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## Theatre, Dance and Motion Pictures Academic Program Review, 2014

Wright State University College of Liberal Arts

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College: Liberal Arts

Department: Theatre, Dance and Motion Pictures

Academic Programs Reviewed:

- 1) Acting (Acting and Musical Theatre Emphases)
- 2) Dance
- 3) Design and Technology
- 4) Motion Pictures
- 5) Theatre Studies

Program Review Committee

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Bruce Cromer	Professor; Head of Acting
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Nicole Richter	Professor and Coordinator, Motion Pictures

Submitted: January 15, 2015

Department Chair, W. Stuart McDowell

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Dean, Kristin Sobolik

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## Program 1: BFA Acting/Musical Theatre

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BFA Acting

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	149	122	72	55	67
Graduates	25	8	10	11	7

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BFA Acting (Musical Theatre)

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	6	10	41	40	34
Graduates	2	9	10	6	6

### Program description

Wright State University's Acting and Musical Theatre Programs are administered through the BFA Acting Degree, as the two options students can select as they prepare for professional careers in stage, film, television and other performing careers. The Professional Actor Training Program (PATP) is a highly selective degree which prepares students with rigorous study of acting, singing, dance, theory and other related courses developed to offer both foundational skills and a contemporary awareness of the current state of their art. The two degree paths share approximately 50% of their core curriculum, with the remaining 50% focusing on either Acting or Musical Theatre specific courses.

### Alignment with university mission, strategic plan

BFA Acting/Musical Theatre programs are designed to prepare students for success through high-quality theory, practice and performance opportunities. Faculty are internationally recognized as experts in their fields and present performance and scholarly work at major regional, national and international theatres, conferences and institutions. Our students and faculty are closely integrated with the regional artistic community, providing service and artistic contributions that stimulate our local economic and cultural climate.

The BFA Acting/Musical Theatre programs align with Mission Goals in the following ways:

Goal One: Academic Quality and Program Distinctiveness – They are demonstrably excellent, as demonstrated by long-term student success and faculty achievement.

Goal Two: Student Access and Educational Attainment – We seek and increasingly attract diverse student populations through targeted recruiting at nationally recognized performing arts high schools that serve these students. We seek to retain and aid these students with both peer and faculty mentorship.

Goal Three: Research and Innovation - We have developed regional and national relationships with professional theatres to enhance both student and faculty artistic opportunities for creative scholarship and professional development. Wright State University's new Musical Theatre Initiative is specifically focused on building regional, national and international scholarly and professional ties through innovative programming, conferences and events.

Goal Four: Community and Economic Development – We enhance Wright State University’s presence in regional and national cultural institutions through high-quality and visible engagement by faculty, alumni and students with educational and artistic institutions.

Goal Five: Essential Resources – We generate increased revenue through the creation of high-quality artistic productions on our stages and through the recruitment of excellent in-state and out-of-state students.

#### **Program distinctiveness**

- WSU’s BFA Acting/Musical Theatre programs offer rigorous integrated professional training in all facets of stage and screen performance
- Students are required to study and engage in diverse performance experiences (contemporary and classical plays, musicals and on-screen)
- Programs are highly integrated with Dance, Motion Pictures, Acting and Musical Theatre working synergistically to offer students maximum opportunities for artistic and professional development
- Programs have strong affiliations with a number of national professional theatres, including: The Human Race Theatre Company, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, West Virginia Public Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse In The Park, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, Short North Stage, and others.
- Highly selective admission; approximately 5% of applicants are admitted annually.

#### **Recognitions of quality of the program**

- 70-85% of graduated Acting/Musical Theatre majors gain professional employment within six months of graduation.
- Faculty members have received more than three dozen university and regional citations for excellence in teaching and creative scholarship since last program review.
- Faculty members are sought as directors, choreographers, master teachers and actors in New York City, London and at major regional theatres and institutions of higher learning.
- Faculty members have written two textbooks that have now become the standard in their fields on Acting and Directing musicals.
- Faculty members are frequent contributors to major national journals in the field of Theatre Education (Teaching Theatre Journal and Dramatics Magazine) and serve as promotion, program and publication reviewers for national and international institutions and publishers.

#### **Program learning outcomes**

- a. Graduates will be able to master professional audition skills.
- b. Graduates will be able to perform in a variety of roles in WSU productions.
- c. Graduates will be able to master artistic and technical skills necessary to pursue acting as a profession.
- d. Graduates will be able to demonstrate knowledge of theatre history, musical theatre history and literature, and/or dramatic literature (depending on degree emphasis).
- e. Graduates will be able to demonstrate knowledge of current business aspects of the acting profession.

### **Description of learning outcomes assessment program**

- **Measure a:** Students were required to audition for visiting professional casting directors, stage directors, choreographers and music directors 2-3 times annually to receive individual feedback regarding artistic, technical and professional proficiency. As well, graduating seniors participate in professional preparation seminars that specifically address their ability to apply this measure. All students are encouraged to audition for ongoing professional theatrical work in summer theatres. Faculty members assist students in preparation for these auditions and monitor results to better prepare the individual student and address overall program effectiveness.
- **Measure b:** All graduating seniors have successfully rehearsed and performed at least one major role, in many cases more than one. All participated in several official department productions (major and minor roles, artistic staff, crew members), as well as numerous student-produced works. More than half also performed in at least one professional theatrical production prior to graduation.
- **Measure c:** All graduating seniors were assessed through formal evaluation in their capstone Acting courses. All first and second year students are evaluated through formal singing, dance and acting juries.
- **Measure d:** All graduating seniors successfully completed either Theatre History and Literature I and II, or History and Literature of the Musical Theatre I and II.
- **Measure e:** All graduating seniors were required to successfully prepare a portfolio of professionally proficient audition monologues and songs, have professional promotional materials and successfully complete a formal professional preparation course designed for either the Acting or Musical Theatre emphasis.

Other measurement instruments:

Faculty members conduct ongoing post-graduation assessment of the effectiveness of our training through alumni interviews and internet surveys. These findings allow us to maintain contact and conduct effectiveness measurement with alumni from as much as twenty-five years ago.

Annual alumni gatherings in New York City and Los Angeles allow us to assess the currency and effectiveness of our training in detail with participating alumni. These comments and suggestions are reported to department administration and appropriate faculty and are employed in the ongoing revision of curriculum.

Professional casting directors, agents, directors and choreographers are interviewed after each visit to Wright State University to assess the competitiveness of students and effectiveness of curriculum.

### **Summary of assessment findings for past five years**

100% of graduating seniors passed the five stated measures.

Based on feedback from visiting professional artists and entertainment industry guests (in Dayton and in New York City), we found that our students are well prepared to begin their careers in Acting and Musical Theatre. The number of students gaining professional industry agent representation within six months of graduation has increased by 30% on average annually since the last five-year review.

Ongoing employment by alumni suggests that WSU's preparation is effective. Last year's graduating class of Acting and Musical Theatre students achieved greater than 70% employment in

theatre related work within 6 months of graduation (many directly upon graduation). Ongoing rates of theatrical employment remain high within five years of graduation, though specific numbers are difficult to maintain due to the sporadic and short-term nature of most entertainment contracts.

Faculty invitations to participate in highly selective international seminars and pre-college training programs have increased substantially.

Acting and Musical Theatre programs have received national recognition by the three major college audition preparation coaches.

For those alumni who choose to redirect their careers, they report that the training they received at WSU has helped them even in non-theatrical professions.

