

**COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS**  
**Assessment Report for 2010-11**  
**B.F.A. Undergraduate Program Assessment Report**  
**Submitted to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts, December 2011**  
**Dr. Julie Jackson, Chair**

### **I Program Goals**

The broad-based program goals of the Department of Theatre support the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) with a major in Theatre and Emphasis areas in Performance and Production. The department will:

- Provide comprehensive curricula and experience in the practical, artistic, and intellectual foundations of theatre art and production
- Support the University's general academic mission by providing courses that stimulate critical and creative thinking in response to theatre literature and practice
- Broaden the context in which students measure themselves and their work in the world
- Prepare students to present competitive portfolios and a repertory of advanced skills necessary for entry level careers or advanced study in the performing arts and entertainment industry
- Present regular and varied programs in theatre and dance for the enrichment of the university and the community

### **II Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

1. Develop a basic technical vocabulary and the ability to apply transferable skills relevant to contemporary stage-craft, stage lighting, costume, makeup, stage management, acting, and directing.
2. Demonstrate mastery of higher order objectives (problem-solving skills) that call on individual analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in collaboration with peer artists and craftsmen in the production of theatre and performing arts.
3. Recognize and be able to describe, compare, and critique styles, crafts, conventions, philosophies, values, significant events, and key figures in the performing arts from a wide variety of historic periods and cultures.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to professional practice including etiquette and conventions, decorum, protocols, managerial chain of command, legal issues, and ethical standards specific to the performing arts and entertainment industry.

### **III Assessment Activities:**

Summary description of overall assessment activities:

The department maintained the same overall assessment activities described and reported in 2010:

The structure of our program supports a planned learning cycle, moving students from instruction, observation, and repetition in the core or basic skills courses (100-200 level) toward an increasing emphasis on conceptualization, critical thinking, and peer interaction at the intermediate level (200-300 level) and faculty mentored upper level work (400 level). Three program components are balanced at every level of the learning cycle: classroom work (academics), lab (application), and performance (demonstration). Student performance onstage and backstage is a synthesis of classroom and lab work that links foundation skills to higher order learning outcomes.

Direct qualitative assessment of Learning Outcomes one and two (basic skills and mastery of problem solving skills) in the area of performance are conducted in auditions held once every semester. Performance and production areas are assessed twice a semester in faculty evaluations of overall student achievement demonstrated onstage and backstage in the department's four season productions. Specific curricular adjustments result directly from observations conducted in audition and performance/production assessments. External evaluators critique individual student and ensemble achievement in all main stage productions by submission of a written response structured according to Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) guidelines. These solicited critiques may assess skills, problem solving in collaboration, professionalism, or on occasion, demonstrated comprehension of specific historic styles or cultures, depending on the nature of the production.

Sophomore Review is a non-credit portfolio and audition review and personal interview evaluated by the entire faculty. The review includes a comprehensive exam focused on outcomes one and four (basic skills and application of professional practice). Sophomore Review is considered to be a gate way to professional auditions and portfolio presentation and is therefore well suited to assess learning outcome number four, preparedness for professional practices and standards. The scoring of Sophomore Review is consistent with scoring methods applied to the Senior Project.

Off-campus internship evaluations submitted by employer's or host theatres may be used to assess all learning outcomes, but are uniquely suited in the assessment of number four. Internships are evaluated by an onsite supervisor. In 2010-11 all interns submitted regular journal entries via email and on their return to campus, prepared an informative presentation and question/answer session for faculty and students. Each intern submits a personal self-evaluation of the experience. Journal and narrative evaluations are effective tools for indirect as well as direct evaluation of student learning, but are not scored according to a numerical system and have no established benchmark.

