



June 28, 2021

Dr. Michael Baumgartner
Executive Director
Coordinating Commission for
Postsecondary Education
140 N. 8th Street, Suite 300
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Michael:

Enclosed is a copy of the proposal to create the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at UNL. The proposal was approved by the Board of Regents at the June 25, 2021 meeting. Also enclosed is the Proposal for New Instructional Program Form 92-40.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Fritz, PhD
Executive Vice President and Provost

Enclosures

c: Chancellor Ronnie Green
Executive Vice Chancellor Elizabeth Spiller
Dean Chuck O'Connor, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts
Vice Provost David Jackson

**COORDINATING COMMISSION
FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

140 N. 8th Street, Suite 300
Lincoln, NE 68508

Telephone: (402) 471-2847
FAX: (402) 471-2886

PROPOSAL FOR NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
Form 92-40

SECTION I

Institution Submitting Proposal: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Title of Program: Acting

CIP Code: 50.0506

Organizational Unit in which program will be located:

Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film

Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts

Name of contact person in the event additional information is needed: Dr. Susan M. Fritz

Telephone: 402-472-5242

Degree, Diploma, or Certificate to be offered (use separate submittal for each level):

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting

Proposed date to initiate program: When approved by the Coordinating Commission

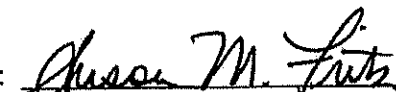
List the location(s) where this program will be offered: UNL

If the program has a projected ending date, please so indicate:

Date approved by Governing Board: June 25, 2021

(Attach all documents related to this proposal upon which the Governing Board made its decision to approve the proposal.)

Chief Executive Officer's or other Authorized Officer's signature: _____


Susan M. Fritz

TO: The Board of Regents Addendum XI-A-7
Academic Affairs Committee

MEETING DATE: June 25, 2021

SUBJECT: Creation of a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval to create a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL)

PREVIOUS ACTIONS: June 28, 2018 – The Board approved the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Emerging Media Arts in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at UNL.
June 10, 2005 – The Board approved the renaming of the Department of Theatre Arts to the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film at UNL.
The UNL Bachelor of Arts in Theatre was established prior to modern records of Board approvals.

EXPLANATION: The proposed Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting (BFA) is a professional baccalaureate degree intended to provide the budding actor with rigorous, professional-level actor training that challenges and enlivens the creative spirit. Building on the success of the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre with an option in performance, the new major will significantly augment the current offerings by educating and engaging the individual artist through the immersion in a sequence of in-depth experiential learning practices developed to prepare the student for a career in theatre, film, and new media. Upon receiving approval, UNL will stop enrolling students in the Performance Option and provide the opportunity for current students to complete their program of study or convert to the new major. No new funds will be required to offer this degree.
This proposal has been reviewed by the Council of Academic Officers; it also has been reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee.

PROGRAM COST: \$0 (No new faculty or resources are needed to operate this program.)

SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A

SPONSORS: Elizabeth Spiller
Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
Ronnie D. Green, Chancellor
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

RECOMMENDED: /s/ Susan M. Fritz
Executive Vice President and Provost

DATE: May 21, 2021



April 9, 2021

Susan Fritz, Executive Vice President and Provost
University of Nebraska
3835 Holdrege Street
Lincoln, NE 68583-0745

Dear EVPP Fritz,

I am forwarding materials related to a proposal to create a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting to be administered by the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts. A current option in Performance within the B.A. in Theatre has been successful and this new major expands the existing program into a stand-alone degree. (The Performance option will be discontinued when the new program begins.) The core courses are already established, there are adequate existing resources, and a sufficient number of quality faculty are available.

This proposed BFA in Acting program is designed to respond to the growing professional preparation requirements of the industry and allow UNL to improve our competitive stance in the higher education marketplace. It has the full endorsement of the Academic Planning Committee and it has my approval. I am requesting you approve it and that it be reported to the Board of Regents at an upcoming meeting.

Sincerely,

Ronnie D. Green, Ph.D.
Chancellor

- c: Kurt Geisinger, Chair, Academic Planning Committee
- Elizabeth Spiller, Executive Vice Chancellor
- Chuck O'Connor, Dean, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts
- Christina Kirk, Director, Johnny Carson School of Theatre & Film
- Christopher Marks, Associate Dean, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts
- Mike Zeleny, Associate to the Chancellor and APC Secretary
- Renee Batman, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs
- Suzi Tamerius, Project Coordinator, Academic Affairs
- Karen Griffin, Coordinator of Faculty Governance, Academic Planning Committee
- David Jackson, Vice Provost
- Cathy Robertus, Executive Assistant to the EVPP

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

New Undergraduate Major or Degree

I. Descriptive Information

Name of Institution Proposing New Major or Degree
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Name of Proposed Major or Degree
Acting
Degree to be Awarded to Graduates of the Major
Bachelor of Fine Arts
Other Majors or Degrees Offered in this Field by Institution
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, with an option in Performance (The Performance option will be discontinued upon approval of proposed BFA in Acting.)
CIP Code <i>[IRADS can help with CIP codes or browse here: http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/Default.aspx?y=55]</i>
50.0506 Acting
Administrative Units for the Major or Degree
Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine & Performing Arts
Proposed Delivery Site
University of Nebraska-Lincoln City Campus
Program will be Offered <i>[full program, not individual courses]</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-campus only <input type="checkbox"/> Distance only <input type="checkbox"/> Both (on-campus and distance)
Date Approved by the Governing Board
Pending
Proposed Date the New Major or Degree will be Initiated
Upon approval by the Coordinating Commission

II. Details

A. Purpose of the Proposed Major or Degree:

The proposed Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting (BFA) is a professional baccalaureate degree intended to provide the budding actor with rigorous, professional-level actor training that challenges and enlivens the creative spirit. Building on the success of the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre with an option in performance, the new major will significantly augment the current offerings by educating and engaging the individual artist through the immersion in a sequence of in-depth experiential learning practices developed to prepare the student for a career in theatre, film, and new media. Approval of this proposed degree will allow UNL to improve our competitive stance in the higher education marketplace by satisfying the national demand for a progressive and comprehensive actor training program focusing on the education, application, and professional preparation required for student success in a selective and growing industry.

