit Requirement**

An MFA in Acting requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours.

### **Curricular Table**

#### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Acting**

*Appendix A*

The combined courses in acting meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area—at least 65%; advanced, analytical or academically-oriented training—at least 10%. Acting classes in basic principles, modern styles, contemporary acting, Shakespeare, and period styles all include analytical training, as do the dramatic literature courses.

### **General Requirements**

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Acting degree meets NAST Standards for an MFA in Acting, are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Broad Range of Acting Knowledge and Skills**

The creative and artistic ability to successfully realize a role from a wide variety of periods, approaches, and playwrights, from script analysis to final performance.

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis**

Ability to analyze a play and character, and understand the ways that historical, economic, political, and social factors inform acting choices in creating a role.

#### **Learning Outcome 3: Advanced Capability in Voice, Speech, and Movement**

Ability to work specifically and healthily in creating the physical and vocal life of a character.

#### **Learning Outcome 4: Working Knowledge of Historical, Critical, and Theoretical Content**

The ability to apply theatrical research to the creation of a role.

## Learning Outcome 5: A Body of Performance Work

Ability to successfully realize a role through numerous performance and production opportunities. Many students are provided an opportunity to perform at TheatreSquared, an Equity professional theatre, in either the regular season or in the summer new play festival.

### **Program Components and Curricular Structure**

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Acting is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing acting skills, as well as coursework that includes script and character analysis, voice and speech, movement, and a variety of periods, genres, and approaches. MFA acting candidates may also take classes that support their acting training in specific areas of interest, such as playwriting and directing. Interested and qualified MFA acting candidates get the opportunity to teach Acting I in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study. Select students may also get the opportunity to teach intro level classes in areas of specialization. A typical candidate pursuing the MFA in Acting will have the opportunity to perform in one-to-two productions each semester. Students sometimes do public presentations of work developed in classes.

In the first year of study all acting MFA candidates enroll in Acting Studio: Principles (THTR 524v) which provides the foundation for Stanislavski based acting technique and script and character analysis; Voice and Speech I (THTR 5432) which focuses on building clear vocal production using proper breath support, the connection between breath and thought, learning to undo inadequate vocal habits, and vocal hygiene; Voice and Speech II (THTR 5552) which explores more closely the connection between breath support and volume, pitch, range, resonance and articulation; Alexander Technique, and study movement each semester through Alexander Technique and/or specific approaches such as Viewpoints, Stage Movement, or Period Styles of Dance. Students also take specialized acting studio courses that offer training in specific periods, genres and approaches, such as Modern Styles of Acting (Chekhov, Pinter, Brecht) or Contemporary Acting, which explores the ten most produced plays of the last year. Generally, in either the fall or spring semester, students take a one-hour dramatic literature course.

In the second year of study all acting MFA candidates take two semesters of Meisner Technique (THTR 548v and 549v), Voice and Speech III (THTR 5562) focusing on the International Phonetic Alphabet, and Voice and Speech IV (THTR 5572) an extension of the application of the IPA to the analysis of different accents of individuals for whom English is a second language; and study movement each semester through Alexander Technique and/or specific approaches such as Viewpoints, Stage Movement, Musical Theatre Dance, or Period Styles of Dance. Students also take specialized acting studio courses that offer training in specific periods, genres and approaches, such as Period Styles of Acting and Performing Shakespeare. Generally, in either the fall or spring semester, students take a one-hour dramatic literature course.

In the third year of study all acting MFA candidates take Voice and Speech V (THTR 591v), three hours of thesis focused on creating a one-person show, and three hours of capstone thesis focused on preparing the student to pursue professional goals through creation of a web-site, audition skills preparation, equipping them with headshot and resume, and interviews with industry professionals. Students also take specialized acting courses that offer training in specific periods, genres and approaches, such as Acting for the Camera. Students also have opportunities to take elective courses such as Directing, Playwriting, and Musical Theatre Performance. Third-

year acting students are assigned a thesis role and work on an additional performance project. Generally, in either the fall or spring semester, students take a one-hour dramatic literature course.

## **Results**

The MFA in Acting has been awarded to 61 candidates. Currently, 31 of these alumni are working full-time in acting and/or teaching. An additional 25 are working at least part-time as professional theatre artists. Five appear to have moved on to other careers.

### **Damian Dena** (MFA Acting 2016)

Freelance Actor, Northwest Arkansas. Trike Theatre, The Classical Edge Theatre

### **Stephanie Faatz-Murry** (MFA Acting 2016)

Assistant Professor of Movement/Musical Theatre at the University of North Dakota. Producing Artistic Director/Founder of North Dakota Shakespeare; Regional: Playhouse on the Square, Charleston Stage, Black Hill Playhouse, Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, Hampstead Stage, Nebraska Theatre Caravan, International: Gyeonggi English Village in South Korea.

### **Chris Hecke** (MFA Acting 2016)

Regional: Synchronicity Theatre (*The One and Only Ivan*), Atlanta Shakespeare Company (*Comedy of Errors*).

### **Bill Rogers** (MFA Acting 2016)

Regional: TheatreSquared (*Sons of the Prophet, Sundown Town, All The Way, Amadeus, Superior Donuts, Detroit*). Film: *Neapolitan, Gordon Family Tree*.

### **Britney Walker-Merritte** (MFA Acting 2016)

### **Guadalupe Campos** (MFA Acting 2016)

National: National Players Company Tour 68 (*The Giver, Hamlet, Grapes of Wrath*); Regional: TheatreSquared (*Amadeus, Hamlet*).

### **Laura Shatkus** (MFA Acting 2015)

Chicago: 16<sup>th</sup> Street Theatre (*Accidental Rapture*), Muse of Fire (*Lady Macbethin Macbeth*), The Gift Theatre (*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Talk Radio*), *Beggars in the House of Plenty*. Regional: TheatreSquared (*Fall of the House, Amadeus, Intimate Apparel*), Arkansas New Play Festival (*Just Like Us, Don Chipotle*), Artist's Lab Theatre (*The New Now*), Trike Theatre (*The Case of The Missing Melody*) Founder of the all-girl improv group: 5 Months Pregnant, which performs regularly in Fayetteville. Founding member of ArkansasStaged, a group of professionals who perform at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville Arkansas (*Art Out Loud: Gertrude Stein, Picasso at the Lapine Agile*). Film: *Valley Inn* and *Gordon Family Tree*.

### **Stephanie Bignault** (MFA Acting 2015)

Regional: TheatreSquared (*Great Expectation, Rapture, Blister, Burn*,); Film: *1 Corinthians 13* (documentary film – official selection Sundance Film Festival, Best Documentary winner at Seattle Int'l Film Festival, Audience Award SXSW Film Festival); *Speak Freely* (national commercial).

### **James Taylor Odom** (MFA Acting 2015)

Actor in *God of Carnage* (Shadowland Stages); Sherlock in *Baskerville* (Cider Mill Playhouse); Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* (Dutch Apple Theatre); *Mary Poppins* (Broadway Palm), *Murder for Two* (TheatreSquared).

**Jason Shipman** (MFA Acting 2015)

**Debbie Banos** (MFA Acting 2014)

Chicago: Urban Theatre Company (*Adoration of the Old Woman*), Halcyon Theatre (*Fefu and Her Friends*), Pulse Theatre (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), Babes with Blades (*Titus Andronicus*), Eleusis Collective Theatre (*King Lear*), Juan Francisco Villa's *Don Chipotle*.

**Kieran Cronin** (MFA Acting 2014)

Regional: TheatreSquared (*Good People, Around the World in 80 Days, Great Expectations*), Arkansas New Play Festival (*B Side Myself*). Film: *Brother* (short).

**Melissa Maramara** (MFA Acting 2014)

Instructor, Ateneo de Manila University. New York: United Solo International Theatre Festival (*Clytemnestra, Love Liz*). Regional: University of Missouri guest artist (*Clytemnestra*), TheatreSquared (*4000 Miles*), Arkansas New Play Festival (*Don Chipotle*); International: New Voice Company (*Stop Kiss, The Vagina Monologues*), Tanghalang Pilipino (*Love's Labour's Lost, Hamlet*), Tanghalang Ateneo (*Othello, Don Juan, Taming of the Shrew*); Film: *Bitukand Manok, Maging Akin Muli, Pepot Superstar*. TV: *Rosalka, Lobo, Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay*, Interviewed on CNN Philippines' *Leading Women*; actor: *The Dressing Room, Purgatorio*, and People's Improv Theater (director: *Iphigenia and Other Daughters, Macbeth, and Tartuffe*)

**Echo Sibley** (MFA Acting 2014)

International: Festival Internazionale di Valle Christi, Italy (*The Tempest, Broadway Night, Amore in Musica Sotto le Stelle*). *Flippin' Channels in the Estrogen Zone*—original one person show performed at the Crisis Art Festival, Lawrence Arts Center, Chicago Sketchfest, Public House Theatre, Chicago.

