

2023-2024 Department of Theatre and Dance ANNUAL REPORT and Data Analysis
Prepared by Daniel Gordon, Chair

1. Name of Department, Program or Unit

Department of Theatre and Dance

2. Vision and/or 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. The goal is to achieve an understanding of the social, political, historical, and technological aspects of theatre and dance and how they will continue to evolve in the future. The Department of Theatre and Dance strives to encourage dialogue and creative self-examination, and to challenge the status quo. We are a community committed to sharing stories about all our collective humanity. We strive to afford opportunities for students to develop a significant level of competency in one emphasis in theatre (performance, musical theatre, design/technical, K-12 teacher certification) or in dance (B.A. Dance, B.A. Dance with K-12 teacher certification).

Theatre Program Mission and Goals (updated in 2022-2023):

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.

- Students will critically and conceptually analyze text, performance, and production.
- Students will demonstrate competency in one or more theatre specializations: Production, Performance, Scholarship, or Teaching.
- Students will apply the interrelated processes of creation, interpretation, performance, in the production of theatrical works.
- (Musical Theatre Emphasis): Students will demonstrate development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.

- (Certification Emphasis): Students will identify and demonstrate effective strategies for entry level pedagogy and teaching methodology.

Dance Program Mission and Goals:

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.

- 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.
 - To nurture artistic leadership in students through opportunities to perform, choreograph, teach, design, stage manage, participate in internships, and be involved in professional organizations.
 - To promote collaborative experiences that develop students' communication skills, appreciation of diversity, and adaptability to change in all artistic and interdisciplinary endeavors.
 - To prepare students for successful careers as educational leaders in public and private K-12 education.
- 3. Description: provide an overview of the degree programs, non-degree programs, and services of the department/unit**

The Department of Theatre and Dance offers the following degrees:

[B.A. in Theatre](#) with concentrations in Acting, [Design/Technical Theatre](#), [Musical Theatre](#), or [Teacher Certification \(K-12\)](#).

[B.A. in Dance](#) and a [B.A. in Dance with K-12 Teacher Certification](#).

The Department of Theatre and Dance fulfills several general education requirements for all undergraduate students.

Oral Communication	THRA 120: Acting I
Global Perspectives	THRT 210: Script Analysis
Historical Perspectives	THRT 385: Theatre History and Literature I
Arts and Humanities	THRA 120, Most all DANA courses, THRT 298: Theatre Appreciation, DANT 298: Dance Appreciation, THRT 385,

Intensive Writing	DANT 385: Dance History, THRT 210: Script Analysis
Physical Activity:	DANT 386, THRT 386, THRT 442
	All DANA courses

The Department of Theatre and Dance provides required [cultural events](#) throughout the year. In 2023-2024 2,495 (not including 1009 comps that were mostly students from our department). student tickets were processed for productions produced by the department in two unique performance venues. This is up considerably from 2022-2023.

4. Update on Goals: referring to the goals for this academic year, indicate goal, whether met or not met, and explanation.

2023-2024 GOAL: HOST REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE AMERICAN COLLEGE DANCE ASSOCIATION (ACDA)

OUTCOME (NOT MET)

The Department of Theatre and Dance had been asked to serve as host for this regional conference for many years, but have put it off for various reason, including faculty turnover, the Covid-19 Pandemic, and accreditation visits. Unfortunately, we had to back out of hosting this conference again for various reasons outlined below:

- Director of Dance Meg Schriffen resigned in December 2023. While her line was filled with a one-semester visiting professor, the institutional knowledge and detailed experience of serving on the board of ACDA could not be replaced.
- Another Professor Dance was out on FAMILY LEAVE for the semester, also leaving a void.
- The institution was unable or unwilling to provide as much support as we had anticipated. By necessity, ACDA must occur over spring break to accommodate the number of workshops, classes and performances needed or a successful hosting. Important services like housekeeping became ever more expensive. In addition, food service and AV support would be greatly curtailed during spring break, or not cost effective due to over time charges.

The faculty will reconsider this in upcoming years now that a new tenure-track assistant professor of dance had been hired beginning August 2024.

2023-2024 GOAL: WRITE AND SUBMIT OUR NASD SELF-STUDY

OUTCOME (MET AND CONTINUING)

The NAST reaccreditation visit will take place in October of 2024. A draft of the self-study was submitted to the Office on Institutional Effectiveness and the interim dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. This will give these constituents until mid-August 2024 to provide notes, suggestion, and recommendations that we can implement before final submission in early September. Department faculty have been collaborative and effective in this process.

2023-2024 GOAL: CONTINUE WITH ENROLLMENT, RETENTION, AND DEI EFFORTS

OUTCOME (MET AND CONTINUING)

As articulated in the detailed discussion below. We brought back the departmental Open House / High School Workshops Day in February for the second year since the Covid 19



pandemic where we featured multiple workshops for both Theatre and Dance. Total attendance was over 200 students and 10 teachers. Workshops offered by departmental faculty included Hip Hop, Set Design, Stage Combat, Theatre Improvisation, Dramaturgy, Latin Jazz, Shakespeare, Movement for the Actor, Ballet, Pilates, Yoga, Contemporary Dance, Tap, Jazz, Zombie Makeup, and Musical Theatre Dance. Schools that attended were:

Fort Mill HS
 Cross HS
 Pallisades HS
 Dorman HS
 Andrew Jackson HS
 Southpoint HS
 York Comprehensive HS
 Fairfield Central HS
 Columbia HS

The event also grossed \$1,542.77 in revenue.

- We offered four (4) student/community outreach productions this year, and attendance was good.
- We hosted our second annual Summer Dance Intensive in Summer 2023. We enrolled 10 rising 8th thru 12 graders for a 1-week dance intensive. The department yielded a profit of \$64 in enrollment fees after all expenses, including 2 scholarships.
- We brought in schools for both the Fall Dance Showcase, and *Rent*.
- Department has committed to produce at least one work each season that depicts stories that center on women, BIPOC, or queer narratives in 2024-2025 and beyond.
- Department faculty participated in all university and college recruitment events, including
 - *Winthrop Day*
 - *Two First look Fridays*
 - Two *ArtsWinthrop* open house events
 - Two teacher Cadet days
 - On-campus departmental scholarship auditions
 - Departmental Open House
- The department was active in off campus recruitment:
 - The SC Governor's School of the Arts
 - Greenville Fine Arts Center
 - South Carolina Theatre Association
 - Florida Theatre Conference
 - North Carolina Theatre Conference
 - Regional High School Dance Festival
 - Charlotte Dance Festival
 - West Virginia Dance Conference
 - Southeastern Theatre Conference

Utilizing data from Gray's Associates to streamline programs be more efficient, we examined current course prerequisites to assess if we can ensure moving students through the prescribed curriculum as efficiently as possible. Data suggested that by separating out the freshman theatre core to two categories, technical and performance, we could move second semester freshmen into THRA 260: Drafting and allow us to offer it once every two years instead of annually. To do this we will need to ensure freshmen tech/design concentration students get THRT 110 and THRT 115 their first semester.