The department actively supports student and faculty participation in the West Virginia Theatre Conference, South East Theatre Conference (SETC), and competitive auditions on a local, state and national level. Conference auditions and portfolio review are scored according to established protocols for each organization. Assessment Day 10 Minute Play Festival was instituted in 2008-09. This activity is focused on two learning outcomes: number two, mastery of higher order objectives (problem-solving skills) that call on individual analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in collaboration with peer artists and craftsmen, and number three, the ability to describe and critique performance styles from a variety of historic periods and cultures. 2010-11 was the third year in which groups of 5-7 students collaborated to create a five minute performance. However, instead of assigning a title based on a familiar script, one required prop, and an assortment of disparate elements assembled by the faculty, all groups were given the same generic dialogue and assigned a theatrical style and genre on which to improvise a 3-5 minute play. This ensemble performance was evaluated in the same four categories used in the past two years: knowledge of specific basic skills, problem-solving, demonstrated comprehension of specific dramatic styles, and the ability to divide and share responsibilities and authority. Discussion following the event served as an indirect assessment tool.

Assessment is not limited to the systematic tools outlined above. Overall assessment is ongoing, cumulative, multi-faceted, and pragmatic. Opportune or unanticipated assessment tools includes interviews with professional guest artists and visitors, graduate surveys and interviews, employer surveys, patron testimonials, performance critiques assigned in THE112 Theatre Appreciation, and audience satisfaction surveys.

#### **Assessment of Learning Outcome #4**

**Upon graduation students will demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to professional practice including etiquette and conventions, decorum, protocols, managerial chain of command, legal issues, and ethical standards specific to the performing arts and entertainment industry.**

Learning outcome #4 is measured in real world simulations on campus (Sophomore Review) and in the required professional internship and other off campus experiences. This outcome and its assessment are necessarily linked to learning outcome #1 since activities involve a non-academic application of basic technical vocabulary and transferable skills relevant to contemporary stage-craft, stage lighting, costume, makeup, stage management, acting, and directing.

Systematic assessment tools for this learning outcome include:

- a) **Sophomore Review**
- b) **Professional Internship supervisor response and self evaluation**
- c) **Regional and National auditions and portfolio submission**

**Assessment of Learning Outcome #4: a) Sophomore Review THE 295**

A. THE 295 Sophomore Review is the gateway to professional auditions including summer job and internship applications. This required no-credit course is evaluated on a pass/fail basis by the entire faculty. Each student submits the following for faculty evaluation:

- 100 point objective basic skills test based on foundation course work.
  - This test is taken in the first semester and repeated at the time of sophomore review. The results of the two tests are compared in order to assess effective teaching in the foundation classes.
- a portfolio presentation or professional audition
- letter of intent
- resume
- formal interview

Sophomore review is schedule on completion of all foundation courses. This usually falls in the spring semester of the second year. However, students with scheduling conflicts (honors, international study, and other issues) and junior level transfer students are allowed to complete course work in the fall semester.

The test continues to be administered at the beginning of the first semester and again at the time of the review for comparison. Test grades are collated with response forms completed by faculty during the review. In the past, faculty advisors and mentors worked with students individually over a period of four to five weeks to prepare the portfolio or audition. Students did not meet as a group and information and advice were repeated multiple times by multiple faculty members. This process was time consuming for the faculty and allowed no opportunity for peer to peer mentoring. With an anticipated 20% increase in enrollments we could see that it would become increasingly difficult to schedule the entire faculty for each individual review.

In 2010 sophomore review was scheduled for the first time at a required weekly meeting time (9:30 Friday morning). Students were given a class schedule with topics and assignments constructed to address specific and recurring deficiencies observed in past presentations. Contact hours were scheduled with all faculty members. The foundations test was administered at the first meeting. Subsequent meetings focused on resume presentation, interview attire and demeanor, job and audition applications/procedures with specific attention to possible internships and audition or portfolio presentation. The actor's head shot is as important as the audition itself and this element had proven to be a stumbling block in the past. Consequently, the department hired a professional photographer and students were encouraged to schedule a photo shoot at no charge to them. The formal review followed precedent and students were scheduled for half hour secessions over a period of two weeks. The evaluation rubric and subjective comments under the headings "resume," "letter of intent," and "interview" were consistent with the past.

