2008/09 DSC Theatre Program Assessment

Program Description
Dixie State College of Utah (DSC) strives to help students to define, shape and achieve educational and life goals. It is dedicated to providing excellent, personalized teaching in a learning environment where all students can become passionate about their individual educational endeavors.

DSC is a publicly supported institution, authorized by the Utah State Board of Regents with two interdependent tiers. DSC offers associate degrees and certificate programs that meet the needs of students, the community and the state. The College also offers baccalaureate programs in high demand areas and in core or foundational areas consistent with four-year colleges. DSC enhances its campus climate by promoting cultural and demographic diversity, and by inviting students to participate in its open-door, post-secondary educational programs.

The Theatre Program of DSC is located in the Department of Fine Arts, within the Division of Arts and Letters. As part of the DSC strategic plan and with major funding support from the state legislature, this program is in transition from a two-year curriculum to a baccalaureate degree. Upper division coursework is in place in anticipation of approval of a bachelor of science/bachelor of arts degree in theatre. Students are currently being prepared to move into that degree program, to complete theatre emphasis requirements for a Bachelor of Integrated Studies degree, or to transfer to a four-year program at another institution. Once the theatre degree is approved, the mission of the program will be expanded to include preparation of students for graduate school, professional theatre training programs, and, when approved, the teaching of Theatre at the secondary education level.

Support Function and Articulation
The Theater Program at DSC is a program in the Fine Arts Department, in the Fine Arts Division of the School of Arts and Letters. Its role is in harmony and consistent with the educational mission of the College as accepted by the State System of Higher Education.

The program supports the mission of the College by offering general education coursework in fine arts and humanities. It promotes cultural and demographic diversity. It provides lower division theater courses to meet the transfer needs of prospective theatre majors. It enhances the reputation of the College by presenting the campus and community with high quality, thought-provoking and educational entertainment. The program supports the College by engaging with the larger professional and educational theater community in the multi-state region. The program excels at providing personalized and excellent teaching in a learning environment where all students can become passionate about their individual educational endeavors.

The Theatre Program is open to both major and non-major students at DSC. It is not expected that students who choose to major in theater have any prior experience; however, advancement in the program does require the adequate fulfillment of pre-requisite courses.

Program Overview
Prospective theatre majors choose between a performance, directing, or technical theatre emphasis. Students who successfully complete the existing theatre program coursework may either graduate from the Interdisciplinary Studies degree program, or transfer to a four-year institution theatre program as highly qualified juniors. Throughout the program an analytic, scholarly and self-reflective component is maintained. The production program prepares a full season of plays and musicals for performance each year. Serious theatre students are expected to be involved in production activities on a continuous basis. The production program emphasizes development and application of skills, effective collaboration and professional discipline.
Relationship to other Programs, Departments, and Division
The Music Program is the most closely integrated with the goals and objectives of the Theatre Program. It has been determined that the bi-annual co-production of musical theater productions is mutually beneficial. It provides opportunities for the students in each program to gain valuable experience, on stage, off stage and in the orchestra pit. It is a laboratory where theoretical course work is applied to real world challenges. It has proven to be excellent training for moving on to professional performance opportunities.

It would be highly beneficial if we could also develop this kind of relationship with the Dance Program, but due to resource constraints and program priorities, at present this kind of collaboration is not practical. We are, however, hopeful for an opportunity to proceed in making this kind of collaboration possible.

Mission and Goals
The Mission of the DSC Theatre Program is to provide the necessary tools for students to become well-rounded artists, scholars, and life-long learners. This will be realized by combining comprehensive theatrical training with a strong liberal arts curriculum. Using this knowledge and experience, students will exit the program being able to integrate their knowledge and ongoing research with their insights into the human condition. This mission is available to and provided for any and all DSC students, regardless of major.

No theatrical performance can be complete without an audience. Through its production season, this program will give the Theatre student a range of design and performance opportunities. It will provide the general student body with historically and culturally diverse experiences which will broaden their educational experience and it will provide a rich array of theatrical performances for the growth, entertainment and intellectual stimulation of the community at large.

