

RECOMMENDATION TO RELOCATE THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DRAMA FROM LETTERS & SCIENCE TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Background

The theatre program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison dates to 1898 with the establishment of theatre-presenting organizations and an academic program within the Department of Speech in the 1920s. In 1972, theatre faculty and staff requested reorganization and separation of the theatre program from the newly named Department of Communication Arts and gained department status as the Department of Theatre and Drama. In the spring of 2013, the Department of Theatre & Drama faculty and teaching academic staff voted to move the department from the College of Letters & Science to the School of Education. Keeping in mind the rich history of theatre and drama education at UW-Madison, the department perceived better opportunities to support its mission by moving to the School of Education.

In accordance with UW-Madison Faculty Policies and Procedure, three members of the faculty requested a special departmental meeting to consider relocation. At that meeting, a majority of faculty and teaching Academic Staff (who hold departmental governance privileges) voted in favor (12 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain) of requesting relocation from the College of Letters & Science to the School of Education. The consideration included the welfare of the faculty, staff, and present and future students. It is the firm belief of the Theatre and Drama faculty that the relocation will facilitate and optimize essential connections between faculty, students, staff, resources, physical spaces, and support services in more sustainable ways. The relocation will provide a path for the department to better address growing demands from students for interdisciplinary opportunities with the arts currently housed in the School of Education and will strengthen and broaden the appeal for recruiting and retaining students and faculty.

Academic Programs and Staff

This relocation will be effective for a transition period beginning July 1, 2014. The relocation of the Theatre and Drama course subject listing will be set in consultation with the Office of the Registrar and will be determined so as to avoid adverse impacts on students. Working through regular course change processes, the faculty and staff will collaborate on making courses available through L&S departments as well as Theatre and Drama. A plan for changes to courses and how they are listed will be submitted to the provost by November 1, 2014.

Many Theatre and Drama courses have already been cross-listed, but the department recognizes that additional cross-listing and changes in courses may be necessary following relocation. The faculty are committed to working with the deans in both the School of Education and the College of Letters & Science to accomplish this. A plan for restructuring and realignment will be submitted to the provost by November 1, 2014.

The undergraduate major in Theatre and Drama will be relocated with the department to the School of Education, recognizing that alignments must be made in the undergraduate curriculum to address differences in degree requirements between the College of Letters & Science and the School of Education. Relocation of the undergraduate major in Theatre and Drama will require the creation of an associated “BS - Theatre and Drama” as a degree for the major in Education. Until such time as that program is available, students will be able to major in Theatre and Drama through L&S, which is collaborating with the School of Education to ensure that current students will continue to be served well. This process will be completed in a period of 18-24 months. In keeping with the April 29, 2014, deans’ agreement, a proposal that details the relocation of the undergraduate program in Theatre and Drama will be submitted to the provost by November 1, 2014.

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The Department of Theatre and Drama currently offers an MFA, an MA, and a PhD in Theatre and Drama, programs which include informal specialization(s) in theatre and theatre-related disciplines. The Department of Theatre and Drama's graduate curricular structure and the requirements for admission, continuation, and graduation are consistent with both National Association for Schools of Theatre (NAST) standards and the UW Graduate School. The NAST-accredited MFA program will move with the department to the School of Education; the detailed plan for this, also in keeping with the April 29, 2014, deans' agreement, will be submitted to the provost by November 1, 2014.

The MA/PhD graduate program in Theatre and Drama will be restructured into two components. First, the graduate program will be renamed the "MA/PhD in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies." Second, the MA/PhD graduate program will remain in the College of Letters & Science and be moved to the Department of English as the new administrative home, with academic oversight provided by an interdisciplinary program committee. Planning will be completed in a period of 18-24 months to allow matriculation of currently enrolled students. In keeping with the April 29, 2014, deans' agreement, a proposal for this restructuring will be submitted to the provost and the dean of the Graduate School by November 1, 2014. The College of Letters & Science has approved a proposal and it will be submitted to GFEC at the earliest opportunity.

Faculty of the Department of Theatre and Drama will be afforded the choice of relocating with the department or transferring to another department in the College of Letters & Science. In either case, resources (salary/fringes and ancillaries historically allocated to perform duties, such as computers) will follow the professor/staff member. Likewise, continuity of access to physical infrastructure and ancillaries vital to the curriculum and mission of faculty and staff – notably access to performance and stage space for teaching, practice, and research – will also be protected. The current untenured faculty in Theatre and Drama will move with the department to the School of Education and the relocation will have no negative impact on their trajectory towards tenure. TA budgetary allocations will follow the "resources-follow-the-professor/staff" principle.

The relocation of the Department of Theatre and Drama from the College of Letters & Science to the School of Education was approved by the faculty of the department on May 17, 2013. The School of Education Administrative and Academic Planning Council subsequently approved the relocation on November 6, 2013, contingent on the transfer of the department's resources at the same time. On April 29, 2014, the deans of L&S and Education communicated to the provost their consent to this change and outlined the principles that would guide the relocation. This transition plan was approved by Provost Paul de Luca on May 20, 2014, and passed by the University Academic Planning Council on June 23, 2014.