

Implementation Plan

1. Cover memo

Department of Theatre Year of appraisal 2016

To: Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
From: Faculty Dean
Faculty of: Fine Arts
Date: November 14, 2016

Please find enclosed the finalized Implementation Plan for the Department cited above as part of the academic program appraisals process. This Plan was duly discussed with:

- The Department Chair
- The Dean of Graduate Studies (if applicable)

As mentioned in the Concordia University Academic Program Appraisals Manual, 5th edition revised, the Faculty and Department will follow-up on this Plan in two years, when prompted by your office.

Sincerely,

Faculty Dean's name Rebecca Duclos

Faculty Dean's signature 

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2. Summary

The Department of Theatre seeks to inspire and prepare students to enter Canada's rapidly evolving performing arts culture. The department values creativity, imagination, and critical, analytical, and entrepreneurial thinking. Throughout the course of the appraisal process, the department has been in the midst of significant transition and has invested extensive time and effort into the planning and preparation for launching new program structures and curriculum.

These programs combine hands-on, practical learning with rigorous historical, critical, and theoretical studies. The Design for the Theatre program (60 credits) invites students to become actively involved in the complex process of conceiving, communicating and realizing the visual framework for theatrical works. The Performance Creation program (60 credits) provides an introduction to many aspects of theatre, from writing, directing, dramaturgy and socially engaged and community-engaged practices, to exploring the possibilities of creating work in an ensemble. The Specialization in Acting for the Theatre (60 credits) offers a strong and challenging education that aims at training performers who can adapt to the many shapes that theatre and live performance can take today. Students in the program are trained to become both actors and creators who can contribute to an artistic production on several levels. The Minor in Theatre (24 credits) is designed to be a general introduction to the field. The Minor may be combined with a non-Theatre Major or Specialization.

Departmental strengths include faculty with solid research and creation records, strong student satisfaction, as well as consistent and solid application and enrolment numbers. The expertise and commitment of the production staff, specialists who support the public events and practical applications of these educational programs, is commendable. Similarly, the ingenuity of the administrative staff as they grapple with the issue of meeting complex department needs is praiseworthy. The department as a whole has expressed an optimistic vision through the configuration of a new undergraduate program that plays to existing strengths and circumstances. This collaborative spirit will enhance the department's resilience through the implementation phase of the appraisal process.

There appear to be strong opportunities to blend creative and critical research within the department's innovative curriculum. This is already ongoing. The new curriculum should enhance opportunities to build and acknowledge these links, allowing for a more porous relationship between curriculum and research. In a time when interdisciplinary research is being promoted in universities, the field of theatre and performance studies remains grounded in cross-discipline problem-solving, bridging conceptual and embodied action; theatre-makers and researchers work across disciplines of visual art, performance, cultural studies, design, creative writing, and more.

Key Recommendations

In order to build on the department's strengths and to address some of the challenges, and as an accompaniment to the recommendations made by the DAC, the EE, and the UAC, the dean's office

offers specific Faculty recommendations. Key points are outlined below – and all are outlined in the table on the following pages.

The department has been encouraged to create a five-year succession plan for program stewardship and departmental leadership, in the context of the approaching period of full-time faculty turnover and renewal, discussions around the MFA in Performance Creation and the university's strategic directions. It is important that the department take the time to ensure equitable and reasonable distribution of work of administrative work. The dean's office will support collaboration with faculty members from other Fine Arts departments who might have useful input.

In sum, the appraisal reports recommend the review of many of the structures in place in the performing arts area. These include the administrative structures and the organization of technical and production staff supporting the three performing arts departments, as well as a review of the access policies and the cost structure in the performance spaces. While no specific resource implications have been noted, the reviews will require input from many members of the Fine Arts community including associate deans, the chairs of the departments, faculty members, staff and technicians. This review should factor in any changes in the use of facilities and production staff as the result of the new curriculum. The reviews will be coordinated at the dean's office level, and may include support in the form of facilitators from the internal or external community.

There are two recommendations regarding the department's curriculum. One: that work be done to maintain the importance of the Theatre and Development legacy within the Performance Creation program. As this former specialization was an important contributor to the department's identity and reputation, its thread should be retained across all programs. Work should be undertaken to define its legacy more clearly within the context of current expertise within performance creation. Two: that the work on the MFA in Performance Creation be continued, so long as it does not take away from efforts to stabilize the current three undergraduate programs. The MFA has the potential to meaningfully enhance the undergraduate curriculum and to further link the department to Montreal's vibrant performing arts landscape.

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3. Recommendations

The Faculty Dean is invited to include a numbered list of recommendations for improvement, as well as a rationale and implementation schedule (an Excel spreadsheet is also available by request to the Appraisal Coordinator).

