DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS
Assessment Report for College of Liberal Studies
2012-2013 Academic Year

ASSESSMENT PLAN

For the 2012-2013 academic year, the Department of Theatre Arts assessed students by four measures:

DIRECT
1. Grades in selected classes.
2. Mentoring and Advising in THA 490 (Senior Capstone)

INDIRECT
3. Self-assessment in the classroom
4. Senior Exit interviews

RESPONSE TO THE CLS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE REGARDING DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT PLAN

1. Clarification of "grades in selected classes." The department did not sufficiently articulate our goal in the original document submitted to the College. All of the students in all of the courses listed on page two were assessed. The only intent was to exclude non-technique courses that fall into the theatre core. Many of our technique-based courses are taught on a two-year rotation, so only one half of them could be assessed during this academic year.

2. Clarification of "mentoring and advising in THA 490." THA 490 is the capstone course, and each senior meets with his or her instructor on a weekly basis. Each capstone course has a set of guidelines, which are used by the instructor to monitor both progress and success. Individualized feedback is provided to each student throughout the project, identifying missing or incomplete components, opportunities to undertake additional challenges, and to answer questions. Some instructors convey this feedback entirely in verbal format while others provide written commentary to students. At the end of the capstone project, each student submits a written analysis. The faculty members use the interim observations and the written analysis to determine how and how well the goals of the project were met. Results are shared with students through the grading of the written analysis, and during the exit interviews themselves—an event attended by all theatre faculty and staff members.

3. Clarification of "Self-Assessment in classes". Many department members administer a survey on the first day of each semester to provide a starting benchmark for students' knowledge and experience, which benchmark will be used to measure end-of-semester work. Some faculty members conduct this survey orally with students and note the results, while others distribute a written document for students to fill out and return.

4. Clarification of Senior Exit Interviews. Our senior exit interviews are designed to get an overview of the graduating seniors' experience within the department. We talk about what they saw as successful experiences in their time in the program and what aspects of it they might have done differently. We also dialogue with the students about what observations we as the faculty made during their time within the department. This interview paired with an exit survey given to the students helps us to make changes or refine our emphases to address trends we see as a result of these two measures.

5. Administering the assessment, analyzing the results, and sharing the data. A faculty member in the department designed the student questionnaire as well as the faculty reporting form for technique #1, in concert with the Department Chair and the faculty member who handles general education assessment for the department (the informal "department assessment committee.") She collected and analyzed the results and presented them to the department for discussion at the annual retreat. The Chair is responsible for

collecting and analyzing the data from the capstone projects and exit interviews. We have discovered over the course of this year that the process for standardizing and analyzing the self-assessment results needs to be refined.

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE #1: "Grades in Selected Classes"

<u>Methodology</u>

The department assessed all students in courses categorized as "technique-based, generally upper division." This includes offerings such as Stagecraft, Lighting Design, Acting, and Directing, designed to enable students to develop skill in a specific aspect of theatrical production—typically the area which a student has selected as their primary emphasis. Not all theatre majors or minors will enroll in each technique-based course. The department curriculum is set up with a common core, along with groups of classes for each of the six emphasis areas: performance, music theatre, design and technology, stage management, arts administration or general studies. The "primarily upper division" language is appropriate due to the fact that 200-level courses like Movement or Stagecraft are most certainly technique-based and just happen not to have higher course numbers

The courses taught in the 2012-1013 academic year falling into the category to be assessed were: THA 221- Movement, THA 231- Stagecraft, THA 320- Acting II, THA 321- Acting III, THA 331- Theatre Technology, THA 330- Scene Painting, THA 341- Lighting Design, THA 376- Economics of Arts and Entertainment, THA 420- Directing, THA 440- Costume Design/History, THA 482- Cabaret and THA 482- Legal Issues in the Arts. As noted below, data was not retrieved from all identified courses.

