

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE**

**Visitors' Report**

**California State University Fullerton**

Fullerton, California

Bruce Goodrich, Chair  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
April 20-22, 2016

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**Programs or degrees for which Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing is sought.**

Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Applied Studies, Design and Technical Production, Directing, Playwriting, Theatre Teaching)

Bachelor of Fine Arts - 4 years: Musical Theatre

Master of Fine Arts - 3 years: Acting; Design and Technical Production; Directing

**Programs or degrees for which Final Approval for Listing is sought.**

Bachelor of Fine Arts - 4 years: Acting

## 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 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.

## OPTIONAL RESPONSE

It is strongly recommended that each institution submit an Optional Response to the Visitors' Report, which may be used to correct (1) errors of fact, (2) conclusions based on such errors, and (3) any documented changes made in the program since the on-site review. In particular, information in the Optional Response should address noted issues of apparent noncompliance, such as those included in Section P. of this report, and any areas where the provision of further information has been deemed advisable by the institution.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the course of three days in April, near the end of the Spring semester, the visitors visited the Department of Theatre and Dance at California State University, Fullerton. During the visit the visitors met with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the College of the Arts, the Chair of the Department, a Librarian, and representative Theatre faculty, staff and students. The visitors toured the department's facilities and the Pollak Library. The visitors reviewed MFA project books, student transcripts and files, observed many classes, and attended productions of *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Into the Woods*, and *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*. All of the meetings were cordial, frank and productive. The visitors would like to thank Bruce Goodrich, the department's Chair, and Hilda Aboytia, the department's Administrative Assistant, for organizing the visit and express gratitude for the hospitality and helpfulness of the administration, faculty, students and staff with whom the visitors met.

### A. Purposes

CSU Fullerton has a succinct mission statement that is supported by eight specific goals with learning identified as preeminent (Self-Study, 6-7). The institution is guided by a strategic plan with four broad goals that "is built upon the foundation of the University's mission statement" and is used to guide decision-making (Self-Study, A.1, Strategic Plan). The College of the Arts "offers intensive programs in Art, Music, Theatre and Dance" and "is also committed to the enhancement of artistic awareness of all students" (2015-16 University Catalog).

The department's purposes are broadly framed and appear to be congruent with those of the University and College. The department's overarching purposes are to provide "opportunities for students to (1) develop an appreciation for theatre arts and dance; (2) become aware, as audience or participants, of the shaping force of theatre arts and dance in society; (3) improve the knowledge and skills necessary for employment in the theatrical arts profession and careers in dance; (4) pursue graduate studies; and (5) prepare for teaching theater and dance" (2015-16 University Catalog). These five opportunities are the common scaffold for the department's degree programs. The visitors note that the first three "opportunities" are different from the ones that appear on the department's website:

- Realize their self-worth in becoming a true artist in the business

- Recognize the shaping force of theatre, dance and television
  - Learn the skills necessary to work professionally in theatre, dance, film, and television
  - Pursue graduate studies
  - Prepare for teaching theatre and dance
- (<http://www.fullerton.edu/arts/theatredance/index.htm>).

The variation between opportunities/purposes in the catalog and on the website is amplified in the Self-Study Report which presents six different sets of missions and goals that appear to have been customized to correspond to the different undergraduate and graduate degrees the department offers (Self-Study, 7-11). The customized missions and goals statements do not appear in the University Catalog or on the department's website.

All of the customized mission statements begin with some variation of the statement that the department "is committed to the rigorous training of students interested in professional performance, design, production and/or education" (Self-Study, Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts, 7). An emphasis on learning through production is central to the department's identity, or, as the website states, "public performance is at the heart of our program" (<http://www.fullerton.edu/arts/theatredance/index.htm>).

Some of the variations in goals (in the customized mission and goals statements) are curious, for example Bachelor of Arts students "Are intellectually, technically, creatively, and technologically prepared to be artistic member[s] of their communities;" whereas Bachelor of Fine Arts students "Are intellectually, creatively, and technologically prepared to be artistic member[s] of their communities through written critiques, reviews and analytical papers" (Self-Study, 8-9). It seems unusual that the student learning outcomes for the professional degree program would be more specific in identifying the completion of academic work products more typically associated with liberal arts degrees.

The visitors recommend the department undertake a thorough review of its different statements of purpose in order to establish greater consistency and clarity in the presentation of its purposes to students and the general public on its publications, website and in the University catalog. NAST Standards state that, "Statements regarding overall purposes for theatre and theatre study must: (1) Indicate that fundamental purposes are educational. (2) Encompass and be appropriate to the level(s) of curricular offerings. (3) Reflect and remain consistent with specific institutional and programmatic responsibilities and aspirations for theatre and theatre study (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.A.1.e.(1-3)).

## **B. Size and Scope**

The Department of Theatre and Dance is a large and complex unit that serves approximately 600-650 undergraduate and graduate students, of which approximately 400-500 are theatre majors. The Self-Study Report did not include an enrollment breakdown for 2015-16 and enrollment data in the HEADS reports were incomplete. The visitors suggest that the department include an enrollment report showing the number of majors in each degree/concentration/emphasis for 2015-16 as part of their Optional Response.

The department offers a credit-rich Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts with two concentrations "Applied Studies" and "Specialized Studies" (with emphases in Design and Technical Production, Directing, Playwriting and Theatre Teaching), a credit-rich Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with concentrations in Musical Theatre and Acting, and a Master of Fine Arts degree with concentrations in Acting, Design and Technical Production, and Directing.

The Self-Study identifies 23 full-time and 31 part-time faculty providing instruction, supplemented by guest artists, residencies and graduate students, who usually teach lower division general education classes. The work of the faculty is supported by a full-time staff of 11 (3 administrative and 8 technical/production) and 3 part-time staff (Self-Study, 19). The department's personnel resources appear to be adequate to cover the size and scope of the instructional and production program.

The department appears to offer sufficient advanced courses and requisite performance and production experiences to support the different curricula and number of students in the program. The department has enough classroom, studio and performance spaces to meet the current demands of the program. And while state financial support for the department has declined precipitously during the Recession (from \$100,000 to \$25,000) the department has been successful in generating substantial box-office revenue from its production program that appears to have made up for some of the loss of institutional support. Overall, through careful planning and effective management the department appears to have adequate resources to cover the size and scope of the programs that are presently being offered.

## **C. Finances**

The Department of Theatre and Dance's financial resources and operations are accurately described in the Self-Study (12-14). The institution appears to comply with NAST standards regarding finances (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.C.). However, the visitors identified two areas of concern related to the overall financial health of the unit. The Operation and Expense budget has seen a loss of \$75,000 since 1998 and the current amount available (\$25,000) barely provides enough support for the scale of this program. While the loss of state funds is beyond the control of the unit, the university would be well served to consider an increase in the Operation and Expense budget as funds become available.

The second area of concern is the current level of graduate assistantship support (\$10,000 per assistantship) is below the national market for graduate students in peer programs, making the department not competitive in recruiting. The department nominates incoming graduate students for out-of-state tuition waivers who are not already residents of the State of California. However all students are responsible for in-state tuition and fees. The low amount of available graduate support is further compounded by the high cost of living in the Fullerton area.