#### **Major curricular changes since last review (or past five years)**

- Addition of 2 *Acting for Camera* courses and new Acting professor with this specialization have expanded the professional competitiveness of our students and raised the stature of our programs.
- Semester conversion has allowed us to refocus training and eliminate redundant or outdated courses.
- We have strengthened the Dance component of the Musical Theatre program through the addition of new upper-level courses and new levels within existing course sequences.
- Newly revised courses in entertainment business preparation require students to develop industry standard internet-based self-promotion materials (website development, video audition samples, etc.). Also, acting, singing and dance courses have been revised to reflect current trends in Musical Theatre and Acting performance.

#### **Graduate placement data, employer satisfaction**

As stated, 70-85% of graduating Acting and Musical Theatre majors achieve professional entertainment employment within 6 months of graduation. Since the last annual assessment, six Acting/Musical Theatre alumni have appeared in Broadway or West End (London) productions, at least one dozen have appeared in first-class National Tours, more than 20 have appeared in major regional productions of plays and musicals, 8 have gained contracts at major themed entertainment centers, and many others are working on cruise ships and in smaller regional theatres. Reports from employers, casting industry professionals and creative staff are uniformly positive, with many stating that Wright State University's reputation for excellent training and professionalism is strong and growing.

#### **If program has professional accreditation, attach most recent review findings and recommendations**

N/A

## Program 2. Dance

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BFA Dance

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	29	37	37	40	39
Graduates	6	3	8	8	8

### Program description

The WSU Dance Program offers a BFA degree that prepares students to become versatile professional dancers, choreographers, and teachers by integrating rigorous studio training and performance experience in ballet, jazz, and modern dance, with additional acting and musical theatre studies. Dance majors hone their technical abilities and creativity through daily ballet classes and specialized training in modern and jazz/theatre dance, perform in dance concerts and musical theatre productions, and create and produce their own choreography for concerts on the mainstage Festival Playhouse. Additional curricula include choreography, kinesiology, pointe, men's class, dance history and dance pedagogy.

### Alignment with university mission, strategic plan

The WSU Dance Program fosters successful graduates by training them in diverse techniques while offering them high quality opportunities to study, perform, and collaborate with regional professional dance companies and national guest choreographers. Our dance graduates are leaders in the community, where they choreograph, teach and perform in all aspects of the arts. In earning a comprehensive Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance and related subjects, the students are thinking critically and engaging in all aspects of university and community dance.

### Program distinctiveness

- Affiliation/Exchange Program with Dayton Ballet: WSU students work as interns/members of second company
- Affiliation/Exchange Program with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company: WSU students work as interns/members of second company
- Comprehensive, versatile training in all three major dance disciplines: ballet, modern and jazz
- Opportunity for dance majors to perform across disciplines such as musical theatre
- Small numbers in class and casting, allowing for all students to perform on the mainstage
- All three faculty members (Justin Gibbs, Gina Walther, and Teressa McWilliams) have professional affiliations with organizations such as Actors Equity Association and 25-plus years of professional work as professional dancers/choreographers/teachers.

### Recognitions of quality of the program

- 80-90% of graduated dance majors are currently working professionally as a dancer, choreographer, or teacher.
- Associate Professor Gina Walther received an excellent, national review from the NY Times for her choreography.

- Associate Professor Gina Walther was offered commissions to choreograph for DCDC and Dayton Ballet's main companies.
- Professor Teresa McWilliams received Outstanding Teaching Award from the College of Liberal Arts and regional critical acclaim for excellence in choreography

### **Program learning outcomes**

- a. Technical proficiency in dance (ballet, modern, and/or jazz), as well as stylistically and artistically versatility.
- b. Competence in the creation and production of choreography.
- c. Knowledge of contemporary dance styles.
- d. Programmatic understanding of the business side of the dance profession and familiarity with employment in regional, national, and international dance venues and graduate opportunities.

### **Description of learning outcomes assessment program**

Measure One: All dance majors audition for and are required to participate in the Wright State University Dance Ensemble concerts, which are evaluated by the faculty choreographers for a Dance Performance course to determine the student's preparation for a career in dance.

Casting depends on technical proficiency in the specific dance style as well artistic sensitivity.

Measure Two: All dance majors undergo a juried final at the end of each quarter. Freshmen and sophomores have a jury panel that consists of the dance faculty and juniors and seniors have a jury panel that consists of the dance faculty plus two outside panelists from the dance community. These dance juries assess ballet, modern, and jazz dance styles and are numerically evaluated. Conferences are held with the dancers to obtain feedback specific to their dance work at the juries.

Measure Three: Dance majors will participate in a senior choreographic dance project which requires students to create an original choreographed work and stage the work on a cast of three or more dancers. Students are responsible for all facets of the work, including music selection, casting, scheduling of rehearsals, and producing the Junior/Senior Concert, in which all pieces are presented. This senior project is adjudicated and evaluated by the dance faculty and one outside adjudicator.

Measure Four: Senior dance majors are required to write a support paper of their senior dance project which includes their stimuli, creative process, casting, rehearsal process, production elements, and recommendations to upcoming seniors. The entire process is evaluated further through their written description.

### **Summary of assessment findings for past five years**

Technical proficiency in dance was found to be very high, as determined by 100% of senior dance majors cast in the faculty Spring Dance Concerts over the five-year period. Degree of proficiency was also determined by the grades of the spring performance course Dan 3990. 95% of all senior dancers performing or understudying in works received A's and 5% received a B; therefore, 100% received acceptably high scores in performance. Findings also supported a high technical proficiency in dance as determined by the dance jury. The results of the dance juries evaluated each year by three dance faculty and two outside adjudicators were that 100% of the senior dance majors received acceptably high scores on all three of their juries throughout the senior year



receiving either an A or B. Indirect measures of technical proficiency are comments of our national guest choreographers and teachers over the five-year measurement. Evaluation of the dance majors and WSU Dance Program was overwhelmingly positive, commenting on their strength, technical prowess, versatility and risk-taking. This evaluation is an impartial validation of the strength of the training and proficiency.

Competence in the creation of choreography was evaluated by grading senior choreographic projects. The result for the past five years was that 100% of the senior dance majors received acceptably high scores on their senior choreographic projects. These scores were determined both by the three dance faculty and one outside adjudicator each year.

100% of seniors achieved high quality of effective communication and writing as determined by high scores in Dance History II and Senior Project II, both Integrated Writing courses.

#### **Major curricular changes since last review (or past five years)**

- Physical Therapy screenings of freshmen by Carol Fisher (Dance Specialist), PT from Kettering Sports Medicine, and ongoing Physical Therapy evaluations with instruction on Pilates equipment.
- Senior Project revised to include Integrated Writing curriculum to effectively write a comprehensive support paper in addition to the choreographic project.
- Dance History II revised curriculum as an Integrated Writing course that effectively trains students in advanced writing skills.
- Dance History, Dance History II, and Dance Kinesiology offered at the freshmen and sophomore level rather than the previous junior and senior level to educate them in these important subjects earlier.
- Guest teachers each semester in advanced jazz class, and the addition of national and international guest artist choreographers each year.
- Juries every semester to evaluate progress.

#### **Graduate placement data, employer satisfaction**

Students are currently:

- 1) Performing on cruise ships, in regional, national, and New York City musical theatre, with the Rockettes, at Disneyworld, in principal roles in national ballet companies, and/or nationally recognized modern and jazz companies
- 2) Teaching in Performing Arts High School programs, and in dance studios across the nation
- 3) Choreographing on regional and national dance studio companies and university dance ensembles.