The proposed BFA in Acting builds on the success of the current BA in Theatre with an option in Performance; the Performance Option will be discontinued upon approval of the proposed BFA in Acting. (For details on the transition between programs, please refer to section III.E. below.) The new program, therefore, is not entirely new, but represents growth, responds to market demands, and offers more opportunities for recruiting and retaining a higher caliber of student. While the overall enrollment targets for the new program will not represent an increase over the current program, the new curriculum is designed to be more attractive to prospective students and improve retention of students enrolled in the program.

B. Rationale for Proposed Major or Degree

The entertainment industry has experienced profound changes over the last decade. The rapid growth in streaming services and new media content that includes animation, gaming, and other virtual platforms have provided new and exciting performance opportunities beyond traditional film and television for actors. Live performance venues continue to produce engaging and entertaining theatrical works across the country generating over \$9 billion dollars in revenue annually¹. According to the marketing firm, Mordor Intelligence, the “media & entertainment market landscape is expected to register a CAGR of over 13% during the forecast period (2020 – 2025).”² Because this changing industry continues to seek trained and experienced performers, it is essential that a professional degree for the contemporary actor include both foundational and advanced training practices which combine experiential instruction with conventional and emerging techniques. The proposed BFA in Acting curriculum includes extensive training in script analysis, voice and movement techniques, acting styles, on-camera performance, business and marketing practices, and new media integration. The synthesis of these skills learned, and their application, will provide the student with a competitive advantage when entering the business of live theatre or the industry of film, television, and new media.

In 1968, the Nebraska Repertory Theater (NRT) came into being at UNL and subsequently produced over 40 years of summer theatre entertainment for the Lincoln community. In 1988, NRT became the only professional Equity³ theatre in the state of Nebraska. In 2017, under the artistic direction of Andy Park, the NRT became the primary producing entity for the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film (JCSTF). The NRT is the only professional university theatre in the BIG 10 and UNL is one of only a select group of universities housing an Equity theatre. They are Louisiana State University (*Swine Palace Theatre*), Syracuse University (*Syracuse Stage*), University of Connecticut (*Connecticut Repertory Theater*), St. Edward’s University (Mary Moody Northen Theater) in Austin, Tx, Centenary University (*Centenary Stage Company*) in Hackettstown, New Jersey, Brown University (Trinity Rep) in Providence, Rhode Island, and the University of Tennessee (*Clarence Brown Theatre*) in Knoxville. BFA in Acting majors at the Johnny Carson School will have the opportunity to perform with the NRT during their training and to engage in a variety of theatrical genres and styles while learning the professional expectations and discipline required of the theatre professional. Working on the NRT stage provides student actors with the unique opportunity to earn points towards membership in Actors’ Equity Association (AEA), the professional union for actors and stage managers. Union membership universally identifies actors as professionals and provides greater access to Equity auditions throughout the country, including those in top regional theatres and Broadway productions.

The National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) is the principal accreditation body for theatre programs throughout the United States. All theatre degrees that the JCSTF offer, including undergraduate and graduate theatre specific programs, meet NAST accreditation standards, so the institution enjoys NAST accreditation. The School is committed to meeting NAST standards for the proposed BFA in Acting in order to maintain this

¹ <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/live-performance-theaters-industry/>.

² <https://mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/media-and-entertainment-market-landscape>.

³ Actors’ Equity Association, founded in 1913, represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers nationwide. Actors’ Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. Please visit <https://www.actorsunion.org>.

institutional accreditation and has been consulting with NAST during the development of this proposal. There are no additional resource needs or costs related to the accreditation of the BFA in Acting since the university is already accredited by NAST.

Once approved and implemented, the proposed major will be one of only fifty (50) NAST accredited BFA in Acting programs in the US and the only accredited program in the state of Nebraska. Of our BIG 10 competitors that offer a BFA in Acting degree, including the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Illinois, Indiana University, Rutgers University, and Pennsylvania State University, only Penn State enjoys NAST accreditation. The proposed BFA in Acting at the University of Nebraska would subsequently represent one of only two such accredited acting programs in the BIG 10 conference and will, we feel, attract Nebraska's most talented high school students who are seeking professional actor training. This will also help establish UNL as a destination for other aspiring actors across the nation. With the recent departmental commitment to greater regional outreach and national recruitment of acting students, the program will be committed to attracting a high caliber cohort of diverse students seeking careers in the entertainment industry. The proposed program will accept sixteen (16) new BFA students per year with a total acting major population of sixty-four (64). These enrollment numbers will furnish improved focused instruction, engagement, and individual mentorship. The planned BFA in Acting will replace the *Performance Option* in the Theatre BA and grant students a more professionally focused and comprehensive major tailored to the needs of a burgeoning entertainment industry.

The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film (JCSTF) is committed to the N2025 (UNL's strategic plan) aspiration that "every person and every interaction matters." This is a core principle that will undoubtedly have a positive effect on both departmental recruitment and student retention by providing exceptional actor training, outstanding performance opportunities on stage and screen, and a commitment to personal and professional mentorship. It moreover provides a foundation on which to build a professional BFA in Acting program that is "unparalleled among public research universities in access, opportunity, innovation, and life-long experiential learning."⁴ By increasing local and national student recruitment, engaging in traditional and emerging media, and providing a multitude of opportunities for collaborative and creative expression, the BFA in Acting program will provide student actors with innovative experiences, impactful research and creative activities, interdisciplinary endeavors, community and industry engagement, and professional development opportunities contained in an inclusive and diverse environment.

