

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

Theatre (245) and Dance (244)

College of Arts and Sciences / Creative and Performing Arts

Prepared by: Brett Garfinkel

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Approved by: Greg Handel

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

NSU Theatre and Dance Mission. The NSU Theatre and Dance Program of the Northwestern Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts seeks to assist students with the acquisition of skills and knowledge in theatrical and dance arts necessary to meet their professional, social and personal needs. Through interaction of the arts, Northwestern Theatre and Dance desires to broaden the possibilities of self-development for all students and extend its influence in the region served by the University, thus culturally enriching the area.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (direct & indirect and quantitative & qualitative) are collected and returned to the Department Head.
- (2) The Department Head will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the faculty.

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

(4) The Department Head, in consultation with Advisory Committee, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Theatre and Dance

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Students will communicate all areas of performing arts through creative application in performance, direction, stage design and technology, musical theatre and dance.

Measure 1.1.

(Direct Knowledge) Theatre/Dance coursework maintains criteria focused on student's ability to communicate theatre/dance subject matter. The target is to have 80% of students attain a final grade of $\geq 70\%$ in all skill-based classes.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty found creative ways to have guest lectures join class discussions through WebEx and/or Zoom. Utilizing new media sources, videos and technology in their courses, faculty engaged students with new course content. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, iPads were given to the department to assist with the implementation of new technology. Students were sometimes quarantined and needed to attend class virtually. This technology also assisted in having Hyflex courses by only having half of the class in person and the other half at home or in a different space to allow for more space in the classroom, studio or shop.

As a result of these changes, in 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, eighty-five (85%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 70\%$ in all skill-based classes. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to communicate theatre/dance subject matter.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In the Costume Design course larger projects will be broken down into multiple smaller projects that will build up into one final project. In technical theatre new projects will be explored that interest the students to keep them engaged. Shop hours and hands on projects will return as part of the course requirements in Introduction to Theatre Arts to assist incoming students in solidifying their learning. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact on the student's ability to communicate theatre/dance subject matter.

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

Measure 1.2.

(Knowledge/Skill/Ability) Theatre/Dance productions maintain criteria focused on student's ability to communicate theatre/dance subject matter. The target is to have 80% of students attain a grade of $\geq 75\%$ on all written assignments.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty implemented the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty challenged students in theatre performance by having them work on character development that was out of their comfort zone. In technical theatre, students learned new skills in areas they did not already know or were familiar with. Dance faculty introduced different styles of dance to challenge the ability of learning movement quickly. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, English faculty made regular guest lectures in classes to help assist in the students' understanding of necessary college writing skills. In Dance History a 10-page research paper assignment was broken down in several steps before writing the paper to help the students not feel overwhelmed, this helped students understand how to structure a research paper.

As a result of these changes, in 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, eighty-eight (88%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 80\%$ on all written assignments. These changes had a direct impact of enrolled students to communicate learned skills in their performance and creative experiences through collaborative process, implementation of skills learned in the classroom translated to performance.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Theatre History professor will return to co-teach the Introduction to Theatre Arts course giving students a more solid foundation of writing skills necessary at the college level. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact on students to communicate learned skills in their performance and creative experiences through collaborative process, implementation of skills learned in the classroom translated to performance.

SLO 2. Students will exhibit a working knowledge of history in the performing arts, dramatic literature, theatre and dance criticism and collaborative processes.

Measure 2.1.

(Direct Knowledge) Theatre/Dance coursework maintains criteria focused on student's ability to exhibit a working knowledge of history in the performing arts, dramatic literature, theatre and dance criticism and collaborative processes. The target is to have 75% of students attain a final grade of $\geq 75\%$ in all courses related

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

to the history of Theatre & Dance.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty implemented the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty took students on trips to Shreveport to see showings of the National Theatre Live productions but only in the fall semester, travel restrictions came into play because of safety concerns with COVID-19. Faculty were trained on new technology in the classroom, utilized the Smartboard and enhanced class instruction with more interactive technology that increased student engagement in the history of Theatre & Dance topics. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, the program used new databases from the library website to be able to show historical dance videos. Curriculum in Theatre History courses was updated to take on a global perspective.

As a result of these changes, in 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, eighty-five (85%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 75\%$ in all courses related to the history of Theatre & Dance. These changes had a direct impact of student's ability to exhibit a working knowledge of history in the performing arts.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The new Theatre History professor has offered new ideas on how to engage students in history by revamping the curriculum; utilizing underrepresented plays by marginalized playwrights and deciding that the History courses do not need to be taken in succession. The next time Dance History is taught more time will be given in class to watch important works. The next time Costume History is taught more images of people of color will be incorporated into the slideshow to help students feel represented and included. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact of student's ability to exhibit a working knowledge of history in the performing arts.