#### **If program has professional accreditation, attach most recent review findings and recommendations**

N/A

## Program 3. Design and Technology

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BFA Design/Technology

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	31	40	46	52	51
Graduates	7	5	8	8	8

### Program description

WSU's Theatre Design and Technology BFA program prepares students for careers as designers, technicians, or stage managers in the professional theatre. The curriculum consists of general courses in design, drawing, and theatre technology, as well as courses specific to each of our ten concentrations. In addition to traditional classroom learning, our students acquire substantial hands-on training while serving in positions of increasing responsibility on the department's plays, musicals, and dance concerts, both in the Festival and Herbst Theatres.

### Alignment with university mission, strategic plan

The Design and Technology program aligns with the university mission by providing rigorous, high-quality training that prepares our students to succeed professionally and challenges them to work to their fullest potential in their capacities as artists and technicians. We encourage maximum access to our program with a policy of open admission for any student who is accepted into the university. Faculty members have worked for international opera companies, major regional theatre, dance, and opera companies, major concert venues, and at national conferences and schools across the country. Our faculty and staff remain connected to the professional world to remain vital as artists and technicians. They strive to stay current on emerging technologies in the entertainment field, training our students in areas that include automated lighting, computer drafting and graphics, media servers, and digital sound systems.

The creative contributions our current students and alumni make, not only to departmental productions, but to theatre, dance, and opera companies in the region and across the country, positively impact the quality of life for the thousands of audience members who attend those events. Many of our graduates contribute to the region's economy and cultural wealth by choosing to pursue careers in the greater Dayton area; Design/Technology alumni are staff members at the Human Race Theatre Company, the Dayton Opera, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Scenic Solutions, and the Victoria Theatre Association, to name a few.

### Program distinctiveness

- The quality of our physical productions onstage (scenery, lighting, costumes and sound) is far above what most undergraduate programs can accomplish, and often comparable to what is seen in professional regional theatre. This reflects the high standards we expect of our faculty, staff, and students.
- Ongoing professional affiliations with Human Race Theatre Company, Dayton Opera, Scenic Solutions (a professional scenery fabrication studio), Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and the Victoria Theatre Association, among others. These affiliations create numerous opportunities

each year for our students to meet with theatre professionals, learn new technologies, serve in internships, and attain pre- and/or post-graduation employment.

- Our affiliation with IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) Local 66 enables our students to work with the local stagehands' union in loading in and out national tours, performing acts, and sporting events at local venues such as the Nutter Center, Schuster Center, and Victoria Theatre. In addition to providing income, these opportunities expose our students to technology and professional experiences otherwise unavailable to them.

### **Recognitions of quality of the program**

- 80-90% of graduates are working in the professional theatre as designers, technicians, or stage managers, or in closely related fields that make direct use of their BFA training.
- Graduates who choose to pursue a Master of Fine Arts degree are accepted by some of the most prestigious graduate theatre programs in the country.
- The Design/Technology staff received the 2014 President's Award for Excellence (Outstanding Unit)
- Two of the four faculty members are members of United Scenic Artists Local 829 (NY), the selective theatrical designer's union which admits only designers of the highest caliber (through a rigorous exam and/or interview process). The other two are currently applying for membership in USA.
- Faculty members design regularly for local professional theatre, dance, and opera companies, as well as regionally and nationally.
- Faculty members have received awards for the excellence of their theatrical design work from the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival, and from both the regional and national components of USITT (U.S. Institute for Theatre Technology)
- Pam Knauert Lavarney's set designs for WSU productions of *Chess*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Aida* and *Into the Woods* were published in the 2008 and 2013 of *Scene Design and Stage Lighting* (Block and Wolf, Cengage Learning), a widely used theatre design and technology textbook.

- **Program learning outcomes**

Students in Design/Technology/Stage Management (BFA) will demonstrate:

- a. High level of competency and responsibility in one or more areas of theatre design and/or technology and stage management
- b. Competency in key leadership role, such as stage management, designing, or supervising building of mainstage productions.
- c. Proficiency in theatre design, theatre technology, or stage management.
- d. Knowledge of technical theory, application and craft in their area of focus.
- e. Critical thinking and problem solving ability.
- f. Knowledge of theatre history and dramatic literature.
- g. Skills in integrated drawing, drafting, painting, presentation and construction skills, as well as knowledge of computer design.
- h. Pragmatic understanding of the business side of the design/technology profession.

### **Description of learning outcomes assessment program**

- Measure One: By their senior year, D/T students are expected to design studio productions in the Herbst Theatre, and qualified seniors to design mainstage productions in the Festival Playhouse or receive assignments for other theatre companies in the greater-Dayton area. These projects are evaluated by faculty - as well as are sometimes reviewed in the local press and adjudicated by American College Theatre Festival representatives from other universities, all responding to the student's work.
- Measure Two: During the senior year, students in Stage Management will run large scale mainstage productions and musicals, for which they are evaluated by faculty.
- Measure Three: Especially qualified students are encouraged to take an internship at a professional theatre such as the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, for which they are evaluated by professionals in their area of expertise.
- Measure Four: All Design/Technology/Stage Management majors must undergo a portfolio evaluation at the end of each year's study, culminating with a senior portfolio review and presentation, from which evaluation is made by faculty.

### **Summary of assessment findings for past five years**

Approximately 95% of Design/Technology majors passed the annual Portfolio Review, which is one of the primary ways we measure student learning. Passing Portfolio Review means they have done satisfactorily in their classes and have progressed through their training to appropriate levels of accomplishment and responsibility in their production assignments. Feedback from internship supervisors and employers of our graduates, as well as the graduates themselves, confirm that our students are receiving the training they need to be competitive professionally.

Through communication with many of our alumni, it is clear that the vast majority are pursuing successful careers in theatre design and/or technology with nationally recognized companies such as Cirque du Soleil, Blue Man Group, La Jolla Playhouse, the Goodman Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Alley Theatre, Disney, Carnival Cruiselines, and many others. Several are assisting Broadway designers. Recent alums have gone on to top-notch graduate schools such as Yale, University of Texas at Austin, University of Washington, and Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

### **Major curricular changes since last review (or past five years)**

- As part of the process of converting our curriculum to semesters, we examined and compared the curricula of other high-quality BFA Design/Technology programs. As a result, we decided to add two new requirements for all of our students – a general art survey course (ART 2140), and a new course which we developed and are now teaching, Introduction to the Performance Process (TH 1510). This course tailors the teaching of acting and directing concepts to the specific needs of Design/Technology students.
- With the addition of faculty member David J. Castellano in the Stage Management area, we have been able to expand the stage management program so that the requirements for the major are now comparable to those for our other concentrations. Eliminating some courses that were no longer particularly relevant allowed us to develop an upper-level stage management course and an arts administration course, as well as add required courses from outside the department in marketing, non-profit administration, and fund-raising and grant writing. This revision of the stage

management curriculum now enables our students to earn an Arts Management Certificate through CELIA, in addition to preparing them for a wider range of theatre or other arts management careers.

