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The Young Americans College of the Performing Arts
Annual Academic Instructional Report 2014-2015

1. Narrative overview on the Associate of Arts in Performance academic program. Key strategies and approaches implemented in curriculum, learning resources and assessments. Comment on goals from previous year-end report.

2014-2015 goals

- Implementation of sophomore level courses
- Review of master course curriculum
- Syllabi development and improvement

Continuous improvement

The College took great strides in the 2014-2015 academic year towards establishing continuous improvement processes in the form of solid, assessable learning objectives, developing a range of assessment instruments and approaches, and tracking outcomes of those objectives. Although preliminary work in introducing faculty to concepts such as Bloom's taxonomy, learning objectives, "assessable" verbs, rubrics, and the like began in the 2013-2014 academic year, Fall 2014 was designated the "go live" date of implementation. As with all such comprehensive endeavors, there remained a high learning and implementation curve for many of the faculty for whom these concepts were both new, and, as a consequence of their arts backgrounds, often "foreign". To overcome some of these obstacles, we held several "mini-workshops" during faculty meetings focused on various aspects of defining, assessing and tracking learning objectives and outcomes.

Syllabi development & improvement and review of master course curriculum

As comprehensive of an effort it was, we were cognizant that we could not reasonably accomplish a major review and alignment of syllabi with the Master Course curriculum, perfect learning objectives and syllabi, and implement reporting all at once. We therefore phased our approach, focusing first on syllabus development and improvement and alignment with our Master Course Outlines and overall curriculum in Fall 2014, and then on ensuring greater reporting compliance in the Spring term. The results: by the end of Fall 2015 90% of courses had completed, reviewed and posted syllabi; only 1 course had objectives phrased in a non-assessable form; and 7 courses still needed to be reconciled with their associated Master Course Outline (Fall Syllabus Monitoring Excel file).

Some of that reconciliation remains a continuing process as we maintain a balance between the requirements of our program and students and those of our partnering institution (NCMC) under whose banner the courses are offered. As we move to independent status, these courses will change slightly to reflect the specific goals of YACOPA.

As of the end of the Spring 2015 term, we had SLO outcome reports for 84% of our courses (26 out of 31). Outcomes from those Spring courses, as well as Fall are reported in the tables following this narrative.

Discussion of outcomes report

Seventy-five per cent (75%) of the courses reporting SLO results (27 out of 36) hit or exceeded all of their goals for student outcomes on their selected objectives. Of those that did not, five had one LO that didn't reach goal (DAN 220, MU 128, SOC 171, THF 100, THF 101), two missed 2 objectives (B104, MU 129) and two missed all three targets (THF 115, THF 230). However, no relationship between missing these goals and overall course outcomes are apparent. With the exception of Business Math and the two English composition courses (which did not report outcomes), the student course-ending scores exceeded 80%.

Specific interventions for the courses that did not meet their outcomes objectives include:

- Business Math: strategy session with Dean of Instruction to generate additional approaches to this goal. Is this a writing assignment? Presentation? Are there forms that this project can take that resonate more strongly with these students (this course already has implemented some very relevant activities).
- MUS 128: strategy session with Dean of Instruction to generate additional approaches to this goal. Is there a way to assess differently? Kinesthetically? How about applying Chris' test approach (notes that can be accessed *after* completing the test? A poster project? Maybe a poster project in class?
- MUS 129: with Dean of Instruction, explore possible reasons for discrepancy between these two objectives and the third (98%).
- SOC 171: Will have a new instructor. Monitor this after next round of outcomes reports.
- THF 100 & THF 101: both these courses missed their marks by a small percentage and assessment for both objectives was based on tests and quizzes. Strategy session with Dean of Instruction to generate additional approaches to these goals.
- THF115 & THF 230: results for all three objectives for these two courses were significantly lower than any of our other courses. Dean of Instruction, Chair and faculty will consult to devise plans for addressing and improving these outcomes.

- DAN 220: ballet is a challenging course; these results not unexpected, nor do them seem problematic. Overall final course performance for these students is in the low 90%, so the effort they are putting into these objectives is ultimately paying off. Dean of Instruction to discuss with the Dance department question of whether they feel a 70% goal is appropriate for this course, or whether they should strive for higher, and if so, what that goal would be.

All breadth of knowledge course goals are set at 70% or "C". All but one of the courses in the other departments (music, dance, theater) are set at 80% or "B". Music Theory (MU 130) is the exception; the goal for that class is set at 70% or "C". To distinguish this difference, outcomes for that course are indicated in [brackets] in the table below.

