

Academic Program Review
Theatre Program
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Self Study Report
September 2002

Preamble

By definition a theatre program which both teaches and produces a season of public performances differs in a number of ways from a standard academic program of classroom instruction and individual faculty research projects. Of necessity then, we have taken some liberties with the suggested template for self study reports. Every effort, however, has been made to cover all the points listed in the template.

Background

The Theatre Department accepted its first students in September of 1988. At that time the Department comprised 2 faculty, 2 staff and 13 students. As of September 2002 the Theatre Program has 5 full time faculty, 2 guest faculty each semester, 5 staff and a student body of 73.

From the outset it was recognized that a program of this size and in the relatively isolated location of the west coast of Newfoundland could not and should not attempt to be all things to all people. We would limit ourselves to a few areas and aim for the highest possible level of instruction in them.

Students major in either Acting or Stagecraft with a common Academic core. As stated in the University Calendar our aim is threefold; to produce students with a first class liberal arts undergraduate education where their primary area of study has been theatre; to produce students who would be admitted to Education programs with the aim of eventually teaching theatre and drama at the primary and secondary levels; and to produce students prepared to enter the theatre profession at a journeyman level or pursue further professional training at a graduate school or conservatory.

From the beginning particular emphasis has been placed in two areas: the academic component, to foster what Northrop Frye so aptly called "the educated imagination," and the mounting of full scale productions, in accordance with our belief in the principle of "learning by doing." It should be noted that we are unique in this regard in that we are the only theatre in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador which mounts regular seasons of world drama from the classics to the modern international repertoire.

By great good fortune we are in the position, unique in Canada, of being able to offer the final semester of our fourth year curriculum at our own campus in Old Harlow, Essex just forty miles outside of London. The Harlow Institute, as it is now called, is indeed the "jewel in the crown" of our program offering incomparable opportunities for theatre criticism (virtually daily attendance at performances in London and Stratford), research in selected areas of theatre history, workshops, field trips and master classes and the rehearsal of a final "thesis" production under close to professional working conditions.

Student Information

There are currently 70 students enrolled in the Theatre Program. This number can further be broken down as follows:

	Acting	Stagecraft	
Fourth Year	16	3	19
Third Year	15	5	20
Second Year	12	3	15
First Year	13	3	16
			70

Table 1 Student Breakdown by Major

	Male	Female	
Fourth Year	8	11	19
Third Year	6	14	20
Second Year	4	11	15
First Year	3	13	16
			70

Table 2 Student Breakdown by Gender

Typically, the program accepts students from all across the province, students who are completing their last year of high school. Applicants to the program must meet MUN's eligibility criteria and must make separate application to the program. In all instances, prospective students are interviewed by either Stagecraft or Acting faculty in order to more fully determine a student's candidacy for the program.

As the program matures, we are seeing more and more applicants from the remainder of Canada, the US, even Europe.

Given that our students must endure two rounds of applications, it is not surprising that many of them excel both in the Academic and more Practical components of the program, a fact that is borne out by the number of our students who make the Dean's List.

Attrition does occur, particularly in first year, though if a student makes it into third year they typically go on to finish their degree. We are very pleased that in recent years several students who did not finish their degrees found time to complete the necessary credits and go on to graduation.

The Theatre Program is pleased that more and more financial opportunities, in the shape of scholarships and bursaries, have become available to our students. Currently, there are eight major awards available to our students, including the recently announced Al Pittman Memorial Scholarship.

In addition to Harlow we have addressed the problems of both limited numbers of faculty and relative isolation by aggressively recruiting first class master teachers and guest artists from the profession, in Newfoundland, from across Canada and in England. In addition to the value to both students and faculty of a constant stream of rotating guest artists in terms of delivering the program, they have proved to be an effective conduit in terms of helping our graduates to find professional employment.

After fifteen years we are confident in suggesting that ours is the best undergraduate B.F.A. Theatre Program in Canada, east of Montreal. We base this on the record of employment of our graduates (Stratford, Shaw, Soulpepper) their success in earning M.F.A.'s (with distinction) from major graduate schools in Canada, the United States and Britain and from the response we have had to our graduates from a significant number of directors, artistic directors and technical directors who have employed them.

In 1994 the program was reviewed and as a result a number of significant modifications were made to the curriculum. Given our emphasis on students learning by participating in fully mounted mainstage productions which require between 12 and 20 rehearsal and crew hours per week, it was decided that all production work become fully credited courses. The argument was that students in the Visual Arts made paintings, sculptures, photographs etc. for credit and therefore theatre students should receive credit for making theatre. Consequently, the curriculum was adjusted to include production courses at the second, third, and fourth year levels while at the same time preserving the integrity of the academic core which we continue to view as an essential component of our degree. The results for students have been entirely positive. They now get marks for the thing they came here to do and as a result overall averages and retention rates are up considerably. The down side of this revision has to do with faculty workload and will be addressed later in this report.

Finally, the process used to prepare this self-study was to assign the actual writing and collation of data to two faculty (Professors Livingstone and Hennessey) while involving all other faculty in discussion. Individual interviews were held with each member of the staff, with the technical director/production manager appending his own report. In addition interviews were conducted with a current student representative, a representative alumnus and a number of guest artists. Current and graduate students were also encouraged to respond to a questionnaire (see appendices.)