### **Graduate placement data, employer satisfaction**

90-95% of Design/Technology graduates find positions in professional theatre (or related occupations) within 6 months of graduation. Our alumni are currently working on and off Broadway, in regional theatres, on national tours and cruise ships, in professional production houses and top-notch university training programs, for Disney and Cirque du Soleil. Some examples of what some of our Design/Technology alumni are currently doing:

- Joel Shier (2006) - Associate Lighting Designer for the following shows on Broadway: *The Elephant Man*, *If/Then*, *Matilda the Musical*, *Ghost the Musical* and *Godspell*
- Jeremy Cunningham (2011) – Assistant Lighting Designer for the following shows on Broadway: *Kinky Boots*, *Lysistrata Jones*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *Bye, bye, Birdie*, *Finian’s Rainbow*, and *Rent*; Lighting designer for Mercedes fashion Week, NY
- Cameron Holsinger (2004) - First Assistant Stage Manager on national tour of *Once*
- Sarah Hiscott (2006) - Stage Manager for Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas, NV
- Phil Tokarsky (2009) - Studio Manager of the Creative Visual Merchandising Department at Tiffany & Co., NY
- Greg Barrett (2010) - MFA from Parsons School of Design; Marketing Manager for Ketra, Inc., a lighting systems manufacturer in Austin, TX
- Susie Shultz (1996) - Puppet and Animatronics Chief for *Finding Nemo* in the Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL
- Lisa Loen (2006) - MFA from Yale University; freelance costume designer in NY and for regional theatres across the country
- Ross Feilhauer (2003) - Electrician for Broadway shows, including *Beautiful*, *Aladdin* and *Cinderella*
- Natasha Blanchette (2010) – Production Manager of the Holiday Dept. at Botanical Design, a large-scale landscape design company in Seattle, WA
- Christopher Mumaw (2008) – MFA from University of Washington; freelance scene designer in Seattle
- Amanda Stultz (2004) - Technical Director for the Roundhouse Theatre in Bethesda, MD
- Amy Whitaker (2008) - Wig Master/Makeup Artist at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park
- Scott Woxman (2002) - Senior Production Manager at Princess Cruises
- Brian Garber (1998) - Production Manager at SUNY Purchase College in Purchase, NY
- Michelle Fullerton (2000) - Charge Scenic Artist at the Alley Theatre, Houston, TX
- David Russell (1995) - Lead of the Animation Department at Double Fine Productions (videogame design company) in San Francisco, CA

### **If program has professional accreditation, attach most recent review findings and recommendations**

N/A

## Program 4. Motion Pictures

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BFA Motion Pictures

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	61	69	85	83	82
Graduates	8	8	8	6	14

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BA Motion Pictures

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	17	11	21	16	13
Graduates	5	2	7	8	5

### Program description

The Wright State Motion Pictures program offers two degrees. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Motion Picture Production is a highly selective program that gives students in-depth training for professions closely related to film production, while providing opportunities to develop their creativity and study in the film medium. The Bachelor of Arts in Motion Picture History, Theory, and Criticism combines the breadth of a liberal arts education with the specialized appreciation of the aesthetic, social, ideological, and historical aspects of film.

### Alignment with university mission, strategic plan

The Motion Pictures program is well-aligned with the university mission and strategic plan. The program provides a high-quality student experience by providing intense, hands-on filmmaking instruction, and stays on the cutting edge of innovation through our continual embracing of the newest filmmaking technologies. We make films that matter, and focus on using film as a medium to improve quality of life. Our students do that through their rigorous training in documentary and narrative filmmaking, which calls attention to people and issues left out of traditional media. We host Documentary Night and Big Lens, short film festivals where the public sees our student work and participates in dialogue and debate about important social issues. We emphasize the importance of diversity in filmmaking across the curriculum. Our faculty filmmakers are nationally known for making films that matter as well, such as *The Last Truck*, *A Lion in the House*, and *A Long Walk*. *The Last Truck* was one of the first CELIA projects, which demonstrate high-quality, innovative collaborations and further strengthen the reputation of the arts at Wright State. CELIA acts to develop initiatives to enrich the already-remarkable artistic climate in the Dayton region—an important tool for economic development.

Our faculty produces scholarship that calls attention to the need to increase diversity in representations of sexuality, race, gender and ethnicity. We are home to KinoFemme, a women's filmmaking collective that aims to increase the number of women working in the film industry. We also support the economic revitalization of our region by working closely with FilmDayton and community partners to bring film production to the Dayton region, fostering growth of the regional film industry.

## Program distinctiveness

1) Wright State's Motion Pictures program is distinct in its core belief that students benefit as much from film history, theory and criticism courses as they do from film production courses. Numerous other film production programs only require a minimal offering of film history, theory and criticism courses. We are the only film program in Ohio that combines practical hands-on filmmaking training with an emphasis on the theory, history and criticism of film. Wright State Motion Picture alumni regularly cite the significance of a rigorous education in film history and theory. Here are quotes by 3 alumni:

"There are scores of film schools and I've employed many graduates of those programs, big and small. I can honestly say that by and large the Wright State graduates are the best prepared to jump into film production, not just for their technical abilities but for the very same skills that I also acquired while at Wright State."

- *Karri O'Reilly, '94, production supervisor most recently on CAROL, starring Cate Blanchett & Rooney Mara, which filmed in Cincinnati in Spring 2014*
- 

"Knowing how to operate a camera or place a microphone is only a technical exercise without an understanding of the language of cinema. Wright State equips you with that language and the skills to execute it. Being able to critically deconstruct films helps you construct new ones with confidence. I've met many graduates from better-known film schools who don't have anywhere near the knowledge of historical or international cinema that Wright State grads do."

- *Chase Whiteside, '11, whose work has appeared on the BBC, PBS and numerous other websites.*
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"I am incredibly grateful for the tremendous emphasis that the motion pictures faculty puts on becoming educated about the world around us. They make us aware of social and political issues around the globe and challenge us to find our voices in a meaningful way. We are given the tools to become critical thinkers, a skill that transcends film and has made me better prepared to compete in the professional job market and, more importantly, create substance in my work as a writer."

- *Nichol Simmons, '99, Sundance Film Festival award winner and screenwriter*
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2) Our faculty are nationally known for their documentary and narrative film work, as shown through the major grants and multiple Academy Award and Emmy nominations their films have received (as well as awards at several national film festivals). Filmmaker Steve Bogner is an Academy Award nominated, Emmy winning filmmaker whose films have screened worldwide in festivals such as Sundance, Telluride and SXSW, and on network television, including HBO and PBS. New faculty filmmaker Chinonye Chukwu is a recipient of the prestigious Princess Grace Award and Princeton Hodder Fellowship. Her debut feature film, *AlaskaLand*, has been selected to screen globally, including at the Chicago International Film Festival and the New York African Festival at Lincoln Center. The film has been released by New World Distribution and is currently available on iTunes, VOD and other digital and broadcast platforms.

3) Our students have won national and international acclaim and awards in showings at major film festivals, including Cannes Short Film Corner, Sundance, Slamdance, Pan African Film Festival, and Women's Independent Film Festival.

4) A long standing record of excellence, as demonstrated by our recognition as an Ohio Center of Excellence (CELIA) by the Ohio State Assembly. One of the first projects completed under the CELIA umbrella was *The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant*, made by our faculty Steve Bognar and Julia Reichert, which several students and alums also worked on. We have previously been a two-time "Program Excellence" grant winner.

5) The Motion Picture program became officially recognized as 1 of 140 film schools in the country that are qualified to nominate one student for the globally-recognized and renowned Princess Grace Award. This award is given by the Royal Family of Monaco and the Princess Grace Foundation – USA, and recognizes emerging film students with a large cash grant (up to \$30,000) to help catapult their artistic careers.