Dan 122 and 123 results were assessed and recorded in a non-standard fashion. This, as well as many other idiosyncracies presented through this manual process that we have used to-date will be remedied by the end of the 2015-2016 academic year through implementation of TK20. Beginning in the Spring of 2016, all faculty will input their outcomes reports directly into the TK20 system, which will link outcomes in a way that will standardize this data collection and analysis process.

Implementation of sophomore level courses

This academic year also introduced the implementation of a set of new sophomore classes including the introduction of a musical theater course, a revamping of the audition course, vocal tech 3 and survey of theater. These new courses required major changes to the acting classes as well to ensure a clear distinction and unique purpose for each of these theater/acting courses.

"Student effort in class" data analysis

One of the items asked of students in the year-end survey is for them to self-assess the effort they put into their course work. Students were forthcoming and apparently quite reflective in their responses to this question, and their responses verified what YA faculty have observed regarding our students: they are not as interested in the "academic" courses as they are in the performance ones. The average score for breadth of knowledge courses is 77, while it is 92 for performance classes, and 89, 88 and 90 respectively for vocal, acting and dance emphasis courses (see "All Spring Classes Combined" summary document). This difference is clearly reflected in the students' self-assessment of how much effort they put into the course as illustrated in this summary table:

Student self-assessment of overall effort in class summarized by department				
	STRONG	MODERATELY STRONG	MODERATE	MODERATELY WEAK
Breadth of Knowledge	38	35.2	20.7	6.1
Dance	66.7	26.4	6.2	.7
Music	59.7	31.6	7.6	1.1
Theater	60.8	32.8	6.1	.3

This reaffirms the that we need to continue developing hands-on and mentally engaging pedagogical approaches to engage, excite, and connect our YA students to these courses that inherently are less physically engaging.

2. Annual goals for the Associate of Arts in Performance for the upcoming academic year

Goal	Activities Linked to Goal	Relationship to College mission and strategic plan
Increase completion rates		
Narrow the outcomes gap between performance and breadth of knowledge courses	• Implementation of TK20 for SLO tracking and analysis • Establish consistent follow-up practices for addressing identified gaps in given courses	Graduate students who have a strong, balanced education in both academics and performance.
Build information literacy programs	• Continued development of YA Virtual Library • Development of Success Coaching Program	Build the academic qualifications and critical thinking of our performance-oriented students.

3. SLO assessment cycle and results

Course Code and Name	Mode of Instruction	SLOs Assessed for First Time	SLOs Assessed to Monitor Improvement Activities	SLOs Identified as Needing Improvement Activities	SLOs Assesses that Meet Standards
BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE COURSES			**Goal= 75% of students earning C (70%)**		

B 104: Business Math (Sp 15)	Hybrid	1, 2 & 3	NA	1= 70% Develop fundamental skills in problem solving situations by organizing, analyzing, recording, and reporting business related problems. (weekly quizzes) 3= 50% Understand and apply principles of personal finance by researching various aspects of tax and insurance applications in one's life. (Research and homework)	2= 76%
ED 150: Teaching Methods by Age and Development	On campus	3, 1, 4	NA		3= 92% 1= 75% 4= 94%
ENG 111: English Composition I	Hybrid		NA		
ENG 112: English Composition II	Hybrid		NA		
MU 120: History of Music	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 100% 2= 100% 3= 100%
PSY 161: Introduction to Psychology	On campus	10,11, 24	**NA**		10= 88% 11= 96% 24= 96%
SOC 171: Introduction to Sociology	On campus	1,2,3	NA	1= 74% Define key concepts of sociological study (group, groupthink, deviance, social stratification, and elements of stratification, family and variations of, gender, race, and age inequality, etc.)	2= 95% 3= 99%
THF 101: Survey of Theatre	On campus	3,4,8	NA	8= 71% Define theater terminology	3= 91% 4= 81%

MUSIC DEPARTMENT COURSES	**Goal= 75% of students earning B (80%) or better, unless otherwise indicated [C]**				
MU 101: Chorale I	2 on campus, 5 practicum studies		NA		
MU 102: Chorale II	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 95% 2= 95% 3= 95%
MU 111: Semi-Private Voice	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 98% 2= 80% 3= 92%
MU 112: Private Vocal Instruction	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 95% 2= 89% 3= 97%
MU 121: Piano I	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 82% 2= 86% 3= 89%
MU 128: Vocal Techniques I *Note: Labeled as MU 105 in supporting documents*	On campus	2,4,5	NA	2= 69% Describe the mechanics of the voice (Vocal Anatomy Test)	4= 84% 5= 88%
MU 129: Vocal Techniques II	On campus	3,5,1	NA	3= 63% List methods for maintaining good vocal health (Vocal Health Test) 5= 60% Demonstrate how to approach a variety of vocal styles and genres	1= 98%
MU 130: Music Theory I	On campus	1,2,3	NA		2= [100%] 1= [75%]

