

2019-2020 Program Review



CAN Program Review (Instructional) - Theatre Arts (Odd Year)

Program Review Narratives

2019-2020

Instructional Program Review (IPR)

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Executive Summary

0. Executive Summary: STRENGTHS

The Theatre Arts Department provides quality education to a diverse population. We serve transfer students, general education students, those seeking a furthering of their skills, as well as students in related programs (i.e. Dance, Digital Art and Animation) who wish to acquire the skills and knowledge that we provide.

The general education courses are a source of reliable enrollment for the Theatre Arts Department, and many students report having heard that the GE/IGETC courses offered in the Theatre Arts Department are fun, engaging, and driven by a sense of passion and purpose.

The Theatre Arts Department produces one show a semester, offering hands-on experience for those interested in a career in theatre arts, live entertainment, and studio production, as well as students interested in developing their skills in public speaking, interpersonal communication, teamwork and leadership skills. Students working the technical aspects of the production are offered the opportunity to learn a few key aspects of stage, light and sound design, as well as stage management and other technical skills related to the entertainment industry.

Students are encouraged to hold themselves to a high standard and to develop professional attitudes, habits and discipline, as well as to engage in hands-on creative problem solving.

OPPORTUNITIES

Recently the Theatre Arts Department had the opportunity to work with Michele Leavy of Crowded Fire Theatre Company, who directed a production of "The Late Wedding" by local celebrated playwright Christopher Chang. This was (and is – there are two more performances coming up this weekend) an exciting opportunity for the department, as students had the opportunity to work with a professional in the field, and members of the greater Bay Area theatre community will be in attendance for tomorrow night's show.

CHALLENGES

Producing Theatre Arts Department shows has become increasingly difficult for two reasons. The first is the retirement of Mike Walsh, who in many ways was an anchor for the Theatre Arts Department. His professionalism raised the bar for all involved. While his replacement John Kenny has done quite a bit of work in good faith on these shows, it's become clear that his background and training is more narrowly focused in specific elements of technical theatre, rather than in design (set, sound and lighting) and stage management. Without someone on staff in the Theatre Arts Department with knowledge and training in those aforementioned areas, producing shows here at our former level of professionalism will not be possible. That poses a significant challenge to the department, as our Theatre Arts program needs to provide its students with performance experience that prepares them to compete at a professional level.

The second, less problematic stumbling block the department faces in producing shows is the fact that we can no longer audition

our actors, but must instead find a role for every student that enrolls in the course (DRAM 300.1). This means that small-cast shows are now out of the question, and larger-cast shows are difficult to produce, since we never quite know who we're getting, and whether they'd be right for the various roles. This really only leaves the Theatre Arts Department with one viable option, and that is the one-act festival.

The one-act festival has been our go-to option for every show for the last several years (since Fall of 2016). The one-act festival format is flexible enough to accommodate whoever happens to enroll, and whatever their level of experience or ability may be. It works.

However, performing in a one-act festival cannot offer students the same kind of learning experience (and professional preparation) as performing a full-length play. The department must find a way to produce full-length work if it is to remain a true Theatre Arts department.

The department is also faced with a roll-over challenge from previous years: there are a number of classes we can no longer offer due to historic low enrollment, including: DRAM 305 Technical Theatre (a core in the Theatre Arts AA and TMA), DRAM 201 Acting II, and DRAM 150 Script Analysis. Students attempting to earn an AA in Theatre Arts have had to either 1) petition for equivalency, or 2) do an independent study with the head of the department (who then needs to work on an extra project outside of regular assigned work, which is burdensome on a one-person department).

Furthermore, with the increasing emphasis on moving students through the community college system more efficiently, it becomes difficult for students to include a non-GE/IGETC Theatre Arts course in their schedule. This has really "hollowed out" the Theatre Arts Department offerings.

It is time for some major adaptations and creative solutions to these problems.