Of those eight, one (the Maxim Mazumdar) is reserved for a first year student, two (The CBC Prize, and the Harriet Ware Award) are reserved for third year students, and two (the Tommy Sexton Triple Threat and the Al Pittman Memorial) are reserved for fourth years. The Cottage Crafts Association Scholarship, The Wabush Mines Travel Bursary, and the Imperial Tobacco Canada Fine Arts Scholarship are all open the Fine Arts Students in general and are not reserved specifically for Theatre Student.

The Department is pleased that the number of awards has continued to grow, and that some of them are earmarked for Harlow. However, it still seems to be the case that our students are being awarded significantly less money through scholarships than the rest of the university, or even when compared with the Visual Arts Students. Given the following general information, some trends are apparent.

Year	Mun	SWGC	Fine Arts - Visual	Fine Arts - Theatre
1997/98				
Scholarships Awarded	1,002	76	9	5
Value of Scholarships	\$1,355,325	\$94,050	\$9,300	\$2050
Average Value of Scholarships	\$1,352.62	\$1,237.50	\$1,033.33	\$410.00
1998/99				
Scholarships Awarded	1,040	93	17	8
Value of Scholarships	\$1,464,956	\$102,850	\$12,550	\$6,100
Average Value of Scholarships	\$1,408.61	\$1,105.91	\$738.24	\$762.50
1999/00				
Scholarships Awarded	1292	151	16	13
Value of Scholarships	\$1,941,142	\$238,850	\$15,200	\$8,000
Average Value of Scholarships	\$1,502.43	\$1,581.79	\$950	\$615.38
2000/01				
Scholarships Awarded	1420	143	16	13
Value of Scholarships	\$2,249,500	\$229,900	\$15,200	\$8,000
Average	\$1,584.15	\$1,607.69	\$950.00	\$615.38

Value of Scholarships				
2001/02				
Scholarships Awarded	1531	160	17	13
Value of Scholarships	\$2,293,069	\$212,500	\$16,600	\$6,750
Average Value of Scholarships	\$1,497.76	\$1,328.13	\$976.47	\$519.23

Table 3 Scholarship Statistics

Upon graduation, our students have found various opportunities waiting for them. At least one graduate is now a practicing lawyer, several have become high school teachers, and at least three have completed a graduate degree. Of course, we are very excited that many of our students have gone on to work in the professional theatre. Our Stagecraft students do very well and we are represented not only in Newfoundland but at most of the major festivals and theatre across the country, including The Atlantic Theatre Festival, The Stratford Festival, and Soul Pepper Theatre. Our acting students have found work in television, on film, and on the stage right across the country. Here at home, each of the major summer theatre festivals relies heavily, almost exclusively, on Grenfell Graduates.

Teaching Activity

The Theatre Program at Grenfell offers a BFA in theatre, in one of two specializations - Acting and Stagecraft. While the curriculum is joint for the first semester of first year, students are streamed into one of the two areas in the second semester of first year.

The Theatre Program was set up, and is still billed, as being pre-professional. Quite simply, it is the belief of the department that the BFA degree will prepare a student for any number of possible careers, including that of the professional theatre. As stated earlier, this philosophy seems to be borne out in the fact that so many of our students have succeeded in a variety of fields after graduation. Indeed, many of our students applaud the program for preparing them for further work or study.

Of course, one of the principle aims of the department is to prepare students for work in the professional theatre and here a great measure of success has been achieved. As stated earlier, not only are an increasing number of students attending, or expressing an interest in attending, graduate schools, but many of our former graduates are working professionally in the entertainment sector.

The department has also held firm to the philosophy that one of the principle means of educating students in the theatre is to let them do theatre. The theatre program is a

producing company, intent on offering its students major roles in significant plays. As enrollment has increased, and not equitably as we shall see, this has meant even further sacrifices on the part of the faculty, but we have struggled to maintain this most basic position. While not everyone agrees, the bulk of the faculty holds to the opinion that theatre is about doing. And doing theatre, doing it well and doing it often, is a hallmark of our program. It seems that our program is almost unique in its assurances to all students above first year that they will be involved in departmental productions.

In keeping with this, the Theatre Program has, since its inception, allowed its students to see and experience world class theatre.

Memorial's Harlow Campus represents a unique opportunity for our students to live and work close to one of the most theatrically rich and vibrant cities in the world. Again, it appears that we are unique in building in an extended trip to England as a required component of the program.

It is hard to overstate the particular benefits of the Harlow trip, and many students speak of their time in England as "life-changing". The Theatre Program considers the trip to be a vital component to the degree and has fought through the years to retain it. Finances have dwindled, and a trip that was once largely the responsibility of the University is now shouldered by the students. Our students do a commendable job of fund-raising, and, happily, more scholarship money is now available specifically for Harlow. However, more must be done to ensure its survival.