Measure 2.2

(Knowledge/Skill/Ability) Theatre/Dance productions allow students to exhibit skills learned in their coursework. The target is to have 75% of students attain a grade of $\geq 75\%$ in course assignments.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis: In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty implemented the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The department produced shows/performances that pushed students in new ways. Faculty trained and taught students how to be better prepared

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

for shows/performances. If faculty did not have the skills necessary, they sought out guest artists that could teach a master class for the department. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, the program had a difficult time with exposure to COVID, two shows were cancelled because of it. The department then decided to create virtual cabaret performances utilizing the students that were cast in the cancelled shows. After editing the videos, they were released to patrons, faculty, staff, students and on social media platforms. An alumnus of the Theatre & Dance program, Gregory Williams, Jr. was hired to direct a play written by an African American playwright; the play was rehearsed and performed virtually.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, eighty-six (86%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 75\%$ in course assignments. These changes had a direct impact on students to exhibit skills learned in their coursework.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The process for season selection will be defined more clearly to include student suggestions along with faculty proposals. The casting policy will be re-evaluated to be more equitable and inclusive. Favoritism among performers has proven to be a concern, a new practice of casting performers a director has never worked with will help alleviate that tension. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact on students to exhibit skills learned in their coursework.

SLO 3. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, interpret, create and develop a unique point of view on theatrical and dance topics.

Measure 3.1.

(Direct Knowledge) Theatre/Dance coursework maintains criteria focused on student's ability to develop analytical skills. The target is to have 70% of students attain a grade of $\geq 75\%$ in written assignments, presentations or projects of an analytical nature.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty implemented the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty created more ways for students to showcase their analytical skills through writing assignments in the area of interest to the student. The faculty encouraged students to research and present material not only in classes but on research day and other conference opportunities. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, the faculty allowed students to choose a play, musical or dance work that they were interested in as a topic for a writing assignment. The faculty offered suggestions on how students could get involved with virtual conferences and presentations; with most conferences being held virtual and at a

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

discounted rate this allowed more of our students to participate in these events.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, we found that eighty-four (84%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 75\%$ in written assignments, presentations or projects of an analytical nature. These changes had a direct impact on student's ability to develop analytical skills.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will remind and encourage students to read assignments and deadlines more carefully. In Script Analysis weekly quizzes will be given to assure that the reading of course material is being completed. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will improve the student's confidence in their ability to develop analytical skills.

Measure 3.2

(Knowledge/Skill/Ability) Theatre/Dance productions help develop a unique point of view on theatrical and dance topics. The target is to have 80% of students attain a grade of $\geq 75\%$ in written assignments, presentations, or projects of a unique point of view.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The department continued to offer Donor Only performances and built closer ties to the community through special events like these for the fall semester and only two shows in the spring. Faculty came up with new ways to have students become more engaged with the community. Faculty encouraged students to stand behind their convictions and present their views in an educated way with examples to justify their views. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, two faculty emeriti were asked to teach for the Fall semester giving students the opportunity to learn from new faculty and appreciate a different teaching style. A new doctoral theatre history faculty member was hired for the Spring semester and completely reorganized the curriculum for the history courses to include a global perspective this helped solidify the student's unique point of view of different theatre productions.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, eighty-seven (87%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 75\%$ in written assignments, presentations, or projects of a unique point of view. These changes had a direct impact on student's ability to develop a unique point of view on theatrical and dance topics.

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The program will seek to find new and unique projects that help students to develop a unique point of view. Students need to be encouraged from the start of college on how to develop their own ideas and perspectives rather than just right and wrong answers, to achieve this, more time will be given in the course Introduction to Theatre Arts to teach students the foundation of developing their own ideas. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will improve the student's ability to develop a unique point of view on theatrical and dance topics.

SLO 4. Students will demonstrate their competency by exhibiting productions/performances for evaluation, portfolio reviews, juries, and/or by successful placement in approved internships/employment and/or continued education.

Measure 4.1.

