

Brock University Faculty of Humanities Brock University - Faculty of Humanities
Department of Dramatic Arts (DART)
Strategic Plan: From Priorities to Actions
August 2013 (v. 15.01.15)

Vision

The Department of Dramatic Arts of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts at Brock University (DART) is an innovative centre for integrated studies of performance praxis and pedagogy. Through a progressive curriculum and departmental performance culture, and the faculty's scholarly and creative research, we aim to create the artist-scholar-educator leaders of tomorrow. The artist-scholar-educator, in our vision, is one who moves confidently between theory and practice and possesses the skill set to engage local, national, and global publics with imagination, insight, integrity, and creativity. The Department's curriculum provides a dynamic integration of foundational learning across a range of concentrations of study, while also providing opportunities for specialized, advanced study. Students are exposed to studio practices, methodologies in research and criticism, as well as educational and applied theatre learning in local and global contexts. Our concentrations of study are: Theatre Praxis, Drama In Education and Applied Theatre, Performance, and Production and Design. All concentrations are oriented towards experiential learning, interdisciplinary enquiry, and engagement with historical and contemporary models in order to illuminate the knowledge, the relationships, and the historicity of dramatic arts' role as a constitutive force in world societies. We encourage graduates to use drama, theatre, and performance to effect change in their world.

Mission

Our mission is to develop a program that will be a destination in Canada for its particular niche and pedagogical innovations in "praxis." Praxis refers to the synthesis of theory and practice as the basis for social understanding and change. We seek to advance praxis by integrating interdisciplinary research, teaching, and creation, such that the theoretical study of theatre as a cultural practice becomes embodied and lived, and presents the conditions of possibility for civic engagement and social responsibility.

Profile

The Department of Dramatic Arts has been hailed as "cutting edge", "the best kept secret in Ontario", and "among the most interesting and innovative" theatre programs in the country by the Director of the University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Our program has established itself

as "a hot-house of activity, with a bright, active young faculty, engaged students, and committed staff", as noted by the Department's external reviewers in 2007. The reviewers also noted that the "course offerings are ambitious, exciting, relevant and forward looking." We are on the cutting edge of theatre studies which, as a field, has witnessed an increased emphasis in praxis-based methodologies.* Through their own engagements with praxis, including partnerships with theatre and performing arts institutions and the cultural community of the Niagara Region and beyond, students of the Department of Dramatic Arts are exposed to current developments in the field of theatre studies and graduate from the program at the forefront of disciplinary innovations. The success and rate of student placements, post-graduation, attest to the quality of DART's curriculum and the efficacy of its teaching in this field of study.

The Department of Dramatic Arts is marked by a vibrant and rigorous culture of scholarly research and creative activity. Faculty are members of an extensive array of national and international research and creative professional organizations, including the American Educational Research Association, the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), Canadian Actors' Equity Association, the Canadian Association for Theatre Research (CATR), the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, the Centre for Academic Integrity, the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), the Montréal Working Group on Circus, Performance Studies international (PSi), the Prague Quadrennial of Scenography, Associated Designers of Canada (ADC), the Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology (CITT), L'Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec (APASQ) and the Société québécoise d'études théâtrales (SQET), amongst numerous others. Four of seven tenured or tenure-track faculty members have held SSHRC grants in recent years, and faculty regularly receive funding from numerous other internal and external bodies including the Ontario Arts Council, the Metcalfe Foundation, the Laidlaw Foundation, the St. Catharines and Area Arts Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK), the British Academy, and the Humanities Research Institute. Many of these awards have supported theatre practice in play development, dramaturgy, production, and touring, as well as more conventional scholarly research. Dramatic Arts faculty are particularly enterprising in their capacity to bring together like-minded colleagues both within and beyond Brock University, as is evidenced by the number of conferences that faculty not only attend, but also instigate and deliver in collaboration with other institutions locally, nationally, and internationally.**

Faculty are developing a significant body of publications and editorial work in the discipline's leading journals and in national and international essay collections, and an emerging track record of monograph and edited volume publications. They engage in professional and community-engaged theatre and performance practice, and short film and television production. The relevance and impact of DART faculty research is evident in the increasing number of international keynote and guest lecture invitations. Faculty regularly contribute to the creative life of the campus and the region by creating productions in collaboration with student actors and technicians. Many of the above activities are both grounded in and contribute to an evolving culture of praxis central to the Department's orientation and mandate.

