

VISITORS REPORT

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW for DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

University of Maryland - Baltimore County

VISIT DATES: MAY 7 - 9, 2017

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Report submitted to Vice Provost Antonio Moreira, May 24, 2017

Introduction

After thorough examination of the self-study which was provided by the department, and examination of department websites, Professors Jones and Raun visited the campus of UMBC. The reviewers commend the department on a focused and efficient self-study, and extend our appreciation for the professionalism and hospitality we experienced during the visit. During the two-day visit, we attended a production of *The Mail Order Bride*; met with a variety of stakeholders in the program (faculty, staff, students, university administrators, and community members); explored the facilities; and examined governance documents. We learned much about the theatre program and provide the following response to the questions posed by the institution and the department.

General Goals and Objectives of the Department

The general goals of the undergraduate program are highly appropriate (BA in Theatre Studies, BA in Production and Design, and BFA in Acting), and connected to current models of the discipline in the profession and higher education. The department is undertaking a comprehensive review and redefinition of its vision and seems poised and equipped to engage with a number of specific objectives over the next few years. A department retreat to narrow the focus of these objectives to a manageable number is planned for Fall 2017. As a sign of vitality, the department chair and faculty seem to be looking forward to the occasion.

As outlined in the self-study, the program's learning outcomes goals are:

1. To apply fundamental critical thinking skills to the analysis and interpretation of dramatic literature with particular attention to acting, designing, or technical production
2. Select and use, with safety and efficiency the tools and equipment basic to theatre production technology
3. Communicate to an audience through at least one of the components of theatrical art
4. Function effectively as a member of a theatre production team

The department is meeting its educational goals and objectives through a robust and inventively assessed series of classes and participatory experiences. This course and laboratory work is extended and applied in a carefully selected set of production opportunities which are produced for the public. The faculty consistently monitor and adjust the curriculum and the production season planning to meet the needs of "an ever-changing art form, responding to and creating new ideas that confront our ethical, political, and artistic ideas and practices". They are clearly -- in courses, in production, and in less formal interactions -- creating an educational "experience that stimulates, challenges and inspires" their students.

Recommendation:

- In reviewing the ambitious "future directions" section the APR team suggests that the program find a way to distill the objectives down to three items. We suggest these be memorable and achievable and that the department articulate specific tactics to realize them. Our recommendation for combining some objectives is found below (see the bulleted section under *Emerging Vision and Potential Institutional Benchmarks*).

Student Perceptions of the Program

The visiting team spoke with 20 students from variety of emphases and interests across the program. The students clearly recognize that they are engaged in high quality educational opportunities, practice-based learning, and are receiving remarkable individualized attention.

Specific responses included:

- “If you want an opportunity the professors will make it happen.”
- “We appreciate the cross-training of faculty.”
- They have the ability to explore and discover their own multiple paths is of high value, and this exploration is modeled and supported by the faculty.
- “You get to learn about yourself” (we noted that this is consistent with the mission and objectives of the department).
- “The faculty never sacrifice process for the product.”
- The students feel they are connected to the professional world via their faculty member’s connections and professional development and also through well-chosen guest artists.
- Several students noted the quality of advising.
- They recognize the value of learning about multiple approaches to creating work—both devised and scripted.
- The capstone course was praised for inclusion of the variety of trajectories evidenced among the graduating senior class, and for focusing each individual student’s attention on the requirements progress as they move into the profession, a related field, or graduate school
- The students praised the “ensemble” course for building a sense of capacity, of community, and engendering truly collaborative learning.
- All those present recognized the value and potentials of a focus on new work and new approaches (we noted that this, too, is consistent with the emerging vision).

In general, the students we spoke with are VERY aware of the radical changes that have come upon them with faculty changes, leadership changes, and new spaces in which to learn and work. They are aware of the wonderful new spaces and equipment, while simultaneously aware of the stress that shifting personnel creates in the department.

The list of things they hope the program will consider implementing includes:

- Hiring an acting/movement faculty member
- Including cross training in film/cinema and integrating with what’s emerging in other departments. They said, “We’d like to design/direct/act on camera and in new media.”
- Some students spoke of a desire for specific training in advanced acting, drafting, etc.
- Students expressed desire for more articulation of how to continue their growth and education at the end of the program

Students Sense of Program Integration and Alignment

There may be issues of disconnection among course objectives in the overall curriculum. Transference of knowledge and skills and building bridges from one course to another is sometimes perceived as being left to the student. It is possible that this difficulty arises because of disparate faculty approaches and ways of working. A deliberate *alignment* of vocabulary, common specific learning outcomes shared by faculty as they develop their common vision, could help unify the curriculum from a collection of courses into a more cohesive program. The faculty may wish to ask “What do our course competencies have to do with one another?” The students expressed a tension between the freedom of taking courses out of sequence according to their needs and

interests, and the plan for lock-step progression. This appeared to be an issue for the majority of students we spoke with and was of special concern to transfer students.