#### **Recognitions of quality of the program**

1) Recent Film Festival and Awards Success for Student Films:

**PUNCHES & PEDICURES** (Wright State Thesis Film) Team: Ashley Brandon & Dennis Hohne

**Student Academy Award nomination**

World premiere, Slamdance Film Festival

San Jose Cinequest Film Festival

**PAINTED LADY** (Wright State Thesis Film) Team: Brittany Shyne, Cassie Ryan, Jacob Ebel, John

Saylor

Atlanta Film Festival

Pan African Film Festival

Women's Independent Film Festival (winner, Best Director & Best Short Film)

St. Louis International Film Festival

Citizen Jane Film Festival

Denver Starz Film Festival

**PARK** (Wright State Thesis Film) Team: Liz Cambron, Zac Sleeth & Matthew Harris

Slamdance Film Festival

Citizen Jane Film Festival

**THE SULTAN**—Wright State Documentary--Team: Josh Deane and Yasser Souisri

Cannes Film Festival Short Film Corner

**MAPPING THE MIND BETWEEN MOVIES: INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE WORK OF WONG KAR-WAI**—

Peer Reviewed Academic Publication from our BA—Michael Ward—*Bright Lights Film Journal*, May 2011, Issue 72



2) In the last 18 months, Wright State's Motion Pictures program has been featured at least five times in the Dayton Daily News:

Feature article on a Wright State student film receiving a Student Academy Award Nomination  
<http://www.mydaytondailynews.com/news/entertainment/wsu-film-grads-gain-notice-from-academy/ng6zx/>

Roundtable newspaper discussion on violence in games and movies, featuring Dr. Nicole Richter  
<http://www.mydaytondailynews.com/news/news/opinion/are-movies-video-games-and-music-causing-more-bloo/nZRFH/>

Feature article on Wright State Motion Pictures major Aisha Ford  
<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/news/local/linda-vista-program-helped-family-in-need/nfnWb/>

Feature article on a number of Wright State-connected film successes:  
<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/entertainment/movies/local-woman-up-for-oscar/ncqpd/>

Feature article on transmedia web-based documentary project by Wright State Motion Pictures faculty Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert (Emeritus)  
<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/entertainment/movies/reinventing-dayton-on-the-web/nWckh/>

3) Recent Alumni Successes:

Nicole Riegel, screenwriter, was named by *Filmmaker* magazine as among 2014's "25 New Faces of Independent Film," wrote a screenplay that ended up on the coveted film industry *Black List*, and is now writing screenplays for top directors Justin Lin (*Fast & Furious*) and Cary Fukunaga (*True Detective*).

Marco Fagnoli is director of photography and occasional director of the hit FOX comedy *The Mindy Project*, starring Mindy Kaling.

Hannah Beachler was the Production Designer of *Fruitvale Station*, which took both the Grand Jury and Audience awards at Sundance and *Miles Ahead*, the upcoming feature film directed by Don Cheadle, who also stars as Jazz genius Miles Davis.

Chase Whiteside, Erick Stoll and Liz Cambron created New Left Media, a documentary production collective. *IndieWire* called these documentaries "a perfect example of where documentary form and style is headed" and they have received over 7 million views on YouTube.

Alumni Sherman Payne sold a high profile spec script to the producer of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Beautiful* and *Y Tu Mama Tambien*.

Our graduates played key positions on major feature films including Joe Cassano on *12 Years a Slave*; Chance Madison on *The Avengers* and *Captain America: Winter Soldier*; Scott Bowers on *The Dark Knight Rises*, *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *30 Rock*.

Adam White won a regional Emmy for his film on aviation *The Restorers*.

4) The Motion Pictures program became a member of the University Film and Video Association, a nationally renowned collective of prestigious film programs in the world. This membership allows our students to compete for various production grants.

### **Program learning outcomes**

*Students in Motion Pictures Production (BFA) will demonstrate:*

- a) Proficiency in the techniques of motion picture production, including the practice of independent filmmaking.
- b) Understanding of motion pictures history, theory, and criticism, including the concepts of authorship and genre.
- c) Understanding of national and international cinemas.
- d) Knowledge of the trends in the contemporary cinema.
- e) Knowledge of employment and/or graduate school opportunities.

*Students in Motion Pictures History, Theory, and Criticism (BA) will demonstrate:*

- a) Proficiency in writing and scholarly research, along with critical thinking and writing skills
- b) Understanding of motion pictures history, theory, and criticism, including the concepts of authorship and genre.
- c) Understanding of national and international cinemas.
- d) Knowledge of the trends in the contemporary cinema.
- e) Knowledge of employment and/or graduate school opportunities

### **Description of learning outcomes assessment program**

*Direct Measures for Motion Pictures (BFA)*

Measure One: Every BFA student will be evaluated by the entire Motion Pictures faculty at the end of the first year and the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. This evaluation will include a review of the student's film work and writing, as well as include a personal interview.

Measure Two: The thesis project, required of all BFA students, serves as a physical testament for all 4<sup>th</sup> year students. These projects are evaluated by all motion pictures faculty when students apply for completion funds.

Measure Three: Many of the junior and senior projects are presented as part of the Big Lens Festival, a regional presentation at a major film house, such as the Neon Movies or the Dayton Art Institute. This presentation is covered by the Dayton Daily News, as well as other local newspapers, and on local network programs such as LIVING DAYTON and WYSO's *Excursions*. Such exposure can prove invaluable for young filmmakers beginning their careers.

Measure Four: Junior documentary projects are screened every year in the annual Documentary

Night Screening, which takes place on campus, is open to the public, and attracts a standing-room-only crowd. Audience members are given the chance to evaluate, comment on, confront, and discuss the films of the student filmmakers, who are required to attend.

Measure Five: Junior and senior projects are encouraged to participate in national and international film festivals and competitions. This gives advanced students a further measure of the quality and sophistication of their work, often leading to financial and artistic rewards

#### *Direct Measures for Motion Pictures (BA)*

Measure One: BA students are expected to cap off their studies with an independent study in film history, theory, and criticism. This work is expected to show their mastery of critical and writing skills. Further, students have the opportunity to present their work orally to faculty and students, defending their work.

Measure Two: In upper-level theory classes, junior and senior students are especially encouraged to make presentations which show their ability to process, assimilate, research, and present their critical work. They also are encouraged to present at local, regional and national film conferences.

Measure Three: BA students are eligible to take screenwriting classes. When they do, their work is sent out to writing professionals for evaluation.

Measure Four: BA students are also eligible to participate in film projects. When they do, their work is also eligible to be evaluated according to measure four, five, and six of the BFA program.

#### **Summary of assessment findings for past five years**

Students demonstrated their proficiency in the techniques of motion picture production and acquaintance with all components of film production reflected in the quality of their senior film projects, which won numerous awards as noted above and were screened for the public at our annual Big Lens Film Festival as well as national and international festivals.

Students demonstrated their understanding of cinema history, theory, and film criticism and detailed understanding of national and international cinemas through the quality of their films and written work, which is increasingly helping them get accepted into prestigious graduate schools. Brittany Shyne is working on her MFA at Northwestern University; Liz Cambron is working on her MFA at the University of Illinois at Chicago and was selected for TEDX Dayton to present on gender and cinema; Nicole Riegel completed an MFA in Screenwriting from UCLA; Kyle Wilkinson is working on his MFA from Duke; Sherman Payne completed an MFA in Screenwriting from Columbia University; Abbie Sorenson is pursuing her MA at Wright state. BA student Michael Ward published in the widely read, peer-reviewed *Bright Lights Film Journal* for his article "Mapping the Mind Between Movies: Intertextuality in the work of Wong Kar-Wai. Several students have also presented their work at regional and national conferences such as the Popular Culture Association Conference and the Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality Symposium.

#### **Major curricular changes since last review (or past five years)**

Motion Pictures has undergone major curriculum changes the past five years, which began when Dr. Charles Derry retired and Dr. Nicole Richter joined the faculty. Nicole created twelve new film

classes, substantially revising and modernizing the theory component of the curriculum to reflect new innovations in world cinema. By adding courses such as Advanced Critical Writing, the BA became more focused on publishing of scholarship and career preparation.