The desire of the Theatre Program to make theatre has also resulted in a unique partnership with the School of Music in St. John's. The recent creation of a Music Theatre course means that some of our students are able to collaborate with Music School students on an exciting level. It is the intent of the course that the production act as a showcase for the skills and talents of the two Schools and their students, and a short provincial tour was mounted last year of "The Fantasticks". With musical direction and support provided by the School of Music and technical support being offered by the Theatre Program, the production was directed by Ken Livingstone and designed by Carol Nelson. The cast featured current and former students and played to great success in three separate theatres across the province. A collaboration with the school of music seems like an entirely natural one, and the creation of this course represents a real and concrete connection to be fostered.

There are, however, several difficult issues surrounding our student activities.

Like many BFA programs, ours is competitive and requires an audition/interview process that is separate from the application procedure to the University. And it is truly competitive; we always turn away some applicants. However, we do not feel that it is enough. Typically, we get just over our ceiling, when we should be getting much more than we can accept applying to the program.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that we have a much greater percentage of females applying than males. Indeed, the situation has reached an almost ludicrous situation, with the number of male applicants declining each year.

While the Theatre Program has endeavoured to undertake its own recruitment drives, we are not fully equipped to focus our energies on it. Understandably, the College recruits Grenfell-wide, without focusing on any one program or division. It is simply the case, however, that unless we must find some sort of long-term solution to this problem.

Once here, our students are given quite close academic counseling, and are assigned an advisor from within the Department each academic year. While students may fall behind on their studies from time to time, the department undertakes to be sure it knows where its students stand, academically, at every turn.

Professional and Community Service, related to discipline or professional activities

The Theatre Program has built itself on the premise that all its faculty members maintain their status as working professionals. To that end, our complement spends as much time as possible working professionally when time permits.

To date, our faculty has directed here in the province for such established professional companies as Rising Tide Theatre, and Theatre Newfoundland Labrador. Last season, the Chair of the Program, Ken Livingstone, directed a very successful Irish tour of Newfoundland writer Al Pittman's *West Moon*, the first Canadian tour of Ireland by a professional company.

In a similar fashion, our Stagecraft Faculty has worked within the Newfoundland professional community and without - at The Atlantic Theatre Festival, and for professional touring productions.

It is also the particular case that we are frequently able to work with our students in a more professional environment and further mentor their move into the professional world.

Our faculty has also demonstrated its commitment to the larger artistic community by serving on the Jury of the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts and Letters Competition, and serving on community and professional boards. Currently our faculty occupies space on the Board of Directors for Theatre Newfoundland Labrador, the Association of Cultural Industries, and the Community Advisory Board to the Corner Brook Arts and Culture Centre. It is here that our faculty demonstrates its commitment to the cultural community at large; the Association of Cultural Industries, in particular, has been lobbying the provincial government to enact Status of the Artist Legislation in this province, we are happy to have been represented at those meetings.

Additionally, as our Program matures, members of our faculty are frequently invited to participate in ad hoc cultural groups whose mandate is to increase awareness of the arts and culture in this province.

It is also frequently the case that our faculty involves themselves in high school activities. For example, we have been frequently invited to adjudicate high school drama festivals, or to give workshops at these festivals, and are often asked by local schools to work with students for a session here in our facilities. This is important outreach, cements our ties to the community, and helps to raise awareness of our program amongst high school students.

Departmental Organization and Human Resources

The Theatre Program operates with a complement of five full-time faculty members, three for the acting program, and two for stagecraft. These are:

- Ken Livingstone Chair, MFA (Directing), University of British Columbia
- Arif Hasnain, Associate Professor, BA, University of Toronto
- roy Hansen-robitschek, Assistant Professor, National Theatre School
- Carol Nelson, Assistant Professor, MFA, Wimbledon School of Art
- Todd Hennessey, Assistant Professor, MFA, University of Calgary

It should be noted that Todd Hennessey is the newest appointment, having been awarded a tenure-track position in July. Carol Nelson was with the department on a series of short term contracts for several years was awarded a full time position in 1997 and will be eligible for tenure next year. roy Hansen-robitschek was appointed tenure last year.

Ken Livingstone began the program in 1988, and Arif Hasnain joined the faculty in 1991. Each will be eligible for retirement within the next seven years.

To supplement its complement, the Theatre Program relies heavily on a rotating system of Master Teachers/Guest Artists. Each semester, the Program will hire two or three Master Teachers to deliver Master Classes and to teach specific skills to our students. Typically, the Program brings in one Master Teacher for each of the Acting and the Stagecraft components, but that is not a fixed number. Currently there are two Master Teachers delivering courses to our Acting Students.

As the Program prides itself on the continuing professionalism of its Faculty, our Guest Artists are drawn from the professional communities of Newfoundland, Canada, and, in the case of the Harlow component, Great Britain. Our Guest Artists have included highly regarded actors and directors, master scenic painters, prop makers and lighting designers. Their expertise helps to round out and diversify the content delivered by the program, gets our students in touch with working professionals, and helps smooth the transition into the professional world.