					3= [91%]
MU 131: Music Theory II	On campus		NA		
MU 205: Vocal Techniques III *Note: Labeled as MU 208 in supporting documents*	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 100% 2= 100% 3= 95%
MU 221: Piano II	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 87% 2= 93% 3= 93%
MU 290: Performance Teaching Practicum	Practicum studies		NA		1= 100% 2= 100% 3= 100%
Course Code and Name	**Mode of Instruction**	**SLOs Assessed for First Time**	**SLOs Assessed to Monitor Improvement Activities**	**SLOs Identified as Needing Improvement Activities**	**SLOs Assesses that Meet Standards**
THEATRE DEPARTMENT COURSES			**Goal= 75% of students earning B (80%)**		
THF 100: Introduction to Acting	On campus	1,4,3	NA	4= 71% Recall and define terms and concepts from textbook and class lectures (in-class quizzes)	1= 98% 3= 78%
THF 102: Acting I	On campus	1,5,3	NA		1=100% 5= 89% 3= 84%
THF 110: Scene and Character	On campus	2, 5, 6	NA		2=100% 5= 94%

Development					6= 90%
THF 115: Improvisation	On campus	2,1,3	NA	2= 59% Demonstrate proficiency in basic improvisational techniques and exercises 1= 65% Recognize & illustrate standard improvisation terminology 3= 71% Create and produce a complete improvisational performance	
THF 150: Intro to Stage Craft	On campus		NA		
THF 210: Musical Theatre	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 75% 2= 85% 3= 95%
THF 230: Audition Techniques	On campus	1?,2?, 3?	NA	1= 40% Create an audition binder that represents their strengths and weaknesses 2= 56% Create a resume 3= 65% Self awareness	
THF 275: Stage Craft Crew	Practicum studies		NA		1= 78% 2= 98% 3= 87%
THF 290: Performance Practicum	Practicum studies	1,2,3	NA		1= 97% 2= 97% 3= 97%
THF 299: Advanced Performance	On campus		NA		

DANCE DEPARTMENT COURSES Goal= 75% of students earning B (80%) or better					
DAN 120: Classical Ballet I	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1=92% 2=94% 3=94%
DAN 121: Jazz Dance I	On campus	1,4,5,7,8	NA		1= 91% 4= 83% 5= 89% 7= 97% 8= 95%
DAN 122: Modern Movement I Fall 2014 JK	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1=100% 2=100% 3=100%
DAN 122: Modern Movement I Sp KL Used a three-point scale of Superior, Satisfactory & Unsatisfactory	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 62% @ Sup; 38% @ Sat 2= 34% @ Sup; 62% @ Sat 3= 45% @Sup; 55% @ Sat
DAN 123: Tap Dance Used a three-point scale of Superior, Satisfactory & Unsatisfactory	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 92 % @ Sat 2= 15 % @ Sup; 69% @ Sat 3= 62% @Sup; 38% @ Sat
DAN 220:	On campus	1,2,3	NA	2= 71%	1=76%

Classical Ballet II				Define, interpret and respond to basic classical ballet terminology	3= 76%
DAN 221: Jazz Dance II	On campus	1,2,3	NA		1= 100% 2= 100% 3= 100%

4. Summary of reposes from student faculty evaluations

Student satisfaction with courses

Student responses to questions about their courses resulted in overwhelming positive results. As an example, for Spring 2015 courses, students rated the following as "Strongly Agree" at an 80% or higher rate:

- Teacher provides clear and fair evaluations of my work
- Teacher respects ideas and opinions differing from their own
- Teacher makes me feel welcome to ask questions
- Teacher divides their time among students in a fair and equal manner
- Teacher is available to give help when needed
- Purpose of this course is clear and relevant

Eighty-five per cent (85%) and 87 per cent (87%) respectively rated their course pace as "Well-paced" and "Just right" in terms of demand.

Two questions among these responses did not reach 80% strongest level. For "Overall content is stimulating and challenging", 68% of respondents indicated they "Strongly Agree" and 24% at "Somewhat Agree". Forty-nine per cent (49%) of respondents "Strongly Disagree" to the statement that the "Majority of assigned projects are too difficult", while another 32% "Somewhat Disagree". In both of these cases, the total of these two response sets ("Strongly Agree" + "Somewhat Agree") exceeded 80%.

This 80%+ positive "Strongly Agree" profile does change when sorting by department. Breadth of knowledge results look more like the two outliers from the aggregate set above; that is, each question attains an 80% or higher total when adding together response rates indicating "Strongly Agree" and Somewhat Agree". Response rates in the "Strongly Agree" category are generally ten to twenty

percentage points below those of the aggregate. While we do not find these results worrisome, we do continue to develop strategies to raise student engagement in these courses.