### **Published Objectives**

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

### **Advisement**

Each semester, students are advised on required courses for the MFA in Acting, as well as possible electives, in accordance with a six semester Plan of Study implemented by the head of acting. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal goals of the MFA candidate. See Appendix F 5.

### **Student Evaluation and Retention**

At the end of each semester, the performance faculty evaluates each MFA Acting candidate in the areas of performance-work, class-work, professional conduct, and progress. Students are given both oral and written critiques in private meetings.

*See Appendix F 8.*

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

#### Strengths:

- A high percentage of our MFA acting alumni are working professionally in the field.
- Our program offers strong acting training that prepares the student in a wide array of periods and approaches.
- We closely mentor and evaluate each student.
- We have a strong guest artist series that augments the normal course offerings.
- Our program offers an intimate and supportive environment that encourages artistry and growth.
- We have devoted and talented faculty members.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Facilities are lacking. We don't have enough space for classes or productions. Access to facilities we do have is limited.
- MFA acting candidates are often over-extended between classes, assistantship responsibilities, and productions.
- We would benefit by formalizing relationships and performance opportunities for our students with professional theatres.
- We do not have a diverse faculty that can serve as role-models and provide structure for a diverse student body.

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### **For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Directing**

*See Appendix F 5.*

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare candidates for professional careers in theatre directing. While we welcome students who ultimately pursue teaching careers, we're particularly interested in training talented and committed directors as future leaders of the American theatre, potentially becoming artistic directors of their own companies or regional theatres, as well as spearheading original works and adaptations in collaboration with other theatre artists. As our student directors collaborate with their peers as well as with our faculty, we seek articulate, educated, and introspective students who bring a body of directing, theatre, and/or performing arts experience. We actively recruit students from around the nation and the world, with recent students hailing from Virginia, New York, Syria, Arkansas, Texas, Italy, Colombia, South Korea, and Kansas. Our directors are passionate to learn, grow, and embrace challenges. They are engaged, curious citizens, eager to create art that awakens our daily lives and challenges the status quo.

The theatre faculty provides directing candidates opportunities to develop their unique artistic voices, equipping them with the skills and experiences to become confident and imaginative storytellers. Directors prepare for production work by learning and practicing script analysis and research, communication methods for collaborating, organization and time management of rehearsals, and exploring the visual and aural tools of our art form. The student directors' primary focus here is on their work with actors, helping them to discover, distill, and communicate story, relationships, and character. To that end, directors take many of the classes offered in the graduate acting track and lead our M.F.A. actors in directing studio classes throughout their three years of study. In classroom and production experiences we also train

directors to collaborate with an array of theatre artists, including: scenic, costume, lighting, sound, properties, and projection designers; playwrights; dance and fight choreographers; music directors; stage managers; technical directors; and business managers.

It is our hope that artistic relationships forged with their peers here will endure well beyond their graduate studies.

Students practice the process of directing a play with focused, rigorous classes that cover a wide range of historical and contemporary genres and styles. They helm productions that include new plays, devised theatre, and extant scripts, in our studio, black box, and proscenium spaces.

We value the flexibility of our program, striving to meet the individual needs and future goals of our students and offering strong guidance and mentorship, while providing a wide range of classes, training and production experiences.

The MFA in Directing degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and is assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty.

### **Credit Requirement**

An MFA in Directing requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course, they are required to assistant direct and/or stage manage, and direct at least one production in each of their three years of study, at least one of which is a new work in collaboration with a graduate playwright, and at least one of which is a fully-supported and designed show.

### **Curricular Table**

#### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Directing**

*See Appendix A*

The combined courses in directing and affiliated areas meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area as stated in the *NAST Handbook*, with the exception of the history of theatre and critical analysis.

Studio or related classes: 60%; Other studies in theatre: 40%.

### **General Requirements**

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Directing degree meets NAST Standards for Directing and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Develop and Guide Productions**

The creative and artistic ability to develop an approach to directing a production from concept to finished product. The ability to develop and guide fully mounted productions on a wide variety of plays from statement of concept through public performance.

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis**

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that a playwright uses structure, language, images, metaphors, relationships, and characterizations to lead to three-dimensional choices in

theatrical storytelling. Ability to integrate advanced understanding and capabilities in play analysis, performance, and design in creating the concept of a production.

#### Learning Outcome 3: Dramatic Literature and Theatre History

A broad knowledge of dramatic literature and theatre history, including a demonstrated ability to undertake inquiry, investigation, or research associated with various aspects of performance and production.

Ability to use appropriate resources to research text references, cultural and political world of the play, critical commentaries, production history and reviews, in service of making production choices.

#### Learning Outcome 4: Theatre Collaborative Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with actors, designers, and theatre technicians, and observing peer, faculty, and professional directors in creating theatrical productions. The ability to work with actors and designers in the processes of production, including the ability to conduct rehearsals effectively.

#### Learning Outcome 5: Technical Skills in Staging and Design Principles

The ability to use picturization and composition to create three-dimensional stories and relationships unfolding in time and space. An understanding of basic design principles and of aural and visual comprehension in the theatre and other dramatic media.

#### Learning Outcome 6: Communication Skills

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through spoken, written, and visual presentations. An understanding of all of the theatre arts and crafts at a sufficient level of knowledge to communicate with other artists and producers and to make informed critical judgments in all areas of the theatre.

### **Program Components and Curricular Structure**

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Directing is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing analytical, staging, communication, and collaborative skills. A typical candidate pursuing directing will have the opportunity to direct a minimum of four mounted productions. MFA directing candidates also serve as a stage manager and/or assistant director.

Throughout their six semesters study, MFA directing candidates take either the directing studio (five times) or musical theatre directing course (once), which provide the foundation for understanding the process of analyzing scripts, conceiving an approach, practicing the art of collaborating with actors, and staging historical and contemporary styles of theatre. Realism is taught in the first semester of training, with subsequent coursework selected from Shakespeare, Absurdism, Brecht, Greek or Roman Theatre, and contemporary theatre, along with occasional specialized offerings such as adapting non-theatrical material, and Italian or Spanish Theatre. Courses in acting, including the first-year acting studio, help directors learn the actors' process. Directors are invited to take classes in Stage Speech, Meisner, and other acting and design classes that might meet their needs and future goals. In addition, directors take symposium classes in rotating collaboration with their peers in various design specialty areas (lighting, scenery, and costume design).

Over their 3-year course of study, the directors will also take *Creating a One-Person Show*, the *History of Décor*, *Viewpoints*, *Devised Theatre*, and electives that meet individual needs and goals, as determined by the head of directing with input from the student.

In their first year, directors typically direct a one-act or full-length realistic play with limited production support; the focus is on script interpretation and analysis and collaborating with actors. In their second year, directors expand their horizons to more complex styles, directing a full-length play that typically includes a collaborative process with two or more designers, along with a limited production budget and technical support. In their third year, directors mount a full-length thesis production, usually on our mainstage, with a full collaborative process and department support. The thesis production requires extensive research, analysis, and subjective journaling about the artistic experience, all of which result in a thesis paper. In addition, in their second and/or third year, directors work with a playwright on the production of a new play and/or a staged reading. As time permits, directors are encouraged to work on independent projects both within our department and in the community.

In their first year of study, directors serve as either assistant directors or stage managers for one of our mainstage shows, enabling them to grow by observing experienced directors while learning about our department's production processes. Recent student directors have also had opportunities to assistant direct at TheatreSquared, our acclaimed local professional theatre. One of our students also choreographed a mainstage production there while others have served as director or dramaturg for their annual new play festival. One of our M.F.A. directors was recently TheatreSquared's resident assistant director and will be directing a mainstage show later this season. Students are encouraged to pursue assistantships and internships in alignment with their passions and needs; the graduate school provides modest financial support for some opportunities, including select directing labs and workshops.

