UCC Program Review Committee summary of review

Program – Theater

This program includes the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- B.F.A. Theater Performance (Acting)
- B.A. Theater
- B.A. Theater offered through the Honors Tutorial College
- B.F.A. Theater offered through the Honors Tutorial College
- B.F.A. Production Design and Technology
- B.F.A. Stage Management
- B.F.A. Playwriting
- Theater minor
- M.F.A. Theater
- M.F.A. Directing
- M.F.A. Production Technology
- M.F.A. Playwriting
- M.F.A. Production Design
- M.F.A. Acting

Recommendation

This program is found to be viable, see report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

Date of last review – AY 2003

Date of this review – AY 2016

This review has been sent to program director and the dean. The program director provided some corrections, which have been included. The dean has provided some comments, which are attached.

This review has been sent to the Graduate Council, they have no comments to add.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the Division of Theater in the School of Dance, Film and Theater are all viable programs. Since the last review there have been some notable changes including the merger of the schools of film, dance and theater into one school and the end of a 57-year partnership with Monomoy Theater, a summer stock theater company in Cape Cod. But the division is anticipating a new partnership creating a professional summer theater program (Tantrum Theater) in Dublin that launches with three productions in summer 2016. The theater division has a collaborative and committed faculty and strong leadership. But it is currently hindered by limited, and in some cases, unsafe, facilities and resources.

After a 2014 accreditation site visit, the National Association of Schools of Theater (NAST) delayed re-accrediting the theater programs pending additional information, updates on some facilities and the launch of the Tantrum Theater. Likewise the division’s membership renewal with University/Resident Theatre Association (URTA) has been deferred until 2017 pending resolution of facilities issues, the full development of the Tantrum professional theater program and staffing concerns.

Commendations

- Collaborative faculty and teaching/administrative staff devoted to student success
- Respected leadership
- Quality productions that serve campus and community
- Assessment of student learning

Concerns

- Facilities over capacity with some safety and ADA problems
- Faculty composition changes and work load
- MA in Theater History and Criticism on hiatus since 2009-10

Recommendations

- Student, faculty and staff concerns about the health and safety of students working long hours in Forum Theater, the size and space of workshops, and the costume storage areas should receive immediate attention.
- The division should pursue its ideas to revise the BA theater program to attract new majors and retain majors who do not get into a BFA program. The suggestions to add an emphasis on theater management, fundraising and other non-production aspects seem very good, and should be supported with faculty resources and/or collaboration with the colleges of business and communication.

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1 Prepared in Spring 2016 by three internal reviewers recruited by the UCC Academic Program Review Committee—Dr. Dale Masel (Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering), Dr. Herta Rodina (Department of Modern Languages), and Assoc. Professor Mary T. Rogus (E.W. Scripps School of Journalism). Submitted 3/18/16.
1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Division of Theater in the School of Dance, Film and Theater was first established as the Department of Dramatic Arts in 1930 at Ohio University. In 1958 OU’s First Lady, Elizabeth Baker, purchased the Monomoy Theater in Cape Cod to establish a summer stock theater program for students to get professional experience. The department became a School of Theater in 1968, and in 2013 the School of Theater was merged with the schools of dance and film to create the new School of Dance, Film and Theater. In summer 2016 the division will launch the Tantrum Theater professional summer program in Dublin, OH. The last UCC review of the theater programs at Ohio University was 2002.

The programs in the Division of Theater are currently under review with their accrediting body, the National Association of Schools of Theater (NAST). The undergraduate and graduate programs were reviewed for re-accreditation in 2014 and the NAST Commission report delayed re-accreditation pending the division’s response to several questions and updated reports on actions pending at the time of the 2014 self-study. Those responses were submitted at the end of 2015. In addition, the division’s membership renewal with University/Resident Theatre Association (URTA) has been deferred for two years (until 2017) pending resolution of facilities issues, the full development of the Tantrum professional theater program and staffing concerns. The NAST accrediting site team report and letter to the division, as well as the URTA deferral letter, were provided to the internal review team in place of an outside reviewer.

Faculty/Staff:

The theater division in the 2015-16 academic year had 18 fulltime faculty members and teaching/administrative staff members: 9 tenured Group I, 3 tenure-track Group I, 3 Group II (1 is Group IV being converted to Group II), and 3 Teaching/Administrative Staff. In addition, it utilizes six part-time adjuncts or early-retired professors. The most recent demographic breakdown of faculty/teaching staff is listed below. The division has lost women and minorities in the last couple of years because of early retirement and death. The self-study details extensive but unsuccessful efforts to recruit and hire a more diverse staff.

Table 1-1: Faculty composition, Fall 2015

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<th>Fulltime</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
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<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The fulltime and part-time faculty and teaching staff are loosely organized into four subgroups: Performance; Directing and Stage Management; Production Design and Technology (PD&T); and Playwriting and Theater History (PATH). However they teach collaboratively across 13 degree programs: a BA General Theater degree program, four BFA degree programs (Performance, Playwriting, Production Design and Technology, Stage Management), an HTC program, an MA in General Theater and six MFA degree programs (Acting, Directing, Playwriting, Production Design, Production Technology, Production Design and Technology).