#### B. Benchmarks

- Overall: 100% pass. Since this pass/fail review takes place midway into the program and students are allowed to rework and resubmit the portfolio or audition, all students who complete the course are expected to pass.
- Foundations test: An overall increase of 50% is expected between the foundation test administered in the first semester and the foundation test administered in the third semester (sophomore review). This benchmark is of long standing.
- First attempt foundations test: 80% of all students who register for THE 295 are expected to pass the foundations test on the first attempt.
- Portfolio/audition review: 90% of all students are expected to pass the portfolio/audition on the first attempt
- Graduation rate post THE 295: 100%. A significant dropout rate is expected prior to Sophomore Review as freshmen decide on another major or pursue new interests and opportunities on campus. However, THE 295 is, in a manner of speaking, the point of no return. Student's who pass this marker and do not graduate are not likely to complete an undergraduate degree.
- Graduation within 4 years: While the university has set an ideal benchmark of 100% graduation within four years, we cannot expect to achieve this goal due to an increasingly high number of

Marshall and transfer students who enter our four year BFA program at the sophomore or junior level. The current benchmark is therefore 85% completion within four years. The number reported below includes students who have already graduated and students now at the junior level in good standing.

### C. Result/Analysis

- Overall: Within the last four academic years (Fall 2008-Spring 2011), thirty nine (39) students have passed Sophomore Review: fourteen (14) production area students and twenty five (25) performance area students.

		Fall 2008	Spring 2007	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	SUMMARY RESULTS
Production	Passed sophomore review first attempt	0	1	1	2	5	0	1	3	14 production students completed THE295
	Portfolio resubmitted	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	1	
	Internship completed in the summer/fall following Sophomore Review	-	1	-	1	1	-	0	1	3 secured a professional internship in the first two semesters following completion
	Dropped out of the program	-	0	-	1	1	-	1	0	3 dropped the program
	Failed out of the program	-	0	-	0	1	-	0	0	1 failed the program
	Graduation rate	-	1	1	2	3	-	0	3	10 have or will graduate
	Anticipated graduation within 4 years	-	1	1	0	1	-	0	3	6 have or will graduate within 4 years
Performance	Passed sophomore review	2	5	1	7	0	5	2	3	25 performance students completed THE 295
	Audition resubmitted	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	
	Internship completed in the summer/fall following Sophomore Review	1	3	1	4	-	5	1	3	18 secured a professional internship in the first two semesters following completion
	Dropped out of the program	1*	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	1 dropped *1 student took a year off
	Failed out of the program	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0
	Graduation rate	2	4	1	7	-	5	2	3	24 have or will graduate
	Anticipated graduation within 4 years	2	2	1	5	-	5	2	3	20 will graduate within 4 years

- Portfolio/Audition: benchmark met. 100% passed THE 295. Over this four year period, one production area student successfully resubmitted a portfolio. The final portfolio exceeded expectations and reinforced the importance and effectiveness of the faculty review.

Successful completion of Sophomore Review is directly linked to the ability of our students to compete for summer and fall internships. The weakest element in auditions has traditionally been the professional head shot. This is significant because an invitation to audition is often based on the headshot. In spring 2009 and 2010 a photographer was hired to provide students with professional quality headshots at no cost to the individual student. This addition was a significant improvement and all but one performance student successfully auditioned or applied for summer/fall internships following completion of sophomore review. The department will continue to provide a photographer in the spring semester.

Eighteen (18) of twenty five (25) performance area students completed the internship in the summer/fall following sophomore review and all were favorably reviewed as “well prepared” by the employer. Three (3) of fourteen (14) production area students completed a professional internship in the summer/fall following completion of THE 295 and all were reviewed as “well prepared” by the employer. Clearly, failure to complete an internship by the senior year has a

negative effect on the student's ability to graduate within four years. The reasons for low completion in the production area may indicate a weakness in the program. However, seven (8) of fourteen (14) production area students who graduated within the last four years were full or part time employees of Marshall Auditoria during the summer and twelve (12) were part time employees of the department and Auditoria during the academic year. Students who accept full time employment on campus during the summer are given priority in hiring during the academic year. This opportunity, though valuable as a learning experience, may discourage production area students from aggressively seeking a professional internship in the junior year.