Directors are given regular, in-depth feedback on all aspects of their work, including scenes directed in ongoing studio classes. The faculty directing mentor typically attends two or three rehearsals at various phases of each production process and provides written notes and oral feedback. Following the productions, the faculty mentor discusses the processes and end results, as well as student accomplishments and potential growth areas. In addition, the directing mentor requests and collates anonymous, aggregate feedback from the participating actors and stage manager, which is then shared in writing with the student director and reviewed with the mentor. This candid assessment provides invaluable, immediate, and direct feedback, often suggesting areas for future growth. Following the second and third year projects there are also post-mortems with the design and production teams. In addition, student directors are urged to visit privately with design and production collaborators and their mentors to glean further insights on their collaboration processes.

In preparation for initial design presentations for their second and third year projects, students meet with the directing mentor to share and explore the play's themes, ideas, challenges, and artistic possibilities, practicing aloud how they might inspire collaborators, getting peer and mentor feedback, revising their approach, and then practicing aloud again. Students review audition and callback methods and game plans with the faculty mentor. Cast lists are reviewed by the head of acting and the department chair prior to posting, to ensure departmental needs are appropriately met.

All directors are awarded half-time assistantships, covering tuition and providing a generous stipend. In addition, academically qualified directors are eligible to apply for a three-year fellowship. When students are directing, production preparation and rehearsal time are counted as a significant part of their assistantship hours, as their work provides opportunities for other students to engage in productions. Additional assistantship work required of the directors has typically included helping with grading and attendance for large Introduction to Theatre sections and, more recently, helping with show house management. In the past, directors occasionally taught Directing 1 or Stage Combat.

Our faculty meets at the end of every semester to evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class and production, which results are then shared with directing students in writing and reviewed in private with the directing mentor.

### **Results**

The following are the MFA directing students and graduates since 2004, with select credits:

**Jeremiah Albers** (current directing student; anticipated graduation 2018)

- Assistant Director, TheatreSquared, *Fun Home*, 2017
- Artistic Director, Generic Theatre, Norfolk, Virginia
- Theatre Editor and Critic, *AltDaily*
- Producer, Collaboration for the Advancement of Secondary Theatre
- Playwright (book and lyrics), *Cuff Me: The Unauthorized Fifty Shades of Grey Musical*

**Cole Wimpee** (current directing student; anticipated graduation 2018)

- Assistant Director, *Detroit*, TheatreSquared, 2017
- Artistic Director, Aztec Economy, New York
- Freelance Director and Actor
- Member & Participant: Lincoln Center Directors' Lab; Directors' Lab Chicago; Directors' Lab West
- Associate, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

**Kholoud Sawaf** (M.F.A. in Directing, 2015)

- Director, *Vietgone*, TheatreSquared, 2018
- DramaLeague Fellowship Recipient, 2017 Classical Director Fellowship for Artists of Color
- Resident Assistant Director, TheatreSquared, 2016-2017
- Directing Fellowship, Manhattan Theatre Club, 2016
- Artistic Assistantship in Directing, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 2016
- Recipient, \$250,000 grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts, in conjunction with TheatreSquared,  
to develop her vision for a new adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*
- Associate, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

**Brandyn Smith** (M.F.A. in Directing 2015)

- Assistant Professor of Dance, Southern Arkansas University, 2017-Present
- Assistant Professor and Director of Theatre, University of Arkansas – Pine Bluff, 2016-2017
- Choreographer, *Next to Normal*, TheatreSquared, 2013
- Freelance Director and Choreographer

**Esteban Arevalo Ibañez** (M.F.A. in Directing 2012)

- Artistic Intern, Collaboration Theatre, Chicago
- Freelance Director, including: *Washed Away*, Chicago Fringe Festival; *Hell's Kitchen*, arc/TEXT Festival;  
American Theatre Company; Prologue Theatre Company
- Fulbright Scholar in Spain (from Colombia)

**Kiara Pipino** (M.F.A. in Directing 2012)

- Assistant Professor of Theatre, King University
- Artistic Director, Festival Internazionale Valle Christi
- Freelance Director, including SOLO Festival, NYC
- Playwright, *After All* (fully produced reading at Playwrights Horizons) & *Washed Away* (Chicago Fringe Festival)

**Published Objectives**

All objectives for the degree are published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses are available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi.

**Advisement**

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate directing candidate meets with the head of directing to review artistic and educational progress. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments may be made to reflect the students' needs and future goals.

**Student Evaluation and Retention**

At the end of each semester all MFA directing candidates are evaluated by the faculty, whose thoughts, concerns, and praises are shared by the head of directing in a private meeting with the student. Students are given both oral and written critiques. As noted above, directing students are provided on-going classroom and production evaluations for all of their studio classes and productions.

**Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to providing professional training in directing extant historical and contemporary scripts, with additional training and practice in collaborating on new works with playwrights, creating devised theatre, and adapting non-theatrical material for the stage. It has a well-structured selection of directing and acting courses, process classes with designers, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni. Great strengths of the program include individualized feedback and instruction, and flexible classes and course content.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion:

- We currently do not have sufficient rehearsal spaces to stage productions on a floor plan that's the same footprint as the performance venue, which differs from a professional model and inhibits training.
  - We expect that the current renovation of our Global Campus Theatre will significantly improve rehearsal space access and serve as a focal point for MFA directing training and productions;
  - Our directors historically have had insufficient numbers of collaboration & process classes with designers and playwrights. This has recently improved, and we're currently in the process of strategizing how we might continue to make inroads.
  - Directors occasionally have insufficient numbers of peer actors available to collaborate in studio scenes; while we're experimenting with new techniques, such as actors' assistantships enabling them to serve directing studio classes, opportunities to practice staging scenes with 3 or more actors remains limited. In addition, there's no successful strategy yet for how to recruit experienced, undergraduate upperclassmen to participate in studio scenes.
  - We do not yet offer sufficient numbers of classes in theatre history and critical analysis. We're exploring the pros and cons of admitting an average of three rather than two directors, which was our model until 2012. Prior to then, we recruited two directors every other year.
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**For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing  
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Playwriting**

*See Appendix F 5.*

**Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree in Playwriting is to prepare the candidate for a professional career in playwriting—as a playwright writing for the theatre, the small or big screen, and as a dramaturge working to support the creation of new work for the American stage.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to grow and amplify their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become master storytellers and bold dealers in personal truth. Students are given multiple opportunities to practice the process of building a new play from conception to completion, working peer-to-peer with fellow collaborators including: directors, actors, and designers. This process is repeated throughout the writer's three-year course of study at varying levels, from concert- and staged-readings through to full production. Building foundational knowledge in dramatic form and structure is a key component to a playwright's education, including exposure to a diverse array of approaches to dramatic theory and script analysis. MFA Playwrights learn through rigorous writing workshops on a variety of special topics to build personal resiliency, develop the core strength to overcome inhibition and self-doubt, and embrace a fearless form of personal expression—one rooted in fierce personal investment while engaging with the larger cultural dialogue in which their work challenges and confronts. The program is intentionally intimate, allowing for flexibility to meet the individual needs of each student and for intensive and individualized mentorship. Through a wide-range of topical classes, collaborative experiences, and professional development opportunities we prepare our students for the unknowns of the professional world, by making them confident in the power of their voice, while being capable to articulate their vision, triage

critical feedback, and effectively improvise with collaborators. We believe the next generation of playwrights are instigators of action and engagement artists, with a mix of practical skills and personal prowess to be artistic leaders on a mission to transform hearts and minds.

The MFA in Playwriting degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, contest and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in Playwriting with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing a portfolio of work, a professional resume, internships and experience in dramaturgy, as well as experiences collaborating in all levels of production.

### **Credit Requirement**

An MFA in Playwriting requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

### **Curricular Table**

#### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Playwriting**

*See Appendix A*

The combined courses in Playwriting and affiliated areas more than meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area 50% playwriting exclusively + 6 hours of thesis, 25% Script Analysis and Theory, 15% Associated Theatre Classes, and 10% Electives.