Students who enroll in the program will participate in a curated sequence of classes that progress through active integration into live and recorded performances. With the recent opening of the Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, BFA in Acting students will have expanded opportunities to engage in advanced practices and other emerging techniques that include live motion capture, 3D animation enactment, green-screen work, and voice-over practices, which afford graduates significant advantages when entering the competitive entertainment industry. Whether working alongside professional actors at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, voicing an animated character, performing in a virtual platform, or devising an original solo performance, students in the BFA in Acting program will receive exceptional training and unparalleled experiences.

Graduates will enter an emergent entertainment industry with a comprehensive knowledge of both their craft and the business skills necessary to be competitive in their chosen field. Students will attend professional development seminars, as well as workshops with industry experts, that will support instruction in current professional practices for stage, film and other media. Students will leave the Carson School with the information and experience needed to become successful actor entrepreneurs. Ultimately, our students will become the content creators and storytellers that will shape the industry and the world. Whether on stage or screen, there has never been a better time to be an actor.

⁴ Donde Plowman and Will Smith, "Report of the N-150 Commission," <https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/report-of-the-n150-commission>.

C. Description of the Proposed Major or Degree:

The proposed BFA in Acting is a professional actor training program that balances foundational practice in theatre and film with exposure to specialized performance techniques such as voice-over, gaming, motion capture, and green screen work. Intended to replace the current BA in Theatre: Performance option, the BFA in Acting is designed as a progressive, forward-thinking approach to actor training, preparing graduates to become professionally ready, industry savvy actors. The program will be an essential part of the Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film providing world-class actor training for students residing in Nebraska and the nation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes are directly influenced by the National Association of Schools of Theater (NAST) which will serve as the accreditation body for the proposed program. As stated in the NAST 2020/2021 handbook, essential competencies, experiences, and opportunities in the BFA in Acting program will include:

- Demonstrated ability to act (i.e., to project oneself believably in word and action into imaginary circumstances, evoked through improvisation or text).
- Demonstrated ability to engage effectively in improvisations both by oneself and in an ensemble.
- Demonstrated ability to create characters convincingly from plays drawn from different genres and styles in an ensemble relationship with other actors.
- A developed technique for analyzing the specific tasks required in performing varied characters from written plays.
- Understanding of the specific demands of the acting styles for major periods and genres of dramatic literature and media.
- Clear, articulate, and expressive speech, normally with demonstrated ability to use appropriate tools and systems to learn and perform dialects, and the ability to perform effectively in verse plays.
- A flexible, strong, and controlled voice with trained breath support; appropriate vocal range and freedom from vocal and postural tension in rehearsal and performance; demonstrated ability to use the voice effectively as an instrument for characterization together with the ability to project the voice effectively in theatre spaces of varying sizes and in media productions.
- A flexible, relaxed, and controlled body trained in basic stage movement disciplines, including dance and mime; demonstrated ability to use the body effectively on stage as an instrument for characterization and to be responsive to changing time/rhythm demands and spatial relationships.
- An overview understanding of makeup materials and techniques.
- Demonstrated comprehension of the basic business procedures of the actor's profession including, but not limited to, audition procedures, resumes, and agents.
- Solo and ensemble performance experience in a variety of formal and informal settings shall be provided throughout the degree program. Students will participate in at least one fully produced major production during their course of study. In addition, performance of a significant role in at least one production during advanced study and no later than senior year is required. This performance need not be fully produced and may be in a medium other than live theatrical performance.

Admission criteria

Students must adhere to the admission standards established by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and be accepted to the university prior to acceptance into the BFA in Acting program.

Requirements for acceptance into the BFA in Acting program include the following:

- A successful audition and interview of the applicant conducted by the full-time performance faculty and School director. Auditions/Interviews can take place on campus or through digital submission and requires a consensus of all adjudicators for acceptance into the program.

Audition materials will include:

- Two (2) contrasting monologues;
- Thirty-two (32) bars of a song from a musical (optional);
- Resume;
- Headshot;
- Personal/Creative statement detailing the desire to train at UNL, creative interests, and future goals; and
- Two (2) personal references (includes one from high school/college instructor or administrator).

Students interested in the BFA in Acting program will be strongly encouraged to attend the Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film's Scholarship Audition Weekend (SAW) held each February on the campus of UNL.

Credit Hours and Course Requirements

The BFA in Acting program will include Theatre core courses (shared with the Design and Technical Production option in the current BFA in Theatre), additional major requirements, electives, and general education (ACE) courses. Degree requirements and associated credit hours are as follows:

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
Theatre Core	24
Additional Major Requirements	59
Electives	16
General Education (ACE)	30*
Total Credit Hours Required	120

** 9 credit hours of ACE related courses of the required 30 credit hours are satisfied in the degree plan. These approved courses include: THEA 112G (Introduction to Theatre-ACE 7), THEA 234 (Scripts in Production-ACE 2), and THEA 472 (Theatre Perspectives-ACE 10).*

Impact on Subject Codes

No changes to subject codes are needed.

Theatre Core

The core of the BFA in Acting program provides the student with a foundational understanding of script analysis, theatre history, and design principles inspiring a deeper understanding of the discipline. The majority of these courses are shared with the BFA in Theatre Design and Technical Production option in order to develop a consistent foundational understanding among all theatre majors. The synthesis of these areas of study provides the essential support necessary for project-based learning outcomes in additional core offerings, THEA 202 (Directing) and THEA 472 (Capstone).

