

April 1, 2015

College of Arts and Sciences

## Proposed Departmental Name Change

**Current name: Department of Theatre**

**Proposed name: Department of Theatre and Dance**

**Proposed Change to be effective July 1, 2015**

This name change is proposed to most accurately reflect the current scope and status of the unit. As Dr. Berman explains, in addition to all of the independent Dance programming, dance is fully integrated into the work of the theatre program, for example, through choreography and dance training for actors. The contributions are reciprocal: theatre students design the lights and sound for dance concerts. In short theatre and dance are fully integrated.

It should also be noted that there is precedent in the college for a department title that encompasses significant areas of expertise even though these do not represent a degree. Some years ago, the department of Chemistry and Physics changed its name to the Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy because of the significant focus of several physicist faculty on astronomy. We made this change even though there is neither a major nor a minor in astronomy. In the case of theatre and dance, we offer the Dance minor. The prior case would appear to more than justify the current request.

For the most part, an approved name change would require electronic edits on websites, catalogs, etc. at the cost of editorial time. Brochures, posters, stationery and business cards would be updated. These are updated on a regular basis in any case. The costs for these updates would be borne by the department.

I recommend approval.

Kenneth J. Procter

Dean

College of Arts and Sciences.

### Rationale for Changing the Name of the *Theatre Department* to the *Department of Theatre and Dance*

Submitted by Chair Karen Berman

March 25, 2015

The Department of Theatre currently has 64 Theatre Majors, 41 Dance Minors (number pulled from the transactional system and not frozen files), and 36 Theatre Minors, according to the latest statistical report from Chris Ferland as of March 25, 2015. Numbers of Dance Minors have stayed in the 40-50 range from 2012-2015. Before that the Dance Minor numbers were in the 30 range. In addition, we serve over 300 students per semester in the core curriculum through our Theatrical Heritage and GC2Y courses. Likewise, we serve the entire Milledgeville community through theatre and dance events.

The Dance Program, once under the auspices of Continuing Education and then the Music Department, was placed under the Theatre Department in fall 2008. Since that time, it has been fully integrated under Theatre and is overseen by the Department Chair. The Dance Minor Program mission is

supportive of, and parallel to, the liberal arts mission of Georgia College which fosters creative thinking, community outreach and engagement, and interdisciplinary studies. Students in our Dance Minor Program develop not only their dance technique, but also a well-rounded intellectual capacity. The Dance Minor Program provides students with opportunities to study dance within an environment conducive to research, exploration, and performance. Students are encouraged and expected to pursue the physical, scholarly, and imaginative aspects of dance while enriching their communication skills and creativity.

In the 2014-15 year, we have had 4 Dance Minors accepted to M.F.A. programs in prestigious universities in which all four received full scholarships. These Minors competed with Majors from all over the country to get those limited spots in graduate schools.

For the past two years, our Dance Instructors with Continuing Education, hosted over 400 dancers from all over the U.S., including California, at the American College Dance Association festival on campus. It was so successful that consideration was originally being given to holding it here at Georgia College again in 2016. It is prestigious to be chosen to host.

The Dance Minor is served by one full-time Director of Dance who carries an MFA degree in Dance, and, new this year, one full-time Lecturer of Dance with an MFA degree in Dance. The program offers the full continuum of classes from Dance Pedagogy, Dance History, Dance Composition, Tap Dance, Modern Dance I and II, Modern Dance Workshop, Jazz Dance, Ballet I and II, Ballet Workshop, Dance Improvisation and Dance Practicum. With 50 academic Dance Minors and an additional 30 students taking dance classes for credit, the Dance Program shows off its rigor in the professional quality GC Dance Concert. In addition, we have added a Dance Concert called *Bountiful* each year.

The Community Dance classes within the Department of Theatre, also overseen by the Director of Dance, are served by an additional three instructors, bringing the total number of Community Dance instructors to five. Some 200-240 dancers from age three to adult take paid classes and then appear in four sold-out performances (including one weekday matinee for local school districts) of *The Nutcracker* at Christmas and the Community Dance Concert in spring. The income from this Community Dance program pays a good portion of the salary of the Director of Dance. Moreover, the Community Dance program offers engaged learning and outreach to the community (including the Veteran's Home, work with anti-violence against women with the Women's Center) and is considered to be the highest caliber dance program in the Milledgeville area, which includes two additional independent dance studios. Georgia College has won Best Dance Studio and Best Annual Event (for *The Nutcracker*) from the Union-Recorder for 5 consecutive years.

The department has sponsored or co-sponsored numerous national dance companies as guest artists to work with our students, including: Rennie Harris Puremovement Hip Hop Dance Company and Liz Lerman Dance Exchange through an NEA grant to the Theatre Department, Ballet Ethnic and Alvin Ailey II through Allied Arts, and more. The nationally renowned Liz Lerman Dance Exchange from Washington, D.C. actually created and performed an original dance piece with our dance students. The original dance piece, which included disabled residents as well as counselors of the Life Enrichment Center of Baldwin County, was presented for the public. We just won another NEA grant to bring this troupe to Georgia College in April 2015 to do a Civil War Field Guide on the observance of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these events in Milledgeville. Likewise, we have won an NEA grant for March 2016 to bring Rennie Harris Puremovement Hip Hop Dance back again.

The dance instructors also bring important choreography skills to the Theatre productions, both musical and non-musical, as well as master classes in movement, dance for musical theatre, movement for the Theatre Major, and Alexander Technique which is a specific pedagogy for actors.

The scope of the department, as described above, is much too great to simply call it the Theatre Department. We are proud of our dance discipline and believe it should be recognized along with Theatre in our department name. We, therefore, kindly request a name change to Department of Theatre and Dance to acknowledge the full range of artistic endeavors pursued within the department. Thank you for your kind consideration.