### **General Requirements**

Content and methodology for the Master of Fine Arts in Playwriting degree meets NAST Standards for Playwriting and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Advanced Technical Skills in Dramatic Construction**

Understanding of a broad variety of dramatic strategies, forms, and structures, and the practice to put that knowledge into practice in the construction of a writer's own dramatic text.

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Writing**

The artistic ability to write and develop new plays from inception through a post-production draft.

#### **Learning Outcome 3: Script Development and Process**

Provide practical hands-on experience in the development of new dramatic work, including integrating outside resources and ideas relevant to the specific work and a focus on strategies and theatrical processes to help the writer acquire the skills to evolve and grow their work.

#### **Learning Outcome 4: Dramatic Analysis**

Develop the ability to analyze a play's structure, unlock the strategies the writer uses in creating the work, and develop the dramaturgical skill to articulate how a variety of plays function and create theatrical meaning. Real-world dramaturgical opportunities provide opportunities to put this knowledge into practice.

**Learning Outcome 5: History, Theory, and Criticism**

Understand how the historical, critical, dramaturgical, and theoretical content informs how and why plays have been made since the inception of the dramatic form.

**Learning Outcome 6: Production Opportunities**

Provide writers the opportunity to understand and deepen their work through the crucible of full production, where elements are fully realized and staged with actors and designers contributing to bring the play from the page to the stage.

**Learning Outcome 7: Collaboration**

Develop effective, creative, and collaborative skills through working shoulder-to-shoulder with peer and professional directors, designers, dramaturges, actors, and technicians in the development of the writer's work.

**Program Components and Curricular Structure**

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Playwriting is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing skills in dramatic writing, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, theory and history, and develop effective collaboration and communications skills through integrated classes in devising and adapting. A typical candidate pursuing playwriting will have the opportunity to have one fully mounted production of their thesis play, with multiple opportunities for development opportunities in workshop readings, staged-readings, barebones productions and crafting a solo-performance. MFA Playwriting students can also serve as co-collaborators in areas of interest, such as acting, directing, devising, or design.

In the first year of study all playwriting MFA candidates are required to enroll in THTR 5533 Playwriting Workshop, which provides the foundation for developing the skills to write a play. The Playwriting Workshop repeats every semester, and topics vary in each semester focusing on particular styles and artistic movements, as well as different types of dramatic writing. The Workshop is a combination of reading, analysis, and writing allowing writers to experiment in a variety of styles and forms. The core of the workshop focuses on the development of the Playwrights evolving work, and writers have multiple opportunities to hear the work out loud by MFA actors, receive critical feedback, and continual opportunities to revise. Other special topics including Writing for Television, Screenwriting, Solo-Performer, and Adaptation are offered within a three-year rotation. In the first year, each candidate in Playwriting, takes Dramatic Literature, to develop script analysis skills and deepen understanding of dramatic form and structure and historical and theoretical frameworks. First year Playwrights, take Devising Theatre, which gives them opportunities in researching and creating a devised piece with peer directors, writers, and performers, thus helping acquire collaboration skills and strategies. Graduate course work in related areas, such as Acting, Directing, History occur in the first year and one elective can be taken. At the end of the first year, each MFA candidate will have a rehearsed, public reading of a new play, including critical response feedback.

In the second year of study all Playwriting MFA candidates are required to enroll in the Playwriting Workshop, which emphasis will shift by topic. The Playwriting Workshop continual focus is on furthering playwriting skills through practice of writing new work. In the second semester, the Workshop will focus on practical work on a new play with peer directors and

actors, culminating in a public presentation of a barebones production of a work developed in earlier workshops. Additional Theatre History, Theory, and Dramatic Literature classes are encouraged as needed, as are related courses in design, production, and performance. One elective can be taken.

In the third year of study all Playwriting MFA candidates enroll in a third year of the THTR 5533 Playwriting Workshop which focuses on additional special topics, including writing for television and rewriting. The final year of the Playwriting Workshop focuses on developing a professional portfolio of dramatic works. MFA candidates can with the advice of their mentor can take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in script analysis, history/theory, acting/directing/design, and other areas of interest. All Playwriting candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis is a full length play with an attending process narrative, detailing their process of creating and the production of a full-length play.

At the end of the spring semester the MFA Playwriting candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Performance Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA Playwriting candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship.

### **Results**

Currently approximately 80% of all MFA Playwriting candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in Playwriting are working in theatre or an allied profession.

**Robert Hart** (MFA Playwriting 2015)

**Brittany Taylor** (MFA Playwriting 2015)

**Rachel Washington** (MFA Playwriting 2015)

**Larry Mitchell** (MFA Playwriting 2014)

**Clinessha Sibley** (MFA Playwriting 2014)

### **Published Objectives**

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

### **Advisement**

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate Playwriting candidate meets with the head of Playwriting. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Poetry, Fiction, and Translation. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal and goals of the MFA candidate.

*See Appendix F 5*

### **Student Evaluation and Retention**

At the end of each spring semester all MFA Playwriting candidates present a finished work they have completed during the academic year both informally to the public and formally to the Performance Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques. See Appendix 8

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to providing professional training in playwriting with additional training in dramaturgy. It has a well-structured selection of writing and theory courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- We need to grow the size of the student MFA Playwright population by 100%.
- We need more opportunities in special topics such as Screenwriting and writing for Young audiences.
- We need diverse guests to mentor MFA playwrights and provide new strategies in creating new work.
- We need flexibility in the production schedule to accommodate the development of new works by the MFA playwrights.
- We need more interaction between the design and performance area, and generally commit to meaningful interactions/connections between students in individual areas.
- We need to build meaningful connections with other disciplines where narrative is a key component: creative writing, music, game-design.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.

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### **For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Costume Design**

*See Appendix F 5.*

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the costuming field as a costume designer, costume technologist, costume shop manager or a teacher of costume design and/or technology.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become visual storytellers. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of taking a design from an idea to reality through project work and fully supported productions. Technical understanding and skills in producing costumes is also stressed. MFA costume students learn in the classroom through rigorous project work and through real world application by producing high quality productions. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have

artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Costume Design degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, jury and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in costume with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing– a portfolio of work, a resume a website, internships as well as providing design and technical assignments.

### **Credit Requirement**

An MFA in Costume Design requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

### **Curricular Table**

#### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Costume Design**

See Appendix A

The combined courses in costume design and affiliated areas more that's met the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area (costume exclusively + 6 hours of thesis) 50%, Associated design courses 25%, Script Analysis and History of Décor 10% and Electives 15%

### **General Requirements**

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Costume Design degree meets NAST Standards for Costume Design and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Design and Implementation**

The creative and artistic ability to develop a costume design of a production from concept to finished product.

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis**

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that historical, critical and theoretical content informs the visual choices in creating costume design for a production.

#### **Learning Outcome 3: Theatre Collaborative Skills**

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with directors, peer designers and theatre technicians in creating theatrical productions.

#### **Learning Outcome 4: Technical Skills in Costume Production**

The ability to interpret a designer's sketch and transform it from a two-dimensional idea to a three-dimensional costume through the methods of flat patterning, draping and costume construction techniques.

#### **Learning Outcome 5: Communication Skills**

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through visual presentations, spoken and written communications.

## **Program Components and Curricular Structure**

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Costume is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing design skills and technical costume production skills, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, history and developing presentations and communication skill. A typical candidate pursuing costume design will have the opportunity to design a minimum of two mounted productions and a maximum of five. MFA costume candidates can also serve as a costume design assistant, costume shop manager, cutter/drafter, first hand or crafts artisan, or makeup designer.

In the first year of study all costume MFA candidates are required to enroll in Costume Design I (THTR 5213) which provides the foundation for understanding the process of designing costumes and script analysis as well as implementing the elements of design and historical and evocative research. The course in Costume Shop Management (THTR 5243) focuses on the organization, communication and time management skills needed by both technicians and designers when collaborating to produce costumes. In the first year of enrolling in Costume Technology Studio (THTR 5293) the graduate student focuses on the skills and techniques need to construct costumes with an emphasis on analyzing the costume sketch and creating costumes by employing the flat pattern and draping method. Graduate coursework in Script Analysis and Theatrical Makeup is also required and one elective can be taken.