The department is to be commended for an outstanding record of box office income increase, supported by wise season selection by the unit executive. Strong popular production choices along with a vibrant season subscription base have helped to offset other financial constraints faced by the department. There is a shared clarity of the need for all to stretch every dollar to maximize the academic impact, resources appear to be fairly distributed, and overall the unit is achieving remarkable results with severely limited finances. However, even greater transparency regarding departmental resources is desired by faculty. Recent staffing changes in both the main office and with the Production Manager provide the opportunity for greater input in the budgeting process and an effective plan for greater understanding among all interested parties.

Additional resources may be possible through a more aggressive campaign for development dollars. The college has recently hired a new Senior Director of Development and the relatively new Dean appears to be committed to additional work on this front.

## **D. Governance and Administration**

## **1. Overall Effectiveness**

The University, through its Mission, Strategic Plan, and emerging Master Academic Plan is focused on achieving a better alignment of its aspirations and practices in order to raise its national profile and improve student success. The University is the largest in the CSU system and has historically been underfunded. The Recession exacted a serious toll including ten years of deferred maintenance problems across campus. The University's senior leadership, with whom we met (Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of the College of the Arts), are optimistic about the institution's future. The institution, under its current administration, has been good at setting goals and achieving them. It is hoped that the Master Academic Plan initiative will lead to the better use of existing resources and a more equitable funding model that will serve the institution going forward. Senior administration expressed strong support for the College of the Arts and the Department of Theatre and Dance which was characterized as "one of our jewels". The department is respected for the quality of its faculty and students, the strength of its degree programs, and the prominence and success of its large production program. Open communication and mutual respect appear to inform relations among the various levels of administration.

## **2. Policy-Making**

The institution has established curricular and educational policies that are administered by the department and described in the Self-Study (14-16). Faculty are involved in departmental governance and serve on key committees that advance the work of the unit: Scholarship/Alumni, Play Selection, Executive, and Curriculum. Formal meetings of the entire faculty occur once a month primarily for information sharing. Faculty in the discipline areas (Dance, Design and Technical Theatre, History & Literature, Musical Theatre, Performance, and Voice and Movement) meet as needed to address curricular and student issues unique to their area. In addition, regular production meetings are held to advance the work of the department's large production program. The faculty are represented by a collective bargaining agent (California Faculty Association) and operate under a union agreement that addresses issues such as workplace, salary, promotion and tenure. The faculty are knowledgeable and well-informed on policies and procedures.

## **3. Theatre Executive's Load and Responsibilities**

The duties and responsibilities of the chair for organizing, facilitating and directing the work of the department are listed in the Self-Study (15). The chair is an elected position (3 year term) that is subject to review and renewal. The chair is administratively responsible for the department's academic and production program. The chair receives 9 units of assigned time for administrative responsibilities and often teaches one class and/or works creatively in the production program each semester. The duties, responsibilities and authority of the chair are clearly understood by the faculty. The chair appears to have the experience, energy, commitment and support to successfully manage his varied responsibilities. The chair was praised for his acumen as the executive producer of the department's production program. He is regarded by colleagues as approachable, a good listener, and adept at diffusing, if not always resolving, conflicts. The chair is ably assisted by an administrative staff that includes an Administrative Assistant, Administrative Coordinator, and a Production and Business Coordinator. The department was without the services of an Administrative Coordinator at the time of the visit because a search was underway to fill the position.

## **4. Communication**

Communication appeared to be generally good within department considering that the NAST visit occurred near the end of a busy academic year, with three productions running, and faculty voting on a new contract. Communications are predictably complicated by the department's size and the different perspectives, status and agendas of the unit's stakeholders. It can be easy in large departments for silos to develop and communication to become less effective over time. The department should persist in efforts to enhance communication among the discipline areas and between faculty and staff. Distributing the department's NAST Self-Study Report and the Visitors' Report to the faculty and staff, and engaging them in the development of the Optional Response provides an opportunity to strengthen communication within the department.

## **E. Faculty and Staff**

The department has an excellent and diverse faculty that includes highly qualified artists and scholars, all properly credentialed, many with national reputations in their area of expertise. The overall number and distribution of faculty appear to be sufficient, in most instances, to achieve the department's purposes and comply with NAST standards regarding faculty and staff (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.E.). Many faculty are active professionally and bring their artistic or scholarly experience to bear in their teaching. The faculty the visitors met with were passionate about students and learning. Both part-time faculty and staff are also highly qualified and enthusiastic about the department's students and programs. These various teachers' impact are augmented and enhanced by a robust schedule of guest artists who also regularly contribute to the educational mission of the unit. Overall, faculty and staff morale was quite positive.

Tenure-track faculty cited clear understanding of campus and department appointment, evaluation, and advancement policies and procedures. Faculty are represented by the California Faculty Association and a vote on a current contract with the CFA was being undertaken during the visit. Staff are represented by the California State University Employees Union under a collective bargaining agreement. Part-time faculty are represented by the California Faculty Association.

Graduate students spoke highly of their opportunities to serve as teachers and the effective mentoring and supervision that they receive from faculty in improving their teaching in classrooms and labs. Students also cited the strength of the staff in partnering with them during their courses of study. Courses that the visitors observed appear to be offered at appropriate levels and are of appropriate size to enable effective teaching practices.

A variety of staffing and faculty changes will be faced by the department in the not-too-distant future. The main office staff currently has a vacancy created by the recent departure of a long time staffer and the promotion of another. An additional staff vacancy exists in the costume construction laboratory and there is concern about the potential retirement of the staff scenic artist. One senior faculty member in the History and Literature area is on transitional retirement and another will begin transition in the coming year. The department recently lost part-time faculty who were responsible for the direction of its small undergraduate Playwriting and Theatre Teaching programs. While temporary arrangements have been made to cover these programs, it is unclear if the department has sufficient faculty resources to direct these programs in the future. NAST standards state "The institution shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual qualifications enable the theatre unit and the specific educational programs offered to accomplish their purposes" (NAST *Handbook 2016-17* Standards for Accreditation II.E.1.a.(1)).

## **F. Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety**

The department' offices, classrooms, performance, support and storage spaces are all located in the expansive Clayes Performing Arts Center. The institution appears to comply with all NAST standards regarding facilities, equipment, health, and safety (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.F.). The visitors were impressed with the overall quality of the performance spaces, laboratory spaces, rehearsal spaces, and classrooms. The large complex is in good condition and appears to be well equipped to support the unit. Four performance spaces (a 125 seat thrust theatre, a 150 seat black box theatre, a 250 seat thrust theatre, and a 500 seat proscenium theatre) serve to appropriately showcase and challenge both designers and performers, providing all with a range of experiences to prepare for a career in the theatre.

An attitude and commitment to health and safety is present throughout the complex. All students involved in production are provided with a mandatory safety orientation and advanced safety training is made available as appropriate. The overall cleanliness and order of nearly all the spaces toured was duly noted. The properties storage, paint lab, and television study are in need of improved organization, but the available summer production break was cited by the staff as an opportunity for addressing these concerns. The scenic lab and theatrical rigging systems were particularly worthy of note, for consistent signage, training records, required personal protection gear, and protocols to be vigilant in safe practices.

A further example of the unit's commitment to health and safety was evidenced in the standard language consistent in the majority of the production related course syllabi examined during the visit. The unit also has a very good working relationship with campus occupational safety officials who partner with the faculty and staff in providing strong operational oversight. Overall, no obvious safety concerns were found and the unit is to be commended for setting a high, professional standard of operation for all students, staff and faculty.