The division has experienced a general enrollment decline in undergraduate majors over the last six years, from a high of 164 majors in fall 2009 to a low of 114 in fall 2013, and then a slight rebound to 126 in fall 2014. Graduate student enrollment has maintained a steady range of 52 to 60 over the same period, with 54 students in fall 2014. The undergraduate student population in 2014-15 was 66% female and 25% minority, the graduate student breakdown was 48% female and 18% minority. This compares very favorably with the
university’s overall student racial/ethnic diversity of 13%. Part of the division’s success in recruiting a diverse student body to a small, rural theater program can likely be attributed to the personal visits faculty and staff make to performing arts high schools in urban areas such as Cleveland.

Changes since Last Review:

The Division of Theater has undergone some major changes and restructuring since the last program review. Those changes include:

- **Merger with the schools of dance and film in 2013 to create the School of Dance, Film and Theater.** According to conversations with faculty, staff and students, this merger is still very much a work in progress. Students noted that expected new opportunities to collaborate across the divisions in classes and productions had not materialized beyond what already existed before the merger. They noted that there was substantial collaboration before the merger, especially for PD&T students working on film and dance productions.

  Staff members pointed to a difficult attempt to merge the budgets of the three divisions which after a year of paperwork was undone. At the administrative level it appears that the only change is another layer of administration, since all divisions still have their own heads (Artistic Directors), and within the theater division each program has its own head (sometimes the only faculty or staff member associated with that program).

  There was a clear sense that, as the largest division in the new merged school, a disproportionate burden of school, college and university service and administration fell on theater faculty and staff. A specific example was promotion and tenure and peer review. However this was discussed with a sense of resignation rather than complaint.

- **The university’s 2014 decision to withdraw from the Monomoy summer stock theater program in Cape Cod after 57 years.**

  The Monomoy Theater provided undergraduate and graduate students in all Theater Division programs with important professional experience, which is required by their accrediting body. Students have been without a summer theater experience for two years. However the division is working closely with the university, the city of Dublin and the Dublin Arts Council to develop a new summer theater, the Tantrum Theater, which could eventually become a year-round professional regional theater-in-residence program. Ohio University has already dedicated significant resources to this project as its new Dublin campus continues to grow. Faculty and staff members are excited and committed to the Tantrum Theater program and expect to produce their first three performances this summer (2016). Moving its summer professional theater program to Ohio should make the logistics much more manageable, create a much stronger recruiting opportunity, and significantly expand the entire division’s arts outreach beyond Southeast Ohio.

- **Changes in leadership and the composition of faculty and staff.**

  Since the last program review the division has had multiple changes in leadership. Concerns expressed in the 2002 report about divisiveness surrounding the director in what was then the School of Theater have been completely resolved. The current Artistic Director/Division Head was universally praised by faculty and staff as a fair, supportive and excellent leader.
Because of declining enrollment, the division has had difficulty replacing Group I faculty positions when faculty members have retired, left or died over the last eight years. In fall 2008 the division had 16 Group I and 1 Group IV faculty members. In fall 2013 the division had 10 Group I and 5 Group IV faculty members and in fall 2015, 12 Group I, 2 Group II, and 1 Group IV faculty members. During this same time period, the division has maintained all but one of its 13 degree programs, most of which require very different types of expertise. As a result, a much heavier faculty teaching and academic administration burden has fallen on the 3 Teaching/Administrative staff members, who also have responsibility for sound and lighting technology, and costume, scenery and prop shops. In addition, the reduction in Group I faculty positions has meant a heavier service burden on the remaining Group I faculty members for college and university service that requires Group I status.

Programmatic Practices:

Teaching/Advising— The review team was extremely impressed with every faculty and staff member's collaborative and passionate commitment to teaching and advising undergraduate and graduate students. That commitment and passion was echoed by the students we met.

Because of the professional and integrated nature of the degree programs in the theater division, it is vital that faculty and teaching staff work closely together on the practicum productions which students in different programs come together to create. In addition to teaching 3-5 classes each semester, all faculty and staff teaching skills courses also devote dozens of hours a week to one-on-one mentoring in performance rehearsals, costume design and creation, construction of props and scenery, and design of sound and lighting. The emphasis in nearly all BFA and MFA courses is learning by doing, and instructors and students maintain intensive schedules to accomplish that goal.

Faculty and teaching staff members we spoke with all readily admitted that while there was a workload policy, it was regularly, but willingly disregarded. They are committed to ensuring students have the classes they need, when they need them, and in many cases there was only one instructor qualified to teach a given class. Faculty members would like additional faculty so that they can teach the necessary courses under the guidelines of the workload policy, but ensuring that students are able to take the classes they need is a top priority, which leads to exceeding the standard workload. BFA and MFA faculty and teaching staff repeatedly said the only way their students would be prepared for career success in the competitive profession was with the combination of intensive hands-on skills courses and multiple quality productions where they could apply those skills.

It is notable that faculty and teaching staff who focus on BFA and MFA programs are equally committed to the theater theory and history education of their students, as well as their liberal arts education. The professional and scholarly faculty in the division are equally respected and work well together to ensure that students receive a well-rounded liberal arts education as well as thorough preparation for careers in the profession. None of the tension that is sometimes found in professional schools between professionally-oriented and research-oriented faculty and teaching staff was evident in the division. Likewise the teaching/administrative staff has equal status with faculty members in the decision making and operation of the division. This is a cohesive and collegial group focused on their students.