The Program also relies quite heavily on its Staff to assist in the delivery of course content. There are five staff positions:

- Technical Director/Production Manager - responsible for the technical and financial organization of each production and the maintenance of the physical plant; responsible for the scheduling of technical staff, the setting of production schedules and maintaining production budgets; organizes the rental and loan of department space and equipment; maintains safety codes and the abiding of all federal, provincial, and municipal by-laws.
- Workshop Supervisor - maintains and supervises the operations of the carpentry workshop for both theatre and visual arts; is involved in set construction and as master carpenter builds specialized period furniture and weapons.
- Head of Wardrobe - is responsible for the construction of all in house costume designs; is responsible for maintaining the costume shop and warehouse. Is an expert in the drafting, cutting and assembling of costumes.
- Theatre Technician - has particular expertise in lighting and sound equipment and in electronics and computer operations; assists the technical director in these areas of production as well as being responsible for sound design for individual productions.
- Stage Manager - is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the stage management of departmental productions. This includes maintaining rehearsal schedules and spaces, liaison with directors, designers and other technical staff, and the supervising of student stage managers.

Of these positions, the Stage Manager is contractual. Of the others, only the Head Carpenter is eligible for retirement within the next seven years.

All of the staff assist in the delivery of courses. The positive aspect of this is that our stagecraft students get experience with a variety of personnel and expertise. Unfortunately, it also raises what is perhaps the most complicated issue of all with regard to our faculty and staff: workload.

According to the MUNFA contract, faculty at Grenfell are expected to teach up to the equivalent of six three hour lecture courses per academic year.

Currently, each of our faculty delivers a full complement of courses plus an additional course, for which we are expected to teach up to 20 hours a week, and for which we get no credit. During the last program review, it was decided, out of fairness to our students, that the productions we undertake annually would be turned into courses, effectively creating Theatre 2080, 2090, 2081, 2091, 3080, 3090, 3081, 3091, 4080, 4090. These courses constitute production courses for our second, third and fourth year students spread across two semesters.

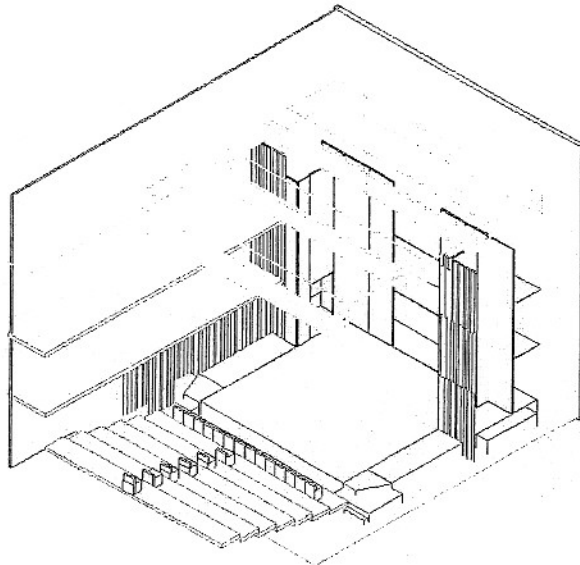
Currently, while each of our Faculty is assigned as the professor of record for each of these courses, and must submit grades to the Registrar's Office, we receive no teaching credit for these courses. Making the situation more untenable is the fact that our Acting classes, which meet for six hours a week, are only considered to be the equivalent of one and a half credit hours. In effect, a faculty member can teach nine hours a week in regular classes and spend up to 20 hours a week in rehearsal and still be considered to be underloaded.

Now, while it is the case that our work on departmental productions is considered scholarly research for the purposes of Promotion and Tenure, there are some thorny issues. In the first instance, there have been grumblings from the P&T committee that our time spent working with students is not the same as working with professionals beyond the bounds of the department. Secondly, unlike many of our colleagues throughout the University, our research is effectively being prescribed - we must spend this time researching in order to deliver the courses. This is a shocking infringement on Academic Freedoms, to say the very least. Finally, there is the very real personal burden of having our faculty members working, at times, 13 hour days, four days a week, away from their homes and families.

The reasons as to why our faculty has been put in this position are a matter of historical record, and are perhaps too long a story to tell here. Suffice it to say, that the move was made to benefit students - where once productions held no academic weight, and yet were "required", they are now courses, done for credit. This meant some alteration to the calendar, and there are now fewer "academic" courses, but overall the move was felt to be fairer to students who were becoming overwhelmed and overburdened. There was very little question that the faculty could be put into an overload situation on a continual basis, so the compromise was that of scholarly research.

THE FINE ARTS THEATRE & STAGECRAFT PROGRAM
SIR WILFRED GRENFELL COLLEGE

Program Revue



A Production Manager/Technical Director's View

Preamble:

Before coming to Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in 1996, I spent twenty-three years working in professional theatre and the entertainment industry. Most of this time was spent in major regional theatres such as Theatre New Brunswick, smaller regional theatres such as Magnus Theatre and in summer theatres such as Upper Canada Playhouse, Theatre Lac Brome and Theatre Brockville. During my career, I have toured with shows from St. John's to Vancouver Island. I have been employed building Sets and Props, as a Sound Technician, Lighting Technician, Stage Manager, Production Manager, Technical Director, General Manager/Producer and as a Set and/or Lighting Designer. For a time, I ran my own production and sales company providing lighting, sound, staging equipment and related services in New Brunswick and the Maritime provinces. For most of the fifteen years preceding my arrival here, I was in a position of hiring theatre personnel. It is from this background that the following views are founded.