Perceptions of Season Selection

The students endorse and understand “New Plays, New Ways” concept. The work produced integrates them into the most contemporary issues in society and the emerging approaches to theatre production.

It was clear to the visitors that the program is at the forefront of the national conversation about works by and about women. The department is actively supporting the direction of the field and appears to be moving toward the stated Dramatists Guild goal of 50/50 by 2020. This work serves the student body well as women are a proportionally large part of those enrolled in the program.

The students expressed a concern about a lack of roles and stories that represent the African American experience. In addition, they raised the question of greater inclusion of Asian voices -- which appears to be a growing demographic at UMBC. The group of students interviewed in the site visit appear to be much more diverse than are the faculty or the playwrights selected for production seasons. This concern about diversity is coupled with a lack of clarity about how individual students can contribute in meaningful ways to the discussion of season selection.

Recommendations:

- The department may wish to include a well-articulated mechanism for student input at appropriate points in the season selection process.
- The commitment might be made to produce the plays and playwrights of more diverse voices. Diverse generators of work need to be visible and evident in order to draw students to the program.

Quality of the Program and Consistency with College and University Missions

The self study doesn't list specific aspirational peers against whom we could measure quality, and the conversations during our review did not examine this closely. However, the department's faculty are very aware of the features of the nearby institutions with whom they compete for students. For example, the new BFA in Acting at Towson University could be having an impact on the numbers of students applying to UMBC for that same degree. Without knowing who the department's aspirational peers are, the reviewers can only compare UMBC's to programs of similar size and degree offerings that we are familiar with. We believe without reservation that UMBC's compares quite favorably. The quality of the production we viewed was truly exceptional. This seems to be a program that is “punching above its weight,” on par with many programs twice its size and those with graduate students. The production that we attended, the interviews with students, staff and faculty, and our observations during the visit all indicated a program of high quality that is seeking constant improvement. It was evident that the program is at a moment of significant opportunity to reach higher, and seeks the best pathway forward to get there. Its goals and objectives fit well into the college. Their work and educational endeavors clearly complement the vision of the institution as represented in the UMBC strategic plan *Advancing Excellence*.

The Department's desire for engagement with the first goal of UMBC's strategic plan—to have a **collective impact in research, scholarship and creative achievement**—is clear. Faculty are active in research, but they have been compromised by the requirements of taking care of the new facility. Also, the infusion of new faculty and staff to serve the potential of the facility has been disruptive of the status quo in a very positive way. More so than any other arts faculty, the collaboration of a theatre faculty is dependent on building relationships. Their democratic governance of the department since the opening of the new facility has established a promising way of working that up to this point has too often been directed at “urgencies of the moment.”

The institution provides remarkable support for tenure track research faculty to have time and fiscal resources available to their professional development. Yet the faculty seem pulled toward serving the potentials of their new facility. There are priorities of day-to-day operations that compete with opportunities for internal and external engagement. There is also a type of creative scholarship that faculty are eager to do that requires a support different from traditional travel support. Producing a play is “real scholarship.” Rather than travel, it could be very useful to have a commissioning grant for development of ensemble work and new plays in process of collaborative discovery that can only be met by producing actualized productions. Travel to conferences is less useful to many theatre artists and technologists whose research creativity depends on collaboration. Travel to a conference can be seed money to foster national networking, but the real costs of producing new, multidisciplinary achievement requires investment in producing it. Unfortunately, external grants for the creative development common to STEM disciplines are largely unavailable in the arts.

Among the opportunities for Theatre at UMBC to excel is through origination of new works. The program exhibits potential to engage across the curriculum with expertise in creative origination, and excellence in craftsmanship of technical production. Its unique position as the university’s “storyteller,” positions the Theatre program as uniquely able to pull conversations from multiple disciplines into action. What is unusual at UMBC is that the program’s faculty and staff seem eager to find collective, collaborative lines of inquiry with disciplines beyond their department. It is up to the institution to create a supportive environment that will reward their outreach as not just service, but as bona fide co-investigation.