DEI Efforts:

- The department worked in 2023-2024 to redesign our baseline departmental attendance policy, with emphasis on student well-being, and to discuss recent attacks or criticisms of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts nationally and within our own state.

We also updated the charge/mission of the DEI committee:

Charge: *All faculty members and students in the Department of Theatre and Dance will serve as a committee-of-the-whole focused on building, promoting, and continually re-evaluating diversity, equity, and inclusion in all our programs. We embrace the design and implementation of curriculum and the creation of production opportunities that celebrate **diverse** experiences across sex/gender, disability, race, sexuality, region, class/caste, religious belief/faith, generation, and ethnicity/nation. We work to develop and activate policies that remove barriers, promote fairness, and provide **equitable** access for all students, faculty, and staff. Finally, our department is committed to the recruitment, full **inclusion**, and retention of faculty, staff, students, and visiting artists from all socio-cultural backgrounds, without the expectation or assumption of representation.*

- To promote inclusion, the Winthrop *Rockhettes* featured its first male dance in 2023-2024. While the policy was changed the previous year, this marked the first time a cis male student participated.
- The majority of scenes used in THRA 320: Acting II I n 2023-2024 revolved around conflict other than the romantic hetero couple. Plays that explore conflict among friendship, patients, siblings, gay and lesbian couples, and work relations were brought into the classroom, explored, and utilized in pursuit of deregulating heteronormativity and deepening our exploration of what is at the core of the human experience and conflict within scene work.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance is committed to addressing students by their correct pronouns and their preferred name. Students' names in *Wingspan*, class rosters, and emails may indicate their *dead* name. The following survey/Google Form was adopted from the Department of Fine Arts and faculty were asked to send it to all their classes prior to the first day of class. Students may not wish to share their pronouns publicly, so they should know its ok to not answer the survey.

<https://forms.gle/ZWaoQxmQwx5YHHSZ9>

2023-2024 GOAL: TRANSFORM JOHNSON 202 / COMPUTER LAB TO A DEPARTMENTAL CREATOR SPACE.
OUTCOME (MET AND CONTINUING)

As Winthrop has moved to being a “laptop campus” usage data had revealed that the MacLab is seldom used by students, and mostly as a source of printing. We kept three (3) of the iMacs in the room for student use as needed, connected to them *Wacom* drawing tablets and loaded them with update software for *Q-Lab*, *Vectorworks* drafting program, and the *Adobe* Design Suite. Another computer became dedicated as a digital audio workstation with a USB keyboard and USMB microphone. In addition, the department’s Yeager Light Lab was installed in the room to aid in teaching lighting classes. Also, a large format plotter was installed for students to print their own drafting work. Next phases could include adding a 3-D printer for prop creation and adding better technology for the audio workstation, including better speakers.

5. **Proposed Goals for the 2024-2025 Academic year**

2024-2025 GOAL: ADVOCATE FOR ADDITIONAL FACULTY AND STAFF TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT

The department’s faculty believe that there exists a strong need for additional personnel in order of priority:

- Theatre performance (acting/directing) faculty—The performance concentration is the second largest in the theatre program. Only musical theatre is larger, but those musical theatre students take numerous courses in the acting curriculum as a core element of their curriculum (as do theatre education students).
- The part-time scene shop supervisor should be made a full-time position. This would add much-needed consistency in the position, aid in promoting safety measures, and allow for facility maintenance. In addition, this position could be partly funded by the increase in summer facility rental that this supervisory position would allow.

2024-2025 GOAL: HOST THE DECENIAL NAST ACCREDITATION VISIT AND WRITE THE OPTIONAL RESPONSE

The accreditation process is a means for working productively to build and strengthen relationships among theatre, education, and professional preparation. The purpose of the visit is for the visitors to develop an external perspective on the work of the theatre unit. Our goal will be to maintain professional and collegial peer review approach and atmosphere and allow them to observe classes, shops, rehearsals and other activities, review performances, and provide access to syllabi and other records as needed.

2024-2025 GOAL: CONTINUE WITH ENROLLMENT, RETENTION, AND DEI EFFORTS

The department has a stated goal to develop and promote proactive strategies, programs, and initiatives in the classroom and production that move all identities from the margins to the center. To make this centering and embracing of difference to happen, we will spend the next year spotlighting cultural identities that seem most important to students.

Based on conversations and interactions with students, it appears our current students are most concerned with gender identity, sexuality, (dis)ability, and class/caste. As a department, we will ask ourselves what we are doing to celebrate and center these specific identities and their cultures. The department is already doing this work with the equity and inclusion goal of hiring people from diverse backgrounds for positions that are not intentionally tied to culturally specific work. That goal translated into hiring a Black guest choreographer for both the Fall and Spring Dance Showcases. We would like to create a new course on Queer Theatre, that can be offered in rotation with THRT 386: Theatre History II and THRT 442: African American Theatre, as they cover the same period but through different lenses. Must a professor of such a course identify as queer to teach this course? What resources should come to bare in its creation? As we develop long-range plans to achieve diversity, equity, access, and inclusion, these are the questions we will explore with students and as a department in 2024-2025.

2024-2025 GOAL: IMPROVE INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES AND PROVIDE RESOURCES AS NEEDED TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Non traditional classroom spaces throughout the department have historically not received technology resources other more traditional learning spaces have. These include

- J117: The Studio Theatre - There are currently no projection capabilities in that space, and outside of the performance audio system, there is no audio reinforcement
- The Johnson Theatre - The projector is antiquated and too weak for that size space. It does not serve the needs of CVPA faculty conference because of this.
- Johnson 103: The Tap/Acting Studio – The floor needs to be resurfaced and have more spring added to the subfloor to prevent injury for dancers.
 - Also new furniture is needed in the space.
- Johnson 205; The Creator lab – Further enhance the digital audio workstation capabilities in the space.
- J112: The Makeup Classroom – Replace broken seating with matching chairs
- J232: Small Dance Studio – replace floor covering
- J235: large Dance studio - replace floor covering

6. **Analysis of trends in programs using data provided by AAAS (this data will be provided to you by May 1)**
 - **Headcount enrollments by program, race/ethnicity, gender, and classification Retention**
 - **Degree completion and time to completion**
- **Other relevant data to your programs you think is important to highlight**
 - **Source:** <https://www.winthrop.edu/institutional-effectiveness/institutional-research/index.aspx>

Program Enrollment

College / Degree Program	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	"1-Yr Change: % Diff 22F to 23F"	"4-Yr Change: % Diff 19F to 23F"
Theatre (B.A.)	159	159	131	115	144	25.2%	-9.4%

