**Theater and Dance**

**Spring 2009 Submitted Plan:**

**Program Mission**

**Step1: Department/Program Mission**

The goal of the Albion College Department of Theatre and Dance is to provide the College community with examples of the best theatre and dance from our cultural heritage and from contemporary life. We value the effectiveness of theatre and dance to explore issues of human consequence and to offer to the student, as performer, designer, technician and audience, the opportunity for self-affirmation and self-actualization. The curriculum, therefore, balances a sequence of literature and history courses with the traditional theatre process courses in performance and production as well as dance technique and choreography. Students develop simultaneously their analytical and research skills with their imaginative and creative skills. In the classroom, in the laboratory, and in performance, students acquire the knowledge and experience essential to become a gifted theatre artist and an informed audience member. Theatre majors are expected to complement their course work with active participation in the department's programs.

**Step 2: List goals/outcomes**

1. Theatre majors will be familiar with a variety of plays representative of the whole spectrum of western dramatic literature and types of theatre
2. Theatre majors will articulate and discuss the evolution and development of theatre, as well as the relationship of dramatic literature and physical theatre to cultures and societies
3. Theatre majors will read and analyze play scripts from a theatrical point of view and demonstrate the ability to make informed judgments about play scripts and productions.
4. Theatre majors will participate in all aspects of the production of a play.

**Step 3: Identify program components**

*Goal one: Theatre majors will be familiar with a variety of plays representative of the whole spectrum of western dramatic literature and types of theatre.*

All theatre classes involve the study of play scripts and thus contribute to this goal, especially the history and literature classes: Survey of Dramatic Literature (209) and the classical (280), modern (281), and post-modern (372) history classes. Additionally, students are familiarized with a variety of plays through our production program.

*Goal two: Theatre majors will articulate and discuss the evolution and development of theatre, as well as the relationship of dramatic literature and physical theatre to cultures and societies.*

This goal is met primarily in the theatre history classes (classical [280], modern [281], and post-modern [372]). The relationship of dramatic literature and the physical theatre to cultures and societies is also an important part of the various period acting classes (365,366).

*Goal three: Theatre majors will read and analyze play scripts from a theatrical point of view and demonstrate the ability to make informed judgments about play scripts and productions.*

This requirement is addressed in our production classes where plays are read and analyzed with an eye toward production: the acting (251, 365, 366) and directing (350) classes, as well as the design (211,311) classes.

*Goal four: Theatre majors will participate in all aspects of the production of a play.*

This goal is met through participation in the production program. The theatre keeps a detailed record of each student’s participation in productions throughout his or her time at Albion. Majors are required to enroll in four quarter-unit practicum courses that insure their participation in a variety of productions. In addition, majors are required to serve at least as an Assistant Stage Manager for a production, where they take part first-hand in the whole scope of a production—from production meetings to rehearsals, to technical rehearsals to performances.

**Step 4: Select methods/data sources and instruments**

1 and 2. For **goal one** (familiarity with a variety of plays and types of theatre) and **goal two** knowledge and development of the theatre and its relationship to culture and society), we looked at their grades in the required two of three history classes (280, 281, 372) and in the Survey of Dramatic Literature (209)

3. **Goal three** (ability to analyze scripts from a theatrical point of view) can be determined by grades in the production classes dealing with design (211, 311, 312), acting (251, 365, 366), and directing (350)

4. **Goal four** (participate in all aspects of production) can be seen by examining the departmental record of theatrical activity.

**Step 5: Analyze and interpret the data (Due October 1, 2009 with preliminary data; due November 2, 2009 with final data for this assessment cycle)**

In order to determine familiarity with a variety of plays and types of theatre (learning goal one), as well as to ascertain knowledge of the development of the theatre in relation to culture and society (learning goal two), we look to student performance in the Survey of Dramatic Literature class and the various Theatre History classes.  The grades of the six graduating seniors in these classes were uniformly high—no grade was below 3.0 and the average of all grades was 3.7.  We feel that all of our students met this goal.

To measure students’ ability to analyze scripts from a theatrical point of view (learning goal three), we look at performance in “production” classes dealing with technical theatre and design, acting, and directing.  Here, too, the grades of the graduating seniors were uniformly high—no grade was below 3.3 and the average of all grades was 3.7.  We feel that all our students met this goal.

The results for goal four (students will participate in all aspects of the production of a play) yielded surprising results.  Why surprising? According to department production records, of the six graduating seniors four participated in productions for 4 years, one participated for three and a half years, and one participated for two and a half years (this is not unusual, given that students do not all decide to major in their first year).

Most of the seniors had the kind of variety of experiences that we expect to see.  The most varied record was a student who worked on 16 productions over four years; he acted in seven productions, served as an assistant stage manager for one, stage manager for one, directed three productions, did lighting design for three productions and stage design for one, and was the light board operator for one production.  Even the least varied of the four (a student who worked on nine productions over three and a half years) acted in five productions, served as assistant stage manager for two, choreographed one musical, and designed costumes for one production.

Most surprising were two students whose production experience was pretty much limited to acting.  One acted in eight productions over four years and served as assistant stage manager once.  Another acted in five productions over two and a half years and was on the make-up crew for one production.  In both cases, they students would have received more technical production experience than their records indicate because they took the Technical Theatre class and worked on crews that didn’t appear on the participation list.  Still, their lack of more varied production experience means they fell below departmental expectations.

**Step 6: How will the data collected be used for decision-making, strategic planning, etc. (Due October 1, 2009 with preliminary data; due November 2, 2009 with final data for this assessment cycle)**

*NOTE:You will need to submit a summary report of your findings to the Assessment Committee for review. In that report, please include details of how the data will be used, any program changes that will be made (or not made). Questions to ask yourself/to include in the report are as follows:*

* *How, exactly, will your data be used to help with program planning and improvement?*
* *Will your program form a committee to review assessment findings, and make recommendations for change or improvement in a timely manner?*
* *Will your entire department convene to discuss assessment results and program changes?*
* *Who will make formal recommendations for curricular or other changes—the chair/head? The committee?*

The department will review the data—especially the results regarding participation in all aspects of production.  (This year the issue was students who acted almost exclusively; in other years we have sometimes seen the opposite happen—students who did technical work almost exclusively.)  While four of the seniors (77%) more than met our expectations, we need to decide if we are satisfied that two (23%) did not.  If not, we need to develop better methods of recording participation and/or strategies of encouraging more varied participation.

In addition to the assessment data reported above, we also hold an exit interview with the graduating seniors for assessment purposes.  As a result of the comments gathered in these interviews we will be making the following curricular changes:

* Adding “Basic Acting” as a prerequisite for the upper level acting classes to keep interested but unprepared students from enrolling
* Adding some 300-level history and/or theory classes to give majors more choices in this area
* Including some dance classes in the theatre practicum area of the requirements for the major