ACTION PLANS

- Top priority, to begin by the end of the Fall 2019 semester: the Theatre Arts Department must develop an MOU with a local theatre company, creating a relationship that will enable the department to once again produce professional-level work, and give our students the kind of production and performance experience they need.
- This MOU would involve something like this: Canada College would open up the use of Theatre Arts department space (Flex, prop room, costume room, shop) and non-monetary resources (props, costumes, shop tools and storage, support from Canada marketing department) to the "resident" theatre company, and in exchange the "resident" theatre company would cast our own students in its productions, using their own director, stage manager, and designers.
- The resident theatre company would perform at least one weekend and one weekday matinee in the Flexible theatre, before moving the show to its own permanent venue.
- We would thereby function as a kind of "satellite space" for the resident theatre company, enabling them to produce an additional show per season, without having to pay for rehearsal space. Canada College Theatre Arts, in turn, gets the resources of a professional theatre company, without having to pay for additional staff.
- Upon successful creation of a working MOU, the next step will be outreach to local high school drama departments.

Program Context

1. Mission: The mission of the Theatre Arts Department is to train and inspire the next generation of performing arts and entertainment industry professionals, and to cultivate within our students the following: a respect for each other and for the creative process, an understanding of how theatre is made (from the perspective of an actor, a playwright, a director, a producer, and a technician), an enthusiasm for creative discovery, interpretation, and analysis, the discipline necessary to do one's best work, a willingness to take risks, the habits of a professional, and the enthusiasm of a life-long learner.

The Theatre Arts Department offers many "activities that foster students' personal development," such as projects in acting, playwriting, and directing. These projects offer students a unique opportunity for self-development, self-discovery, and creative expression. Those students who are cast in our productions spend many hours each week in a very intensive rehearsal process, creating a very supportive teacher-student relationship ("supportive faculty/staff/student teaching and learning relationships").

2. Articulation: No known changes.

3. Community & Labor Needs: Not applicable.

Looking Back

4. Curricular Changes: Two Theatre Arts courses have recently (after undergoing a significant revision through the Curriculum Committee) been approved for GE/IGETC status. These are DRAM 233 New Play Development, and DRAM 101 History of Theatre. DRAM 233 will be offered for the first time in its current form in the Spring of 2020, and DRAM 101 in the Summer of 2020.

5A. Progress Report - IPC Feedback: Responses are reflected in this report: I've Included a more detailed review of enrollment data.

5B. Progress Report - Prior Action Plans: • The Theatre Arts Department provided support to Rick Najera in his Fall 2018 production; this show went reasonably well, with actors reaching their goals, and all of the logistics of the show having gone smoothly. The Theatre Arts Department worked with the Marketing Department to reach out to the broader community, and the shows were well attended.

- Several students who have taken Film Study and Appreciation course have gone on to enroll in DRAM 140 or DRAM 200.
- DRAM 101 is now GE/IGETC and will be offered in the Summer of 2019.
- The Screenwriting course is on hold, for now, as a) its unclear that a non-GE course could attract enough students, and b) a section on screenwriting could be embedded in the DRAM 233 New Play Production course (as playwriting and screenwriting have significant overlaps, and studying the differences between the two could also be instructive).
- The Theatre Arts Department continues to participate in the Arts Honors Certificate (we're doing one this semester, in fact). This continues to enrich our program.
- The Theatre Arts Department has recently reached out to the Counseling Center, requesting a meeting in which we could clarify and strengthen the message to students about the value of art classes for their education and careers.

6A. Impact of Resource Applications: Not applicable.

6B. Impact of Staffing Changes: As stated in the Executive Summary, the retirement of Mike Walsh has proven over the last two years to have been a significant setback for the Theatre Arts Department. Mike Walsh's professionalism raised the bar for all involved. While his replacement John Kenny has done quite a bit of work in good faith on these shows, it's become clear that his background and training is more narrowly focused in specific elements of technical theatre, rather than in design (set, sound and lighting) and stage management.

Without someone on staff in the Theatre Arts Department with knowledge and training in those aforementioned areas, producing shows here at our former level of professionalism will not be possible. That poses a significant challenge to the department, as our Theatre Arts program needs to provide its students with performance experience that prepares them to compete at a professional level.

Current State of the Program

7. Enrollment Trends: FTE has taken a bit of a dip in this last year, from 26.55 in 2015/16 and in 2016/17 to 25.37 in 2017/18. Fill rates, after climbing steadily from 50.8% in 2012/13 to 85.9% in 2016/17, have now dropped to 79%. Load, after climbing from 228 to 336 between 2013 and 2015, and holding steady at 394 for the two-year period between 2015 – 2017, has now inched up to 399 in 2017/18.