The costume and scenic lab spaces are well organized, equipped, and maintained. Both spaces are well ventilated and contain additional systems to address air quality when necessary. Specialized areas for metal working, CNC routing, make-up casting, fabric modification, and properties construction are all provided. A lighting lab, computer based design and drafting lab, and audio exploration equipment is also available. The faculty and staff appear to have an intentional goal of exposing students to a wide variety of technology and designs systems, ranging from the lowest budget and technology possible, all the way up to standard commercial theatre equipment.

As with most academic theatres, the department is challenged with keeping up with contemporary technology in lighting, sound, and projection systems. However, incremental investments have been made in all three of these areas to partially address this concern. The unit is commended for being part of the regional consortium developing components and controls for motion control systems. The available equipment and the display of its use in the production of *Into the Woods* indicated strong learning in this critical area of contemporary technology.

Another challenge shared with many other educational theatres is adequate storage for costumes, lighting and sound components, properties, and scenic elements. Overall the visitors found the unit making effective use of nearly every available square foot within the complex. The disposal of some historic equipment that is no longer in use should be considered to gain back some additional storage space.

All in all, the performance, rehearsal, and production labs combine to make an impressive and effective facility to support the educational mission of the unit. Faculty office space appears to be at a premium and some reorganization or reassignment may be necessary in this area to improve both

support and communication, but overall the facilities at Fullerton are something in which all can take pride.

## **G. Library and Learning Resources**

An earthquake in March 2014 caused extensive damage to the south wing of the Pollak Library at CSUF that resulted in the closing of the stacks and the adoption of a book paging system. During the visit, administrators, faculty and students expressed concern about access to materials in the library. What the visitors discovered when they toured the library was that the collection has been consolidated in the north wing, while construction continues on the south wing, and open access to the stacks has been fully restored. It is anticipated that construction will be completed on the south wing by 2017-18.

Given the damage the building has suffered, the access, holdings and services provided at the Pollak Library are adequate to meet the needs of the department's curricula and appear to meet NAST standards (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.G.). The library is conveniently located a short walk from the Performing Arts Center. Like most university libraries, the Pollak is in transition and investing in eBooks, digital media, online journals and databases. The print collection has the range of books and materials one would expect to find at a large public university. The library has a helpful website, a knowledgeable staff and an interlibrary loan program that provides quick access to any book, article or recording, not in the Pollak Library.

The department maintains and staffs its own small Theatre (Duerr Library) and Musical Theatre libraries which house scripts, scores, vintage books and journals, and other donated materials. It was reported that both collections are frequently used by students. Efforts should be made to ensure students are aware the Pollak Library's collection is easily accessible again and encourage its use. Once construction is completed on the Pollak Library, the department may want to assess the need for maintaining departmental libraries.

## **H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, Advisement, and Student Complaints**

### **1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention**

The department's recruitment, admission and retention programs are functioning successfully and appear to be in compliance with NAST standards (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.H.). The institution and department is ethical and attentive to orienting and advising new students. The department has selective admission procedures that include auditions and juries for its two professional Bachelor of Fine Arts concentrations in Musical Theatre and Acting, and its Master of Fine Arts program. All undergraduate students are initially placed in the BA program and must successfully complete the core curriculum and an audition at the end of their sophomore year before being admitted to a Bachelor of Fine Arts concentration. Retention in the Bachelor of Fine Arts programs appears to be strong.

The Bachelor of Arts concentrations in Applied Studies and Specialized Studies (with emphases in Directing, Playwriting, Design and Technical Production, and Theatre Teaching) are Liberal Arts programs that were retitled in 2010, in an effort to make them sound more practical and professional. The visitors found some of the terminology used to describe the department's Bachelor of Arts degree program (e.g. applied studies, specialized studies, concentrations, emphasis, tracks) confusing in the Self-Study. The department could benefit from greater

precision in how it describes its programs to be consistent with national practice. NAST standards state “The term Concentration is used by some institutions to designate a major, and by others to designate a minor or area of emphasis. Institutions must define and publicize the meanings of such terms and use such terms consistently within specific subject matter areas” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.2.d.).

The department’s undergraduate recruitment materials describe the student opportunities, although there are some discrepancies between statements on the department’s website and in the University Catalog (see discussion under items B. Purposes and I. Published Materials and Websites in this report). Recruitment materials describing the Master of Fine Arts program are much clearer and more commonly understood.

## **2. Record Keeping**

The department appears to comply with standards regarding record keeping (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.H.1.h.). Paper files are maintained on all students in the unit’s record office. Files reviewed included advising check sheets, change petitions, and copies of student progress correspondence. The files the visitors examined contained relevant paperwork regarding course substitutions and programmatic changes that needed to be addressed that were beyond students’ control. However, such documented changes were limited in number and appeared to consistently benefit the student whenever possible. Additionally, University student progress records are maintained in a password protected computer database. The database is the source for documented student grades and a progress check list that examines university core requirements.

## **3. Advisement**

The institution and department appear to have an effective system of student advisement that complies with NAST standards (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.H.1.j.). There are two faculty in the department who serve as Undergraduate Advisors and a faculty Graduate Advisor (Self-Study, D.1. Organizational Chart). Faculty who oversee specific curricular areas also advise and regularly monitor student progress. The College of the Arts appears to have a robust career advising program with a full time staff member assigned through the office of student life to work directly with theatre students. This career advisor holds regular office hours within the department and also provides assistance with internship and field studies opportunities. The Dean expressed strong support for early career assistance as a priority for the College.

## **4. Student Complaint Policy and Its Effectiveness**

The CSU system knows that federal regulations require institutions of higher education to make public contact information for filing complaints. The University has detailed procedures for filing and investigating student complaints on its website, as well as descriptions of the appeals process. Online resources provide a clear path for students to register complaints. The policies and procedures appear to be carefully designed to identify, address and rectify issues in a timely manner. Within the culture of the department, students and faculty both cited an “open door” policy with the chair, who often seeks to diffuse conflict before it escalates. The institution appears to comply with standards regarding student complaint policy and its effectiveness (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.I.1.b.(13)).

# **I. Published Materials and Websites**

The Department of Theatre and Dance has a website that links off of the College of the Arts homepage: <http://www.fullerton.edu/arts/theatredance/index.htm>. As mentioned earlier in this report, the clarity, accuracy and quality of information on the website varies and does not always appear to be current or in agreement with the University Catalog. For example, information on the department's homepage states, "students choosing a B.A. degree in theatre have a choice of concentrations liberal studies; production/performance (which includes emphases in the areas of acting, directing, playwriting, design/technical production; entertainment studies; and teacher education. We also offer a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre." This information appears to describe an earlier iteration of the BA program and is not in agreement with information presented in the Self-Study or published in the University Catalog. It is recommended that the institution update its website and published materials. It is the responsibility of NAST accredited institutions "to provide accurate public information" (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Code of Ethics, Article II, Section 3, and Standards for Accreditation II.H.1.a.; II.I.1.a.).

### **J. Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution's Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program (if applicable)**

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding branch campuses, external programs, use of the institution's name for education activities operated apart from the main campus or the primary education program (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.J.). The department is part of the College of the Arts unique Grand Central Art Center (GCAC) located in the city of Santa Ana, a short drive from Fullerton. The GCAC is dedicated to "the open exploration of contemporary art and visual culture: locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally through socially engaged collaboration among artists, students, and the community." In practical terms, the 45,000 square-foot facility contains subsidized living spaces for graduate students in the visual and performing arts as well as the 70 seat, thrust style Grand Central Theatre. The unit has an effective program of production at the GCAC providing students with the opportunity to produce in a low budget, "store front" style theatre, exploring contemporary plays and musicals.

