



ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW (APR)

Theatre (Part A)

"Are we teaching the right things?"

SECTION 1: Introduction

1. List your name, name of the program coordinator (if different from your name), academic department/college, academic program, and academic year of the APR.

Dr. Vickie Wisdom
Humanities Department
Theatre
Fall 2020

2. Briefly describe the program, identifying any subunits and the specific role each plays at Evangel University (EU). A table or chart would be sufficient.

The theatre program has three subunits: Theatre, Theatre/Speech Education and Theatre/Music (a cooperative major between Humanities and Music). The program provides students across majors the opportunity to continue their love of theatre beyond choice of major. All three units prepare students to teach, perform and contribute to the callings placed on their lives.

Because these three theatre programs share revenue, performances, needs, and some courses, this APR addresses the identity, strengths, and potential for all three programs: Theatre, Theatre/Speech Education, and Theatre/Music. Students in each of these programs participate in live productions. Revenue donated to the theatre is used for all three programs. Equipment and safety guidelines apply to students in all theatre areas. However, some distinctives for each program are noted in the APR, such as Theatre/Speech Education graduates who have received teaching positions, alumni who are using their Theatre/Music degree on Broadway, and Theatre majors involved in film.

3. Briefly describe the staffing in a manner that illustrates the organization of staff and that their credentials are appropriate. A table or chart would be sufficient.

Dr. Vickie Wisdom is the only full-time faculty member in the program (BME, MBA, EdD) with over 25 years of directing experience in theatre in higher education. She is supported by three adjuncts with degrees and qualifying professional experience in field.

4. Identify key stakeholders (students, alumni, employers) that require ongoing attention from the program.

Key stakeholders include theatre majors (and double majors) and minors, theatre graduates across the country, the EU community at large, the surrounding Springfield community. Stakeholders also include graduate schools and employers from a wide range of professions.

SECTION 2: Identity: Mission, Values and Strategic Plan

5. Explain how the program advances Evangel's mission, values, EU 20 Outcomes, and/or strategic plans.

The program advances several of the EU20 Outcomes. Two of them also relate to the overall EU mission: Integrational philosophy and Artistic expression. Our theatre program integrates a student's faith and learning through play selection determinants – we focus on seeing the spiritual application and integration through every script read in each course, and through scripts chosen for production. Our courses are intentionally designed to help every student (whether major, minor, or core curriculum) understand the importance of theatre in our lives, and that art, in its perfect form, comes from the Lord and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Here are several examples of student responses to one of our reflection prompts that touches on both EU20 Outcomes:

“As we go through life, our reactions and emotions, how we live our lives, are on display for all to see. There will always be people observing and judging. What people say about us affects how we feel about ourselves. But at the end of the day, our message and our mission are what matter most. It is the same way in theatre. Everything is out in plain sight. There is no place to hide. In fact, you want people to see what you're doing. It is a risk. You are vulnerable before an audience. No day is quite the same as the one before it. There will be judgment and ridicule. But if you care about what you are saying, if you care about showing people how to see the world in a new light, then it is worth it. Connecting people through theatre is worth the pain and the heartbreak. In the same way, the pain and heartache in life make beautiful moments that much sweeter. In our class, we all came from different backgrounds and stories, but we were willing to be vulnerable, to compromise our pride and work together to create something beautiful. Though we probably won't be best friends because of this class, we will still be connected and more aware of how important each individual is. We were shown the world in a new light. That is precious and something I will enjoy sharing with those around me in my everyday life.”

“Much like theatre, the experiences that we have with the Holy Spirit are ephemeral. The experience is there for a moment, filling us with hope, or instruction, or peace. The Holy Spirit isn't incessantly talking to us. He gives us moments of inspiration and guidance, and then he is quite again, at least that's the way it is for me. Also, like theatre, experiencing the Holy Spirit is a moving and enlightening moment, but it is not exactly the same every time we experience Him”.

“I find the concept of theatre being ephemeral fascinating! One of my top 5 strengths is connectedness, so I like thinking about the intricate details of life. The Holy Spirit is ephemeral, or at least it should be in our lives, because we should be constantly growing and seeking out change. Theatre is never the same, otherwise we would get bored with it and move on. However, it has lasted for thousands of years because it is constantly growing and molding to society. I think our relationship with the Holy spirit should never be stagnant. It needs to constantly be growing and shaping into something different”.

