

**REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
TO THE REGULAR May 2019 SENATE**

FOR DISCUSSION

**Quality Assurance – Cyclical Program Review of Thorneloe University at
Laurentian University’s
Theatre and Motion Pictures Arts
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan**

In accordance with the Laurentian University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this Final Assessment Report has been prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and Laurentian’s response and action plan. The report identifies the significant strengths of the program, opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

**SUMMARY OF THE CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW OF THEATRE AND
MOTION PICTURE ARTS, THORNELOE UNIVERSITY AT LAURENTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

The list of programs is as follows: Bachelor of Arts in Theatre (3 year), Bachelor of Arts in Theatre (4 year); Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre (4 year) – Specialization Performance, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre (4 year) – Specialization Production (in collaboration with Cambrian College); Certificate in Theatre Arts (30 credits) and Minor in Theatre Arts (24 credits). The Department also offers Bachelor in Fine Arts in Motion Picture Arts – Specialization and a Minor in Motion Picture Arts (24 credits).

Currently there are two full-time faculty associated with the theatre program; there are nine part-time or sessional members for theatre and five faculty members for the movie picture part of the program.

The program submitted its self-study to Vice President Academic and Provost.

The self-study presented an overview of program options and then set out the objectives of the program and its mission statement, followed by the program’s learning objectives and learning outcomes based on degree level expectations. The self-study then addressed concerns from a previous review of the program and identified follow-up actions taken by the program.

The self-study described the role of each of the persons involved in its writing and highlighted input received from others outside the program. Thereafter, it listed the faculty and also provided a chart identifying departmental research funding. In addition teaching loads of the professors involved were spelled out, thesis supervision and physics

resources. The self-study went on to talk about enrolment, course outlines, student success and how learning outcomes are assessed.

After reviewing the self-study, the Review Team conducted a site visit on March 28 and 29, 2018. The external was Dr. Kathryn Bracht from the University of Regina, Mark Scott (Thorneloe University, outside the department but faculty of Arts), Dr. Lorraine Mercer (Huntington University – Gerontology, a faculty member outside the Faculty of Arts). Two students, Tamika Poetzsch and Morgan Penney, made up the balance of the committee.

The site visit began with a supper with Patricia Tedford (Chair of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts) and Benjamin Paquette (Coordinator of Motion Picture Arts) on the day before the visit.

On March 27, the committee met with the Associate Vice-President Learning and Teaching Dr. Shelley Watson, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr. Elizabeth Dawes and the President and Vice-Chancellor of Thorneloe University, Rev. Dr. Robert Derrenbacher as well as a meeting with the Chair of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts, Dr. Patricia Tedford. After lunch, the review committee met with three stakeholders individually:

David Robinson, Professor, School of Northern and Community Studies, and Sarah Gartshore, Local Artists, Playwright, Actor, Alumna and then visited the facilities. The first day was completed with a meeting with Desmond Maley, Librarian and a group of students and graduates of the program and a lecture by Dr. Ian MacLennan.

On March 29, the review team met with department members individually (or in small groups): Andrew David and Meridith Zwicker, Benjamin Paquette, Jennifer Hazelton, Ian MacLennan. This was followed by a meeting with the External Reviewer and a concluding meeting between the External Reviewer, the Dean of Arts and the Associate Vice-President Academic and Provost.

The report from the External Reviewer from May 2018 includes Objectives, Priorities and Recommendations.

- “Strengthen Academic Programs” could be further invested, in particular the Theatre Program relies on sessionals for unique courses, such as baby clown, mime and physical theatre which could benefit from a full time faculty member in the area.
- “Enhance Visibility and Increase Enrolment in Academic Programs” requires more on publicity, promotion and recruitment.
- “Revitalize Spaces for Living, Learning, and Working” as a priority it to be commended and the current spaces work well.
- “Govern with Excellence” could be extended to include more community outreach.

The admission requirements are appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes, but finding the information online is a challenge.

The curriculum is appropriate and adheres to the standards. There has been a recent move by the Theatre and Motion Picture Arts program to include more Canadian content in theatre productions, and these efforts are commended and should continue with the addition of Indigenous theatre offerings, along with the unit’s discussion to continue to

reach out to the French theatre department. The major challenge for Thorneloe is that there are fewer full time faculty to deliver many of these courses.

The relatively new programs in Motion Picture Arts are also aligned with film programs across the country.