In the second year of study all costume MFA candidates are required to enroll in Costume Design Studio (THTR 5283) which focuses on furthering costume design skill and artistry by concentrating on historical research and designing period costumes. (THTR 5123) Rendering for the Theatre provides the opportunity for students to improve painting and rendering skills to effectively communicate design ideas and (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Digital Tools and Concepts provides the design candidate with training in employing digital tools to do the same. The second year of Costume Technology Studio (5293) focuses on the skills and techniques need to construct period underpinnings as well as creating historical silhouettes by employing the draping method. (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Portfolio Development focuses on creating a professional quality portfolio, resume, cover letter, website, and other promotional materials as well as providing the student with opportunities to present their work in a formal interview setting. In (THTR 5143) The History of Décor the graduate design candidate studies the changing styles in art, architecture and furniture from the Greeks to modern day.

In the third year of study all costume MFA candidates enroll in Costume Design Studio (THTR 5283) which focuses on furthering costume design skill and artistry by focusing on contemporary scripts and reinterpreting period scripts. The final year of Costume Technology Studio (THTR 5293) focuses on costume craft skills which can include millinery, puppetry, armor making and fabric dyeing and painting. MFA candidates can with the advice of their mentor can take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in figure drawing, textiles, computer aided drafting and accounting. All costume candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis can focus their process of designing a mounted production or their role as a costume shop manager or cutter draper for a production. Finally, all costume graduate candidates enroll in Special Topics: Costume Exam (THTR 5913) in which the student is given the semester to independently design the costumes for a script with an emphasis on the process from initial idea to sketch. An all-day on-site exam is given in which the focus is on solving problems and finding creative solutions.

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Costume candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Costume candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA costume design candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship.

### **Results**

Currently all MFA costume candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in Costume are working in theatre or an allied profession.

#### **Cayla Greer (MFA Costume Design 2015)**

Freelance draper & stitcher for Texas State Fair, Shakespeare Dallas' *King Lear*, SMU, The Kitchen Dog Theatre and designer for *Fame* for the Jr. Players

#### **Nicole Thompson (MFA Costume Design 2015)**

*Costume Shop Manager*

#### **Kelly Henry (MFA Costume Design 2013)**

Instructional Assistant costume shop manager & designer at Tarrant County College and Freelance Costume Designer

### **Published Objectives**

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

### **Advisement**

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate costume candidate meets with the head of costume design. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Art and the Apparel studies program. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal and goals of the MFA candidate.

*See Appendix F 5.*

### **Student Evaluation and Retention**

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Costume candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Costume candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

*See Appendix F 7 & 8*

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to providing professional training in costume design with additional training in costume production. It has a well-structured selection of design and technology studio courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- We currently do not have adequate space or room for more equipment to produce the costumes required for our productions or to teach the students enrolled in the required coursework.
- The Fine Arts Building and the costume shop space is not ADA compliant.
- We currently are woefully understaffed for the amount of costumes we produce. This is further exacerbated by our inability to attract graduate students who serve as the major workforce in the costume shop.
- Peer institutions in our region have at least 3, if not more faculty and staff members that make up their costume department: Costume Design faculty, Costume Technology faculty, Costume Shop Manager, and other specialists who focus on draping, wigs, or crafts.
- We are unable to attract a high caliber graduate student due to our limited staff and space issues.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.

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**For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing  
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Lighting Design**

*See Appendix F 5.*

**Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the entertainment design field as a lighting designer, assistant lighting designer, lighting programmer, production electrician or a teacher of lighting design and/or technology.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become visual storytellers. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of taking a design from an idea to reality though project work as well as fully supported productions. The primary focus of the design program is on design training and opportunities but, the technical skills necessary to support a lighting design including programming, technology, and electrician work are all stressed. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Lighting Design degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, jury and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in lighting design with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing a strong portfolio of work, a resume, a website, professional internships, as well as providing design and technical assignments throughout their 3-year residency.

### **Credit Requirement**

An MFA in Lighting Design requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

### **Curricular Table**

#### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Lighting Design**

*See Appendix A*

The combined courses in lighting design and affiliated areas more than meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area (lighting exclusively + 6 hours of thesis) 50%, Associated design courses 25%, Script Analysis and Criticism 10% and Electives 15%

### **General Requirements**

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Lighting Design degree meets NAST Standards for Lighting Design and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Design and Implementation**

The creative and artistic ability to develop the lighting design of a production from concept to finished product.

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis**

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that historical, critical and theoretical content informs the visual choices in creating the lighting design for a production.

#### **Learning Outcome 3: Theatre Collaborative Skills**

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with directors, peer designers and theatre technicians in creating theatrical productions.

#### **Learning Outcome 4: Technical Skills in Lighting Production**

Ability to read, understand, and create technical drawings (Light Plot, Section, associated paperwork) using contemporary digital methods of delivery, a thorough knowledge of the technical equipment and tools, and an understanding of the systems involved in creating and executing a lighting design.

#### **Learning Outcome 5: Communication Skills**

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through visual presentations, spoken and written communications.

## **Program Components and Curricular Structure**

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in lighting design is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing design skills and technical production skills, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, history and criticism, presentation of their work and communication skills. A typical candidate pursuing lighting design will have the opportunity to design a minimum of two fully mounted productions in a variety of venues. MFA lighting design candidates will also serve as a lighting design assistant, master electrician and may serve as a sound designer, projection and/or media designer, or special effects coordinator.

In the first year of study all lighting MFA candidates are required to enroll in Lighting Design (THTR 3733), which provides the foundation for understanding the process of designing lighting including the tools and techniques of the designer. Lighting Design Studio (THTR 5393) creates individual projects in design with an emphasis in script analysis as well as implementing the elements of design and research. Lighting Technology Studio (THTR 5383) emphasizes lighting technology including fixtures, lighting control, equipment design and the mechanics of lighting. Graduate coursework in Script Analysis is also required and students enroll in (THTR 591V) Drafting for the Theatre and one elective can be taken. The Summer Internship (THTR 592V) requires students, with guidance, to find their own summer stock work as an assistant, electrician or designer.

In the second year of study all Lighting MFA candidates are required to enroll in Lighting Design Studio II (THTR 5393), which focuses on furthering lighting design skill and artistry by concentrating on the problems of lighting the play through project work. (THTR 5123) Rendering for the Theatre provides the opportunity for students to improve painting and rendering skills to effectively communicate design ideas and (THTR 591V) Special Topics in Digital Tools and Concepts provides the design candidate with training in employing digital tools to do the same. The second year of Lighting Technology Studio (5383) brings more focused work on the lighting control console and its capabilities. (THTR 591V) Special Topics in Portfolio Development focuses on creating a professional quality portfolio, resume, cover letter, website, and other promotional materials as well as providing the student with opportunities to present their work in a formal interview setting. In (THTR 5143) The History of Décor the graduate design candidate studies the changing styles in art, architecture and furniture from the Greeks to modern day. The Director/Designer Collaboration (THTR 591V) is a 1 hour special topics course that allows designers and directors the opportunity to work on projects independent of the departmental production system.

In the third year of study all Lighting MFA candidates enroll in Lighting Design Studio (THTR 5393), which focuses on lighting musical and non-realistic theatre as well as lighting for installation. The final year of Lighting Technology Studio (THTR 5383) focuses on advanced technology such as moving lights and LED. MFA candidates can, with the advice of their mentor take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in computer aided drafting, computer game design and photography. All lighting candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis outlines their process of designing a fully mounted department production.

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Lighting candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers'

Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Lighting candidates present their work both informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technology Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA lighting design candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship during their 3-year residency.

### **Results**

Currently, approximately 90% of all MFA lighting design candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in Lighting Design are working either full-time or part time in theatre or an allied profession.

#### **Emily Clarkson** (MFA Lighting Design 2017)

Freelance Lighting Designer based in New York City. Gilbert Helmsley Intern 2017.

#### **Jacquelyn Cox** (MFA Lighting Design 2016)

Freelance Lighting Designer based in New York City. Currently assisting on Broadway for *Come From Away* and *Hamilton*.

#### **Jacob Hofer** (MFA Lighting Design 2016)

Freelance Lighting Designer for theatre and dance, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

#### **Diana Kaiser** (MFA Lighting Design 2013)

Freelance Lighting Designer, Chicago, Illinois.

### **Published Objectives**

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses are available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi.

### **Advisement**

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate candidate meets with the head of lighting design. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Art, Computer Science and English. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal and goals of the MFA candidate. See Appendix F 5.