THE CHALLENGE OF SPACE, EQUIPMENT, BUDGETS & PERSONNEL

SPACE

I've been told that the Fine Arts building was cut by 20% between time of conception and time of construction due to budget restraints. We are lacking space in construction, fitup/painting, wardrobe, stagecraft teaching, rehearsal halls and storage.

Construction, Fitup & Painting:

The "rule of thumb" is that your shop area should at least equal your stage and wing space. Our carpentry shop is just slightly smaller. In a normal professional theatre this would be acceptable, but with a space that doubles as a scene shop and as a classroom workspace for four years of students, it is lacking in work table space, assembly area, storage for individual projects and is hampered by far too low a ceiling for a theatre scene shop. There is very limited space for storing materials as they are delivered and the loading dock is almost always congested with both Theatre, Visual Arts and Gallery supplies coming and going. It must be noted that there is a certain amount of demand on the space and it's resources by the Visual Arts program as well.

The other "rule of thumb" is that you should have a fitup and paint space at least as large as your actual stage area. This is where individual set pieces can be assembled as a whole, hardware mounted and scenic painting of the elements can take place while they are together as the audience will see them. We have no such space. This means that paint supplies and painting must take place in the shop or loading dock area. This further congests the limited space and results in compromising the safe utilization of the stationary power tools in the shop. Large pieces of set need to be painting in place on the stage and the resulting over-painting of the floor and dampness associated with water based paints have caused damage to the stage surface even when plastic has been laid down. It is impossible to safely teach many painting techniques (such as spraying) without a proper dedicated space.

Our Props Shop is salvaged space in the Arts & Science building and is physically of sufficient size (if it didn't double as storage) but lacks good lighting, ventilation and has a high background sound level due to fans, etc. housed in that space. In a professional theatre setting, the props personnel would go on strike. As a classroom for Props and Master Classes, it is totally unacceptable - but we continue to use it because there is no other space.

Our Wardrobe areas would be barely adequate for a small production company with casts of 2 to 4 persons mostly costumed in modern dress. The space has no natural light, no ventilation, houses the washer and dryer (high noise and humidity) and is too small to efficiently cut and construct costumes in. This space is also used as a classroom for up to six students at a time. Often, sewing machines have to be set up in adjacent dressing rooms in order for students to have enough physical area to put together projects. A proper costume shop/classroom would be at least four times the size of the current space, have a separate office for the Wardrobe

Supervisor, a separate room for the washer and dryer, storage space for materials and a dedicated dye space. Presently we dye in one of the small dressing rooms, which is neither efficient or really safe. Our largest dressing rooms are built to accommodate eight actors and are regularly used for up to sixteen.

Over the years, classes have increased in size and how we deliver course material has changed. In Stage Craft as well as in Acting we have outgrown the facilities. As well as the above mentioned spaces, we share classroom space with Visual Arts with both programs utilizing the Seminar Room and the Lecture Theatre. In recent years, as both programs have evolved, there has been an increasing problem with scheduling room usage that can only be addressed with more classroom space.

Our one other classroom option is a room beside the Props shop in the Arts & Science building. This has mostly been used as a drafting studio because it is the only area big enough to put up our drafting boards. It is used as little as possible due to lack of ventilation and noise. Even with these problems, we continue to use it for Stage Craft classes and for Master Classes - because that is all we have.

Increasingly, in the theatre world, computers and software are being used to design, draft, record and edit sound and control lighting. Although we are able to delivery the rudiments of these skills, it is though shared resources in the common computer lab and has proven to be frustrating working with non-dedicated equipment. A Theatre computer lab with eight to ten stand alone stations (much like the Visual Arts Mac Lab) will be required within the next few years in order to expose our students to the rudiments of computer work they will require in the professional world.

Rehearsal space has become a very big problem. With four years of acting students using this one room for classes (ranging from 14-26 students per class) as well as trying to accommodate student scene studies, and up to three productions in rehearsal at a time - the space is not up to it. We are supplementing this space with another classroom that is far too small and with rented space off campus. For rehearsal purposes, a hall in professional theatre must be at least the size of the stage area plus enough room to put in a director and stage manager's table. There should be storage close by for rehearsal props and furniture. A normal rehearsal hall should be 1/4 bigger than the performance area. Ours is 1/3 smaller to begin with. We need three such rehearsal halls to actually deliver the program at this time.

As there is no storage provisions in the Fine Arts Building, we have rented facilities off-campus almost since the inception of the program. The current storage space for sets and furniture is the best in three moves, but it still takes up a lot of valuable time and resources to move pieces to storage and then return them when needed. We have been able to acquire space in the Arts & Science Building for smaller props storage (in the Props Shop) and for costume storage, but it is busting at the seams even with a recent cull.

EQUIPMENT

When the building was constructed and outfitted in 1988, it could certainly boast that it was a "state-of-the-art" facility. In the theatre itself, the lighting and sound equipment was on par or better than most medium professional regional theatres. Although we have gone through the exercise of prioritizing and submitting upgrading and replacement capitol budgets every year, there has been very little funding to keeping the facility up. We were able to add to our lighting instrument inventory two years ago, but this was just the tip of the ice-berg. By nature, a teaching institution is harder on equipment than an actual professional theatre. With wear and tear and changes in technology, we are almost at the point where we have to completely re-furbish our lighting inventory and control systems, and our sound recording and playback systems in order to be competitive in Stage Craft student recruitment and retention. Our present Stage Craft graduates are capable of adjusting in the professional workplace at this time, but this year's class will feel compromised by the time they enter the workforce if we do not start major upgrading. When the program started, we were on par with medium regional theatres - now we are lacking in the technical support that many small and even many mainland summer theatres use regularly.

