

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Name of Program:	Theatre Arts
Year:	2019-2020
Name of Preparer:	D. Keith Best

Program Mission Statement

The Mission of the Theatre Program is:

The Department of Fine Arts offers a major in performing arts with specialties in theatre performance (acting and directing) or theatre design/technology (scenery, lighting, costuming, and stagecraft). The department seeks to prepare students for graduate studies in the major, for entering professional training programs, or for entering professions that require creative thinking and artistic expression. Students may also earn either a minor or a collateral in theatre. The education students participate in leads to the development of life skills of self-discipline, personal responsibility, and organization; and the ability to communicate effectively and work cooperatively is fostered in the program. The program educates the student body at large and serves the community through quality performances that exhibit student and faculty artistic work and function as a laboratory for applying skills learned in the classroom and studio.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. Students will demonstrate communication skills, collaborative problem-solving, and modes of self expression that are essential to the art of theatre and theatre production.
2. Theatre arts students will summarize and examine the relevance, implications and consequences of theatre to its social, cultural and historical context.
3. Theatre arts students will recognize and practice an appreciation for a professional disposition in theatre art analysis, production process and practices.
4. Theatre arts students will identify, interpret, and practice the practical and professional aspects of the production process.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of theatre concepts, theories, organization and production process.
2. Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully participate in a theatrical production under the direction and supervision of an experienced production team.
3. Students will identify, examine, and evaluate skills, knowledge and vocabulary usage to form aesthetic judgments of/within the production process.
4. Students will examine, demonstrate, and create sufficient skills and knowledge in advanced areas of study in their specialty.

Assessment Methods

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of theatre concepts, theories, organization and production process.

The primary and direct assessment tool for this SLO has been the Exit Exam given to graduating seniors. The exit exam included questions from each theatre course that the student completed at FMU. These questions target specifics from the courses that would be representative of the knowledge in this SLO. The graded exams are reviewed by theatre faculty to determine areas in which students seem to have difficulty retaining important information. However, faculty have decided that a pre-/post- test combination would better suit our assessment needs. Essentially the same test containing the same questions, the pre-test would be given in the first semester of a student's program and the post-test given in their exit interview before graduation. We plan to implement the pre-test by Fall 2021 and post-test by December 2021. Any findings will be analyzed by the Theatre faculty at our closing meeting of the semester.

An FMU Theatre Handbook was created to provide important information for Theatre majors and minors. This tool does not assess, but provides useful information for students to apply to their academic and creative pursuits, as well as reinforces information they learn in class and productions.

Baseline – n/a

Benchmark – Continued use of the FMU Theatre Handbook.

Target – To create and implement a pre-/post- test for theatre majors and minors by Fall 2021. Update Theatre Handbook.

2. Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully participate in a theatrical production under the direction and supervision of an experienced production team.

The direct assessment tool for this SLO is the use of the course Theatre Practicum (THEA 210) in which students receive a grade for specific roles (both onstage and backstage) under the direction of theatre faculty. Students are required to take multiple practicums in their program. The theatre faculty who work directly with the student in the production process assigns practicum grades at the end of the semester based on an evaluation of the student's performance in a specific assignment (lighting, acting, stage management, etc.). Items considered include (but are not limited to) attitude, professional manner, timeliness, discipline, commitment, quality of work, etc. Findings will be analyzed by the Theatre faculty at our closing meeting of the semester.

- Baseline – 100% of students taking the Practicum course in the 2017-2018 year were judged to have successfully completed (passed with a C or greater) the requirements of the course by a faculty panel.
- Benchmark – 100% passed with a C or greater 2018-19.
- Target – 100% to excel with an A.

3. Students will identify, examine, and evaluate skills, knowledge and vocabulary usage to form aesthetic judgments of/within the production process.

Many parts of the Exit Exam were specific to the production process including areas of aesthetic judgment. These parts had been directly assessed independently of the entire exam in previous years. The pre-/post- test will also include these areas of direct assessment.

We also utilize a response report (written and oral) from a KCACTF (Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival) respondent for at least one of our yearly productions. This entails participation in the yearly festival including a visit from a respondent to comment upon all areas within a production. During this response, students are indirectly assessed through questions posed to them via the respondent. This year, we invited respondents to one production.

At least one of our yearly productions includes an indirect assessment through a “post mortem” gathering. After the production closes, all cast and crew come together to discuss successes and challenges of that particular production.

All findings will be analyzed by the Theatre faculty at our closing meeting of the semester.

- Baseline – Completion of the exit exam, one KCACTF assessment per year, and one post mortem discussion.
 - Benchmark – Two KCACTF assessments and one post mortem discussion.
 - Target – Completing the pre-/post-test, at least one KCACTF assessment, and one post mortem.
4. Students will examine, demonstrate, and create sufficient skills and knowledge in advanced areas of study in their specialty.

In addition to being directly assessed by faculty in the course, final projects in upper level courses such as, Costume Design, Directing II, and Acting IV, usually receive outside adjudication, which provides direct and indirect assessment. There is usually a written response and/or score from respondents.