Goals for the DSC Theatre Program
1. To produce well rounded artist/scholars
2. To enhance the cultural and intellectual life of our campus and community
3. To provide service to our institution, community and profession
4. To support and encourage the growth and development of our faculty and staff
5. To develop a regionally prominent liberal arts theatre training program
6. To assist the alumni, and facilitate communication between generations of DSC Theatre graduates

Goals for DSC Theatre Students
1. Be familiar with dramatic repertory
2. Know major eras of Theatre History and the associated artists, playwrights and styles
3. Be able to self-assess efforts
4. Exhibit ability to conduct research
5. Exhibit ability to create and manage theatre
6. To develop a significant level of skill in their emphasis area

Goals for DSC Production Season
1. Provide students with a range of production opportunities of varying genres, styles and historical periods
2. Provide the DSC campus community with productions that enhance the student’s educational, intellectual, cultural and emotional understanding and development
3. Provide our service area with a variety of productions that enhance and expand their cultural lives
4. Foster the production of new works

Goals for DSC Faculty and Staff
1. To be mutually supportive
2. To be professionally active
3. To render campus and community service
4. To mentor junior faculty
5. To encourage Faculty and Staff members to maintain well-rounded and balanced lives
Curriculum:

Major Changes in the past five years.

As a result of the previous accreditation review and the proposed baccalaureate degree, the theatre program curriculum has increased considerably. The new courses added to the curriculum are as follows.

- THEA 1023 Understanding Movies
- THEA 1025 Understanding Movies (lab)
- THEA 1713 Script Analysis
- THEA 1900 Private Applied Theatre: Acting
- THEA 2053 Classical Acting
- THEA 2113 Intermediate Voice and Diction
- THEA 2203 Costume Construction
- THEA 2210 Scenic Design I
- THEA 2230 Light Design I
- THEA 2240 Costume Design I
- THEA 3033 Acting Studio: Musical Theatre
- THEA 3043 Acting Studio: Acting for the Camera
- THEA 3113 Accents and Dialects
- THEA 3250 Sound Design
- THEA 3500 Sound Technology
- THEA 3600 Directing I
- THEA 3610 Directing 2
- THEA 3720 Th. History I
- THEA 3730 Th. History II
- THEA 3740 Th. History III
- THEA 3880 Stage Management
- THEA 4033 Acting Studio: Mask
- THEA 4043 Acting Studio: Stage Combat
- THEA 4320 Scene Painting
- THEA 4410 Scene Design II
- THEA 4430 Light Design II
- THEA 4440 Costume Design II
- THEA 4500 Sound Design
- THEA 4660 Survey of Period Styles/Décor

Course Descriptions

The complete theatre program curriculum with course descriptions, (including new and old courses), taken from the college catalog and curriculum approval forms is found in Appendix A: Theatre Course Descriptions.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

1. To know major eras of Theatre history, the associated artists, playwrights and styles, and the social context in which they developed
2. To be able to create an effective theatrical performance, or design, or to effectively manage a production
3. To be able to self-assess efforts
4. To be able to conduct research and to communicate discoveries in oral and written formats
5. To develop depth of understanding and preparation in one area of specialization
6. To effectively integrate Liberal Arts education and theatre training
Program Assessment

Of the three items listed as “Concerns” in the theatre program’s 2004 interim report, the first issue noted was that we had, “Not yet used the results of assessment to plan and implement improvements.”

While that may be accurate in a technical sense, it would be informative to quote the April, 1990 Council of Arts Accrediting Associations briefing paper “Outcomes Assessment and Arts Programs in Higher Education.” It states “Anyone who has witnessed a rehearsal . . . knows that outcomes assessment is continuous, often severe and, in fact, the driving force of the entire enterprise.” In addition: “Many of these [assessment] activities are so traditional to the education and training of artists that they are identified by older, less fashionable names such as entrance audition or portfolio review, annual jury or portfolio examination, senior creative or performance project, competitions internal and external to the institution, and so forth. . . . Quite often, the procedures in the arts are far more extensive, intensive, comprehensive and targeted than assessments in other disciplines.”

