Student Learning Assessment Program Summary
2005 Academic Year
The Department of Theatre Arts

Eastern Illinois University Mission Statement

Eastern Illinois University offers superior yet accessible undergraduate and graduate education. Students learn the methods and outcomes of free inquiry in the arts, sciences, humanities, and professions guided by a faculty known for its commitment to teaching, research/creative activity, and service. The University community strives to create an educational and cultural environment in which students refine their abilities to reason and to communicate clearly so as to become responsible citizens in a diverse world.

The Mission Statement of the College of Arts and Humanities

The College of Arts and Humanities will enter the 21st Century dedicated to developing free and rational men and women committed to the pursuit of knowledge in its fundamental unity, intelligently appreciative, both in their common and diverse heritage, conscious of their social and moral obligations. Such men and women are best equipped to master the specific skills of any calling and to become mature, competent and responsible citizens of a free society. To that end the college will support excellence in teaching and both scholarly and creative activity. It will create a community of scholars characterized by freedom of inquiry expression. In every way possible it will evince its commitment to the centrality of arts and humanities at Eastern Illinois University and to the community it serves.

The Mission Statement of the Department of Theatre Arts

The Department of Theatre Arts at Eastern Illinois University supports in every way possible the Mission of Eastern Illinois University and the College of Arts and Humanities. It prepares its majors for careers in the various fields of the theatrical arts and provides for the non-major and the community, as a whole, the opportunity to experience theatre performance both as a spectator and as a participant. To that end the Department Theatre Arts:

Departmental Goals:

a. to prepare the undergraduate theatre major for graduate school, entry level positions in the theatre, film or television or related professional areas (secondary education, management, public relations.)

b. to provide the non-major the opportunity to participate in theatrical experiences at every level of study (performance and production.)

c. to support the work of other programs in the university by providing a varied production season, representing major works, genres, and social and historical perspectives.

d. to provide for, the campus community and the Charleston area a valued cultural experience.
Comprehensive Departmental Learning Objectives:

1. Performance

1-a. Understand basic acting technique
1-b. Understand the importance of movement in performance
1-c. Understand period style and movement as it relates to performance
1-d. Knowledge of the history of acting and the development of contemporary acting techniques
1-e. Understand of the workings of the human voice
1-f. Understand the role of the director in the contemporary theatre
1-g. Knowledge of the analysis of play scripts for production
1-h. Development of the ability to communicate with other artists in the field

2. Scenery and Costume Design/Technical

2-a. Be able to read, draft and understand basic theatre drawings
2-b. Be able to construct the basic elements used in contemporary stage design
2-c. Have a working knowledge of the tools used in the contemporary theatre
2-d. Have an understanding of the basic principles of light
2-e. Have an understanding of how to hang, focus and maintain lighting instruments commonly used in the theatre
2-f. Have an understanding of the control of light in the theatre
2-g. Have an understanding of the relationship between designers and director
2-h. Have a basic understanding of how garments are constructed
2-i. Have an understanding of fashion as it relates to theatrical performance

3. History and Literature

3-a. Have an understanding of the major periods of drama and their relationship to the contemporary theatre
3-b. Have an understanding of the principal writers and critics of a given period and the contemporary view of their works
3-c. Be able to read, understand and analyze play scripts.
3-d. Have an awareness of the significant plays, criticism and theories of the major periods in theatre history

Department of Theatre Arts
Student Learning Assessment Program
Summary 2005

As stated in earlier reports the evaluation and assessment of the THA major is continuing and ongoing. The Department of Theatre Arts has made an effort this year to bring the assessment program into a sharper focus and relate it in a direct manner with the departmental goals, objectives, and vision.

With the Fine Arts project finally under way the Department of Theatre Arts is looking at the structure of the curriculum, the number and types of productions, and the overall quality of the major as it relates to the student matriculating through the university. As a part of this process the department is in the early stages of seeking accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), one reason is to validate the work of the program and to provide the department with data from similar institutions that offer undergraduate programs in theatre arts.
and theatre arts education.

In the fall of 2004 the Department brought to campus a consultant from NAST to evaluate the program and its work in relation to NAST standards. Mr. Tad Currie visited EIU for 2 days in November, visited classes, talked with students and faculty, and viewed the fall production of ALL MY SONS, directed by Clarence Blanchette. I have attached his evaluation, which was on the whole positive with some areas of concern. He indicated to the faculty and the deans that the program met NAST standards and could/should begin application, this despite the fact that the Doudna project had not yet begun. Using the evaluation as a guide the department is pursuing the following:

1. A curricular review is underway examining all courses, but in particular those relating to the production program and those that require student participation in the various shops.
2. A study of the academic day and better ways to make use of this time both for faculty and for students.
3. Examination of the production program both in terms of size and scope.
4. Set up a committee to write and prepare the departmental self-study in preparation of the NAST visit in 2006.

**Anticipated outcomes:**

a. A curriculum that meets the needs of the student and makes better use of faculty and student time.
b. A production program that is high in quality, diverse and provides opportunity for majors, minors and the university community.
c. A curriculum that is leaner and stronger in its offerings.

*(see attached Eastern Illinois University Consultancy Report)*

In addition to the above the department has made the following changes with regard to the Learning Assessment Program:

1. Revamped the examination given to entering freshmen and exiting seniors. Exam was cut from 100 questions to 50 and is prepared on a scantron form in order to better evaluate results. The exam was given to the seniors and the freshmen students in THA Seminar I. It is planned in the future to share results of these tests with faculty at the annual fall retreat in order to provide input on how to improve curricular offerings. (a copy of the exam is attached)

**Outcome:** An exam that better reflect what is actually taught in the course and should better reflect the learning goals and objectives of the program.

2. Matched the Departmental learning objectives for performance, technical and history with courses offered in the major. (a listing of the above is attached)

**Outcome:** A clear map of how the learning objectives mesh with curricular offerings.

3. In the performance (audition) area a rubric was found and developed to measure student performance. At each audition (fall and spring) faculty members fill out the rubric and give students immediate feedback on individual performances. It is planned to review results at the annual fall retreat to evaluate and discuss possible changes in the audition training and procedure. (A copy of the rubric is attached0
**Outcome:** To provide immediate feedback to student auditionees and have a means to track improvement in performance and auditions. A change beginning in fall 05 is a more "professional" approach to the process requiring all major to provide a performance resume for review and performance majors will provide an actor's head shot as well.

4. Plans are to monitor the number of students not only cast in but auditioning for departmental productions. This will include majors, minors and general student populations. This year some sixty (60) students auditioned for departmental productions

**Outcome:** This will give the department a better understanding of how it is meeting the goals listed in its mission statement.

5. A rubric was found and developed to be used in the evaluation of student design portfolios. The portfolios are evaluated at the end of each design class, when a student submits a portfolio as a part of the application process to be a student designer, and prior to attending the American College Theatre Festival. Results will be shared and discussed at the annual fall retreat. (A copy of the form is attached.)

**Outcome:** A better, more systematic approach to portfolio evaluation and a measure of how the process is improving.

6. A rubric was found and developed to assist in monitoring progress of students in relation to crew assignments in the production area. Again results and ways to improve will become a regular part of the fall retreat. (A copy is attached)

**Outcome:** A better more systematic and balanced means of evaluating student progress in production work.

Respectfully submitted May 2005

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