(Direct Knowledge/Skill/Ability) Demonstration of knowledge and skills through practical application. The target is to have 85% of students attain a final grade of $\geq 85\%$ on their capstone experience courses.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The department reevaluated the capstone courses making sure the experience is an accurate culmination of knowledge and skills in Theatre & Dance program. Faculty mentored students in preparing professional portfolios and digital audition packages to assist in students submitting material for internships, summer positions, regional theatre positions, amusement park & cruise ship jobs as well as graduate school application materials. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, the department had to rethink the way the shows were produced due to COVID exposure; the capstone performances in the Fall semester were all virtual. Remaining diligent on reminders about due dates of assignments helped students succeed during a fluctuating semester. Faculty allowed time in class to work on assignments and offered feedback during the process that helped maintain their focus on deadlines.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, eighty-eight (88%) of the students achieved a final grade of $\geq 85\%$ on their capstone experience courses. These changes had a direct impact on student's demonstration of knowledge and skills through practical application.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Students will be given more opportunities to practice presenting their portfolio and/or audition

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

package to faculty more regularly for feedback. Practice interviews will be given to students for them to learn to become more comfortable in a different professional setting around different faculty where they will need to talk professionally about their craft. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact on student's demonstration of knowledge and skills through practical application.

SLO 5. Students will develop an appreciation and accepting attitude towards social responsibility, respect for the art, artistic standards and judgment, professional discipline and interaction with other communities and cultures.

Measure 5.1.

(Direct Knowledge) Theatre/Dance coursework maintains criteria focused on student's growth and appreciation of their art and craft and their place as an artist in society. The target is to have 70% of students attain a grade of $\geq 75\%$ in their disposition and professionalism as well as their understanding of how performances affect and impact the community.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The department came up with new ways for students to see the impact of their work on local communities by inviting different groups of people in the community to the department to engage in an open dialogue with students about the importance of theatre and dance in their lives. Faculty reached out to different organizations that foster relationships with college artists and allowed for the students to connect with other artists in their community. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, the department could not have different groups from the community come into the department during the fall semester due to COVID. Community engagement and involvement was mainly handled through social medial outlets. During the Spring semester when COVID guidelines loosened, live performances were able to resume. Students presented their class projects in a formal manner giving them experience in their professionalism. Students in the course Stagecraft who are performers were able to see the effort of technicians and learn the valuable work that goes into all aspects of productions, this helped develop a mutual respect and professionalism needed in theatre.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, ninety (90%) of the students achieved a grade of $\geq 75\%$ in their disposition and professionalism as well as their understanding of how performances affect and impact the community. These changes had a direct impact on student's growth and appreciation of their art and craft and their place as an artist in society.

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will place more of an emphasis on showing up to class on time, attending all classes and practicing/rehearsing on assignments outside of class time. Directors and choreographers will re-evaluate policies regarding scholarship deductions for arriving late to a rehearsal or missing an important meeting. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact on student's growth and appreciation of their art and craft and their place as an artist in society.

Measure 5.2.

(Knowledge/Skill/Ability) Participation in theatre/dance productions allow students to develop an appreciation of their social responsibilities as artists and crafts-persons. The target is to have 80% of students attain a grade of $\geq 80\%$ in Applied Theatre, Dance Theatre Technology, Dance Performance or Dance Production Courses.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The department focused on the development of social, artistic, and cultural awareness through new productions. The department looked into having new musicals or plays performed. Faculty suggested new shows they have seen or heard that will focus on these topics. Faculty explored ways of involving students in community outreach. In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, the program brought in a guest director to direct a play written by an African American playwright. Faculty had open discussions in some courses focusing on social issues regarding their art form. Community outreach was difficult to achieve this year due to the pandemic.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, eighty-nine (89%) of the students achieved a grade of $\geq 80\%$ in Applied Theatre, Dance Theatre Technology, Dance Performance or Dance Production Courses. These changes had a direct impact on students to develop an appreciation of their social responsibilities as artists and crafts-persons.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The department will invest in creating an account with New Play Exchange website to offer the NSU community (faculty, staff and students across the entirety of campus) access to new plays by new playwrights. The program is commissioning Del Shores, a Hollywood Director, to write an original play for students that is age appropriate and based off their personalities. Since the target has been met for the past two years both percentages of the target will be increased for the next academic year. These changes will have a direct impact on students to develop an appreciation of their

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

social responsibilities as artists and crafts-persons.

Comprehensive Summary of Key evidence of seeking improvement based on the analysis of the results.

