

STRATEGIC PLAN

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Section 1 Department Description

1.1.1 Mission, vision, and goals

Overview

The Department of Theatre and Dance offers two majors and three minors. It employs four full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members: Henry MacCarthy, Micah Maatman, Michele Rusinko, and Amy Seham. The Theatre/Dance faculty also includes a full-time three-year appointment in Dance, currently filled by Melissa Rolnick. In addition, the department has two lab-instructor positions in which faculty teach part-time and also fulfill staffing assignments. These are Andrea Gross, Costume Shop Manager and faculty, and Terena Wilkens, Technical Director and faculty. The department includes two key adjunct professors in dance technique, Sue Gunness and Cynthia Gutierrez-Garner. Additional adjuncts staff our program in Dance, Playwriting, Musical Theatre and Special Topics. The department is supported by the invaluable Jo Nickels, as our part-time Administrative Assistant.

The department graduates approximately 10 majors per year, and currently has 32 declared majors, with others planning to declare this spring.

The department offers more than thirty classroom-based or studio-based courses, and regularly mentors dozens of creative research projects in performance, design, arts management and dramaturgy. Department productions engage scores of students in various aspects of each show, from technical crews to assistant designers and a wide range of performers. These opportunities are available to majors and non-majors alike, in true liberal arts fashion. (One recent show starred a Biology major, a Philosophy major and a Religion major.) Hundreds of students, faculty and members of the community attend each production, extending the educational impact of our work.

In our recent revision of the mission and curriculum of our programs, the Department of Theatre and Dance has strengthened its commitment to social justice, civic engagement, leadership and service, reflecting the mission of the college. We continue our insistence on excellence in all aspects of study and performance and we value our role within the liberal arts, interdisciplinary context. In the coming years, the department seeks to collaborate with colleagues and community to give voice, body and life to the struggle for social justice.

Mission

The Department of Theatre and Dance involves students in creative inquiry, embodied knowledges, inventive collaboration and skillful expression of ideas in order to prepare them for lives of leadership, service, and excellence in the arts, culture and business of the future. We teach that performance is a vital means of working for social justice and personal transformation, mentoring students in explorations of the many ways theatre and dance artists interpret and affect society. Students and faculty collaborate on creative research projects designed to raise awareness, create community, foster self-expression, challenge stereotypes, evoke compassion, and represent diverse perspectives. Through teaching and advising we foster excellence in all aspects of theatre and dance, preparing students for professions in the arts. We mentor students in the development and articulation of their own sense of vocation, purpose and creative vision for life and art beyond college.

The Department of Theatre and Dance presents Gustavus audiences with dynamic, innovative, high quality productions. We seek maximum engagement with the life of the college and choose our seasons with regard to faculty needs, student concerns and campus initiatives. In keeping with our commitment to service learning and public outreach, the Department is also dedicated to providing a resource for the expression of broader concerns, histories, and story-telling from local and state-wide communities.

Vision

We see ourselves educating students in mind, body, and spirit, pursuing the life-transforming potential of embodied learning in studio classes and in courses in history, theory, and literature. We encourage majors and non-majors to develop their

identities as artist-thinkers. We see ourselves as crucial “trainers” helping all students to develop the muscles of imagination, creativity and communication necessary for productive lives of leadership and service.

We envision an expanded program of performance for social justice that builds on current courses (such as Creating Social Justice Theatre) in both theatre and dance and additional projects in the community (such as our work with St. Peter High School and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies). We are working to perfect a distinctive curriculum in social justice performance that includes studio training, scholarship and mentored independent work. We see ourselves continuing to strengthen the connection between the department, the Diversity Center, Service Learning, and the student-led social justice theatre troupe, *I Am We Are*, providing additional training and guidance for their work. We see great potential for community outreach and student recruitment through our performance for social justice emphasis.

We embrace the unique role of theatre and dance within a liberal arts setting. We see ourselves playing an integral role in campus-wide initiatives, supporting curricular goals across disciplines, and collaborating with students and faculty from many departments and programs. We envision increased involvement and visibility of theatre/dance in the community. We see ourselves collaborating enthusiastically with many colleagues and communities throughout the year.

We envision a theatre/dance curriculum that articulates a clear progression from beginning through advanced work in performance, theory and design. We envision a curriculum that serves general education and also provides adequate depth and breadth in several areas of study for majors. We see ourselves with adequate time and resources to continue working closely and intensively with classes and individual students in creative research. We envision having resources to build our programming in global performance, study abroad and internships.

We believe in preparing majors for graduate schools and professional careers, readying them to excel in professional dance and theatre companies, Broadway shows, arts management, design and technology and the creation of independent performing groups. At the same time, we envision a course of study and experience that prepares students to become the creative, compassionate and self-confident leaders of tomorrow. We promote the value of theatre/dance experience in a larger context that includes ministry, education, law, politics, public relations, psychology, physical therapy, business, community organizing, social activism and more.

We see ourselves building on the excellence of our Dance major, and serving both majors and general education students with a strong faculty presence. We envision expanding the role of Dance in our social justice programming. We see a second full-time tenure track position in Dance, and an ongoing commitment to crucial adjuncts and guest artists needed for dance students to flourish

We see ourselves with space and technology adequate to support creative work by faculty and students without the constant need to compete over limited resources. We envision having adequate space and technology to nurture independent creative research in performance and design by students.

