

OFFICE OF THE  
VICE-PROVOST  
ACADEMIC

9<sup>th</sup> FLOOR  
KANEFF TOWER  
4700 KEELE ST  
TORONTO ON  
CANADA M3J 1P3  
T 416 650 8017  
F 416 736 5876

**Theatre, BA/BFA, MFA Theatre, MA/PhD Theatre & Performance Studies,  
School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design**

**Cyclical Program Review – 2007 to 2014**

**Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan**

**Reported to Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance:** December 12, 2016

**Program Description**

The Department of Theatre, the largest in eastern Canada, offers a BA Honours and a BFA Honours degree program, as well as a 90-credit BA, providing students with different approaches to achieving their own theatrical goals. At the Graduate level, there are MFA (Acting, Directing, Design), MA and PhD (Theatre and Performance Studies) programs. The department also has an agreement with Humber College that allows acting students to complete academic courses and receive an Honours BFA.

Program	Accepts 2014	Enrolment FTES 2014	Degrees Awarded 2014
BA/BFA	112	456	96 Hons; 5 90-credit
MA	10	11	15
MFA	20	17	3
PhD	4	21	4

**Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:**

Elizabeth Bradley, Arts Professor, Department of Drama, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

D.J. Hopkins, Professor, School of Theatre, Television, Film, San Diego State University

Mark-David Hosale, Associate Professor, Digital Media Program, York University

**Documentation Provided to the External Reviewers**

Prior to the site visit, the external reviewers are provided with the following:

- Dean's /Principal's Agenda of Concerns
- Department/Program Omnibus Statement (where applicable)
- Program Self-Study Brief, which includes program structure, curriculum and learning outcomes, program reflection, enrolment and retention data, resources, student input and quality enhancement opportunities
- Faculty CVs
- University, Faculty and Program planning documents



**Site Visit:** January 21 and 22, 2016

The reviewers met with Vice-Provost Academic, Alice Pitt; Dean, AMPD, Shawn Brixey; and Chair, Department of Theatre, Ines Buchli; MA/PhD Graduate Programme director Laura Levin; MFA Graduate Programme director Michael Greyeyes; Theatre Studies Coordinator Magda Kazubowski-Houston; Acting Area Coordinator Mark Wilson; Dean of Graduate Studies, Barbara Crow. The reviewers also met with university librarians, full-time and part-time faculty members and staff. There were multiple opportunities to meet with graduate and undergraduate students. The reviewers toured the facilities on campus and observed rehearsals for an upcoming production at the Joe Green Theatre in downtown Toronto.

**Outcome:**

The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations. Progress on the recommendations will be included in the Follow-up Report due in June 2018, which will provide documentation on alignment between program requirements and promotional materials and elaboration of faculty renewal priorities based on outcomes of the deliberations currently underway. The next CPR will begin in the Fall of 2022.

**Strengths: (selected)**

The reviewers begin their report with this statement, “It is clear that the range of courses taught, the content diversity of much of the curriculum and the wide-ranging interests noted speak to a vibrant, creative, and intellectually rich community”. It was clear to the reviewers that the Department of Theatre values professionally active faculty who are also committed to quality pedagogy. “The Review Committee cannot state often enough how impressed we are with the quality of the individual faculty whom we met during our brief visit.” In addition, students report that the professional connections of their supervising faculty are frequently useful in leveraging further opportunities. The reviewers said, “It is plain that longstanding excellence and thoroughness of curriculum sequencing is present in the upper level undergraduate training.”

In their report, the reviewers also noted the following: “Especially commendable are the efforts of faculty members in production and design to demonstrate leadership in the sustainability movement.”

**Opportunities for Enhancement: (selected)**

The reviewers suggested that the Faculty be cautious in its promotion of the programs to guard against any potential disconnect between the program as advertised and the actual program design and offerings. They also noted some lack of clarity in terms of focus for students in the Theatre Studies BA programs compared to students in the BFA program where there students see a clearer curricular path.

The reviewers observed, and the program response concurred, that supervision loads at the graduate level are unrealistic. More faculty supervisors, especially with backgrounds directly relevant to thesis work to allow supervision assignments to be reduced, would

greatly improve the student experience.

The reviewers report states that students would benefit from the development and implementation of a programmatic assessment plan.

The department needs to undertake serious consideration of how the mix of programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels is functioning. Noting current enrolments in each and the need to offer a modern curriculum attractive to students it should carefully consider what would be the ideal program mix. The Review Report states *“Given all the demands on faculty — professional growth, teaching at undergraduate and graduate levels — the department should ask: are there programs that cannot consistently offer their curriculum because faculty are not consistently available to teach required classes? If so, as a corollary question: Are there programs that always have faculty available to teach required classes? Do these faculty assignments (including both shortcomings and abundance) reflect collectively determined department values? Is program design a different skill set than excellent teaching? Are program leaders adequately supported in enabling progressive yet rigorous curriculum design?”*

Student feedback to the reviewers was included in their report. It was noted that “All students would welcome a downtown outpost – whether a performance or studio space or a teaching extension.” Concerns raised include the lack of adequate program specific advising, student mental health issues, inadequate communication about activities, a lack of clarity about augmented training outside of the curriculum, and students’ financial contributions to seemingly mandated social events.