First-year core courses:

- **THEA 112G-Introduction to Theatre**– Introduction to the forms and functions of theatre and dramatic literature in the historical development of Western cultural traditions. While the theatre always reflects the aesthetic and philosophical concerns of the cultural era, the objective of the course is to determine the unique aesthetics of the theatre as an art form by exploring such issues as the relationship between the literary text and the text in performance; the changing role of theatre in culture historically; the various theatre research methods (historical, critical, experimental).
- **THEA 234-Scripts in Production**– Survey of dramatic literature and texts in production, promoting a broad understanding of performed scripts. Approximately 12-15 plays and/or screenplays studied.

- **THEA 120-Principles of Design for Theatre and Film**– Introduction of the basic elements of design and the development of visual and perceptual skills. Develop an extensive portfolio of 2D and 3D visual projects through experimentation with various media.

Second-year core courses:

- **THEA 201-Technical Theatre Practice** – Basic theoretical and practical application of the technical theatre production, including scenery design, construction, use and requirements and related areas that are considered scenic or influence scenery, its design and construction. Related areas include types of stages, facilities, equipment and tool use and maintenance, materials, drafting fundamentals, painting, moving scenery, properties and safety.

Third-year core courses:

- **THEA 335/336-Theatre History (2 Semesters)** – Historical examination of Theatre from Ancient Greece through the present.
- **THEA 202-Directing**– Fundamental concepts of play direction, play selection, script analysis and interpretation, artistic choices, articulating of ideas, communication with actors, and critique. Rehearsal and presentation of realistic scenes.

Fourth-year core courses:

- **THEA 472-Theatre Perspectives (Capstone)** – Advanced study of theatre arts and crafts. Students will display proficiency in their discipline through the synthesis of skills learned resulting in the generation of a final project or performance.

Major Requirements

The BFA in Acting will provide experiential learning in foundational methods, advanced performance study, and emerging techniques. Students will gain experience in a variety of performance-based courses from classical to contemporary drama, beginning through advanced stage movement, comprehensive vocal training including accents, dialects, and voiceovers, stage combat, dance, film acting, and the exploration of new media performance.

The fifty-nine (59) hours required beyond the core complete a professionally focused program that will educate the student in both the art of performance and the business practices necessary for employment. By completing their training at the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, students will have developed the essential skills and entrepreneurial expertise necessary to become competitive in their industry.

Electives

There are sixteen (16) hours of electives required for the BFA in Acting. Of the sixteen hours, two (2) elective hours must be allocated for additional music or dance courses. The remaining hours can be used to satisfy a minor requirement outside of the major to strengthen the students' interdisciplinary knowledge or in their primary emphasis to encourage a deeper understanding of their discipline.

ACE

Thirty (30) credit hours of ACE (Achievement Centered Education) courses are required to satisfy the general education requirements at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Three (3) approved ACE courses, THEA 112G (Introduction to Theatre-ACE 7), THEA 234 (Scripts in Production-ACE 2), and THEA 472 (Theatre Perspectives-ACE 10) currently exist in the general Theatre curriculum and are included in the BFA in Acting core offerings. The courses satisfy nine (9) of the thirty (30) ACE credit hours required by the university for degree completion.

Grade Rules

As per university academic standards, all students accepted into the BFA in Acting program must maintain an overall 2.0 grade point average to remain in "good standing." Consistent with other programs in the college,

students must receive a "C" or better in courses required for the major. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in probationary action established by the university (see: <https://registrar.unl.edu/academic-standards/policies/academic-standards-undergrad/>). Given the importance of the cohort-based model of this program, students who have to retake a course to achieve the minimum "C" in required courses will remain with their original cohort in all other classes and activities, to the extent possible.

Pass/No Pass Policy

From the current (2020-21) UNL [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts

University regulations for the Pass/No Pass privilege state: The Pass/No Pass option is designed to be used by a student seeking to expand his/her intellectual horizons by taking courses in areas where he/she may have minimum preparation without adversely affecting his/her grade point average.

1. Neither the P nor the N grade contribute to a student's GPA.
2. P is interpreted to mean C or above. Some professional education courses require a C+ or above.
3. A change to or from Pass/No Pass may be made until mid-term (1/2 of the course.) This date coincides with the final date to drop a course without the instructor's approval.
4. The Pass/No Pass or grade registration cannot conflict with the professor's, department's, college, or University policy governing grading option.
5. Prior to the mid-term deadline, changing to or from the Pass/No Pass requires using the MyRED system to change the grading option or filing a Drop/Add form at Husker Hub, first floor Canfield Administration Building. After the mid-term deadline, a student registered for Pass/No Pass cannot change to a grade registration unless the Pass/No Pass registration is in conflict with a professor's, department's, college, or University policy governing Pass/No Pass.
6. The Pass/No Pass grading option cannot be used for the removal of C- or D or F grades.

Pass/no pass privileges in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts are extended to students according to the following additional regulations:

1. Pass/no pass hours can count toward fulfillment of ACE requirements up to the 24-hour maximum.
2. Freshmen and sophomores may enroll for no more than 6 hours of Pass/No Pass work per semester.
3. Students may not elect to take courses on a Pass/No Pass basis to fulfill degree requirements in the major. Departments may allow up to 6 hours of Pass/No Pass to be taken in the minor offered by the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts.
4. Departments may specify that certain courses can be taken only on a Pass/No Pass basis.
5. The College will permit no more than a total of 24 semester hours of Pass/No Pass grades to be applied toward degree requirements. This total includes all "pass" grades earned at UNL and other schools.

Individual departments⁵ vary in their policies regarding Pass/No Pass hours as applied to the major and minor. Consult the individual departmental listings for these policies. Students who wish to apply Pass/No Pass hours to their major and minor(s) must obtain approval on a form that is available in the Dean's Office, 102 Woods Art Building.