We envision ourselves as a statewide resource for high quality, educational, thought-provoking theatre and dance. We envision Anderson Theatre filled to capacity at every performance with students, colleagues, and members of the broader community. We work to make vital, live performances increasingly meaningful, relevant and engaging for today's generation.

GOALS

Through a number of intensive meetings with new and experienced theatre/dance faculty and staff, we have articulated the following 12 significant goals as the means of accomplishing our vision.

1. To promote performance as a means of working for social justice and personal transformation while maintaining high standards of technical and creative excellence. To be a consistent vehicle through which the campus community can engage with specific social justice issues in positive, creative ways. To create a nationally recognized center for the study of social justice performance. To develop a reputation as a desired destination for high school students interested in social justice-focused theatre and dance. To make students, parents, and the community aware that the lasting value of this work includes vital preparation for leadership in the future.

2. To enhance our ability to foreground pedagogy and process while sustaining high expectations for excellence in creative inquiry and production. To nurture excellence in the classroom and on the stage. To adjust our revised curricula in theatre and dance to

work smoothly and productively for students. To develop existing and new courses to further enhance our distinctive mission.

3. To provide strong leadership for the growing Dance major and develop an ongoing program of *community outreach and social justice performance* in Dance.

4. To provide studio, performance and classroom facilities appropriate to the high level of instruction and the prestige of the program and the college. To offer state-of-the-art, multifaceted and flexible learning environments for our students, encouraging a holistic approach to the creative process. To be an educational and artistic resource for campus, city and statewide communities. To achieve full accreditation by NAST (National Association of Schools of Theatre) and NASD (National Association of Schools of Dance), national organizations that represent quality and prestige in our disciplines.

5. To increase students' employability and expressive, creative potential by providing them with current digital technology and equipment for design and multi-media performance. To enhance and strengthen our engagement with technology in coursework and production. To increase our Web presence. To create an archive of digitally recorded videos of Gustavus Theatre and Dance productions crucial for successful grant applications, student recruitment, marketing, dance reconstructions, classroom teaching and faculty development.

6. To mentor student "artist-thinkers" through challenging coursework and creative collaborations with faculty. To facilitate independent creative research and artistic work and support students' ability to present that work on campus, and at conferences, festivals and other venues. Provide funding to support student scholarship and creativity.

7. To pursue excellence with balance in the Theatre/Dance production season by managing the limited resources in space, money, time and skilled labor available without either sacrificing production values or exhausting faculty and staff.

8. To strengthen the department's engagement with international education and global perspectives. To provide opportunities (courses, artist residencies) for theatre and dance students to experience a broader range of cultural expression, especially in Asian or African performance. To further develop travel/international courses and faculty research.

9. To enhance student opportunities by developing networks of partnerships with off-campus groups and individuals. To foster and sustain relationships with service organizations, schools and community groups that enable genuine efficacy in the creation of social justice performance work at Gustavus and additional opportunities for such work beyond Gustavus. To create ongoing collaborations with professional arts organizations and artists on a local and national level, giving students and faculty the benefit of these relationships. To develop contacts with Gustavus alumni for advice and financial support.

10. To build additional scholarly and creative development opportunities for pre-tenure and post-tenure theatre and dance faculty. To pursue grants, residencies and fellowships that fund professional development.

11. On multiple levels, to increase awareness of “what we do” in theatre/dance and to translate that awareness into more consistent and productive engagement with the campus, local and statewide community. To play an integral role in campus-wide initiatives, supporting curricular goals across disciplines, and collaborating with students and faculty from many departments and programs.

12. To promote each faculty and student performance as a celebration of student talent, intelligence, and creative achievement. To enhance recruitment, fundraising, alumni relations, service and community outreach by taking full advantage of these events. To make Anderson Theatre a recognized cultural resource for a broad range of spectators.

1.2 Programs

The Department of Theatre and Dance offers the following majors: Theatre, Dance, Theatre or Dance with Honors. We offer the following minors: Theatre, Dance, Theatre for Social Justice

Despite pressure on faculty commitments, the department is committed to the First Term Seminar program. Our new faculty members were immediately trained for FTS, and we continue to offer at least one and often two sections each year. The department participates enthusiastically in General Education. On average, we provide 15 ARTS courses each year and 2 HIPHI courses. The department has a long-term commitment

to Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, offering two core courses on a regular basis. The department contributes to Curriculum II, Physical Education, LALACS, Peace Studies and the Writing Program (3 courses).

The Department of Theatre and Dance is particularly dedicated to the concept of experiential education, and offers a minimum of one significant course/production every January term involving 30-60 students. The department also supports international education with links to several programs abroad, our own travel courses, and significant participation in the Global Insight initiative.

1.3 Support relationships

The Department of Theatre and Dance believes strongly in collaboration and has developed successful relationships with many offices, departments and programs across campus. We work cooperatively on academic pursuits and also have specialized relationships linked to our performance season and social justice work.

The department produces shows designed to serve the campus community and the wider public. We are supported in this effort by the Fine Arts office, which provides critical box office and front of house services at each performance. Our events are included in the Fine Arts season calendar, and we pay for a season announcement card that is sent with that mailing.