It looks like maximum enrollment hit a peak in 2014/15, at 327 students; it dropped down to 276 in 2016/17, and stepped up to 303 this last year, 2017/18. I expect maximum enrollment to continue to hover at around 300 or so.

Fill rates for the spring and fall semesters average at 74%, while the summer fill rate (for the online class) averages at 94%.

The Theatre Arts Department has had numerous conversations with the Division Dean re: offering Theatre Arts courses at optimal times/days etc. No apparent improvements are to be made in that area. The Theatre Arts Department has recently contacted the Marketing Department re: creating a new "look" for Theatre Arts flyers and digital ads. A successful MOU with a local theatre company (see Action Plan) should generate more visibility for the department, and bring in more students.

8-A. Access & Completion: I did not receive an Equity Supplement for the 2017/18 year – in fact, I didn't see any Equity Supplements for any Humanities Division courses on the Program Review website, at <https://canadacollege.edu/programreview/datapackets1819.php>

I give all of my students – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. - the same materials, the same resources, the same amount of encouragement and support. Like every professor I've spoken with on the subject, I will offer extra help to students who are

struggling. Extended deadlines, extra support during office hours, even heartfelt talks about life's lessons and struggles – all in an effort to give struggling students a second chance. I allow all of my students to revise every one of their projects for a better grade, and I offer a large pool of extra credit, along with a long list of way to earn that extra credit. I could not possibly be more generous and still make the course challenging enough to be a meaningful experience.

And that is all I can do. I treat all of my students as the sacred and sovereign individual that they are, and I will not categorize my students into groups, with a plan to treat them any differently because of their membership in that group.

Students act out of intrinsic motivation – they do not respond to the goals set for them by a committee, nor even by their own professor, no matter how accessible and supportive that professor may be.

The truth is that the problem of academic underachievement can only be fixed by the student himself or herself – as a sacred and sovereign individual, not as a representation of a category.

8-B. Completion - Success Online: The gap between online and face-to-face success rates has dropped from 9% in 2015/16 to 4.9% in 2016/17. This year the gap was 5.2% (80.9% non-online courses / 75.7 online courses), which I believe is a statistically negligible difference from last year's differential.

This year's retention is 96% for online courses, and 93.6% for face-to-face courses – the retention rate is actually slightly higher for the online courses, at 2.4%.

I think the take-away here is that while there is some difference in success and retention between in-person and online courses, at around 5% and holding, this is not a significant problem for the Theatre Arts Department.

9A. SLO Assessment - Compliance: All Theatre Arts SLOs are systematically assessed at least once every two years, as reflected in TracDat. All three SLO's in DRAM 140, DRAM 200, and DRAM 300.1 have been assessed annually since at least 2015.

9B. SLO Assessment - Impact: While I have not found SLO assessment to be an inspiring teaching tool (as a department of one, there is no "dialogue" around SLO assessments), I have been improving instruction, paying close attention to areas where students are succeeding, and where they're struggling, and made changes to the curriculum to address these areas. Here are a couple examples:

Many students in my DRAM 200 Acting class have struggled to learn how to memorize their lines. I've expanded on my lectures re: memorization techniques, including tips from related fields such as public speaking, and even unrelated fields such as the hard sciences. These techniques include visual mapping (or "memory palace"), image-name associations, and the "chaining technique." Some of these suggestions have proven to be more useful than others; the experimentation continues.

I've also discovered that students in both my DRAM 200 Acting class and in my DRAM 140 Introduction to Theatre courses are having significantly more trouble with a) physicalizing the character – that is, expressing the character's inner life through the body, and b) making eye contact, "playing off" each other, and active listening. In other words, students seem to have become more physically and socially inert. (I believe the proliferation of cell phone addiction is a significant contributor to this phenomenon.) This has presented a real obstacle in students achieving the course SLOs. I've adjusted by getting students on their feet more often, bringing new warm-up and improv exercises into the classroom.

