

**WINTHROP UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE  
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Assessment of student learning outcomes in the Department of Theatre and Dance occurs within the context of the following general principles:

1. Much of the assessment that takes place in the classroom is evaluative, and faculty members employ assessment tools everyday in many ways.
2. The department's academic programs have a wide array of educational objectives, so the department does not have a "one-plan-fits-all" approach to assessment.
3. Academic assessment does not replace curricular, departmental, and other types of ongoing review for improvement: it supplements and improves it.
4. Faculty ownership of and participation in assessment activities is essential. Assessment is embedded in the culture of the entire teaching/learning enterprise of the department.
5. The department has a history of making programmatic changes based on assessment results.

Description of a few examples of assessment measures can demonstrate how the above general principles translate into concrete form at the broader, departmental level.

*Accreditation Reviews and Annual HEADS Reports*

Winthrop is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance and the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The Dance Program reviews were conducted in 1999 and 2009. The next review is scheduled for 2019. The Theatre Program reviews were conducted in 1994 and 2004. The next review is scheduled for 2014. In each case, program success is evaluated with consideration of accreditation standards and data compiled in HEADS reports.

*Annual Faculty Review*

The Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance reviews each faculty member's goals and record of accomplishment in May for the previous calendar year. Evaluation criteria include teaching, creative/scholarly activity, and service that supports student learning. On the basis of this assessment, faculty members and the Chair collaboratively consider and design new goals and objectives.

*Classroom Observation*

The department Chair and senior faculty members observe the instruction of probationary and adjunct faculty every semester. They use a rubric for rating instructors' effectiveness, then a meeting occurs with the instructor to review the observation/evaluation and make plans for teaching improvements.

*Administrative Evaluations*

All faculty members in the department make written evaluations of the department Chair and the Director of Dance, a program director-level administrative position. The dean and chair, respectively, collect and analyze the faculty evaluations as one element in a larger, annual review of administrative effectiveness. Annual consultations between these two administrators and their respective superior occur to develop a plan for improving administrative skills.

*Local, State, Regional and National Festival Adjudications and Professional Development*

Student and faculty participation at discipline-specific festivals and competitions, such as the American College Dance Festival, the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival, and the Charlotte Dance Festival. These events provide feedback and evaluation in areas of performance, production and choreography by experts, scholars and professional adjudicators. The success of our students and faculty is measured by their creativity and artistry, the number of peer-reviewed scholarly activities in which they engage annually, and by their honors and awards.

*Placement*

Placement of graduates from the school in professional companies, internships, and graduate programs is considered in the assessment of school goals.

Assessment measures in this department demonstrate:

- A. that we have an assessment plan that tracks the where, how and when learning occurs for students during their academic careers in the dance or theatre major at Winthrop. (The Assessment Map)
- B. that the learning that occurs in all aspects of the dance and theatre programs aligns with the broader learning goals of the department, college, university, and external accrediting organizations. (Vertical Alignment)
- C. that we always attain the important symbiotic connection between assessment and change. (Closing the Assessment Loop)
- D. that we regularly review all components of our department’s assessment plan (see fifth column of The Assessment Map)

**A. The Assessment Map in the Department of Theatre and Dance:**

<b>ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT RESULTS</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT FREQUENCY</b>	<b>RESULTS USED TO MAKE CHANGES IN:</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY/TOOL REVIEWED</b>
<b>Department Level</b>				
Course Evaluations	Student feedback data on instruction	Every semester	Pedagogy; curriculum	Every five years
Post-Show Discussions	Minutes of sessions	After every production	Season Planning; curriculum	Every five years