- Foundations test: benchmark exceeded. 100% of students improved 52-64% between the first semester and the third semester.
  - Individual grades over a four year period average 85.5% with a mean of 80-81%. There is a significant disparity between high and low achievers.
  - Junior transfer students (students who have not completed foundation classes at Marshall) achieve 90% or higher. This ranking is consistent with our high achieving students. In the next three years we will have opportunities to compare the performance of transfer students to that of students who have come through our program.
- First attempt foundations test: benchmark exceeded. 90% of continuing students who take the foundations test pass on the first attempt.
- Graduation rate of students who have completed THE 295: benchmark not met. Of thirty nine (39) students who passed THE 295, four (4) production area and one (1) performance area student did not complete the program. This number is not statistically significant, but it is troubling. Students who fail to graduate after sophomore review are highly unlikely to complete the undergraduate degree in any other field. While illness or a family crisis was the likely cause of several withdrawals, Sophomore Review is intended to identify and address such issues prior to successful completion.
- Graduation within 4 years : benchmark not met.
  - 42% of graduating production area students graduated or will graduate within four years
  - 80% of graduating performance area students graduated or will graduate within four years

#### D. Analysis/Planned action

- In spring 2011, Sophomore Review was substantially revised to include weekly group meetings and contact hours with all faculty. Students and faculty agreed that this worked well in comparison to the difficulty of scheduling individual meetings.
- Students agreed that the addition of a professional photographer for head shots was significant. Also, in the future we plan to include visiting professionals and theatre artists in THE 295 and to expand assignments and mentoring in the application process for internships. We continue to develop a list of professional internship opportunities.
- 20% of production area students and 72% of performance area students completed the professional internship in the summer or fall following completion of Sophomore Review. This low completion rate is a significant problem because the internship is directly linked to a student's ability to complete the program within four years. Faculty will review and increase mentoring for the internship application process with the intention of achieving a benchmark of 80% completion of the required internship prior to the senior year.
- Until 2010, all portfolios and auditions were presented in the traditional manner. In fall 2011, the department purchased software that allows each student to maintain an online digital portfolio and resume, including links to digital auditions and design projects. Faculty will develop on-line support for the application and audition process and mentor students in developing digital presentations.
- In 2009-10, the chair developed a new tracking sheet for the theatre major and a four year course rotation which guarantees that all students will have an opportunity to complete required courses

within a four year period. Advisors will explain that certain required courses are available to them only once in the four year period. The department expects to substantially improve the four-year graduation rate, particularly among production area students.

- In 2011-12 the foundations test will be revised and updated to include new course material in the foundation classes.

#### **Assessment of Learning Outcome #4: b) Professional Internship THE 490**

- A. All students are required to complete a four credit hour theatre internship, usually in the summer or fall following Sophomore Review. The internship must be completed in a professional production company under the supervision of a working professional and be of six or more weeks duration. Students may request that a professional workshop course be substituted for employment. Course materials and evaluation include:
- Professional evaluation: Internships are evaluated by the professional supervisor on a formal ten-point scale and written assessment
  - Journal: personal record of the experience
  - Presentation: Students prepare a 'show and tell' for faculty and peers upon completion of the internship. This presentation includes a self evaluation of the experience.

The program is viewed as highly successful. Students have completed internships across the country and in Italy and London. For example, in summer of 2011, students completed professional internships at:

Highlands Playhouse, Highlands NC  
Eagles Landing Camp, Coconut Creek FL  
Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre, Grand Lake CO  
Black Hills Playhouse, Custer SD  
Weathervane Playhouse, Newark OH

Paramount Arts Center, Ashland KY  
Disney World, Orlando FL  
Flat Rock Playhouse, Flat Rock NC  
SECOA Theatre Equipment Systems Integration,  
Champlin MN

#### B. Benchmarks

- Professional evaluation: 100% of students should achieve 80% or higher on the supervisor's numerical evaluation. 100% of students should receive positive written evaluations.
- Presentation and self reflection: 90% of all students should view the experience as significant in terms of professional advancement. Not all internships positions are of equal value to the students but the experience should be viewed as of high value.