6. Describe how the program serves, supports, or collaborates with one or more other EU program(s) to help students succeed

The theatre program collaborates with the Communication, Music and Education Departments through shared degree programs. It also plays an important role in students who wish to minor in Theatre while majoring in a variety of areas including Theology, Business, English, Art, Children's Ministries, Elementary Education, Music, Government, etc.

7. Explain any changes or improvements that have been implemented since the last APR.

The entire Theatre program, with the exception of Theatre/Music has been completely revamped to reflect current trends in the theatre field and in higher education. Courses have been streamlined and created to provide our theatre students with a complete experience in the field of theatre. The Theatre/Music program is under complete review and restructuring.

8. Describe any adverse effect that the elimination of the program would have on EU's ability to help students succeed.

Theatre at EU is one area of study on campus that reaches students across every discipline. All productions are open auditions and most have students not only from the theatre program, but representing every department on campus. This program also provides a way to showcase the talents of EU students to alumni, donors and the community. It allows for integration of faith and the arts and provides an opportunity for artistic expression that they would not otherwise have beyond music or art. Students would not have the additional skills that theatrical experiences provide on their resumes as they go into the workforce.

SECTION 3: Relevance

9. Chart enrollment trends and identify the extent to which there is a discernible demand or need for the program and how successfully the program meets it. How is stakeholder interest expected to evolve in the future, e.g.: will it decline, remain the same, increase? Identify the expected impact on the program.

In Fall, 2016 there were 9 majors and minors enrolled across all three units of theatre. In the Fall, 2020, we have 15 majors and 10 minors across all units and interest continues to grow in the field. With Covid-19, we could have easily seen a decline in incoming freshman, however, our numbers are up from last year. There are few Christian universities with theatre majors – it is critical as we develop graduates to go into the world to proclaim the gospel through their various callings that EU continue to encourage and educate our Christian men and women in the field of theatre. The theatre program has increasing interests in our local community, with area theatre businesses partnering with us. New alliances and coalitions are being built with area high school theatre educators and the local theatre community of Springfield. Our alumni board was developed four years ago, and continues to offer insights, encouragement and support. With increased coalitions and relationships, we have begun to see small donations designated to our program, and vendors offering discounts to help us offset our limited funding.

10. Explain how the program has evolved in response to changing demands/needs of today's students or other stakeholders.

Based upon feedback from alumni and students, content areas that were previously combined and minimally covered in one or two courses have been separated out to offer a full range of instruction in the various elements of theatre in order to give our graduates a complete education in the field. Graduates are now prepared academically to feel completely ready to teach in the high school classroom, get accepted into the graduate school of their choice, and pursue positions that allow them to use the skills developed in their theatre courses. With the challenges of Covid-19 to the performing arts, our team has developed online opportunities of learning and alternative ways to perform theatre in order to continue offering a complete education for our majors and minors.

11. A SWOT Analysis involves identifying the program's strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T). List the program's strengths (attributes of the program that are helpful to achieving program objectives) and weaknesses (attributes that are harmful to achieving objectives).

STRENGTHS:

- Strong adjunct faculty
- Accessible Faculty
- Engaged students
- Facilities
- Rich legacy of outstanding shows
- Program has several outstanding alumni including founder of BlueMan Group
- Program has interdisciplinary focus with Music, Communications and Education Depts.
- Graduates are prepared with skill sets that facilitate success beyond the career field of theatre in business, politics, leadership, religious studies, and entertainment
- Advisory Committee of Alumni established in late Spring 2016
- Updated curriculum for majors and minors in Theatre and Theatre/Speech Education
 - Increased presence in the Springfield community
 - EU community energy and enthusiasm for productions

Weaknesses

- Infrastructure updates are desperately needed
- Safety improvements to comply with OSHA and USITT requirements
- Small number of majors/minors
- Outdated curriculum with poor alignment to outcome goals for Theatre/Music
- Lack of specialized courses in Musical Theatre
- Financial constraints

- Underdeveloped strategy for recruiting majors and minors
- Only one full-time faculty member to cover all coursework and specialties within the field, scheduling, advising, directing, supervising theatre education majors, recruitment, promotion of financial support, building donor and alumni base

12. List the program's opportunities (external conditions that are helpful to achieving program objectives) & threats (external conditions that are harmful to achieving objectives).