In order to build visibility and recognition of the excellence of our students' work and the service we provide through social justice performance projects, we would like to continue to clarify and enhance our relationship with the office of Marketing and Communication, Alumni Relations, Service Learning and other offices concerned with the public.

The Department of Theatre and Dance collaborates closely with the Department of Music to produce our bi-annual musical. The musical is highly popular students, families and audiences, and is an excellent public relations/recruitment event. Prospective students who wish to include music, dance and/or theatre in their college experience (even those who do not intend to major) will very often show great interest in the musical. Our partnership with Music makes the musical possible.

Johnson funds often enable us provide the guest artists and choreographers who make a crucial contribution to our students, especially in dance. Because there is no

commonly shared written form of dance, we cannot purchase a "score" for a dance but must bring in guests to have students experience high level professional dance choreography. Students deeply appreciate their association with guest professionals, and often form lasting relationships that help considerably when the students graduate. Our recent collaboration with a guest artist in puppetry allowed us to create spectacular effects for our spring production of *The Other Shore*.

Physical Plant does a great job maintaining our facilities. The student employment program provides indispensable support for our scene shop, costume shop, lighting crew and office work.

Technology Services supports our office computers, and often supports critical aspects of design coursework and production that require computers. We look forward to building on this relationship as plans emerge for an interdisciplinary media center.

Media Services provides some equipment for documentation of our performances. Because video documentation is increasingly required by granting organizations, used in recruitment efforts and valuable for marketing, we hope to develop a more significant connection with that office to increase the quality of our videography and to build an archive of our work necessary for the reconstruction of specific dance works and suitable for use in the classroom.

We work collaboratively with the Diversity Development and Multi-cultural Office to foster diverse participation in our classes, productions, and social justice projects. In partnership with that office, we co-sponsor the *I Am We Are* troupe, a diverse student theatre troupe that creates performances for First-Year Orientation, the Building Bridges conference and many other multi-cultural initiatives. The Diversity Office is an invaluable ally in our efforts to recruit participants, determine key issues, and create social justice performance projects. In a similar vein, we have worked productively with the Center for Vocational Reflection and the Community Service Center on specific projects and look forward to developing those connections further.

The Dance program regularly collaborates with the Music department to feature dance in the Christmas in Christ Chapel services, and has an ongoing and inspiring relationship with the Arboretum. In addition to other projects, the dancers present "Dancing in the Arb" each May.

Other offices, such as Admissions, the Advising Center and the Counseling Center, have been supportive of our goals. We have recently sponsored an on-campus internship through the Career Center and plan to focus on increased development of internship opportunities for our students. Alumni Relations and Development

We are in sympathy with the goals of International and Cultural Education. We regularly sponsor a January-term program with the Gaiety Theatre School in Dublin, Ireland and have additional ties with the Visthar program in Bangalore, India. We hope to increase our participation in study abroad, including possible leadership of the Social Justice program in India and possible sabbatical work at United International College in Zhuhai, China.

Section 2. Strategic Review

2.1 Strategic Issues

Strengths (internal)

The Department of Theatre and Dance has a strong, revitalized curriculum, the result of many hours of collaborative work by faculty and staff in the last two years. With the liberal arts model as our foundation, Theatre and Dance blends classroom and studio courses with creative research and production to give students a multi-dimensional educational experience.

We have articulated a specific focus on Performance for Social Justice, strongly promoting Gustavus core values of Justice and Service. We have developed a specific progression of courses that teach students the critical skills to analyze the relationships between cultural performance and social values.

We enable students to express their commitment to positive social change through a variety of performance models. We have created a new course, Creating Social Justice Theatre that trains students in the foundational theories and techniques at the heart of *I Am We Are*, our student-led social justice theatre group. This class provides a solid lead-in for Theatre and Society, a core course in the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies program that also serves our new focus. Our social justice concentration attracts a wide range of students, including those already committed to then performing arts as well as those seeking effective means of working for social change.

We have worked steadily with the Diversity office to increase the accessibility of our productions and courses to students from diverse backgrounds—and have achieved significant success in this goal.

We have made positive connections with St. Peter High School and the St. Peter Area Children’s Theatre, creating opportunities for Gustavus students to work with youth in the St. Peter Community. We continue to collaborate with the Center for Genocide and Holocaust Studies in both theatre and dance classes. Holocaust survivors recently shared their experiences with young choreographers, who will spend this semester striving to create thoughtful embodied responses.

In collaboration with student group *I Am We Are*, we create powerful performances in support of First Year Orientation and the Building Bridges conference, along with smaller events that address a wide variety of campus needs. Our contributions have included participatory workshops designed for Take Back the Night, BIONIC week, Safe Zone training, the Gustavus teach-in on anti-Semitism and other initiatives. We provide a needed medium for student expression in response to negative events. For example, the *I Am We Are* workshop organized after a recent racist incident on campus drew more than a hundred students.

We also present plays that explore difficult questions, often followed by talk-back panels that enable further processing of the issues. Eager and active student response to *The Laramie Project*, *columbinus*, and other shows demonstrates the need for this forum. Last semester, *Topsy Turvy Mouse* offered participants an in-depth exploration of hate-crimes, race, war and modern media. Hundreds of students attended, and many stayed for discussions with the playwright and other experts on the issues.