### **K. Community Involvement; Articulation with Other Schools**

The Department of Theatre and Dance has a long and productive history of community involvement through its varied programming of plays, musicals and dance events, which culturally enrich the campus and Fullerton community. For many years, the department has presented a High School Theatre and Dance Festival, which introduces high school students from southern California to the performing arts at CSUF. The Preeminents is a group of musical theatre students who perform at special events on and off-campus showcasing the work of the BFA Musical Theatre program. The unit also has a long history of active involvement in the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival where they have garnered many awards. Additionally, the department hosts an ongoing exchange program with Trinity University in Ireland that typically sees 4-6 Trinity students in residence each fall, and 2-6 CSUF students studying at Trinity each spring. Individually, faculty work professionally in the community and entertainment industry, as well as serve as adjudicators for high school and university productions in the region.

### **L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community (if applicable)**

N/A

## **M. Review of Specific Operational Standards for (1) Free-Standing Theatre Institutions of Higher Education and/or (2) Proprietary Institutions (if applicable)**

N/A

## **N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula**

### **1. Credit Hours**

#### **a. Definitions and Procedures**

##### **(1) Definition of Credit and Methods of Assigning Credit**

- a) The institution has specific and accessible information on its website (University Regulations: <http://catalog.fullerton.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=28>) which defines credit and its methods for assigning it. The policy states:

“For all CSU degree programs and courses bearing academic credit, the “credit hour” is defined as “the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

- 1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- 2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.”

A credit hour is assumed to be a 50-minute period. In courses in which “seat time” does not apply, a credit hour may be measured by an equivalent amount of work, as demonstrated by student achievement.”

- b) The institution has specific and accessible information on its website (Transfer Credits: [http://www.fullerton.edu/catalogprevious/catalog20092011/admissions\\_and\\_registration/trancred.asp](http://www.fullerton.edu/catalogprevious/catalog20092011/admissions_and_registration/trancred.asp)) that describes its policies and practices for granting course credit for transfer students.

##### **(2) Publication of Definitions and Policies**

The institution’s definitions and policies are accessible from its website.

##### **(3) Procedures Used to Make Credit Hour Assignments**

The following excerpt from a 02-13-2013 memorandum on Credit Hour Compliance at CSUF, found on the University's website describes the institution's procedures to make credit hour assignments:

“Determination of the appropriate credit hour designation for new courses at CSU Fullerton occurs at several levels in the approval process. Individual departments are expected to insure that new courses submitted for approval comply with the requirement that each credit hour earned involve (1) one hour of “classroom or direct faculty instruction” and at a minimum two hours of out of class work or (2) an equivalent amount of some other academic activity. Each course submitted is reviewed by the corresponding college curriculum committee which is charged with assessing whether the work required justifies the number of credit hours to be awarded. College Deans and the Office of Academic Programs provide additional levels of review as do the three university curriculum committees – the University Curriculum Committee that addresses undergraduate, non-General Education courses; the General Education Committee; and the Graduate Education Committee. Courses must be approved by the Academic Senate and finally by the University President. Guidelines for determining credit hours are embodied in “Instructor Contact Hours and CS Number” which sets forth the expectations for weekly class hours and the different types of classes offered at CSU Fullerton. It is a summary of pages 19-23 of Section V of the Data Element Dictionary used across the California State University System.”

[http://webcert.fullerton.edu/wasc/eer/files/Credit-Hour-Compliance\\_FINAL\\_2.16.12.pdf](http://webcert.fullerton.edu/wasc/eer/files/Credit-Hour-Compliance_FINAL_2.16.12.pdf)

**(4) Means Employed to Ensure Accurate and Reliable Application**

The institution employs formal and typical systems of faculty and administrative review of all curriculum proposals to ensure accurate and reliable application of its credit hours policies and procedures (see item (3) above).

**(5) Procedures of Free-Standing Institutions**

N/A

**b. Evaluation of Compliance**

The institution appears to be in compliance with NAST standards for Credit and Time Requirements (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.a.). The visitors note that evidence for compliance was not included in the Self-Study and suggest that the department include documentation in its Optional Response.

**c. New, Experimental, Atypical Formats or Methods.**

N/A

**2. Specific Curricula**

**a. General Content and Competency Standards**

The Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts with concentrations in Applied Studies and Specialized Studies, and the Bachelor of Fine Arts with concentrations in Acting and Musical Theatre appear to address all relevant NAST General Content and Competency Standards. All Theatre majors (Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts) must complete the University's 51

semester hour General Education program which covers five major areas: 1) core competencies in communication and critical thinking, 2) scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning, 3) arts and humanities, 4) social sciences, 5) life-long learning and self-development (CSUF Catalog 2013-15). The University's General Education program addresses NAST's Essential Content and Competencies for General Education (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.D.1.).

## **b. Individual Curricula**

### Baccalaureate Programs

#### **Degree Title: Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Applied Studies)**

**(1) Status** –Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.

**(2) Curriculum** – The curriculum consists of 68-72 credit hours of required course work in Theatre which includes: 38 credits in lower and upper division core courses (e.g. Art of Theatre, Acting, Stage Craft or Intro to Costume Design, Theatre Management, Directing, World Theatre A-E, etc.), 22 credits in adviser-approved Theatre electives, distributed and selected from three categories of courses: 1) Acting/Directing (3-9 credits), 2) Design/Technical Production (3-9 credits), and 3) Theatre/Dance/Art/RTVF/or Music (a minimum of 5 credits), and 8-12 credits of performance/production practicum (THTR 478B 2 credits) that is repeated six times for native students and four times for transfers. The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences appear to address all of NAST's Essential Content and Competencies for Liberal Arts Degrees (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.D.).

It must be noted that the 8-12 credits in THTR 478 B is a “department requirement” that students must complete in addition to the 60 credits that are listed in the University Catalog (see [http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=2&poid=487&returnto=143](http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&poid=487&returnto=143)). It was reported to the visitors that the 8-12 credits of THTR 478B while required, “are not counted in the overall unit total for degree.” The visitors found this distinction confusing and difficult to discern in the Self-Study, the website and University Catalog.

The requirement of 68-72 hours in Theatre in the Applied Studies concentration and 51 hours in General Education, for a total of 123 hours for graduation, appears to preclude students from taking any free electives or being able to complete a minor or second major without taking additional credits. If the 12 hours of THTR 478B do not count in the overall unit for degree then students have 9 hours of additional credit to complete in order to meet the institution's minimum requirement of 120 hours for a BA. The visitors suggest that department clarify this issue in their Optional Response.

The visitors note that the number of required credit hours in this program (including the THTR 478B requirement) exceeds NAST's standards for liberal arts degrees which “focus on theatre in the context of a broad program of general studies” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.1.b.(1).). Rather, this credit-rich BA program appears to provide a broad education in theatre that is professionally oriented and supported by a program in general studies. Normally, liberal arts degrees require between 30-45% theatre content and 50-70% in general studies (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.C.2.). In the department's Applied Studies concentration those ratios appear reversed with 60% of the curriculum theatre content and 40% general studies.

It was reported that the CSU system has not approved new Bachelor of Fine Arts programs. It appears, that the department has developed credit rich Bachelor of Arts programs that are quite close in the distribution of course work and practical learning experiences to Bachelor of Fine Arts programs, with the exceptions that there are no auditions, juries or assurance of advance performance or production opportunities.

