

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE

VISITORS' REPORT

FOR

COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Professor Timothy McGraw, Theatre Executive

Date of Visit: January 30 – February 1, 2008

Visitors:

Professor Kevin Marshall, University of Florida (team chair)
Professor James J. Fallon, Salem State College (team member)

Degrees for which renewal of Final Approval for Listing is sought:

Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Theatre (Design/Technology, Performance)
Bachelor of Science – 4 years: Theatre Education

Degree for which renewal of Plan Approval is sought:

Bachelor of Arts – 4 years: Theatre

DISCLAIMER

The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NAST accreditation standards represent only the considered opinion of the visitors at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the Commission on Accreditation following a complete review of the application, including the Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report submitted by the institution.

INTRODUCTION

The Theatre Department at Columbus State University is applying for renewal of membership in NAST. We visited the University January 30 – February 1, 2008. During the visit, we met with the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, the Dean of Libraries, the Library's liaison to the Theatre Department, the department's Chairperson, faculty, staff and students. We toured the new theatre complex, the department classrooms and faculty offices, and the library. We reviewed the transcripts and course syllabi, observed classes, and attended a performance of *Fuddy Meers*. Our meetings were friendly, honest, and productive. We wish to acknowledge the generous hospitality of the administration, faculty, staff, and students in making our visit pleasant and constructive.

A. PURPOSES

"The mission of the Department of Theatre at Columbus State University is to educate students in the collaborative art of theatre by preparing them for professional employment, careers in theatre education, and graduate study. The course of study teaches the craft and artistry of acting, directing, design, technical, and educational theatre...The CSU Department of Theatre seeks to enhance the quality of life for the university and metropolitan communities by sharing our students' growth and development through our eclectic theatrical production." (Self-Study p. 7)

The Visitors find the above statements of mission, particularly the commitment to enhance the quality of life for the university and metropolitan communities and their new location downtown for easy accessibility to be appropriate for this department in this institution. The upper administration of the university is committed to raising the level of all of its programs and is urging departments to rise to the challenge. The visitors acknowledge and are pleased that the university has selected the Theatre Department as a Select Mission at Columbus State University.

"Theatrical graduates will be able to demonstrate: General knowledge of all areas of the theatrical process; Knowledge of the theatre history and appreciation for dramatic literature of western civilization; knowledge and proficiency in theatre design, technology, and proficiency in acting and directing; BSEd graduates will also be able to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in the methods of teaching theatre." (Self-Study p.7)

The visitors congratulate the department for its ongoing commitment to assessment and improvement.

The institution appears to meet the mission, goals, and objectives standards at the time of the visit (NAST *Handbook 2007-2008*, II.A).

B. SIZE AND SCOPE

The department appears to be quite healthy and now has wonderfully new facilities for performance, offices, classrooms and studio production support spaces. A common complaint voiced to the visitors was that the facilities need to be fully completed and equipped with up to date furniture and equipment. Theatre student enrollment is in a continued growth mode

“Enrollment in the CSU Department of Theatre is stable and growing... The growth of the department is a result of a number of factors: the presence of both the BFA and BA as well as the BSEd degrees; more aggressive recruitment by the department; continued expansion of on-campus living space; and an increase in faculty members who have been visibly active in recruitment and participation in state, regional, and national professional organizations. Perhaps the two biggest factors in increased enrollment have been the Investment in People capital campaign by the university befitted the Department of Theatre with the construction of state-of-the-art facilities, and, frankly, the word-of-mouth advertising by our own increased number of majors who have taken an active and enthusiastic part in the recruitment process. (Self-Study p. 9)

The Theatre Program has seen a growth in the number of majors. In the fall of 2002 there were a total of 89 theatre majors and in the fall of 2006 there were 139. The theatre unit has instituted an audition policy for admittance into the theatre program which may limit the number of students admitted into the program. The Self-Study raises a red flag when it is stated there exists “the risk of burnout for the costume, scenic, and lighting designers.” The visitors learned that the faculty technical director is also the lighting designer and the sound designer for the four department productions plus a touring children’s production that has approximately 50 performances a semester. The visitors attended a variety of classes during the visit and although the Self-Study reflects a 19:1 student ration none of the classes observed had anywhere near that number of students in attendance. Class size as observed by the visitors appears to meet NAST guidelines.