<div align="center">Courses Identified for Assessment in 2012–2013</div>

<u>Course</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
THA 221	Movement	Fall	22
THA 231	Stagecraft	Spring	13
THA 241	Makeup	Fall	17
THA 320	Acting II	Fall	28
THA 321	Acting III	Spring	24
THA 330	Scene Painting	Fall	12
THA 331	*Theatre Technology*	*Fall*	*Results not reported*
THA 341	Lighting Design	Spring	6
THA 376	Economics of Arts	Spring	11
THA 420	Directing	Fall	13
THA 422	Acting IV	Fall	17
THA 440	Costume Design	Spring	4
THA 482	Cabaret	Fall	21
THA 482	Legal Issues	Fall	8

Courses such as Theatre Studies, designed for all theatre students and focused on acquisition of a breadth of knowledge over three semesters, were not assessed, as they fall into the common core. Similarly, the department's freshman fall introductory course: THA 210- Theatre Foundations was excluded, as were all sections of the general education offering THA 110- Theatre Appreciation. THA 130- Multicultural Plays and THA 304- Musical Theatre History-- were inadvertently provided the student questionnaire, but as these coursse falls under the core/broad education criteria, it has been excluded from the results.

Implementation

At the end of the semester, students in each of the were asked to complete a questionnaire in which they identified "one component of the course that will allow you to express yourself more clearly in your primary emphasis area" as well as "one component of the course that revealed an area in which you need further development.

After collecting the questionnaire, instructors collated the results, summarizing the number of answers to each question that directly reflected a strategic learning outcome for the course as planned by the instructor and articulated in the syllabus, that indirectly reflected one of those strategic learning outcomes, or that did not relate to the course objectives at all. Instructors also recorded the overall grade distribution for the course.

A faculty member in the department collected all the instructor response sheets and provided the analysis that follows.
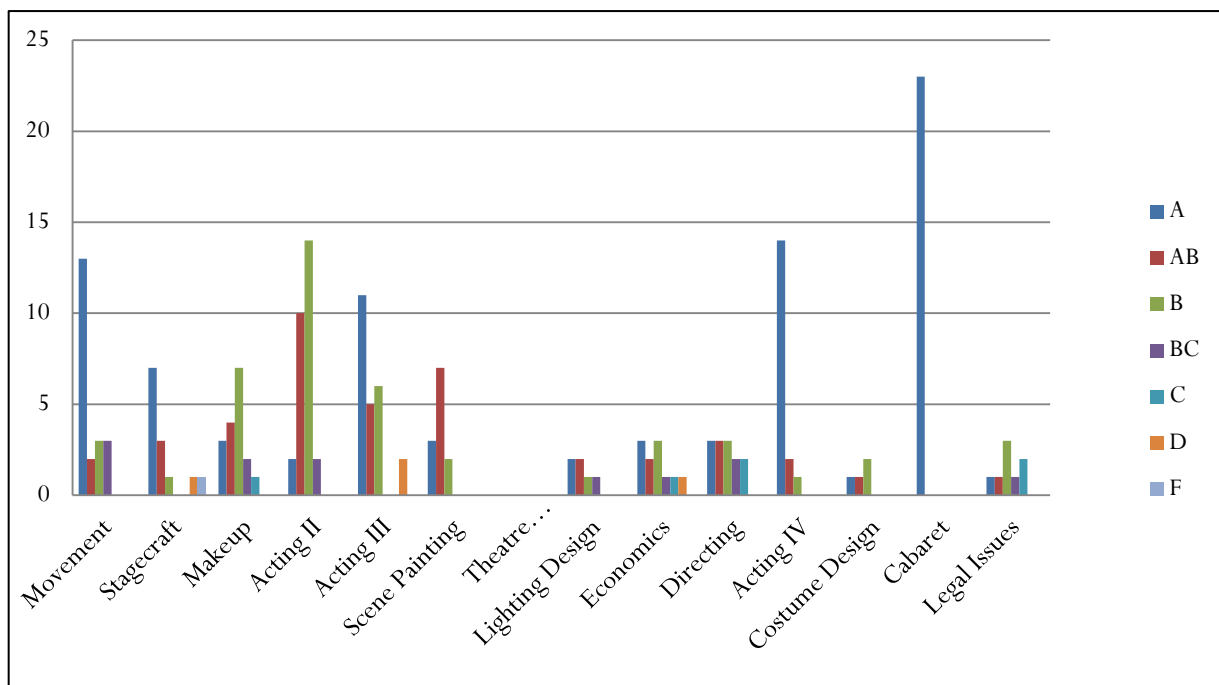
FINDINGS