The Department consists of eight faculty positions: one at the rank of full professor, six at the associate level, one at the assistant level, and one essential ILTA who has been with us since 2006. In 2013-14, and given our faculty sabbaticals (1.5 positions), transition to retirement (1 position), and administrative and service responsibilities (Chair of Department, Director of graduate SCLA program at MLLC), our full-time faculty are providing leadership with their teaching load of 11 credits in a total complement of 41 DART-programmed courses (not including DART cross-listed courses programmed and resourced by other departments) to 244 students with Dramatic Arts as their Major subject. We are currently straining to contain our pedagogical, production, and creative research activity in our facilities in the basement of Schmon Tower, and eagerly anticipate the new facility in downtown St. Catharines (198 St. Paul, opening 2015), which will provide a more adequate physical context.

Our public profile boasts two high caliber undergraduate productions a year — well attended by the university community, the general public, and schools throughout the region — which contribute to the cultural fabric of St. Catharines. Additional public performance programs such as the One Acts Festival and the capstone fourth-year collective creation performance attract sold-out audiences. Equally significant course-based outcomes and faculty research

endeavours in Drama in Education and Applied Theatre (for example Dart 3F93: Social Issues Theatre for Community Engagement and related student club-generated performances; DART 3F98: Alternative Forms of Theatre; and faculty and student led projects such as Mirror Theatre) regularly engage local audiences in provocative explorations of learning, community and social justice both on-campus and off. The productions and outcomes are made possible by the considerable work of one part-time and two full-time staff members, as well as the SFPA/DART Production Manager. Our staff are also deployed in teaching skills laboratories and providing university services, such as costume and property rentals and the execution of the enormously successful annual General Brock Soiree fundraiser.

*As evidenced in the formation of programs such as Performance as Public Practice at the University of Texas at Austin; the Erasmus Mundus Master of Arts in International Performance Research jointly run by the University of Warwick (UK), the University of Arts in Belgrade (Serbia), and Trinity College, Dublin (Ireland); the Department of Drama at Queen Mary, University of London; the Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies at the University of Warwick; the Centre for Applied Theatre Research at the University of Manchester; and the University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies; and the formation of working groups at major associations such as ATHE, ASTR, and CATR, all of which emphasize the productive and critical potentialities in praxis.

** See, for example, DART's interdisciplinary conferences "Metastasizing Capital: The Logic of Unbridled Growth" (2006) and "Madness Manifest: Creativity, Art, and the Margins of Mental Health" (2008); Panamerican Routes/Rutas Panamericanas, an international festival and conference on performance and human rights in the Americas in joint partnership with Aluna Theatre and Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto (2012 & 2014); the Lyric Canada conferences (2010 & 2014); and a symposium on actor training at the Magnetic North Festival (2011). Additionally, faculty members have been integral to the organization of national and international conferences with associations such as PSi #16, ATHE, CATR, IFTR, amongst others.