The prime lighting examples of this are in our outmoded lighting control board and the lack of any scrollers or moving fixtures for student to become familiar with. In sound, our top of the line \$4,000 + reel to reel tape decks are now obsolete. We are relying on a staff member's personal computer and software to teach students digital recording, editing and playback. It is imperative that we are able to properly equip the sound booth with both teaching and operating computer hardware and software.

In all the shop areas and wardrobe, we have continued to upgrade as possible through our yearly budget allocations. As funding is always tight, it is only when equipment has reached the phase of being a real safety risk that we have been able to replace larger items.

BUDGETS

Our per show budgets put us on par with most summer theatres in Ontario. Not Stratford or Shaw Festival, rather Upper Canada Playhouse and Thousand Island Playhouse. The biggest difference is that we have to costume three to four times the number of actors for every show. In 1990, the show budget was \$20,000 for the year and four shows were produced. For the past six years our yearly show budget has been frozen at \$15,200. In 1990, a sheet of 3/4" G1S plywood cost \$24.95, today that same sheet is \$45.00 - an increase of 80%! Even if materials only rose at an average of 50% over the past decade, it means that in 1990 dollars we have \$7,000 to work with. This is not only a constant challenge to the Directors, the Designers and the Production Manager - it is diluting the carpentry, properties and wardrobe skills of our Stage Craft students by denying them materials to work with. The success of the Acting Program is leading us to stretch these production budgets further by adding a fifth and possibly a sixth show to the year.

PERSONNEL

In support structure, the Theatre Program is in desperate need of a full-time Props Master to help instruct in the Stage Craft and Production courses. In the past we have sometimes been able to use Mater Class teachers to help fill this need. This has gone against the philosophy of our core Stage Craft program being consistent and that every class should graduate with the same skills and learning opportunities.

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College is certainly a little isolated from mainstage professional theatre in the rest of Canada. Continued involvement in the Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology and promoting upgrading or professional development for staff members will be essential to keep up with changes within the industry. Support staff should continue to have contact and practical instruction time with students as appropriate to their areas of professional expertise.

In Conclusion:

As a Production Manager/Technical Director, I have felt confident that if still working in professional theatre, I would hire almost all of our Stage Craft graduates from at least the past four years. I have not hesitated in recommending them to my counter-parts in theatre. After attending a few CITT (Canadian Institute of Theatre Technology) conferences and speaking with both working professionals and those teaching in programs similar to ours, I have come to the conclusion that we are sending students out with the skills required to find work in the theatre, film and entertainment industries.

My biggest fear is that shortly, we will no longer be a viable institution in delivering those skills if we do not start a major upgrading of space and equipment.

Jim Chalmers-Gow
Technical Director
Sept. 26, 2002

Research and Creative Activity

As is to be expected in a program where all faculty are assumed to be working professional artists, our primary research takes the form of creative activity. Specifically this activity consists of directing, designing, and in the case of one cross-appointed faculty member, acting.

This research is two-fold. During the regular academic year faculty direct, design and act in departmental productions, often in partnership with major professional guest artists (i.e. a resident director will create a production with a guest designer or a resident designer will make a production with a guest director.) In addition most, though not all, faculty are actively engaged in the professional theatre community in Newfoundland and Labrador, working on a regular basis for such leading professional companies as Rising Tide Theatre, Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador, The Stephenville Festival, and the Resource Centre for the Arts in St. John's.

As has been mentioned earlier in this report, our graduates now make up a critical mass in the professional theatre community of this province, where they are taking the initiative as directors, designers, technical directors, stage managers and performers. As an example of the esteem in which our graduates are held, I refer you to the letter in the appendix from award winning artistic director, Jillian Keilley. Similar comments about our students have been forthcoming from the artistic directors of Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador, Rising tide, The Atlantic Theatre Festival and Neptune Theatre in Halifax.

Perhaps the best example to date of the international scope of our research is the professional production of the late Al Pittman's *West Moon* which toured Ireland in the fall of 2001 and has already been referred to above. This production featured some of Newfoundland's best known actors and musicians (Daniel Payne of *Random Passage*, Rick Boland of *The Divine Ryans* and acclaimed singer, songwriter, Pamela Morgan.) The production was produced, designed and directed by Theatre program faculty. In addition the stage manager and the technical director were graduates as were three out of ten actors. The production was endorsed by both the Premier of Newfoundland and the Prime Minister of Ireland.

The connection between research and teaching is, in the case of the Theatre Program, inextricable. We function as creative artists as we teach and as teachers while we create, both in the program itself, and in the larger professional community. If one accepts the premise that the directing and/or designing of a major production (either for the department or for an outside company) is the equivalent of publishing an article on that particular play in a journal, then the level of research of most of our faculty is remarkable. On occasion an individual may mount as many as eight productions within a twelve month period, and seldom fewer than four.