Grade Distribution

88% of students enrolled in the courses received or are estimated to receive a grade of B or better. (*Spring 2013 results were collected before final grades were submitted so that this information could be discussed at the retreat.*) Only 1% of students were reported to fail a course.
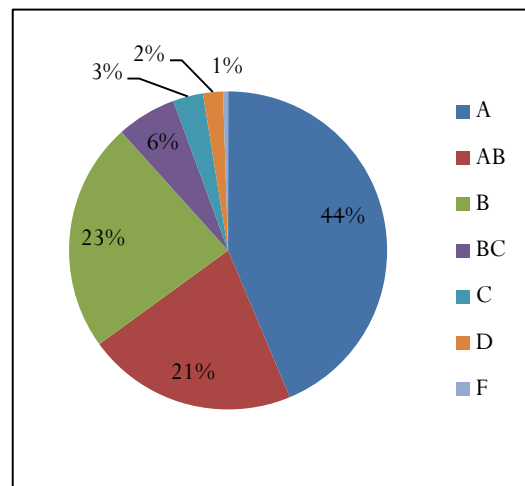

Overall Grade Distribution 2012-2013

Grade Distribution by Course

Question One: Describe how one component of this course will allow you to express yourself more clearly in your primary emphasis area.

This question was specifically designed not simply to record basic skill acquisition, but to capture the students' perspective on how that skill relates to their overall contribution to the collaborative art of theatre. In designing course learning objectives, theatre instructors focus on both of these components. The results indicate that not only are students picking up these essential information but they are able to recognize them as key to their means of communication.

The reported 3% of unrelated responses further indicates the success enjoyed by theatre instructors in articulating their objectives to students at the beginning of the course.
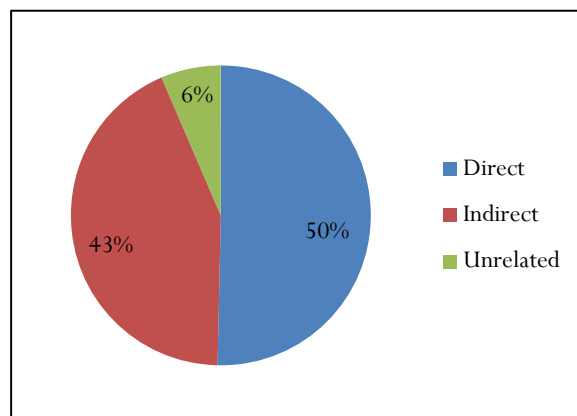

Correlation of Student Responses to Instructor SLO's
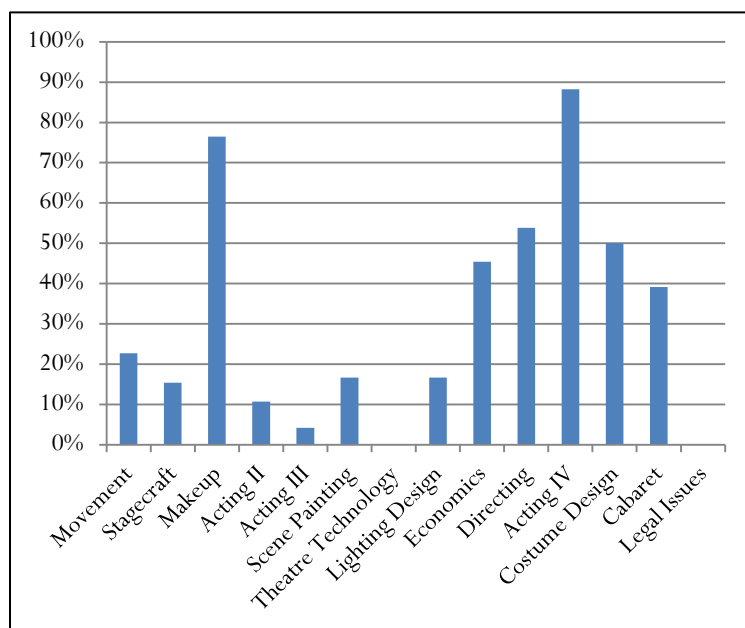
Direct Relationships

Students reporting an outcome directly matching an articulated strategic learning objective are fairly evenly distributed throughout the assessed courses.

Comparative results for both direct and indirect matches are presented below in chart form, denoting the percentage of answers for each reported course.

