Montana University System
INTENT TO PLAN FORM

Program/Center/Institute Title: Option in Musical Theatre Performance, BFA Theatre

Campus, School/Department: UM Missoula-Schools of Music and Theatre & Dance

Expected Submission Date: Fall 2018

Contact Name/Info: John DeBoer, john.deboer@umontana.edu, 812.322.2505

To increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process, please complete this form not more than 18 months in advance of the anticipated date of submission of the proposed program/center/institute to the Board of Regents for approval. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the Intent to Plan process, please visit http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp.

1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.

The School of Theatre & Dance and the School of Music propose to combine existing coursework in both Schools into an official interdisciplinary option in “Musical Theatre Performance” under the existing BFA in Theatre. The official Level II option is preferred in order to track students in the program and efforts undertaken in the areas of Theatre, Dance, and Music.

2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).

Dr. David Cody from the School of Music conducted significant research into the demand for this curriculum during his sabbatical in the Spring of 2018 and we believe this reorganization of existing curriculum will create a significant recruiting opportunity for the University with minimal additional investment (The document outlining his research is available on request).

There are 218 musical theatre degree programs in the US, but very few in our region. We have the opportunity to attract more in-state students (rather than see them study musical theatre out of state) as well as attract more students from across the nation. We regularly attend national auditions in Seattle where the majority of HS students attending are interested in Musical Theatre. The College of Visual and Performing Arts needs curriculum in Musical Theater in order to maintain its position as the flagship arts institution in the Northwest. There is HIGH demand for musical theater programs in our region, and low supply. We have the faculty, facilities, and resources in place already to make such a program a reality.

3) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing institutional program array.

Musical Theatre is inherently interdisciplinary and would utilize the strengths of the theatre, dance, and music programs. Since January, the UM faculty has received many communications from the president’s office stressing the need and importance of interdisciplinary programs and multi-disciplined approaches to teaching. UM President Seth Bodnar reasserted this in an interview with UM Communications Director Paula Short:
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Our liberal arts and sciences tradition and interdisciplinary focus are the foundation of undergraduate, professional, and graduate programs that foster critical thinking and integrative problem solving.

Developing and strengthening interdisciplinary programs is at the forefront of the university’s new mission and I interpret this as a mandate for us to create something together in response. I can think of no better way for the College of Visual and Performing Arts to move forward with the new mission of the university than to create a true INTERDISCIPLINARY degree that draws upon the strengths in the music, theatre and dance programs and unites them in a rigorous and dynamic new degree.

4) Describe how the program/center/institute overlaps, complements, or duplicates existing efforts in the MUS. Describe efforts that will be made to collaborate with similar programs at other institutions. If no efforts will be made, please explain why.

There is no overlap between existing programs in the MUS. There are 2-Year transfer articulation agreements in place between the School of Music and the School of Theatre & Dance with Flathead Valley Community College but no undergraduate baccalaureate curriculum in Musical Theatre in the MUS. By instituting this option within the existing Theatre BFA, we can further improve our partnerships with professional theatres (run by UM faculty and alumni) that could provide apprenticeship and internship opportunities for UM students:

- In Missoula: Montana Repertory Theatre and the Missoula Children’s Theatre
- In Montana: Bigfork Summer Playhouse, Grandstreet Theatre, and the Fort Peck Summer Theatre
- Nationally: Cour D’Alene Summer Playhouse, Arizona Broadway Theatre (Founded and run by UM Alumni), and with the opportunity to establish relationships numerous other professional musical theatre producing companies across the PNW.

Signature/Date

College/School Dean: 9/6/18
Chief Academic Officer:
Chief Executive Officer:
Flagship Provost*:
Flagship President*:

*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Date of Final Review:

When submitting the proposal to the BOR, include this signed form with the Level II request.