The review team also noted the division’s attention to the assessment of learning outcomes. Each program has a defined set of learning outcomes, guided by the missions of the university, college and division, as well
as its accrediting/trade organizations, NAST and URTA. For each learning outcome, the division has set specific assignments, classes and practicum projects for all students, and collects data on those tasks. The most impressive part of the assessment process is that faculty and teaching staff take seriously the final step of closing the loop by feeding back the data into changes in curriculum and programs. An example given was the learning outcome of professionalism in auditions (resumes, presentation, introduction, etc.) for BFA performance students. After data showed that many students did not meet a minimum standard in professional presentation during the semester auditions, a workshop in audition professionalism was added for performance majors.

Advising is part and parcel of the one-on-one mentoring that is the hallmark of the division. Students expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the guidance and advising they receive from faculty, teaching staff and division leadership.

Research, Scholarly and Creative Activity— The CVs of faculty and teaching staff for the Division of Theater exhibit an impressive array of professional creative activity outside of their work on productions at Ohio University. Looking at their productivity since the last UCC review, Performance and Directing faculty members each list more than a dozen acting, coaching, choreography and/or directing roles in professional productions for respected regional or national theater companies across the country, as well as for film and television. Likewise the Production Design and Technology faculty members and teaching staff each list dozens of professional assignments in directing, costumes, make-up, scene design and construction, props, sound and lighting in theater, film, television and music productions nationwide, and some internationally. There is not a single faculty member or teaching staff member who is not incredibly productive in his/her profession. Several of the MFA Production Design and Technology students told us they were invited to work with faculty and teaching staff on these professional assignments, giving them valuable experience.

The Playwriting and Theater History faculty members are equally productive scholars. Since the last UCC review, they have published 3 books and multiple book chapters and reviews. They have also produced more than a dozen journal articles and dozens of refereed conference papers.

The faculty and teaching staff also submit a large number of grant applications to fund production projects, equipment and supplies. Many of these are Ohio University grants; others are to outside organizations. Their success rate is quite high, and has allowed the division to make some much-needed equipment and facility upgrades, as well as stage some innovative productions.

Service— With a small group of fulltime faculty and teaching staff, and a large number of programs and facilities to manage, the service load within the division is very heavy. In addition to their internal service work, nearly all the professional faculty and teaching staff participate in and organize training workshops at high schools, other universities and for theater companies or professional trade organizations around the country.

In addition two Performance and Directing faculty members co-founded the Brick Monkey professional theater company in Athens, and several faculty and teaching staff are actively involved in Brick Monkey productions.

Resources:
Resources are the biggest challenge to the viability of the Division of Theater programs. The BFA and MFA programs require small class sizes by their very nature and to comply with NAST accreditation standards (in fact this was a concern in the NAST review for some of the performance classes). At the same time the classes and the practicum productions are resource intensive, requiring specialized teaching and performing spaces, fully equipped workshops and technology. That is not a combination that serves the division well under the RCM budgeting model at Ohio University. The division recognizes the need to increase its student enrollment, and views the theater minor and a revitalized BA program as ways to do that without further straining facilities and equipment resources, but currently there are only 1.5 faculty members who teach non-skills courses. Those faculty members are already strained meeting the needs of majors and teaching Tier II service courses for the university, while still engaging in research as Group I scholars. The division faces the classic ‘chicken and egg’ conundrum of a resource-intensive program that needs to grow.

While the division works toward its long term goals to upgrade and expand facilities, there are some health, safety and accessibility issues that the review committee believes need more immediate attention. Those are detailed below in the facilities section.

**Staffing**—As mentioned previously, the division has lost Group I faculty positions due to retirements, departures and death. Since 2008 four of those positions have not been replaced with Group I faculty lines primarily because of declining enrollment. Consequently, administrative and academic responsibilities have fallen on fewer shoulders, leading to teaching/administrative staff taking on duties and responsibilities of fulltime faculty members without the requisite compensation, benefits and protections. It has also pulled specialized teaching expertise out of the classroom; for example the current division head was the faculty member with lighting expertise. Finding an adjunct with the same expertise in the region is virtually impossible. In addition a production manager teaching/administrative staff position was eliminated in 2004.

Over the last two years the division has been able to hire three Group I faculty members (2 in PD&T-Costuming, 1 PATH-Theater History), convert 1 Group IV to Group II and hire 1 Teaching/Administrative Staff member (PD&T-Costuming). All of these hires were replacements for fulltime faculty or staff members who had retired, left for other positions or died. So the division is rebuilding its ranks, but remains down two faculty lines from its 2008 numbers.

One of the ways the division works to supplement staffing and enhance the students’ experience is by bringing guest artists-in-residence to work on productions and teach master classes. The performance students noted that they had wonderful experiences with guest artists, but the PD&T students expressed their disappointment at not having exposure to more master classes or production opportunities with guest artists. Faculty and staff in the division have written multiple grants to cover the high cost of bringing guest artists in for the four to six weeks required when they work on productions with students, and faculty also regularly reach out to accomplished alums for this service. Providing more funding for guest artists, especially in the PD&T area, might help the division build enrollment and capacity that could allow for more permanent positions.