The visitors noted that with the appointment of the scene designer as chair the program actually lost a design/tech position. The present situation where one individual is responsible for technical direction, lighting and sound design for the entire production season is untenable. It was reported to the visiting team that this individual works 80-90 hours a week 75% of the time during the production season.

The Chairperson of the department was the scenic designer for the production of *Fuddy Meers* and another scene design faculty member was the technical director for part of the scenic set up and construction because the faculty technical director was getting a new sound system up and running for the touring children’s production. In the meetings with the members of the faculty,

the need for additional full time tenure track faculty was always stressed. The current technical director is leaving the university at the end of the spring 2008 semester and a search is under way to find someone to fill the position. It may be difficult to find one person who is capable and qualified to be the technical director, lighting designer, sound designer, and teach many of the technical theatre course offerings. It also appears that there is one full time faculty member teaching a majority of the acting/performance classes. There are several part-time faculty teaching acting classes but this may lead to some discrepancies in the materials, methods, and modes of assessment.

The addition of full time faculty in the specific areas of 1) lighting design, 2) technical direction, and 3) acting/performance appear to be needed for the current size (139 – 150 majors) and scope (BFA degrees, BA degree, and BSEd degree) of the program.

The visitors recognize that the Size and Scope of the theatre program currently appears to meet NAST Standards with the exception of the technical director/lighting design/scene design position. It is strongly recommended that courses, projects, or productions not be added without either the elimination of others or the addition of necessary resources to maintain the Size and Scope balance.

C. FINANCES

The visitors noted that as addressed in the Self-Study financial resources for “The department’s budgets come from three sources: state funds, student fees, and private funds handled through the Columbus State University Foundation. State funds include the department’s Instructional and Operational Budget. Theatre Activities Budget is supported by Student Activities Fees, from which we produce our season of plays...Part-time faculty budgets, which have been used to pay additional instructors for Theatre Appreciation courses, support courses for the program, and additional instructional support for productions (such as dialect coaches, fight choreographers, movement coaches, etc.) have been slashed as of this budget year. There are concerns over our ability to cover all necessary aspects of production and instruction without the addition of new faculty or competent part-time faculty. Although the department has grown substantially, the Non-personnel Services budget, administered by the Chair of the Department, has not increased to adequately cover all expenses required to serve a student body that has tripled in five years. In addition, recent University System of Georgia budget cuts further threaten our ability to improve and develop our programs (a planned development of a musical theatre program approved five years ago has now been flatly denied funding by the University Administration).” (Self-Study p. 14)

From the financial statements included in Appendix II of the Self Study, it appears the state funded departmental budget has increased from \$408,369 in 2004 to a proposed \$709,861 for FY 2008. The major increase was in the number of faculty and staff and increases in salaries. The operating supplies and expenses line saw a \$5,000 increase over the 4 year period from \$3,500 to \$8,500. There are several items that are needed to better serve the faculty and staff that include a new printer (there are currently two printers for the 8 full time faculty, 4-5 part-time faculty and the department’s administrative assistant), a department van for the theatre education touring production that visits approximately 35 – 40 schools a semester.

Because the NAST Financial Guidelines and Recommendations state: "Student learning and health and safety are paramount considerations in determining and evaluating financial support." There are several items that need to be addressed:

1. the dust collection system installation for the cut off saw in the scene shop,
2. the installation of an industrial air cleaner in the scene shop, to help eliminate saw dust going up into the costume shop and to be considerate of individuals with dust allergies and asthma,
3. completion of the dye vat exhaust system in the costume shop,
4. proper drafting and drawing tables are needed in the design classroom as well as storage for student supplies in the design and drawing classroom,
5. installation of a dance floor in the dance studio where there is currently thin carpet over a cement floor

There is a concern that the academic department productions, for which the faculty receive teaching responsibilities, are at the discretion of the Student Activities Budget. Again from the financial statements in the Self Study, it appears there has been an annual increase in the funding from \$35,000 in 2004 to \$60,000 proposed for 2008. It is hopeful that there will continue to be increases in this budget to cover the ever increasing costs of lumber, steel, paint, fabric, gel, and other educational theatrical supplies. NAST Standards state, "Budget allocations for personnel, space, equipment, and materials must be appropriate and sufficient to sustain the programs offered by the theatre unit from year to year" (NAST *Handbook 2007-2008*, II.C.b.).