⁵ The Carson School pass/no pass policies do not vary from the College policies as described here.

List of courses

Course number	Course title	Cr	Status
Core			
THEA 112G	Introduction to Theatre (ACE 7)	3	Existing
THEA 120	Principles of Design for Theatre and Film	3	Existing
THEA 201	Technical Theatre Practice	3	Existing
THEA 202	Play Direction I	3	Existing
THEA 234	Scripts in Production (ACE 2)	3	Existing
THEA 335	History of Theatre I	3	Existing
THEA 336	History of Theatre II	3	Existing
THEA 472	Theatre Perspectives (ACE 10)	3	Existing
	Core total	24	
Additional Major Requirements			
THEA 101	Foundations for the Actor I	3	New
THEA 102	Foundations for the Actor II	3	New
THEA 150	Acting Studio I	3	New
THEA 151	Camera Acting I	3	New
THEA 204	Stage Makeup	3	Existing
THEA 250	Acting Studio II	3	New
THEA 251	Camera Acting II	3	New
THEA 253	Voice I (<i>formerly Voice and Speech for Performance I</i>)	3	Existing
THEA 254	Voice II (<i>formerly Voice and Speech for Performance II</i>)	3	Existing
THEA 255	Stage Movement I	3	Existing
THEA 256	Stage Combat (<i>formerly Stage Movement II</i>)	3	Existing
THEA 285B	Practicum (Scene Shop)	1	Existing
THEA 285E	Practicum (Electrics Shop)	1	Existing
THEA 285R	Practicum (Running Crew)	1	Existing
THEA 285T	Practicum (Costume Shop)	1	Existing
THEA 350	Acting Studio III	3	New
THEA 351	Camera Acting III	3	New
THEA 353	Voice III	3	New
THEA 354	Voice Seminar	2	New
THEA 402	Movement II (<i>formerly Advanced Stage Movement</i>)	3	Existing
THEA 460	Performance Lab	3	New
THEA 462	Professional Practice	3	New
DANC 111 or 112	Ballet I or Modern Dance I	2	Existing
	Additional requirements total	59	
Electives			
	Electives total	16	

ACE			
ACE 1	Writing course	3	Existing
ACE 2	THEA 234 Scripts in Production	*3	Existing
ACE 3	Math/Statistics	3	Existing
ACE 4	Sciences course	3	Existing
ACE 5	Humanities course	3	Existing
ACE 6	Social Sciences	3	Existing
ACE 7	THEA 112G Introduction to Theatre	*3	Existing
ACE 8	Ethical Principles	3	Existing
ACE 9	Diversity course	3	Existing
ACE 10	THEA 472 Theatre Perspectives	*3	Existing
	ACE total	30	
<i>*Nine (9) of the required Thirty (30) ACE courses are satisfied by the core requirements of the degree.</i>			
BFA in Acting			
	Degree total	120	

Sample 4-year plan (! denotes courses identified as critical requirements)

TERM 1				16 HR
THEA 150	Acting Studio I		!	3
THEA 101	Foundations for the Actor I		!	3
THEA 112G	Intro to Theatre	ACE 7		3
THEA 234	Scripts in Production	ACE 2		3
THEA 285B	Practicum (Scene Shop)			1
	ACE 1 Written Texts	ACE 1		3
TERM 2				16 HR
THEA 151	Camera Acting I		!	3
THEA 102	Foundations for the Actor II		!	3
THEA 120	Principles of Design for Theatre and Film			3
THEA 204	Stage Makeup			3
THEA 285E	Practicum (Electrics Shop)			1
	ACE 4 Sciences	ACE 4		3
TERM 3				16 HR
THEA 201	Technical Theatre Practice			3
THEA 250	Acting Studio II		!	3
THEA 253	Voice I			3
THEA 255	Movement I			3
THEA 285R	Practicum (Production Running Crew)			1
	ACE 3 Math/Statistics	ACE 3		3

TERM 4				13 HR
THEA 251	Camera Acting II		I	3
THEA 254	Voice II			3
THEA 256	Stage Combat			3
THEA 285T	Practicum (Costume Shop)			1
	ACE 9 Global/Human Diversity	ACE 9		3
TERM 5				17 HR
THEA 335	Theatre History I			3
THEA 350	Acting Studio III		I	3
THEA 353	Voice III			3
THEA 402	Movement II			3
	ACE 5 Humanities	ACE 5		3
DANC 112/211	Ballet I or Modern Dance I			2
TERM 6				14 HR
THEA 336	Theatre History II			3
THEA 351	Camera Acting III		I	3
THEA 354	Voice Seminar			2
	Elective			3
	ACE 6 Social Sciences	ACE 6		3
TERM 7				14 HR
THEA 460	Performance Lab			3
THEA 462	Professional Practice			3
	ACE 8 Ethical Principles	ACE 8		3
THEA 202	Play Direction I			3
	Elective			2
TERM 8				14 HR
THEA 472	Theatre Perspectives	ACE 10		3
	Dance/Singing Elective			2
	Elective			3
	Elective			3
	Elective			3

Course Descriptions

THEA 101 Foundations for the Actor I (NEW)

Introduction to the necessary psychophysical preparation for the actor in support of the core theatre requirements and advanced performance study. The course explores efficient physical alignment, a practical understanding of breath, healthy speaking practices, imagination and play, improvisation, and personal creative habits as they pertain to the body as an instrument for acting.

THEA 102 Foundations for the Actor II (NEW)

A continuation of the exploration and advancement of skills and processes learned in Foundation for the Actor I.

THEA 112G Introduction to Theatre

Introduction to the forms and functions of theatre and dramatic literature in the historical development of Western cultural traditions. While the theatre always reflects the aesthetic and philosophical concerns of the cultural era, the objective of the course is to determine the unique aesthetics of the theatre as an art form by exploring such issues as the relationship between the literary text and the text in performance; the changing role of theatre in culture historically; the various theatre research methods (historical, critical, experimental).