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The title of the concentration was changed in 2010 from “Liberal Studies” to “Applied Studies” in an effort to make it more appealing. The visitors acknowledge that “Applied Studies” is perhaps more appropriate than “Liberal Studies” given the credit-rich content of the program and the department’s stated purpose for the degree “to train and produce a well-rounded practitioner, fully involved in the activities of the unit, who is able to communicate and analyze clearly, and with acuity, regarding the core elements, which compromise the collective experience of the art form” (Self-Study 38). The visitors note that the NAST Directory lists the concentration as “General” which is an accurate description of the program’s content in comparison to the different areas of emphases featured in the “Specialized Studies” concentration.
- (4) **Student Work** –The visitors observed student work across all degree programs in a variety of classes (Acting, Voice and Movement, Stagecraft, World Theatre, etc.) and in the productions of *Don’t Dress for Dinner*, *Into the Woods*, and *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*. The productions were excellent demonstration of university theatre. Student actors, individually and as part of larger ensembles, created believable, engaging and compelling characters that they sustained throughout the performances. The caliber of design, technical and production work was uniformly high. The department is committed to providing performing opportunities for its Bachelor of Arts students who might not be cast in main stage productions but can participate in the Bachelor of Arts Showcase, workshops and directing scenes. Classroom observations provided evidence of student engagement and learning.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** –The department appears to be attentive to academic assessment and is engaged in identifying and measuring the development of student learning outcomes for its different degree programs (see Self-Study, 66-69).
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** –The Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Applied Studies) appears to be meeting its stated goals and objectives.

**Degree Title: Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Design and Technical Production)**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.
- (2) **Curriculum** – The curriculum for the Design and Technical Production emphasis in this consists of 64-68 credit hours of required course work in Theatre which includes: 42 credits in lower and upper division core courses (e.g. Art of the Theatre, Acting, Directing, Seminar in Writing, and World Theatre A-C), as well as seven introductory Design/Tech courses (e.g. Stage Craft, Makeup, Costume Design, Scene Design, Lighting Design, Drafting CAD, and Audio Techniques ), 17 credits in adviser-approved, upper division Design/Tech electives, and 8-12 credit of performance/production practicum (THTR 478B 2 credits) that is repeated six times for native students and four times for transfers. The 17 credits of upper division Design/Tech courses provide students with the opportunity to select specialized courses in their area of interest. The practicum credits are used to give students specialized production and design assignments (see Self-Study, 45).

It must be noted that the 8-12 credits in THTR 478 B is a “department requirement” that students must complete in addition to the 59 credits that are list in the University Catalog (see [http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=2&pooid=487&returnto=143](http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&pooid=487&returnto=143)). It was reported to the visitors that the 8-12 credits of THTR 478B while required, “are not counted in the overall unit total for degree.” The visitors found this distinction confusing and difficult to discern in the Self-Study, the website and University Catalog. In the Design and Technical Production emphasis the 12 hours of practicum credit fulfill a crucial role in student learning and the development of competencies. It seems ironic to the visitors that this important learning requirement is not counted in the official overall unit total for degree.

The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences in the Design and Technical Production emphasis in the Specialized Studies concentration appears to most closely align with NAST standards for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design/Technology (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IX.B.), rather than a more typical liberal arts program where “the degree focus is breadth of general studies combined with theatre studies and an area of emphasis” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.B.1.b.).

The visitors note that the number of required credit hours in this program exceeds NAST’s standards for liberal arts degrees. The area of emphasis consists approximately of 20% (21 credits) of core theatre studies courses, 40% (51 credits) of Design/Tech courses, and 40% of General Studies classes. This is very close to NAST’s curricular guidelines for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design/Technology, which states “studies in the major area, including basic design and /or technical training, should comprise 30-40% of the total program; supportive courses in theatre, 20-30%; general studies, 25-35%.” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IX.B.1.b.).

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The title Design and Technical Production matches the content of the program and is appropriate for the emphasis. The title of the “Specialized Studies” concentration was coined in 2010 to distinguish it from the “Applied Studies” (formerly Liberal Studies) concentration. It appears that the other “concentrations” in the Bachelor of Arts program as published in the institution’s NAST Directory listing (e.g. Design and Technical Production, Directing, Playwriting, Theatre Teaching) became “emphases” when the Bachelor of Arts was retitled and restructured in 2010.
- (4) **Student Work** –The visitors observed student work for the Design and Technical Production emphasis in several classes (Stagecraft, Makeup, Costume Design, Audio Techniques) and in the productions of *Don’t Dress for Dinner*, *Into the Woods*, and *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*. The productions were excellent demonstrations of university theatre. The caliber of design, technical and production work was uniformly high and competitive with student work in Bachelor of Fine Arts Design and Technical production programs the visitors are familiar with. Classroom observations provided evidence of student engagement and learning. Graduates of the program have been successful in securing admission to graduate programs and professional employment.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** –Learning is sequential in the Design and Technical Production emphasis, which allows for intensive, targeted, practical and theoretical study in the different disciplines. The development of competencies is achieved through the completion of classroom projects in specialized classes and culminates in realized work and production assignments that are part of the production season. The program does not have

formal portfolio reviews for its undergraduate students but some are invited to participate in end of semester portfolio reviews and critiques with Master of Fine Arts students (Self-Study 45).

- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** –The Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Specialized Studies: Design and Technical Production) appears to be meeting its stated goals and objectives.

**Degree Title: Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Directing)**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.
- (2) **Curriculum** – The curriculum consists of 68-72 credit hours of required course work in Theatre which includes: 57 credits in lower and upper division core courses (e.g. Art of Theatre, Introduction to Oral Communication, Stage Craft or Intro to Costume Design, Design for Theatre, Makeup, Stage Management, World Theatre A-C, etc.) as well as performance courses (e.g. Acting I and II, Voice/Movement A-B, Directing and Advanced Directing A-B, etc.), 3 “elective” credits in Directing/Acting for the Camera, and 8-12 credits credit hour of performance/production practicum (THTR 478B 2 credits) that is repeated six times for native students and four times for transfers.

It must be noted that the 8-12 credits in THTR 478 B is a “department requirement” that students must complete in addition to the 59 credits that are list in the University Catalog (see [http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=2&pooid=487&returnto=143](http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&pooid=487&returnto=143)). It was reported to the visitors that the 8-12 credits of THTR 478B while required, “are not counted in the overall unit total for degree.” The visitors found this distinction confusing and difficult to discern in the Self-Study, the website and University Catalog. In the Directing emphasis, the 12 hours of practicum credit fulfill a crucial role in student learning and the development of competencies. It seems ironic to the visitors that this important learning requirement is not counted in the official overall unit total for degree.

The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences in the Directing emphasis appear to address NAST’s standards for pre-professional studies in directing (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation XI.A.; Appendix 1.D.). The purpose of the program is to prepare students “to advance to graduate study or to entry-level positions in the professional theatre” (Self-Study 42). The visitors note that the number of required credit hours in this program exceeds NAST’s standards for liberal arts degrees, which “focus on theatre in the context of a broad program of general studies” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.b.(1)). Rather, this credit-rich BA program appears to provide a broad education in theatre that is professionally focused on the development of directors and supported by a program in general studies. Normally, liberal arts degrees require between 30-45% theatre content and 50-70% in general studies (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.C.2.a.).