Values

The following statements of values give expression to our collective efforts in coherence with the 2010 Brock University Integrated Plan:

- 1. We foster a creative research environment to provide the vision and the drive that will make the Marilyn I. Walker School for the Fine and Performing Arts a centre of excellence.
- 2. We value excellence in our pedagogy and we foster teamwork, respect, and collaboration among departmental members to encourage a rich departmental culture and learning atmosphere.
- 3. We value the transdisciplinarity of our field and the function we perform as an important linking component in a faculty of Humanities where fine and performing arts are the living dialogue of digital and interactive media, visual and spatial poetics, music and lyric expression, ancient and modern cultures, languages and literatures, narrative, argument, and philosophical traditions. Interdisciplinarity is at the heart of DART's curriculum.
- 4. We encourage international pursuits in faculty research and student learning. We value the reciprocity between artistic, educational, and scholarly practice, which transforms Niagara's cultural reality and reaches far beyond.
- 5. We believe theatre is a social philosophy which in action generates respect, justice, and good citizenship.

Strategic Priorities

Key strategic priorities include:

- Maintain and develop a creative research environment for faculty, students, and staff.
- Achieve and secure baseline f/t faculty teaching and research productivity for our undergraduate cohort.
- Maintain effective, meaningful, and appropriate learning environments by effectively managing course delivery methods and scale.
- Maintain scholarly and creative laboratories (including libraries, studios, shops, and theatre) for faculty and student research, teaching, and public presentation.

1. Ensure Brock is a preferred place to work and study

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|---|---|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| Maintain and develop a creative research environment for faculty, students and staff. | Integrate creative research into the curriculum through productions, theatre creation and production, public performance, master classes, and scholarly presentations including symposia and publications. Promote professional training for faculty, staff, and students. Leverage professional partnerships (Stratford and Shaw Festivals and other local arts organizations in the Niagara and GTA regions) Celebrate the noteworthy accomplishments of faculty, students, and alumni through presentations and awards and in both internal and external communication media. | Sustained success in grants application and other entrepreneurial initiatives. Successful publication in peer-reviewed outlets. Recognition of creative and scholarly research via reviews and awards and positive external evaluations of creative research projects. Quality and quantity of research projects utilizing new knowledge and skills. Increased number of professional partners and student placements in schools, graduate schools, and cultural institutions. Quality and quantity of programs offering advanced learning and exchange such as Walker Cultural Leaders. | ongoing | variable |

Innovate program teaching and learning to generate a pervasive culture of research and creative activity.

- Continue to review internal pedagogical and research learning as well as of comparator programs in regional, national, and international contexts.
- 2. Hold regular Department meetings and annual retreats focusing on curriculum analysis by Concentration Committees, leading to UPC/ARC adjustments.
- 3. Maintain regular communication with high school teaching and learning communities to advance curricular development:
 - Survey of high school teaching and learning community
 - Survey of upper-level scholarly and professional opportunities
 - Survey of employment and workforce demand, short and long term, as appropriate
- 4. Provide internal opportunities for scholarly discussion and exchange, such as Talkbacks and Symposia.

Enhance and sustain perception of attractive and authentic reputation.

1. Communicate and represent through marketing and communication channels the successful and noteworthy accomplishments of faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

- Audience increase and development for faculty and student outreach endeavours.
 - Quantity and quality of faculty innovation in scholarly, educational, and creative communities
- Increase in quality of student applicant profile as well as quantity of quality applications from a broader geographic catchment.
- Meeting or exceeding appropriate university-set targets for majors student registrations.
- Development of innovative learning collaborations with colleges (articulation agreements), universities, and other institutions of PSE, as well as credible professional institutions (Shaw and Stratford Festivals).
- Public and professional identification of Brock as a preferred program for dramatic arts study.
- Approval at Senate ARC/UPC of program proposals.

 Presence of Department students, graduates, and students/alumni in communication vehicles, press, online presence, social media. ongoing

variable

ongoing

Dedicated communications and marketing support from new and/or existing resources (additional task-load).