10. PLO Assessment: Just as students in the Theatre Arts Department have been meeting their SLO goals, so to the department is meeting its PLO goals. Students in the Theatre Arts Department are engaging with the arts and the creative process through in-class projects and public performances, describing the roles of creative expression in human culture through class discussions, and using critical thinking skills in evaluating works of art through papers, script analyses, and other written works. Improvements to these assessments are made each semester, as project descriptions are revised, new plays are found or developed for public performances, and new questions evolve organically out of class discussions.

Looking Ahead

11. Program Planning: • Objective 1: Create an MOU between the Theatre Arts Department and a local theatre company, creating an ongoing working relationship that will enable the department to once again produce professional-level work, and give our students the kind of production and performance experience they need.

• Objective 2: Turn the Flex Theatre into a Smart Classroom, so that current technology (including films, videos, and the Canvas platform) can be more smoothly integrated into Theatre Arts courses.

Program Review Narrative Status: Complete

CAN Program Review (Instructional) - Theatre Arts (Odd Year)

Objective: Turn Flex Into Smart Classroom

The Theatre Arts Department uses the Flexible Theatre as a classroom as well as a rehearsal and performance space, and because I use a lot of multi-media in my classes, I am requesting that the Flex Theatre be equipped as a “smart classroom,” with a projector mounted on the grid, a rolling screen, and the ability to connect my laptop to the projector through a plug in the wall.

It's important that the Theatre Arts Department have this resource for the following reasons:

- 1) The “smart cart” that I've been using since I was hired in 2007 is cumbersome, difficult to set up, and outdated.
- 2) The screen (which Mike Walsh built and is now hanging from the grid) onto which I project lectures and videos is small, and difficult for some students to see, especially with PowerPoint lectures that use a lot of text.
- 3) I am now teaching LIT 441 Survey of Film, and turning the Flex into a smart classroom would enable the division to use this space for that purpose, freeing up 3/142 for other classes.
- 4) Not only would a smart classroom setup significantly enhance instruction in Theatre Arts courses, but it would also turn the Flex Theatre into a multi-use space, in which ASCC, other campus organizations, or outside groups could hold their special events. This would raise awareness of the existence of the Flexible Theatre, and of the Theatre Arts Department.

Objective Status: 2 - Continuing (PR)

Objective Year: 2018-2019

Estimated Start Date: 01/08/2019

Estimated Completion Date: 01/15/2019

Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.: Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success., Organizational Development - Focus institutional resources on the structures, processes, and practices that invest in a diverse student population and prioritize and promote equitable, inclusive, and transformative learning.

Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.: District Goal #1 - Develop and Strengthen Educational Offerings, Interventions, and Support Programs that Increase Student Access & Success, District Goal #3 - Increase Program Delivery Options, Including the Expanded Use of Instructional Technology, to Support Student Learning and Success

Objective: Create an MOU between the Theatre Arts Department and a local theatre company

Create an MOU between the Theatre Arts Department and a local “resident” theatre company, creating an ongoing working relationship that will enable the department to once again produce professional-level work, and give our students the kind of production and performance experience they need.

- This MOU would involve something like this: Canada College would open up the use of Theatre Arts department space (Flex, prop room, costume room, shop) and non-monetary resources (props, costumes, shop tools and storage, support from Canada marketing department) to the “resident” theatre company, and in exchange the “resident” theatre company would cast our own students in its productions, using their own director, stage manager, and designers.
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- Upon successful creation of a working MOU, the next step will be outreach to local high school drama departments.

CAN Program Review (Instructional) - Theatre Arts (Odd Year)

Objective Status: 1 - New (PR)

Objective Year: 2018-2019

Estimated Start Date: 11/01/2019

Estimated Completion Date: 01/15/2020

Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.: Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success., Community Connections - Build and strengthen collaborative relationships and partnerships that support the needs of, reflect, and enrich our diverse and vibrant local community., Organizational Development - Focus institutional resources on the structures, processes, and practices that invest in a diverse student population and prioritize and promote equitable, inclusive, and transformative learning.

Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.: District Goal #1 - Develop and Strengthen Educational Offerings, Interventions, and Support Programs that Increase Student Access & Success, District Goal #2 - Establish And Expand Relationships With School Districts, 4-year College Partners, And Community-based Organizations To Increase Higher Education Attainment In San Mateo County, District Goal #3 - Increase Program Delivery Options, Including the Expanded Use of Instructional Technology, to Support Student Learning and Success