

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF A MASTERS OF ARTS PROGRAM IN THEATRE & DANCE**

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve a new master's of arts program in theatre and dance, effective Fall 2014.

### **Background**

In May 2011, the Department of Theatre undertook a comprehensive review of its PhD and MA programs as part of the impending merger process of the theatre and dance departments. As a result, the newly formed Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance terminated the previous PhD and MA programs in theatre and proposed a new research-based MA degree program in theatre and dance with a concentration in teaching artistry. In 2012, a program needs assessment was completed, which included: a national research survey; an extensive review of current MA programs in theatre and dance in the US; an examination of disciplinary accreditation standards; and, consultation with national professional organizations. Developed from this comprehensive needs assessment, the proposed program will prepare students for careers as professional teaching artists, arts education directors and administrators, and leaders in the field.

The proposed MA program is designed to provide specialized training in research methods, pedagogical foundations of teaching artistry, artistic practice, and professional development. The curriculum will equip arts practitioners, artists, educators and community workers with practical knowledge and research skills necessary for effective engagement of communities through dance and theatre arts experiences. The proposed MA will be offered in two formats: fully online and hybrid residency, which will provide significant flexibility for working professionals and those outside the Detroit metro area.

This will be the only cross-disciplinary MA program in Theatre & Dance in the US and the only MA program that focuses on Teaching Artistry. There are only two other programs that focus on Teaching Artistry in the nation: the MFA in Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities at the University of Texas – Austin; and the MFA in Dance, at the University of Maryland – College Park, which focuses on performance, choreography, and the training of teaching artists. Eastern Michigan University has an MA and an MFA in Applied Drama/Theatre for the Young. However, that program is significantly different from the proposed MA in Theatre & Dance, as its focus is solely on theatre for young audiences.

### **Program Description**

The Master of Arts (M.A.) is a three-year program of advanced studies in theatre and dance. The program will equip artists, arts practitioners, arts educators and community workers with practical knowledge and research skills necessary for effective engagement of communities through arts experiences. With an emphasis on meeting the needs of urban populations, the MA

program draws on the particular strengths of Detroit as a learning environment. Bringing together the most current theories and practices of arts engagement, students will be trained in an environment that fosters cultural sensitivity, problem-solving skills, and ensemble-based thinking and creativity. With this degree, students may continue or pursue careers in teaching artistry, teaching (K-12 and Higher Education) and in a variety of performing arts educational positions in professional and community-based settings.

Graduates of the program will know how to: design, implement and evaluate curriculum in performance for a range of populations; cultivate and foster complex community connections; develop a service-orientation towards their own art practice; integrate entrepreneurial thinking into their creative practice; research and write effective funding applications.

Three groups constitute the target populations for this degree program: 1) artists currently working in community settings who wish to develop their skills in teaching and engaging communities through the arts; 2) BA/BFA students in theatre and dance who have recently completed their undergraduate studies and are seeking a transition or bridge into the professional world and/or further graduate studies; and 3) K-12 school teachers seeking professional development opportunities and opportunities to enhance the curriculum through the arts in an advanced degree program. While the MA in Theatre and Dance is, by design, a professional degree program, tailored for those who wish to pursue or enhance a career as a teaching artist, the MA program also represents rigorous training in research, writing, and scholarship that would be suitable preparation for further study at the doctoral level in dance and theatre.

### **Admission Requirements**

Applicants must meet requirements for admission to the Graduate School. In addition, applicants must have at least a 3.0 grade point average. Qualified admission is not possible.

A minimum of fifteen semester credits in the area of specialization (theatre, dance, a related field, or some combination therein) is required. The program also requires a personal statement regarding their academic and professional background and how it has prepared them for admission to the program.

In addition to the personal statement, applicants must also include a statement of objectives, in which they articulate how their academic and professional goals are related to the program, and describe how and where they will carry out their fieldwork projects contained in some coursework. Three letters of recommendation must be included. At least one letter of recommendation must be from the coordinator or administrator where the applicant's fieldwork projects will be carried out. A personal interview will be required for selected applicants.

### **Curriculum Requirements**

#### **Degree Requirements**

Thirty-two credits

Plan A (Essay): 28 credits of coursework plus 4 credits in essay

Plan B (Thesis): 24 credits of coursework plus 8 credits in thesis

**Required Courses** (18 credits)

- THR 7390 – Foundations of Theatre and Dance Pedagogy: Cr. 3
- THR 8300 – Arts and Human Development: Cr. 3
- THR 7400 – Research Methods in Theatre and Dance: Cr. 3
- THR 8700 -- Seminar: Research Topics in Theatre and Dance: Cr. 3
- THR 8400 – Artistic Praxis: Cr. 3
- THR 8750 – Principles of Teaching Artistry: Cr. 3

**Electives** (6-10 credits)

- THR 8400 – Artistic Praxis: Cr. 3 (repeatable max 6 Cr.)
- THR 8750 – Principles of Teaching Artistry: Cr. 3 (repeatable max 6 Cr.)
- THR 5200 – Performance Studies: Cr. 3 (DNC 5200 cross list)
- THR 5230 – Pioneers of the Modern Theatre Cr. 3
- THR 5410 – Applied Theatre: Community Possibilities: Cr. 3
- THR 5460 – Applied Theatre: Theatre in Education: Cr. 3
- THR 5490 – Applied Theatre Practicum: Cr. 1-3
- DNC 5810 – Teaching Creative Dance for Children: Cr. 3
- DNC 5998 – Professions Research
- DNC 6010 – Technique Lab 1: Cr. 1
- DNC 6610 – Dance Company: Cr. 1
- THR 7040 – Dramaturgy: Cr. 3
- THR 7990 – Directed Study: Cr. 1-4

Plus other electives with approval of advisor.

**Essay (4 credits) Plan A**

- THR 7999 -- Master's Essay Direction: Cr. 4

Oral Examination: A final oral examination covering the essay and all course work taken at Wayne State may also be required.

**Thesis (8 credits) Plan B**

- THR 8999 -- Master's Thesis Research & Direction: Cr. 8

Oral Examination: A final oral examination covering the thesis and all coursework taken at Wayne State University will also be required.

**Graduation Requirements**

All coursework must be completed in accordance with Graduate School and the regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. Students may enroll on a full-time or part-time basis but must complete requirements within six years of admission.

### **Program Administration**

The Director of the Master of Arts program will bear primary responsibility for admissions, and overseeing processes of student advising and progress. The Master of Arts Committee, consisting of the core faculty members from the program, will bear primary responsibility for recruitment, curriculum development, and program evaluation. Whenever possible, a balance between the number of theatre faculty and the number of dance faculty on the Master of Arts Committee is preferred.

### **Budget and Resource Requirements**

New applicants will be accepted to the proposed program every other year; therefore, all required courses will be offered every other year. Elective courses are currently offered on a regular basis. The proposed program will require no additional expenditures for fulltime faculty and staff.

No additional resources will be necessary; current facilities, equipment and supplies are adequate to support the program.

### **Accreditation**

Minimum requirements of the proposed MA program are governed by the disciplines' respective accreditation bodies, National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) and National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). The program requirements meet all standards and guidelines of NASD/NAST.

### **Approvals**

The proposal for the M.A, in Theatre and Dance was approved by the Faculty and Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, the faculty of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, the Dean of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, and the Graduate Council.