The production curriculum is undergoing drastic changes because of technology changes and changes in faculty. We have transitioned to digital filmmaking and revised production courses to be more in line with new modes of filmmaking and changes in editing software. Dr. William Lafferty revised the introductory production course MP1800 to focus on digital filmmaking. Steve Bognar joined the faculty in 2012 when Julia Reichert retired, bringing his perspective and leadership to improve our thesis films and documentary semester. Chinonye Chukwu joined the faculty in 2014 when Jim Klein retired, filling a much-needed role in the program through her ability to teach Screenwriting and Directing Actors, classes we did not offer for several years. We are in the process of assessing and re-evaluating every aspect of our B.F.A. curriculum.

#### **Graduate placement data, employer satisfaction**

Wright State Motion Pictures graduates work in every aspect of the film industry, in numerous locations, including Los Angeles, New York, New Orleans and Cincinnati. Our graduates are directors (Marco Fagnoli), writers (Nicole Riegel, Sherman Payne, Erik Bork, Kevin Kramer), Producers (Karri O'Reilly), Production Designers (Hannah Beachler, Vanessa O'Kelly), Cinematographers (Marco Fagnoli, Evan Nesbitt, Amy Faust, Adam White), Dolly Grips (Joe Cassano), Grips (Matthew Harris, Chance Madison), Electrics (Scott Lipez), Key Production Assistants (Scott Bowers, Chris Tung).

The film production industry offers largely free-lance employment since production companies are formed and dissolved as each film goes in and out of production. We track our graduates who are employed again and again on new productions. We are very proud of our active and loyal alumni, who now span over three decades of post-Wright State work in the film industry. The measure of their success is their ongoing employment, and rise in the ranks of film crew positions. A few are retained by long established companies, as is Chris Gaede, who has remained with James Cameron's company since the early production phase of *Avatar*.

A longer-term goal of our film program is to continue to strengthen our relationships with and awareness of alumni activity. Last year, the Wright State Motion Picture Alumni Society was formed, and officially approved as a Wright State alumni society by the Wright State Alumni Association. We see WSMPAS as a means to inform alumni about current student success, and to garner support for current student productions. In fact, in November 2014, one recent alumni, Chris Tung, approached the Wright State Foundation about establishing a grant award for current Wright State Motion Picture student film productions. Over the last year, Motion Picture alumni Nicole Riegel, Sherman Payne, Hannah Beachler, Scott Bowers, John Sylva, Karri O'Reilly, Nichol Simmons, Rick Davis and Adam White have all volunteered time and services to current Wright State Students. O'Reilly, Beachler, Davis and White have all hired multiple Wright State students for professional productions.

#### **If program has professional accreditation, attach most recent review findings and recommendations.**

N/A

## Program 5. Theatre Studies

### Enrollment and Graduate History: BFA Dance

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Enrollment	53	57	49	47	50
Graduates	5	6	3	4	6

### Program description

The Theatre Studies program combines studies in theatrical subjects with broad preparation in the liberal arts to prepare students for a wide range of careers. Graduates have gone on to pursue careers in professional theatre, education, public service, and countless other fields. Because of the focused curriculum, the Theatre Studies program allows the student to take a second major or to pursue minor concentrations in two or three other academic areas.. Theatre Studies students are encouraged to diversify their education in a variety of disciplines. The major in Theatre Studies is generally considered to be preparation for further study at the graduate level.

### Alignment with university mission, strategic plan

The Theatre Studies program seeks to offer career preparation to a broad range of students in the area of theatre performance and education.

Several goals in the university mission are particularly salient in the accomplishments and goals of the Theatre Studies program:

- Students engage in meaningful community service, working as volunteer interns at the Dayton Art Institute, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, the Victoria Association, the Human Race Theatre Company, among many regional organizations. This furthers Wright State's mission to further partnerships throughout the region.
- Students reflect wide diversity, with nearly 40% of African American background.
- In furthering the university and college's "celebration of diversity", as well as the strategic plans, the new Instructor position that is being sought will be designed to be a diversity hire.
- In support of the values of the university, to form global partnerships, Theatre Studies students are encouraged to master a second language, and to travel abroad; students have traveled to Japan, England, Germany, Hungary, Croatia, Greece, among other countries.

### Program distinctiveness

Due to the strength of Wright State's theatre production program, the Theatre Studies student can acquire a high level of both practical and theoretical knowledge and experience - a distinction not afforded theatre students in programs with less extensive production emphases. The large number of electives in this major affords the students the opportunity to acquire a minor or second major, thus better preparing the student for a wide range of career opportunities.

**Recognitions of quality of the program**

The variety of internships attained in regional and national arts organizations such as The Human Race Theatre, the Dayton Art Institute and Disney Studios in Florida, as well as study abroad, all speak to the quality of the education Theatre Studies students are receiving, and their preparedness to succeed once they graduate.

**Program learning outcomes**

Due to the lack of a permanent position in this area, the program learning outcomes have been impossible to track. For the past five years, all core courses have been taught only by adjuncts on an ad-hoc basis.

**Description of learning outcomes assessment program**

None; see above.

**Summary of assessment findings for past five years**

None; see above.

**Major curricular changes since last review (or past five years)**

None.

**Graduate placement data, employer satisfaction**

Students have gone on to varied careers in teaching, advertising, and production assistance.

**If program has professional accreditation, attach most recent review findings and recommendations**

NA

## Departmental Summary

### Faculty demographics

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Full</b>	9	8.34	7.34	8.34	7.42
<b>Associate</b>	7	6	6	6	5
<b>Assistant</b>	2	4	4	4	5
<b>Inst/Lect</b>	7	6.51	5.75	5.75	6.75
<b>Adjunct</b>	6.17	5.88	6.08	4.79	5.08
<b>Total</b>	31.17	30.73	29.17	28.88	29.25

### Staffing Summary

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Unclassified</b>	4.75	3.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
<b>Classified</b>	3.75	5.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
<b>Total</b>	8.50	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.50

### Student/faculty ratio

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Student FTE/Fac FTE</b>	6.70	7.08	6.83	6.96	7.42

### Average class size

	2010	2011	2012
<b>Lecture</b>	39.25	28.94	45
<b>Lab only</b>	8.45	11.71	6.29
<b>Lecture/Lab</b>	11.78	11.97	17.98

### Total of student data for all programs in unit

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
<b>Enrollment</b>	346	346	351	333	336
<b>Graduates</b>	58	41	54	51	55

### Total credit hours generated for unit

	Fall 09	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
<b>Undergraduate</b>	6725	6263	6315	6649	6453
<b>Graduate</b>	na	na	na	na	na
<b>Total</b>	6725	6263	6315	6649	6453

### Course completions

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Undergraduate</b>	93.5%	93.0%	93.6%	93.3%	93.5%
<b>Master's</b>	na	na	na	na	na

### Expense per student and revenue to expense ratio

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Expense per student</b>	\$15,027	\$14,980	\$16,210	\$16,384	\$15,504
<b>Rev/Expense</b>	0.914	0.972	0.927	0.914	0.983

### Research and External Funding

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>External funding</b>					

### External Funding

Design/Technology (Matthew Benjamin) - \$10,000 grant from DP&L for the purchase of energy-efficient LED cyclorama lights for the Festival Theatre (2011)

Motion Pictures - \$12,000 from the Levin Family Foundation for the Red Camera (digital cinema camera) (2014)

Motion Pictures - \$26,000 from the Roy and Patricia Begley Foundation (2014)