THEA 120 Principles of Design for Theatre and Film

Introduction of the basic elements of design and the development of visual and perceptual skills. Develop an extensive portfolio of 2D and 3D visual projects through experimentation with various media.

THEA 150 Acting Studio I (NEW)

Foundational training for the actor including textual analysis, ensemble development, concentration, physical engagement, sensory sensitivity, emotional availability, impulse, and authenticity in performance. Exploration of the actor's "vocabulary" and its application to character development.

THEA 151 Camera Acting I (NEW)

Introduction to the fundamental techniques and practice of on-camera acting. Students will be introduced performance scalability, working within the frame, vocal and physical adjustments, and active listening. Extensive collaborative and self-assessment practices with the introduction of on-camera scene study.

THEA 201 Technical Theatre Practice

Basic theoretical and practical application of the technical theatre production, including scenery design, construction, use and requirements and related areas that are considered scenic or influence scenery, its design and construction. Related areas include types of stages, facilities, equipment and tool use and maintenance, materials, drafting fundamentals, painting, moving scenery, properties and safety.

THEA 202 Play Direction I

Fundamental concepts of play direction, play selection, script analysis and interpretation, artistic choices, articulating of ideas, communication with actors, and critique. Rehearsal and presentation of realistic scenes.

THEA 204 Stage Makeup

Introduction to the methods and techniques of makeup.

THEA 234 Scripts in Production

Survey of dramatic literature and texts in production, promoting a broad understanding of performed scripts. Approximately 12-15 plays and/or screenplays studied.

THEA 250 Acting Studio II (NEW)

Examination and exploration of the physical, vocal, and emotional demands required of classical acting.

THEA 251 Camera Acting II (NEW)

Concentration on visual storytelling through character development, emotional verity, and performance continuity. Exposure and engagement in production and crew assignments, camera movement, blocking, coverage, and basic editing techniques. Advanced, full coverage scene study in studio and on location.

THEA 253 Voice and Speech for Performance I

Beginning development of voice and speech for performance.

THEA 254 Voice and Speech for Performance II

Continued development of voice and speech for performance.

THEA 255 Movement I (NEW)

Experiential practice in theatrical movement techniques intended to develop the physical engagement, flexibility, and focus necessary for character development and physical expression. Introductory work in Suzuki technique, Viewpoints, and low trapeze.

THEA 256 Stage Combat (NEW)

The development and application of skills required of an actor combatant in a theatrical arena. Includes both a historical overview and safe and proper technique training in unarmed combat and multiple weapons.

THEA 285B Practicum (Scene Shop)

Intensive practical application of principles in technical theatre production in Scenic Construction.

THEA 285E Practicum (Electrics Shop)

Intensive practical application of principles in technical theatre production for Lighting and Sound.

THEA 285R Practicum (Production Running Crew)

Intensive practical application of principles in technical theatre running crew for a live production.

THEA 285T Practicum (Costume Shop)

Intensive practical application of principles in technical theatre production in Costume Construction.

THEA 335 History of Theatre I

Theatre from Ancient Greece through Elizabethan period

THEA 336 History of Theatre II

Theatre from French Neoclassicism to the present.

THEA 350 Acting Studio III (NEW)

Focused exploration of character and ensemble development inspired by advanced Realistic and Hyper-Realistic scene study.

THEA 351 Camera Acting III (NEW)

Advanced, project-based on-camera acting experience focusing on the requirements of working on set.

THEA 353 Voice III (NEW)

Application of phonetics to stage diction and dialects. Mastery for characterization on stage of the distinguishing characteristics of foreign dialects, regional variants, and stage diction.

THEA 354 Voice Seminar (NEW)

Advanced application of vocal techniques for performance.

THEA 355 Movement II (NEW)

Exploration of theatrical movement techniques including advance exercises in strength, flexibility, articulation, specificity, and ease. Focus on imagery, impulse, and connection. Includes devising of original material.

THEA 460 Performance Lab (NEW)

Introduction emerging performance techniques for the actor and their application in new media.

THEA 462 Professional Practice (NEW)

This course focuses on effective business and entrepreneurial practices in the professional entertainment industry including audition preparation, marketing practices, content assembly and presentation, and other business-related techniques required of the contemporary actor.

THEA 472 Theatre Perspectives

Advanced study of theatre arts and crafts. Students will display proficiency in their discipline through the synthesis of skills learned resulting in the generation of a final project or performance.

Advising

All BFA in Acting students will be assigned to a performance faculty member of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film during their first semester of study. The assigned performance faculty will serve as the student's academic advisor and mentor throughout their college career.

Accreditation

All BA and MFA Theatre degree programs offered by The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and operate under the rigorous academic standards articulated by that organization. The 2020/2021 NAST Handbook describes the accreditation body as follows:

The National Association of Schools of Theatre was founded in 1965 to improve educational practices and maintain high professional standards in theatre education. Included in the membership are independent schools, universities, and colleges that teach theatre. The National Association of Schools of Theatre has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as the agency responsible for the accreditation throughout the United States of free-standing institutions that offer theatre and theatre-related programs (both degree- and non-degree-granting), including those offered via distance education. The Association is a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors.

NAST cooperates with the six regional associations in the process of accreditation and, in the field of teacher education, with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. NAST consults with the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and similar organizations in the development of NAST standards and guidelines for accreditation.

The Association accepts for Membership only institutions established for the purpose of educating individuals in theatre. Member institutions must consistently adhere to sound educational policies and practices.