But with that justification aside, recent training from the College, in particular the faculty workshops presented in August, 2008, have given us tools that will make it significantly easier to quantify and share of our assessment efforts.

Assessment Activities

1. “Juries,” individual interviews between the faculty and each major, discussing student strengths, weaknesses and strategies for success (implemented Spring 2009)
2. Senior “capstone” projects (in development, will occur once a year)
3. SLO assessment of design/tech, performance and history/criticism/literature, year one
4. Ongoing evaluation of alumni’s academic and professional success

Outcome Assessment Time Table

Annually:
1. Juries
2. Capstone

Revolving:
1. Year one, 2009/10, will review SLO and design/tech classes
2. Year two, 2010/11, will review SLO and acting/performance classes
3. Year three, 2011/12, will review SLO and history, criticism and learning courses
4. Year four, 2012/2013, will assess alumni academic and professional success

Assessment Techniques and Instruments

Juries provide direct, ongoing assessment and analysis of student/program weakness and strengths. A report of each Jury will be kept in the student’s portfolio. The portfolio should be maintained through their tenure at DSC, and be available for evaluation at the student’s capstone project review.

The capstone project is to be a culmination of the student’s training at DSC. In addition to the record and report of the actual project, it will also include record of the student’s ongoing development while matriculating at DSC. Projects may include extended research papers, performance design or stage management assignments, original plays or other faculty approved activities. The project is to have both an end product and a record of how that project was realized.

The evidence of our success in teaching the program’s student learning outcomes will be assessed primarily by evaluation of course work. Instructors will keep copies of exams, research papers and student self evaluation as evidence artifacts. Course changes will be presented to the faculty and implemented in the subsequent academic year.
The evaluation of post-graduation success will involve several components. As much as possible we will work to maintain contact with each student. Some success is already being seen in the “DSC Theater Alumni” Facebook page. With that contact we will be in a much better position to keep track of student employment and academic success. In addition, where we have cooperation with transfer programs and graduate schools, we will request their assistance in the evaluation of student preparation and success.

Each of the assessment instruments will supply the program with direct evidence that will be evaluated by the faculty. Where needed, changes will be made based on the success or failure of our ability to teach to our student learning outcomes.

FACULTY
Prior to 2007 the Theatre faculty of DSC consisted of two full time professors and a limited number of adjuncts, (one or two, depending upon need). With the anticipation of a baccalaureate degree, funding from the 2007 legislature session provided funds for the hiring of two additional theatre faculty members with terminal degrees. Funding was also approved for a full time costume shop supervisor. This position has been filled for fall 2009.

Program Organizational Chart:

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<th>Profile</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Donald Hinton</td>
<td>Dean of the School of Arts and Letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Brent Hanson</td>
<td>Ph.D.– BYU, Associate Dean, Professor, GE, Design, Tenured</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Brent Hanson is currently Associate Dean of the DSC College Fine Arts Department. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees in design at the University of Utah. In 1993, he completed a Ph.D. in theatre and film at Brigham Young University. He has worked in the theatre department at DSC College for twenty-seven years, directing and designing numerous productions. For the past several years he served as artistic director for the Hill Cumorah Pageant, one of the country’s largest outdoor dramas, which is staged each summer in upstate New York.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varlo Davenport</td>
<td>MFA – Acting, The Ohio State University, Director of Theatre, Professor, Performance Instruction and Directing, Tenured</td>
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<td>Varlo has appeared in over fifty stage and film projects and has also directed many productions, including, Jekyll and Hyde, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Sweeney Todd and The Boys Next Door. He serves as the Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festival, (KC/ACTF), region seven, circuit eight, respondent coordinator. He is the author and performer of the award winning one-person show John Wesley Powell: The Last American Adventure. For seven years Varlo was the Producing Artistic Director of The Outlaw Trail Theater, in Vernal, Utah. He has assisted in the founding of The Vagabond Theater Company, The Neil Simon Festival and The Space Between Theatre Company. Varlo is a graduate of Southern Utah University and has an MFA in Acting from The Ohio State University.</td>
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Michael Harding, MFA – Directing
Shakespeare, Exeter
Assistant Professor
GE, Performance, Directing, Theatre History, Probationary

Professor Harding’s primary instructional responsibilities include teaching Directing, Theatre History, and Acting. He is also tasked with directing responsibilities, program development and student advisement.