Our teaching engages students intellectually, physically and spiritually. Although the push for “engaged learning” is fairly recent, Theatre and Dance courses have long included experiential projects, group interaction and creative involvement—not only in the studio, but also in history and theory classes as well. Observers often comment on the lively discussions and dynamic interaction in our classrooms. It is validating to hear our teaching practices being urged on other disciplines.

We provide experiences of intense commitment and collaboration, self-awareness and empathy. We engage students in cooperative, active expressions of diverse perspectives and shared humanity. We embrace the experiential education

opportunities of January term—offering significant projects for student involvement each year.

We continue to develop liaisons with professional theatre and dance organizations in the Twin Cities and elsewhere that will benefit our students. Our ongoing cooperation with the Playwrights' Center has provided us with exciting new plays, talented adjunct professors of playwriting, and the opportunity to commission an original play (with the Center for Vocational Reflection) for the Nobel conference on Einstein. Our ongoing engagement with professional guest artists enriches student experience in dance and theatre, while providing students with professional contacts for the future. Guest artists choreograph, design, and teach specialty courses such as the recent International Shadow Puppetry that benefit majors and non-majors across the campus.

We give students a substantial number of contact hours through production, rehearsals, and classroom/studio work. We devote a great deal of additional time coaching individuals, mentoring independent projects, advising student-led groups and attending/critiquing performances. Students in Theatre/Dance thrive on the one-on-one attention and the intensive faculty/student collaborations the department makes available. Advanced students have opportunities to discover their own artistic voices through mentored creative research projects including designing scenery, costumes or lighting for mainstage shows, directing, playwriting, choreography, arts management, performance and dramaturgy.

Our production season embodies the core value of Excellence. Theatre/Dance performances regularly exhibit talent, imagination and production values equal or superior to those of universities and professional performing companies in the region. Moreover, students are trained, capable and excited about collaborative and independent work in acting, dance, directing, choreography, design and theatre for social justice.

The Gustavus Dance program is developing a national reputation for excellence. Our dancers and choreographers have been recognized with awards at national conferences and our majors have been accepted to prestigious graduate programs in Dance across the country. Recent graduates and other alumni are performing with professional companies in the Twin Cities and across the country. The Dance major is growing steadily, attracting a significant number of bright, talented students.

New faculty and staff bring additional resources, energy and creativity to the Department. We have recently strengthened our core curriculum, adding courses technology and media, including cutting-edge methods essential to students' future employment. We have expanded expertise in global performance, particularly in the Americas. Our hybrid staff/adjunct instructor in costumes is qualified to teach challenging history/literature courses relevant to Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, broadening our offerings to students.

Students involved in the department's courses and productions are welcoming and supportive of one another. Majors and non-majors participate in department work with intense commitment and dedication. Students show a genuine interest in exploring the historical significance, theoretical insights and social meanings of performance as key elements in their creative process.

Department members participate in frequent retreats and weekly meetings not only to discuss logistical questions, but also to share ideas and passions about art and pedagogy. We value the distinctiveness of each artist's vision while we work toward consensus on all major decisions. Each member of the team has demonstrated enthusiastic investment in our new curriculum and in our commitment to artistic excellence.

Weaknesses (internal)/Challenges (external)

Our lack of adequate classroom/studio and performance space adversely affects students on many levels. Rehearsals, set construction, lighting, public performance and independent projects vie for the same theatre space in Anderson, creating tension and limiting any ability to accommodate innovation. The only other rehearsal/classroom space, the Black Box, is scheduled throughout the day and night, with student groups meeting at 10 pm or at midnight in order to rehearse a scene for class or for a social justice project. This space is also used for student-led and classroom performances, but holds a maximum of 49 (including actors), severely limiting audience and artistic choice. For senior projects, honors projects, and creative research performances, students must struggle to secure access to Black Box for even the minimum of technical or dress rehearsals and shows.

Similarly, students are hard pressed to find time for rehearsal or experimentation in the single dance studio. Kresge is the only space with an appropriate dance floor to

prevent injuries. This one studio must also serve as the performance space for student-led dance projects. It is overcrowded, poorly ventilated and ill-equipped for performance events that feature over sixty dancers and multitudes of spectators – yet it is the only option we have.

Basic lack of space renders us incapable of supporting the number of creative research projects our students are eager and qualified to explore. For lack of a second studio and second rehearsal space, we are unable to be accredited by NASD and NAST (National Association of Schools of Dance and Theatre). Their requirement of additional space for programs of our size is a good indicator of national standards and expectations.

Lack of live accompaniment for dance classes, the biannual music theatre workshop, or the biannual musical. Because the Music department is challenged by a shortage of accompanists, they have been unable to support Theatre/Dance needs for student employees in this area. Dance classes in our peer institutions work consistently with live accompaniment because this standard practice enables Dance faculty to focus on the needs of individual students in each class, and to maintain the tempo and flexibility of the routines.

Space for costume construction, scene-building, drafting and design projects is also inadequate, limiting student work in these areas. The office for several adjunct professors is a former broom closet. The student lounge/meeting area is a stairwell. Adequate office and interactive space would strengthen teacher/student and student/student collaboration.

