

# UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON – PROGRAM CHANGE PROPOSAL

Electronically submit this completed form with attachments in one file to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

<b>COLLEGE (check one):</b>	<b>Arts and Sciences</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<b>Business</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Education</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Proposal Submitted By: Gregg Stull			Date Prepared: October 9, 2017	
Department /Program:	<b>Theatre &amp; Dance: theatre major</b>			

*Note: for any program change entailing the addition any new courses, or revisions to existing courses, separate proposal for those course actions must also be submitted.*

<b>PROPOSAL TO CHANGE EXISTING PROGRAM (check no than one of the following)</b>	
Revise requirements for existing <b>major</b>	X
Revise requirements for a concentration within an existing <b>major</b>	
Revise requirements for an existing <b>degree program</b>	
Revise requirements for existing <b>certificate</b> program	
Revise requirements for existing <b>minor</b>	
<b>Implementation Date: FALL semester, year:</b>	Fall 2018

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMS:**

1. **Rationale statement** (Why is this program change needed? What purposes will it serve?)
2. **Impact Statement** (Provide details about the Library, space, budget, technology, and impacts created by this program change. Supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. evaluating the resource impact and feasibility of the program change are required.)
3. **Catalog Copy** (Provide the *existing* Catalog Description **and** the complete statement of the *proposed* new Catalog description that reflects the program changes)

<b>PROPOSAL TO CREATE NEW PROGRAM NOT REQUIRING STATE ACTION</b> (check no more that <b>one</b> of the following)	
<b>New concentration</b> within existing major	Name: _____
<b>New minor</b>	Name: _____
New Major but NOT a new degree*	Name: _____
*Use ONLY for interdisciplinary majors that will be grouped as part of the "Special Majors/General Liberal Arts and Sciences" degree (CIP Code 24.0101) or reported as a BLS degree (CIP Code 24.0199)	
<b>Implementation Date (semester and year):</b>	Fall 2017

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR NEW PROGRAMS NOT REQUIRING STATE APPROVAL:**

1. **Rationale statement** (Why is this additional program needed? What purposes will it serve?)
2. **Impact Statement** (Provide details about the Library, space, budget, technology, staffing and curricular impacts created by this program change. Supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. evaluating the resource impact and feasibility of adding the new program are required.)
3. **Catalog Copy** (Provide the complete Catalog Description for the proposed new program)
4. **Any change that impacts another Department must have a written statement (such as a copy of an email) from the Chair(s) agreeing to the change.**

Department Chair Approval: _____	Date: 10/9/17
CCC Chair Approval: _____	Date: 11/09/2017
Dean Approval: _____	Date: 11/10/17
UCC Chair Approval: _____	Date: 11/16/17
*Provost Approval: _____	Date: _____

*\*Required only in cases of proposals for new concentrations, new minors, or new majors that do not involve a new degree*

## **Rationale Statement**

The Department of Theatre and Dance seeks to add a proposed new course, THEA 400: *Professional Identity and Practice*, as a requirement to the major in theatre.

The Department of Theatre and Dance has offered, annually since 1996, a series of six workshops each fall to assist our majors with the essentials of career preparation. This series of workshops covered all of the essential topics—resumes, headshots, portfolios, cover letters, reference lists, and how to mount an effective job search. The series continued every spring in the form of a weekly drop-in session where students could pose specific questions, get advice on potential jobs, and talk about their ongoing searches. Participation was encouraged, but entirely voluntary. That said, the majority of our majors made the commitment to these workshops, completed all of the assignments, and left with everything they needed to search for an entry-level job in the theatre.

Because the documents of the job search specific to our discipline are unlike others, we knew that this approach was needed to supplement the support of the Center for Career and Professional Development if our graduates were to be competitive in the profession beyond graduation. This also gave us the opportunity to talk with students specifically about their career goals as a supplement to their regular academic advising sessions.

The success of these workshops is evident. We have an extremely high track record of placing our graduates in prestigious internships and jobs in theatres throughout the country. Our network has grown so that some of the students who participated in our early workshops are now seeking our graduates to work with them.

This approach was manageable when our major population was limited in size. Since our program has grown significantly over the last few years, we find ourselves increasingly frustrated that our very busy students cannot attend all of the workshops but still want the content and attention they offer. Helping two dozen students individually prepare their resumes, cover letters, and launch a job search takes more time than we have to give. We recognize the need and value in this work; we simply must find a more efficient delivery method that will enroll all of our students.