FY 2007 saw the four year low in the Theatre Angels Foundation fund with \$93,947 from a FY 2004 high of \$115,224. Money in this account includes contributions made by the department faculty and the *Fuddy Meers* program listed many of the department faculty as donors. The Children's Theatre (Theatre Educational Outreach) fund shows an FY 2007 asset of 36,468 which is more that double the FY 2003 balance of \$13,518. This is an integral part of the only public theatre education degree program in the state and is an asset to the elementary schools.

The visitors note that additional funds are needed for computer office support especially for the office and production support areas. The program has been "lucky" that qualified trailing spouses have filled adjunct teaching positions especially in the voice, movement, and acting areas. These teachers have professional and prior teaching expertise but their present status raises the question as to how their skills would be replaced if their full-time teaching spouses moved to another institution?

Travel funds for faculty remain quite low and increases seem necessary especially due to the program's remote geographic location. Travel funds need to be utilized for recruiting purposes as well as for faculty development activities.

The management and administration of the department's financial resources are handled in an effective manner.

Due to the issues noted above, it is unclear if the unit meets NAST Standards in this area (NAST Handbook 2007-2008, II.C.).

D. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

“Governance within the university is organized by tier system. All University System of Georgia institutions are overseen by the Board of Regents and Chancellor. The Chancellor makes recommendations to the Board regarding promotions, appointments, budgets, and other faculty resource concerns. He has the right to veto decisions of any council, faculty, or committee, and further makes budget recommendations. The President of each university works with the Chancellor to insure that policies of the Board of Regents are put into effect.

The Department of Theatre has an ongoing relationship with the College of Education because of the BSEd degree in Theatre and operates under the same review process as all other College of Education programs. The Program Director for Theatre Education, serves as liaison with, and serves on committees of, the College of Education. The director works to keep the theatre faculty and BSEd students apprised of necessary information and/or changes in the program.

The Department of Theatre faculties work together in defining educational and administrative policies. The Chair of the Department is responsible for attending upper administrative meetings, i.e. the College of Arts and Letters Department Chairs’ meeting. He then articulates information from those meetings to the faculty. Decisions regarding any of this information are then discussed and voted on within the department. Additionally, policies regarding curriculum structure, courses such as Children’s Theatre Production or Theatre Practice, or other outreach programs, are often initiated by the faculty member(s) most closely involved; however, they still bring ideas, decisions, and policies to the department as a whole for financial decisions. This system works well for the department and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis to insure proper communication.

Each faculty member recognizes and respects the professional and pursuit of academic excellence of the others and these relationships have a positive impact on the department, the students, and the education offered. The autonomy and responsibilities authorized by the administration is beneficial and allows the department to structure and revise curriculum based on the needs of the department and the degree programs. (Self-Study p 17, 19, 20)

The college and department seem to be good university citizens working patiently and persistently to achieve their goals. The duties and responsibilities of the Department Chairperson are clearly defined as are the specific responsibilities of the Theatre Education Program Director. In meeting with the faculty as a whole and individually, there seems to be sufficient autonomy within the department for the structure of the theatre curriculum for setting specific degree requirements and credit hours offered per course. The department is extremely fortunate to have the strong support of the soon to be retiring President, and the current Provost and Interim Dean.

The visitors find an appropriate administrative system that appears to comply with the NAST Standards. The current chair is extremely hard-working, talented, and respected. The Theatre Executive enjoys the support and well-earned credibility with the faculty in the department and

across campus. Several faculty members commented to the visitors on the need for the chair to have some additional administrative training such as the ATHE Leadership Institute to further develop the administrative skills of the chair.

E. FACULTY AND STAFF

One of the great strengths of the theatre unit is the hard-working, dedicated faculty and staff. All of the full and part-time faculty members have appropriate MFA or PhD degrees and experience in their specific area of teaching.