The Theatre and Motion Picture Arts programs could “cross-pollinate” more with theatre, and develop courses that are cross-listed between the two programs. This would encourage both Theatre and M.P.A. students to work, play, and build community together.

There are several aspects in the theatre training program that are significant and innovative. First, it needs to be mentioned that the program is the only one of its kind in Northern Ontario, which is important for students and theatre artists who wish to stay and create theatre in the north, as they are able to train and stay in the community. It’s also worthy to note that the program has taken students on international trips abroad, both to Taiwan and to Denmark, to rehearse and perform Shakespeare. If either of these initiatives were to be knit into the program as concrete program offerings it would be highly attractive to potential students.

One of the distinguishing aspects of the program is the introduction of physical theatre and clown. Most theatre programs in Canada do not offer clown as a core course offering. This, along with the links to The Manitoulin Conservatory of Creation and Performance, combined with the relationship the department has to professional artists who teach clown and physical theatre, is a special one.

In the Motion Production Arts Program, gateway classes in photography appear to be an excellent link into the program, and again, the personal connections faculty have to the burgeoning film industry are promising, which gives the program a ‘leg up’ on film programs in larger centres. Because of the relatively small size of the program, students can and have been mentored on set in professional environments, which is an aspect of the program that is attractive and not always available to programs in larger centers.

Students like the small focused classes and opportunities to travel but note scheduling conflicts between classes and a lack of practical courses in film production and would like to see a better representation of female instructors. Students in Motion Picture Arts expressed that they would like to see more instructors, technicians, equipment, and are in need of sound equipment (sound kits) and a sound studio along with studio facilities and film equipment. Students from both streams also expressed a desire to have more opportunity to work together, so the programs were more inclusive of one another, rather than exclusive. Students also suggested they would like to see more Indigenous theatre classes offered, along with studio courses in musical theatre and courses for professional development. Progress has been made to revising the curriculum to include more Indigenous content as well as introduce students to the tri-cultural mandate of the University.

The review team commends the administration at Thorneloe for its creative, flexible and adept utilization of human resources, but as mentioned previously, the Motion Picture Arts program is at a critical point in its growth and development. All faculty in this program are sessional, and if the Theatre and Motion Picture Arts programs are to “Enhance visibility and increase enrolment in academic programs” an investment in a third hire in Motion Picture Arts is required.

One of the best indicators of a program’s success is with its students and graduates, along with the quality of research from the faculty. Several graduates of both the theatre and

film programs took time during the review period to detail how the program launched their own successes in their respective industries. As there is no formal tracking of graduates, information in this regard is limited to anecdotal evidence from faculty and the unit's self-study. It appears that for a small program, graduates have gone on to have successful careers in acting, self-producing shows, working in production and/or crew on local film and television projects, taking on work in publicity, promotion and fundraising, as well as working locally for the Sudbury Theatre Centre and *Cinefest*. This practice included positions in theatre administration or front of house, and as filmmakers showing award-winning films and theatre-makers creating their own work. All of this reflects well on the program.

**SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS (R)
RESPONSES FROM THE UNIT (U), DR. DERRENBAKER (P) AND THE
RESPONSES OF THE DEAN OF ARTS (D)**

R1: Third full time faculty hire in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts.

Hire a third person with a specific, dedicated skill set in Motion Picture Arts. The potential for growth in this program is extremely promising, and it needs immediate support. It should be stated that as a university that is dedicated to the arts and humanities Thorneloe is unique in and of itself. In a time of fiscal restraint, it is vital to have institutions that are dedicated to the continuance of learning and teaching in this broad and important field of study. The Theatre and Motion Picture Arts department has admirably maintained a standard of excellence despite obvious limitations, and has been flexible and creative in developing relationships with community partners to overcome these limitations. It is clear that in order for the program to be sustainable and develop in the areas identified in the self-study, such as incorporating more Indigenous content, maintaining their unique courses in clown and physical theatre, developing the Motion Picture Arts program and reaching out and creating more opportunities for content in Francophone theatre, a third hire in the program is imperative. The current dependency on sessional faculty is not sustainable.

U1: Agree with recommendation 1. Prior to the external evaluation it was thought by faculty at Thorneloe, that a third hire would ideally be someone who could teach in both Theatre and Motion Picture Arts. However, as a result of further examination it has become clear that the need is specifically in Motion Picture Arts, and this area cannot be sustained with community partner involvement unless there is a full time faculty representing this area of study. The current dependency on sessional faculty is not sustainable. Goals identified in self-study (as listed above) cannot be met without the addition of a third faculty. Also, it is doubtful that such a person who could teach in both areas could actually be found. We can however get more creative in how we offer courses, and look at the possibility of team teaching courses that cross disciplines.