College / Degree Program	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	"1-Yr Change: % Diff 22F to 23F"	"4-Yr Change: % Diff 19F to 23F"
Dance (B.A.)	40	46	47	34	36	5.9%	-10.0%

College/Major	2022Fall Cohort	Retained in Any Major	Retained in Original Major	Retention in Major Rate	Retention in any Major
Theatre	33	27	23	69.7%	81.8%
Dance	5	3	3	60%	60%
CVPA	158	127	103	65.2%	80.4%
Winthrop	707	515	396	56%	72.8%

Undergraduate Degrees Conferred

DEGREE PROGRAM	2018-19 Fall/Spr/Sum	2019-20 Fall/Spr/Sum	2020-21 Fall/Spr/Sum	2021-22 Fall/Spr/Sum	2022-23 Fall/Spr/Sum	"1-Yr Change: % Diff AY22 to AY23"	"4-Yr Change: % Diff AY19 to AY23"
B.A. Theatre	22	30	31	34	22	-35.3%	0.0%
B.A. Dance	7	5	10	13	7	-46.2%	0.0%
M.A.T. Teacher Ed.- Theatre/Dance	2	1	5	3	1	-66.7%	-50.0%

Enrollment and Diversity Information from 2024 HEADS Report:

DANCE	Male	Female	Total	Percentages
Asian	0	0	0	0%
Black / African American	5	15	20	55.56%
Hispanic	2	1	3	8.33%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0%
White	2	10	12	33.33%
Other / Ethnicity Unknown	1	0	1	2.78%
TOTALS	10	26	36	100%

THEATRE	Male	Female	Total	Percentages
Asian	0	2	2	1.39%
Black / African American	14	29	43	29.86%
Hispanic	1	3	5	3.47%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0%
White	23	61	84	58.33%
Other / Ethnicity Unknown	3	8	11	7.64%
TOTALS	41	103	144	100%

Enrollment in the THEATRE program grew by 25.2% between Fall 2022 – Fall 2023, and are well above 2013 -2014 numbers of 89, representing a 10-year growth of 62%. A large portion of these are still musical theatre concentration students. Indeed, there are more musical theatre students in dance classes than dance students. I attribute this to the growing positive reputation of the program. This has been acquired through the quality of our productions, as well as the success of our students who have auditioned for professional positions and graduate programs at venues such as the Southeast Theatre Conference (SETC). In 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2024 more students from Winthrop were passed through the state screening process than any other institution in the state. Indeed, 19 acting musical theatre, and dance students were escorted by faculty to the Southeastern Theatre Conference to audition for professional companies in march 2024. Good News like this creates excitement. In addition, as we continue to place alumni in K-12 theatre teaching positions across the state, these teachers serve as ambassadors for our programs. The Mary Howell-Deckle Scholarship, which is used exclusively for Theatre allows us to attract students who qualify among the most prestigious institutions in the nation. This punctuates the urgency to add more theatre faculty, specifically a dedicated Acting / Directing faculty.

We attended numerous in-person recruiting events in 2023-2024. We attended and recruited at the North Carolina Theatre Conference, Florida Theatre Conference, and the Southeast Theatre Conference and our own South Carolina Theatre Conference, which I believe contributed to the positive enrollment numbers forecast for Fall 2023. Even with the large number of degrees conferred the previous two years (56), over all enrollment in the theatre unit still has exploded. This enrollment growth also punctuates the need for interim faculty budgets to increase. Theatre retention for the Fall 2022 cohort is excellent at 81.8%, stronger than the CVPA average or the university as a whole

Diversity representation in the THEATRE program remains a positive attribute, with overall students of color equaling about 42%, down from 50% in previous years. We work to communicate this aspect to prospective students through open house events, and by ensuring accurate representation is depicted in promotional material in both print and web. It is important to properly reflect who we are to maintain this balance. (see recruitment efforts above in GOALS). The program committed to produce at least one work each season that depicts stories that center on women, BIPOC, or queer narratives in 2024-2025 and beyond.

DANCE enrollment grew 6% in the one year between 2022 and 2023 but still reflects a 10% drop over four years. We hope this new enrollment growth will continue and not be part of the cyclical roller-coaster feel of the bouncing numbers over the last five years. We find that offering

\$2-3k DMS scholarships remains effective in attracting students to the program, and the overall “quality”, as measured by preparedness to dance at the freshman college proficiency level improved for the incoming class of 2023-2024 with the majority of the freshman cohort placing into level one modern or ballet and needing to be placed into more remedial beginning and intermediate levels. It was interesting to us that Gray’s Data indicates that the Dance program contributes more money per credit hour production to the university than Theatre. Of course it’s a smaller program, but even so, it was encouraging to see that. The 5-year average for retention within the major in DANCE for the Fall 2023 cohort is 60%. This number is reflective of the lower number of students in that cohort (5), and, as mentioned in last year’s report, none of them were strong dancers starting where we would expect in terms of dance proficiency. The previous year’s cohort retention exceeded the rates of Theatre, CVPA, and the university as a whole, but again, we are talking small total numbers in the cohorts. We attribute any success in retention to strong faculty-student interactions within the major.

We are pleased to be a destination for diverse dance students with approximately 66% identifying as students of color in Fall 2023. Again, scholarships contribute to this success greatly. Efforts to achieve a broad diversity include the Summer Dance Intensive scholarships offered (50%), accurate student representation in recruitment material, both print and digital, and commitments from faculty to choreograph works with diverse themes and subject matters on a range of social issues.

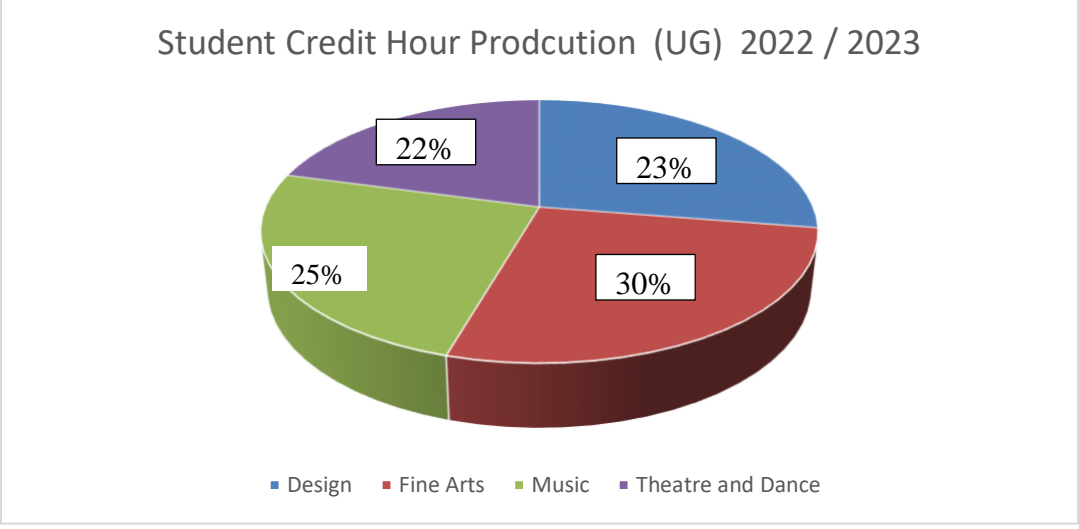
Diversity in both Theatre and Dance has increased dramatically since 2013. In theatre, in 2013, almost 80% of the students identified as white/Caucasian. By 2023, that number was less than 59%. In Dance, white students made up 76% of enrollment in 2013, while in 2023, that percentage was 33%. This is a direct result of intentional efforts in recruiting a diverse student body, utilizing scholarships effectively, and producing works that represent our community.