**Facilities**—Kantner Hall was last renovated in 1996 and is not scheduled for its next renovation until 2019. All of the teaching, performing, and production and design space is customized, with the exception of two seminar rooms. Productions are staged primarily in the Elizabeth Baker Theater, a traditional proscenium theater; The Hahne, a black box theater; and the Forum Theater, a deep thrust space in the Radio-Television Building, next door to Kantner Hall. There are three production and design shops (costume, scenery and props) in the building, and a fully-equipped digital recording sound studio which was recently upgraded to state-of-the-art equipment. The theater division also has use of a voice and movement classroom and design studio in Putnam Hall.
As has been previously noted, the division is working with the college and university, and the city of Dublin and its Arts Council to launch the Tantrum Theater summer residential program. This would replace the Monomoy Theater summer stock program that was shut down in 2014. The division is required to have a partnership with a professional theater program as part of its NAST accreditation and URTA affiliation. This new partnership presents multiple exciting opportunities for the division, including the opportunity to eventually stage productions in a new performing arts center. Given that competing programs at OSU and CSU are building brand new performing arts facilities on campus, the Tantrum program could provide some balance for recruiting students and bring recognition to the program in one of Ohio’s major urban centers.

Because of the number of productions staged by the division to meet the practicum experience needs of BFA and MFA students, and the skills classes taught in the Kantner Hall spaces, they are all used to capacity. For example, schedules posted on the doors of performance studios showed the spaces in use from early morning to late at night. Performance and directing students noted there is no “open lab” time available in these spaces for them to work on assignments so they typically have to do that work in the hallways or lobby of Kantner Hall.

Faculty, staff and performance and directing students all gave high praise to the quality of the work from PD&T students despite very cramped production and design shops. The review team agreed with this assessment, having attended Urinetown during our evaluation and/or several other past productions, as well as touring the PD&T shops.

If the situation for the theater division was confined to simply a need or desire for larger, more modern PD&T shops, the review team would end this section here, because we are certain that nearly every department or school on campus could make the case for larger, more modern facilities. Any program teaching professional skills wants its students working with state-of-the-art technology and facilities. However, students, faculty and staff all pointed out, and the review team saw first-hand, that these cramped spaces cause serious health, safety and accessibility issues. The review team was impressed with the emphasis on safety that faculty and staff put in all PD&T shops, thereby avoiding serious injury. Below is a list of specific examples the review team witnessed or heard about from multiple sources:

Accessibility— The only access to the scene shop is via a half-flight of stairs; there is little room to navigate through the PD&T shops (no one in a wheel chair could get into or around the shop areas; review team member Mary Rogus who uses a cane and was wearing a medical boot could barely make it through; any student, faculty or staff member with temporary or permanent mobility issues would be unable to work or have great difficulty working in these areas); staff built their own ramp to enter the Hahne Theater because it was only accessible via stairs, but admits it is unlikely to be ADA compliant.

Metal work and welding right next to the paint shop requiring a stop-down of any work in the paint shop whenever students are welding.

Scenery construction areas too small to manipulate large set pieces, creating dangerous situations when students are working with electric saws and similar tools simultaneously on multiple set pieces.

The need for final set assembly and painting on stage rather than in shops, while also trying to rehearse productions on those stages.
Repeated requests for certified trainers in Ohio University Environmental, Health and Safety Dept. to teach costuming students the proper use of respiratory masks when using toxic dyes and chemicals have been denied.

Costume and prop storage areas inadequate to the point that a crawl space under the Baker Theater stage is being used and requires students to wear hard hats because a few students received minor concussions hitting their heads on pipes. The smell in these storage spaces is incredibly foul and musty, indicating rotting costumes, shoes and props. (It should be noted that plans are already underway to renovate a space behind the main theater in the Athena Cinema on Court St that will provide much-needed alternate storage space. In addition, other storage space is being considered in Putnam Hall and the university is seeking central storage space for multiple departments.)

Electrical wiring on the second floor coming out of an electrical panel, strung around a hallway, down a staircase and propping open a fire door to heat the bridge between Kantner and RTV—this has been reported multiple times to Facilities and Maintenance over a two-year period.

Respiratory illnesses, which students now refer to as the “Forum Flu,” for those working long hours over consecutive days in the Forum Theater. There has been substantial investment in the Forum Theater to deal with flooding issues and then toxic carpet and flooring. When students first raised complaints, the air and ventilation were tested and determined to have no unsafe levels of contaminants. However these were one-time or short term readings. Students report illnesses and asthma aggravation after spending about a week working in the theater for long hours. Since students, faculty, and staff will spend many 12+ hour days in the theater during the two weeks prior to a performance, the air tests should be repeated replicating longer exposure to contaminants.
Technology—Sound and lighting equipment have been recently updated through grants, as mentioned previously. Teaching spaces have projection and sound equipment that has been customized to allow for immediate playback of exercises and assignments for critique. PD&T students work with computer-aided-design software to create and construct sets. Students and faculty/staff indicated satisfaction with the tools available for PD&T work.

The one area where PD&T students, especially MFA students, expressed dissatisfaction was digital staging and projection technology. They said they are not getting experience working with the high tech projection, lighting and effects staging that is part of modern productions in major theater companies or television/film studios. They said this severely limits their career opportunities beyond regional theater. They also noted that even if the equipment and resources were available, there currently is no one to teach them how to use it.

The bottom line, beyond the safety and health concerns, is that the current facilities and technology are a deterrent to recruiting. The day the review team toured the PD&T shops, a promising potential MFA student had just turned down the division’s offer, because of the scene shops. When we asked if they would recommend the programs to potential students, the PD&T, MFA and BFA students said they did not and would not recommend it because of the facilities. The BFA performance students, on the other hand, enthusiastically endorsed the program to their high school peers.

2. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

a. Is the Department fulfilling its service role, adequately preparing non-majors for future coursework and/or satisfying the needs for general education?

The Theater Division is fulfilling its service role to the university and is meeting the needs for general education. Theater regularly offers multiple sections of the following Tier II fine arts courses: THAR 1130 (Acting Fundamentals I), 1710 (The Theatrical Experience, also online), 1720 (Elements of Performance), 1730 (Fundamentals of Play Analysis and Playwriting), 2710 (Theater History I), 2711 (Theater History II). In addition, faculty are developing more online courses to satisfy the Tier II requirement and graduate students are facilitating these offerings. Expanding the BA program has strong potential for increasing non-major enrollments, but it is hampered by a lack of faculty -- 1.5 compared to 2 and 2.5 in the past. Finally, introductory classes might attract and retain more students if offered by faculty rather than graduate students, but current staffing does not make this possible.

By its very nature, theater is already an interdisciplinary field. Since its merger with dance and film, however, the division is creating further opportunities for work in multiple disciplines. For instance, performance faculty teach an acting course to first-year film students; performance and film faculty co-teach courses; production design & technology students have the opportunity to work with dance lighting and costume design in the Dance Division; faculty have created a creativity and collaboration course for theater and dance students, and are designing an arts administration course. The Assistant Director of the School of Dance, Film, and Theater is available to facilitate the development of interdisciplinary endeavors.

b. Is the program attracting majors likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of majors appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?
New first-year freshmen measures of quality indicate that the Theater Division is attracting higher caliber students on SAT Verbal, Average HS Rank and Average HS GPA, while remaining consistent in other areas.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>New First Year Freshmen Measures of Quality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Math</td>
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<td>SAT Math</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avg. H.S. Rank</td>
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<td>Avg. H.S. GPA</td>
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The Theater Division helps ensure that majors succeed by admitting all students into the BA program for their first year. At the end of the first year, they select students for the BFA in Performance, Production Design and Technology, Playwriting, or Stage Management. Depending on the program, selection is based on an audition/portfolio, an application, an interview, and academic performance during the first year. Those not selected are encouraged to remain in the BA program.

The mean GPA for undergraduates earning a degree in theater has dropped slightly since 2008, from a high of 3.55 in 2011-12 to a low of 3.28 in 2013-14. The minimum GPA, however, has increased from a low of 2.22 in 2013-14 to 2.65 in 2014-15, with a high of 2.97 in 2009-10 (OIR).

Theater Division faculty actively recruit majors by visiting high schools with strong theater programs, as well as schools with diverse student populations such as Cleveland School of the Arts. They also use personal contacts to recruit; the performance faculty, for example, is working on enrolling more out-of-state students. The Tantrum Theater outreach programs will help recruit from Dublin-area high schools. The division has taken steps to increase retention by including students on the play selection committee and by offering lunch bag programs focusing on diversity. OIR data indicate that the percentage of women and minorities has increased over the past several years:

- 2008 – 64% female, 36% male; 88% white (male and female), 12% minority (male and female).
- 2014 – 66% female, 34% male; 75% white (male and female), 25% minority (male and female).

The nature of the program clearly requires small classes. Although the number of undergraduate majors has decreased since Fall 2008, recent figures from OIR show improvement.

Fall 2008: 146
Fall 2009: 164
Fall 2010: 142
Fall 2011: 127
Fall 2012: 127
Fall 2013: 114
Fall 2014: 126
Discussions with faculty and students indicate that recruiting and retention efforts are hampered by old equipment, lack of space, space in disrepair, and lack of courses in newer technologies. When the reviewers asked if they would recommend the program to prospective students, undergraduates were ambivalent, praising the quality of the faculty and the courses, but criticizing the sub-standard resources.

c. Does the undergraduate curriculum provide majors with an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation?

The undergraduate curriculum provides majors with the necessary background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work. Courses appear to provide a solid foundation in common knowledge combined with specific sets of professional skills, while still allowing students adequate room for exploration. The core curriculum of all BFA tracks – Performance, Production Design and Technology, Stage Management, Playwriting – requires that majors take courses in related tracks. For example, performance students have PD&T course requirements and responsibilities and their PD&T counterparts have performance requirements. This ensures they get exposure to all aspects of the profession.

In addition to courses, the division invites guest artists to work with students in their particular area of expertise. In our conversations with undergraduates, PD&T students in particular felt that they could benefit from more guest artists, especially in cutting-edge fields such as smart technologies. They are concerned that the lack of adequate facilities and faculty in the PD&T program does not prepare them for top jobs in the industry. In general, performance students did not share this concern, although they realize that they miss out on opportunities because of what the PD&T students cannot do for them.

Since preparation for a career in theater cannot be achieved by coursework alone, the BFA students have numerous internship opportunities with professional theaters and frequently also work with faculty members on their professional projects outside of the academic year. These opportunities are especially important for PD&T and Stage Management students, because position cuts have reduced the number of faculty in these areas. Despite some staffing concerns for Tantrum Theater, this new initiative represents great potential for all theater students, and faculty are committed to ensuring that it will be the students who benefit.

The Theater Division is currently re-evaluating the BA degree to make it more appealing to students who, at the end of their first year, do not get accepted into a BFA track. These students tend to leave the program, because they feel a BA has less prestige than a BFA. The challenge for faculty is deciding how to create and promote its distinct identity so that the BA is perceived to be of equal stature to the BFA.