More information can be found at <https://nast.arts-accredit.org>

The proposed BFA in Acting is designed to fulfill the learning outcomes established by NAST (see Section II B: Description of Proposed Major or Degree/Learning Outcomes). The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film is committed to receiving NAST accreditation for the BFA in Acting degree and no additional resources are needed to do so.

III. Review Criteria

A. Centrality to UNL Role and Mission

The role and mission at UNL states, "Through its three primary missions of teaching, research, and service, the university is the state's primary intellectual center providing leadership throughout the state through quality education and the generation of new knowledge."⁶ The BFA in Acting will provide the university with a nationally recognized professional actor training program that supports a progressive and innovative curriculum, promotes opportunities for research/creative activity through the formation of original performance materials, and serves both the university and Lincoln communities through live and recorded public performances. Additionally, the BFA in Acting program has been designed to support the aims of the N2025 strategic plan⁷ defined in the following:

⁶ <https://www.unl.edu/about/role-mission/>

⁷ <https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/n2025-strategic-plan>

1. Innovate student experiences that prepare graduates to be life-long learners and contributors to the workforce in Nebraska and the world.

By establishing a curriculum that focuses on the needs the contemporary entertainment industry, students will be engaged in creative and intellectual processes allowing them to contribute to the generation of new ideas in support of a developing industry.

2. Establish a culture at Nebraska committed to increasing the impact of research and creative activity.

A requirement of the BFA in Acting program is the creation and public presentation of original, devised creative material fostering a culture of “makers” in the discipline. Further, with the recent dedication of the Carson School for Emerging Media Arts, BFA in Acting students will now be allowed the opportunity to explore new forms of creative activity through the research and application of emerging performance techniques.

3. Focus research, scholarship, creative activity, and student experiences to foster innovative, interdisciplinary endeavors and solve challenges critical to Nebraska and the world.

Throughout the centuries, it was often the artistic commentary provided by actors and storytellers that provided the public with impactful content related to the investigation of political, social, and ethical constructs examining the struggles of the human condition. It is paramount that the students in the BFA in Acting program be provided with the opportunities to engage in innovative creative practices allowing for the creation of content that inspires imagination and investigation.

4. Broaden Nebraska’s engagement in community, industry, and global partnerships.

Students in the BFA and Acting program will regularly engage with local and regional communities through production opportunities at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre along with various film and new media projects. Moreover, students will become involved in their industry through an innovative “professional development series” composed of a series of workshops and seminars presented by a variety of national and international industry professionals and guest artists. Attendance will be required of all BFA students beginning their freshman year as part of their studio class curriculum.

5. Create a climate at Nebraska that emphasizes, prioritizes, and expands inclusive excellence and diversity.

With the recent expansion in regional and national recruiting efforts, including an increase in merit-based scholarships, the JCSTF is committed to assembling a diverse and inclusive BFA in Acting cohort.

6. Prioritize participation and professional development for all Nebraska students, staff, and faculty.

With a strong commitment to mentorship, students in the BFA in Acting will be assigned a faculty mentor in their area that will help the student establish a professional development plan and work to empower the student by providing them with the necessary information required for successful integration into the entertainment industry. Additionally, students will participate in productions produced by the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, Nebraska’s only professional Equity theatre, allowing them to work alongside seasoned professionals while developing their craft. This opportunity is limited to small number of university actor training programs in the country aiding in the understanding and practice of professional behaviors.

The BFA in Acting is a professional degree that will expose students to diverse materials and authors, introduce them to “new knowledge”, perspectives, and processes for creating materials, and develop an entrepreneurial understanding of the entertainment industry in support of student success. The program will encourage and support critical and creative thinking skills as students confront the social and ethical challenges present in an ever-changing industry. Ultimately, the program will develop life-long learners and creators that will have local, national, and global impact that is in line with the aims of the N2025 framework while also supporting the current mission of the University.

C. Relationship of the proposal to the University of Nebraska Five-Year Strategy

The proposed BFA in Acting major is a professional actor training program that is designed to favorably align with the NU Five-Year Strategy. The following objectives of the degree address the elements of the framework in the following ways:

Access, Affordability, and Attainment

UNL continues to be an affordable option for Nebraskans and the cost is very competitive for those students from outside of Nebraska. The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film is committed to increasing merit-based scholarships and seek new private and public scholarship funding options to further strengthen affordability of student education at UNL and to attract a diverse population of talented young actors in Nebraska and throughout the country. The proposed program is designed to be attainable in four years.

Workforce Development

The purpose of the BFA in Acting program is to develop a professionally focused acting program that is unique to Nebraska and the region. A primary outcome of the BFA in Acting program is to prepare the student to become an “artist entrepreneur” through substantial industry education and engagement. Supported by a robust guest artist program, industry seminar structure, and performance internship collaboration with local, state and national theatres, students will be significantly better prepared to enter the workforce than the majority of competing university programs. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to study abroad fostering international linkages and engage with communities across the state through performance internships at summer theatres.

In addition to the comprehensive curriculum offered, students in the BFA in Acting program will benefit from the unique offerings of this institution. Of note, students working on a production at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre will earn points toward membership in Actor’s Equity Association, the professional union for stage actors and stage managers. Other exceptional opportunities linked to the program include a summer study abroad program that allows students to immerse themselves in the London theatre scene, train in Shakespearean acting techniques and perform at the historic Globe Theatre. These opportunities in addition to professional internships with national theatres and the integration into the Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts will help to prepare the student actor for a successful career in the domestic and global entertainment industry. As leaders in their discipline, the faculty draw upon their areas of expertise and employ their extensive professional networks to encourage national and international engagement and collaboration for all BFA in Acting students.

The shift from the BA to the BFA degree provides a more professionally oriented focus that is expressly designed to help graduates secure sustainable careers in the industry. The proposed BFA degree will only enhance efforts to recruit candidates with the most likelihood for gainful employment. High school students with the strongest potential for professional careers in the industry are routinely advised by mentors and advisors to seek BFA rather than BA performance programs.

