

**Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Department of Drama**  
**Master's of Fine Arts Program in Acting, Directing, Playwriting**  
**Master's Degree in Theory & Criticism**  
**Master's of Art in Theatre Education**

**Assessment Measures**

The Department of Drama uses the following measures to assess student learning outcomes:

Direct measures:

MATE: DR 951 (Supervised project), written comprehensive exams.

MA: DR 995 (Thesis Guidance) or two seminars approved by the head of the program, written comprehensive exams.

MFA in Directing: DR 850 (Thesis production workshop), DR 997 (Thesis production guidance), written comprehensive exams.

MFA Acting: DR 939 (Monographs), written comprehensive exams.

MFA Playwriting: DR 860 (playwriting internship), DR 996 (playwriting thesis guidance), written comprehensive exams.

Indirect measures:

Grades in all courses

Student evaluations of all courses

Student participation in production work

Alumni feedback

On-going faculty review of individual student's degree progress

On-going faculty review of comparable programs

**Assessment Findings**

MATE: There is no data for either DR 951 or comprehensive exams in the MATE program, as it is in its second year, and no student has completed the program to date.

MA: All MA students who have taken the comprehensive exams in the past five years have successfully passed them.

MFA in Directing: All students who have taken comprehensive exams have successfully passed them.

MFA in Acting: All but one student has successfully passed their comprehensive exams on the first attempt .One student failed, and re-took the exam over the summer, passing on the second attempt.

MFA in Playwriting: All students who have taken comprehensive exams in the past five years have successfully passed them.

All MFA students have successfully completed their thesis production work (DR 860 for playwrights, DR 850 for directing). The evaluative tools for Acting are new to the program, and have not yet occurred.

### **Progression Data**

#### Comment on Enrollment:

Five years ago we determined that the graduate programs as then constituted were not attracting the best students. In an attempt to determine our best course of action, we spoke with people who had been accepted into the program and chose to go elsewhere, those who chose to attend CUA, and to professors at undergraduate institutions. We also reviewed other competitive programs to help determine best practices in graduate theatrical training. The resulting programs coordinate courses to make the best use of our faculty, and emphasizes the collaborative nature of theatre arts. We accept two playwrights and two directors at a time because of the programmatic obligation to produce thesis shows for each of them. We can sustain a maximum of four thesis productions in a given year, thus limiting the number of students we can accept. Our ideal acting company would be 10 (5 male, 5 female), however lack of competitive scholarship aid has limited our success in that area. Additional scholarship aid provided by the University for the incoming class should help mitigate this issue. With the current situation of a single full-time faculty member in theory/criticism, we limit the incoming MA class to 5.

The Masters of Arts in Theatre Education (MATE) was developed in conjunction with the Education department because of an increased interest nation-wide in programs specific to Drama Education. Utilizing existing Drama courses with only a select few additions, we have developed a program to train theatre educators in skills and best practices for teaching drama in secondary education. This track has been created so that someone can complete it in 1½ years, or take courses as they are able. It is now in its second year, and 1 student is scheduled to graduate as of December 2008. Our recruiting efforts are focusing on web contact and individual contact with regional drama teachers.

#### Comment on Passage of Comprehensive Exams: (see attachment A)

In the past five years only one student failed to pass comprehensive exams on the first attempt. His weakness in writing had not been aggressively monitored; the faculty now includes writing ability as part of the end of semester evaluations of all graduate students.

#### Comment on Time to Degrees/ Graduation Rates: (see attachment B)

The MFA programs in Acting and Directing require full-time participation, and completion in three years. In the past five years only one student has failed to successfully complete the program and was asked to leave based on the end of semester evaluations by the full-time faculty. His failure was based on a lack of professional skills. The MFA playwriting program has the flexibility for students to go part time, so there are currently two students who will take four years instead of three to graduate. They are both on track to complete their degrees on schedule. One playwriting student left after one year, having determined her interest lay in other forms of writing. One MA student has completed all coursework exclusive of thesis guidance and comprehensive exams, and is on a leave of absence. She plans to continue in the spring of 2009. All other graduate students have successfully completed their degrees on time.

