

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REVIEW

*Western Nevada College
Associate of Arts, Musical Theatre*

I. Description of Program Reviewed

The Associate of Arts in Musical Theatre degree program is designed to provide training in the breadth of skills required for musical theatre performance as well as satisfy many of the lower-division requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Musical Theatre at most four-year institutions. Students are expected to cultivate a creative imagination, artistic standards and judgment, and a respect for the art form. A unique characteristic of the program is its connection to a successful theatre company that draws enthusiastic and appreciative audiences from multiple cities in Nevada and California. Students who complete this degree are better prepared to audition for upper-division coursework at a four-year institution and for professional theatre companies, and they are more qualified to teach musical theatre students in youth organizations.

II. Review Process and Criteria

The program review team conducted a self-study over the course of the 2007-2008 academic year in order to identify program strengths, weaknesses, and ideas for improvement in terms of: enrollment, curriculum, scheduling, student satisfaction, instructional quality, and program retention. The Office of Institutional Research provided the review team with data that were used to inform conclusions about the program. Two external reviewers—TMCC Theater Professor Paul Aberasteri and WNC Mathematics Instructor Scott Morrison—reviewed the self-study document, toured the Carson campus facilities, met with a group of musical theatre students, and reported their findings to the program review team, members of the Program Assessment and Review Committee, the Director of Institutional Research, the Dean of Instruction, and the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

III. Major Findings and Conclusions of the Program Review

The following are the major strengths of the program that were identified during the review process:

- Courses are scheduled so that students can complete the degree within two years.
- Through course evaluations, a high percentage of students expressed satisfaction with core musical theatre courses.
- Students participating in the focus group discussion expressed their appreciation of Professor Stephanie Arrigotti's professional, passionate, respectful, and honest interactions with the students; of the relaxed environment in which students feel safe to take risks; and of the program in general.

Several opportunities to improve the program were also identified. Recommendations from internal [I] and external [E] reviewers are in italics:

Program Recruitment and Retention: Students who are active in the program are inclined to seek degrees in other disciplines that offer stronger employment opportunities, and many people who audition for the shows are not part of the musical theatre degree program. At the time this review was conducted, no students had graduated with this degree.

- *Make part-time instructors aware of how the courses they teach contribute to the degree program so that they can communicate the importance to their students of obtaining the degree.* [I]

- *Pursue transfer agreements with four-year institutions in order to increase the marketability of the degree. [I]*
- *Forge contacts between WNC musical theatre students and faculty at transfer institutions to encourage students to persevere with their musical theatre studies. [I]*
- *Encourage students who are active and interested in the program to declare an Associate of Arts in Musical Theatre degree. An online degree-declaration form will be available soon on the college Web site so that it will be easier for students to do this. [I]*
- *Communicate to students the results of studies that show that people with performing arts backgrounds are able to think critically, perform better in math and reading, and are confident in front of groups of people—all qualities that make them desirable on the job market. [I,E]*

Distance Education: It is important to serve students in rural areas by continuing to offer classes in Music Appreciation—a core requirement for the musical theatre degree and a course applicable to a general education requirement for all associate degrees—while exploring ways to best utilize the instructional media.

- *Strive to increase the availability of Music Appreciation classes and to improve instructional methods for teaching courses online and via interactive video. [I,E]*

Scheduling: Classes taught by part-time instructors are often scheduled at the same time as rehearsals, so students are forced to make deals with instructors and hope that their grades don't suffer when they have to leave for rehearsals.

- *Continue to try to schedule classes and rehearsals to avoid conflicts. [I]*

Program Information: Most courses for the program are available only on the Carson campus, so students must attend classes on the Carson campus in order to complete the degree, but that limitation is not made clear in publications, such as the college Web site and the Academic Program Guide.

- *Make sure that information is made available in all publications so that Fallon students are aware of the limitation. [I]*

IV. Descriptive Statistics

A. Number of students with declared major in the program area:

2007-08*	26
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B. Number of graduates from the program for the following years:

2005-06	0
2006-07	0
2007-08*	1

C. Headcount of students enrolled in any course related to the program (duplicated):

Fall 2007	10
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* Does not include summer 2008.