



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2008-2009

Report Date: JULY 19, 2009
School/College: ARTS & SCIENCES
Department/Program: PERFORMING ARTS
Person completing the Report: ROBERTO G. VAREA

- **Overview Statement:**

Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:

- which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.
- who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes

During the 2008 - 2009 the Performing Arts Department underwent its most comprehensive program self-study since its creation in the year 1999, and its birth as an independent department in the year 2004.

An important aspect of this review involved evaluating and re-drafting our department's goals and learning outcomes, as well as engaging in a complete revision of our major's curriculum, a process still in progress.

We want to place community engagement, ensemble work, and the development of a practice of discussion and criticism at the center of the new curriculum. To that effect, we have focused first on the following learning outcomes:

- Students will identify, classify, and analyze diverse cultural traditions that inform their craft, in a context of community engagement.
- Students will evaluate and critique performance works (their own or others') orally and in writing, and participate in constructive critical discussion of such works.
- Students will engage with community members through performance work, with an understanding of the ethical collaborative methods employed by performance artists with the communities that they serve.



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- Students will research, develop and perform a community-based stage work addressing social justice issues.

All full-time faculty has been involved in this assessment. However, due to the focus of our evaluation, and the fact that currently only the disciplines of Dance and Theater are part of the major, professors Dowling, Young and Varea have played a more extensive role, in particular in regards to assessing the capstone courses, “Company I and II”

- **Please Answers the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:**

- **What did you do?**

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

- Conducted mid-semester evaluations and progress reports on all PASJ major’s courses;
- Reviewed final exams/selected papers from PASJ 265 Performance and Social History; PASJ 305 Theater & Culture;
- Reviewed selected works from PASJ 108 Acting I; PASJ 130 Dance: The Craft; PASJ 208 Acting II; PASJ 231 Dance: The Exploration; PASJ 308 Viewpoints;
- Reviewed and critiqued the final project of PASJ 331 Performing Arts & Community Exchange; Evaluated and critiqued the final presentation of PASJ 480 Company I & PASJ 485 Company II;
- Conducted end of Fall semester presentations and evaluations by Faculty panel of PASJ 480 Company I; End of Spring semester viewing and “post mortem” critique of PASJ 485 Company II;
- Conducted individual evaluation of creative work and exit interview of Graduating Seniors.

- **What did the faculty in the department or program learn?**

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.



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The most positive find across the evaluated courses and final projects, is the marked improvement in our student's understanding and articulate expression of the social justice mission of the PASJ Major and the community engagement component present in key courses.

Our students have shown more clarity in the organization of ideas and the understanding of key concepts related to performance in the context of community engagement, and through papers, participation and department forums, also shown the ability to apply concepts to relevant personal experiences.

In the ensemble-based processes, in particular in regards to collective and individual development of original work and "composition," our students showed great interest, dedication and focus. Their attention to class rules, participation, attendance, and quality of the final project, has shown important improvement.

Our students have also shown a marked improvement in their interest in taking a more active part in their education, by organizing themselves as a PASJ student council, beginning at the end of the spring semester to hold regular meetings with the faculty.

We have not seen a marked improvement in the application of skills related to craft-based courses. We have also seen our students struggle with the development of new material in the Company I and II courses, in particular, in the area of transitioning from exercises and lab work into the realm of the development of new dramaturgy towards a final product. Our students have struggled consistently in this area, in particular, as it relates to collective, or company dynamics towards a shared performance experience.

- **What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?**

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

First of all, we clearly see the need to improve greatly the sequencing of craft-based courses. We have seen in particular in Acting courses, an overlap in the introduction to new vocabulary and concepts, which needs to be addressed promptly. A similar pattern has been observed in Social Justice "core" courses such as PASJ 265 and PASJ 331, where course examples, even if relevant, are sometimes also repeated.

In order to facilitate improvement, it will be critical to conduct working sessions



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with the full time and adjunct faculty who teach these courses. These sessions need to be conducted along with a full review of the syllabi, and the development of shared goals, objectives, and course vocabulary / glossaries, in order to best facilitate our student's understanding of the material, and of the way in which it builds up from one course level to the next.

We are considering expanding and focusing all content related to ensemble work, and the development of new material. One way in which this will take effect, will be by making "Acting III" a mandatory course as opposed to its current elective status.

We have also found that major adjustments need to take place in our "capstone" courses, Company I and II. We need to better prepare our students in the previous years in two critical areas: a. to successfully engage with community members through creative work, and b., to improve and increase the courses and opportunities that focus on the development of original material, and ensemble-based work.

In particular in the area of performance-based courses, we will begin to implement a yearly "diagnostic" event, by having our students present short pieces, audition-style, to all the faculty who teach in a given area of the craft. We will implement a protocol to discuss and share important information related to each student, to better assess his or her overall progress in a given year.

- **Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:**
 - Program Mission
 - Program Learning Goals
 - Program Learning Outcomes
 - Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes
 - Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

As we have just finished our APR and received our reviewer's report in the spring 09 semester, our department's faculty is conducting a retreat on August 15 through the 18, 2009 to develop its new curriculum.

Attached you will find our Curriculum Map, as well as revised Effort Grade Rubrics, Research Paper Rubrics, and Response Paper Rubrics.

Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2009

You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: marin@usfca.edu) or as a hard copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4th floor.



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If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).