### **Curricular Improvements**

Four years ago we stopped accepting new graduate students in the MFA Acting program while we revamped all three MFA programs, and integrated them with the MA program coursework. In the fall of 2006 we accepted two playwrights, two directors, and seven actors into the MFA programs. Under the new plan we accept MA, MATE, and MFA playwriting students every year, and actors and directors every three

years. We have closely monitored all of these programs for how well they work in conjunction with each other, and how the courses progress within each discipline. Because the curriculum has undergone an intense evaluation three years ago, major changes are not foreseen for the time being. We do plan an end of semester meeting to refine the programs before the new contingent of students arrives in the fall of 2009 based on student evaluations and faculty feedback.

The MATE program is in its second year. Because no one has completed the program to date, there is no meaningful data on these students. The faculty has continued to monitor the progress of the current students through the program so that we will be able to compile data for its first five years.

**Graduate Student Comps Exam Data  
Department of Drama (Cohort 2000-2007)**

**Master's Program**

**Comps**

| Cohort | Cohort Size | Passed MA comps in 2000-01 | Passed MA comps in 2001-02 | Passed MA comps in 2002-03 | Passed MA comps in 2003-04 | Passed MA comps in 2004-05 | Passed MA comps in 2005-06 | Passed MA comps in 2006-07 | Passed MA comps in 2007-08 |
|--------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2000   | 6           | 0                          | 3                          | 0                          | 0                          | 0                          | 0                          | 0                          | 0                          |
| 2001   | 3           |                            | 0                          | 2                          | 1                          |                            |                            |                            |                            |
| 2002   | 13          |                            |                            | 0                          | 9                          | 3                          | 0                          | 0                          | 0                          |
| 2003   | 16          |                            |                            |                            | 0                          | 9                          | 6                          | 1                          |                            |
| 2004   | 16          |                            |                            |                            |                            | 0                          | 7                          | 2                          | 1                          |
| 2005   | 5           |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            | 0                          | 0                          | 2                          |
| 2006   | 15          |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            | 0                          | 1                          |
| 2007   | 14          |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            | 1                          |

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session, the fall semester, or the spring semester the following year.  
For example, Cohort 2000 consists of the students first enrolled in Summer 2000, Fall 2000, or Spring 2001.

Attachment B

**Graduate Student Retention & Graduation Data Summary  
Department of Drama (Cohort 2000-2007)**

**Master's Program**

| Cohort | Number of entering master's students | Number of students who have not received a degree and did not maintain continuous enrollment | Number of students who enrolled in PhD program after receiving a master's degree | Number of students who passed comps | Graduated in 1st year | Graduated in 2nd year | Graduated in 3rd year | Graduated in 4th year | Graduated in 5th year | Graduated in 6th year | Graduated in 7th year | Graduated in 8th year |   |   |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 2000   | 6                                    | 3  | 0  | 3                                   | 0                     | 3                     | 0                     | 0                     | 0                     | 0                     | 0                     | 0                     |   |   |
| 2001   | 3                                    | 0  | 0  | 3                                   | 0                     | 2                     | 1                     | [Hatched Area]        |                       |                       |                       |                       |   |   |
| 2002   | 13                                   | 1  | 0  | 12                                  | 0                     | 9                     | 3                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       | 0 | 0 |
| 2003   | 16                                   | 0  | 0  | 16                                  | 0                     | 9                     | 6                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       | 1 |   |
| 2004   | 16                                   | 2  | 0  | 10                                  | 0                     | 10                    | 2                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       | 1 |   |
| 2005   | 5                                    | 0  | 0  | 2                                   | 0                     | 0                     | 4                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |   |   |
| 2006   | 15                                   | 3  | 0  | 1                                   | 0                     | 1                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |   |   |
| 2007   | 14                                   |  |  |                                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |   |   |

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session, the fall semester, or the spring semester the following year. For example, Cohort 2000 consists of the students first enrolled in Summer 2000, Fall 2000, or Spring 2001.