

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)
REPORT ON: DRAMATIC ART
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
 May 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review Preparation

In preparing this document, the Program Development Committee reviewed the following: Dramatic Art's Self-Study (SS) (2014/15), the report of the external reviewers (ER) (July 2015), the response from the Director (DIR) (October 2015), and the response from the Dean (DR) (December 2015) to the above material. The external reviewers were: Dr. Tracy Davis, Barber Professor of Performing Arts, Professor of English & Theatre, and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Graduate School, Northwestern University, Evanston Illinois; Dr. David Fancy, Associate Professor, Department of Dramatic Arts, Graduate Program Director, MA in Studies in Comparative Literatures and Arts, Brock University; and Dr. Laurie Freeman-Gibb, Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Windsor.

Undergraduate Programs

The School of Dramatic Art (SODA) offers an Honours Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Drama in Education and Community, and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Drama. In addition, the School collaborates with the Department of Communication, Media and Film to offer a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Drama and Communication, Media and Film. Students also have the option of combining their Honours Drama major with a major from another discipline.

Third-year students who choose not to pursue the fourth year of the program may apply to graduate with a General Bachelor of Arts in Drama. There are no admissions to the General program, rather it is a graduation option at the end of year three.

The School is a partner in the delivery of the Arts Management Certificate and offers Major and Minor Concentrations in Drama for the Bachelor of Arts and Science.

The School does not offer any graduate programs.

Enrolments

Undergraduate - Total

	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Full-Time	278.8	259.6	261.42	240.36	217.87
Part-Time	33	33	28.29	24	19

Undergraduate – By Program

	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
BFA: Acting – Full-Time	81	77	80	74	80
BFA: Acting – Part-Time	7	8	8	6	4
BA (Hons) in Drama in Education and Community – Full-Time	92	90	86	74	69
BA (Hons) in Drama in Education and Community – Part-Time	6	12	4	5	4
BA (Hons) in Drama – Full-Time	55	46	47	46	30
BA (Hons) in Drama – Part-Time	8	6	6	7	6

BA (Hons) in Drama and Communication, Media and Film – Full-Time (Drama’s portion)	28	29.5	27.5	27	22
BA (Hons) in Drama and Communication, Media and Film – Part-Time (Drama’s portion)	3.5	3	5	2.5	1.5
BA (Combined Hons) in Drama – Full-Time	14	11.5	10	9	10.5
BA (Combined Hons) in Drama – Part-Time	1.5	2	3	1.5	1.5

Human Resources

Faculty/Instructors

Tenure/tenure-track faculty	11 (including Director, Assistant Vice-President, North American Recruitment, Director of Humanities Research Group, and one vacant tenure-track position)
Limited-term appointments	1
Faculty members with graduate faculty status	3

Full/Part-time Staff

Assistant to Costume Designer	1
Costume Designer	1
Marketing and Box Office Coordinator	1
Master Carpenter Technician	1
Property and Scenic Painting Coordinator	1
Scenic Designer/Artist	1
Secretary	.75
Secretary to Director	1
Technical and Production Coordinator	1

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (with Implementation Plan)

Significant Strengths of the Programs

The reviewers noted that the School has very dedicated faculty and staff members, willing to go the extra mile(s) to provide students with an exceptional undergraduate experience. For instance, students across all programs can obtain individualized for-credit production-related experiences, offered by faculty members as voluntary overload because they are committed to program excellence and student achievement despite limited resources. “[The] flexibility [of the technical staff] and [their] acumen as supervisors of students fulfilling mandatory production labs, mentors to BA Honours students developing aptitude in a particular technical area, managers of budgets and shops, and in some cases also designers of productions and teachers of classes and advisors on independent studies is awe-inspiring.” (ER, p.9)

The low attrition rates and good time to completion rates across all programs speak to the quality of the programs and the quality of the student experience offered by the School. (ER, p.10)

The Jackman Dramatic Art Centre with its state-of-the-art classroom facilities, Essex Hall Theatre, the Studio Theatre and new production and classroom space in Essex Hall all contribute to the strengths of the programs, though “an ongoing space audit and facilities renewal plan is clearly needed.” (ER, pp.2-3)

Opportunities for Program Improvement/Enhancements

The reviewers noted that “[a]t this specific point in its evolution, key pathways forward in the areas of curricular renewal, strategic faculty and staff hires, as well as inter-program communication and collaboration can assist

SODA in successful progress and sustainability as it moves towards the next cyclical academic review.” (ER, p.12)

As noted above, while there have been improvements in space and facilities over the last few years, more needs to be done. Working with the Dean and others to develop an ongoing space audit and facilities renewal plan to systematically address space and equipment deficiencies will enhance the teaching, learning and research experience of students, faculty and staff. (ER, p.12, 14; DR, p.1)

As the reviewers suggest, curriculum review and assessment should be a continuous exercise. The BFA Acting program offered by the School is among the top three such programs in Canada. The PDC supports the School in its choice of foundational acting techniques and approaches. The School is encouraged to continue to deliver a first-class Acting program founded on the concepts and techniques it deems appropriate, as identified through its curriculum review exercise.