P1: I agree with the recommendation and the Unit's response. Again, see comments above about the need for a new agreement regarding Base Operating Grant distribution.

D1: Agreed.

R2: Cross list courses for students in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts.

In the short term, the department could look at where classes could be cross listed between the two program streams of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts. Examples brought forward included an introductory class on Acting for the Camera, perhaps leading to a production class in later semesters that result in short film projects that theatre students perform in, and MPA students produce, both supervised by their respective areas. Long term, this could include a combined BFA in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts.

U2: Agreed; Benjamin Paquette and I have already been discussing co-teaching an acting for the camera course (which has been on the books but not offered in several years since camera acting was incorporated into Acting III). Further, we would like to see films made by our students, telling Northern Stories. We have encouraged the MPA students to use the acting students, but they have come back with “no one is available”. We need to construct this opportunity within class time. It should not be organized as an extracurricular, as most students have too many conflicts as they work part-time jobs. If there is a possibility in the future of a combined BFA concentration it would speak to the demands of these evolving art forms, particularly in the Greater Sudbury Area, where many opportunities arise for professionals in the entertainment industry to cross over into related disciplines. Further, this would fit into the articulation agreement with Cambrian College, who is also examining their programming and considering a combined area of study.

P2: Agreed. I also agree with the Unit’s response.

D2: Agreed, cross-listing would allow for more courses requirements to be fulfilled with the same amount of workload. My only concern would be if students who are in one program often minor or double major in the other program. If this is the case I would ask that the unit consider the impact for these students prior to cross-listing courses.

R3: Creation of a full time position and/or internship in technical theatre and production management for Theatre and Motion Picture Arts.

U3: In an ideal world, with appropriate resources, a full-time hire would be desirable. Further, that person could be in a position to supervise an internship. As Cambrian College is currently under review of their programming, we will have to look at this more closely and determine the necessity of such a hire, depending on how the collaboration on main stage productions continues to be supported.

P3: I agree with the Unit’s response.

D3: Agreed with Unit’s response.

R4: Implement a Program Development Advisory Panel for continued program development of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts.

In the self-study, the unit’s stated goals include the incorporation of Indigenous theatre content into the program, the development of certificate programs in specialized training in clown, devised theatre and/or physical theatre, and connecting further with the Francophone theatre program/community. As the Theatre and Motion Picture Arts Program is undergoing this exciting time of change, it is an opportune time to incorporate many of these new ideas in programming. It will be important to work with the local Indigenous community to determine a positive direction for course content in that area. As there are several ideas for program development and outreach expressed in the unit’s self-study, a Program Development Advisory Panel would help focus on the areas that are ripe for growth and are attractive to students, as well as focus on the larger, more

holistic development of the program, including the opportunities to perform internationally through the established connections to Taiwan and Denmark. At this juncture, developing programming between the Theatre and Motion Picture Arts Programs would be the most advantageous.

U4: Agreed. A creation of a Program Development Advisory Panel for continued development in areas listed above would facilitate in the organization of priorities, integrate community involvement, and specifically enlist the interests of the local Indigenous community.

P4: Agreed.

D4: Agreed.

R5: Update and make accessible information for all programs in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts online, in particular information regarding the Bachelor of Fine Arts.

It is critical to the program to have correct, accessible information available for the various degree programs offered. The links to the program information for Theatre and Motion Picture Arts are extremely confusing for students, and detrimental to program. Online information for programs, courses, and faculty must be regularly updated.

U5: Agreed: We are constantly working on this: in the past, present, and will be in the future. But really as noted in the self-study- it must improve or we will suffer the consequences in enrolments. One of the challenges is maintaining consistency and continuity across multiple staffing changes year over year.

P5: Agreed.

D5: Agreed.

In the interim, a simple and effective method suggested during the site visit would be to create a course tracking sheet for each program, with a list of courses required, when they are offered, and when the students can take them if they are not offered every year, along with a list of potential electives. These should be mandatory for use by the registrar's office. Students interested in the Theatre and Motion Picture Arts Program should be directed to the chair of the program for counselling.