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The title Directing matches the content of the program and is appropriate for the emphasis.
- (4) **Student Work** –The visitors observed student work across all degree programs, in a variety of classes (Acting, Voice and Movement, Stagecraft, World Theatre, etc.) and in the productions of *Don’t Dress for Dinner*, *Into the Woods*, and *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*. The productions were excellent demonstration of university theatre. Student actors, individually and as part of larger ensembles, created believable, engaging and

compelling characters that they sustained throughout the performances. The caliber of design, technical and production work was uniformly high. The core component of the Directing emphasis is the completion of four semesters of directing classes, which includes the presentation of many scenes and texts. The final class culminates in the public presentation of original one act plays. Classroom observation of the first Directing class provided evidence of student engagement and learning.

- (5) **Development of Competencies** –Learning is sequential in the Directing emphasis and is reflected in the development and assessment of competencies as students move through the curriculum. The small size of the program, its alignment with the Master of Fine Arts program, and the mentoring students receive from the Head of Directing appear to ensure the development of competencies.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** –The Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Specialized Studies: Directing) appears to be meeting its stated goals and objectives.

**Degree Title: Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Playwriting)**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.
- (2) **Curriculum** – The curriculum consists of 60-64 credit hours of required course work in Theatre which includes: 52 credits in lower and upper division core courses (e.g. Art of Theatre, Introduction to Oral Communication, Acting, Stage Craft or Intro to Costume Design, Lighting Design, Stage Management, Directing A-B, World Theatre A-E, etc.), 9 credits in Seminar in Playwriting, Advanced Playwriting, and Seminar in Critical Techniques, 6 credits in adviser-approved Theatre electives (e.g. Theatre and Cultural Diversity, Theatre Management, Drama into Film, Dance and Cultural Diversity) and 8-12 credits credit hour of performance/production practicum (THTR 478B 2 credits) that is repeated six times for native students and four times for transfers.

It must be noted that the 8-12 credits in THTR 478 B is a “department requirement” that students must complete in addition to the 59 credits that are list in the University Catalog (see [http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=2&poiid=487&returnto=143](http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&poiid=487&returnto=143)). It was reported to the visitors that the 8-12 credits of THTR 478B while required, “are not counted in the overall unit total for degree.” The visitors found this distinction confusing and difficult to discern in the Self-Study, the website and University Catalog.

The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences appear to address all of NAST’s Essential Content and Competencies for Liberal Arts Degrees (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.D.). The number of required credit hours in this program exceeds NAST’s standards for liberal arts degrees which “focus on theatre in the context of a broad program of general studies” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.b.(1)). Rather, this credit-rich BA program appears to provide a broad education in theatre that is supported by a program in general studies. Normally, liberal arts degrees require between 30-45% theatre content and 50-70% in general studies (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.C.2.a).

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The title Playwriting appears to match the content of the program and is appropriate for the emphasis. The visitors note that the emphasis includes just two courses in playwriting (e.g. Seminar in Playwriting and Advanced Playwriting), but recognize how the sequence of courses in World History and Critical Techniques are essential

to the curriculum and courses in acting, directing and design useful adjunct areas (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.C.).

- (4) **Student Work** – There are only a few Playwriting emphasis students in the department and no playwriting courses were being offered during the visit. The visitors were unable to review any student work products unique to the program
- (5) **Development of Competencies** –Overall, the department appears to be attentive to academic assessment and is engaged in identifying and measuring the development of student learning outcomes for its different degree programs but it is unclear how far this initiative has advanced in the Playwriting emphasis.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** –It is unclear if the Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Specialized Studies: Playwriting) is meeting its stated goals and objectives. It was reported during the visit that the part-time faculty who had been directing the program and teaching the two Playwriting courses online, had resigned. The visitors were able to meet with one fifth year Playwriting student who expressed frustration and disappointment with the program. It was explained to the visitors that the Head of Directing, who has a background in new play development, has offered to take over the direction of the program. This could help to stabilize the program in the near-term. NAST standards state that institutions “shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual qualifications enable the theatre unit and the specific educational programs offered to accomplish their purposes” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.E.1.a.(1)). The visitors suggest the department explain its plans for the Playwriting emphasis in its Optional Response.

#### **Degree Title: Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Theatre Teaching)**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.
- (2) **Curriculum** – The curriculum consists of 67-71 credit hours which includes 56 credits of lower and upper division Theatre courses (e.g. Art of Theatre, Voice/Movement, Acting I and II, Stage Craft, Intro to Costume Design, Makeup, Intro to Scene Design, Stage Management, Directing A-B, Seminar in Critical Techniques or Advance College Writing, Lighting Design, Advanced Directing and World Theatre A-E), 3 credits in THTR 402B Teaching Theatre to Secondary Students, and 8-12 credits credit hour of performance/production practicum (THTR 478B 2 credits) that is repeated six times for native students and four times for transfers.

It must be noted that the 8-12 credits in THTR 478 B is a “department requirement” that students must complete in addition to the 59 credits that are list in the University Catalog (see [http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=2&poiid=487&returnto=143](http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&poiid=487&returnto=143)). It was reported to the visitors that the 8-12 credits of THTR 478B while required, “are not counted in the overall unit total for degree.” The visitors found this distinction confusing and difficult to discern in the Self-Study, the website and University Catalog.

The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences appear to address all of NAST’s Essential Content and Competencies for Liberal Arts Degrees (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII. D.). The visitors note that the number of required credit hours in this program exceeds NAST’s standards for liberal arts degrees which “focus on theatre in the context of a broad program of general studies” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.b.1.). Rather, this credit-rich Bachelor of Arts program

appears to provide a broad education in theatre that is supported by a program in general studies. Normally, liberal arts degrees require between 30-45% theatre content and 50-70% in general studies (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation VII.C.2.a.). In the department's Theatre Teaching emphasis 60% of the curriculum is theatre content and 40% devoted to general studies is closer to the curricular structure of a Bachelor of Fine Arts program (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation X.A.1.b.; X.A.2.b.).

California does not credential Theatre as a teaching field. Consequently, students pursuing the Theatre Teaching emphasis with the objective of teaching in the public schools must double-major in English and complete professional education courses and field work in English classrooms as part of the credential program. At the time of the visit the California Legislature was considering a bill to credential Theatre as a teaching field. The department has outlined some of its aspirations for the Theatre Teaching emphasis, if the bill is passed (see Self-Study 31). The visitors suggest that department discuss the status of this legislation and plans for the emphasis as part of their Optional Response.

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – In the University Catalog the emphasis is titled: Theatre Arts, Teaching Concentration (Single Subject). In the Self-Study, “Teaching Emphasis”, “Teaching in Secondary Schools Emphasis”, “BA Theatre Arts Teaching Concentration” are all used as titles for the program. The visitors suggest that the department clarify its titling of this program in its Optional Response. The title “Theatre Teaching”, which is used in the institution’s NAST Directory listing, appears to match the program’s purpose and content.
- (4) **Student Work** – There are only a few Theatre Teaching emphasis students in the department and the visitors were unable to review any student work products unique to the program. The visitors did meet several students who were hoping to pursue the emphasis but “only if they didn’t have to double major in English”.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** – Overall, the department appears to be attentive to academic assessment and is engaged in identifying and measuring the development of student learning outcomes for its different degree programs but it is unclear how far this initiative has advanced in the Theatre Teaching emphasis.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** – It is not clear if the Bachelor of Arts - 4 years: Theatre Arts (Specialized Studies: Theatre Teaching) is meeting its stated goals and objectives. As the Self-Study makes clear, the program is in transition and without full-time faculty to supervise or offer the one teaching course in the department that is part of the emphasis. NAST standards state that institutions “shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual qualifications enable the theatre unit and the specific educational programs offered to accomplish their purposes” (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.E.1.a.(1)).