#### C. Results/Analysis

- Professional evaluation Internships: benchmark exceeded. In the four year period 100% of supervisor's evaluations were very good. Evaluations in 2010-11 exceeded our highest expectations and the mean quantitative evaluation was 9.0 or 90%. Supervisor comments were extraordinary and are now posted on our website. Examples:
  - "His openness, grounded core and ability to take direction combined with a hunger for art, musicals and learning was inspiring. **Rarely do we get this level of professionalism from an actor this young**"
  - "He was not afraid to research and try something new and different, fitting in well with the environment of the engineering and project management departments. **He came to our firm with some basic electronic drafting skills; he left with a much broader skill set** and an appreciation for drafting as a communication tool."
  - "This was the first opportunity for me to work with a student from Marshall. If he is a testament of even a small percentage of your students, **we will be keeping a sharp look out for Marshall on resumes and may also be interested in an on campus audition/workshop.**"
- Presentation and self evaluation: benchmark met. Presentations and self evaluation are, without exception, very high. Returning students invariably site the experience as 'life changing.' One

production area student reported significant problems in dealing with an immediate supervisor, but the student viewed this as a valuable introduction to the profession. The overall supervisor who evaluated this student was extremely positive.

D. Analysis/planned action

- Communication between faculty mentors and students during the internship needs to be more carefully defined. Students are unsure what they should be reporting. In addition, faculty members are researching the possibility of utilizing Blackboard for greater peer to peer mentoring.
- The main area of concern is the internship application process. In the past, many students have tended to “put all their eggs in one basket” and have applied for positions sequentially rather than make several applications at the same time. The result is that in May a few students always find themselves without a position. Faculty are developing projects to augment this process in Sophomore Review and will encourage students to begin the process much earlier in the year.
- The internship is a financial burden to many of our students. It often requires travel and loss or substantial decrease in summer income. The department is considering ways to provide financial assistance for unpaid internships and is actively seeking paid internships.
- Anecdotally, many students are subsequently employed by the theatre or organization where they completed the internship. The department should develop a tool for measuring the link between the internship and employment post graduation.

**Assessment of Learning Outcome #4: c) Participation in competitive regional and national auditions**

- A. Three program components are balanced at every level of the learning cycle: classroom work (academics), lab (application), and performance (demonstration). Student performance onstage and backstage is a complex synthesis of classroom and lab work directly linked to higher order learning outcomes. Individual and ensemble achievement in production and performance are regularly evaluated by state, regional, and national auditions. Both emphasis areas are also evaluated by unbiased, external observers who adjudicate Marshall Theatre season productions
- B. Benchmarks We anticipate that 100% of students who pass Sophomore Review will complete the internship. We anticipate that at least 40% of juniors and seniors who audition at the fall WV screening will pass on to the SETC conference in spring. Of these, we look for 80% placement for summer internships or jobs. However, there are far too many variables at play—nature of the competitive pool, biased judges, travel issues, illness, economic cutbacks in theatre budgets—to determine a reliable numerical base for off campus auditions and portfolio submissions.
- C. Result/Analysis In fall 2010, two (2) of seven (7) students who auditioned for WV screening were passed on to audition at the SETC spring conference. For the second year in a row, several of our most talented and dedicated actors were disqualified. Faculty who witnessed the auditions felt that judging was poorly structured. However, in fall 2011 students were offered individual mentoring and encouraged to organize carpools to attend regional auditions. As a result, 53% of MU students who auditioned were passed (a 250% increase over the previous year) whereas only 35% of all students who auditioned in the state of WV were passed. This data will be included in next year’s assessment report, but it is a significant indicator that improvements to audition preparation have had a positive effect.
- D. Analysis/planned action. SETC remains an excellent source for student internships. However, the department has taken significant steps to advertise and encourage participation in other competitive regional and national auditions in major cities (Florida, Baltimore, Atlanta, St Louis, Chicago, Texas, Indiana, DC) and under other organizations, including Top Hat (musical theatre) and U/RTA (resident theatre association). Faculty will develop better guidelines and mentoring for production area applications, particularly for paid internships. We will continue to update the Internship bulletin board and email announcements of upcoming performance and production opportunities and invitations to apply for internship positions. All theatre majors are required to attend a presentation by returning interns and this event has significantly increased general knowledge about the process. We will develop additional opportunities for peer exchange of information and advice on the internship process.