An Honors Tutorial College option exists for exceptional students in both the BA and BFA programs. Seven students, most from Performance, are currently enrolled; faculty consider 6-10 students optimum. In a combination of one-on-one tutorials and traditional courses, students cover the basics of all branches of theater and also study their chosen specialty in greater depth than non-HTC students. The division is in the midst of clarifying the differences between the HTC BA and BFA. For instance, they have adopted a language requirement for BA students and a pre-directing course for the BFA.

d. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the undergraduate program?
Despite inadequate resources and a shortage of faculty and support staff, especially in Production Design and Technology, instructors are doing everything possible to ensure that students receive necessary preparation. All routinely and willingly teach more courses than indicated on their workload policy and postpone faculty fellowship leaves to accommodate the curriculum. Without exception, the reviewers found them to be incredibly devoted to their students and all are exceeding expectations to ensure the integrity of the program.

**e. Are pedagogical practices appropriate? Is teaching adequately assessed?**

Meetings with faculty indicated that they are committed to high-quality, challenging teaching; meetings with students confirmed enthusiastic engagement in their studies and strong admiration for their instructors. Theater assesses teaching in a number of ways. In addition to Class Climate evaluations at the end of every course, all instructors submit annual self-evaluations for each course they teach.

Although Theater does not conduct formal peer observations, faculty routinely co-teach courses, drop in on one another's courses, and sometimes take their colleagues' courses. The division has established solid learning outcomes for all their programs and is making changes to aspects of the curriculum based on assessment data.

**f. Are students able to move into discipline-related careers and/or pursue further academic work?**

BFA in Performance: Most alumni either continue in the profession in regional or flagship theaters or pursue advanced training. An increasing number are employed in film and digital media, which suggests that the program is successfully adapting to 21st-century acting needs.

BFA in Stage Management: Recent alumni are employed in a wide variety of discipline-specific jobs in venues such as Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, New York Theatre Workshop, The Lark Theatre, Radio City Music Hall, Titan Theater Company, Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theater, among others. The availability of internships in a broad range of professional theaters leads directly to employment for many of these graduates.

BFA in Playwriting: The Division has no formalized method for tracking these alumni, but informal tracking suggests they proceed to Master's programs, which is a main goal of the undergraduate degree.

BFA in Production Design and Technology: No specific data provided on alumni of this degree.

BA in Theater: No specific data provided on alumni of this degree.

### 3. GRADUATE PROGRAM

**a. Is the program attracting students likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of students appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?**
The Theater Division has a group of graduate students who are passionate about their work. Based on the quality of their performances, the students do appear to be successful in applying the skills that they are learning, and they recognize the commitment of the Division’s faculty and staff.

Currently the number of students in the Division appears to be appropriate. In general, the programs are at or above capacity. With the individualized attention that is necessary in both the undergraduate and graduate theater programs, the faculty is already spending a large amount of time with students in lectures, labs, practicums, etc., so without an increase in staffing, it could be difficult to accommodate additional enrollment.

However, the state of the production facilities may hamper the Division’s ability to continue to remain competitive in recruiting and maintaining enrollment levels. While graduate students praised the faculty and staff of the Theater Division, they expressed concern with the facilities and technology. They noted other universities offer more modern facilities and technology, which makes it difficult for Ohio University to remain competitive when recruiting prospective graduate students. A faculty member noted that a prospective graduate student who had recently visited campus decided not to attend Ohio and specifically noted that the facilities did not provide resources needed for the technical aspects of theater production.

The Theater Division is doing a good job of attracting a diverse student body in the division as a whole, with respect to both gender and race. However, racial diversity is not distributed across all of the degree programs.

By gender, approximately 50% of the students are female, and this has been relatively consistent since 2008, as shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Theater Division enrollment by gender, 2008-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The faculty have made a concerted effort to recruit non-white graduate students to the Division and this appears to be paying dividends, as the percentage of non-white graduate students has more than doubled since 2008, as shown in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2: Theater Division enrollment by race, 2008-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-white</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Int’l</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This increase is particularly impressive when comparing the composition of the Theater Division to that of the University as a whole. The Theater Division has gone from being below the University’s percentage of non-white students in 2009 to being well above it in 2014, as shown in Table 3-3. Even though they are
competing against universities in urban locations with a potentially more active theater community, they are doing a very good job of maintaining the diversity of their enrollment.

**Table 3-3: Ohio University enrollment by race, 2008-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-white</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Int’l</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, this racial diversity is not distributed evenly across all of the Division’s programs. Of the 6 graduate degree programs with virtually all of the Division’s enrollment, there are almost no non-white students in three of them, as shown in Table 3-4.

**Table 3-4: Average enrollment per year by degree program, 2008-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production Design (MFA)</th>
<th>Production Technology (MFA)</th>
<th>Playwriting (MFA)</th>
<th>Acting (MFA)</th>
<th>Directing (MFA)</th>
<th>General Theater (MA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13.57</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>9.29</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-white</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Int’l</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MFA Acting program had no US non-white students during the 7-year period and the Directing and General Theater programs had 2 and 1 students, respectively. As noted above, there can be challenges in recruiting students pursuing theater degrees to a non-urban campus, but the number of non-white enrollments in some of these programs demonstrates that faculty recruiting efforts should continue.

