

Theatre Diversity Report  
2009-2010

The Theatre arts department once again collaborated with the Intercultural Programs Office to co-produce a guest production that dealt with issues of diversity in a theatrical program. In September 2009, the hereandnow Theatre Company brought their production of *Telling Our Stories* to Porter Theatre for a wonderful evening of performance. Hereandnow uses the voices of its diverse cast to reach out through a universal theme: everyone comes from a unique experience, and everyone has a story to tell. The department has been very grateful for the partnership with Elena Yee and the ICP office and plays to bring 1-2 productions in the 2010-2011 academic year that both enriches our production season while highlighting themes of diversity, multi-culturalism, and international performance.

The department has also been taking a hard look at our current curriculum and what steps might be taken to expand our pedagogical breadth in teaching plays and theory from Non-Western sources and historically under-represented sources such as women and American theatre artists of color. We have wrestled with our current curriculum, specifically TA 1 Great Literature of the Theatre, and TA 120-121 Theatre History I and II, to find what could be taken out to include more diverse content. One of the challenges is that those courses include the “basic canon” and so to not teach the existing material seems like a pedagogical failure for our program. Currently, we are in conversation to introduce 1 or 2 new courses that are interdisciplinary in focus and will expand our curriculum. The two courses will focus on World Theatrical Literature and Race and Ethnicity on the American Stage and will be team-taught by professors with expertise in these areas from varying departments. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the courses, the process for creating them will take a bit of time. Steps will include:

- 1) Consult with Provost to request course approval and funds to hire adjunct for existing courses in faculty rotation.
- 2) Approach targeted faculty from other departments to gauge interest in team-taught course.
- 3) Consult with Chairs of affected departments to work out load and rotation concerns with new courses.
- 4) Work with GE and Dept. curriculums to integrate new courses with academic programs.

The department recognizes the challenging work ahead but is excited by the future possibilities of an enriched curriculum in line with our college-wide and departmental goals and outcomes for our students.

Lastly, the department did make a full time tenure track hire this year. Unfortunately, our 2 finalists did not include faculty of color or women. The committee worked very hard to expand our pool but each of the applicants representing diversity either did not have the full range of skills and experience necessary to the position, did not fully understand the Christian orientation of the college, or dropped out of the pool due to the Community

Life Statement and the official college stance on Homosexuality. It is certainly an emerging trend for the college that there are applicants who fully believe and endorse the articles of faith but advocate for the full inclusion of the GLBT in the Church. This is also part of the fabric of the ongoing tension between “diversity” and the choices that the college will face in relation to how much of change it can accommodate without losing its core identity.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Chair, Theatre Arts  
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