The Department is very focused on student success, and is contributing to UMBC’s second strategic goal to enhance **student experiences that integrate in- and out-of-classroom learning to prepare graduates for meaningful careers and civic and personal lives.** Time to degree seems efficient, advising is close and personal and informed by a culture of mentorship highly valued by both faculty and students. Diversity of minority voices is, however, somewhat problematic, as the faculty and staff do not reflect the diversity of their student body. Attention to experiences that can bring minority voices to the classroom and stage seems to be an imperative.

By its nature, of course, theatre education and training integrate classroom learning with realized, public performances. Faculty are particularly aware of how their new facilities can be a positive change agent. They dedicate their generous, discretionary research time and support to address the internal, local student learning and success of potentials found within their new facility. This can become a problem when their discretionary time for external research is swallowed up by the demands of on-campus production.

Through its most recent curricular revisions, the department has explored innovations in curricular development addressed in the next section of this report. It was evident that the department takes quite seriously its role in **continuous improvement of its curriculum to keep it innovative and supportive** of student success as voiced in the UMBC Strategic Plan.

The Theatre department is seeking to broaden its connection to the university community and so contribute in a vital way to the fourth goal of the UMBC’s Strategic Plan to **build, nurture and extend connection with diverse internal and external partners.** Themes of the work on stage can engage with the important issues in other disciplines—for instance, science and ethics--and catalyze difficult conversations around those topics. Voiced by the Department in its self-study, and also among a variety of faculty voices we heard on our visit, there is a clear desire to use the new facility and also the program’s ascendant image to impact various communities. This sort of engagement will raise the visibility of the department immediately, and should lead to opportunities to bring their ideas to a national conversation. The questions that remain to be answered are: How can the program reach out beyond perceived borders and boundaries? And how will they take the excellent work of students and faculty to regional and national conversations?

Recommendations for department/program growth in alignment with mission and vision:

- Pursue the department's plan for a Fall 2017 retreat meant for focusing on a vision and priority setting. Reflecting on alignment with the goals of the UMBC Strategic Plan should be an agenda item.
- Leverage strengths in creating new works (both written plays and ensemble devised works).
- That the department seek, and the college create, opportunities to foster deliberate and specific connections to queries and issues of other disciplines across the university.
- Align opportunities for shared faculty/student creative projects on campus with opportunities for nationally significant creative collaborations and presentations.
- That the institution provides commissioning grants in combination with travel support, for development of ensemble work and new plays in processes of collaborative discovery that can only be met by producing actualized productions.
- Exploration of alliances with STEM programs on campus to fund joint ventures.
- The department's season selection process should seek out and prioritize work that places the stories, voices and bodies of minorities on stage in fully committed ways. (see *Perception of Season Selection* on p. 3)
- Seek opportunities to engage with the Association for Theatre in Higher Education to disseminate work explored and created at UMBC.
- Consider accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

Quality of the Curriculum

An innovative curriculum and pedagogy is connected to the idea of "New Plays, New Ways".

Both the BA and BFA curricula honor accepted standards while integrating new approaches emerging in the field. This is embraced by a meme for a new vision that the department has coined, "New Plays, New Ways." This feature of their recent curricular changes represents an unusual dimension of an emerging field. In fact, the BA in Theatre with concentration in Theatre Studies (TS) and the recently developed emphasis area in Design and Production (D&P) offer the most innovative directions. The significant difference between the BA and the BFA is the course work in ensemble creative inquiry and discovery located in courses such as *Ensemble*. This innovative dimension, echoed in their creative productions on stages, reflects an emergent, national disciplinary development. Many programs, professional theatres, and arts associations have embraced and created significant work that is changing the field in ensemble work and devised theatre.

The BFA in Acting is a very useful recruiting tool and adheres to disciplinary standards and norms for pre-professional training of actors. As a sign of the BFA's continuing strength, the incoming freshman BFA class will include at least 5 Linehan Scholarship recipients. The program was referred to as the "backbone" of the department and the training these students receive appears to be strong and cohesive. Recent student successes include those that are enrolled in and/or graduated from top tier graduate schools, those working in impressive theatre and media venues, and those that are forging new directions in the national theatre scene.

Recommendation:

- The current students experience across all programs will be improved, and the BFA program strengthened with the promised hire of an Acting and Movement specialist. This position could be a bridge between the innovations of the BA and the steady strength of the BFA. It would be desirable for this new hire to be a member of an underrepresented group. We hope resources for this position will become available soon.