### **Student Evaluation and Retention**

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Costume candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Lighting Design candidates present their work both informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

*See Appendix F 7. & 8.*

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to providing professional training in lighting design with additional training in lighting technology. It has a well-structured selection of design and technology studio

courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- Without a dedicated lighting laboratory space, the design students cannot experiment or work with the technology and tools outside of a production setting. There is no time for lighting to try out ideas until the lights are hung for a specific play. This compromises their educational and artistic opportunities.
- The Fine Arts Building is not ADA compliant.
- Without a dance program, the lighting designers do not have the opportunity to design dance lighting except in the rare occasion we can secure designs away from the university.
- Given that lighting design is a live art form, the lighting department relies on the cooperation of the performance and directing programs to supply us with actors to perform in projects. As these programs struggle with time and space issues as well, the lighting program is left without performers to light except in main stage productions.
- We are unable to attract a high caliber graduate student due to our staff and space issues.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.

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**For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing  
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Scene Design**

*See Appendix F 5.*

**Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the entertainment design field as a scenic designer, scenic artist, properties artisan, scenic carpenter, and scenic draftsman.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become visual storytellers. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of taking a design from an idea to reality through project work as well as fully supported productions. Although the primary focus of the design program is on design training and opportunities, technical understanding and skills in producing scenery is also stressed. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Scene Design degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class,

production, jury and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in scenery with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing a portfolio of work, a resume, a website, professional internships, as well as providing design and technical assignments throughout their 3-year residency.

### **Credit Requirement**

An MFA in Scene Design requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

### **Curricular Table**

#### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Scene Design**

*See Appendix A*

The combined courses in costume design and affiliated areas more than met the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area (scene exclusively + 6 hours of thesis) 50%, Associated design courses 25%, Script Analysis and History of Décor 10% and Electives 15%

### **General Requirements**

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Scene Design degree meets NAST Standards for Scene Design and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcome 1: Design and Implementation**

The creative and artistic ability to develop a scene design of a production from concept to finished product.

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis**

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that historical, critical and theoretical content informs the visual choices in creating scenic designs for a production.

#### **Learning Outcome 3: Theatre Collaborative Skills**

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with directors, peer designers and theatre technicians in creating theatrical productions.

#### **Learning Outcome 4: Technical Skills in Scene Production**

Ability to read, understand, and create technical drawings (drafting) using contemporary digital methods of delivery while maintaining a high level of design aesthetic.

#### **Learning Outcome 5: Communication Skills**

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through visual presentations, spoken and written communications.

### **Program Components and Curricular Structure**

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in scene design is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing design skills and technical scenic production skills, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, history and developing presentations and

communication skill. A typical candidate pursuing scene design will have the opportunity to design a minimum of two fully mounted productions and a maximum of five. MFA scene design candidates can also serve as a scene design assistant, assistant technical director, properties manager, sound designer, projection and/or media designer, or special effects coordinator.

In the first year of study all scenic MFA candidates are required to enroll in Scene Design I (THTR 4653) which provides the foundation for understanding the process of designing scenery, providing technical drawings to support the design, model making skills, rendering (digital and hand drawn), script analysis, and historical and evocative research preparation and presentation. In the spring of the first year, all candidates enroll in a Scenic Technology Studio course (THTR 5193) where they focus on skills building projects that are less design focused and more related to techniques needed as a designer. Scenic painting, model making, graphic design, and web site development are all technology areas that are explored in the Scenic Technology Studio Courses. Scene design students take part in graduate level digital drafting (AutoCAD or Vectorworks) course where they perform exercises related to realized productions or theoretical projects.

In the second year of study all scene design MFA candidates are required to enroll in Scene Design Studio (THTR 5283) which focuses on furthering scene design skill and artistry by concentrating classical theatre opportunities to include, Shakespeare, Greek, Roman, and Restoration literature. (THTR 5123) Rendering for the Theatre provides the opportunity for students to improve painting and rendering skills to effectively communicate design ideas and (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Digital Tools and Concepts provides the design candidate with training in employing digital tools to do the same. The second year of Scenic Technology Studio (THTR 5193) focuses on scenic art (scene painting) techniques and skills. (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Portfolio Development focuses on creating a professional quality portfolio, resume, cover letter, website, and other promotional materials as well as providing the student with opportunities to present their work in a formal interview setting. In (THTR 5143) The History of Décor the graduate design candidate studies the changing styles in art, architecture and furniture from the Greeks to modern day.

In the third year of study all scene design MFA candidates enroll in Scene Design Studio (THTR 5183) which focuses on furthering scene design skill and artistry by focusing on contemporary scripts and alternative performance venues and events. The final year of Scenic Technology Studio (THTR 5193) focuses on advanced scene painting and carving techniques. MFA candidates can, under advisement of their mentor, take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in figure drawing, architecture, game design, and directing.

All scene design candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis can focus their process of designing a mounted production. Finally, all scene design graduate candidates enroll in Special Topics: Scene Design Exam (THTR 5913) in which the student is given the semester to independently design the scenery for a script with an emphasis on the process from initial idea to sketch. This project can either be a theoretical project or in coordination with the MFA playwriting program whereby the scene designer works with a team to conceptualize a production for an original script. An 8 hour, on-site exam is given in which the focus is on solving problems and finding creative solutions.

At the end of each fall semester all MFA scene design candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers'

Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA scene design candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA scene design candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship during their 3-year residency.

### **Results**

Currently, approximately 90% of all MFA scene design candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in scene design are working full-time or part time in theatre or an allied profession.

#### **Joseph Farley** (MFA Scene Design 2017)

Master carpenter and stage supervisor, Santa Fe Opera – Santa Fe, NM

#### **Kiah Kayser** (MFA Scene Design 2017)

Freelance scenic designer and scenic artist, New York, NY

#### **Heather Roberson** (MFA Scene Design 2014)

Properties assistant and scenic artist, Arkansas Rep, Little Rock, AR

### **Published Objectives**

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UAConnect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

### **Advisement**

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate scene design candidate meets with the head of scene design to arrange a schedule for the upcoming semester. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Art and the Architecture programs. Consideration is also made for the professional goals of each individual MFA candidate.

*See Appendix E 5.*

### **Student Evaluation and Retention**

At the end of each fall semester all MFA scene design candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA scene design candidates present their work in a public setting where their work is formally evaluated by the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

*See Appendix F 7. & 8.*

### **Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The degree is committed to providing professional training in scene design with additional training in scenic production. It has a well-structured selection of design and technology studio courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our

colleagues in other departments, and a working relationship with our successful and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- We currently do not have adequate space for additional equipment to produce the scenery required for our productions or to teach the students enrolled in the required coursework.
  - The Fine Arts Building and the scene lab space is not ADA compliant making it difficult to attract a wide range of applicants.
  - Although we've seen improvements over the past 3 years, it is still challenging to attract the highest caliber graduate students due to our limited space and lack of state of the art technology concerns.
  - The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.
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## **Section II.C. Programmatic Areas**

### **Item TGP: Theatre Studies for the General Public**

#### **Theatre Studies for the General College Student**

For many years, the theatre program has provided an important contribution to the University's core requirement with the delivery of THTR – Theatre Appreciation. Delivered in the traditional campus classroom and online, the course is taught by fulltime and part-time theatre faculty. Additionally, theatre faculty teach special sections of the course for honors students.

One of several choices in the Fine Arts section of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences core, THTR 1003, 1003H – Theatre Appreciation satisfies state and university requirements for a survey based course in the visual or performing arts. It is one of three courses offered through the Department of Theatre included in the Fine Arts section (THTR 1013 – Musical Theatre Appreciation and DANC 1003 – Movement and Dance are the other two courses) designated as fulfilling this university core requirement. Accordingly, THTR 1003 is listed in the Course Description Section of the University Catalog and is a documented option as noted in the University Catalog and on all Degree Checklists.

The purpose of THTR 1003, 1003H – Theatre Appreciation is to provide information and experience on various aspects of theatre arts: acting, theatre architecture, dramatic theory, theatre history, various areas of production and their interrelationships with society. To investigate dramatic theory each instructor requires the reading and discussion of various plays. Selected for their social content and/or historical relevance, the plays usually spark lively debates.