Recommendations	Prioritized timeline for completion	Responsibility	Dean's comments and resource implications
<p>1. The department is facing a period of full-time faculty turnover and renewal. As stated in both the DAC and External Evaluator reports, it is important that the department make a five-year succession plan for program stewardship and departmental leadership, taking into consideration which programs and curricular initiatives are both fair and feasible to maintain in light of departures and expected sabbaticals, while also ensuring diversity, LGBTQ representation, and gender balance. The succession plan should include: scenarios for both short and long-term faculty hiring; and the division of labour associated with program stewardship.</p> <p>Rationale: Immediate confirmed retirements combined with the first year's implementation of new curriculum make assessment and a plan for leadership critical. The department should take the time to assure equitable and reasonable distribution of program stewardship and departmental leadership given that full-time capacity is likely to be reduced in the near future.</p>	Fall 2016 - Spring 2017	Full-time faculty; Department Chair; Department Administrator; Department administrative staff; Dean's office Director of Administration; Faculty dean	
<p>2. A plan should also be made for faculty service workload associated with production, other special projects or extracurricular activities, as well as any additional workload associated with the new curriculum.</p>	Fall 2016 – Spring 2017	Department Chair, Department Administrator, Dean's office Director of	

	Administration as needed		
<p>Rationale: There is an opportunity with the new curriculum and the VRP to seek clarity and increased effectiveness in the distribution of administrative work in the department.</p>			
<p>3.</p> <p>a. There should be a review of the administrative structure supporting the three Performing Arts departments, using the staffing structure of comparable multidisciplinary performing arts units at other institutions as a benchmark, as recommended by the UAC and External Evaluators. The dean's office will work to support the collaboration between the three departments.</p> <p>b. This review should cover an assessment of current staff job descriptions and the division of labour, particularly as relates to the new curriculum and productions.</p> <p>c. This review should also cover any possibilities for creative scheduling in the performance spaces shared by the three performing arts departments. Perhaps including weekends, intensives, or blended approaches.</p>	<p>Department Administrator; Chairs of Theatre, Music, and Contemporary Dance; Director of Administration, Office of the Dean.</p>	<p>Winter / Spring, 2017</p>	
<p>Rationale: Administrative support has been identified as a priority issue by the DAC reports and External Evaluators for the departments of Theatre, Music, and Contemporary Dance.</p>			
<p>4. There should be a review of the technical and production staff supporting the three Performing Arts departments, including a review of job descriptions and comparisons of the staffing structure of performing arts departments at other institutions as a benchmark, as recommended by the UAC and External Evaluators. This should be done in conjunction with other recommendations, above, and factoring in any changes in use of facilities and production staff during the implementation of the new curriculum. The dean's office will</p>	<p>The Associate Dean, and Manager, Planning and Academic Facilities; Director of Performance Production; Director of Administration;</p>	<p>Winter / Spring, 2017</p>	

<p>work to support the collaboration between the three departments</p>		<p>Chairs of Music, Theatre, Dance.</p>	
<p>Rationale: A review of production support staff and space use has been identified as a priority issue by the DAC reports and External Evaluators for the departments of Theatre, Music, and Contemporary Dance.</p>			
<p>5. There should be a review of access policies and the cost structure regarding the university's performance spaces, as well as any associated health and safety concerns, given the pedagogical necessity of working in spaces designed for performance. This review should include consideration of future curricular expansion by the addition of an MFA in Performance Creation. The dean's office will work to support the collaboration between the three departments</p>	<p>Winter / Spring, 2017</p>	<p>Department Administrator; Director of Performance Production; Associate Dean, Facilities; Manager, Facilities & Planning; Chairs of Theatre, Music, and Contemporary Dance</p>	
<p>Rationale: The department is burdened by the high cost of working in spaces dedicated to public performance that are also designated as profit-making venues for the university. Working in found spaces off-campus or in classrooms, while valuable, may not always be pedagogically appropriate or a cost efficient solution.</p>			
<p>6. The department is encouraged to continue to work on development of an MFA in Performance Creation, in collaboration with the Departments of Music and Contemporary Dance. Following the recommendation of the UAC, the department should prioritize simplifying and stabilizing the current three undergraduate programs.</p>	<p>Fall 2016 – Winter 2017</p>	<p>Chair & Members, MFA Committee (Theatre, Music, Contemporary Dance); Associate Dean, Academic Affairs; Facilitator, Academic Affairs</p>	

<p>Rationale: An MFA program should be designed to take realistic advantage of existing teaching and classroom resources, potentially by alternating intensive periods of in-residence collaboration with periods of independent work at a distance. An MFA cohort will enhance the undergraduate curriculum via production work and providing teaching opportunities.</p>			
<p>7. The department should ensure that the thread of social and community engagement of the now-retired Theatre and Development Specialization remains present across all programs in the new Performance Creation Specialization, given that this area has been a distinguishing strength and an important piece of the department's reputation. Revisions may be required in the department's communications and advertising.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Department Chair; Fine Arts Communications Advisor; Performance Creation area head</p>	
<p>Rationale: The external evaluators were particularly concerned that this unique aspect of the department's curriculum might be rendered less visible when folded into the more general program name.</p>			
<p>8. The department should work with the office of the dean to review and if necessary redesign the financial structure for the department.</p>		<p>Department Chair, Department Administrator, Office of the Dean Director of Administration, Financial and Planning Officer</p>	
<p>Rationale: The department should be maximizing the resources available to it. Given the recent curriculum changes, the VRP, in addition to the other recommendations, this is a good time to look for opportunities to save or reallocate the budget.</p>			