He earned his BA in Theatre from the College of William & Mary and an MFA in Staging Shakespeare from The University of Exeter in Devon, England. He teaches courses in several areas of theatre, including Acting, Directing, Script Analysis and Theatre History. Additionally, he coaches private acting lessons and directs several annual productions at DSC College. Mr. Harding also works as a professional actor at various theatres around the US. He is the author of two plays: the experimental research-based The Rise of James VI and = (or, for the math-impaired, Equals).

Brent Innes, MFA – Design, Utah State University Assistant Professor Technical Director, Design/Tech Instruction, Probationary

Professor Innes’ primary instructional responsibilities include teaching Light, Sound and Scenic Design, and Stage Management. He also serves as Technical Director in which capacity he oversees all technical aspects of the DSC Theatre production season. He supervises students, manages budgets and resources, and maintains equipment.

Brent also does professional lighting design work in Hawaii, Wyoming, and Idaho. A graduate of Utah State University where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Lighting Design and a Master of Fine Arts (2007) in Theatre Technology and Design. Brent was awarded the Barbizon Award of light design UST for his work on Macbeth.

Jan Hunsaker – MFA-Directing, University of Utah Adjunct Instructor

Josh Scott, AS, DSC Scene Shop Foreman Staff

John Parkinson – MA – Theater, Adjunct Instructor

Faculty & Staff

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*One full-time secretary is shared among the Division of Fine Arts, the Music Department, the Art Program, the Dance Program, and the Theatre Program.
### Students

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### PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

**Indicators of student achievement**

The most obvious example of student achievement can be found in the success they have had at the KC/ACTF regional conference. In February of this year, (2009), students competed in the design competition and Travis Cox won the regional award for the sound design he created for *Dancing at Lughnasa*. In 2008 Guy Smith won both the regional and national makeup design competition for his work on *Sweeny Todd*. It is worth noting that most of the competitors in this competition come from graduate programs in nationally renowned universities.

In addition, we have had student success in obtaining employment. Many of our performance and technical students work for Tuacahn. We have successfully placed students with the Neil Simon Festival, the Utah Shakespearian Festival and The Old Globe Theater and The Kingsmen Shakespeare Company in southern California.
Other students have left DSC and gone on to a number of different graduate programs around the country. Currently Lanny Langston is at the University of Idaho, and Slate Holmgren is at Yale School of Drama.

Student achievement examples have to this point been primarily anecdotal; however, of the students who were part of the theatre program this year, 2008-2009, we have successfully placed:

1. One student with the Utah Shakespeare Festival
2. Three students with the Tuacahn Center for the Arts
3. Two students with the Neil Simon Festival
4. One student transferred to UVU, where he received a departmental scholarship
5. In addition, two of our students have formed their own production company and are employing several of their peers as actors and technicians this summer

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

From the early 1960’s to 2002, the theatre program was housed in the Cox Fine Arts Center. That building was demolished in 2002 and for two years the program creatively utilized a variety of spaces on and off campus in order to continue teaching classes and presenting shows. In 2004, the $18,000,000 state-of-the-art Dolores Doré Eccles Fine Arts Center was completed. The music and theater programs share the Center along with a large visual arts gallery. The Eccles Fine Arts Center is the recipient of three major architectural awards: The American Institute of Architects “Honor Award;” and the 2004 Intermountain Contractor Magazine has also given the Center two awards: 1) Silver Award for Public Project, 2)Best Higher Education Facility, 2004.

The Eccles is centrally located in the midst of the campus. The significant spaces dedicated to the theatre program include:

1. Main Stage (Proscenium) – 500 seat capacity
2. Laboratory Theatre - 1600 square feet
3. Rehearsal Room – 1600 square feet
4. Costume Shop
5. Scene Shop
6. Costume and Small Properties Storage
7. Furniture Storage
8. Four faculty offices

In addition to the space available, the performance venues were equipped with state of the art sound and lighting hardware and technology. The program also has access to a 12 station smart classroom with current professional grade design software installed.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

We are developing a list of library theatre holdings and will include that information when it is completed. At present please look to Appendix B: Library Theatre Holdings, for a list of electronic resources.