Access to technology is severely limited, curtailing our faculty's ability to keep pace with design and performance techniques that now dominate the field. The department has inadequate computer hardware and software to engage students in design innovations. Multi-media resources are lacking, both for use in students' artistic work and for properly documenting the department's achievements. We also need to improve our website and our overall web presence. It is increasingly apparent that compelling web design, including video samples of our work, is crucial to our recruitment efforts. The internet has emerged as the single most effective vehicle for publicizing our program and our productions.

The entire Dance program depends on a single tenure-track position, with only one three-year and two adjuncts. The lack of additional long-term faculty weakens the

ongoing development of this promising major. Students may be deprived of consistent mentorship and continuity of focus, especially during the upcoming sabbatical of our one full faculty member. Progress in developing social justice performance work in dance is undermined by the temporary nature of dance faculty's involvement in the department's mission.

The pressure of sustaining our level of excellence in teaching and production with limited resources often makes faculty, staff, and student participants feel overstretched, particularly in the area of tech and design. Successful production depends on student staffing, and work-study students with requisite skills are scarce. Students in tech/design classes must learn significant skills before they can fulfill support positions in lighting, sound, scenery and costume construction. They learn by doing. The fluctuating nature of this labor pool can cause tension when deadlines must be met.

Theatre and Dance faculty have many commitments that must be undertaken as unpaid overloads. For example, the dance faculty is not compensated for their hours of time choreographing pieces for the annual dance concert. Theatre faculty is not compensated for the significant time commitment of advising *I Am We Are*, coaching individual student auditions, mentoring advanced creative research, senior projects and honors projects or supporting service projects in the St. Peter community. Yet these things must be done.

As a department, we are challenged to find ways not only to create the performances but also to share them with the wider community. Our productions take on maximum educational value for students when they experience audience reaction. Projects take on full meaning only in their reception by others.

Those who attend our shows are consistently intrigued by their content and delighted with their quality. Yet we hear many others say, "oh, was it this weekend?" or, "my students would have loved this." For a variety of reasons, each show created by the department runs for one or at most two weekends of performance. Thus, our need for intensive marketing and campus-wide awareness of our work is highly time sensitive. Each show's director is particularly overwhelmed as production nears by the need to initiate or supervise public outreach for his or her own show. Yet, unless the director is pro-active, the specific marketing of each event is often too little too late to make the community aware of these brief opportunities.

The department sponsors the design and distribution of posters. We have begun the process of creating video teasers, shown on the internet, in the student center/cafeteria and at Gustavus movie nights. Currently, however, there is no one working with high schools to encourage attendance that might result in recruitment. No one has time to interact with senior centers, immigrant organizations or other community groups to encourage them to regard our work as a resource for the region. No one is inviting alumni or donors who would be delighted by the energy and achievements of the appealing students in these excellent productions. Each show has far greater potential to benefit the entire campus and community than anyone yet realizes.

Our ability to socialize and work collaboratively with colleagues is challenged by our intensive evening and weekend schedule of rehearsals and production. Theatre/Dance faculty would like to be more directly involved in college activities that we are forced to miss because of time conflicts.

The role of Chair of the Department is especially challenging in this time of transition, with new faculty requiring significant mentoring and extensive study needed for curriculum revision, strategic planning and the forthcoming 10-year review.

Opportunities (external)

We are energized by the enthusiasm of students for our social justice performance concentration. This focus attracts quality students committed to make performance relevant and meaningful to a new generation. We will build upon this opportunity to be known across the country for our distinctive program. We have the opportunity to become a destination for students seeking active, creative ways to foster social change.

We have the makings of a stellar Dance program with distinctive elements of outreach and social justice content. Melissa Rolnick's current work with the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and her ongoing volunteer work, teaching dance to juvenile offenders at the Hoffman Center, demonstrate the enormous potential of maintaining a permanent, highly qualified tenure track faculty member.

We have the opportunity to prepare students to excel in an uncertain future. We will work to make students and parents aware that students trained in theatre and dance will develop skills and insights applicable to any venture. Students in theatre and dance

learn to think outside the box, to solve problems with creative imagination, to collaborate with others, to express themselves with confidence, to listen, to engage in meaningful dialogue, to meet deadlines, to analyze texts, to adapt to new and challenging situations, and to think on their feet. We hope to create a brochure citing key economic analysts who declare that their studies in theatre and dance are not frivolous but are instead transformative.

We embrace the opportunity directly to support campus curricular initiatives and to work across disciplines to enhance the educational experience of students all across the campus. We see the promise of consistently providing First Term Seminar faculty with vivid examples to use in discussions of critical thinking and providing other faculty with dynamic, embodied vehicles through which to address values, vocation, interpretation and meaning. As with *The Laramie Project*, *columbinus* and *Topsy Turvy Mouse*, we will include talk-back panels following shows and make ourselves available for classroom visits. We seek additional opportunities for integrating our work with that of our colleagues.

There are funding opportunities in our social justice performance work that have yet to be tapped. With a colleague from Southwestern University, Dr. Seham has submitted a preliminary proposal to the Teagle Foundation for the development of social justice theatre troupes in relation to social justice theatre coursework on both campuses. This work is intended to be shared and disseminated to other schools hoping to develop similar programs, and provides the opportunity for additional faculty development and additional recognition for the accomplishments of our department in this area.