One information sheet for students entering in an odd year, and one for those entering in an even year would help to solve the confusion around when to take classes that are offered every other year, for example, and would go a long way to help with the confusion around registration and the student's program planning.

U5: Agreed: creation of tracking sheets would be helpful. We have had specific instructions sent to Registrar in the past but they were not used in the following year as staffing changed.

P5: Agreed.

D5: Agreed.

R6: Create a system for tracking alumnus of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts, and revitalize enrolments through effective publicity and promotion of the department.

While this is put into practice, an additional suggestion brought forward to the review team was the creation of an annual Distinguished Alumni Award, which could help track successful students and provide a public record of those who have graduated from the program and gone on to successful careers. This award system would also support Priority #2. “*Enhance Visibility and Increase Enrolment in Academic Programs*”. A long term system of tracking students’ needs to be incorporated, and the unit’s plans to reach this goal through seeking the necessary funding for recruitment, retention, and tracking alumni is important.

U6: Yes this is a great idea: we just need the system and the human resources to initiate it and run it year over year. There is only so much time when we have only two full-time faculty.

P6: Agree, in principle. However, it is difficult to track our Alumni at Thorneloe. We need to rely on the LU Alumni Office to assist in this as all Theatre/MPArts grads are Laurentian Alumni.

D6: Agreed, in Psychology they use the Psychology @ LU Facebook page where most Alumni remain members. Once a year a call out is sent on the page and alumni are asked to give us a ‘Where are they Now’ update. This has proven to be somewhat successful.

SUMMARY

As mentioned in the introduction, it is a trying time for arts and humanities programs in institutions across the country. The easiest position for an institution to take is one of austerity, and cut positions and/or reduce funding. It is this reviewer’s opinion that during times of fiscal restraint the most creative, productive programs tend to build and/or advance program development, and Thorneloe’s Theatre and Motion Picture Arts Program is in a good position to combine the strengths of both its program streams into program offerings that could distinguish the department. The program also has several unique qualities that set it apart simply by its position – both geographically and within the federated universities at Laurentian. The student commentary was most clear about the individual attention to each student’s needs, the quality of training and education, attending an institution that provided quality housing that was physically connected to the educational spaces, and the fact that Thorneloe itself is an institution dedicated to the Arts and Humanities. Students also commented about “coming home” to Thorneloe, where they didn’t feel like a “number”. This is what will connect students to the program, and is an aspect of the program that should be actively promoted.

U: The unit agrees in principle with all of the recommendations. Most changes are in agreement with those identified in the Self Study. We need more human resources to institute the changes. We are pleased with what we have managed to achieve: a place of belonging for our students. Further, the level of student satisfaction and student success speaks to the dedication of all members of our faculty. With the recent new hire, and the fairly recent combination of the two programs Theatre and Motion Picture Arts under one department, the department is in an excellent position for continued growth, evolving into programs that can truly serve Northern Ontario.

P: I agree with both the summary recommendations and the Unit’s response to them.

8

D: Agreed.

ACAPLAN'S RESPONSE

| Recommendation | Proposed Follow-up | Responsibility | Timeline |
|---|---|--|-----------------|
| Third full time faculty hire in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts | Hire faculty member with appropriate skill set | President of Thorneloe University | December 2019 |
| Cross list courses for students in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts. | | Chair/ coordinator | September 2019 |
| Creation of a full time position and/or internship in technical theatre and production management for Theatre and Motion Picture Arts. | Discussions with Cambrian College for collaboration | Chair/Coordinator President of Thorneloe University | |
| Implement a Program Development Advisory Panel for continued program development of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts. Advisory Panel to include members of the community. | | Chair/coordinator | September 2019 |
| Update and make accessible information for all programs in Theatre and Motion Picture Arts online, in particular information regarding the Bachelor of Fine Arts. | | Chair/coordinator and the Dean | September 2019 |
| Create a system | | Chair/coordinator | December 2019 |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| for tracking alumnus of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts, and revitalize enrolments through effective publicity and promotion of the department. | | and Vice-President, Academic and Provost | |
|--|--|---|--|

The Dean of Arts shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made shall be presented in the Dean's Annual Report and filed with the Vice-President Academic and Provost and the President of Thorneloe University. The Executive Summary and the monitoring reports will be posted on Laurentian University's web site.

CONCLUSION

Thorneloe University at Laurentian University's Theatre and Motion Pictures Arts is approved to continue and it will be reviewed in the fall of 2026.