

2014-2015 Annual Program Assessment Report

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College, and to james.solomon@csun.edu, director of assessment and program review, by September 30, 2015. You may, but are not required to, submit a separate report for each program, including graduate degree programs, which conducted assessment activities, or you may combine programs in a single report. Please identify your department/program in the file name for your report.

College: Mike Curb College Arts, Media & Communication

Department: Theatre

Program: Theatre

Assessment liaison: Larry Biederman

1. Please check off whichever is applicable:

A. Measured student work.

B. Analyzed results of measurement.

C. Applied results of analysis to program review/curriculum/review/revision.

2. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s). On a separate sheet, provide a brief overview of this year's assessment activities, including:

- an explanation for why your department chose the assessment activities (measurement, analysis, and/or application) that it enacted
- if your department implemented assessment **option A**, identify which program SLOs were assessed (please identify the SLOs in full), in which classes and/or contexts, what assessment instruments were used and the methodology employed, the resulting scores, and the relation between this year's measure of student work and that of past years: (include as an appendix any and all relevant materials that you wish to include)
- if your department implemented assessment **option B**, identify what conclusions were drawn from the analysis of measured results, what changes to the program were planned in response, and the relation between this year's analyses and past and future assessment activities
- if your department implemented **option C**, identify the program modifications that were adopted, and the relation between program modifications and past and future assessment activities
- in what way(s) your assessment activities may reflect the university's commitment to diversity in all its dimensions but especially with respect to underrepresented groups
- any other assessment-related information you wish to include, including SLO revision (especially to ensure continuing alignment between program course offerings and both program and university student learning outcomes), and/or the creation and modification of new assessment instruments

The Department of Theatre conducted many satisfying discussions regarding the state of assessment in our department. As noted in the previous year's report, the faculty concluded that a revision in our program SLOs was necessary as those SLOs were not only

questioned by our College Assessment Liaison and Associate Dean, but more to the point, they just were not proving useful or accurate.

Whereas the process stalled a bit in the previous year in Fall of 2014, a decision was made to continue with the 5-year plan, completing an assessment of an SLO that was not conducted in the year scheduled because of our concerns regarding SLO revision. We decided to complete that evaluation, regarding SLO 3 (Apply historical, cultural, aesthetic and literary understandings to the creation of theatre), so that in addition to fulfilling our commitment, the process might help us better identify what wasn't working in our existing SLOs.

Also, in response to new questions about assessment practices by Jack Solomon, it was decided that the next most useful assessment undertaking should be to evaluate our Acting for the Camera courses, both to look at the efficacy of those courses but to assist in our establishment of a new course proposal for Advanced Acting for the Camera.

Both of these plans also gave us opportunities to learn and utilize the Electronic Assessment System. As liaison, I spent considerable time seeking the assistance of the administrators of the EAS in using the application for these assessment projects. Both were not good fits for the system in its current state. Firstly, one was an assessment of assignments retrieved in a course during the previous academic year and the EAS is designed to capture assignments in the present. The administrators had to adapt and trick the system with random student ID numbers to get the system to accept the assignments we had collected. After that, the evaluation process was smooth and all assessors agreed that the EAS was quite user-friendly and made the evaluation process clear and efficient. However, the calculation stage revealed some significant problems with the system that went unsolved for a few months.

During that time, the Spring Semester began and we invited Jack Solomon to our first faculty meeting of the year. We had a fruitful and vigorous discussion that led to some positive simplifications and clarifications of our SLOs. However, upon further discussion, again, we found ourselves amending, adding, trying to be inclusive of all of the manifestations of the varied disciplines of theatre in our SLOs. Perhaps thankfully, time ran out and we had to come back to it.

Given the delay in resolving our assessment of SLO 3, the committee of evaluators agreed we should no longer wait for the EAS issues to resolve and we decided to meet and discuss the results, which was really quite adequate since the resulting conversation was far more about the problems applying the SLOs than the resulting data. That conversation resulted in a determination that our SLOs

were an attempt to be too inclusive of the many disciplines of theater. Much of the language in the SLOs were more functional in the context of a rubric designed to specifically relate an assignment to an SLO. Once we liberated ourselves with the need to insert evaluation criteria into our SLOs, the revisions seemed to come quickly and clearly. The full faculty unanimously voted to adopt these new SLOs starting this Fall 2015. Those SLOs are as follows:

- 1. Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills inherent to the varied and distinct processes of theatrical development and presentation.**
- 2. Students will apply essential knowledge and skills through participation in theatrical projects.**
- 3. Students will demonstrate understanding of the relevant contexts in which theatre is created and presented.**
- 4. Students will formulate and articulate critical analyses and evaluations of theatrical works.**
- 5. Students will develop the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills essential to collaboration.**

We are very gratified that we achieved a consensus on these SLOs and look forward to implementing them in future assessments.

Regarding the assessment of the Acting for the Camera course, the EAS was not able to receive the video data. Furthermore, our guest faculty teaching the Experimental Course for Advanced Acting for the Camera was concerned about the collection of data, and the impact on student performance when knowing their work would be seen outside of the class context and that this inhibits their willingness to risk and invest themselves fully. So we have raw data from both semesters of last year's beginning courses, and we will look at how to make the most constructive use of this data, both in assessing the SLOs and making our case to make Advanced Acting for the Camera a permanent course.

We conducted many curricular changes, increasing the integrity of prerequisites for the courses, both encouraging students to navigate through the courses with the right preparation, while also releasing unnecessary restrictions on their interests. We added a stage management course TH 385, so students have an option to pursue stage management or theatre management for their management study requirement in the major. TH 333, a new GE course focused on musical theatre history, is in the proposal stage, as an addition to the musical theatre minor. Prior to this, musical theatre minors could only fulfill this requirement with TH 433. However, the 400-level theatre history courses rotate topics each semester. To accommodate minors, TH 433 was preempting other theatre history topics from being offered. Upon approval, the minors will have a course dedicated to their program, all students will have musical theatre history as a GE option, and students can benefit from broader course offerings at the 400 level.

Perhaps most importantly, the department completed our accreditation evaluation with our accrediting organization, NAST (National Association of Schools of Theatre), which included an extensive written report and a site evaluation by the accreditors. We will not receive our official re-accreditation until next March, when their board meets to vote. But our visitor's report was overwhelmingly positive and affirming of our practices. (A copy of this report is attached to accompany this form.)

3. Preview of planned assessment activities for next year. Include a brief description and explanation of how next year's assessment will contribute to a continuous program of ongoing assessment.

Our current plans for the upcoming year include analysis of the data retrieved in our camera courses in preparation for our proposal for a permanent advanced course. (Syllabus for the course and class rubric for the assignment are attached.) Also, we are aware that assessment in our Master's program has not been active in recent years. The head of that program is in agreement that the SLOs were already in need of revision, but now more so that the undergraduate SLOs have been updated. Last year a search for new position in Theatre History was a key component of our activities, it was decided that the individual who takes this position should play an active role in the development of those new SLOs, so that will also be a goal of the upcoming academic year. Lastly, even though we had five year plans, the activities for those plans were never designated for the fourth and fifth year, so it is not hard to conclude that it is no longer beneficial to hold ourselves to an undefined plan. At our first faculty meeting of the year, the faculty was asked to consider in each of their areas—Performance, Design/Management, and History/Literature, what goals we have for which assessment would be helpful. We hope to generate assessment activities that are inspired by visionary and practical concerns. We will meet within the following month to discuss and propose future activities in addition to those already designated.