**b. Does the graduate curriculum provide an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers following graduation?**

Appendix E of the self-study noted job placements of Division alumni after graduation and awards received by alumni. Based on this information, graduates appear to be receiving the training needed to succeed in their careers after graduation.

However, some of the current graduate students expressed a concern that they would not be prepared for the full breadth of careers that they might want to pursue after graduation. In particular, they noted that the Theater department lacks the resources to be able to provide training in new technology that is utilized in theater production.

Some also expressed concern about dual-listed courses. While expectations for the quantity and quality of their work are higher than for undergraduates in these classes, graduate students – PD&T in particular -- felt they would learn more from more complex and challenging applications of the techniques they were studying. The NAST reviewers shared concerns about the number of dual-listed courses that graduate students take. In his response to these concerns, the division head noted that in most cases more than 50% of graduate students’ course work is indeed in graduate-only courses, thereby meeting the accreditation body’s
standard. The one exception was in props technology and the division has taken steps to remedy this situation.

c. Does the program provide adequate mentoring and advising to students to prepare them for discipline-related careers?

From discussions with both faculty and students, the answer seems to be a resounding “yes”. Across all of the graduate degree programs, faculty and staff appear committed to the success of their students, going above and beyond in giving their time and effort to ensure that students are learning.

The students stated that they’re encouraged to talk to the faculty and staff when there’s a problem or a concern and they seemed comfortable in doing so. In particular, students praised the dedication of the Artistic Director/Head of the Theater Division, Michael Lincoln. They felt that he has their best interests at heart and that he is dedicated to doing everything he can to ensure their success with the resources he has available.

Another strength of the Division that students mentioned was the opportunities they have to assist their professors with their outside projects. They really appreciated the hands-on experience in a non-academic theater environment, which creates an excellent learning experience for them.

d. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the graduate program?

The work done in the Theater Division is very time-consuming due to its nature, such as working in practicums with small groups and supporting student productions. Faculty and staff dedicate an immense amount of time to student-oriented responsibilities, potentially at the expense of their own creative activity. Because of this, there currently does not appear to be sufficient faculty to support all of the degree programs in the Division.

With the level of specialization in each of the technical aspects of a theater production, it is difficult for faculty to teach in multiple disciplines outside of their area. For areas where there is not sufficient expertise among the faculty and staff, the Division is using adjuncts to teach classes. However, this is an unsatisfactory solution because the professionals with the appropriate background are not available in the Athens area, so the adjuncts commute to Ohio University from Cincinnati and from northeast Ohio. Because they are only on campus a limited amount of time each week, they are not available for the mentoring that is necessary within these technical specializations.

e. Does the program offer appropriate financial support to graduate students?

From the description of graduate assistantships in the self-study, it appears that the funding students receive is appropriate for the level of work that they are assigned, either as an instructor in an entry-level class, assisting with a larger lecture-class, or performing office work. However, it appears that the workload is driven by the funding available and not by the work available to be done. With additional funding, more students could be supported and their assistance in teaching entry-level courses or courses for non-majors could allow faculty to spend more time on tasks that graduate students can’t do, such as teach upper-level courses or graduate courses.

f. Is teaching adequately assessed?
From discussion with the Theater Division Curricular Chair, it is apparent that the Theater Division takes seriously the assessment of students’ achievement of learning outcomes. The Curricular Chair described their assessment process and gave examples of improvements that they had made in the BFA program as a result of the assessment, though examples of assessment at the graduate level weren’t discussed. The Appendix D of the self-study described learning outcomes of the BA and BFA programs, but did not describe outcomes for the MA or MFA programs. If assessment is not being done at the graduate level, they are encouraged to consider some form of assessment.

g. Are students able to move into discipline-related careers?

As noted in (b) above, students do appear to enjoy success in careers related to their program. However, they may not be competitive with graduates of other universities since some technology available to students in programs at other universities is not available at Ohio University.


This section is not applicable as the Theater Division does not offer a doctoral degree.

COMMENDATIONS

Faculty

- Without exception, Theater Division faculty form a unified, collaborative, highly dedicated professional community. They assume relentlessly heavy workloads to serve students at all levels and to assist colleagues. Interpersonal conflicts mentioned in the 2002 Seven-Year Review have completely disappeared.
- All are actively and energetically engaged in both formal and informal student advising. The undergraduate and graduate students we interviewed all spoke very highly of their advisors, citing in particular their round-the-clock availability and the quality and quantity of time and attention they provide.
- Most faculty stay in regular contact with alumni throughout their careers; this strengthens the division's ability to provide guest artists, internships, and employment leads.

Division Leadership

Faculty, students, and classified staff all had strong praise for the Director. They credit him with being able to improve the program as a whole, to achieve a lot in a relatively short time and with scarce resources. They cited his selfless dedication to the position, his interpersonal skills, his loyalty to the program and to them, and the trust he inspires.

Production Quality and Service to Community

On the first evening during the review, we had the opportunity to attend the Theater Division’s performance of Urinetown. All aspects of the performance were outstanding and are an outstanding demonstration of the talent and commitment of the Division’s faculty and students.

We also had the opportunity to see the theater in Kantner Hall as part of our tour and see the work underway for the next production. It was remarkable how much activity was happening on stage and backstage to
prepare the technical aspects of the show. In spite of the cramped quarters, each of the different technical specialties had adapted their procedures to do their best with the space available.