#### **Degree Title: Bachelor of Fine Arts - 4 years: Musical Theatre**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.
- (2) **Curriculum** – The curriculum consists of 88-92 credit hours which includes 76 credits in appropriate Theatre, Dance and Music classes that include core Theatre courses (e.g. Intro to Stagecraft or Costume Design, Makeup, Directing, Seminar in Critical Writing, World Theatre), and classes intended to develop specific skills and competencies in acting, voice/movement, music and dance. Students select 2 credits from a list of additional dance,

kinesiology or practicum courses, and complete 14 performance/practicum credits. Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees at CSUF are expected to have a minimum of 132 credits; the Musical Theatre program apparently requires 148 (see Self-Study, A.1. Credit Hour Classification).

The curriculum “is designed to prepare the student for a career as a professional Musical Theatre artist, and focuses on developing skills in the areas of acting, singing, dancing, auditioning and performance” (website). The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences in the curriculum appear to address all NAST standards for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IX.D.).

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The degree is appropriately titled.
- (4) **Student Work** – The performance work of Musical Theatre students was observed in the production of *Into the Woods* and in THTR 236B Fundamentals of Musical Theatre. Student actors, individually and as part of a larger ensemble, created believable, engaging and compelling characters that they sustained throughout the performance. The quality of the singing and movement work was outstanding and showcased the skills and techniques students are learning. The Musical Theatre track (pre-admission) students in THTR 236B were performing/developing songs for use in auditions. The coaching and critiques provided by the instructor, teaching assistants (three senior Musical Theatre majors) and the class were insightful and encouraged learning.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** – Admission to the program is limited and controlled through an audition process that occurs at the end of the student’s sophomore year. Initially, students are admitted to the BA program and take the Musical Theatre Track of introductory core courses. Learning is sequential in the curriculum and the development of competencies is assessed through 1) success in the classroom and performance program, and 2) juries that periodically evaluate student development. The small size of the program and the attention students receive from the Musical Theatre faculty appear to ensure the development of competencies.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** – The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre appears to be meeting its stated goals and objectives. Graduates from the program have been successful in working professionally. The program appears to meet all NAST standards for Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IX.D.).

**Degree Title: Bachelor of Fine Arts - 4 years: Acting**

- (1) **Status** – The department is seeking Final Approval for Listing.
- (2) **Curriculum** – The curriculum consists of 90-94 credit hours which include 74 credits in a combination of core Theatre classes (e.g. Art of the Theatre, Makeup, Directing, Critical Writing, World Theatre A-C) and Acting classes (e.g. Acting I-IV A-B, Voice and Movement I-III A-B, Oral Interpretation of Shakespeare, Audition, Acting for the Camera, Acting Workshop), 6 credits of Theatre electives selected from introductory Design/Tech classes (one course from the following: Intro to Stagecraft, Costume, Scenic, Lighting and Audio Technique.) and other core classes (one course from the following: Theatre and Cultural Diversity, Theatre Management, Playwriting and Drama into Film), and complete 14 performance/practicum credits. Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees at CSUF are expected to have a

minimum of 132 credits; the Acting program apparently requires 148 (see Self-Study, A.1. Credit Hour Classification).

The curriculum “is designed to prepare the student for a career as a professional actor, and focuses on developing skills in the areas of acting, auditioning and performance” (website).

The distribution of course work and practical learning experiences appear to address all NAST standards for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IX.A.).

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The degree is appropriately titled.
- (4) **Student Work** – The visitors observed student work in a variety of classes (Acting I, Acting IV, Acting for the Camera, Voice and Movement) and in the productions of *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Into the Woods*, and *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*. The productions were excellent demonstration of university theatre. Student actors, individually and as part of larger ensembles, created believable, engaging and compelling characters that they sustained throughout the performances. Classroom observations provided ample evidence of student engagement and learning.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** – Admission to the program is limited and controlled through an audition process that occurs at the end of the student's sophomore year. Initially, students are admitted to the Bachelor of Arts program and take the Acting Track of introductory core courses. Learning is sequential in the curriculum and the development of competencies is assessed through 1) success in the classroom and performance program, and 2) juries that periodically evaluate student development. The small size of the program and the mentoring students receive from the Performance faculty appear to ensure the development of competencies.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** – The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting appears to be meeting its stated goals and objectives. Graduates from the program have been successful in working professionally. It appears to meet all NAST standards for Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting (NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IX.A.).

#### Graduate Programs

##### **Degree Title: Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Arts - Acting**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing
- (2) **Curriculum** – The institution appears to comply with NAST standards regarding specific terminal degrees (see NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation XV.A.; B.1.). Studies in advance, analytically- or academically-oriented theatre studies appear to occupy only 10% of the degree program, however additionally desired work in this area is possible with selected elective course work.
- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The degree is appropriately titled.
- (4) **Student Work** – Student work in both classroom observations and in sampled productions exhibited appropriate levels of acting knowledge and skills in the creation and presentation of

roles. Reviewed “Project Books” also support the quality of the level of instruction in the program.

- (5) **Development of Competencies** – A consistent pattern of juried reviews assist in providing specific evaluation of individual progress and help to establish future developmental goals for each student.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** –The curriculum appears to be effective in relation to the stated goals and objectives. The combination of graduate student casting with an assured mainstage role every semester and the rigorous classroom studio time exploring acting, directing, voice, and movement techniques appears to provide effective delivery of the published Master of Fine Arts curriculum. Post-graduation student success is also a metric that supports the overall effectiveness of the program.

#### **Degree Title: Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Arts – Design and Technical Production**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing
- (2) **Curriculum** – The institution appears to comply with NAST standards regarding specific terminal degrees (see NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation XV.A.; B.4.). The degree program is marketed with specific tracks aligned with student interest in becoming a lighting designer, scenic designer, costume designer, or technical director. In addition, a secondary area of interest may also be accommodated.
- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The degree is appropriately titled.
- (4) **Student Work** – Student work in both classroom observations and in sampled productions exhibited appropriate levels of design and technical production. Reviewed “Project Books” also support the quality of the level of instruction in the program.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** – The range of production performance spaces combined with well-equipped laboratories in scenery, costume, lighting, and technical production undergird the ability for the Master of Fine Arts student in this area of study to achieve multiple competencies. The overall production operation is modeled after a successful regional theatre company providing students with a level of professional competency in an environment where risks are encouraged and faculty and staff support are provided.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** – The curriculum appears to be effective in relation to the stated goals and objectives. The combination of the extensive production program in multiple venues and the rigorous classroom studio time exploring production techniques appears to provide effective delivery of the published Master of Fine Arts curriculum. Post-graduation student success is also a metric that supports the overall effectiveness of the program.

#### **Degree Title: Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Arts – Directing**

- (1) **Status** – Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing
- (2) **Curriculum** – The institution appears to comply with NAST standards regarding specific terminal degrees (see NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation XV.A.; B.2.). However, the curricular listing provided in the Self-Study lists 20 3 credit courses plus an additional 12 credits of electives, resulting in a 72 credit hour degree program (Self-Study 57). This is at odds with the University Catalogue, which describes the degree as a 60 hour

program with 3 credits of electives  
([http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=2&poid=402](http://catalog.fullerton.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&poid=402)).