We are excited by the opportunity to work closely with the Diversity office in addressing issues of race and difference on campus. We plan to continue recruiting, engaging, and featuring a diverse range of students in *I Am We Are* and in mainstage productions. We see a genuine value in providing immediate venues for responses to specific incidents, and for creating performance-based vehicles for campus dialogue about questions of identity, values and ideology.

We see great potential in interdisciplinary collaborations, including possible team teaching or interdepartmental projects. We see an excellent interdisciplinary opportunity in the establishment of an Arts Administration minor. Art, Music, Theatre/Dance and Communication Studies are all enthusiastic about the proposal, and the faculty member teaching Marketing in Econ/Management has also expressed support. Many students have expressed keen interest in this program. The study of

arts administration is particularly relevant for students focusing on performance for social justice. Graduates interested in founding new performing companies or collaborating with those already working in the field of social justice-based theatre and dance will need an understanding of fundraising, marketing, public relations and other aspects of the business of survival in the arts.

Opportunities to work with guest artists are at the heart of our dance program and theatre program. We plan to continue these connections, which also often benefit graduating students in their search for employment.

We seek additional opportunities for encouraging student directors, choreographers and designers to pursue their own visions, to experiment, to build on classroom learning, to involve classmates in original projects, to design and offer social justice performances and workshops.

Students from *I Am We Are* and the Theatre program will be presenting a panel at the Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed Conference this May. We hope to create additional opportunities for students' work to be highlighted at conferences and festivals.

Gustavus Theatre/Dance has participated in the Minneapolis Fringe Festival each summer for the last five years with original theatre and dance shows featuring students and recent alumni. We see this venture as an ongoing opportunity to showcase and develop faculty and student artistic work. We hope to build on every potential connection with the Theatre/Dance community in Minneapolis-St. Paul and to foster student and faculty opportunities to collaborate with other theatre/dance companies.

We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with Art and Communication Studies in the proposed new media center. We see this Center not only as beneficial to our students, but also as a resource for the wider community by providing high quality and entertaining documentary and performance events, opportunities for discussion of ideas, a venue for sharing and recording the stories of diverse local groups, and educational engagement between community and student artists.

We have the opportunity to build on our recent projects with St. Peter High School and with the Center for Genocide and Holocaust studies to develop our social justice performance program. We seek additional opportunities for outreach through the Community Service Center.

We create innovative works of art in collaboration with dedicated colleagues and talented students in an atmosphere of inquiry, openness and good will. We deeply appreciate every one of these opportunities.

2.2. Barriers

Space. As discussed in our "Challenges" section, innovations in the Theatre and Dance program are constantly thwarted by lack of space: rehearsal space, studio space, performance space, smart classroom space, construction space, office space and storage space. Inadequate facilities constitute the primary barrier to student creative enquiry projects. Shortage of space creates conflict between production and pedagogy. Cramped quarters limit our ability to serve majors and general education students at our full potential.

Time/Staffing. Faculty and staff routinely work at a high degree of overload. Commitment to our students and our production work threatens our ability to pursue long-term planning, pedagogical innovation, outside funding, and professional scholarship and creative projects. Student participants can be unreliable and overcommitted. Too often the same few students do technical work on every show and become exhausted. Additional help is needed

Lack of second tenure-track position in Dance blocks our ability to build coherence and consistency in this program, serve majors and non-majors, and develop social justice content in the dance program.

Lack of staff accompanist undermines best practices in teaching Dance, and serious difficulties in teaching or producing a variety of music theatre.

Lack of up-to-date technology inhibits design and teaching quality.

Low level of campus awareness of theatre/dance offerings undermines our ability to work integrally and supportively with other programs.

Lack of communication and collaboration with administrative offices such as Alumni Relations, Development and Public Relations continually frustrates our need to reach out to alumni supporters, funding sources and audiences. Efforts are sometimes

duplicated, sometimes at cross-purposes, rarely shared. For example, we are not included or even informed about solicitations of specific theatre/dance alumni with donor potential, even when we have very positive personal relationships with most of them. In another instance, two press releases for a recent show were written by students—one working with our department and another interning in Public Relations—without either knowing about the other.

Section 3 Strategic Initiatives and Recommendations

1. Increase opportunities for student, student-faculty and faculty creative research, innovation, experiment, creative research and performance in Theatre, Dance and Performance for Social Justice.

The most significant barrier to student engagement is the lack of adequate rehearsal, studio and performance space.

- a. Secure funding for a new Laboratory Theatre, fully equipped for the exploration of theatre, dance and performance for social justice. Building could be a basic “black box” with flexible seating for 100 spectators. Additional open spaces with appropriate flooring for dance studio and physical theatre work, as well as other rehearsal, classroom, office and production space would address many of the barriers to our goals. A Laboratory Theatre building would enable us to fulfill our vision by:
 - i. Providing a home base for student-led social justice performance projects and workshops
 - ii. Providing rehearsal and performance space for advanced student creative research performances
 - iii. Providing rehearsal space for students in performance classes
 - iv. Providing space for faculty-student and faculty experimental creative research.
 - v. Providing space for community performance projects.
 - vi. Easing restrictions on use of Anderson theatre for student or community projects
 - vii. Easing tension from over-booking of limited studio or rehearsal space.

- b. Hire Technical Director for Laboratory Space Present teaching and production needs already overstretch current tech and design faculty. An additional staff person would ease workload by concentrating on needs of student productions in the laboratory space.
- c. Provide adequate theatrical and multi-media technology to facilitate innovative, advanced work in student-led and faculty-led creative research.
- d. Hire a Staff Accompanist to support instruction, creative research, and performance in dance and music theatre.