CREDIT HOUR PRODUCTION BY DEPARTMENT / PROGRAM

<u>COLLEGE / DEPARTMENT / PROGRAM</u>	<u>2019 / 2020</u>	<u>2020 / 2021</u>
Visual and Performing Arts	<u>17,497</u>	<u>16,924</u>
Design	3052	3758
Fine Arts	5354	5162
Music	4564	3904
Theatre and Dance	4082	3801
Theatre	2959	2669
Dance	<u>1123</u>	<u>1135</u>

<u>COLLEGE / DEPARTMENT / PROGRAM</u>	<u>2021 / 2022</u>	<u>2022 / 2023</u>
Visual and Performing Arts	<u>14,966</u>	<u>13,299</u>
Design	3467	3738
Fine Arts	4477	3379
Music	3520	2998
Theatre and Dance	3186	3804
Theatre	2168	2669
Dance	<u>1018</u>	<u>1135</u>

COLLEGE / DEPARTMENT / PROGRAM	2023 / 2024
Visual and Performing Arts	14,827
Design	3943
Fine Arts	3866
Music	3540
Theatre and Dance	2978
Theatre	2007
Dance	971



Credit Hour production has decreased across the institution, as interim faculty budgets were shrunk by 70% by 2022-2023, after being cut the previous year too. In Theatre and Dance this resulted in not offering numerous three-credit service classes that served the general education curriculum that consistently filled with large numbers. This is the primary cause for credit hour production decreases.

7. Highlights of Faculty/Staff Achievements for 2023-2024

The department hosted a week -long dance masters residency in February 2024 with Mary Williford-Shade. **Mary Williford-Shade** has been hailed by Deborah Jowitt of the *New York Times* as “extraordinary” and by Alan Kriegsman of the *Washington Post* as “....incisive, electric, with deep undercurrents of sensuality.... wild, willful and mysterious/”

Shade was a principal dancer with Mark Taylor, Mark Dendy, Pittsburgh Dance Alloy, and Maryland Dance Theater. Some of her company repertory includes works by Marta Renzi, David Rousseve, Susan Marshall, Bebe Miller, Doug Elkins, Sean Curran and Molissa Fenley. Shade has received several university awards that include the Texas Woman’s University’s Mary Mason Lyon Award for Excellence in Scholarship, Teaching and Service, a Summer Research Stipend, a Research Enhancement Award and a Faculty Development Leave.

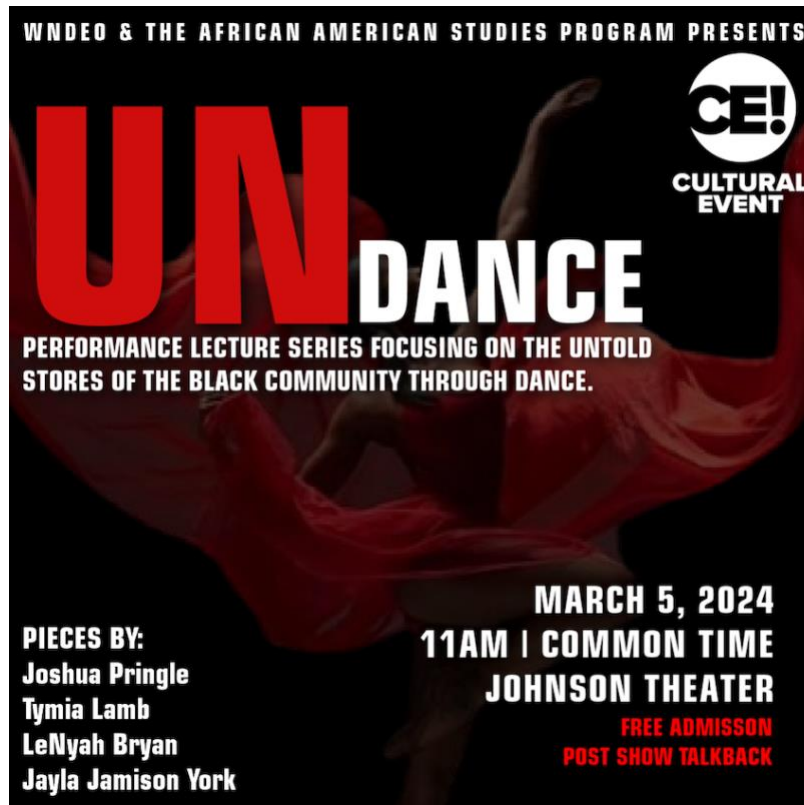
The Department created a script library from the donation of books and scripts by former late theatre faculty Janet Gray. She and her husband Russell Luke, an adjunct instructor of the program for many years, had amassed a lifetime of literary theatrical treasure. Indeed, we now possess a library of Tennessee Williams plays and critical analysis that rivals any in the state.

- **Daniel Gordon** designed lighting and scenery for the [Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival](#)'s production of *Measure for Measure*. For its 33rd season, The Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival reached deep into the Bard's folios for this less frequently performed dark comedy. *Measure for Measure*, which dates back to 1604, is set in Vienna at a time when the city was teeming with loose morality.



- **Rachel and Brandon Dawson** performed in a production of *As You Like It* as, appropriately enough, the lovers Rosalind and Orlando in October with Shepard Shakespeare Company in Charlotte.
- **Rachel Dawson** presented a workshop: *Consent and Boundary Practices for the Theatre* at the Southeastern Theatre Conference. Mobile, AL "An introduction to consent, boundaries, and power dynamics in the theatre. Communication tools will be shared through lecture and participatory activities to help create a consensual space for all. Learn how these foundational concepts of theatrical intimacy work expand to all in the room, not just those engaging in intimacy work."|
- **J.P. Woodey** was technical director for the Chautauqua Opera Company's production of *Sweeney Todd* as well as *Peter and the Wolf* with Chautauqua Youth Ballet and also served as lighting designer for *Wizard of Oz* at Theatre Charlotte, in September.
- **Biff Edge** presented a series of technical theatre workshops to high school theatre educators in the region at the Old English Consortium
- **Dr. Marvin McAllister** presented a paper (via Zoom) on William Brown's 19th century entertainments and New York City "*sporting culture*" for the 44th annual Society of Historians of the Early Republic (SHEAR) conference and transformed this conference paper into a journal article for a special edition of the Journal of the Early Republic.