The excellence of performances produced by the division provides a wonderful arts outreach to the university as well as the Athens county region.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes
Each program area has a defined set of learning outcomes. For each learning outcome the division has determined specific assignments, classes and practicum projects for all students. It collects and analyzes data on those assignments and projects systematically. The most impressive part of the assessment process in the division is that faculty and teaching staff take seriously the final step of closing the loop by feeding back the data into changes in curriculum and programs.

CONCERNS

Safety and Accessibility of Facilities
The only access to the scene design shop is via a half-flight of stairs and there is little room to navigate through the PD&T shops (no one in a wheel chair could get into or around the shop areas and anyone with temporary or permanent mobility issues would be unable to work or have great difficulty working in these areas). The staff had to build their own ramp to enter the Hahne Theater because it was only accessible via stairs, but admits it is unlikely to be ADA compliant.

The scenery, prop and costume design and construction areas are so cramped that students working in one area often have to stop for safety reasons when students in another area are working. Because the scenery construction areas are too small to manipulate large set pieces, final set assembly and painting is done on stage while actors also are trying to rehearse productions. Costume storage areas are so cluttered it’s hazardous to locate anything and the noxious odor indicates rotting material. In a crawl space used for costume storage under the Baker Theater stage, students have to wear hard hats to prevent concussions from low-hanging pipes.

Beyond the safety concerns, the PD&T facilities have become a major deterrent to recruitment, especially for the MFA program.

Faculty Composition
Over the past 7 years, there has been a significant shift in the composition of the faculty in the Theater Divisions so that they now rely much more heavily on Group IV faculty, staff, and adjuncts to teach classes.

From 2008 to 2013, the size of the faculty was relatively stable with the total number of faculty going from 17 in 2008 to 18 in 2009. However, the number of Group I faculty decreased by 40% so that Group IV faculty and Early Retirees make up nearly half of the department’s faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group I</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group III</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group IV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With a limited number of Group I faculty, this increases their service load, since the same responsibilities must be distributed among a smaller pool of people.

Likewise, staff in the Theater Division have been required to take on more responsibility than they would in most other programs on campus. Not only do staff teach classes, but there are also three programs within the Production Design and Technology area for which staff are responsible for administering both the undergraduate and graduate programs. With the demands from teaching, administration, and supporting multiple productions within the Theater Division, this workload has the potential for burning out these staff members so that they leave the university.

**MA in Theater History and Criticism**
This program currently has only 1.5 instructors who can contribute to it. It went on hiatus in AY 2009-10 when a second position was not filled and the remaining probationary faculty member could not run it alone while untenured. It has not graduated a student since 2008 and is not currently accepting students. If offered, it would be in competition with a similar program at OSU, which is completely funded. As a one-year program, it helped students decide if they should continue their graduate education and it complemented the MFA offerings by reinforcing the relationship between art and scholarship.
Dear Dr. Ingram,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the program review report for the Theater Division in the School of Dance, Film, and Theater. I appreciate the careful attention provided by the reviewers both in their visit with the unit, and in their reading of the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and the University Resident Theatre Association (URTA) accreditation reports. I strongly concur with their assessment that the undergraduate and graduate programs in Theater are viable programs, with faculty and staff who have a “collaborative and passionate commitment to teaching and advising undergraduate and graduate students,” and who are all “exceeding expectations to ensure the integrity of the program.” I am especially pleased that the reviewers were able to attend a performance of a large production (Urinetown), and found that “all aspects of the performance were outstanding and are an outstanding demonstration of the talent and commitment of the Division’s faculty and students,” and noted that the “excellence of these performances…provides a wonderful arts outreach to the university as well as the Athens county region.” I wanted to provide some additional context to areas of concern and recommendations that were included in the report.

Facilities
We are currently working with Facilities to identify appropriate additional space for workshops, which should help address many concerns about cramped workshops and accessibility. While we are assessing several possible spaces, we are moving to the next stage of evaluation for one possible space near Kantner—we plan to submit a PIF (project initiation form) shortly, which will also clarify the budget needs for that space. We will continue to pursue additional spaces for other needs, such as storage. In the meantime, as noted in the report, the Theater Division will continue its strong emphasis on safety.

As noted in the report, environmental testing was conducted shortly after the water problems and subsequent repairs in the Forum Theater. Environmental Health and Safety has returned to perform additional testing this spring, and has worked with the Theater Division to identify testing sites and times (results are pending). The respirator mask training issue has been resolved. The wire running between Kantner and RTV has been removed, but repairs to the radiator in the bridge between the two buildings is still pending.

Faculty Composition/ MA in Theater History and Criticism
As noted in the report, as faculty turnover (e.g., retirements) has occurred, faculty composition has shifted from primarily Group I to a mix of Group I, II, and IV,
although full-time faculty FTE has remained about the same, while student enrollments have declined (though they are rebounding). Each unit in the college is working on a multi-year staffing plan, which will be considered in the context of the other needs in the College. As part of the staffing plan, the Division will evaluate bringing back the MA in Theater History and Criticism in the context of their other needs. As we launch the Tantrum Theater in Dublin late this spring, we will explore incorporating new faculty working with the Tantrum Theater into the curriculum of the department as well.

Thank you for the constructive feedback, and I thank you, your committee, and the reviewers for the time and expertise that you have brought to the review process.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Elizabeth Sayrs
Interim Dean, College of Fine Arts