Of particular importance, one opportunity for program improvement identified by the reviewers relates to learning outcomes. The School is encouraged to review the curricula for all its programs with a view to further ensuring “consolidation around depth and breadth of knowledge and of knowledge of methodologies”. (ER, p.6)

Further opportunities for program improvements are captured in the recommendations listed below.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendations (in priority order)

(Final recommendations arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report, the Director’s response and the Dean’s response.)

Recommendation 1: That the School submit:

- (a) learning outcomes for each of its undergraduate programs that clearly correspond to the University's stated "Characteristics of a University of Windsor Graduate" [*PDC notes that learning outcomes for most of the School undergraduate programs have been submitted in the area’s Self Study. Learning Outcomes for the BA Honours in Drama are still outstanding.*], and
- (b) learning outcomes and assessment methods for each of its undergraduate courses that clearly correspond to the program-level learning outcomes. [*PDC notes that learning outcomes for several undergraduate courses are provided in the Self Study, appendix E*]

Agents: Department Council, Director, CTL, Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 2: As part of its curriculum renewal and program development exercise, that the School:

- a) Consider consolidating course offerings. (In particular, as the School continues working with Communication, Media and Film on a proposal for a Certificate in Theatre Production and Digital Media Design, that consideration be given to consolidating courses so that they may serve as requirements for either the existing interdisciplinary Arts Management Certificate or this proposed new certificate.
- b) review course offering rotations
- c) consider formalizing curricular pathways involved in apprenticeship learning, by restructuring and/or redesigning independent study courses (24-350s) as internships or research/project/performance-based courses. This will help address the currently unsustainable numbers of independent production-related individualized teaching experiences ('350s').
- d) establish and pursue an overall plan for a more coherent and structured pathway to graduation for BA Honours students.

Agents: Director of School, Department Council

Completion by: Fall 2019

Recommendation 3: That the School increase numbers of public presentations by opening end-of-course presentations/performances for wider viewing, and consider other such visible celebrations of teaching, learning, research, and creation *across the School* with respect to *all degree programs*.

Agents: Director of School

Completion by: Fall 2019

Recommendation 4: That the School develop a plan to examine a spectrum of approaches to hiring, curriculum, and recruitment.

Agents: Director of School, Department Council, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 5: That the School prioritize the development of a targeted and comprehensive undergraduate student recruitment plan for all three programs.

Agents: Director of School, Assistant Vice-President, North American Recruitment

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 6: That the School work with the Career Services Office to provide information to Dramatic Art students on the career services available to them.

Agents: Director of School, Career Services Office

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 7: That the School develop and implement a plan to continue and expand its efforts to track alumni from all degree programs as a means to promote the School and enhance recruitment efforts.

Agents: Director of School, Alumni Affairs

Completion by: Fall 2017 (submission of plan)

Recommendation 8: That the School develop a plan in which all faculty members understand themselves to be active members of the entire School and not responsible simply to the degree program with which they have a primary affiliation.

Agents: Director of School, Department Council, faculty members. Dramatic Art is welcome to meet with PDC should it wish assistance in brainstorming how this recommendation can be met.

Completion by: Fall 2019

Recommendation 9: That the School continue its efforts to increase subscription rates to University Players, which has seen a 50% decline since the last cyclical review by, for instance, developing and pursuing a policy of attracting new audiences and exploring different approaches to production. If cuts to production budgets continue, the viability of University Players will be in danger.

Agents: Director of School, Department Council

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 10: That fiscal resources supporting recruitment and teaching be distributed more equitably across the School, which has in the past privileged the BFA Acting program.

Agents: Director of School

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 11: That the School undertake a facilities renewal plan, including plans for upgrading of recently acquired spaces in the engineering building, and that it ensure that health, safety, and accessibility issues are foregrounded.

Agents: Director of School, Dean of FAHSS

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 12: That the School make a case to the Dean of FAHSS for additional resources in the form of:

- a) A faculty hire in Drama in Education and Community with a planned teaching distribution that can also enhance the BA Honours program.
- b) A production manager to complement and consolidate the existing technical staffing in the School, enhance BA Honours students' co-curricular participation in SODA productions, and advise on development of a certificate in Theatre Production and Digital Media (in collaboration with Communication, Media and Film). The potential AAS hire currently under discussion should be prioritized in this area.
- c) An eventual faculty hire in production and design should be considered in relation to possible synergies with regional theatrical production, and with a view to emphasizing contemporary opportunities in production and design (including site-specific work, community engaged performance practices, and so forth). Decisions about any future hires should be considered in the context of department-wide long-term planning discussions.

Agents: Director of School

Completion by: Fall 2017

Recommendation 13: That the School, in consultation with the Dean, develop a plan to mitigate the challenges of hiring visiting artists and faculty to the School.

Agents: Director of School, Dean, Department Council

Completion by: Fall 2017