- **Gabby Tull** and **Kelly Ozust** curated a concert entitled ‘Un Dance’ featuring stories of the black community with our own junior choreographers. This event celebrated the growing and diverse student population, providing further artistic outlets to showcase their works. This concert series was in collaboration with the African American studies advisory committee so that students across all disciplines across campus could experience a choreographic experience that is a reflection of the black experience.



- **Leslie Cook** presented a Wig Workshop to students in the department in Spring of 2024. This was specifically requested by students to augment their education.
- **Kelly Ozust** presented at the National Dance Education Organization Conference in Denver, CO. This presentation focused on intergenerational dance and non-Motion narratives in performance, and was co-presented with my mother, Paula Ozust. It stemmed from work I did with my mother and grandmother for the Movement in the World conference held at Winthrop in 2023.

Highlights of Student Achievements for 2023-2024

- **Musical Theatre students** performed at Westminster Towers retirement community in Fall 2023
- Alum, **Delaney McLaughlin** (BA Theatre, May 2021) earned an MFA at the University of Georgia’s Franklin College of the Arts in May 2023. Her research included a thesis on

lighting design for Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*. She will also serve as a visiting professor of theatre at Washington and Lee University for Fall 2024.

- All **theatre education (2) and dance education (3) students** (both undergrad and AMAT) successfully passed the EdTPA assessment, providing them state certification to teach.
 - Allysa Boyd, Dance
 - Kayla Alexander, Dance
 - Steffan Mayrides-Jolon, Dance
 - Hailey Green, MAT, Theatre
 - Madison Wilkin, Theatre



- Theatre student **Ash Hernick** was accepted to a summer apprenticeship with New York City Local #1 of the International Alliance of Stage Employees (IATSE).
- Theatre student **Sebastian Liafsha** was hired for summer 2023 as lighting designer for the summer repertory season of Big Fork Summer Theatre in Montana. He lit five musicals in just a few weeks.



Dance and theatre students **Brooke Trigg, Jalah Jamison York, Steffan Mayrides-Jolon, Sunshyne Patterson, Abby Lake, Molly Wilson, and Madalin Beam** travelled to the annual [SCDancing 2024](#) Festival in Spartanburg SC with the help of funds from Undergraduate research. There they presented an original choreographic work titled *Bodies in the Closet*.

- Theatre student **Mary Horn-Garber** has been hired as properties artisan for summer 2024 with the Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma
- Musical theatre senior **Cameron Vipperman** advanced to Regional NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) competitions in musical theatre held at Furman University.

Curricular Updates planned for 2024-2025

- Change the name of the PERFORMANCE Concentration to ACTING: Since the creation of the Musical Theatre concentration, a concentration titled "Performance" is ambiguous and does not distinguish it from Musical Theatre. This causes confusion for prospective students. "Acting" delineates this from the other form of performance represented in Musical Theatre. And finally, there is no requirement for students to "perform" in this curriculum, so in keeping with the NAST accreditation standards for Title, Content, and Intent, this clarification better aligns with NAST recommendations.

- Change DCED 342 (Dance Pedagogy) and THED 342 (Theatre for Youth) to 500-level classes (542). We wish to make this a graduate level courses that undergrads take so that when they do the AMAT program in Dance Education, it will help them with earning more grad level classes (the 6 credits they need) by having taken them as undergrads. Due to the intense rigor and internship schedule of the AMAT program, we find students struggle to earn the graduate-level credits required. This solution was devised in collaboration and consultation with the College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences
- Explore modification of Dance Program to try increase credits of technique classes while maintaining 120 credits and Reduce courses taught by faculty each semester
- Amending the Theatre Performance concentration to include screen-acting (pending faculty resources)

Facilities and Equipment

The department relies on well-working modern equipment that appropriately prepares students for work within their fields or graduate study. The theatre design/tech program in particular is heavily reliant on technology.

Existing facilities project requests:

- Remodel existing dressing rooms and greenroom. Submitted January 2, 2019. Combine rooms J125A and J126. The current makeup classroom (J126) is too small to serve the growing enrollment in the department. Combining these rooms will more than double the capacity to serve enrollment. Combine the J125D and J125G small dressing rooms into one larger dressing rooms. Single "star" dressing rooms do not serve the needs of a university theatre and dance program. A larger room would be much more efficient for the department and for community rental groups.
- Johnson Greenroom– Replace worn carpeting. Submitted September 5, 2017
- New shades for JOHN 103 like the ones put in the dance studio
- New Dance flooring for JOHN 103 (hole in the floor and other areas are buckling up
- Replacing upstairs water fountain with bottle refill fountain like the one downstairs. This is adjacent to the dance studios, so is needed.
- Basement of Johnson is now flooding during moderate rain. The pump that empties water needs to be replaced.
- Carpeted floor tiles in the Johnson Hall lobby are peeling up and creating a serious trip hazard. They need to be replaced as it seems the glue is faulty. In addition, there are soft spots in the floor under

the carpeting that is indicative rot. Some holes are becoming a trip hazard.

- Existing Equipment Requests
 - Complete the recommended audio upgrade for Johnson Theatre
 - Purchase of a wireless microphones begun in 2018.
 - New audio console
 - Interfaces
 - speakers
 - Purchases 12 ETC LED ellipsoidal lighting fixtures. These will equally serve the dance and theatre programs. 11 were purchased Spring in 2022.
 - this technology is essential to teach the students how to use it.
 - Install a 'built-in' projector to hang in J117 (The Studio Theatre), with a laptop connection port on the wall and speakers that do not require using the theatre sound system.
 - JOHN 106 need new curtains/legs
 - JOHN 106 replacing scrim
 - Rigging inspection (Completed in Spring 2024)

Strengths*Opportunity to Practice your Craft*

The program offers unique opportunities for students including workshops and numerous performance opportunities. Few undergraduate programs in the region offer as many performance and design opportunities for students. This is partly because the programs are exclusively undergraduate: Students are not in competition with graduate students for roles or design positions. The curriculum prides itself on being “well-round”, and offering a holistic approach to training. Students learn all aspects of their craft. In Theatre, all students take design/production classes as well as acting and theory classes. Dance students study several styles of technique, including ballet, modern, jazz, tap, and world dance, as well as extensive practice in choreography for an undergraduate program. Each year we get more musical theatre transfers from Coastal Carolina University. These are BA students who lack the above opportunities due the BFA curriculum there.