Any findings will be analyzed by the Theatre faculty at our closing meeting of the semester.

Baseline – n/a

Benchmark – Acting IV adjudicated.

Target – We will ensure an outside assessment component in a performance or a technical area of the program each year.

Assessment Results

We had 12 majors and 12 minor/collaterals in Theatre for 2019-20.

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of theatre concepts, theories, organization and production process.

Due to early closing of the campus due to Covid-19, we gave no direct assessment exit exam this year. Therefore the baseline, benchmark, or target were not met and we have no data.

2. Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully participate in a theatrical production under the direction and supervision of an experienced production team.

There were 9 assessed practicums of 7 students. All practicums were passed with an “A”. (Note: Due to Covid 19 closure, students assigned to work on the canceled April 2020 show were given an alternate assignment.) Therefore, baseline and benchmark were achieved.

3. Students will demonstrate skills, knowledge and vocabulary usage to form aesthetic judgments of/within the production process.

No exit exam was given this year, so the baseline, benchmark and target were not met for this part of SLO #3.

There were 12 students participating in the one KCACTF-assessed production so we met our baseline of one productions. The respondents' reports and comments echoed those concepts put forth by the faculty director during the production process. To have an outside professional reiterate what has been emphasized during the production process seems to encourage retention of those concepts. Respondent reports are attached.

4. Students will acquire and demonstrate sufficient skills and knowledge in advanced areas of study in their specialty.

There was no adjudication of advanced courses this year due to Covid-19 closure.

Action Items

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of theatre concepts, theories, organization and production process.
 - Exit exam data is nonexistent for the 2019-2020 year. For the last few years, the faculty has been questioning whether the exit exam is providing useful information for our purposes. We intend to redesign the exit exam as a pre-/post-test ready Fall 2021 semester.
 - The Theatre Handbook is online. It needs to be updated.
2. Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully participate in a theatrical production under the direction and supervision of an experienced production team.
 - Benchmark met
3. Students will demonstrate skills, knowledge and vocabulary usage to form aesthetic judgments of/within the production process.
 - Pre-/post-test will be created and implemented by Fall 2021, otherwise the benchmark was exceeded.
4. Students will acquire and demonstrate sufficient skills and knowledge in advanced areas of study in their specialty.
 - We will ensure an outside assessment component in both the performance and technical areas of the program, as well as set baselines, benchmarks, and targets in the fall. (Note: The 2020-2021 year will be an exception as there will likely be no live theatre productions due to Covid-19 regulations.)

Executive Summary of Report

In March 2020, universities across the country shut down campuses and moved instruction online because of Covid-19. Francis Marion University's theatre season was cut short and we had no April production. Also, assessment of performance classes did not occur.

Because of concerns put forth by CHE, in Fall of 2021, we are a major in performing arts with Music Industry and Theatre programs allowing for tracks in both areas. This will necessitate universal changes to our program. As well, we have made faculty changes in the last two years necessitating changes to our program. As we have considered curriculum changes, we have decided as a faculty that many of our current assessment methods are not valuable to us or providing useful information. Though there is some assessment data, we will change our current assessment tools. As the program structure becomes more clear, we will work to provide more clear information and policies for the students. We will be in contact with our accrediting organizations to make sure our curriculum meets standards.

Appendix

Report from KCACTF respondent, Tom Burch, for *Boom*

February 24, 2020

To whom it may concern:

*This letter will serve as a production response for Francis Marion University Theatre Department's production of **Boom**, by Peter Sinn Nachtreib.*

I had the very good fortune to see this production this past SATURDAY, and wish to extend my congratulations to the show's team, the department, and the university for the high quality of work that was on display in multiple areas. There are several things which I wish to speak to in particular.

Conceptually the production was, overall, very sound. This indicates a clear point of view and a concise regard for the process and the story as led by the director, Dr. Dawn Larsen. The choices made in the design, direction, and acting were witty, thoughtful, and while very supportive of the text and the playwright's intent, they expanded on the world to create a unique experience, and that is precisely, the crux of good theatre.

In terms of design and tech, this production ranks among the strongest undergrad productions I've experienced in a while. Aaron Krohn's set and lights were both quirky and fun, and the technical execution of both were superb. Professor Steadman's costumes were clever and smart in their own way, and the surprise "reveal" at the end was perfect.

The acting too was quite good. This is a challenging play with multiple layers and styles required in the performing, and the actors carried it off quite articulately. This shows not only a solid ability of the students, but again, the concerted effort of the director to sculpt what is needed. This too was quite successful.

Overall, this production had a level of care and clear attention that some colleges struggle to achieve. I sincerely hope that you are aware and appreciative of the efforts and talents that you currently have on hand.

Best wishes on the rest of your school year, and if you have questions for me about this response, please feel free to contact me at tburch8@uncc.edu or by phone at 607-793-1275.

Sincerely,

*Tom Burch
Assistant Professor of Scenic Design
UNC Charlotte*