- iPads were given to the department to assist with the implementation of new technology. Students were sometimes quarantined and needed to attend class virtually.
- This technology also assisted in having Hyflex courses by only having half of the class in person and the other half at home or in a different space to allow for more space in the classroom, studio or shop.
- English faculty made regular guest lectures in classes to help assist in the students' understanding of necessary college writing skills.
- In Dance History a 10-page research paper assignment was broken down in several steps before writing the paper to help the students not feel overwhelmed, this helped students understand how to structure a research paper.
- The program used new databases from the library website to be able to show historical dance videos.
- Curriculum in Theatre History courses was updated to take on a global perspective.
- The program had a difficult time with exposure to COVID, two shows were cancelled because of it.
- The department then decided to create virtual cabaret performances utilizing the students that were cast in the cancelled shows.
- After editing the videos, they were released to patrons, faculty, staff, students and on social media platforms.
- An alumnus of the Theatre & Dance program, Gregory Williams, Jr. was hired to direct a play written by an African American playwright; the play was rehearsed and performed virtually.
- The faculty allowed students to choose a play, musical or dance work that they were interested in as a topic for a writing assignment.
- The faculty offered suggestions on how students could get involved with virtual conferences and presentations; with most conferences being held virtual and at a discounted rate this allowed more of our students to participate in these events.
- Two faculty emeriti were asked to teach for the Fall semester giving students the opportunity to learn from new faculty and appreciate a different teaching style.
- A new doctoral theatre history faculty member was hired for the Spring semester and completely reorganized the curriculum for the history courses to include a global perspective this helped solidify the student's unique point of view of different theatre productions.

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

- The department had to rethink the way the shows were produced due to COVID exposure; the capstone performances in the Fall semester were all virtual.
- Remaining diligent on reminders about due dates of assignments helped students succeed during a fluctuating semester.
- Faculty allowed time in class to work on assignments and offered feedback during the process that helped maintain their focus on deadlines.
- The department could not have different groups from the community come into the department during the fall semester due to COVID.
- Community engagement and involvement was mainly handled through social media outlets.
- During the Spring semester when COVID guidelines loosened, live performances were able to resume.
- Students presented their class projects in a formal manner giving them experience in their professionalism.
- Students in the course Stagecraft who are performers were able to see the effort of technicians and learn the valuable work that goes into all aspects of productions, this helped develop a mutual respect and professionalism needed in theatre.
- The program brought in a guest director to direct a play written by an African American playwright.
- Faculty had open discussions in some courses focusing on social issues in regard to their art form.

Plan of action moving forward.

- In the Costume Design course larger projects will be broken down into multiple smaller projects that will build up into one final project.
- In technical theatre new projects will be explored that interest the students to keep them engaged. These changes improved the student's ability to communicate theatre/dance subject matter.
- Shop hours and hands on projects will return as part of the course requirements in Introduction to Theatre Arts to assist incoming students in solidifying their learning.
- The Theatre History professor will return to co-teach the Introduction to Theatre Arts course giving students a more solid foundation of writing skills necessary at the college level.
- Creating major specific core classes has been discussed to see if our students respond better by working with faculty that appreciate artistic minded students.
- A new Theatre History professor has offered new ideas on how to engage

AC 2020 – 2021 Assessment

students in history; utilizing underrepresented plays by marginalized playwrights and deciding that the History courses do not need to be taken in succession.

- The next time Dance History is taught more time will be given in class to watch important works.
- The next time Costume History is taught more images of people of color will be incorporated into the slideshow to help students feel represented and included.
- The process for season selection will be changed to include student input.
- The casting policy will be re-evaluated to be more equitable and inclusive.
- Favoritism among performers has proven to be a concern, a new practice of casting performers a director has never worked with should help alleviate that tension.
- Faculty will remind and encourage students to read assignments more carefully.
- In Script Analysis weekly quizzes will be given to assure that the reading of course material is being completed.
- The program will seek to find new and unique projects that force students to develop a unique point of view.
- Students need to be encouraged from the start of college on how to develop their own ideas and perspectives rather than just right and wrong answers, to achieve this, more time will be given in the course Introduction to Theatre Arts to teach students the foundation of developing their own ideas.
- Students will be given more opportunities to practice presenting their portfolio and/or audition package to faculty more regularly for feedback.
- Practice interviews will be given to students for them to learn to become more comfortable in a different professional setting around different faculty where they will need to talk professionally about their craft.
- Faculty will place more an emphasis on showing up to class on time, attending all classes and practicing/rehearsing on assignments outside of class time.
- Directors and choreographers will re-evaluate policies in regard to scholarship deductions for arriving late to a rehearsal or missing an important meeting.
- The department will invest in creating an account with New Play Exchange website to offer the NSU community (faculty, staff and students across the entirety of campus) access to new plays by new playwrights.
- The program is commissioning Del Shores, a Hollywood Director, to write an original play for students that is age appropriate and based off their personalities.