Every indication is that the involvement of faculty and graduates with the professional theatre in this province will continue to grow, particularly in the area of new writing and script development. We are particularly proud that the wheel has already come full circle in the case of two of our students. Both native born Newfoundlanders, they graduated from our program and then went on to take graduate degrees in directing and to work professionally elsewhere in Canada. Both are now back in the province directing professionally for several companies and teaching in our program!

Future Plans

It is to be hoped that the next seven years will build on the foundations of the past fifteen. With regards to student enrollment a maximum of 80 students seems appropriate given our resources of space, budget and personnel (even assuming some increase in each of those areas.) In an ideal world this would mean 15 acting students and 5 stagecraft students in each of the four years. In an even more ideal world, some of these students would be male!

The Theatre Program will undoubtedly continue to have a significant impact on the professional theatre community in Newfoundland and Labrador. There is much talk of a new professional company coming into being in St. John's created entirely by our graduates. To date the Theatre Department has participated in two co-productions with Rising Tide Theatre (*Spring Awakening* (1991), *Hamlet* (1992)) and the recent co-production of *The Fantasticks* with the School of Music. Such co-productions not only provide our students with the opportunity to work alongside professional actors and technicians while still earning academic credit, but they expose them to the invaluable learning experience of touring. It is hoped that such joint ventures will continue.

The creation this spring at The Canadian Theatre Conference in Ottawa of a new organization called The Association of Canadian Professional Teacher/Trainers suggests a number of possibilities including exchanges with other programs and the hosting of this organizations' annual meeting here at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College. There is great interest from artists across Canada in all things Newfoundland.

The Harlow Institute will continue to be of paramount importance to the program but it is essential that, given the rising cost of international travel, some sort of subsidy, sponsorship or travel bursary be aggressively pursued.

Finally, with regards to student recruitment a major reconsideration of current practices must be undertaken. Again this must take place on two fronts: within the province and both nationally and internationally. There is no need to significantly increase our enrollment but there is a desperate need to increase the number of applications. In order to maintain the desired level of talent/aptitude/enthusiasm among our students we must be able to choose from a much larger pool. Students must feel that admission to the program is indeed competitive and that acceptance in the first place is a major accomplishment. In the first instance attention must be paid to recruiting in St. John's and the Avalon Peninsula. It is surely cause for concern that in this current academic year there are more first year students from outside the province than from the east coast.

Additional Issues

Throughout this report a number of pressing issues have been raised which require immediate attention. We will elaborate on these in the hope that the review panel will be able to offer significant support and advice.

Budget

The situation here is so obvious that there is little point in belabouring it. As Jim Chalmers-Gow has pointed out in his section of the report, not only have we shared major cutbacks with other units in the University, but our dependence on purchasing raw materials for productions has put us at the mercy of astronomical increases in the cost of supplies. As Jim points out we are now mounting as many as six productions on a budget that is only a fraction of what we were given to mount four productions a decade ago. At the very least production budgets must be restored to the actual purchasing power that they had ten years ago. Likewise the budget for Master Teachers and Harlow combined has been reduced from \$ 60,000. To \$ 45,000. As one of our most frequent guest artists has pointed out, in the Fall of 2001 she was actually paid less than she was in the same period in 1990!

We have referred above to the desperate need to off-set the rising cost to students of the Harlow Institute by providing some sort of across the board travel subsidy for eligible students. The need for more capital expenditure will be discussed under equipment and space.

Equipment

Again, the situation here is self evident. Particularly in the areas of lighting and sound where in the past fifteen years the industry has moved largely to digital technology and as a result we have fallen seriously behind. Our equipment is either obsolete, passed its "best before" date, or borrowed. Recent upgrades in the Carpentry Shop have made a major difference but similar capital expenditures must be made in the areas of lighting and sound equipment and to a lesser degree in wardrobe. After fifteen years and well over 60 productions the auditorium and front of house are in need of some serious repair and maintenance.

Space

The most pressing physical needs of the program have to do with space. In any given semester there are at least two and often three productions in rehearsal at the same time, as well as student directing projects and scene study rehearsals. Our one dedicated rehearsal hall is also our only teaching area for all acting classes. As of September 2002 we have been given, as a stop-gap measure, a basement room in the Arts and Science Building which is too small, has no natural light and is inadequately ventilated to accommodate a large number of physically active performers over a four hour period. In addition we rent off-campus rehearsal space when it is absolutely required. At the absolute minimum we need one additional rehearsal space of the proper size, adequately ventilated and heated and reasonably accessible by our students if it is not on campus. The University cannot continue to enrol students in fee paying courses without

providing classroom space in which to teach these courses.

The second area in which we have a critical space problem is in wardrobe. It is essential that major renovations be undertaken to expand and refit the wardrobe area. This includes the relocation of washing and drying machines, the creation of a safe area for dyeing and spraying, a secure office space for the head of wardrobe, as well as a second cutting table for instructional purposes. All these changes can be made within the current backstage areas by removing certain non-load bearing walls and refitting major appliances. The present situation is completely unsatisfactory both for production and teaching and involves issues of health and safety.