There is concern that some faculty are over burdened with preparations for several different classes a semester and for additional production responsibilities. It was expressed many times by the faculty that the design/technical faculty are over burdened by designing and executing quality productions and willing to do what it takes to make the productions the very best they can be. There is concern that the faculty technical director is leaving in May and he has also been serving as the lighting and sound designer for the productions. There is additional concern that the number of performance majors is increasing and there is only one full time faculty for the acting component and one full time faculty in the directing component. There are qualified part time faculty teaching the acting performance classes but there may be discrepancies in the goals, objectives, assignments, and assessments in the same course.

In the classes visited, the faculty student ratio was appropriate with 9 students in the costume construction class, 15 in a basic design class, 8 students in drawing and rendering, and 14 in an intermediate acting class. In all of the classes there was ample group and individual attention given to the students.

The staff is well qualified in their respective jobs. The administrative assistant was very knowledgeable of the day to day operations and the departmental procedures and rules for both the faculty and students. The costume shop foreman had a well maintained and organized costume shop and costume storage area. The new scene shop foreman, having been on the job for only 4 days, demonstrated her skills by transforming the cluttered, saw dust filled scene shop into a rather tidy and clean shop in just over 24 hours. It is expected that the cleanliness and organization in the scene shop will be maintained for the safety and education of the students, faculty and staff.

F. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, HEALTH, AND SAFETY

The new facilities with two theatres, light lab, scene shop, costume shop, classrooms, offices, conference rooms, department library, and storage are very nice and academically appropriate in size and location. The faculty, staff, and students are pleased with the new facilities.

For the most part, there appears to be adequate lighting, scenic construction, and costume construction equipment for production and academic purposes.

As stated in the self study there is still a need for:

1. installation of the dust collection system for the cross cut saw and serious consideration of an industrial air cleaner system to reduce the amount of saw dust in the air and in the shop;
2. completion of the ventilation system for the costume shop dye vat;
3. installation of a properly sprung dance floor in dance studio-movement on thin carpet over a cement floor is difficult and with the possibility of shin splints is a safety and health issue
4. purchase of drafting tables and stools in the Design and Drafting classroom;
5. assembly of the shelves and organization of the hand properties storage;
6. assembly of the shelves and organization of the stage lighting, electrics, gel, lamps, gobos, and special effects equipment;
7. organization of the scenic flats, furniture, and larger properties

With the Theatre Education component having a show touring to elementary schools both the fall and spring semester next year, their request for a new van for which they have priority should be given serious consideration. It is the visitors' understanding that the students will tour two or three times a week and having readily available, reliable transportation is imperative. The touring theatre production is a good example of the university's outreach to the community.

G. LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The Dean of the Library and the Theatre Unit Library Liaison provided the visitors with a power point presentation of all of the internet resources that are available to the students and their availability to assist the students and faculty. The Library Liaison is available to demonstrate all the resources that are available in the library for any theatre class.

There were many theatre plays, and books on scenic, lighting, and costume design, acting, directing, stage management, and theatre history on the shelves. In addition to the books readily available in the Columbus State University library, the students have access to all of the books in all of the University System of Georgia libraries. Within the CSU library there were adequate student information technology services and quiet reading and study areas.

Faculty members make requests to the library liaison for specific books they would like the library to purchase. There is a modest annual allotment of about \$1200 annually. The library operates under a philosophy of "access not ownership" and provides the proper resources so that both faculty and students have immediate access to all necessary materials when needed. This approach appears to meet NAST standards for library resources.

H. RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION-RETENTION, RECORD KEEPING, AND ADVISEMENT

Within the past five years there has been a steady increase in the number of theatre majors in the BFA degree programs. In addition to the University-Wide recruitment efforts offered through the Admission office such as Visitation Days, Probe Fair, and Student Searches, the department faculty members actively recruit students. The faculty members attend the Southeastern Theatre Conference, the Georgia Theatre Conference, and the Georgia Thespian Conference to recruit

students to the program. The students commented on the willingness of the faculty, especially the department chairperson to meet with them, give them personal tours of the facilities, and answer any of their questions.

The new audition, portfolio, and interview requirements for admission to the theatre program are listed in the Department of Theatre section on page 116 of the *2007-2008 Columbus State University Catalog* and all theatre applicants are provided with the theatre audition application packet by the Theatre Department. The retention rates appear to be on par with institutions of similar size and scope.

