

March 26, 2007

To: Senate Steering Committee

From: Senate Planning and Review Committee  
Frances Jackson, Chair

Re: Proposals from Music, Theater Dance

The Music Theatre and Dance Department (MTD) in the College of Arts and Sciences has proposed the addition of four new degrees: Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance. All four proposals have received the approval of the Department, the required curriculum committees in both the Department and the College, and the approval of the College Assembly.

These degrees are being offered for two reasons. First, the BFA carries more professional prestige and has broader recognition than the BA degree in these areas, which are already offered by MTD. Secondly, several of the accrediting bodies that evaluate programs in MTD, e.g., the National Association of Schools of Dance, made the suggestion in 2001 that MTD should consider offering the BFA. Both NASD and NAST (Theater) will make a second accreditation visit in Fall, 2007.

The major difference between the BA degree in these four areas and the BFA is the higher expectations of skills and talents that BFA majors must exhibit. All students seeking admission to these programs, whether BFA or BA majors, are required to audition; this would not change. However, BFA students would have more concentration in the major than BA majors. SPRC understands the rationale for the BFA, but wonders if the BA is really necessary and whether there will be sufficient majors to justify offering both degrees.

No new courses are proposed for these four degrees. Rather there will be repackaging of current courses to meet the needs of BFA students. It is anticipated that approximately half the BA majors will switch to the BFA. However, it is also expected that offering the BFA will work to increase enrollment in these programs.

This proposal requests an additional tenure track faculty position in Ballet/Dance education, a Costume Shop Assistant and a full time Adviser by year five of this new degree. In addition, an additional clerical position to support both the Dance and Theatre programs is also requested. The Theatre program needs a specialist in Stage Voice and an additional tenure track position in Musical Theatre is also requested by year four.

The only issue of concern for SPRC are the enrollment projections. Enrollment projections for the degrees in theatre (Acting, Musical Theatre, Theatre Design and Technology) are that there will be 60 majors in year one, 20 of whom are new students, and by year five this would grow to 100 majors, 60 of whom would not be part of the BA degree in Theatre. The BFA in Dance is expected to have 30 majors in year one, 10 of whom would be new students, with 50 dance majors in year 5, 30 of whom would not be part of the BA program. These are ambitious projections, given that in 2004-2005, there were nine graduates from the dance program, and 18 graduates from the theatre program, the most ever from both those programs. It is advised that enrollment numbers in both majors be carefully monitored.

Having reviewed a number of other proposals from MTD over the years, it is understood that the new positions requested above are not based on student projections for these degrees, but reflect long standing requests of the Department. The other requests, for a new truck and new dance floors are not specifically tied to these proposals, but reflect the overall needs of the department, whether these proposals are approved or not.