The visitors suggest that department explain this discrepancy as part of its Optional Response.

- (3) **Title/Content Consistency** – The degree is appropriately titled.
- (4) **Student Work** – The visitors’ review of Master of Fine Arts Directing “Project Books” support the quality of the level of instruction in the program. No student directed work was observed during the visit but the visitors did observe a Master of Fine Arts graduate student teaching THTR 370 Fundamentals of Directing. The instructor was knowledgeable, articulate and had an excellent rapport with her students. The instructor was skilled in guiding and leading discussion and critique.
- (5) **Development of Competencies** – With the limited admission numbers to the directing program, individual mentoring by directing faculty is possible. As a result, specific plans of study are tailored to the unique needs of each individual student. This program truly exhibits the “guide-by-the-side” approach with multiple production opportunities and a foundation of shared coursework with other graduate programs.
- (6) **Overall Effectiveness** – The curriculum appears to be effective in relation to the stated goals and objectives. The thorough grounding in the multiple competencies necessary to develop advanced understanding and capabilities in play analysis, performance, and design are clearly evidenced by the students in this highly individualized program.

### **3. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalog Statements**

#### **Baccalaureate Programs**

The visitors reviewed an appropriate number of transcripts, onsite, for recent graduates of the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts (Applied Studies) and (Specialized Studies: Design and Technical Production, Directing, Playwriting, Teaching Theatre). The transcripts that were reviewed were in agreement with all published degree requirements.

The visitors reviewed an appropriate number of transcripts, onsite, for recent graduates of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre and the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. The transcripts that were reviewed were in agreement with all published degree requirements.

Three transcripts for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, for which Final Listing is sought, were not included in the Self-Study. The institution is asked to provide three transcripts for recent graduates of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting degree with its Optional Response.

#### **Graduate Programs**

The visitors reviewed an appropriate number of transcripts, onsite, for recent graduates of the Master of Fine Arts programs in Acting, Design and Technical Production, and Directing. The transcripts that were reviewed were in agreement with all published degree requirements.

### **4. Performance**

Public performance is at the center of the department's degree programs. The department produces 9-10 main stage productions (including two dance productions) and 4-6 smaller productions in five different venues. In addition, the department provides more informal performance opportunities such as a bi-weekly Bachelor of Arts showcase, readings of new work, public presentation of culminating scenes, one acts and performance projects developed in advanced acting and directing classes, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Cabaret.

The visitors had the unique opportunity to observe portions of three different productions (*Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Into the Woods*, and *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*) in three different theatres; The Young Theatre, The Little Theatre, and the Grand Central Theatre, respectively. This rare treat enabled an extensive chance to fully experience the production results of the Fullerton program. Each of the three productions observed appeared to appropriately challenge actors and production students alike. All three exhibited a proper level and quality of design support, and the resultant efforts well served the necessary stage story telling. As exemplars of the quality of the Fullerton program, these productions clearly showed the overall success of the students, faculty, and staff of the unit and appeared to align with all NAST standards and theatre unit objectives.

## **5. Theatre Studies in General Education**

The department offers several courses for non-majors including Introduction to the Theatre, Introduction to Dance, Acting for Non-Majors, and Oral Communication in Literature. In addition, some of its upper division courses fulfill upper level General Education requirements. Given the large number of students in the department, the array of general education offerings appear to be adequate.

## **O. Theatre Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

### **1. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections Development**

The Evaluation, Planning and Projections section of the Self-Study provides a reasonable summary of the challenges and opportunities facing the department from the vantage point of the department's chair who wrote the report.

### **2. Completeness and Effectiveness of Self-Study**

The Self-Study was generally clear and complete, providing sufficient information for the visit. Requests for additional information were handled expeditiously. As stated earlier, the Self-Study was written by the chair. The visitors were surprised to discover during the visit that the faculty had not seen the Self-Study. Broader participation by the faculty in the development of the Self-Study could have resulted in a more complete and accurate report. Faculty expressed excitement about their engagement with the current SWOT analytical and planning work that is underway. The visitors suggest that the chair distribute the Self-Study and the Visitors' Report to the faculty and engage them in a full review and discussion of both documents in preparation for writing the Optional Response.

## **P. Standards Summary**

1. It is not clear that information in the department's publications and on its website is in agreement with the University Catalog (see Visitors' Report item A. and item I., see NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Code of Ethics, Article II, Section 3, and Standards for Accreditation II.H.1.a.; II.I.1.a.).

2. It is not clear if the institution has definitions for what constitutes a concentration or emphasis (see Visitors' Report item H. 1., and NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.2.d.).
3. It is not clear if the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Studies and Specialized Studies with emphases in Design and Technical Production, Directing, Playwriting, Theatre Teaching are liberal arts or professional degree programs (see Visitors' Report item N. 2, and NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation IV.C.).
4. It is not clear if the Bachelor of Arts in Specialized Studies: Playwriting has sufficient faculty to supervise the program (see Visitors' Report N. 2, and NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.E.1.a.(1)).
5. It is not clear if the Bachelor of Arts in Specialized Studies: Teaching Theatre has sufficient faculty to supervise the program (see Visitors' Report N. 2, and NAST *Handbook 2016-17*, Standards for Accreditation II.E.1.a.(1)).

## **Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program**

### **1. Strengths**

- A dedicated, committed, professionally active, student-centered faculty.
- A dedicated, committed, hardworking, student-centered staff.
- A large, vibrant and successful production program that provides substantial performance opportunities for students and significant financial support for the department.
- Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts programs with strong curriculum and success in producing professionally active graduates.
- A tradition of prudent fiscal management and effective administrative leadership.
- A successful undergraduate recruitment program and strong enrollments.
- Spacious, well equipped and effectively organized facilities and performance spaces.
- The Grand Central Art Center (GCAC) located in the city of Santa Ana which is a unique partnership between the City and University and includes a theatre.
- A supportive administration that clearly values and recognizes the significant contributions the department makes to the campus and community.

### **2. Recommendations for Short-Term Improvement**

- Engage the faculty in a comprehensive review and discussion of the Self-Study and Visitors' Report and in the development of the Optional Response.
- Update the department's publications and website.

- Investigate ways to increase funding for the graduate program and make assistantships more competitive.
- Ensure appropriate faculty support for the Bachelor of Arts in Specialized Studies emphases in Playwriting and Teaching Theatre. Carefully consider the future of these emphases in relationship to other programs and priorities.

### **3. Primary Futures Issues**

- Plan for upcoming faculty retirements.
- Investigate campus and system-wide limitations on undergraduate degree offering structures to either confirm the current Bachelor of Arts options (as modified based on this report) or enable undergraduate curricular changes shifting toward Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees to better align with national practices.
- Consider a reduction in curricular offerings to assure the critical mass of faculty and staff to fully support each degree program.
- Identify faculty administrative skills to develop greater options for leadership positions within the department, effectively developing a leadership succession plan.

### **4. Suggestions for Long-Term Development**

- Consider the financial and strategic viability of the graduate degree programs in comparison to both regional and national competitors.
- Capitalize even more on the unique Grand Central Arts Center opportunities for community outreach and engagement.
- Develop marketing tools that feature the success of former students through intentional and increased contact with theatre alumni.
- Partner with the enthusiastic new Dean to develop unique programmatic opportunities through greater collaboration with other college and university units.