Dance rates equaled or exceeded 90% for “Strongly Agree” almost all questions, while Music and Theater reflected the aggregate results (80% generally).

Individual faculty scores and student comments

Sorting survey results by instructor returns equally positive results and student comments were also typically very favorable. The following excerpted comments, particularly from among our Breadth of Knowledge courses, have been selected to illustrate the value that students derived from these courses (despite their lower effort rates) and what they perceive in terms of the relevance of the course to their lives (relating to our College goal of providing “courses of study that are of the highest standard and connect theory to practice so that students are prepared for life after college”):

B104

- I like that every lesson is exactly what I need to learn about in order to succeed in the world. I also appreciate that math and lessons are applied to the business side of the Young Americans.
- Business Math with Mike Krauss is a great way to learn various mathematical skills in prepping us for the performance and entertainment industry as well as just being new to adulthood and being on our own. Mike's class was well structured and I could retain material very quickly when he presented it to us. I wanted to be in Math class every week. I learned a lot from class, whether simplistic or not. I know I am leaving gained knowledge benefitting me in organizing my day to day life.
- I enjoyed the class actually. I feel more ready for real world business math situations.

PSY 161

- Doc is a wonderful teacher. I feel kind of bad for him because a lot of us go from a really high paced dance class or another really fun class to his class and we aren't that focused or motivated to learn about psychology, He deals with us well and I appreciate the fact that he relates a lot of his lessons to things we will use in The Young Americans.
- Doc did an amazing job connecting the psychological text to the world of performance.

ED 150

- I could not imagine this not being a course during our second semester! It was BEYOND helpful in better understanding how our educational system work[s]. It also benefitted me so much in understanding how all kids come from so many different walks of life. This class offered so much insight into how our kids need to be supported better and how to go about that efficiently. I could not have asked for a better instructor to guide all of us on that, either!

DAN

- Loved working with Heidi. Her knowledge of real world situations is invaluable. I loved how well she has prepared us for the life of auditioning an working as a dancer
- I've learned not only jazz technique but also how to act in auditions and what different style you can put to just one dance combo.

Recurring themes among the comments student made about their instructors include: “passionate”, “wonderful human being”, “knowledgeable”, s/he “cares”, “I LOVE” her/him.

Despite the superior reviews from students, this survey did reveal a couple of instructor behaviors and approaches that could benefit from some adjustments, these include:

- “Don’t get sidetracked; stay focused” [Be warm, continue caring about your students, but when class starts, get down to business.]
- Provide clearer expectations and due dates for assignments [Students may need more structure to help them manage their time and juggle expectations of them.]
- Don’t hesitate to push your students a bit more

5. Requests for professional development not supported by current budget. List in order of importance. Not all will incur a direct cost.

Development Need	Why It is Needed	Cost Per Item	Number Requested	Total Cost
MUSIC VASTA Workshop: Intro to Lessac Kinesensic Training Workshop	Training in Resonant Voice Therapy (Cynthia and I are both certified in this. This is the best and healthiest approach I know to vocal health and healing.)	$1200.00	1-2	1200-2400

MUSIC One Voice Certificate Course in Integrative Studies – 1st Intensive	This is a new and exciting theory and direction that voice therapy is going The idea behind it is: to combine singers and **dancers** and how to teach both to sing healthy since the approach is SO different. You have to take this course A YEAR apart. So it is TWO intensives, taken a year apart.	$1150	1-4	$1150-4600
THEATER Arrange for on-site or off-site attendance of workshops, classes or seminars for instructors	To improve teachers' breadth of knowledge and keep us on the cutting edge of teaching techniques in general as well as in our field. (For example, I attended an NLP seminar at my own expense that gave me great tools for the classroom and how to use language and techniques that help me teach more effectively. Also, there have been workshops for "acting-the business of the business" that I couldn't afford to go to but would have given me up-to-date info that would have really enriched what I was able to teach the kids about marketing, current casting directors, agents, etc. They ask me questions constantly that I don't feel 100% confident about answering because the business has changed so much since I started teaching here full-time. I do all that I can to stay current but a class like that would really help me to have the latest information.) Even bringing in someone to teach a workshop to the faculty for a day on things like creativity, new developments in teaching techniques (like			

	how to make a concept sticky), positive education... anything that would help us to keep improving and growing. It's easy for people to become complacent when they're not actively engaged in new learning. And having the school sponsor opportunities for that new learning sends the message that the instructors are valued and that innovation and growth are important.			
Dance None needed at this time. All Dance teachers are regularly engaged in professional development, both within the Young Americans, as well as other private dance opportunities. The budget of the organization would be better spent on supporting payroll, upgrades, extra costs, etc.				