### Future employment projections for discipline (to be provided to unit)

CIP	Program	Wright State University-Main Campus Completions (2012-2013)	Other Regional Completions (2012-2013)	Regional Openings (2014)	Median Hourly Earnings	Location	Total Jobs for the Occupational Group (2014)	Total Jobs for the Occupational Group (2017)	Growth in Jobs (2014-2017)	Annual Job Openings (2014)
<b>Theatre, Dance, &amp; Motion Pictures Department</b>										
50.0301	Dance, General Occupations: Dancers (27-2031) and Choreographers (27-2032)	8	0	4	\$14.23	Region: State: US:	76 523 20,325	81 548 21,723	5.4% 4.9% 6.9%	4 25 1120
50.0501	Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts, General Occupations: Actors (27-2011) Producers and Directors (27-2012) Entertainers and Performers, Sports and Related Workers, All Other (27-2099)	4	32	8	\$21.85	Region: State: US:	222 2,194 176,321	225 2,234 183,536	1.2% 1.8% 4.1%	8 78 8176
50.0502	Technical Theatre/Theatre Design and Technology Occupation: Set and Exhibit Designers (27-1027)	8	6	1	\$26.30	Region: State: US:	44 179 8,774	44 182 9,194	0.1% 2.0% 4.8%	1 6 389
50.0506	Acting Occupation: Actors (27-2011)	17	0	2	\$19.15	Region: State: US:	61 588 72,236	62 613 75,644	1.6% 4.3% 4.7%	2 26 3628
50.0601	Film/Cinema/Video Studies Occupation: Producers and Directors (27-2012)	14	0	6	\$23.87	Region: State: US:	132 1,399 86,064	134 1,408 89,095	1.5% 0.7% 3.5%	6 47 4016
Department Total and Total Regional Job Openings		51	38	21						

It is difficult to extract useful information from the above table, partially because of the wide range of what can constitute "jobs" in the performing arts, and the limited range of what is included in the projections. In general, the table predicts modest growth in the disciplines included within our department, averaging around 3 or 4% nationally over the next three years. What is true among the numerous professions included within the world of motion pictures and performing arts is that



training and ability are everything, and those who are well-prepared will succeed. Graduates from our programs have an extremely high rate of attaining professional employment in their area of training, or in closely related areas (for example, two of our Design/Technology graduates who majored in set design are now a lead animator for a videogame design company and the studio manager for Creative Visual Merchandising at Tiffany and Co., respectively). The specific professional skills our students develop, their ability to think critically and creatively, and the strong grounding in liberal arts they receive at Wright State, position them ideally for a job marketplace that demands flexibility and the ability to adapt.

### **Description of how unit programs and curricula are “mission critical” to the core Wright State educational experience**

The programs of the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures share a national reputation for graduating students of the highest caliber, many of whom are now working at or near the highest levels of their profession. We have an award-winning faculty who bring the highest standards of their disciplines, the benefits of their own continuing professional work experiences, and innovative programming that affords our students contact with some of the best artists in the country, to the education and training of our students.

The creation of CELIA (Collaborative Education, Leadership, and Innovation in the Arts) and its designation as an Ohio Center of Excellence represents the embodiment of Wright State’s mission. In its fostering of creative partnerships with Dayton arts organizations such as the Dayton Art Institute, Dayton Public Radio, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, FilmDayton, and the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, CELIA brings together the community and the university in new and exciting ways. The Oscar-nominated documentary *The Last Truck* and the exceptional production of *Bernstein’s Mass* at the Schuster Center were two CELIA collaborations that had faculty members from Theatre, Dance and Motion Pictures at their core. CELIA also brings in distinguished visiting artists such as musical theatre composer Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Pippin*) and Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart, for short-term residencies involving public performances, exhibitions, master classes with Wright State students, lectures, and other related events.

The department plays a key role in the creation and running of the annual ArtsGala at Wright State, a scholarship fundraising event that has become one of the Dayton region’s premier social events. In its 15 years, ArtsGala has raised over \$1.75 million for arts students at Wright State, while increasing visibility for our arts programs and for the University. Faculty, students, and staff from our department direct, perform, design, and stage manage many of the various components that make up ArtsGala, as well as serve as producers for the overall event.

Taken together, the programs of the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures provide the university community with artistic expression of our core values through the portrayal of characters or individuals engaged in profound struggle over central issues of our shared humanity, identity and purpose. Faculty, staff and students participate both as creators and as audience members. More than seventy individual theatrical productions, choreographic and film works annually engage students, faculty members and audiences in an artistic celebration and consideration of every one of our university’s core values. These creative works serve as a conduit for a far-reaching discussion about our successes and failures in living up to those values. This type

of artistic dialogue between audiences and artists adds a critical dimension to the University's broader efforts to transform the lives of its students and regional community.

#### **Faculty accomplishments and recognitions (since last program review)**

- Prof. Joe Deer recognized with WSU Trustees' Award for Faculty Excellence and College of Liberal Arts Award for Faculty Excellence.
- Prof. Bruce Cromer recognized with 9 awards for excellence in Acting and alumni achievement through regional media and the College of Liberal Arts.
- Prof. Deer invited to direct and choreograph at London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (2014)
- Prof. Deer published *Directing in Musical Theatre* through Routledge Press.
- Acting and Musical Theatre faculty directed and/or choreographed more than two dozen professional productions in national and regional theatres (including New York City theatre festivals, Southwest Ohio venues and major regional theatres)
- Acting and Musical Theatre faculty performed more than two-dozen roles in professional theatre productions.
- One of the first major projects of CELIA, one of Wright State's designated Ohio Centers of Excellence, was a critically acclaimed production of the rarely produced *Bernstein's Mass*, a collaboration between the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and Wright State's Departments of Music and Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures. Department faculty who played key roles in this production were Greg Hellems (director), Gina Walther (choreographer), Pam Knauert Lavarney (set designer), and Matthew Benjamin (lighting designer).
- Asst. Prof. Marya Spring Cordes served as Artistic Director for new play festival, The Puzzle at Marble Collegiate Church, New York City.
- Asst. Prof. David J. Castellano is Director of Productions for Phoenix Opera, Phoenix, AZ
- Prof. Matthew Benjamin had six articles juried and accepted for inclusion on the *Creative Teaching on the Web* website.
- Prof. D. Bartlett Blair is Costume Coordinator for the Dayton Opera, and designed costumes for their production of *The Tragedy of Carmen*.
- Prof. D. Bartlett Blair assembled and consulted on a series of exhibits on *Personal Adornment* at the Dayton Art Institute in collaboration with Diane Stemper, DAI Grants and Education Initiatives Coordinator.
- Design/Technology faculty designed sets, lighting, and costumes (or mentored student designers) for eighty-six departmental productions on the Festival and Herbst stages.
- Critically acclaimed choreography by the NY Times for her work, "Still Present" created on Dayton Contemporary Dance Company by Dance faculty member Gina Walther.
- "Excellence in Teaching" Award for the College of Liberal Arts and national critical acclaim for choreography, Teresa McWilliams
- Filmmaker Steve Bogner's recent films include *Sparkle* (co-directed with WSU professor emeritus Julia Reichert), which won the 'Best Short Documentary' Audience Awards at two film festivals - the New Orleans Film Festival and the SilverDocs Film Festival in Washington, DC. *Sparkle* screened on national PBS in 2013. Bogner also produced and directed (with Julia Reichert) *The Last Truck*, which premiered at the Telluride Film Festival, screened on HBO and was nominated for an Academy

Award in 2010. In 2014, Bogner released two short documentaries. *Foundry Night Shift* screened at the True/False, Full Frame and Camden International Film Festivals, and *Last Reel* screened at the Telluride and Camden International Film Festivals. Bogner worked as a documentary cinematographer on recent films, including *Remote Area Medical*, *This Time Next Year*, *A Place at the Table*, *Puppies Behind Bars* and *Brillo*.