The record keeping appears to be excellent. There is an ample sized record-keeping room with many file cabinets within the department and the administrative assistant was able to provide requested syllabi and student transcripts. The duties and responsibilities sheets for the various production personnel state that copies of the production programs, posters, photos, and other materials are to be submitted to the administrative assistant for archival purposes. There are many photos lining the hallway outside the faculty offices with past production photos.

Advising appears to be working. The students commented on the accessibility of the faculty and their willingness to assist them all the time. The students affectionately refer to the group of faculty offices as “faculty row”.

NAST Handbook 2007-2008, II.H.1.h. states that “The institution shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records of each student’s educational progress, including courses taken, production participation, grades, and/or credits earned, and the results of other appropriate evaluations.”

The program appears to meet NAST standards.

I. PUBLISHED MATERIALS AND WEB SITES

The *Columbus State University 2007-2008 Catalog* is the primary source of information for the university and the theatre program. In addition to the university catalog, the University web site provided additional specific information about the university, faculty, and theatre department.

Information mentioned in the Self-Study concerning the faculty requirements were easily accessed from the university web site in addition to specific information on the theatre program.

The *CSU Theatre Handbook*, available to all incoming theatre majors and on the theatre web site, clearly defines many of the standard operating procedures, rules, regulations, and guidelines for the theatre students.

The Department of Theatre also publishes recruitment brochures, and posters for their productions. Recruitment ads are placed in *Dramatics Magazine*.

The sample of the Theatre Department admissions packet gives a very good idea of the theatre program including the mission, scholarships available, theatre for youth program, and detailed

list of required courses and semester when specific courses should be take to graduate in four years.

The sample study guide for the Children's Theatre touring production of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz* provided many specific learning activities for the elementary and middle school teachers and their students.

University, College, and Department informational and promotional materials appear "clear, accurate, and readily available" as stated in the *NAST Handbook 2007-2008*, II.I.1.a.

J. BRANCH CAMPUSES, EXTERNAL PROGRAMS, USE OF THE INSTITUTIONS NAME FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OPERATE APART FROM THE MAIN CAMPUS OR THE PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PARTNER

Not Applicable

K. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ARTICULATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

Since the construction of the new "downtown" theatre complex, the university has seen an increase in the number of community members attending theatre productions. The touring theatre for youth production performs in 30-40 elementary/middle schools each semester. One production each theatre season is selected and geared toward area high school student audiences.

L. NON-DEGREE-GRANTING PROGRAMS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Not Applicable

M. STANDARDS FOR (1) INDEPENDENT POSTSECENDARY THEATRE UNITS WITHOUT REGIONAL OR OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND/OR (2) PROPRIETARY INSTITUTIONS

Not Applicable

N. PROGRAMS, DEGREES, AND CURRICULUM

Credit and Time Requirements

The BFA degrees and the BA degree require 123 credit hours for graduation and the BSEd degree requires 126 credit hours for graduation. There is a distinction between the lecture hours, lab hours and credit hours for each course. Because of the practical "hands-on" learning in the theatre classes, multiple lab hours can replace the lecture hours in the awarding of credit hours.

The awarding of transfer credit is based upon the transcripts and often the syllabi of specific courses. The theatre faculty work with individual transfer students and might request that the

transfer student take the Columbus State University theatre course to be assured the student is prepared to progress to the next higher level course. Courses not meeting the specific CSU theatre requirement may be used as a non-program elective for transfer credit.

The specific General Education Learning Outcomes of the University (Communication and Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematics, Cultural and Social Perspectives, Scientific Reasoning, Aesthetic Perspectives, and Wellness) are met in many of the specific general education and theatre courses required for the Theatre degrees. The expected outcomes of the Department of Theatre appear consistent with the competencies of the NAST standards and seem to be met through the Theatre courses.

Specific Undergraduate Programs and Procedures

Bachelor of Arts – 4 years: Theatre

Submitted for renewal of Plan Approval

The BA degree in Theatre offers the student the opportunity to experience and learn the breadth of theatre as a collaborative art can encompass. Courses in Script Analysis, Design, Acting, Directing, Stage Management, Arts Management, Technical Theatre, and Theatre History provide an insight into the varied aspects of theatre. According to the Curricular Table submitted for the BA degree, the requirements in General Studies (64 credits – 53.3%), Theatre Studies (33 credits – 27.5%), Performance (6 credits – 5%), and Electives (20 credits – 53.3%) are within Curricular structure guidelines of NAST. This is a new degree program that was begun in the Fall of 2006. According to the Self Study, as of the spring 2007 semester there are 5 students enrolled in the program.

Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Theatre (Performance)

Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for Listing

The competencies for the General Studies and the common body of knowledge and skills are met through classes in English Composition, Math, Communications, Social Studies, and the Sciences. The additional required classes in Dance, Movement, Voice, Auditioning, Directing, Makeup, and 5 Acting courses appear to fulfill the essential competencies and experiences recommended by NAST. There are opportunities for the students to perform in formal and informal settings in department productions and student workshops. The Curricular table indicates that there are 42 credits (35%) in performance, 30 credits (25%) in supportive courses in theatre, and 45 credits (37%) in general studies and an additional 6 credits (5%) that are electives. The 2006-2007 HEADS project indicates there were 59 students enrolled in the BFA performance track for the Fall 2006 semester.

Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Theatre (Design and Technology)

Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for Listing

The competencies for the General Studies and the common body of knowledge and skills are met through classes in English Composition, Communication, Math, Sciences and Social Sciences. The additional required classes in Art Appreciation, Script Analysis, Basic Design, Drafting and

Drawing, Period Styles in Design, and various courses in costuming, scenic design and painting, properties and lighting appear to fulfill the essential competencies, experiences, and opportunities recommended by NAST. There are a sufficient number of courses in the various aspects of design and technical theatre to give students the opportunity to specialize in one or two areas and understand the basic principles of another. The curricular table indicates that the studies in the major area and supportive courses in theatre total 61% of the total credits required for graduation. If the design/technical students take art classes for their Humanities/Fine Arts they will have the NAST recommended 65% of their classes in the major area and supportive courses. The 2006-2007 HEADS project indicates there were 27 students enrolled in the BFA Technical Design track for the Fall 2006 semester.

Bachelor of Science – 4 years: Theatre Education

Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for Listing

The basic competencies essential to theatre teachers are met through the courses required in theatre, general studies, education, student teaching, and participation in the specific children's theatre productions and touring shows. Because the BS in Education degree requires 129 credits the guideline percentages are slightly higher than NAST recommendations based on 120 credits. The teacher education program at the university is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The field experiences provide the Theatre education major with over 900 clock hours of class observation, teaching, and directing. Students are required to pass the Praxis I exam and have a minimum GPA of 2.75. Because Columbus State University is the only state funded university in the state of Georgia to offer the Bachelor of Science in Theatre Education and there are a limited number of elementary and middle schools with certified drama teachers this program is a great asset to the state education system. The program has an excellent reputation due in a large part to the 12 years of knowledge and experience the current theatre education coordinator has. The 2006 – 2007 HEADS project indicates there were 50 students enrolled in the BS Theatre Education for the Fall 2006 semester.

Theatre in General Education

All of the Theatre courses are available to all Columbus State University students provided they meet the required prerequisites. The THEA 1100 Theatre Appreciation course is listed as an option for many non theatre majors to fulfill the University Fine Arts requirement. There is also the Acting for Non-Majors course that is offered once a year as part of the general education component. Additionally, as part of the CSU in Oxford Summer program a course "From Page to Stage" (ITDS 1145 or THEA 5575) is available to all CSU students including theatre majors during the summer 2008 international studies program.

Other Programmatic Activities

The Self-Study reflects opportunities to study abroad during "Maymester" in London (2007 and 2008). The program has utilized a guest director for a recent production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and guest lighting designers for *I Hate Hamlet* and *The Visit*. The program also uses the campus "common hour" for the possibility to meet each Tuesday and Thursday at 12:30 P.M. to facilitate communication within the department.

O. THEATRE UNIT EVALUATION, PLANNING, AND PROJECTIONS

The Self-Study was detailed in a very complete, analytical, and thoughtful manner. Annually, the Department reviews their current position, examines and establishes goals, and makes projections for the future. This process follows both college and university guidelines and procedures.

The projections provided by the department clearly reflect an accurate assessment of the state of the unit and its strengths and current weaknesses.