2. Support Brock's undergraduate student-centred focus while maintaining excellence in graduate education

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|--|--|--|----------|--|
| Prioritize pedagogical excellence and foster teamwork, respect, and collaboration. | Collaborate with the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to develop effective course delivery, pedagogical methodologies, and methods of evaluation. Encourage synoptic and synthetic learning across courses. Review the curriculum on a continual basis. Model good pedagogy in the classroom, as is integral to the Drama in Education and Applied Theatre curriculum. | Successful course evaluations Invitations to present at pedagogical conferences Successful external review in 2016 | ongoing | Dedicated data analysis service |
| Achieve and secure baseline f/t faculty teaching and research productivity for our undergraduate cohort. | Secure a stable minimum full-time faculty cohort in each of the four areas of department program teaching and research concentrations in this order of priority: Regularize by transitioning to f/t tenure-track the DART ILTA position in Voice and Performance, an essential position in the Department program delivery since 2006, commencing in July 2014 Replace the f/t faculty in Drama in Education/Performance currently transitioning to retirement in July | DART ILTA position in Voice and Performance becomes f/t tenure track (2/2). New tenure track hire in Drama in Education/Performance. | 2013-14 | Two credit-load cost Cost savings with new appointment salary level |
| | 2014 with a f/t tenure track faculty appointment commencing in July 2014 | | | Salar y level |

| | plan for addition of ILTA position in Production, Design and Technical Theatre in order to support core teaching, production, and outcome realization. | New ILTA position in Production, Design and Technical Theatre | 2015-16 | New salary (replacing part of existing CUPE p/t contracts and assuming part of support staff salary budget load) |
|---|---|--|---------|--|
| Develop curriculum that supports mobility of our undergraduate student cohort, allows for incorporation of off-campus learning experiences, and facilitates the participation of guest students and faculty in our undergraduate program. | Develop innovative and sustainable learning opportunities that generate recruitment and raise reputation (as resources and strategic opportunities become available): Plan and establish one-year BFA as a fifth year completion of the existing Honours Major degree with Concentration in Performance Plan and establish MA in Education and Applied Theatre Collaborate with regional colleges for joint program delivery design Collaborate with the Stratford Festival to further develop existing Stratford Academy Collaborate with Shaw Festival to develop learning and dissemination opportunities for students, faculty, and the community, including the existing Shaw Internship Collaborate with cross-border PSE such as U Buffalo/SUNY within existing bilateral agreement or new initiatives. Facilitate course-credit-earning placements and apprentice/internship opportunities with cultural organizations, local schools, and related service-learning initiatives (e.g. DART | New BFA program New MA in Education and Applied Theatre Expanded course options with Shaw and Stratford Festivals Increased amount of student engagement with community institutions and their leaders A sustained number of 3P97 Tutorial and Guided Study opportunities for students Increased number of transfer students completing their degrees with DART Increased number of guest students | ongoing | |

3P97, DART 4P91). 3. Plan, develop and deliver spring and summer-session teaching and learning opportunities for the regular DART cohort, other Brock University students, visiting students and both regular and guest/international faculty. 4. Provide advising and support for student applications to post-Brock studies, professional development, and employment opportunities, utilizing guest professionals and networks. Maintain effective, 1. Continue to enable low-enrolment Sustained course enrolment to cap 2013-15 meaningful, and learning experiences in studio-intensive appropriate learning Positive evaluations of course learning subject areas. environments by effectively 2. Provide TAs and Co-ordinators to experiences in university and national managing course delivery support large population-format course testing tools. Vibrant seminar culture that prepares methods and scale. delivery, hybrid course delivery, and online course delivery where graduate TAs as future pedagogues. appropriate. Metrics that demonstrate the practice 3. Develop hybrid learning experiences in of accountability, fiscal responsibility, collaboration with CPI, leading towards and stewardship in effective learning, new online course development in program design, and delivery (see also existing and new subject-appropriate priority objective 7, below) fields. Maintain and develop 1. Provide activities that contribute to the Increase quality and quantity of student ongoing opportunities for studentrichness and complexity of Independent productions. centered teaching, student undergraduate learning, such as: Maximize facility use in the new learning, and personal • Independent production downtown centre and encourage development in coproposals and productions student activities to migrate and curricular activities. Appropriate associated student proliferate there. clubs and projects (e.g. Brock Increased and more complete reporting Music Theatre, Turn Around of co-curricular experience and activity Project, portfolios. Brock Improv) Faculty led research and

