**2014-2015 Annual Assessment Report Update**

**Executive Summary**

**September 15, 2015**

Introduction: During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Theatre Arts Department assessed its first Program Learning Outcome, which is posted on the department website and reads: “Students display appropriate skill in creation, development, and presentation of theatrical performances.” Students are introduced to methods and competencies in theatrical performances in courses such as TA 010 (Acting I), TA 010 (Acting II) and TA Blah (Design), develop them in courses such as TA 125 (Directing) and TA Blah (Design). Students display expressive competencies in those courses, and also the annual Fringe Festival, which serves as an incubator that encourages growth and development in theatrical performance. Students display a sizable achievement in the practices of theatrical performance in a Senior Project, which provides a Capstone experience for the major. All senior Theatre Arts majors are required to complete TA 193 (Senior Performance Project), in a specific area of focus for the student in the discipline (i.e. acting, directing, design, playwriting, historical research, etc.). Departmental assessment for PLO 1 occurs as part of the Senior Project student requirement.

Data and Materials: This report includes the following data and materials in support of the department’s work with its first PLO during the 2014-2015 academic year.

1. Three years of Senior Project responses provided by lead faculty mentors for individual projects
2. Three years of written summaries of End of Semester student evaluations
3. 2 years of Fringe Surveys (though we have more surveys, the last two years were accomplished on Survey Monkey, so create more accurate means of comparison between years)
4. 2013 TA 193 syllabus and 2015 TA 193 syllabus, with changed highlighted and identified
5. 2015 Fringe Application

Findings, Changes, and Adoptions:

I. Senior Project Assessment Methods and Adjustments: In the last three years, all Theatre Arts majors have completed a Senior Project and completed an end of semester evaluation with faculty. In those years, students displayed high degrees of success. As part of the assessment process, the faculty discussed and developed several improvements designed to further elevate students’ thinking and artistry . As part of this process, department instituted the following additions/changes.

1. Clarified evaluation criteria
2. Developed language for the Design and Technical aspect of the PLO

3) Clarified language with respect to courses that *introduce* and *develop* methods, techniques, and competencies in the creation and development of theatrical performance.

II. Fringe Festival. Each year, the Theatre Arts Department produces its Fringe Festival, which provides opportunities for the creation of original theatre, dance, film, and performance art for students. Conceived as a kind of incubator, the Fringe creates numerous opportunities to develop expressive skills with respect to theatrical performance. The festival is used to evaluate student work in many areas at once. Each year, student participants complete a Fringe survey, which evaluates their experience. Recent successes include:

1. Higher evaluations from students in every area in 2015 from 2014, including overall artistic experience, technical support, and educational value.
2. A *significant* increase in student satisfaction in technical support, which is a large focus of our department from our self-study and key questions.
3. A continuation of the overall size and impact of the festival on Theatre Arts majors and the greater campus community in terms of participation and attendance.

III. Design and Technical. In order to better serve students in the Design and Technical area, with respect to PLO 1, the department adopted the following changes:

1. Redesigned Stagecraft courses to enhance students’ abilities to successfully install basic scenery
2. Assigned students major design and technical responsibilities in the departmental season

IV. Other Changes: As a result of our ongoing assessment practices, the Theatre Arts Department adopted the following changes:

* Updated senior project syllabus to include six foundation criteria that guide students and faculty in evaluation of projects (Depth and Breadth of Artistry, Initiative and Discipline, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Collaboration and Community Engagement, Disciplinary and Professional Development, and Contextual and Historical Research)
* Updated senior project syllabus to include great focus and language for students of technical theatre and design
* Made language in the Fringe Application process consistent with language in the Senior Project Syllabus, in order to maximize student success in the development and mastery of competencies relative to performance creation and development (PLO 1).

V. Response to the PRC: In February, 2015, the department received a response from the Program Review Committee and the Executive Team, as part of the department’s 6-Year Review process. That memorandum was highly complimentary of the assessment work undertaken by Theatre Arts. In response to that memo, however, the department includes multiple years of assessment data (three years worth in several cases and two years worth in another), and is in the process of clarifying the relationship between departmental stylistic and programming philosophy, and departmental outcomes and goals.