Ways to Use Outcomes Assessments to Improve Teaching and Learning

The Department, and it seems the institution, demonstrate a high value on direct assessment of student

learning outcomes. The program's four published learning outcome goals are specific, articulate and actionable. These are reflected in the course learning outcomes the reviewers looked at in sample syllabi.

It was evident to the reviewers that the Theatre Department took seriously its periodic examination of courses with close evaluation of how they addressed course level student learning outcomes. Changes to course design that "closed the loop" on this manifestation of program assessment were a strong feature of the department's culture of continuous improvement. Their capstone course, student auditions, production and design gateway assessments (via a rubric) and regular assessments of specific courses to determine if course design is achieving desired outcomes is to be commended. The thoroughness with which the department does this is unusual. The department's devotion to assessment at significant periods of student development (their sophomore and senior year) is laudable.

The department has clearly identified and is using appropriate moments to gather assessment data. Each production assessed by director and other faculty, and external reviewers. However, it is not clear where the assessment of expected performance, production, and aesthetic competencies evident in public performances (at beginning, intermediate or advanced levels,) is gathered, if at all.

The program seems to be gathering a lot about student outcomes, but it was not clear to the reviewers where it is used to make program level changes. For instance, they are gathering data about student success after graduation, but beyond using that to create publicity and marketing, it is unclear what impact it has on the overall program. The department is assessing individual student work, and how course objectives are met. There is an informed review of achievement in public performances, but it is unclear the process by which that data is gathered together to make programmatic change.

RECOMMENDATION

- Align information gathered in the well-considered moments of assessment with the department's vision to answer the question, "are we meeting our stated goals?"
- Create a charge to a few (two?) faculty to gather all course learning outcomes, and align those with the four learning goals of the program to answer the question, "are all program learning outcomes served by the course learning outcomes?" (and to what extent). Look for disconnection among course objectives in the overall curriculum as perceived by students (see *Student Perception of Integration and Alignment* on p. 3)
- Link student success after graduation to stated student learning outcomes of the program. A survey instrument that connects student learning outcomes to success as measured by the graduate might be designed in collaboration with institutional research.

Scholarly and Creative Work of the Faculty and Students

As discovered in conversation and in the department's self-study documents, the scholarly work by faculty members both on campus and elsewhere is of a very high level. Most faculty are engaged in the creation of new work and new approaches to classical texts. Some have received national honors and created new theatre for a variety of festivals and professional companies. The performance and production faculty (voice and text, directing, design) are employed regularly at respected professional venues and benefit from the university's geographic proximity to several urban centers. In addition, these faculty share their work at national conferences as appropriate to their research foci.

The creative engagements undertaken by full time faculty are not limited to those in tenured or tenure-track positions. Without exception, all have significant regional reputations and a significant number conduct creative research with notable impact on a national scale.

One important aspect of the faculty's work here is their sense that they are in the process of developing an identity as an emerging creative ensemble whose artistic work includes their collective work on campus with students as co-creators and co-researchers. The IN TEN Festival and subsequent project, GRRRL PARTS, might serve as a model for theatre programs nationally.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report the demands of the new building, personalized attention to student needs, and recent changes in personnel and leadership have *strained the ability of faculty members to focus on expanding their impact*. We anticipate that as the department's vision is focused and as the radical pace of change slows that the faculty will be able to continue (and perhaps grow) their robust engagement in creative and scholarly work.

The students are engaged with independent undergraduate research and creative activity at all levels of the program and in each degree program. The network created by appropriate guest artists and faculty engagement in the field provides them ample opportunities for applied research and practical exploration of their interests.

Recommendations:

- It might be interesting and useful to examine and write about best practices around the formation of a creative ensemble of theatre faculty and students at UMBC. This work might be published in national journals as it is an arena that is much discussed but seldom examined.
- The work might also be shared at a variety of national and international conferences.

Effective Uses of Program Resources

With the new performing arts center, the physical resources of the program are extraordinary. The faculty and its leadership are well aware of the potentials and responsibilities that come with such a gift. The reviewers observed disciplined, well-considered use of the facilities that enhance the teaching and learning in performance and all four areas of production: scenery, costume, lighting and sound. We also observed decision-making (course scheduling plans, space scheduling, theatre production operations) that considered the most effective use of space and equipment.

The new facility requires additional support from the university, and to some extent that is evident in the operating budget increases provided to the program. The phasing of the additional support, and gradual application of that increase to base funding represents long-term planning by the institution to support it.