			planning	
Post-Show Faculty Reviews	Minutes of sessions	After every production	Production Processes and Logistics	Every five years
Production Reflection Essays in THRA 431, 470, 471 DANT 301, 442	Student essays	Every semester	Pedagogy; production processes; curriculum	Every two years
Production reflection essays in THRA 370, DANA 444, 443	Student essays	Every semester	Pedagogy, production processes, curriculum	Every two years
Classroom observation	Observation data by chair and tenured faculty followed by individual meeting with faculty member	Every semester	Pedagogy and course content	Every five years
Chair's Advisory Council	Minutes of sessions	Every month	Production practices; Season Planning; curriculum; student services; advising	Every five years
Senior Exit Interview/Survey	Notes from interviews/survey data	Every semester	Curriculum; teaching assignments; season planning	Every ten years
<b>Dance Program</b>				
Placement Class	Initial proficiency evaluation data	At beginning of first semester	Curriculum; advising	Every two years
Pre-Major Status and Application Process	Student application and essay	First semester.	Curriculum; advising; scholarship audition process	Every two years
Fourth Semester Proficiency Evaluation	Proficiency evaluation data	Fourth semester	Advising; curriculum; teaching assignments	Every five years
Fourth Semester	Student portfolio	Fourth semester	Curriculum;	Every two years

Portfolio Review			season planning	
Seventh Semester Proficiency Evaluation	Proficiency evaluation data	Seventh semester	Advising; curriculum; teaching assignments	Every five years
First and Final Semester Content Exam	Student exam papers	First and Seventh semesters	Curriculum; teaching assignments	Every ten years
Adjudication of DANT 301 Pieces	Oral response to preview performance	Sixth semester	Production practices; pedagogy and course content	Every five years
ACDF Regional adjudication	Oral response to performance	Every year	Production practices; course content	Every five years
SCADA adjudication	Oral response to performance	Alternate years	Production practices; course content	Every ten years
NASD recommendation	Revision of dance course descriptions and goals	Every ten years.	Course content, curriculum	Every ten years
Capstone Courses	Student portfolios, student projects, course evaluations	Student's Senior Year	Course content, curriculum	Every five years
Competency Review Committee (for Certification degree students)	Approval to complete next step in Teacher Education program	Every semester	Teaching assignments; curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Application to Teacher Education (for Certification degree students)	Student essay and portfolio	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis I (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis II (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In final semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
<b>Theatre Program</b>				

Third Semester Review	Faculty evaluation data	Third semester	Curriculum; teaching assignments	Every two years
Sixth Semester Review	Faculty evaluation data	Sixth semester	Curriculum; teaching assignments	Every two years
Senior Exit Interview	Vita and headshot	Final semester	Curriculum; advising; production practices;	Four years
ACTF Respondent	Oral and written response to performance	Every semester	Production practices; season planning; teaching assignments; advising	Every five years
NAST recommendation	Revision of dance course descriptions and goals	Every ten years.	Course content, curriculum	Every ten years
Capstone Courses	Student portfolios, student projects, course evaluations	Student's Senior Year	Course content, curriculum	Every five years
Competency Review Committee (for Certification degree students)	Approval to complete next step in Teacher Education program	Every semester	Teaching assignments; curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Application to Teacher Education (for Certification degree students)	Student essay and portfolio	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis I (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis II (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In final semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE

The department's faculty members manage the above assessment tools consistently and regularly, as the third column in the chart indicates. The department's faculty members meet up to four times per month, and they review assessment data and implement change in those

meetings. Many of the above assessment activities receive initial review in a faculty subcommittee (dance faculty, theatre faculty, curriculum committee, competency review committee) that makes a recommendation for action to the full departmental faculty. Several faculty members also will gather on an ad hoc basis to conduct certain assessment tools (proficiency evaluations, sophomore and junior reviews, classroom observation) and then provide the departmental faculty with the results for discussion and action.

## **B. Vertical alignment of learning goals:**

The specific degree program missions and goals align with the department, CVPA, university, and accreditation organization missions and goals.

### **Theatre Program Mission Statement**

The mission of the theatre program is to foster individual students' aesthetic, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education as they pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree.