Our faculty always has considered career advising an important aspect of our pedagogy. Because the challenge of parents not appreciating the job opportunities available to theatre graduates is an impediment to growing our major population, we communicate frequently on the successes of our graduates. We also make a point of highlighting our extensive approach to supporting students in their quest to work in the professional theatre.

We believe adding *Professional Identity and Practice* as a major requirement reflects our culture and philosophy, makes transparent our department's desire to support our students, and creates a more formal alliance between faculty and majors around this important aspect of their education and training as emerging theatre artists. This course strengthens our major considerably.

This proposed change to the theatre major (along with the accompanying proposal to establish THEA 400 as a new course) was approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee in the spring of 2017. Both proposals were rejected subsequently by the University Curriculum Committee. In communicating the UCC decision, Patricia Reynolds, UCC Chair, shared this with the department:

*The committee felt that we did not have enough information about what attempts had been made to coordinate with Career Services to provide an adequate program for Theater graduates. It was clear in the proposal that there was an alignment with the same course provided in Studio Arts but not enough clarity about why this particular course would have to be developed and if there had been discussions with Career Services that would be a better direction than to add this class and change a major.*

*In addition, we are very sensitive to anything that goes in the area of Professional Development and would need to see a reason why this is not handled like other career development. We were also being asked to change a major based on this information and this course was pivotal to a change in a major. If as you state this was developed from assessment findings and an external review those justifications were not included in this proposal. It would be helpful if they had been a part of the rationale for these proposals.*

I will address these concerns in this proposal.

1. I have had a number of conversations with Tim O'Donnell regarding the ability of the Center for Career and Professional Development to engage our students with practical skills, materials, and contacts that would position them for success in the career marketplace. The materials of a job seeker in theatre are unlike other disciplines—our designers and technicians develop portfolios (digital and paper), our actors need headshots and resumes of a specific format as well as coaching on audition monologues, cold readings, and casting. Our

musical theatre students need the same as our actors, but also need coaching on developing a musical “book” and audition techniques for acting, singing, and dancing. Our arts management graduates need detailed philosophy statements and several different types of resume geared specifically for the disciplines in which they may be seeking work. All of our students need to learn how to find jobs that are rarely posted for public dissemination—postings that are deliberately hidden from the public eye. Finally, our students need to understand how graduate schools in the arts recruit and educate students and how graduate school in theatre and arts administration differs tremendously from other disciplines. Tim agrees that the specificity required of our students demands a discipline-specific expertise that his staff does not have, nor will ever be able to develop. I am attaching a letter from Tim that testifies to the fact that the Center for Career and Professional Development is not prepared to work with our students and graduates.

2. Our colleagues in Studio Art long ago recognized the unique challenges of supporting their graduates. ARTS 474: *Professional Practices in Studio Art*, has long been on the books and required in the major. This three-credit course shares many of the same objectives as our proposed THEA 400. Not only will students master the practicalities of a job search, they will also become conversant on the conceptual framework that positions an artist to be a contributing member of society. We believe that this vital course in Studio Art, on which we have modeled our own, establishes a recognized need for such course work in the arts and is a precedent for own THEA 400.

3. The Department of Theatre and Dance, along with other departments at UMW that offer degrees in the arts, are participants in SNAAP, the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project. This longitudinal study administered by Indiana University that assesses the impact of arts majors on post-graduate success. UMW surveyed all of its arts graduates in 2017 collecting the most comprehensive data set on our arts graduates to date. While 69% of our graduates reported high satisfaction with the opportunities they had to perform and present their work, only 36% reported the same level of satisfaction with career and graduate school advising. Even more alarming, 25% of respondents reported feeling somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with career and graduate school advising. In fact, the most frequently recurring commentary from respondents had to do with career development and the business skills required of living a life in the arts:

- *It would have been nice to have been prepared for the financial aspects of the immediate post-graduate lifestyle.*
- *I would have liked better career guidance, such as how to put together resume, interview practice, etc.*
- *I think more time could be spent on educating students on the business side of the industry.*
- *UMW could have prepared me better for what to expect in the job market, in terms of both opportunities and realistic income. I feel that this advice should have come from my professors and academic advisors, not from an administrative office like career services.*
- *Specific classes on portfolios and interviews.*
- *Required financial education—budgeting, investing, etc.*
- *Help students negotiate graduate school application process and/or prepare them to navigate job hunt.*
- *I would have liked to know more of the ‘ins & outs’ of pursuing an arts based career. How to do an arts/acting resume with headshots. Pros and cons of joining a union. Should I get an agent and when. In other words, I don’t think I was really taught the “business” of show biz.*
- *I wish I would have been better prepared on how to go about seeking work in my chosen field following graduation.*
- *Teach me more about the business of acting and how to prepare for a career as an actor in the professional theatre.*
- *There was no focus on preparing various kinds of auditions and that would have been extremely helpful. There was no focus on professional prep like resumes/headshots/demos, etc.*
- *I think my advisor could have been more proactive in talking about life after graduation at UMW.*
- *More individualized planning for post graduation.*
- *Financial planning, budgeting, loan repayment.*
- *It would have been nice to have mandatory career and job fairs. I never to as an undergraduate because they were not promoted whatsoever.*
- *Education about taxes and loans.*
- *I believe teaching more about the business side of acting.*
- *I think there should be a mandatory personal finance class.*
- *UMW failed to provide adequate information about life after graduation. The most useful thing someone could have told me during my undergrad years is, “a bachelor’s degree is not going to get you a job. Networking and work experience will get you a job.”*

Our last program review was completed in 2015-16. While our external reviewers offered enormous praise for the success of our program, both believed that we could develop stronger connections between our working alumni and our current students to provide mentoring and professional development. Our senior exit surveys regularly reflect a desire on the part of our students for a more codified approach to career development.

We find in our area that we must make explicit with students that information that once could be implicit in our work—and this creates some challenges with a major population that has doubled in the last three years. Increasingly, we believe that we must instigate and nurture a conversation with our students about creating a future in the arts and everything it means with regard to potential challenges, obstacles, financial considerations, and a path to success. Without the leadership of the faculty on this issue, our graduates will not adequately prepare for post-graduation life and will stumble when they leave UMW. Many of our students come to us today believing that wanting a career is enough and that it will be handed to them with their diploma. If we are to continue to help our students imagine and create extraordinary lives for themselves, we must commit to an academic experience that inspires them to think, to prepare, to articulate, and to activate a future for themselves. We believe that THEA 400: *Professional Identity and Practice* accomplishes this important objective.

### **Impact Statement**

This proposal will have no impact on existing resources. It will be assigned to a faculty member but will not have a significant effect on teaching load.

### **Catalog Copy**

~~Thirty-two (32)~~ **Thirty-three (33)** credits including THEA 131, 321, 361, 362, **400**, and 482; either THEA 433, 434, or 436; nine (9) additional credits from Theatre courses except THEA 111, 112, 390, 491, 492, or 499. In addition, all majors are required to enroll in THEA 390: *Theatre Practicum* each semester except during the semester they enroll in THEA 482: *Senior Project*; students may count eight practicum credits toward graduation.

August 30, 2017

Gregg Stull, Chair  
Department of Theatre

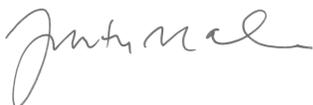
Dear Gregg,

It was good to meet with you earlier this summer to hear your vision for the career and professional development of UMW's theatre majors. It is particularly exciting that you have designs for a new course for all majors, "Professional Identity and Practice." I strongly believe that this is a necessary and important capstone which will significantly enhance the prospects for our graduates.

One of the things that is so encouraging about this idea is that it embeds career and professional development within a disciplinary perspective that is a part of the curriculum. This is simply not something that the Center for Career and Professional Development could ever be in a position to do. Our small staff of generalists lack the training and expertise necessary to provide specialized instruction and coaching on field specific resumes, auditions, and portfolio compilations (to name just a few of the many unique elements of the theatre profession).

I am, however, happy to pledge the full support of the Career Center in realizing your vision. Please let me know if there are things that we can do or provide to support you and the Theatre faculty as you prepare to launch this course.

Sincerely,



Timothy M. O'Donnell, Ph.D.  
Professor of Communication  
Associate Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Success