SPECIAL REPORT

OF THE

ACADEMIC MATTERS AND
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCILS

concerning

THE CREATION OF A MINOR IN THEATER
(#4987)

Presented at the
778th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
April 26, 2018

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

The Academic Matters Council recommends approval of this proposal.

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL

The Academic Priorities Council recommends approval of this proposal.
**Please describe your proposal**

With the aim of serving a larger and more diverse body of students in our courses, the Department of Theater hopes to expand our offerings to include a minor in addition to our existing BA in Theater and the Multicultural Theater Certificate. Unlike conservatory Theater programs that offer BFAs in only one area of Theater (e.g., acting, directing, or design), the UMass Theater Department’s BA provides its students and alums with a broad base of knowledge and experience in theater. Our majors graduate with classroom and hands-on experience in performance, dramaturgy, design, and production.

Due to our department’s commitment to providing our undergrads with this breadth of study and experience, we have never offered a minor. However, our pedagogical commitment to a full immersion in all aspects of theater limits not only the number of students we serve in our department but also the diversity of students that we serve. Many underprivileged students, students who are the first in their families to attend college, or students from STEM-oriented families struggle to convince their families that a degree in the arts is a good use of their tuition dollars and student years. While our department is deeply committed to preparing our students for the world of professional theater (and many of our alums go on to successful and lucrative careers in theater or related fields), we want to provide opportunities in Theater for students who cannot commit to the full 36-credit major.

While the Theater major requires introductory and upper-level courses in Performance, Dramaturgy, and Design, our proposed minor would allow students to study in only two of these three fields. Unlike Theater majors, who are required to complete three one-credit Theater 110s (Performance Management, a course that gives students hands-on production experience), minors would only be required to complete one Theater 110.

**Provide a brief overview of the process for developing the proposal.**

The faculty and staff of the Department of Theater began discussions about offering a Minor in Theater in response to repeated requests from many students who were unable to commit to the 36-credit Theater major but wanted to be involved in our department community. In Fall 2017, faculty teaching the three Theater gen ed courses (Intro to Theater, Drama in the Media, and Contemporary Playwrights of Color) surveyed their non-major students to gauge interest in the minor. The student response was resoundingly enthusiastic and far exceeded our expectations.

In faculty meetings, we discussed how to structure the Theater minor curriculum to uphold our department’s pedagogical commitment to a broad education in theater while allowing some flexibility for students enrolled in the minor to pursue specific interests within Theater. In our proposed curriculum, Theater minors can opt to pursue just two of our three areas (Performance, Dramaturgy, and Design) and gain production experience from a one-credit Theater 110 to complete their 16-credit requirement. We also decided to allow our general education courses in Theater to count towards the 16-credit requirement to incentivize students who are excited by their theater gen ed course to consider adding a minor. These gen ed courses do not count towards the Theater major.
Purpose and Goals

Describe the proposal's purpose and the particular knowledge and skills to be acquired.

The course of study in the Department of Theater is grounded in the belief that the performing arts draw on a unique combination of intellectual and artistic skills and talents, which are most fully developed when theory and practice are integrated into the learning experience. Students pursue a multi-faceted course of study divided into Dramaturgy, Performance (acting and directing), and Design and Production.

Theater majors take courses in all these areas within a flexible program that allows them to take additional classes in areas of individual interest. The graduated sequence of study in each area is designed to bring into focus rigorous critical thinking, precise methods of research, and imaginative expression. Our 36-credit major requires at least 12 credits in Dramaturgy and a minimum of 24 combined credits in the two areas of Performance and Design/Production with at least 9 credits required in Performance and 12 credits in Design/Production.

As stated above, we hope to serve a larger and more diverse body of students by adding a Minor in Theater for students who cannot commit to our 36-credit Theater major for financial, family, professional, or other reasons. Our proposed 16-credit minor requires enrollees to pursue study in only two of the three areas to allow a greater depth of knowledge and inquiry in those areas. (Courses with a grade below C are not accepted towards the major, nor would they be accepted towards the minor.)

In addition to coursework, Theater minors will gain hands-on experience in productions, minimally through their one Theater 110 requirement. Beyond Theater 110, minors will have additional opportunities to participate in our productions, serving as actors, designers, stage managers, directors and dramaturgs, both in our season and in independent undergraduate productions and informal events. They may also attend the many special events designed to supplement the Department of Theater’s curriculum, ranging from hands-on master classes with guest professionals to career-development workshops.

Resources

If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.

The proposal does not require additional resources. The largest increase in enrollments will be in our three intro courses: Theater 120 (Play Analysis for Theater Production), Theater 140 (Intro Techniques in Performance), and Theater 160 (Intro Techniques in Design). All of these courses can accommodate higher enrollments (especially Theater 140, which would likely have the largest increase in enrollment of any course).

Curriculum

Describe the curriculum of the minor. If it includes courses that have not yet received permanent status, please note their status (e.g., being offered as experimental, submitted to Faculty Senate).
workflow, etc.). If you would like to include additional supporting materials, you may attach them below.

PREREQUISITES
TWO OF THE FOLLOWING THREE:
TH120 – Play Analysis for Theater Production (3 credits)
TH140 – Intro Techniques in Performance (3 credits)
TH160 – Intro Techniques in Design (3 credits)

UPPER LEVEL
Two upper-level courses in two fields of Theater (associated with the two intro courses selected from the three above): 6 credits minimum total

PRODUCTION
TH110 – Performance Management (1 credit)

ADDITIONAL CREDITS
Any other 3- or 4-credit course within the Department of Theater, including Theater’s general education courses that do not count towards the major:
TH 100 – Intro to Theater
TH 105 – Drama and the Media
TH 130 – Contemporary Playwrights of Color

MOTION: That the Faculty Senate approve the Creation of a Minor in Theater, as 29-18 presented in Sen. Doc. No. 18-074.