Opportunities

- Reaching out to area high schools and A/G churches who participate in National Fine Arts Festival to facilitate recruitment of majors and minors
- Bring Alumni Artist-in-Residence to play minor/major roles in productions to allow current students the opportunity to learn from their expertise
- Build relationships with other Christian university theatre programs to develop a network linking Christian collegiate theatre programs to share knowledge and expertise
- Partner with Associated Theatrical Contractors on Springfield community performances
- Develop a longitudinal exit survey of alumni that would gather information from graduating seniors, with follow-up surveys 18 months out from graduation and 5 years out.
- Explore opportunities for interdisciplinary program development in the areas of theatre and management (a growing field) with a focus on Entertainment Management and with Church ministries
- Woo donors to the program such as EU Auxiliary, alumni, area businesses

Threats

- Competition for majors. The majority of A/G post-secondary universities offer theatre majors and minors for regional students who prefer to stay close to home.
- Lack of a consistent, coherent assessment program to provide data over the past 10 years
- Recruitment of students
- Current perceptions that a college degree is no longer necessary for emerging career fields
- Alternative ways to receive post-secondary education including online programs/courses
- Financial constraints for productions
- Antiquated equipment, i.e., lighting, sound; lack of projection capabilities

13. Discuss how strengths/opportunities have been or can be used to overcome weaknesses/threats.

Improved and updated curriculum, along with a focus on Fine Arts Scholarships will help attract more students. Monies that have been donated are used to slowly improve technological capabilities. Increased relationships with vendors, community theatres and alumni provide opportunities for student internships.

SECTION 4: Effectiveness

14. Attach your most recent PLO assessment data/results.

Fall 2020

Row Labels	Count of student sis id	Average of outcome score
Character Analysis - Rainmaker		
THTR 239 LEC 1 Rehearsal and Performance		
3. Acting	4	3.25
5. Integration	4	4
Final Project		
THTR 130 LEC 1 Stagecraft Lab 1		

2. Technical Theatre	8	3.25
Final Project - Final Drawing		
THTR 321 LEC 1 Technical Theatre II: Lighting Design		
2. Technical Theatre	13	2.923076923
Grand Total	29	3.206896552

Spring 2020

Row Labels	Count of student id	Average of outcome score
2. Technical Theatre		
Final Project		
THTR 130 LEC 1 Stagecraft Lab	1	4
Final Project Presentation		
THTR 271 LEC 1 Technical Theatre I: Scenic Design	9	3.333333333
Grand Total	10	3.4

What evidence exists that the program helps students achieve learning outcomes? What changes have been made since the last APR to ensure that outcomes are achieved and what changes will be made to the program following this APR? What have you learned from assessing the changes?

The average outcome score was a 3.4 out of 4 which indicates that overall students are achieving outcome goals. THTR 271 achieved a lower score than other courses, however, it was the first time for this course to be offered and tweaks will be made to strengthen the course and its ability to meet necessary outcomes for technical theatre. Four years ago, there were no objectives or learning outcomes for any of the programs upon Dr. Wisdom's arrival. In the past four years, curriculum has been revised, outcomes developed and now have the first real set of data from which to begin decision making.

15. Identify the source of professional standards that inform this program. Explain how those standards have been used to assess and maintain ongoing quality and relevance.

Professional standards from which the updated curriculum and outcomes emerged are gleaned from USITT (United States Institute for Theatre Technology), ATHE (Association of Theatre in Higher Education), (AATE) American Alliance for Theatre and Education.

16. Report and discuss the post-graduation placement of your graduates.

This is Dr. Wisdom's first graduating class – there is anecdotal information beyond these four years at best. We know that our graduates have (and are) completing graduate programs (MA, MFA) in theatre and costuming. We have graduates who are teaching theatre at the high school and middle school levels across the country. Those who are teaching have earned awards with their students at the state and national levels, and are turning out graduates who are choosing to major in theatre for their college programs. We have graduates working professionally on Broadway, and in LA, both in film and theatre. We have graduates who are pastors, bi-vocational performers and employees in business, community theatre, and acting coaches. Some of our graduates have chosen to pursue graduate studies in other fields and are serving as school counselors and principals.