Our location is a strength. Being a suburb of Charlotte allows for internships at the Children’s Theatre of Charlotte, Actors Theatre of Charlotte, and for employment at Carowinds. Indeed, faculty and alums assume leadership roles at Carowinds and now regularly employ students throughout the year. Being close to a major airport helps attract out-of-state students. Downtown Rock Hill is booming, and the “gateway” to downtown opening up behind Johnson Hall provides easily accessible walking to activities. This is very different from what that area was just 5 years ago.

Attractive Campus

Students, faculty, staff, and community members overwhelmingly identify the Winthrop campus landscape, gardens, emphasis on trees, and green spaces, as strengths, as well as the walkability due to the campus size. As mentioned above, the revitalization of the lands between campus and downtown Rock Hill promise to be even more of a game-changer in providing students activities off-campus, and a safer environment.

A Welcoming Environment

The Department of Theatre and Dance is viewed by many as a kind and accepting community that promotes diversity, inclusion, and social justice along with working to make Johnson Hall a safe place for all. To that end, the department has been intentional at recruiting a more diverse student population. Students and alumni typically speak of the family atmosphere, long lasting friendships made, the kindness and generosity of faculty, and the inclusive student body that is conducive to learning and building long-lasting professional relationships. In 2021-2022 the departmental DEI statement was amended to better reflect our commitment to social justice for all, and in 2022-2023 greater efforts were made to explore diversity of gender and sexual orientation.

Interdisciplinary Study and Active Arts Scene

The College of Visual and Performing Arts offers a plethora of events and activities for all students, often regardless of major. #ArtsWinthrop promotes exceptional music, theatre, dance and visual arts programming for the Winthrop University campus, community, and regional audiences. Throughout CVPA and Winthrop there are exhibitions and programs that support interdisciplinary study, research, and discourse for both the academic and public communities. Students from CVPA, especially Dance, regularly contribute to undergraduate research through SOURCE. The Theatre program and Department of Music continue to explore ways to build upon the already good working relationship. Each program consults the other when scheduling classes and events to facilitate students who are active in both.

Collaborative Faculty and Staff

Faculty collegiality within the department is generally strong, and of course essential in a program that does so much collaborative work. Also notable as a strength is faculty retention. There is not a large turn over in departmental faculty which provides a sense of continuity. Two statements that we hear often from students that should be noted are, “the faculty and staff care” and “the department listens to the students’ needs.” This is evident in the level of advising in the programs. Both Theatre and Dance conduct mandatory group advising sessions. These are followed by one-on-one appointments with faculty advisors. These coupled with the support we get from CVPA student services provide excellent advising for students and contributes to the success rate of matriculating students within four years. The retention rates in Dance are among the highest across Winthrop and in Theatre are stronger than the university as a whole.

Scholarships

While there is a need for more scholarships, as outlined in weaknesses, the Theatre program is fortunate to be able to offer the Mary Howey-Deckle Scholarship, which provides for the full cost of attendance and is renewable for three additional years. This award has already done much to attract highly talented students, which in turn attract more, and raises the bar for excellence throughout the course sequence.

A Culture of Excellence in Education

The Theatre and Dance Education concentrations are highly respected throughout the region and known for their rigor and academic excellence. This has led to numerous alumna that now teach in K-12 programs throughout the state, that assist in recruitment. This exceptional curriculum is punctuated with extensive field experience that builds from freshman year to the capstone experience of Internship II, where students spend each day at a school with a mentor teacher.

Facilities

Facilities will be noted in both strengths and weaknesses. The facilities in the department are mostly a strength in that some are excellent. The combination of the Johnson Theatre and the Studio Theatre offer an important balance of process and production in the production work we do. Johnson Hall is a case study in balance itself, where we strive to honor its rich history while demonstrating a path to the future and progress. The dance studios are well designed and immediately attractive to prospective students, who often battle columns and low ceilings in their local studios. The Johnson Theatre utilizes a large orchestra pit, a fully working fly system, and ready access to the scene shop. Unlike many programs nationally, we do not need to share the performance space with the Department of Music, clearing the space for orchestra rehearsal, or

numerous university assemblies. The size of the Johnson Theatre is also a strength. 333-seats is large enough for performers to feel like they are playing a “real theatre” while small enough to feel full at 150 seats sold. Playing to 150 patrons in a 3000-seat auditorium (Byrnes) can be feel debilitating.

Fully Accredited

Winthrop University is accredited with both the National Association of Schools of Dance and the National Association of Schools of Theatre. In fact, Winthrop is one of very few institutions nationally to hold the highest accreditation in all five major arts forms.

Clear Mission Statement and Identity

I believe the department has done a good job of defining who we are and what we value in a liberal arts education. The well-rounded curriculum that allows students to pursue a minor or second major, coupled with the development of critical thinking and writing skills pairs well with the excellent holistic training students are getting in their major (and getting stronger). The department is respected for this in the region and has earned a good reputation. The challenge is communicating this effectively to prospective students who are hungry for conservatory programs, whether they are talented enough to get in them or not. Parents tend to recognize the value of what we offer and appreciate the emphasis on marketable skills beyond performing. The mission statement was updated in 2021 and 2024 to better reflect the department’s commitment to D.E.I.

Diversity

Student enrollment in the department is diversified, with about 50% (plus or minus each year) of those enrolled identifying as students of color. To build upon this, we have analyzed freshman retention data in terms of race, for both theatre and dance. In addition, the department is committed to utilizing guest directors and choreographers of color until funding allows more full-time hires. Black guest theatre directors have directed several plays and musicals written by Black playwrights, ensuring the diversity we enjoy is represented in the works we present to the public.

WEAKNESSES

Faculty and Staff Shortages

Great strides have been made in the last ten years to build the department with appropriate and qualified personnel. Remaining weaknesses include a faculty line not utilized to teach core classes of majors in dance, and a shortage of faculty in theatre. These challenges are compounded with greatly reduced funding in interim budgets. We are very pleased that the line for Professor Meg Schriffen was replaced at her resignation This new faculty member will be starting in August 2024.

The department’s faculty believe that there exists a strong need for additional personnel in order of priority:

- Theatre performance (acting/directing) faculty—two factors support this as the top priority need. First, the performance and musical theatre concentrations account for 2/3 of departmental enrollment. Second, evidence suggests that the musical theatre concentration will continue to grow, all of whom will enroll in performance courses as a core element of their curriculum. One full-time faculty to serve both concentrations is not sustainable.
- Converting the part-time scenic studio supervisor to full time. The production load of the department to serve the current enrollment warrants this, especially as musical theatre productions require more production resources.