The absence of a long-term funding plan to match the thoughtful and organized needs plan that was generated by the program is the most glaring issue that will compromise the effective use of resources if not addressed soon. Already equipment is getting extended beyond its life-cycle or is beyond its half-life, without apparent repair/replacement plans. In STEM areas, the technology to support teaching and learning is understood to be of critical need, and may be supported by grant funding. This is hardly ever the case with performing arts equipment. Such a deficiency will compromise the department's ability to lean into the strategic plan's emphasis on creative research, community engagement, innovative pedagogy, and interdisciplinarity. We encourage the university to think of the production and performance spaces as a living organism -- whose cells must be renewed at regular intervals or the life of the entity will decline.

Of particular, and related concern is the degree to which the program is expected to maintain its physical plant. Because theatre production faculty and staff are highly proficient at electronic technology and physical design and construction, they will step up to solve problems that are not theirs, especially when it can't or won't be determined who is actually responsible for it. For example, "in the wall" lighting, intercom and audio systems

built into the performing arts center are physical assets of the institution. Yet there seems to be an ongoing debate about who is responsible for repair/replacement when these systems either “age out” or stop functioning.

Recommendations:

- Internal commitment must be found to deliver stable, predictable finances toward constant upkeep of the equipment inventory.
- Management level physical plant personnel must get engaged and direct the repair/replacement of any non-working elements of the building systems (including intercom, audio, video and even lighting elements determined to be “of the building.” This needs to be documented, and referred to annually.
- With the change of some performance courses to afternoon scheduling, scenery and costume construction shops might consider starting later and ending later in the day to open late afternoon sessions for student practice of craftsmanship in “work calls.”

Recommendations regarding external resources:

- Seek cross disciplinary funding with STEM areas for equipment support that can share projects and teaching/learning and joint student/faculty research opportunities (see item I below).
- Provide faculty and student technical know-how as a resource to area schools and small theatres. Faculty Lighting Designer Adam Mendelsohn is piloting a project whereby he and students will do service learning to provide cleaning and repair of lighting equipment to area schools. This may be able to be grant-supported, or a partnership with a stage supply company that wants to become a regular supplier to these schools (though the private sector business may need some convincing that you’re not taking business away from them).
- The seating capacity of the facility is too small to provide ticket-generating revenue for touring in companies. However, some theatre ensembles have no resident facility in which to develop new work. Outside of the academic year when use of the spaces is constant, some small revenue may be realized by partnership with professional ensembles that could benefit from the extraordinary resources available, and offer networking/mentorship relationship with students and faculty (see # 3 under *Fuller Uses of Stage Space and PAHB Equipment* below).

Collaboration with Other Units at the University

As mentioned elsewhere in this document there are ample possibilities for a variety of kinds of collaboration with other units on campus. Full engagement in UMBC’s Strategic Plan might suggest more robust collaboration with:

- Other arts programs on campus in facilities use, event planning, and collaborative delivery of courses
- Further integration (co-taught courses and applied research) with STEM fields. This is already being explored in the visual arts programs.
- Initiatives emerging from the university library around “maker spaces” and non-traditional learning environments.
- The Center for Entrepreneurship

Any of these collaborations would be beneficial to the program and might assist the university, the college, or the department engender new financial and human resources. We believe that transdisciplinary work is entirely appropriate for the discipline and can contribute to addressing the increasingly complex challenges facing our society that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

Prioritization of Resource Needs

The following are all necessary:

1. Planned and regularized financial support for equipment repair and replacement throughout the new facility
2. Identification of funds for incubation of creative production projects to support faculty creative work
3. Tenure Track replacement in Movement/Acting
4. Assistance in-kind or via funding to engage admissions staff, university communications and university marketing with a messaging campaign that results in print materials, web site messaging, Twitter, Instagram, and other external messages such as the alumni magazine, university Facebook page, and messaging to all stakeholders of the remarkable level of creative work and achievement of the program
5. Stabilizing operating budget by bringing remaining portion (currently provided as one-time funds) into base funding.

Emerging Vision and Potential Institutional Benchmarks

All schools that are members of the National Association of Schools of Theatre engage in a process such as the one UMBC is undertaking with regard to vision periodically (every five or ten years). UMBC may wish to look at the NAST member list and select a few schools with similar contexts (land grant or state supported, undergraduate focus, near or in urban centers) to benchmark. Some suggestions include Arizona State University, The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, and San Francisco State. In addition to NAST members in similar contexts, the outside reviewers suggest that some research be undertaken about vision and curricular innovations taking place at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois; York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada; and/or the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, in London.

