**Certificate in Technical Theatre**

**Los Angeles Mission College**

**Advisory Board Meeting**

**January 23, 2023**

**Location: Zoom**

**Present:**Chair of the meeting, Robert Cucuzza (Vice Chair, Arts, Media & Performance/Associate Professor of Theatre Arts), Marla Uliana (Dean, Arts, Media & Performance), Curtis Stage (Chair, Arts, Media & Performance), Bri Pattillo (LAMC Adjunct Theater Instructor), Danny Bride (Performing Arts Technician), James Bice (Encore), Kim Cameron (Theatricum Botanicum), Theresa Chavez (About…Productions),

Michael Darling (CalArts faculty, Technical Direction), Julie Durnell (Sylmar Charter High School), Ly Eisenstein (video designer), Seth Kamenow (Verdugo Hills High School), Tyler Lambert Perkins (Shuttercut Design), Cheryl Lynch (John F. Kennedy High School), Nicole Mohr (Vaughn International Studies Academy), Zach Moore (Meerkat Design), Veronica Mullins Bowers (Shuttercut Design), Rafael Posada (Volt Lights), and Luciana Valero (LA Mission College theatre arts alumnus).

1. **Introductions**

Robert Cucuzza introduced himself and led introductions of all board members.

1. **Purpose of the Advisory Board meeting**

Cucuzza explained that this Advisory Board was convened to give advice and support to Los Angeles Mission College in the creation of a new Certificate of Achievement in Technical Theatre. In addition, once the program is approved, board members will be expected to offer pathways to our graduates into internships, entry-level positions, or continuing education opportunities.

1. **Status of Application**

Once the Advisory Board meeting is complete, the New Program Initiation materials, including LMI data, will immediately be sent to the LA Mission College Curriculum Committee for viability review, then to the Los Angeles Regional Consortium for local approval, and to the next channels for full approval. It is anticipated that this program will be offered beginning in the Fall 2023 semester.

1. **Brief history of theatre at LA Mission College**

Cucuzza presented a slideshow that covered the history of theatre at Los Angeles Mission College and demonstrated the reasons and need for a program in technical theatre. The slideshow covered the following periods:

* 1. 2015-2017
     1. Hiring of Cucuzza, a full-time theatre professor
     2. Commitment to production of shows each semester
     3. Plays being produced in the Campus Center with minimal but continuously expanding design and technical elements
  2. 2017-2020
     1. Opening of the Arts, Media & Performance building
     2. 144-seat theater with scene shop, flyrail system, and state-of-the-art lighting and video equipment
     3. Inception of the Associate in Arts for Transfer degree in Theatre Arts, a two-year program
     4. Expansion of course offerings, including classes in stagecraft and design
     5. Expansion of design and technical production elements of shows
     6. Increase in enrollment and theatre majors
     7. Employment of guest artist designers and technicians to mentor students
  3. 2021-present
     1. Hiring of dedicated adjunct instructors in design and tech
     2. Hiring of full-time Performing Arts Technician
     3. Further of expansion of design and technical elements
     4. Connections with high schools with demonstrable interest in technical theatre

1. **Certificate in Technical Theatre:**
2. Cucuzza described the basics of the certificate program, including the following major points:
   1. Two semester, low-unit program
   2. Includes classes that we already have been offering
   3. Practical hands-on experience in scenic construction, prop construction, light hang, cable and focus, rigging and fly rail operation, light, sound, video console operation, stage management
   4. Skills-based
3. Cucuzza described the viability of the program
   1. No other program like it in the Northeast San Fernando Valley
   2. Our theatre program has been emphasizing design and tech from the beginning
   3. Connections to the professional theatre and film industries, as well as CalArts
4. **Input from LA Mission community**
5. Administrators, instructors, and alumni commented upon the program. The support for the program was overwhelmingly positive and the consensus was that there will be great interest for it in our community. What follows are specific comments, questions, and recommendations.
   1. Marla Uliana commented on the technical expertise that she has experienced at all the shows and remarked that it increases each time.
   2. Curtis Stage commented that students often arrive at Mission without a clear path and discover theatre as a potential course of study and career pathway.
   3. Bri Pattillo commented that with the Advisory Board that we’ve put together, our students will have a good chance of making inroads into getting a job upon graduation.
   4. Uliana expressed the need, as a CTE program, to give students skills that are used in the industry today.
   5. Michael Darling asked if we had access to digital fabrication tools and thinks that it’s important to consider this to get students into entry-level jobs. Cucuzza replied that, although we don’t have those machines, he had established a relationship with Vision Scenery in Sylmar, the biggest set shop in Los Angeles, and would re-establish a connection with them.
   6. Tyler Lambert-Perkins expressed concern that the program was geared only towards theatre and encouraged us to expand the program to include other areas of the entertainment industry where the skills learned could also be employed. Cucuzza replied that there is a tremendous amount of collaboration between disciplines in Arts, Media & Performance and that our instruction and training regularly reinforce how the skills are applicable in other media, as well.
   7. Julie Durnell asked if the design courses in the certificate are focused more on design than on practical skills. Cucuzza reassured her that although many of the courses teach conceptual design, most of the course content is devoted to production and learning rudimentary skills. He said that if students were focused on being a designer, we would encourage them to move on to another institute of higher learning after completion of our program.
   8. Darling expressed concern that, since the program is so short, the students’ experiences may be limited by the scenic designs for the two shows that they’d be working on. Cucuzza assured him that in the Introduction to Stage Craft and Technical Theatre Production courses, basic skills like building flats or stairs would be taught, regardless of the scenic design of the shows.
   9. James Bice noted that he’s from Sylmar and was interested in technical theatre from high school, but enrolled at College of the Canyons which did not offer a degree or certificate in it. He confirmed that there is a desperate need for this program in the Northeast San Fernando Valley.
   10. Kim Cameron noted how well-rounded the class offerings are, giving students experiences in many aspects of theatrical production.
   11. Nicole Mohr suggested making it clear to students that in addition to the classes that we offer, there are many more theatre classes in the district that they could take, to create an even more well-rounded educational experience.
   12. Teresa Chavez wondered how to interface with the LA County Department of Arts and Cultures internship program or to create relationships that can lead to other internship opportunities. Pattillo responded that we already have initiated or are building relationships with A Noise With, Latino Theatre Company, the Hollywood Bowl, and Volt Lights. Cucuzza added Independent Shakespeare Company of LA.
   13. Stage asked that a detailed list of courses and descriptions be sent to the Board, with a projected pathway through the program.
6. **Closing Remarks:**

Cucuzza thanked everyone for their time and their comments. He assured them that he would send them the document that Stage requested. He encouraged them to all come see the spring theatre production of *Mr. Grieves and The Vampires*, for it will be a very tech- and design-heavy show and a good indication of the level of theatre that we produce and the professional skills that we teach.