These strategies support goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11 and 12

2. Increase support for innovative teaching, dedicated mentoring, development of social justice programming and high-quality production.

We envision addition of one additional tenure-track position in Dance, two tenure-positions in the design area, and one additional position in the performance/history area.

- a. We have an immediate and urgent need for a **tenure-track position in Dance** to bring the total tenure-track faculty in that program to two. With our current short-term contracts and adjunct faculty, it is difficult to improve curriculum, maintain mentoring relationships, envision long-term goals and explore social justice performance projects. This is our highest priority hiring need.
- b. Our demanding production season, combined with growing student engagement in design classes and advanced creative research in design, creates the need to add tenure-track positions in **Costume Design and Lighting Design**. Currently, the department includes a faculty position in Scene Design, with Costumes, Lighting and Technical Direction covered through Staff/Adjunct faculty positions. Additional faculty appointments would increase the department's ability to teach and mentor students who would, in turn, support the department's production season. Faculty in these design areas would contribute to general education, FTS and other campus-wide programs with their expertise. Current courses, such as our the popular "History of Fashion" taught by our Costume Designer, could be taught on a more regular basis without compromising the needs of the production

season. The staff positions of Costume Shop Manager and Technical Director would need also to be maintained.

- c. The Theatre program would be enhanced by the addition of a tenure-track faculty position in **Performance and History** with specialization in Asian or African theatre and dance. Our commitment to global perspectives, and the pressure on our current faculty in terms of advising, mentoring and directing, would all be addressed by this third appointment in this area.

These strategies support goals 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12

3. Build productive relationships between the department and professional, community and campus collaborators.

- a. Increased funds for professional guest artists working directly with students. Guest artists benefit students' educational experience and provide connections for future employment.
- b. Cooperate with Community Service Center to increase outreach to local schools, senior centers, Mexican, Hmong, Somali and other immigrant communities, and other community groups for collaboration on social justice performance projects. Continue positive interaction with Center for Genocide and Holocaust Studies to create genocide awareness performances.
- c. Pursue connections with professional theatre and dance organizations to create internships and additional creative opportunities for student and faculty involvement
- d. Take part in new interdisciplinary initiatives such as the proposed Arts Management minor and the Media Studies program (and proposed Media Center). Investigate potential and pursue interdepartmental partnerships in the areas of Performance Studies, Dramatic Literature and Performance Art.

These strategies support goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

4. Maximize the presence, impact, benefits of Theatre and Dance department's contributions to campus and community.

- a. Increase integration of Theatre/Dance performances and workshops with college curriculum.
- b. Increase campus awareness of Theatre/Dance offerings through better communication across campus. Improve communication between Theatre/Dance and Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Institutional Development and Community Service to coordinate outreach efforts for maximum mutual benefit.
- c. Increase community awareness of Theatre/Dance and Social Justice Performance opportunities through more focused and effective marketing and publicity campaign.
- d. Improve Website and increase Web presence to facilitate outreach on and off campus. Increase access to technology overall and videography of performance to provide material for recruitment and marketing over the Web.
- e. Increase Administrative Assistant position in Theatre/Dance and Communication Studies from half-time to full time. In addition to the significant crucial work she accomplishes for both departments in a variety of areas, additional hours would permit her to coordinate outreach to high schools and community groups, maintain a focused mailing list for Theatre/Dance events, and supervise internet-based and multi-media marketing.

These strategies support goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12

Section 4 Assessment

1. To promote performance as a means of working for social justice and personal transformation while maintaining high standards of technical and creative excellence. To be a consistent vehicle through which the campus community can engage with specific social justice issues in positive, creative ways. To create a nationally recognized center for the study of social justice performance. To develop a reputation as a desired destination for high school students interested in social justice-focused theatre and dance. To make students, parents, and the community aware that the lasting value of this work includes vital preparation for leadership in the future.

Assessment: Faculty will monitor development of student awareness of the department mission by providing students regular opportunities for oral and written reflection, culminating in a departmental exit interview with each senior. Interviews with incoming or prospective students will help determine external awareness of department's specific focus and reputation. Applications from prospective students mentioning the Theatre/Dance mission, and applications for the Anderson Scholarship special category in Social Justice Performance will indicate external awareness. Increase in applications by high quality students interested in theatre/dance and social change. Consistent interaction with Diversity office and student organizations to determine needs and efficacy of theatre/dance involvement in community social justice issues.

2. To enhance our ability to foreground pedagogy and process while sustaining high expectations for excellence in creative inquiry and production. To nurture excellence in the classroom and on the stage. To adjust our revised curricula in theatre and dance to work smoothly and productively for students. To develop existing and new courses to further enhance our distinctive mission.

Assessment: Revised curriculum fully realized in catalog and practice. Solicit student evaluations of new and existing courses. Discuss changes with graduating seniors and alumni for feedback.

3. To provide strong leadership for the growing Dance major and develop an ongoing program of *community outreach and social justice performance* in Dance.

Assessment: Second tenure-track position established and filled. Increased number of classes and student/faculty projects incorporating dance and social justice. Dance majors articulate the mission and direction of their work through written and oral reflections and journals.

