

New Academic Program: B.A./B.S. in Theatre Arts

Program Proposed Start Date

Fall 2022

Program Description

This proposal is to create a new Bachelor of Art / Bachelor of Science (B.A./B.S.) degree in Theatre Arts. OSU focuses on educating undergraduate Theatre Arts students within a Liberal Arts context, offering a core of general Theatre Arts courses that provide a basic framework for all students to move forward into more specialized areas of focus. After completion of the core, Theatre Arts students work towards their degree by completing 15 credits in History, Dramatic Literature, and Theory & Criticism, and 21 credits in Design, Technical Theatre, and Performance. This program offers flexibility for students to pursue specific areas of interest while gaining experience in all aspects of the study and practice of theatre. In addition, Theatre Arts students must appear as a performer, be on a run-crew, and serve in a position of "major responsibility" and/or leadership during their program. Each of these three experiences must contribute to a university theatre production and be faculty-approved.

OSU currently operates a fully scheduled producing program, University Theatre (UT). The UT offers students hands-on experiences in theatrical production as performers, designers, technical crew, playwrights, and directors. In its current performance venues, the UT produces three faculty or guest-directed/designed productions and two student-led productions per academic year. The UT also has a long history of producing outdoor summer theatre. In this way, theory and practice go hand-in-hand. The Theatre Arts curriculum is structured so that students put classroom activities into practice as part of the UT season.

Program Context

Theatre Arts currently offers a fully independent undergraduate B.A./B.S. option within the current Speech Communication major. There is also an existing Theatre Arts minor. The Communication option, the other curricular option under the Speech Communication major, and the Theatre Arts option do not share any courses, faculty, budgets, or physical spaces and for all intents and purposes operate entirely separately. Recently, the School of Arts & Communication split into the School of Visual, Performing, and Design Arts (SVPDA) and the School of Communication (SoC). The previous option in Communication was also approved as a standalone B.A./B.S. in Speech Communication. This proposal does the same for Theatre Arts, formally elevating the long-standing independent Theatre Arts option to its own B.A./B.S. degree and eliminating the last organizational vestige of previous curricular and administrative structures to match with the newly formed schools. The move also accords with and will

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augment recent and ongoing investments in new theatre facilities in the Arts & Education Complex (AEC).

Program Purpose/Relationship to University Mission/Strategic Plan

The study of Theatre Arts at OSU supports the institution's mission of promoting social, economic, cultural, and environmental progress for the people of Oregon, the nation, and the world through the very nature of play- and art-making (essential ways of exploring, critiquing, and understanding humanity and life). The experiential structure of the program challenges students to think and act critically, creatively, and collaboratively. OSU Theatre's emphasis on community-building requires accountability from each member as students must take classroom lessons into the real world through sharing research, creative work, and performances that engage our Corvallis campus and beyond. There is a place in OSU Theatre for anyone with a commitment to fostering, and being in a culture of engaging storytelling and communal creation. OSU Theatre students work throughout their time in the program in active collaborations that bring together their diverse talents, skills, and backgrounds to explore the human condition through the study and practice of theatre.

Need for the Program

Theatre at OSU has been around almost since its very inception as an institution and, again, has long existed as a formal area of study for students through the Theatre Arts option within the Speech Communication B.A./B.S. This proposal adjusts the administrative and curricular structure to match operational and administrative changes and realities, as well as to best take advantage of new investments in facilities.

Participation in the performing arts, regardless of whether or not it is a student's primary area of study, enhances a student's sense of belonging, emphasizes community and collaboration, and encourages the creative synthesis of ideas into public communication.

The UT and the Theatre Arts area serve students in two ways. First, the students that participate in classes and the production of theatre gain hands-on experience and second, student audiences attending productions have access to quality performing arts events for little to no cost.

Moreover, the performing arts contribute to the economy and cultural landscape of any community, and OSU Theatre Arts students gain valuable experience and training while on campus to prepare them for a variety of careers within the performing arts and larger entertainment industry after graduation.

Finally, OSU Theatre Arts is a program designed to develop competent and engaged leaders and thoughtful citizens. As students work through the curriculum and gain experience in production, they gradually take on more responsibility that culminates in

at least one meaningful leadership role as part of the program. In addition, the very practice of theatre encourages collaboration and community-building. These experiences effectively prepare students to engage in the similar challenges found beyond OSU that require compromise, creativity, and empathy.

Program Financials

EXPENSES

Personnel Needs:

Faculty, tenured/tenure-track: One 1.0 FTE assistant/associate professor to meet teaching as well as growing production needs in the new AEC.

Faculty, fixed-term: One .50 - 1.0 FTE instructor to support program instruction and return to in-person play production post-COVID.

	Fiscal Yr 1	Fiscal Yr 2	Fiscal Yr 3	Fiscal Yr 4
Instructor (Design Specialty)				
Annual Salary	19,351	43,002	44,292	45,621
OPE	6,483	25,156	27,018	28,057
FTE	.45	1.0	1.0	1.0
Assistant/Associate Professor (Specialty TBD)				
Annual Salary			65,000	66,950
OPE			39,650	40,611
FTE			1.0	1.0

Other Expenses:

Services and Supplies:

One-time - Year One:

- Purchase of cards, letterhead, and other marketing changes (\$1K).

Years Two - Three:

- Additional changes to web presence/marketing (\$1.5K total).
- Library (Printed/Electronic): Most of these materials already exist in adequate supply, having served the current Theatre Arts option. That said, an initial Library assessment suggests a minimal investment for improvement of \$500 per year which has been included in the proposal (\$2K total).

RESOURCES

A combination of E&G funds and Ecampus revenue from all the arts areas in SVPDA. In terms of the “new” personnel costs for the major indicated above, they are actually previous positions (lost to retirements-induced changes and a pandemic cut) that will be gradually reintroduced. In simplified summary, 4.0 active FTE (three tenure-stream, one instructor) has become 3.25 FTE (all instructors). The proposed positions noted would

return the program to 4.0 FTE (one tenure-track faculty member and three instructors, with the part-time position eliminated).

Summary

With the coming of the new theatre facilities in the AEC it is time to elevate the existing Theatre Arts option to a full standalone major while rebuilding the faculty. Plans are under discussion for the addition of more dedicated tenure positions once the new facility is in full operation. While the current arrangement of faculty can fully support the academic and production programs as it has for the last few years (assuming a return of the non-renewed FTE lost to curtailed COVID operations), a phased build out of faculty will improve operations, student learning, and production experiences.

RECOMMENDATION

All appropriate university committees and the OSU Faculty Senate have positively reviewed the proposed program. The Provost recommends that the Academic Strategies Committee approve the establishment of a B.A./B.S. in Theatre Arts, effective fall 2022, pending support of the Statewide Provosts Council and the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.