The Review Report ends with 20 detailed recommendations. The extensive and equally detailed program response addresses these recommendations providing additional clarity on some issues raised and outlining progress that has already been made on advancing many of the recommendations.

### **Dean’s Implementation Plan**

The Dean notes, in the preamble to his plan, that “The faculty are actively engaged in the “wholesale interrogation” of its programs necessary to advance their academic quality and to develop new offerings to ensure a vital future.”

In the implementation plan on the following page, recommendations in the areas of curriculum, mentorship, and governance have been addressed or are in process and timelines for other recommendations project completion dates have been articulated.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed Follow-up</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading Follow-up</b>	<b>Timeline for Addressing Recommendation</b>
<p>Develop and implement a comprehensive programmatic assessment plan in order to enhance the quality of the program and learning experience for (BA, BFA, MA, MFA, and PhD).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New department committee to undertake curricular mapping, entrance polls at the end of first year, exit polls at the end of fourth year and focus groups.</li> <li>2. Address assessment across competencies examine criteria for learning outcomes for each year of study.</li> <li>3. Production faculty retreat to review program-wide learning outcomes and to develop a formal assessment model for student success in the BFA Production/Design.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, Assistant Dean of Advising, Associate Dean of Students</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Form special ad hoc assessment and curriculum committee, Fall 2016</li> <li>2. Design and execute production faculty retreat with curriculum focus, Spring 2017</li> <li>3. Ongoing, Devised Theatre Faculty Committee meetings, to augment assessment initiative, Fall 2016</li> </ol>
<p>Undertake a credit, requirement, assessment and resource audit as well as in-class and out of class time necessary to complete assigned or mandatory participation at a 'C plus' level in courses required in the major areas of study.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Theatre Studies area to initiate re-evaluation of time-to-completion of the BA degree credit sequence by reviewing pedagogical expectations and priorities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, Assistant Dean of Advising, Associate Dean of Students, Teaching Commons</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audit begin, Fall 2016</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Devised Theatre and Theatre Studies area faculty will jointly re-evaluate time-to-completion of the Devised Theatre BA degree credit sequence by reviewing courses and core pedagogical expectations and priorities.</p> <p>(MA/PhD programs plan to participate in this exercise to provide better sense of how course hours and assignments are impacting student progress and well being.)</p> <p>3. Credit and requirement audit in consultation with Teaching Commons to develop educational frameworks supporting the mental and physical well-being of students</p>	<p>2. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, GPD's, Assistant Dean of Advising, Associate Dean of Students, Teaching Commons</p> <p>3. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, GPD's, Assistant Dean of Advising, Associate Dean of Students, Teaching Commons</p>	
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<p>Refine expected learning outcomes parameters including; grading and evaluating effort, personal growth, acquired competencies, etc.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Studies area review expected student learning outcomes, processes of assessment, and grading.</li> <li>2. Develop assessment criteria appropriate for both theoretical and practical components of courses, discuss ways to effectively communicate criteria to Teaching Assistants.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, Teaching Assistants</li> <li>2. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, Teaching Assistants</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Process will run throughout 2016-17 academic year.</li> <li>2. Notification and communication of learning outcomes enhancements, Winter 2017</li> <li>3. Full implementation, Fall 2017</li> </ol>
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<p>Restructure curriculum and resource allocation in the Undergraduate Theatre Studies program (Devised Theatre) to fully realize the program's potential.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Changes in degree requirements and resourcing to create a more equitable parallel to other Department programs (e.g. Acting Conservatory)</li> <li>2. The creation and communication of new program name (Performance Creation and Research).</li> <li>3. Develop new course offerings in community-based research, performance ethnography involving outreach in local underserved communities.</li> <li>4. Initiate reallocation of resources to realize interdisciplinarity, integration of theory and praxis in Theatre Studies.</li> <li>5. Begin conversation with Production/Design about merger of Performance Creation and Research and Devising/Production under a new name and the creation of a new BFA in Performance Creation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, GPD's, Assistant Dean of Advising, Associate Dean of Students</li> <li>2. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, GPD's, Assistant Dean of Strategic Marketing, Communications and Recruitment, Associate Dean of Students, Teaching Commons</li> <li>3. Department Chair, Area Coordinators, Assistant Dean of Strategic Marketing, Communications and Recruitment</li> <li>4. Department Chair, Area Coordinators</li> <li>5. Department Chair, Area Coordinators</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin Fall 2016 and full implementation Fall 2017</li> <li>2. Full implementation Spring 2017</li> <li>3. Begin process Spring 2017 and full implementation Fall 2018</li> <li>4. Begin process Spring 2017 and full implementation Fall 2018</li> <li>5. Begin process Spring 2017 and full implementation Fall 2019</li> </ol>
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<p>Develop strategy to reinvest in Full-Time Faculty Complement (new-hires/retirement replacements) reconciling the needs of historical core disciplines and student demand for new fluencies.</p>	<p>1. A prioritized list of replacement positions including Indigenous hires has been submitted to the Dean of AMPD.</p>	<p>1. Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Strategic Marketing, Communications, and Recruitment, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate, Dean of the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design</p>	<p>1. Request innovative new positions with Spring 2017 Faculty complement request</p>
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The Dean will submit a follow-up report on these detailed plans in June 2018 outlining progress made and the impact of any changes.

Alice J. Pitt  
Vice-Provost Academic  
York University