17. Present and discuss any additional evidence of the program's quality and success. Include evidence of stakeholder (students, alumni, employers) satisfaction along with evidence that the unit has reviewed it & used what they learned to improve the program.

Sell out performances, all majors and minors auditioning for all shows; increased interest from area theatres in our majors and minors. Feedback from supervising teachers and principals as to the quality of our students, emails and notes from theatre alumni as well as EU board members reflecting on their enjoyment of performances and their quality.

18. If an A.A. degree is part of this program, describe how the changes to this program affect the A.A. degree.
N/A

SECTION 5: Sustainability

19. What new revenue opportunities have been (or can be) beneficial to the program? Describe any supporting funding from subsidies, grants, fundraising, etc.

We have been encouraged to apply for the EU Auxiliary monetary gift that they bestow upon various programs with need. The program is also underwritten by the Cook Fund, which focuses on technology needs.

20. To what extent does the program have the personnel, technological, and other resources it needs to meet its objectives?

The program is unsustainable with only one full-time faculty member. The growth of advisees and number of courses the single full-time faculty member must manage is impossible to maintain excellence and provide for growth in the program. The program is woefully underfunded, and the technology elements of the theatre are in need of upgrading and completion (i.e, the fly system was never completed when the building was constructed). Budgeting is based upon projected ticket sales, therefore, improvements to infrastructure needs are virtually impossible to make.

21. What efficiencies in the way the program operates are (or can be) beneficial to Evangel University as a whole?

We manage to produce a full season of quality productions which adds to the reputation of the university and increases our visibility in the arts community of Springfield with limited staffing and dependency on ticket sales. The program also benefits our students across disciplines, faculty, staff and administrators as they have the opportunity to enjoy the professionalism of our performances.

SECTION 6: Planning for the Future

22. Based on what you have learned from this review, including the SWOT conducted for the "Relevance" section (questions 9-13), identify 1 – 3 strategic objectives that will enable the program to further one or more of EU's strategic goals in the next 5 years. For each objective, please include: Who is the driver responsible for meeting this objective?; Who needs to be involved in accomplishing the objective?; What strategy(s) will be used to achieve the objective?; and When will this objective be accomplished?

Strategic Program Objective	Person Responsible	Persons Involved	Plan (Strategy) to achieve objective	Goal for accomplishment
Increase enrollment in theatre subunits	Marketing/Enrollment	VP for Enrollment, Program Director for Theatre, Dept. Head for Humanities, Dept. Head for Music, VP for Finance	Develop database of (A/G) Fine Arts students to pursue through various medias	Spring 2021
	VP for Finance		Add additional full-time faculty member to assist with recruitment responsibilities	Summer 2021
				Spring 2021

			Offer coaching to area A/G students in Fine Arts to make connection Establish "student ambassadors" to connect with prospective students beyond Program Director -	Fall 2020
Continue performance opportunities in the challenging Covid environment and its effect on the Arts through radio theatre and outdoor performances if needed	Vickie Wisdom Senior student directors Adjunct faculty Dept. Head of Humanities (funding) ATC	Vickie Wisdom, Abby Vaughan, Annalise Williams, Lori Lawley, Pat Bogle, Lyra Sprenger, La Donna Friesen, Matt Stevens	Collaborate with EU radio and marketing to perform a full length play as "radio theatre" it will reach not only EU and local audiences, but hopefully regionally by partnering with a local station Partner with ATC for alternative staging for spring musical which allows for outdoor theatre (if theatre audiences still unable to attend inside) Develop seven year plans for 2020-2021 season and beyond	Fall 2020 Spring 2021 Spring 2021-Spring 2028
Technology and safety improvements to continue	Director of Facilities Director of Theatre Dept. Head of Humanities VP for Finance ATC	Brian Hauff Vickie Wisdom LaDonna Friesen Linda Allen Matt Stevens	Complete fly system and turn dead hung stage lights into moving battens for safety Remodel catwalks to have light fixtures placed in the correct position without jeopardizing students or workers	Spring 2022 Spring 2024

(Part B)
APR Rubric

Please click on the link below to complete the APR rubric. A PDF copy of the rubric will be uploaded to Course Commons in the department's file of APRs by the chair of Assessment.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OZSm9_ub6U-LC8HNW1BlvPeJHo7tNtRArCYed38MyBIURUZWVVJLV0MyNjAwOEILNzA5N0JPO0dCRC4u

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