Please note also that D. Terry Williams, Ph.D., was brought in recently as a consultant from The National Association of Schools of Theatre to review the Theatre Program. After reviewing the library holdings, his report stated “The hard copy and online holdings in the institution’s library are ample and support the proposed curricula.”

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths
The program’s primary strength is derived from a deliberately cultivated culture of cooperative artist-scholars. The faculty models the collaborative nature of the discipline, self evaluation, and interdependence. Mutual respect is continually reinforced.

In addition, the faculty makes every effort to stay active professionally, either through work in the industry, or service to the profession. The carefully developed curriculum balances the needs for performance and skills training with an academically challenging liberal arts counter-weight. Students display a high degree of program ownership and are eager to accept challenging assignments and opportunities.

The program also has very solid administrative support.

The Theatre Program is also very active in promoting student retention. The faculty frequently invites students to visit our offices to let us know how they are doing. This allows us to have much greater insight to the student’s goals, challenges and overall well-being. We also make it a point to provide socializing opportunities with an opening social, holiday parties and work calls that end in a group meal. This has been very effective in helping students bond quickly with their peers, and enhancing their ownership of the program and the College.

The 2009 addition of a summer Theater Program called The Comedy Storm also provides an excellent venue to provide work experience for students, and continue to reach out to the community.

Challenges

The program has three significant challenges. The first is the lack of a Bachelor’s Degree. This missing component is the key factor in many of our challenges. It particularly effects recruitment, and retention the one area where this program could make a significant contribution to the overall growth of the institution.

Advertising and promotions is another real challenge. Attendance numbers have declined since we moved into this theater four years ago. Outside reviews of our productions indicate that the quality of shows continues at a high level. We have not significantly changed our production selection matrix. The one thing that has changed is the support the program has had in promoting the work we do.

Limited scholarship funding also continues to be a challenge.

Other challenges include:
- The development and support of a summer theatre program
- Building a season ticket audience
- Support for participation in KCACTF
- Keeping sound and lighting equipment in line with industry standards
- Keeping computer software for the design lab up-to-date
- Having the resources to provide for the growing production experience needs of students within the confines of the current reassigned time workload policy
- Additional clerical support--sharing a part-time secretary with other programs limits our effectiveness in many areas, including managing budgets, some publicity activities, curriculum development and management, course and program assessment, recruitment, tracking students after they leave, and so forth
- The need for a costume shop staff employee comparable to the theatre technician position in the scene shop
- The need for additional work-study employees

RECOMMENDATIONS, PLANS & IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations:

Our number one recommendation to the College at large is to do everything in its’ power to facilitate the approval of the Bachelor’s degree.
Plans:

We plan to take a pro-active role in the development of the Dance Program in order to facilitate the same kind of positive collaboration between Theatre and Dance that currently exists between Theatre and Music. Specific activities could include sharing resources, developing stronger faculty-to-faculty connections, input in hiring of additional dance faculty, and so forth.

Improvements:

In the 2004 interim report the first recommendation given was for an expansion of course offerings. This has been largely addressed. Assistance with professional support was requested. This has also been largely addressed by campus policy changes. Also raised was a need for increased faculty compensation. Great strides have been made in that area. There is still room for improvement in regards to scholarship resources. The last item raised at that point was the desire for the program to be allowed to grow. Administrative support in this area has been greatly appreciated.

Other improvements that we have made include the development of a production selection matrix, which will allow us to improve publicity and promotions efforts, and to improve the allocation of resources.

In 2008 DSC Theatre created a ‘Facebook’ page, blog site and on line photo gallery. The on-line presence they afford have done much to improve communication for current students, and greatly enhance our communications with alumni. We would like to add a well designed web page to serve as a central communication hub for all of the program’s efforts.