Faculty will evaluate opportunities and barriers to with the timely completion of an internship in the production area. This is a high priority for the department.

**IV. Overview of changes implemented in your program this past year based on results and planned action specified in last year's report.**

The department addressed participation in West Virginia regional screening auditions which take place in fall. Students met regularly with a faculty mentor and organized carpools for transportation. Peer mentoring was promoted.

In 2011 we posted an audition and internship list on our web site under the heading Student Resources. Students are regularly emailed about upcoming auditions and production positions. In summer four interns 2011 obtained the position through a venue other than SETC. Students are increasingly interested in fall and spring professional internships. While this might make a four year graduation difficult, the professional experience is viewed as invaluable.

In order to improve communication for Marshall Theatre Alliance productions and give our students the opportunity to develop an on line portfolio, the department subscribed to Show Hub in fall 2011. This software and data base will be evaluated at the end of the year.

The syllabus for THE 201 Critical Analysis of theatre literature in performance has been revised and will be directly linked to the Assessment Day activity in 2012.

**V. Specify any changes/modifications made to your program based specifically on data obtained during Assessment Day Activities.**

In spring 2011 we repeated the 5 Minute Play contest. Changes and innovations were not as successful as hoped. In addition, we have not solved the challenge of providing a meaningful experience for the high number of students who volunteered to participate. As a consequence, the data collected was not readable. In 2012, the event will be directly linked to course work and be adjusted to accommodate all students.

**VI. No assistance needed.**

**Marshall University**  
**Assessment of Program's Student Learning Outcomes for the Department of Theatre**  
**2011**

Not every student learning outcome must be assessed every year. However, it is expected that at least one-fourth of the outcomes will be assessed each year, allowing for assessment of all outcomes within a four-year cycle. It also is important to use more than one assessment measure for each outcome.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
#1 Develop a basic technical vocabulary and the ability to apply transferable skills relevant to contemporary stage-craft, stage lighting, costume, makeup, stage management, acting, and directing	2006/2007	Sophomore Review  Tech Olympics			
#2 Demonstrate mastery of higher order objectives (problem-solving skills) that call on individual analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in collaboration with peer artists and craftsmen in the production of theatre and performing arts	2008 /2009	Assessment Day Play festival  Adjudication and audition	Assessment Day: 70% participation 80% success	Assessment Day: 70% participation 90%+ success	Measurement tool will be refined to include technical aspects of production  THE201 critical analysis introduced to the curriculum

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
#3: Recognize and be able to describe, compare, and critique styles, crafts, conventions, philosophies, values, significant events, and key figures in the performing arts from a wide variety of historic periods and cultures	2009/2010	Assessment Day  Adjudication and audition  National auditions and internship placement and evaluation	Assessment Day: 70% participation 80% success	Assessment Day: 90% participation 80% success	Syllabus for THE201 will be adjusted to emphasize critical skills  Development of a Theatre Resource Center within the department with over 1,000 texts available to students and faculty.  Returning theatre interns and all majors participate in a Q&A secession to explore how the position was obtained, what it was like, and who might be interested in future.
#4. Demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to professional practice including etiquette and conventions, decorum, protocols, managerial chain of command, legal issues, and ethical standards specific to the performing arts and entertainment industry.	2010 /2011	Sophomore review        Internship   Competitive national auditions and portfolio review	100% pass 50% improvement on foundations test  100% successful graduation post sophomore review  80% completion in four years  100% positive evaluation  40% pass regional screening to SETC national auditions	100% pass  100%  90% graduation  60% completion in four years  100% positive evaluation  30% passed in 2010 50+% passed in 2111	Increase opportunities to interact with theatre professionals and on-line resume and portfolio  Continue to develop a plan to screen students prior to THE 295  Increase attention to course rotation and completion of the internship in the summer of the junior year  Increase peer to peer mentoring and application opportunities  Increase peer to peer mentoring and application opportunities
	20__ / __				

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
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