### **Theatre Program Goals:**

1. Students should demonstrate a fundamental understanding of and appreciation for the creative processes of theatre, the socio-historical contexts and the nature of the theatrical event.
2. Students will achieve basic skills in performance and production.
3. Students should demonstrate a sense of commitment and a positive attitude that will foster the creative process.
4. (Certification Emphasis): The student will be an effective decision maker in directing the education of students

### **Dance Program Mission Statement**

The dance program at Winthrop University prepares students for careers and future study in dance by fostering their aesthetic, technical, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education. In order to achieve this mission, the program provides students with opportunities to participate in studio-based practices and explorations as well as performance and other relevant educational offerings. The program serves both the university and local community in enhancing their knowledge of the discipline of dance from a holistic perspective, including the political, historical, cultural, and technological events that have contributed to its evolution.

### **Dance Program Goals**

1. To provide a developmentally sequenced curriculum of studio and theory courses that exposes dance majors and minors to a breadth of skills, knowledge, and critical thinking.
2. To nurture artistic leadership in students through opportunities to perform, choreograph, teach, design, stage manage, participate in internships, and be involved in professional organizations.
3. To promote collaborative experiences that develop students' communication skills, appreciation of diversity, and adaptability to change in all artistic and interdisciplinary endeavors.
4. (Certification Emphasis): To prepare students for successful careers as educational leaders in public and private K-12 education.

The theatre and dance program mission statements and program goals share a liberal arts-based vision of education and a commitment to developing students' collaborative and creative skills.

## **Department of Theatre and Dance Mission Statement**

The mission of Winthrop University's Department of Theatre and Dance is to foster individual students' aesthetic, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education as they pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre or in Dance. Through class instruction, private coaching, mentoring, and performance, the department advocates both theoretical and creative explorations to achieve an understanding of the social, political, historical, and technological aspects of theatre and dance. We strive to afford opportunities for students to develop a significant level of competency in one emphasis in theatre (performance, design/technical, K-12 teacher certification) or in dance (performance, K-12 teacher certification)

The department's mission statement affirms the commitment to students' aesthetic and intellectual development asserted in the dance and theatre program goals. The department mission statement echoes the "context of a liberal arts education" component of the dance and theatre mission statements.

## **CVPA Mission Statement**

The College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University offers nationally accredited programs in art, design, theatre, dance, and music, and provides academically challenging instruction in an interdisciplinary environment that inspires and prepares the next generation of artists, educators, scholars, and audiences. We promote intellectual inquiry and collaborative opportunities that encourage each student to develop a uniquely creative vision cultivated through artistry, teaching, scholarship, public performance, and community engagement.

The college mission statement asserts that students receive "academically challenging instruction." The department's mission statement affirms that we achieve this through "class instruction, private coaching, mentoring, and performance" and through the expectation that every student develops a "significant level of competency in one emphasis in theatre . . . or in dance." The department's mission statement asserts that students acquire knowledge through public performances, echoing the language of the college mission statement concerning "public performance and community engagement."

## **University Level Competencies**

In 2010 the administration formed the UWAAC task force. It recommended the adoption of the four University Level Competencies to serve as a guide for all academic programs. These competencies were adopted in 2010. All programs are required to develop an assessment plan by February 2012 that demonstrates how students achieve these competencies.

### **Competency 1: Winthrop graduates think critically and solve problems.**

Winthrop University graduates reason logically, evaluate and use evidence, and solve problems. They seek out and assess relevant information from multiple viewpoints to form well-reasoned conclusions. Winthrop graduates consider the full context and consequences of their decisions and continually reexamine their own critical thinking process, including the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments.

### **Competency 2: Winthrop graduates are personally and socially responsible.**

Winthrop University graduates value integrity, perceive moral dimensions, and achieve excellence in their work. They take seriously the perspectives of others, practice ethical reasoning, and reflect on experiences. Winthrop graduates hold a sense of responsibility to the broader community and contribute to the greater good.

**Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.**

Winthrop University graduates comprehend the historical, social, and global contexts of their disciplines and their lives. They also recognize how their chosen area of study is inextricably linked to other fields. Winthrop graduates collaborate with members of diverse academic, professional, and cultural communities as informed and engaged citizens.

**Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.**

Winthrop University graduates communicate in a manner appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience. They create texts – including but not limited to written, oral, and visual presentations – that convey content effectively. Mindful of their voice and the impact of their communication, Winthrop graduates successfully express and exchange ideas.

The Department of Theatre and Dance will have an assessment plan that documents how our programs fulfill these University Level Competencies completed before the February 2012 deadline.

**Relevant Excerpt from the University Mission Statement**

Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education programs of national caliber within a context dedicated to public service to the nation and to the State of South Carolina. The values of service, excellence, diversity, community, and leadership provide the foundation for Winthrop's continuing development and shape [Winthrop's continuing success](#).

Winthrop enrolls an achievement-oriented, culturally diverse and socially responsible student body between 6,500 and 7,000 students. Winthrop prides itself on being an institution of choice for groups traditionally under-represented on many college campuses.

Winthrop students acquire and develop knowledge, skills, capabilities and values that enrich their lives and prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of the contemporary world, including the ability to communicate effectively, appreciate diversity, work collaboratively, synthesize knowledge, solve complex problems and adapt to change. Ongoing assessment of programs and services ensures both that all academic programs challenge students at their highest level of ability and that the library, instructional technology and other academic service areas support courses of study that are consonant with best practices. As a result, Winthrop graduates are eminently well prepared to enter the most competitive graduate or professional schools as well as to be leaders in their chosen professions and in their communities.

In the department mission statement, we assert that we offer students a "significant level of competency" in one area of theatre or dance. This links to the university mission statement's assertion that "academic programs challenge students at the highest level." The department mission statement speaks of the "context of a liberal arts education" that shapes the theatre and dance curricula. This reflects the identity of the university as a "comprehensive teaching university" in the university mission statement. The department's mission statement speaks of the various means of instruction provided to students with the words "Through class instruction, private coaching, mentoring, and performance." This echoes the language of the university's mission statement where it states "Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, . . . programs."

**NAST Theatre Program Outcomes**



Students holding undergraduate liberal arts degrees must have:

1. The ability to think conceptually and critically about text, performance, and production.
2. An understanding of playwriting and production processes, aesthetic properties of style, and the way these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural forces.
3. An acquaintance with a wide selection of theatre repertory including the principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.
4. The ability to develop and defend informed judgments about theatre

### **NASD Dance Program Outcomes**

Students holding undergraduate liberal arts degrees must have:

1. The ability to identify and work conceptually with the elements of dance.
2. An understanding of choreographic processes, aesthetic properties of style, and the ways these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural ideas and contexts.
3. An acquaintance with a wide selection of dance repertory, the principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.
4. The ability to develop and defend critical evaluations.
5. Fundamental knowledge of the body and of kinesiology as applicable to work in dance.

The department mission statement asserts that students “achieve an understanding of the social, political, historical, and technological aspects of theatre and dance,” and this aligns with the accrediting organizations’ call for development of students’ understanding of artistic processes, “aesthetic properties of style and the ways these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural ideas and contexts.” The accrediting organizations also expect theatre and dance programs to develop students’ skills broadly, and the mission statements for the dance and theatre programs speak of achieving “basic skills in performance and production” and “breadth of skills.”

## **C. Closing the Assessment Loop**

Specific Assessment Activity in 2011-12

- Faculty reviewed student self-reflection essays from the new course for student performers, designers and stage managers (THRT 395). Student data revealed that students were making connections between their artistic work and the goals of the program (for example: growth in artistic skills, leadership, collaboration). Dance students need clearer prompting on the assignment, because they are already conducting a different self-reflection for other purposes. The faculty members who teach the relevant courses in 2010-11 will provide clearer guidance.
- Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, the department added several theatre courses as electives to the dance majors and to the dance minor to encourage students to develop important career skills in production and marketing. Faculty review of senior exit survey data and tracking of alumni employment provided primary evidence to motivate these curricular actions.
- Beginning with the 2011-12 academic year, the department added THRA 173 as a requirement to the theatre performance major to develop important career

skills in marketing. Faculty review of senior exit survey data and tracking of alumni employment provided primary evidence to motivate these curricular actions.

- Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, the dance faculty decided to use the modern and ballet proficiency evaluation forms as the primary evaluative tools for determining grades in all technique courses for the majors. Faculty review of grades awarded in the dance program over the past two years provided the evidence that guided this decision.
- Beginning with the spring 2011 semester, dance faculty decided to include an assignment in DANA 185. The assignment will call for dance majors to plan a fitness program for themselves over the summer to maintain their strength and flexibility. Also, the dance faculty developed fitness and reading recommendations to distribute to new students during summer orientation in June. The dance placement class for the entering students and proficiency evaluations in upper division technique courses provided the evidence to guide this initiative.
- Starting with the 2010-11 academic year, the theatre faculty moved the theatre career forum event to a new time. Various faculty members integrated the content of this forum into assignments in theatre courses in the next semester. Faculty review of student feedback from the career forum in the 2009-10 academic year provided the primary assessment evidence to motivate this action.
- Starting with the 2010-11 academic year, theatre faculty decided to conduct a series of workshops in the fall that prepared students to pursue summer theatre and internship opportunities at the end of the year. Also, the faculty conducted some workshops in January 2011 to prepare design/tech students for interviews for summer work. Student feedback/assessment of the above theatre career forum and student success at state and regional summer auditions provided the evidence to guide this initiative.
- In the Fall 2010 semester, theatre faculty discussed revision to THRA 411 and 412—to focus those courses more on job search skills and less on portfolio/monologue preparation. Also, faculty will change the course content to help students create personal websites to present their artistic profiles. Feedback on course evaluations provided the evidence to guide this initiative.
- The theatre faculty assessed the above career development workshops and the feedback on THRA 411 and 412 in the fall 2010 semester. They decided to curricularize these activities in the 2011-12 year through more intentional use of the THRA 411 and 412 courses. Faculty assessment of the workshops provided the primary evidence to guide this decisions.

- In the fall 2010 semester, theatre faculty discussed preparation for new students. In the spring and summer of 2011 at orientation, students will be advised about portfolio development, a back-to-school list of tools they will need, expectations about fitness for physical labor, audition expectations, and a list of plays to read. Recommendation on the NAST websites provided the evidence to guide this initiative.
- For spring 2011 semester, the department has scheduled a travelling company of dancers to visit area schools where it will present lecture/demos of modern dance. Faculty review of the mission statement to emphasize collaboration provided the motivation for this action.
- In the Fall 2010 semester, student representatives on the Chair's Advisory Council proposed to improve communication by establishing a departmental website/social media page/closed digital community to provide students with a digital location to get all important information from the department. The department chair relied on a consultant to advise on this initiative. Action in the spring 2011 semester followed—the department's administrative specialist created a Facebook Page for the department and invited all department faculty, staff and majors to join. This webpage now functions as the communication center for the department.
- Faculty continued in its policy to avoid scheduling productions on Easter. For the 2010-11 season, the Student Choreography Showcase will have its final performance on Easter Saturday. Faculty review of audience attendance data from the previous two seasons provided the primary assessment evidence for this action.
- In the Spring of 2011, the dance faculty determined to provide an orientation for first-year students about auditioning for Winthrop Dance Theatre in order to explain the commitment they are making. This orientation will occur in DANT 110 in Fall 2011. Student data in the self-evaluations for DANA 444 in the fall 2010 semester provided the primary data to motivate this initiative.
- Revisions to the theatre sophomore and junior review processes. Faculty assessment session on the reviews in the Spring 2010 semester provided the primary assessment evidence to motivate these changes.
  - Establish longer time slots for each student to meet with faculty (for 2011 the time slots are 20 minutes)
  - Students should turn in their self-reflection narratives a week in advance of the review so that faculty can prepare comments in advance. (for 2011 the students turned in these documents one week in advance)
  - Moved the sophomore and junior reviews to late January/early February so as to avoid time conflicts with college and university

events that occur at the end of every semester. (for 2011 these reviews are occurring between 14 January and 5 February 2011)