| | dissemination . | | 2014 launch and ongoing |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Provide the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Brock as well as other universities and academies with well-prepared top-achieving graduates to pursue innovative secondary and tertiary degrees of study. | Pursue curricular program development and delivery that nurtures critical, engaged, original, and innovative thinkers and creators, whose rigorous intellectual training prepares them for advanced level scholarship. Provide a wide range and a balance of innovative interdisciplinary, experiential, and traditional undergraduate courses. | Increased rate of successful applications, scholarships and awards, and program completion at masters and doctoral programs levels. Successful graduation of achieving students in all concentration areas of the program. | ongoing |
| Prepare our students for leadership roles in an increasingly complex world through a variety of teaching and experiential learning approaches. | Develop closer liaisons with existing undergraduate programs that productively enhance and correlate with DART major concentrations, such as IASC. Develop the Co-op program and placement opportunities. Develop curriculum to increase international learning opportunities. (see also (6) below) Develop other university-wide courses: eg. Acting for Non-Actors DART 1F01. (achieved) | Increased rate of student employment post-graduation in arts and related fields. Increased visibility of DART graduates in the professional sphere. Increased pedagogical and professional collaboration with regional arts organizations such as the Shaw Festival, including employment of DART graduates by these organizations. | ongoing |
| | 5. Develop a regional niche program in design and technical production that exploits the creative capital of the professional and technical communities at the Shaw Festival. 6. Develop our multimedia resources to | | 2016 |
| See also (4) below | support creative development in interactive, digital pedagogies. | | ongoing |

3. Foster excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|--|---|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| Create working environment that sustains balanced and effective original inquiry for the faculty and student cohort, and facilitates the infusion of faculty teaching with dynamic and cutting-edge research activity. | Follow the NDWS (Normal Department Workload Standard) to enable a taskload with appropriate time for original inquiry for the faculty and student cohort. Encourage the infusion of research activity into the curriculum. Continue to seek external research grants (SSHRC, Canada Council etc) that integrate student learning with faculty research. | Practice of annual reporting that represents appropriately balanced workload responsibilities, as well as appropriately measured achievement and completion of research and creative projects, both short and long term. Maintenance of current high levels of faculty-driven independent productions, book, chapter and article publication, conference presentation, and other subject-field appropriate expressions of engaged and achieved productivity. Continued success with grants and awards for research, creation and teaching activities. | ongoing | |
| Facilitate and lead in knowledge exchange. | Work to secure opportunities for dissemination, presentation, and conversation among peer communities. Seek and secure participation and/or governance responsibilities in appropriate associations, councils and venues of theatre, including organizations of dramatic arts, performance studies, creation and presentation, education. | Successful hosting of CATR and associated/related organizations during Congress 2014. Sustained faculty and student contribution to organs of associations and councils. | 2013-14 | |
| Maintain scholarly and creative laboratories (including libraries, studios, | Effectively conceive, design, equip, and maintain facilities for the active research, teaching, and creation | Successful opening and sustained functional deployment of the 198 St. Paul facility project, including | 2008-15 | |

| shops, and theatre) for faculty and student research, teaching, and public presentation. | activities of the Department cohort.Plan for sufficient and efficient technical support of our laboratories by maintaining and developing our | performance, production, and technology-development spaces as well as learning commons and information technology resources. | | |
|--|--|---|------|--------------|
| | technical staff cohort, also including learning-related employment opportunities for DART students in key | Regularization and permanence of the MIWSFPA/Dramatic Arts Production Manager position. | 2015 | Cost neutral |
| | support assistance positions such as: plan to increase faculty cohort x1 to support academic teaching program development that responds to 198 St. Paul increase technical support by x1.5 student technical theatre production assistant | Regularization, extension to full-time permanent of the Technical Theatre Production Assistant position. Replacement of upcoming f/t Technical Director position retirement. Sustained and adequate funding for the student-filled positions in order to meet DART needs. | 2016 | ~\$30,000 |
| See also (1) above, (4) below | student costume depot/wardrobe assistants. | | | |