As mentioned in the NAST Standards, introduction to theatre students experience the live theatre by attending program productions, receiving backstage tours, and participating in question and answer sessions with directors and designers. Additionally, each student documents and discusses their reactions to the productions by submitting required critiques that utilize Aristotelian elements.

### **Production Opportunities for the General College Student**

All students enrolled at the University may audition for program productions. Open to all students, audition information is posted on the Kimpel Hall 6<sup>th</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Floor theatre callboard and announced in all theatre classes including sections of THTR 1003 –Theatre Appreciation. The audition sign up is also posted on the Department of Theatre’s website, which is accessible to all U of A students. Though the program’s majors certainly are entitled to casting priorities, the program has, on several occasions, cast non-majors and/or utilized their abilities on running or front of house crews.

Another production opportunity for the general college student is through the production course, Production Practicum (THTR 3001). Open to all university students (who complete required training, have prior theatre experience, or have completed either THTR 1313/1311 or THTR 1323/1321) the course provides safe and effective instruction in the areas of scenic, prop and costume construction and experience with basic lighting.

### **The Theatre Minor**

Some general college students are interested in minoring in theatre. Depending on their major, a minor in theatre is possible. Documented on their Degree Plan, a minor in theatre consists of eighteen hours, nine of which must be advanced. Depending on each student’s major and theatre interests, a theatre adviser recommends appropriate courses to the student’s major adviser. A usual recommendation for a theatre minor consists of THRE 1371 – Script Analysis, THRE 1330 – Stagecraft, THRE 1351 – Acting I, THRE 3351 – Acting III, THRE 4361 – Theatre History I and THRE 4362 – Theatre History II.

### **Talkback Sessions**

Due to their nature, content or approach some program productions lend themselves to talkback sessions following specific performances. Usually linked to and shared with faculty from other academic departments on campus, talkback sessions explore authors, literature, history, themes, and ideas. Performance aspects including acting, directing and design are also discussed during these sessions.

Attendance includes all company members, the audience, and invited moderators or contributors from other academic departments such as history, political science or English. Past talkback sessions include:

- *The Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat*, led by Michael Landman, Associate Professor of Theatre and director of the production
- *The Diary of Anne Frank*, led by Kate Frank, Instructor of Theatre and director of the production
- *Angels in America*, led by Cole Wimpee, MFA Candidate - Directing

Talkback sessions are very rewarding for our students and our community. The theatre faculty plans on scheduling more of these events in the future.

### **Local Media**

With the assistance of the University’s Communication and Marketing Services, the theatre faculty keeps the local media aware of information related to the productions and student, faculty and program accomplishments. All fulltime theatre faculty are listed in the University’s media

guide and they continue to provide information for media releases and willingly interview with the local media so as to provide insight on theatre topics or upcoming productions.

On a regular basis, the program contributes information and images to The University of Arkansas daily digital news site, *Daily Headlines*, *The Northwest Arkansas Times* and the U of A student publication, *The Traveler*.

### **Study Abroad – Theatre in London**

The Department of Theatre and Department of English cosponsor a study tour of London that is open to all majors from all colleges; no theatre experience is required. It includes one week of classroom instruction in Fayetteville the week prior to the trip and four weeks in London with excursions to other destinations, like Stratford-up-Avon and Oxford. During that time, students experience a generous sampling of modern as well as classical drama as performed on the English stage. A typical summer features a broad spectrum of theatre from the earliest dramatic forms to the most current in London and Stratford-upon-Avon. Theatre outings include plays at Shakespeare's Globe, RSC, National Theatre, and in the West End, as well as musical performances and other cultural events. Students will be granted significant free time so that they will be able to explore the city on their own, as well as plan weekend trips and activities outside of London. Student residences (2-3 students/room) are centrally located studio flats with easy access to bus and subway stations. Participants share rooms with kitchen facilities and a common room.

Leadership for the Theatre in Britain trip comes from Fulbright College, including Professor Casey Kayser from the Department of English and Professor Shawn Irish from the Department of Theatre. Both professors have significant experience in theatre studies and in study tours to Britain.

### **Department of Theatre Guest Artist Program – McIlroy Professorship**

The Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences has a guest artist initiative that rotates between the Department of Art, Department of Music, and the Department of Theatre. The McIlroy fund distributes approximately 40K every three years to each program to be used at the discretion of the unit. A complete list of McIlroy Professorship recipients for the Department of Theatre is located in Appendix G.

In addition to the McIlroy Professorship program the theatre program bring several prominent theatre artists to our campus through the “Cultural Activities” account. Faculty members are encouraged to submit guest artist proposals each Fall semester and the department annually supports up to 10K in guest artist visits. These theatre professionals typically present their work in our theatres and/or work with our students in a variety of hands-on workshops.

- Dael Orlandersmith, Playwright and Performance Artist, (Spring 2017).
- Craig McDonald, Professional Actor, Mask Workshop, (Fall 2016).

### **Department of Theatre Season Preview & Awards Reception (Gala)**

Every May, before final exams begin, the Department of Theatre celebrates program and student accomplishments through the annual U of A Department of Theatre Season Preview & Awards Reception. Along with recognition of the graduating class of MFA candidates and BA students, most of the evening's events focuses on student awards for achievement in acting, design, production, and management as well as awarding scholarships to returning undergraduate students. The awards are selected by the theatre faculty, along with a vote from the

undergraduate representative and the graduate representative. Beginning in 2017, the Department presented the First Annual Distinguished Alum Award. The award is presented to an alum from the BA or MFA program whose professional contributions and successes represent the values and talents associated with earning a degree in theatre. The inaugural award for 2017 was awarded to Sarah Colonna (BA 1996). The finishing touch to every academic year, the theatre awards confirm the quality collaborations of the season, the passionate creativity of our students, and the program's annual quest for excellence.

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## SECTION III. EVALUATION, PLANNING, PROJECTIONS

*See Section MDP-III.A.1. Jury Requirement Statement*

*See Section MDP -III.A.2. Jury Forms*

*See Section MDP -III.A.3. Jury Summaries*

*See Section MDP -III.A.4. Consensus of Student Response*

### A. THEATRE UNIT

As part of the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the Theatre Unit is involved in meeting the University's goals through its Master of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Arts degrees. We recently hired a new Chancellor (Spring 2016), and his commitment to the Arts seems to be more clearly articulated than was under previous leadership. He has established, what he is calling the "Eight Guiding Priorities for the University of Arkansas" where he clearly has outlined a strong directive for all units within the university.

<http://chancellor.uark.edu/campus-strategic-planning-process/#guiding-priorities>

#### **Brief History:**

The Department of Theatre has undergone a number of major changes both programmatically and leadership over the past 25 years. The MFA program was launched in 1996 and graduated its first candidates in 1999. The program has grown considerably from a relatively small faculty and staff of ten full-time teaching faculty and one office manager in 1992 to nineteen full-time teaching faculty and 2 full-time dedicated office staff. In 2013, after 20 years under the leadership of Dr. Andrew Gibbs, I began my tenure as Chair of the Department of Drama. One of the first initiatives was to change the name from the Department of Drama to the Department of Theatre. The name change also set the tone for a leadership that would be a bit more direct and transparent with the faculty.

#### **Teaching, Research, and Creative Spaces:**

For many years, the arts at the University of Arkansas were largely ignored. However, recent initiatives for the Department of Art (sculpture and pottery studio spaces South of Campus in a new "Arts District") along with a 20-million-dollar remodel of the old university field house into a state of the art concert hall (Faulkner Performing Arts Center) has sparked an interest in revitalizing all of the arts programs on campus. This has inspired the department to pursue opportunities to add new and/or renovated rehearsal, performance, and research/teaching space dedicated to the Department of Theatre.

**Graduation Rates:**

In the spring of 2013, through a series of informal exit interviews with recent BA graduates, and by evaluating the Senior Progress Review essays written by all graduating Theatre Majors, it was clear that the students expressed great concern in the advising they were receiving at the centralized Fulbright Advising Center as well as a Theatre core that was difficult to understand. One of the first major projects instituted when I became chair in the Fall of 2013 was to revamp the undergraduate curriculum. This was when we began the process of creating the two concentrations – Performance and Design and Technical.