Some general trends can be found in the data. (1) The more specialized the course content is, the higher probability of a direct match. The Legal Issues course reported a 100% direct match, and the Cabaret and Scenic Painting courses were also very high and rounded out the top three scores. (2) Courses with broader content have more likelihood of an indirect match. Costume Design (which also includes costume history) reports a 50% direct match, while Directing—asking students to draw on material learned in a variety of previous courses—reports a 46% match.
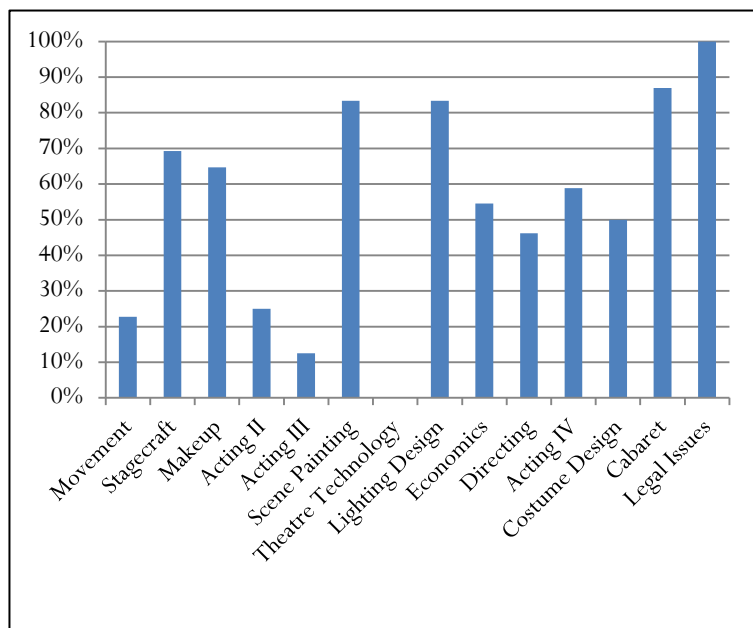
Student Responses with Direct Match by Course

Student Responses with Indirect Match by Course

<u>Indirect Relationships</u>

Students identifying an outcome indirectly matching an articulated strategic learning outcome chart in a nearly perfect inversion of the direct results, given that only 3% of students provided a response determined to be unrelated to the course. In the case of a course like Makeup, this can be attributed to the fact that many of the students do not intend to pursue a professional career as a makeup artist, but will apply these skills to their work as a costume designer or an actor. This course also attracts student with a less-specific interest in professional work in makeup, but who are intrigued by the course content or may have been inspired by commercially available access to the topic—through television shows like Face/Off or visual effects laden film or tv such as The Walking Dead.

In aggregate form, the student responses to question one fall into several common categories:

- Better research skills
- Improved sensitivity
- Intellectual and imaginative skills
- Understanding of history
- Understanding new technology/design area
- Script/character analysis
- Communication
- Organization
- Better technical skills/technique in area
- Ability to express creativity
- Confidence
- Preparation for professional situation
- Specific language and terms
- Looking at the big picture

Question Two Describe one component of this course that revealed an area in which you need further development

This question was specifically designed to capture student perception of their ongoing needs. Several repeat narrative comments can be found between questions one and two. The Theatre Department views this as a positive result. It demonstrates that students not only learned something in the course but they also recognize its importance and the need to continue to expand their abilities. This directly ties into several parts of the department's overall curriculum design, where sequenced courses such as Acting One through Four build on previous work while introducing new and more advanced concepts and techniques.

The narrative comments, again grouped into generalized responses, include:

- Research skillls
- Presentation skills
- Vocal skill development
- Communicating my ideas
- Technical skills/Technique
- Communication
- Organization
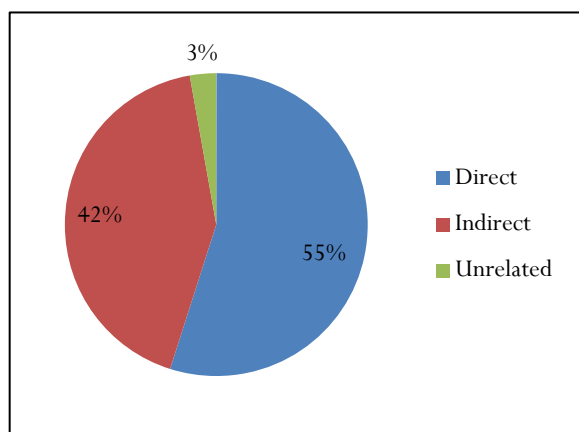
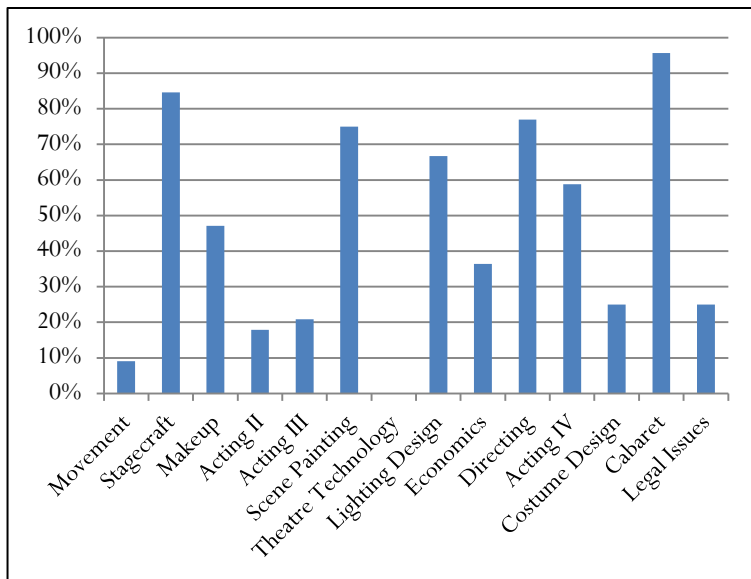Correlation of Student Responses to Instructor SLO's

- Pay attention to smaller details
- Time management
- Breaking down projects to avoid becoming overwhelmed
- Drawing skills
- Preparation
- Detail work
- Reading comprehension & analysis
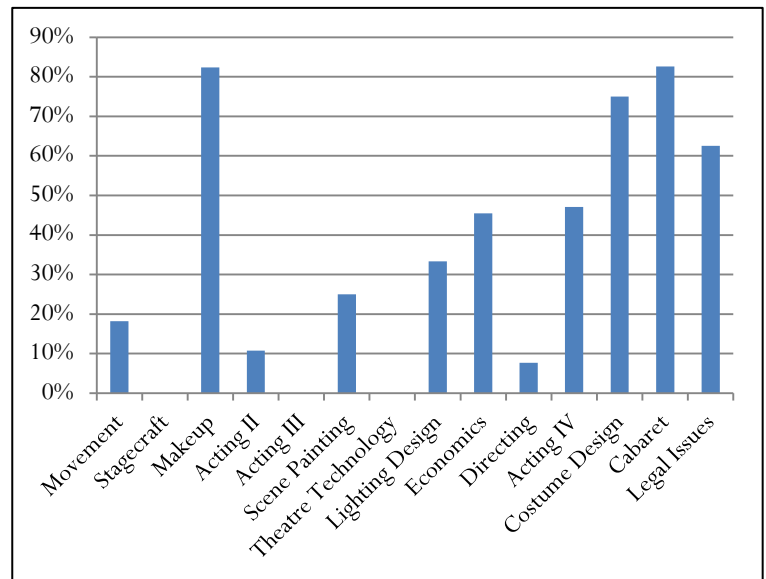- Confidence

Direct Relationship

Courses in which a presentation of technique composed a significant portion of the graded material (such as the performance of a song) show very high correlation between the student responses and course objectives. The Cabaret course reported the highest percentage in this category. Courses where technique and project management held equal importance (such as Scenic Painting or Directing) fell into the mid range, reporting scores between 70 and 80 percent. Courses where communication and presentation of ideas was an indirect learning tool fall appropriately into the lower third of the results.

Indirect Relationship

But those same courses strongly pointed out to students the need for effective organization and communication. A course such as the Economics of Arts and Entertainment, asking students to combine basic macroeconomic principles and an overview of the commercial and non-profit arts industries, saw very high scores for indirect relationships—learning supply and demand formulas may not be presentation-dependent, but communicating the impact of those formulas on a ticket pricing scheme is. Similarly, an artist undertaking a makup design is more likely in a professional setting to create work to be executed by another (an actor or technician) and therefore relies on strong written and verbal skills to ensure their ideas translate to the finished product.

Student Responses with Direct Match by Course

Student Responses with Indirect Match by Course