Printed Promotional and Recruitment Material

The college strives to seek uniformity in recruiting documents. This has limited efforts by the department to be more involved in creating more compelling printed recruitment material. The department needs to make this a priority in the upcoming academic year.

Production Budgets

The production budgets have not increased in over a decade, not even to keep up with inflation, which is exceptionally higher in 2022 - 2023 than in recent decades. In 2023 the production budget was merged with the operating budget, but then completely removed the following year. This has resulted in lower production values for productions as we try to compensate for the higher cost of materials. Solutions to ease this constraint involve either doing fewer productions, which we attempted in 2023-2024 or to increase revenue. Increasing revenue comes with its own challenges. Our box office numbers were higher in 2023-2024, but the extra revenue still does not keep up with inflation. Covid-19 has demonstrated just how dependent on rental and box office revenue the department has really been, as much of it was erased for the 2020-2021 academic year. The department budget must reflect the reality of the cost of delivering this program.

Accessibility

The control booths in the Johnson Theatre are lacking handicap accessibility. We have yet to have a student needing accommodation in the last ten years, but it is just a matter of time. Accessibility in the Studio Theatre (J117) is also limited, but this can be rectified by moving the control station down from the catwalk, if needed, though still not ideal.

Campus Life and Culture

Rock Hill's night-life scene for college students is improving. Entertainment and activities for a younger audience are limited in this part of town. There are now a few options for students to go on evenings or weekends to socialize, listen to live music, or dance. This makes it challenging to keep students engaged and involved in the area during the school year. The local free bus line is helpful for students to navigate the Rock Hill area.

Facilities

While there are many positive attributes to the facilities we use in Theatre and Dance. In recent years the roof has been repaired, the interior of Johnson Theatre has been repainted and recarpeted. A new fire protection system is being installed in Summer 2023. There are still some issues that need to be resolved. The dance floors need to be replaced, as they are now over 20

years old, especially J103, the Tap Studio, as it gets extensive wear.

The Herculean task of keeping Johnson Hall in a presentable state is exhausting but the housekeeping staff in Johnson typically do well, with considerable effort from the technical director, department chair, and administrative assistant. Housekeeping reduced the staff in Johnson Hall from two to one. Exceptions occur when we are not informed when housekeeping staff are either absent or pulled away for other duties, and dance floors will go uncleaned for a few days. This is contrary to the NASD standards and can even create a hazardous situation when the floors in the dance studios become too slippery.

The heating/cooling in Johnson Hall is inconsistent at best. This seems a campus-wide problem with adequate heating and air. This becomes particularly problematic when we have audiences for our productions or when outside groups are renting the space. It also causes extreme temperatures in offices, costume studio, and in the dance studios on a regular basis. Facilities Management is aware of the issues and is regularly working on solving these ongoing issues.

We may offer the very best education ever but if it is packaged in a poor box, we will lose students. Our classrooms reflect a 1970s viewpoint on how students learn – we do not have modern modular spaces for what we know about teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Other facility deficiencies include:

-Lack of a dedicated design studio for drafting, rendering, model-making, etc. Currently we use the one general-purpose classroom, J205. Art studios are better equipped but not accessible to our department. The basement of Roddy may be a solution for this but we have been told they are not handicap accessible, and therefore cannot be used as a classroom.

-Lack of a dedicated shoe studio for dance. J103 right now double as both an acting studio and a dance studio for dance forms that require shoes, i.e. tap and jazz. This makes it difficult to keep the floors in the space clean. This was also mentioned in the 2018 NASD visitor's report. As mentioned above, the floor in J103 needs to be replaced. We are currently getting quotes.

-J232 and J235 are the only studios appropriate for ballet, as they are the only ones with ballet barres. Permanently installed barres in the studios in the West Center would alleviate this, but in the mean time we have purchased portable barres.

Cost and Affordability

Unsurprisingly, the topics of cost and affordability are frequently cited as challenges to prospective and current students, and thus greatly affect enrollment and retention. Our students often express the need to work, occasionally full-time, but still not being able to afford tuition, fees, and books. Most courses in the department contain course fees which are crucial to its fiscal viability. The downside is that students see these fees as constantly being tacked on to their bills. Of course, there is also the issue of value; whether students are getting their money's worth for the relatively high cost of tuition and fees. While there is little beyond scholarships that we can do to affect cost, we CAN work to increase value and accountability, and this should always remain primary in our objectives. We are heartened by the recent announcement for lower tuition in 2024-2025, so that Winthrop is no longer the most expensive public institution in the state.

External factors: Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

Collaboration with the Mass Communication Department

The creation of the Film Content and Production Minor was a great first step to bridge relationships between the two departments. Film is a technician's medium while theatre is an actor's medium. Working together can provide for a strong curriculum in both screen acting and film production by sharing costs and resources. The Grays Associates study may result in recommendations to form a major in Film Production. Beyond the data provided by Gray, such a program would enhance existing programs at Winthrop and boost enrollment. Actors would be attracted for the opportunity to build a reel of student films. Theatre designers and technicians would be able to explore another viable and marketable medium. Music students would be excited to compose scores for student films. Design students could get experience creating motion graphics for film and video.

Collaboration with the new Game Design Major

The Bachelor of Design programs will prepare students to become “lifestyle and experience designers” — designing innovative user/consumer products, experiences and lifestyle relevant solutions. This will create opportunity for students in Theatre and Dance. Specifically:

- Motion capture / movement study for dance students
- Voiceover work for Actors / musical theatre singers
- Costume, lighting, and scenic design in a virtual realm for tech/design students

Interdisciplinary Studies

Interdisciplinary studies has progressed in the last eight years, from bi-annual meetings to discuss topics but never implementing any programmatic offerings. I attribute this as much to the arrival of new faculty as much as to any institutional initiatives, though the *CreatorSpace* has and will certainly do more to spark collaboration among students from different programs. The largest obstacle I see in further implementation is faculty load. Full-time faculty are needed to teach core classes in the major, especially now that adjunct budgets are being squeezed tighter. This leaves little time or budget to offer X-courses, which are often the testing ground for interdisciplinary work. In theatre and dance it is a natural fit to work inter-disciplinarily. Musical theatre by its very nature includes dance and music. Theater and literature are brethren studies also. Dance has been highly effective in the last three years of implementing interdisciplinary study into its work. Recent projects have merged students in music composition with choreographers to produce completely original works. Dance has collaborated with fine arts students to incorporate their work as projections and scenery in performances in recent years.

Location

Winthrop's location should be considered an opportunity that could benefit the department's mission and vision, particularly its close proximity to Charlotte, as mentioned under the heading “strengths”. Opportunities lie in the relationships with professional companies and constituents that we have yet to forge. A short list of these would include the following:

- Carolina Renaissance Festival
- Rock Hill Community Theatre (students have begun interning there in 2022-2024)
- Actors Theatre of Charlotte

- Charlotte Ballet
- Opera Carolina
- Carolina Panthers
- Film and television production in the Carolinas
- I.A.T.S.E. (the professional stage hands union)

Not all of these will bear fruit, but it shows there is plenty to work on.