Guided by a robust and expected visioning process we encourage the program leadership to make certain that all aspects of the program are in *alignment* (in other words that the overall *vision* guides curricular planning, production selection, facilities use and management, faculty work assignments, integration with other units on campus, service assignments and all pieces of the program). A well-communicated and comprehensive vision should serve to reduce sometimes chaotic and overwhelming efforts and provide a beacon that lights a clear path. We encourage the program to distill the list of potential directions down to 3 memorable trajectories/initiatives. In face-to-face discussions members of the faculty requested recommendations for prioritization of their seven goal sets (pp. 45 -46 in the Self Study). We recommend the following reframing:

- “Process-oriented creation leading to artistic excellence”. What we heard in interviews was that this is sometimes thought of as a binary choice. What we saw in production leads us to believe that it is not a binary choice – both things are desirable and lead to positive outcomes in production when in combination. The luxury of 10-week rehearsal periods, when feasible, allow for significant research, integration, and exploration while achieving excellent products.
- Likewise, other goal sets have complementary relationships that can be combined and synergized:
 - *Innovative* theatre making that preferences *new works* (sometimes through ensemble creation) should lead to . . .
 - *Civic engagement* that both *moves the field forward and expresses non-dominant ideas and voices*.

Recruiting

We believe that university has an unusual opportunity to support the theatre program’s need to increase enrollments by pursuing three strategies:

1. Engage students from all disciplines on campus in order to enhance the local reputation of the program. Find ways to reach the 10,000 members of the UMBC community that are not currently aware of, or invested in, the extraordinary work of the theatre department. Ideally, every student who attends the institution will be able to say, “Oh, UMBC has a fantastic undergraduate theatre program!” The first

circle of the UMBC community can be taught to recruit in this way by experiencing productions first hand, coursework in the theatre disciplines, or cross-disciplinary research experiences. We recommend that the department examine the mechanics of interacting with the broader university community on multiple levels.

2. Engage as fully as time will allow in national conversations about the program (taking place in the Association of Theatre in Higher Education, the National Association of Schools of Theatre, the International Council of Fine Arts Deans, the Southeastern Theatre Conference, the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and others) and by getting high school teachers and high school students to campus. The remarkable work of the faculty and staff in UMBC's extraordinary facility should be experienced first-hand if possible -- but short of that, the reputation of the program can be enhanced through engagement with others in the field.
3. Focus on community college students in Theatre, English, Psychology and related disciplines within a 100-mile radius. Get them to campus so they can picture themselves there, experience the tremendous learning opportunities present in the program, and learn of the practical opportunities that are present for them upon graduation with a theatre degree. Consider workshops and engagement activities for these students.

Fuller Use of Stage Spaces and PAHB Equipment

Three primary opportunities that might be examined emerged during the site visit:

1. The synergies and collaborative possibilities present through more cohesive curricular and programming integration with the other *arts disciplines* (music, film, dance, visual arts) are robust. We realize the challenges such integrations involve but the university might consider investing the resources to support more integration. Is there value in considering a school structure, or common administrative hub, or a programming or curricular planning team made up of stakeholders from a variety of arts disciplines? The multiple foundations of the various sections of the new building seemed to be a metaphor for what appears to be an unnecessary (though unfortunately common) separation of disciplines that might profitably support, provoke, and engage one another in the marvelous new facility.
2. Theatre integration with science and technology disciplines is being explored elsewhere. As a STEM campus UMBC may hold particularly interesting potential in the integration of theatre with those disciplines. The stage spaces and technologies would be particularly suited to these collaborations. Potential grant money from these integrations and this type of interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary research could help support the foundational programs.
3. It seems a shame that either of those beautiful theatres is ever idle. Are there possibilities for collaborative agreements with professional companies who could use whichever space that is not at work for current production?

Summary

The faculty and the staff of the program will require a bit more time to live out the fullness of their potential after so much change, but based on our experience UMBC's theatre program is a **hidden gem**. The examined production; the student interviews; and the faculty engagement, knowledge and achievement were all of superior quality. The program strength is borne of careful attention to detail, depth of critical reflection, and commitment to collaboration. We hope that our responses will prove of some assistance to the program as it moves to more sustainable use of human resources and facilities. It deserves support in its trajectory toward excellence in theatre education and to national prominence.