

**Assessment Trend Report
Student Learning Outcomes in Theater and Dance**

December 3, 2009

The goal of this report is to evaluate the assessment of student learning outcomes in Theater and Dance. The report addresses four key questions to evaluate the quality of our assessment processes.

(1) How have we sustained the assessment effort over a multi-year period of time?

How many years have you completed an annual assessment report?

_____ 2006 ___x_ 2007 ___x_ 2008 ___x_ 2009

The Theater and Dance Department developed an assessment plan in 2006 and has collected data over the past three years. Discussions about assessment of student learning take place at regular meetings and retreats. The assessment process was reviewed in 2009; the department has identified areas for improvement in assessment of student learning.

(2) How do we systematically and comprehensively collect and analyze data about student learning?

All of the faculty in the Department of Theatre and Dance were involved in the development of the student learning outcomes and participate in the ongoing process of data collection. To assess student learning in its majors—BA and BFA, Acting, Design and Technical, Stage Management and Theater Administration, the department collects data on each of the four student learning goals: collaboration, analysis, technique, professionalism, and a life of meaning and value. The Theatre & Dance program collects excellent rich data on each student, based on direct observation of student performance. Each year every theatre student completes a year-end self-evaluation addressing his or her progress on the four learning goals. They meet with two faculty members who review their self-evaluation and discuss observed performance, concluding with a rating of the student's progress. Other data are also collected, such as Freshman Hurdle results, Design Project grades, Shop grades, Senior Exit Surveys, and Play Analysis grades. This data collection is systematic (all students) and that it is comprehensive (all four learning goals). Each student receives high quality ongoing "progress evaluation" on the four learning goals each year.

While the data collection and review of individual students is systematic and comprehensive, the performance of all students in the program are not analyzed or discussed. The Chair of the department agrees that the program needs to develop a better annual report tradition in order to share and discuss the overall total student strengths/weaknesses on the four outcome goals with all theatre faculty.

(3) How do we use the analysis to improve curriculum and pedagogy and to inform decisions about budgets and strategic priorities?

Discussions about student learning take place among Theatre and Dance faculty throughout the year, in both formal and informal settings. Conversations take place "24/7," but the department also sets aside time during retreats to discuss the annual assessment reports. These reports are distributed to the faculty members ahead of time via email. While the faculty is always in the process of revising and modifying the curriculum, often in response to shifts in the industry, the department realizes more changes should derive directly from assessment.

While assessment in Theatre and Dance may be a work in progress, the faculty has gleaned useful information that has helped them become more effective, both inside the classroom and out. Some innovations that the faculty has developed are:

- A more intentional emphasis on collaboration, especially in the production area
- A concerted effort to establish a culture of support and positive regard among students and faculty through meetings early in the academic year and post-audition and opening-night celebrations
- Improved communication between faculty members in Theatre and in the School of Music
- Continued development of the New Musicals Workshop, which brings students and faculty into close contact with industry professionals
- More frequent presence of guest artists and industry professionals
- Continued efforts to develop relationships and opportunities with Chicago theatre companies and personnel
- Continued development of projects through funding from the Coleman Foundation and the Tabor School Center for Entrepreneurship
- Piloting courses in advanced play analysis
- Increasing requirements in all majors in the department for dramatic literature courses, including courses in theory, criticism, dramaturgy, and conceptual approaches
- Improving advising and mentoring BA students

(4) How do we evaluate, modify, and continue to improve the student learning assessment process in this program? .

Using the process of ongoing evaluation of individual student progress since 1996, the department has continued to seek improvements in their approach of collecting the year-end evaluation as primary data. Through a recent review of the overall assessment process, the department realized that most of the onus of overall assessment review falls on the department chair. The department chair plans to invite her faculty to become more active participants in the formal assessment processes through improvements in reporting and sharing results.

Based on their analysis of their assessment process from the last three years, Theatre and Dance faculty has identified areas for improvement:

- Tying skill development more closely with learning goals
- Coordinating syllabi and increasing collaboration among faculty
- Developing learning goals and piloting a BA capstone course
- Improving assessment method, collecting direct student artifact, and developing appropriate rubric for data analysis
- Creating more conversation on assessment and reviewing assessment process regularly

Evaluation from Focus Visit Leadership Team (includes Academic Deans, Program Leaders, and Focus Visit Report Writers)

Rating: GREEN

Academic program	Goal 1 (multi-year)	Goal 2 (data collection)	Goal 3 (Use assessment to improve)	Goal 4 (improve assessment)	Total
Theater and Dance	3	2	3	2	10

Based on the four questions/criteria, the Focus Visit Leadership Team rates the Department of Theater and Dance as Green. The Theatre & Dance program collects rich data on each student, based on direct observation of student performance. However, the analysis and sharing of results is limited to the individual student (not the whole group of students). The program has clear plans to improve its tradition of reviewing data results of all students, therefore, improving their overall assessment process.