4. To provide studio, performance and classroom facilities appropriate to the high level of instruction and the prestige of the program and the college. To offer state-of-the art, multifaceted and flexible learning environments for our students, encouraging a holistic approach to the creative process. To be an educational and artistic resource for campus, city and statewide communities. To achieve full accreditation by NAST (National Association of Schools of Theatre) and NASD (National Association of Schools of Dance), national organizations that represent quality and prestige in our disciplines.

Assessment: Accreditation by NASD and NAST. Ability to offer additional General

Education courses limited by space. Additional production of high quality independent student work. Increased availability of space and time for social justice performance workshops. Students involved in productions also able to maintain studies as a result of more reasonable scheduling.

5. To increase students' employability and expressive, creative potential by providing them with current digital technology and equipment for design and multi-media performance. To enhance and strengthen our engagement with technology in coursework and production. To increase our Web presence. To create an archive of digitally recorded videos of Gustavus Theatre and Dance productions crucial for successful grant applications, student recruitment, marketing, dance reconstructions, classroom teaching and faculty development.

Assessment: Demonstrable increase in technology available to Theatre/Dance students. Increasing archive of usable video for development, recruitment and teaching. Re-designed website. Increased internet interaction with prospective students and alumni. Establishment of a Theatre/Dance "blog" to encourage further interaction.

6. To mentor student "artist-thinkers" through challenging coursework and creative collaborations with faculty. To facilitate independent creative research and artistic work and support students' ability to present that work on campus, and at conferences, festivals and other venues. Provide funding to support student scholarship and creativity.

Assessment: Evaluation of increased number and excellence of creative research projects presented on campus. Increase in student participation in off-campus conferences, festivals and professional artistic productions. Gustavus student-faculty participation in USITT conference, Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed conference, American College Dance Festival Association conference, Minnesota Fringe Festival and other academic and professional events.

7. To pursue excellence with balance in the Theatre/Dance production season by managing the limited resources in space, money, time and skilled labor available without either sacrificing production values or exhausting faculty and staff.

Assessment: Faculty would have time to be more engaged in curricular planning, scholarship and college governance. Staff and students able to complete responsibilities with less burn-out.

8. To strengthen the department's engagement with international education and global perspectives. To provide opportunities (courses, artist residencies) for theatre and dance students to experience a broader range of cultural expression, especially in Asian or African performance. To further develop travel/international courses and faculty research.

Assessment: Increase in the availability of coursework and artistic experience in Asian and African performance. Increase in travel courses and faculty involvement in Gustavus programs in India, China and South America.

9. To enhance student opportunities by developing networks of partnerships with off-campus groups and individuals. To foster and sustain relationships with service organizations, schools and community groups that enable genuine efficacy in the creation of social justice performance work at Gustavus and additional opportunities for such work beyond Gustavus. To create ongoing collaborations with professional arts organizations and artists on a local and national level, giving students and faculty the benefit of these relationships. To develop contacts with Gustavus alumni for advice and financial support.

Assessment: Increased number of internships and summer jobs with professional performing groups. Compile a comprehensive list of internships and relevant summer employment of our students. Compile information about current employment of recent graduates and alumni, investigate relevance of internship to employment.

Increased number of alumni involved in advising students. Increased guest artist residencies and follow through with alumni who maintain contact with these artists. Increased number of community groups participating in social justice performance projects. Feedback from alumni on lasting benefits of community involvement. Feedback from community groups on benefits of working with students.

10. To build additional scholarly and creative development opportunities for pre-tenure and post-tenure theatre and dance faculty. To pursue grants, residencies and fellowships that fund professional development.

Assessment: Increased directing, choreographing and design opportunities in professional companies for faculty, increased number of grants awarded, increased funding for faculty creative research. Assess projects completed, publications, conference presentations and application of research to work with Gustavus students.

11. On multiple levels, to increase awareness of "what we do" in theatre/dance and to translate that awareness into more consistent and productive engagement with the campus, local and

statewide community. To play an integral role in campus-wide initiatives, supporting curricular goals across disciplines, and collaborating with students and faculty from many departments and programs.

Assessment: Theatre/Dance performances become standard features of FTS, Curriculum II and many other syllabi across campus. Theatre, Dance and Social Justice Performance events regularly featured in student newspaper, local and regional publications, Minnesota Public Radio. Increased participation in social justice projects by community groups and increased attendance at shows by diverse audiences from the area. Audience surveys distributed at performances solicit feedback and identities of audiences from outside Gustavus. Where did people hear about the show? What made them choose to come onto the campus for a performance?

12. To promote each faculty and student performance as a celebration of student talent, intelligence, and creative achievement. To enhance recruitment, fundraising, alumni relations, service and community outreach by taking full advantage of these events. To make Anderson Theatre a recognized cultural resource for a broad range of spectators.

Assessment: Performances in Anderson Theatre consistently play to capacity houses. Through cooperative communication with college administration, alumni and donors regularly invited to performances and to meet and greet with performers and faculty. Prospective students regularly attend performances and enjoy interaction with performers and faculty. High school students regularly attend shows in large numbers and have opportunities for post-show discussions with performers and faculty. Community groups regularly attend performances and participate in workshops with students. Theatre and Dance performances featured in college-wide events and celebrations.