P. STANDARDS SUMMARY

It is not clear to the visitors if the unit can conform to NAST standards if the current situation of the technical director/lighting design/scene design position remains the same. It is entirely too much work for one person to perform effectively. Detailed in Size and Scope (Section B), Finances (Section C), and Faculty and Staff (Section E) of the Visitors' Report

Safety concerns are outlined in Facilities, Equipment and Safety (Section F) of the Visitor's Report.

The visitors are concerned that courses, projects, or productions not be added without either the elimination of others or the addition of necessary resources to maintain the current Size and Scope balance of the theatre program.

Q. OVERVIEW, SUMMARY, ASSESSMENT, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

Performance evaluation: In the performance of *Fuddy Meers* there were good character choices made by many of the actors. Although the characters may have been stereotypical, the acting was consistent throughout the performance. The direction of the mass mayhem at the end of Act 1 was well done through the blocking, focus, and timing of the actors, sound effects, and lighting.

The special effects makeup of the scarred eye and ear was effective in the thrust theatre and the close proximity of the actor to the audience. The choices for the sound effects were appropriate and effective for the scene transitions. The costumes were appropriate for the specific period and the characteristics of the actors. The properties were well done especially the sock hand puppet. The use of intelligent lighting to suggest movement for all of the scenes in the car and the intensity, color, movement, and focus for the other scenes were suitable. The scenic painting successfully achieved the tile floor in the kitchen area and the cinder block walls of the basement. More attention to craftsmanship in the scenic construction could have eliminated some of the seams between pieces of the walls and the crooked alignment of the large center doors. Overall, all aspects of the production contributed to an enjoyable evening at the theatre.

Student feedback: The visitors met with a group of approximately 80 theatre majors who liked the fact that they were involved right away and appreciated the expertise and availability of the

entire faculty. Many students praised the experience of the traveling Children's productions. The students expressed concern that there were too few faculty members teaching acting, the need for more design technical faculty, some of the elective courses were not offered frequently enough, and some courses required too much work for the number of credits awarded. It is noted that the overall response of the theatre students to the program was very positive.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

STRENGTHS

- The excellent new performance spaces are the envy of many programs in the country.
- The faculty is dedicated, talented, and committed to the program.
- The theatre executive is hard-working, determined and appreciated by the faculty.
- The students are talented, enthusiastic and very appreciative of their committed faculty.
- Theatre has been designated as a Select Mission of the university.
- The quality of theatre production is very good.
- The course offerings are appropriate for all degree programs.
- There is tremendous understanding and support for the theatre program from the retiring president of the university.
- The theatre education program is the only BSED degree program in the University System of Georgia.
- The children's theatre program is very strong and has a highly visible profile.
- There is growing community involvement and support since the move to the new downtown facilities and the "Investment in People" development campaign.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order to fulfill the university goal of academic excellence, it was made very clear that a program of the high caliber that is the CSU theatre program, and a program distinguished as a Select Mission will need additional full-time tenure track faculty to adequately teach the increased number of students in the BFA, BA, and BS degree programs and to make use of and maintain the new facilities. The position of technical director/lighting designer/sound designer should be addressed immediately. Additional faculty in the acting program is also a major concern at present as well as the overload for the theatre education professor.

The unfinished or incomplete projects for the new facilities mentioned in this report will need to be completed for safety, and overall quality educational reasons. Particular attention must be paid to the ventilation concerns in the shop and production areas, the installation of properly sprung dance floors and the purchase of proper classroom seating and design/drafting tables.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

Although the proposed MA degree program is a worthwhile goal it appears to be premature. It is advisable to first increase the number of faculty and funding for the current undergraduate programs. This is necessary in order to achieve and then maintain the standard qualities of

excellence in teaching and learning at the undergraduate level and then turn the program's energies toward developing a graduate program in theatre.

Funding for theatre production at the present time rests primarily with Student Activity funds. It is recommended that additional, reliable university funds be secured for theatre production since this activity is instructionally and academically related and should be a university responsibility and not subject to unpredictable Student Activity funding.

Additional funding is needed for faculty travel, development, and student recruitment reflecting the growing program and the need for increased visibility necessitated by the program's remote geographic location.

The strong children's theatre touring program needs to have dependable, reliable, and available transportation during their extensive touring season.