Our region can also offer cultural opportunities with art galleries, the York County Cultural Council, local, regional and national sporting events etc. that are unique for a town the size of Rock Hill. Other location opportunities revolve around our quality of life here to attract students and faculty. We are in the heart of the Carolinas, and all that implies. These together with cultural and environmental advantages should make Winthrop a “destination campus” rather than an afterthought as it may be for some.

Communication/Marketing

A common concern expressed across the department and alumni is the need to better ‘tell the story’ of all the great things happening in theatre and dance, as well CVPA, thus raising ‘Eagle’ visibility, and improving our reputation.

Foster Alumni Relations

The university would benefit from a more unified collaboration with high school teachers in the state. As a department, both Theatre and Dance have created an advisory panel of arts educators in 2021 and expanded it in 2023. These alumni provide direct access for us to recruit and help mentor teacher find resources we can provide.

St-ARTS / Summer Intensives

The short-lived Pre-University program failed to serve as an effective recruitment tool. In Summer 2022 we offered our first Summer Dance intensive These are typically popular and have been regularly asked about at conferences where we attend. There is opportunity to grow this if we can provide housing for students out of this region. The goal is to offer this option in summer 2025.

On-Line Programming

Data suggests that students prefer the Theatre Appreciation and Dance Appreciation courses to be offered on-line. On-line versions of this class used to fill to capacity of 25 and beyond while those that meet in classrooms would hover around eight students, and so there is an opportunity to increase FTE production. This might hold true for other courses in the department that also fulfill general education requirements, such as THRT 210: Script Analysis (global requirement). The Covid-19 pandemic has forced us all to become proficient with distance learning, and it is a positive note in this tragedy.

The online ticket sales system could be expanded to include events in Music and other constituencies on campus. The system could also be set up in the new student center for sales during that day at that location. We currently spend a large portion of box office revenue on the selling of the tickets. This is an opportunity to streamline the cost of ticketing. We will change the ticket sales vendor use by the department from Showtix to Ludis in order to take advantage of its enhanced marketing and reporting capabilities at the same cost.

Threats

Faculty and Staff Compensation / morale

In order to retain good faculty, compensation must be competitive. The university lags behind others in the state and region. Initiatives have begun to address this, but morale is still affected, especially when factored in with faculty work-load and mandatory furloughs. What felt like a large exodus in upper administration positions in 2022 had weakened morale considerably going into 2022-2023. There was a sense of flight that faculty felt. This has improved by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, and even more so going into 2024 with the appointment of a highly effective permanent provost, but faculty morale is still on a precipice.

Competition with Other State Schools

Students in SC have many choices to study theatre or dance in state. As of 2024 there were no fewer than 20 institutions offering degrees in theatre, and six that had dance programs. According to Universities.com, Winthrop dance is ranked number four in that list for 2024 (<https://www.universities.com/find/south-carolina/best/dance-degrees>) (in 2021, we were 2nd). In 2008, there were only three schools offering dance. For theatre, Winthrop ranked 2nd for state schools.

Competition with NC Schools That Offer Reduced Tuition

Thanks to the new Promise Program from the state of North Carolina, tuition for all undergraduate students at Western Carolina University has been reduced to \$500 per fall and spring semesters for in-state students and \$2,500 for out-of-state students. This is almost 1/3 the cost of attendance at Winthrop for in-state students. We are excited at the prospect of offering in-state tuition as part of the articulation agreement with Central Piedmont Community College in 2024-2025.

Demographics 2024: Drop in Number of Students Enrolling in College Due to Decreased Population

It is unclear how this will affect our region, as we are still enjoying a population growth in the Carolinas, but as institutions scramble to attract students nationally, competition will become stiffer.

Value of Higher Education

There is a perception among some that the value of higher education is diminishing, particularly one in the arts, as opposed to technical trades. Reasons include: local hostility toward higher education, the uncertainty and support for higher education at the national level, and the lack of local employment opportunities where a significant portion of our students reside. Reasons that address the weakening value of higher education include: cumulative costs of higher education, the disinvestment from the state, the lack of available state aid/national aid, the high amount of debt owed after graduation (more than \$30,000 on average), and low availability of arts jobs in the region. This leaves an inevitable question of "Is this really worth it?" The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this. We need to provide high value in a quickly changing environment. Nationwide, faculty are asked to do more with fewer resources,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/college-faculty-course-workload-budgets/2021/04/30/d5d2ee1e-a904-11eb-8c1a-56f0cb4ff3b5_story.html as articulated in a recent Washington post article.

Economic

Family income has remained level while cost of tuition has soared. This makes two-year colleges more attractive for some families. Maintaining articulation agreements will be essential to attract these students who do go to a two-year school first. If community college becomes free nationwide, how will that affect 4-year colleges?

Student Preparation vs College Expectations

Students are less prepared for college, both academically and emotionally. Writing and critical thinking skills are particularly lacking. A recent national survey of college counselors reveals that anxiety is the top presenting concern among college students (41.6 percent), followed by depression (36.4 percent) and relationship problems (35.8 percent). Destabilizing world events from 2021-2022 have only exacerbated this problem and there appears to be an epidemic in student mental health, while resources for them remain minimal.

Technological

Experts agree that we are on the cusp of an AI revolution. How that affects higher education remains to be seen, but it stands to reason that many of the support positions in higher education will evolve, as might teaching itself. Students now have access to programs such as ChatGPT that can create imagery or write their papers.

Political

Nationally, State governments learning have engaged in a type of “cultural warfare with some institutions of higher. Courses that involve critical race theory have been threatened or 32 states have introduced, passed or enacted bills banning or limiting DEI initiatives during this current legislative session ([Source NBC News](#)). SC is not one of those states.

Human Resources

Finding qualified interim faculty in niche disciplines like the arts always has its challenges. This has been compounded this year with other local institutions offering significantly better compensation than Winthrop. UNC Charlotte for example pays its dance adjuncts 2.5 times what we do the same credits and contact hours. Indeed, he lost an excellent ballet instructor for 2023-2024 due to this, and another in Spring 2024.

A dance technique class is 1-credit, but three contact hours. Nevertheless, it is compensated at half the rate of a three-credit theory class with the same contact hours. I have worked over the last decade to remedy this by increasing compensation for these classes, to the levels it is now. When I first arrived, the compensation ranged from \$900 - \$1100 for the same classes. The current financial position of the university, and the restrictions it poses is a direct threat to attracting and retaining qualified interim instructors. In 2023-2024 we were able to increase that rate to \$1600 for the three contact hours, but still far behind the \$2700 that those teaching a theory class earn.