- Scholar Nicole Richter has published 10 articles and book chapters since coming to Wright State in 2009 including in *The Journal of Bisexuality*, *Short Film Studies* (international journal), *Queer Love in Film and Television*, *Feminism at the Movies* and the first academic book about Wes Anderson. She also serves as the President of FilmDayton. She founded KinoFemme, a women's filmmaking collective at Wright State, drastically increasing the number of women in the film program.
- Filmmaker Russ Johnson's recent film installation *American Pacemaker* premiered at the Weston Art Gallery in 2013. Johnson was also the editor, still photo animator, and post-production supervisor of *Suffragettes in the Silent Cinema*, currently in distribution by Women Make Movies. This film played in an extended run at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and has garnered showings and prizes throughout Europe.
- Filmmaker Chinonye Chukwu's short film, *The Dance Lesson*, premiered at the Ritz Theater of Philadelphia and was later licensed by mindTV for regional network distribution. The film was also a Regional Finalist for the 2010 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Student Academy Awards. Chinonye has just completed *A Long Walk*. The film is a short adaptation of the anthologized story, "A Walk Through the Neighborhood," and is partially funded by a \$27,000 Special Projects Grant from the Princess Grace Foundation-USA. The film continues to thrive on the festival circuit, winning a Special Jury prize at the USA Festival and "Best Short Film" at the Dayton LGBT Film Festival. It has also screened at several Academy Award Qualifying festivals, including: the Cleveland International Film Festival, Florida Film Festival, Athens International Film and Video Festival and the Rhode Island International Film Festival. She is currently casting for a major feature film she will be shooting in the spring.

### **Programs and areas of recognized excellence with supporting evidence**

The Department of Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures, along with the School of Music and the Departments of Art and Art History, together make up CELIA (Collaborative Education, Leadership, and Innovation in the Arts), one of six Ohio Centers of Excellence at Wright State University. The establishment of CELIA affirms the high quality of programs in the arts at Wright State, including those in our department.

The current \$23 million CAC expansion and renovation highlights the preeminent standing of the arts programs at Wright State University. When complete, the CAC will be a state-of-the-art facility befitting the quality of education that takes place within it.

The Motion Pictures Area has been praised by Tom Hanks for the excellence of its alumni, leading to Hanks agreeing to have the new Motion Pictures Center named in his honor, as well as his participation in the university's capital campaign as its co-chair.

The Musical Theatre Initiative at Wright State University has begun developing a national presence through the presentation of international performing star, Leslie Uggams, in workshops and concert with WSU students that will result in a national PBS television event. This special is produced through Dayton/Cincinnati's Think TV and Baltimore, Maryland's PBS affiliate.

## **Capacity for growth of programs**

### Acting/Musical Theatre

Acting/Musical Theatre programs are at current capacity based on the number of available leading roles in departmental productions (between 24-30 per year), recommended numbers of students in studio classes, and teaching loads (using National Association of Schools of Theatre guidelines). We currently enroll approximately 93 students in both combined programs (our maximum capacity is 96, or approximately 24 students per cohort – 12 Acting/12 Musical Theatre). In the last five years, we have drawn more student applications from across the US, including a more racially diverse population. Because of a growing national reputation, we see that the number of applicants has grown by approximately 20%.

### Dance

With the expansion of the Creative Arts Center and the addition of a new Pilates room and dance studio/informal performance space, the Dance Program will have the opportunity to present additional informal concerts, develop the physical therapy injury prevention program, and hire additional dance faculty. Limited studio space and faculty have confined the program to the current curriculum, as there was no room to offer additional classes and no extra faculty to teach new courses. Additional space and faculty will be a positive recruitment tool to increase the number of talented, serious dance majors and raise the quality of incoming freshmen.

### Design and Technology

Although our enrollment has been trending upward, we would like to see further growth in student numbers, particularly in our design and technology (i.e., non-stage management) concentrations, which would enable us to better support the department's sizable production season. Larger numbers would ease some of the deadline-related pressure currently felt by students, faculty, and staff, thereby improving the quality of the education we can provide. The creation of a larger dedicated Design/Technology classroom as part of the CAC renovation and expansion, as well as new shared computer labs, will allow us to accommodate a modest increase in student enrollment, and should help us to attract new students. The faculty is actively pursuing ways to increase the amount of recruiting we do, but limited recruitment funding for a department that includes four major programs is an issue.

### Motion Pictures

In November 2014, we engaged a consultant, Eric Furie, Manager of Digital Technology at the School of Cinematic Arts of the University of Southern California (one of top film schools in the world). Eric came to Wright State for a two-day intensive consulting visit, during which time he met with Motion Pictures faculty, staff, students and Wright State administrators, including Dean Sobolik, Associate Dean Caron and Chair McDowell. Eric also toured the Virtual Reality Lab in the Wright State Joshi Engineering Center, and the under-construction new Wright State Motion Pictures Center.

This assessment and re-evaluation is part of a larger process of moving the Wright State Motion Pictures program to a new, state-of-the-art facility in 2015, and towards a plan of serving and annually graduating more students, substantially changing the structure of the program to expand.

### **New program opportunities**

N/A

### **Proposals to enhance programs (if desired)**

#### Acting/Musical Theatre

The addition of our *Acting for Camera* sequence, an enhanced relationship with the Motion Pictures program, and opportunities presented by the new Musical Theatre Initiative are substantial recent enhancements to our offerings. The Musical Theatre Initiative will create symposia and national conferences focused on the work of major artists and special topics to attract international participation and opportunities for students and faculty. We expect to focus on developing these to their full potential over the next several years.

#### Dance

Two of the three full time dance faculty teach a variety of styles but are limited in what they teach currently due to space and minimal faculty. With the new studio space, our vision is to expand the courses offered, to vary the teachers teaching those courses, and to hire additional faculty. Currently, in the majority of styles, the dance majors take a particular style of dance from the same teacher for their four years. The success of our graduates depends significantly on their ability to adapt to a variety of choreographers; revising this teaching schedule will aid in their success. Pursuing a more definite teacher's exchange with Dayton Ballet and Dayton Contemporary Dance Company is under discussion as well as continuing to commission national guest choreographers.

#### Design and Technology

During the last several years we have routinely spoken with prospective students who are interested in our program and want to pursue a career in Hair and Makeup. Unfortunately, we have to turn them away because we don't offer a concentration in that area. Because we don't have a staff Hair person, we continually have to scramble to find qualified people to fulfill that role on departmental productions, usually hiring someone out of Cincinnati. Consequently, the cost of hair styling and wigs (which includes not only labor cost, but travel expenses and wig rentals) on a large show is much more than it would be if we had someone on staff (over \$6000 on *Les Miserables*, which included \$555 in travel reimbursement, \$4300 in fees and \$840 in wig rentals). Currently our staff Properties Master teaches the 1 makeup class we offer, and although he's very good at doing that, there is no one available to help actors with their makeup application during performances, and as a result the quality of that component of our productions is often markedly lower than the rest of the production.

In the design of our new Design/Technology spaces in the CAC Expansion and Renovation, we prioritized the creation of a small hair and makeup classroom not only because we desperately need it now to remove related activity from the costume shop, but in the hope that one day we will have a staff person who can fully utilize it for our productions and in the training of students. We believe that it would be fiscally wise for the department, improve the quality of our productions, allow us to

better train actors, costume designers and costume technicians, and let us move toward creating a new concentration within the Design/Technology program that would be attractive to prospective students.