4. Serve the social, cultural and economic well-being of the University, as well as the local, national, and global communities

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|---|---|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| Promote theatre as a social philosophy vital to good citizenship. | Continue to develop curriculum and pedagogy in which the history and values of democracy and power relations are interrogated, creatively and theoretically. Model good citizenship by the fostering of a respectful working environment and departmental culture. Supporting cultural and community organizations through partnerships and | A positive, respectful pedagogical and working environment. Increased partnership and collaboration activity with community organizations. Enhanced and ever-expanding dialogue with our audiences and community about the mutually informing relationship between performing arts and citizenship. | ongoing | |

| | creative research endeavours. 4. Encourage educational outreach and dialogue by conceiving enhanced mainstage and outcome activities, situated on campus and in remote locations, including virtual presences. | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------|---|
| Maintain and enhance opportunities for social, cultural, and economic engagement by and for | Develop new programming and partnerships that respond to the new facility at 198 St. Paul across the calendar year. | Increased rates of community participation and active response, aided by potential development of presentation subscription series. | 2015- 2017 | Additional faculty and staff facilitation |
| diverse communities. | Maintain and develop participation in the MIWSFPA Walker Cultural Leaders series as well as Department-initiated guest artist and scholar presentations | | ongoing and 2014 | |
| See also (1) above | 3. Increase mainstage presentation program from 2 to 4 principal activities, when resources are available | | 2016 | |

5. Encourage transdisciplinary initiatives

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|---|---|--|----------|---------------------------------|
| Maintain and develop the transdisciplinarity of our field and foster links across the university and broader community. | Facilitate inter-department and interfaculty collaboration in creative research endeavours. Encourage development of mainstage productions and departmental production outcomes as vehicles for cross-departmental participation. Foster faculty research in performance studies, an inherently interdisciplinary field of inquiry. Support faculty teaching and | Increased dissemination of evidence and reports of transdisciplinary collaboration, including, for example, university-wide symposia. Increased, new opportunities for transdisciplinary collaboration issuing from current and future initiatives. | ongoing | |

| | collaborative conference activity with other units across the university. 5. Promote transdisciplinary profile via | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| | web and other outreach tools. | |
| | 6. Develop an internationalized curriculum | |
| | through the study of hemispheric and | |
| See also (3) above | global cultural practices. | |

6. Promote internationalization

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|---|--|--|----------|------------------------------------|
| Maintain and foster opportunities for scholarship and learning at international locations and by international guests in Niagara. See also (2) above | Collaborate with Brock International to advance existing and develop new opportunities for internationalization (e.g. in Scotland, Ireland, United Kingdom, United States, Ghana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Bermuda). Support international student initiatives such as the Turn Around Project. Encourage and support faculty participation in and organization of international conferences, festivals, and other creative activities. Calibrate the undergraduate course offerings at DART to facilitate 12-week exchange opportunities by local and international cohort. | Increased rate of participation of DART students in international learning experiences. Increased rate of participation by guest international students in DART community of learning, research, and creation/presentation. | ongoing | |

7. Practise accountability, fiscal responsibility, and stewardship

| Strategic Objectives | Strategic Actions | Measures of success | Timeline | Incremental Budget Implications |
|---|---|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| Sustained long term development of strategic scholarships, awards, and other significant methods to recognize meritorious accomplishment supported by internal and external donors and organizations. | Coordinated development of donor prospects in concert with Brock Advancement. | Increased funding of endowed and flow-though awards and scholarships. One new major award every three years. | ongoing | |
| Continue to practice accountability, fiscal responsibility, and stewardship. | | | ongoing | |