Recent exit interviews and Senior Progress Review essays clearly show a significant improvement in student ease of matriculating through the Theatre degree requirements. Our graduation rate has been quite consistent over the past 5 years with an average of 17.4 graduates. With an average of 115.4 majors over the course of those 5 year, and an assumed equal distribution between freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, that puts our graduation rate at approximately 61% for a 4-year rate.

**Diversity and Inclusion:**

The university has a diversity initiative to increase minority and underrepresented faculty/staff and student populations to be more reflective of our society in general. Northwest Arkansas is an area with a fairly high percentage of families of Hispanic descent; the university has been able to double our Hispanic student population, but still struggle to identify and hire qualified Hispanic faculty. The Department of Theatre has made concerted efforts to recruit more minority students (especially in the MFA program); however, the recent loss of our only minority faculty member, has created new challenges for the unit. Although we've been successful in recruiting African American as well as Hispanic students into our BA and MFA programs, we unfortunately do not have any minority faculty to serve as immediate mentors making retention a bit more challenging. Gender issues tend to not be a problem for our faculty or student body. If anything, we have a much more difficult time recruiting undergraduate male students. We have had some gender equity concerns in regard to our female faculty over the past 5-7 years; however, recent efforts have contributed significantly to increasing the pay of those female faculty members who were at the lower end of the pay scale.

**Student Assessment Bachelor of Arts – Theatre:**

As the BA concentrations were being developed, we identified the need to evaluate and interact on a more formal and consistent level with all BA students. Although we had a mechanism in place for assessing learning outcomes for all Theatre majors who were in their final year, (Senior Progress Review), we didn't have a means of tracking and assessing student progress of the underclassmen. By implementing the underclassmen jury procedure, we hope to be able to track the progress of all Theatre majors. Since the system has only had one round of underclassmen (Spring 2017) we are yet to collect a data set that will provide enough information to better understand if we are meeting all of our learning outcomes.

**MFA Candidate Assessment:**

The Graduate School requires that all Graduate Students receive a formal assessment at least once per academic year. The Department of Theatre conducts formal reviews of all MFA candidates 2 times per academic year – one at the completion of the fall semester, and a formal review and evaluation at the end of the spring semester. Each fall review culminates with a written and/or face-to-face meeting between the candidate and their immediate mentor. The

spring review follows a more formal procedure whereby a document is filed with the Graduate School outlining the progress of the candidate.

*See Appendix F 8 for Graduate Evaluation Form*  
<http://catalog.uark.edu/graduatecatalog/objectivesandregulations/>

## **B. STUDENTS**

The Department of Theatre appoints (by application) two students (one graduate and one undergraduate) to serve as the Student Representatives. These students are expected to attend all faculty meetings, participate in the season selection process but surveying their constituents and collecting play/musical titles, assist with recruitment efforts and events, serve as departmental ambassadors to students visiting the department, and help organize and manage the year end Season Preview and Awards Reception. They also communicate the agenda and all pertinent information shared at the monthly faculty meetings as a means of keeping all of the students within the department informed.

Assessing the effectiveness of curricula and perceptions of the graduating students has been pursued via a variety of processes; however, we are still exploring more effective and efficient ways to gather data. Currently, all MFA candidates in their final semester are required to participate in exit interviews with their immediate mentor as well as the chair of the department. Undergraduates who are graduating participate in the Senior Progress Review and are encouraged to participate in a formal interview with the chair. Generally, the purpose is to determine whether or not the student believes that he or she was well served by the curriculum, the faculty, and the opportunities they were afforded during their academic career. They are also given a chance to share their future goals. Some of the concerns expressed by students have been:

*1. There haven't been enough performance opportunities for undergraduates.*

As a result, the department had created an all undergraduate production that serves the students who may have not been cast in either mainstage, or studio productions.

*2. Advising is inconsistent and the Advising Center doesn't know what Theatre students need to graduate.*

The department now has identified 2 faculty members to serve as Undergraduate Departmental Advisors (no compensation or release time) as well as an Honors Advisor for those students pursuing 4 year or Departmental Honors. We also hold an "Advising Fair" each semester where faculty are present to let students know about the upcoming semester's courses and how they fit into their training/and or goal to graduate.

*3. Concerns regarding having access to rehearsal spaces and design studio time due productions that have priority.*

The departmental production manager has established a sign-up procedure whereby students can check out time in three of our dedicated classroom/rehearsal spaces – Kimpel 404, 401, 402, 204 – Computer Lab, and 204B Acting Studio. The sign up is managed through our departmental website and requests are made via email.

4. *Concerns regarding a lack of rehearsal furniture and blocking cubes/walls.*

The Department built and purchased 3 sets of rehearsal for the Kimpel Hall and Global Campus Theatre spaces to include various acting cubes, booked flats, rolling door units, sofas, and chairs.

5. *Students requested more experience in Acting for the Camera as well as more guest artist working in the field who can share their experiences about working in the theatre industry.*

During the past 3 years, we have offered an undergraduate acting for the camera course in addition to our graduate acting for the camera course. Unfortunately, we recently lost the faculty member who had been teaching this course and will be looking to find a replacement who has expertise in this area.

We just completed a Department of Theatre (Drama) Survey that will be used to determine what our former students feel are the strengths and weaknesses of our programs. It is planned, at this point, to conduct these online surveys roughly every 5 years, so that they will coincide with the NAST survey.

### **C. PROJECTED IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES**

After 8 months of planning, the Dean of the Fulbright College has agreed to fund a renovation project of the Global Campus Auditorium that will turn it into a state-of-the-art Black Box Theatre. This 3-million-dollar project is the first project that adds performance/rehearsal space to the existing facilities managed by the Department of Theatre in over 30 years. The project is slated to be completed in February of 2018 and will serve as a secondary performance venue. Although the theatre will be located on the square in downtown Fayetteville, (not on campus) it will be utilized as both a rehearsal space as well as a classroom. It will add over 3200 additional square feet of teaching and performance space to the Department of Theatre.

See Appendix J

Additionally, there are plans to renovate and restore the Edward Durell Stone, Fine Arts Center (home to the University Theatre) sometime in the next 3-5 years. The building was completed in 1950 and, aside from repairs and general maintenance, has not been properly renovated since it opened. The building houses the University Theatre, the Stella Boyle Concert Hall, a fine arts library, and a wing for the Department of Art where there are offices, classrooms and other drawing and painting studios. The current estimate is approximately 40 million dollars for a complete restoration. Since this serves as our primary performance venue, it is a high priority for the Department of Theatre. The restoration would be an excellent start to the Department of Theatre's needs in regard to state of the art theatre equipment; however, unless an addition to the existing structure is built, it will not address the biggest concern which is adequate research/creative, and office space.

### **D. FUTURE CONCERNS**

The growth of our university is the first issue we all face. The College was forced to hire many instructors and adjunct faculty in order to meet the needs of the expanding student population. Fulbright College is providing many of the general education courses for the entire university.

The number of students who take Theatre Appreciation and Musical Theatre Appreciation has doubled over the past 7 years. There is a plan to manage the growth moving forward, but currently we have as more non-tenure track faculty than tenure-track and there is not a plan in place to convert those non-tenure track lines to permanent tenure-track lines.

This tends to create concerns primarily in the area of management and service to both the department and the college. The service load (area head's primarily) placed on a select few faculty members (tenure track) makes it challenging for them to continue to pursue their research/creative work on a consistent manner, teach the required courses for the MFA candidates and undergraduates, and serve on the necessary departmental and college committees while recruiting for and running an MFA and BA program with a limited number of support faculty members. I am aware that this is not an isolated situation; all universities have this concern; however, in order to continue to be an attractive destination program, we believe we are challenged to provide unique course offerings as well as our foundational course in an effort to distinguish us from surrounding universities. The added benefit of having a professional theatre (TheatreSquared) in our city also provides wonderful opportunities for our students, faculty and staff. However, maintaining that relationship and the added challenge of having an additional theatre producing high quality productions also adds to the daily workload of maintaining a strong, healthy creative relationship.

Another concern is one that all of higher education is facing, but seems to be even more problematic for "arts" programs. It seems that the number of students who enter college wanting to pursue a theatre degree is diminishing as parents tend to guide their children into a more "practical" and financially stable degree. We experience many students who, after a semester or more, decide to finally "cut ties" and choose the major they are passionate about – theatre. Although this is great for us, it is difficult to track whether the department is getting acknowledgement for adding these majors when calculating our graduation rates.