Faculty and Staff

The issue of overload for all faculty will be addressed in the next section. With regards to the delivery of the regular curriculum the major problem is in the area of stagecraft. As a result of considerable thought and effort on the part of faculty, staff and guest artists the delivery of the stagecraft curriculum over the four years of the degree has been significantly improved with the application of a universal template that is delivered in a systematic and consistent manner.

However, in order to do this with only two stagecraft faculty, the professional staff have increasingly been involved in an instructional capacity. To some extent this is appropriate. Who better to demonstrate the mysteries of the table saw than the master carpenter or explain the art of cutting fabric than the head of wardrobe? Unfortunately, instructional time, particularly in the case of the technical director/production manager, is cutting into production time. The result in the case of non-unionized staff is an inordinate and unacceptable workload, in the case of those in unions, an impossible amount of overtime.

Individual staff differ in their response to this situation. Some resent the imposed teaching responsibilities and wish to return to the strictly professional tasks for which they were first employed. Others are eager to embrace teaching but wish recognition in the form of reclassification, upgrading and pay increases. Neither response is desirable.

The obvious solution, which will not in itself solve all the problems (staff should and must continue to instruct in areas of particular expertise) is to hire a third full-time stagecraft professor, with particular expertise in the areas of sound and lighting. It's as simple as that.

Faculty Workload/Research

We have saved the most contentious and problematic issue for last in the hope that the panel will be able to assist us in solving what has become an almost impossible situation to resolve.

When the curriculum was revised and productions became courses for which the students paid fees and received marks (in fact in recognition of the amount of time and effort required in those courses, students paid higher fees and received more credit units than standard courses) no provision was made for including these courses as part of faculty workload, or overload as the case may be. The thinking at the time was, we all direct and design anyway in addition to teaching classes, so nothing is really going to change. Also since we were assured that such production work would be recognized towards promotion and tenure we felt we were getting recognition in kind if not in salary.

However, in the subsequent seven years a great deal has in fact changed, both in the University as a whole and with regards to the theatre faculty. Major administrative changes have resulted in what was a Theatre Department with a relatively autonomous Head, becoming a Theatre Program with a Chair who reports to the Head of the Division. At the same time for promotion and tenure purposes the University as a whole has greatly increased the importance of research relative to teaching. Also, an active and aggressive faculty union has achieved considerable gains in many areas, including what is considered to be an appropriate workload and what the compensation should be for teaching overload.

Within the theatre faculty there have been considerable, but predictable changes over fifteen years. Senior faculty can no longer be expected as a matter of course to expend the same degree of time and energy as they once did, production after production. Younger faculty are getting married and having children and their priorities are, quite appropriately, being reconsidered. The situation in a nutshell is that theatre faculty are doing something that no other faculty in the University would consider i.e. they are teaching regular University courses for which they are the professors of record and for which they must deliver a specified syllabus and a set of final grades, and they are not being paid for this work. To be quite clear all theatre faculty teach a full load of two studio courses per semester and then most directors and both designers teach from 12 to 20 hours per week as production courses. This work is not recognized as being overload in calculating teaching loads.

At the time of the revision of the curriculum it was understood that this production work would be recognized as creative research but this has proved problematic in two ways. Junior faculty have discovered that promotion and tenure committees are reluctant to grant full research value to this work on the one hand. On the other hand, particularly in the case of design, the actual creative work of research, conceptualization, drawing, modeling, and drafting is all done outside the actual production course hours. The 20 hours per week is pure practical laboratory instruction in all the areas of stagecraft required to mount a production.

The situation is compounded by a lack of consistency or it seems common sense. When

those courses are taught by a visiting guest director or designer, they are paid the appropriate per course fee. When a faculty member directs a production course outside the regular semester he or she is paid the full studio course fee (for example directing *Pentecost* (Theatre 3081) in March 2002 the professor received no payment, the same professor directed the co-production of *The Fantasticks* in May 2002 (Theatre 3605) for the standard studio course fee of \$ 4,800.00.) To add insult to injury our colleagues in the English Department in St. John's offer a drama concentration which includes four studio "production courses." When a member of the English faculty (who are not theatre professionals) teaches one of these courses it is considered to be, for the purpose of calculating workload, equivalent to two regular courses. Since in St. John's normal workload is calculated at 5 courses per academic year, it is possible for one studio course to comprise an entire semester's workload! To put this in perspective a member of our theatre faculty is normally required to deliver triple the workload for the same salary.

It has been argued that if these production courses do indeed constitute "research" a faculty member cannot be required to teach them. The Catch-22 here is that the courses are required of the students, so while an individual professor may choose not to direct or design in a given semester the remainder of the faculty must take up the slack or the program grinds to a halt.

For a number of years, and because the original agreement was undertaken in good faith, there has been a reluctance to attempt to resolve this conundrum by simply resorting to dollars and cents. Alas, there may be no other way out. Doing the math very quickly it would seem that, given there are 6 production courses per semester, if the standard studio course rate were paid either as overload to faculty or as fees to guest artists, the cost to the program would be \$ 4,800.00 x 12 or \$ 57,600.00 , the equivalent of one qualified assistant professor per annum.

Any advise that the review panel can give on this issue would be deeply appreciated.