Data collected from July 2011 through August 2013 provides significant evidence that alumni from UNL with a performance degree (either a BA in performance, BFA in acting or MFA in acting) have become part of the workforce in the state of Nebraska. As well, graduates of these degree programs are working across the United States and internationally, many helping to boost the university’s national reputation.

Highlighted below are just a few of the alumni who graduated with these performance degrees. The focus here is predominantly on those graduates currently working in Nebraska.

Judy Hart (BFA in acting, 1975) worked professionally as an actor in New York but returned to Nebraska in the early 90’s. Hart, Founder and Director of Angels Theatre Company (1991-2020) has served on the Lincoln Arts

Council and has worked as an adjunct faculty member at the Johnny Carson School and Doane College. (See also Hart's letter in support of the proposed BFA in acting.)

Melissa (Critchfield) Epp (BA in performance, 1977) served as Director of Development at the Lincoln Arts Council and is currently running a successful voiceover business in Lincoln.

Joan Korte (MFA in acting, 1994) is currently a Professor of Theatre at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Colby Coash (BA in performance, 1998) is a Nebraska state senator, District 27. Coash also serves as Associate Executive Director/Government Relations Director at Nebraska Association of School Boards. As well, he has run Coash Speaking & Consulting in Lincoln since 2015.

Sasha Dobson (MFA in acting, 2000) works as an adjunct faculty member at the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and also as an events coordinator at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts. She has served on the boards of both The Angels Theatre Company and The Flatwater Shakespeare Company in Lincoln.

Steve Barth (MFA in acting 2003) is the Executive Artistic Director of Crane River Theatre in Kearney, Nebraska. Crane River Theatre regularly hires current students and graduates of the Carson School. Barth is a current board member for Nebraskans for the Arts and a 2014 recipient of the Nebraska Arts Council Governor's Arts Award for Emerging Leadership.

Joel Egger (BA in performance 2004) is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Doane University.

Ryan Kathman (MFA in acting 2010) is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Alexander Jeffrey (BA in performance 2011) ran Simple Science Productions, LLC in Nebraska (2011-2013), hiring crews of mostly University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumni and students to shoot films. In 2013 he moved to LA. He now serves as Executive Director of El Dorado Film Festival. His short film won the 2015 Louisiana Film Prize and other accolades on the film festival circuit. He is currently working on his first feature film in Italy.

Clearly, not all performance graduates of the Carson School have stayed in Nebraska. Mitch Tebo (BFA in acting 1972) just finished a run in the Broadway revival of *Oklahoma* which won a Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical. "The theatre department gave me a lot of stage time to explore my craft, especially in combination with the summer rep where you got to work with other professionals," Tebo said in a recent article in Nebraska Today. Tebo lists his credits at Nebraska Repertory Theatre alongside Broadway and Off-Broadway credits and work at Paper Mill Playhouse and George St. Playhouse, highly respected regional theatres.

Jessie Graff (BA in performance, 2007-USA Stuntwomen, SAG, AFTRA) lives in California. Graff's film and television credits include *X-Men*, *First Class*, *Make It or Break It*, *Another Period*, *Bridesmaids*, *Knight and Day*, *Bad Teacher*, *Wonder Woman 1984* and *Supergirl*. She is also known for her ground-breaking success on *American Ninja Warrior*.

With the launch of the BFA in acting degree UNL has the potential to produce the next Johnny Carson. Mr. Carson, a graduate of UNL's theatre program in 1949, spent most of his career in LA. His contributions to his profession and his gifts to the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film have had a profound and positive impact on the university and on the state. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has received more than \$33 million in total philanthropic support from Johnny Carson and the Johnny Carson Foundation.

"I got my start in the Temple Building and have never forgotten the impact of my academic studies at the University of Nebraska on my life and career," Carson said in 2004, just over two months before his death. He went on to say, "It is my hope that this gift will enable future generations of theatre and film students to learn their craft...which will enable them to pursue their goals, just as I did."

The proposed BFA in acting degree is designed to serve the unique career goals of each student. Some may choose to stay in Nebraska to launch careers. Others, like Johnny Carson, may launch their careers elsewhere: LA, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, etc. The shift from the BA to the BFA degree only enhances these graduates' potential for employment and sustainable careers in the industry.

Culture, Diversity, and Inclusion

A further commitment to increasing recruiting efforts will insure a more diverse and dedicated student population. Adopting a BFA in Acting program allows for access to national recruiting events including the University Resident Theatre Association (URTA - <https://www.urtta.com>) providing access to a larger, more culturally diverse community of students. URTA auditions are held annually in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles and require that universities offer a BFA/MFA in acting to participate. Recruiting events like URTA will allow the department to assemble a complementary mix of diverse voices that is representative of the world we live and provide access and opportunity to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic situation. Moreover, national recruitment efforts will improve the quality of students in the program while promoting a diverse and inclusive environment. These practices, supported by merit-based awards, will have a positive impact on the school and university making the University of Nebraska and the BFA in Acting a competitive and affordable destination program for the pre-professional actor.

The Carson School has a commitment to embed issues of diversity into the fabric of all of our dialogues pertaining to strategic priorities. Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to our core vision and mission as a school. We are seeking a network of diverse colleagues to promote our job searches and we advertise these jobs in a wide array of diverse networks and platforms. We are engaging students from diverse backgrounds in recruiting efforts in high schools. We have formed a task force and are engaged in partnerships and with consultants to combat systemic racism, a challenge shared by most higher education institutions. We are engaged with Arts Administrators of the Big Ten Academic Alliance in discussing barriers to advance diversity, equity and inclusion, our current and past responses to social issues around race, and what steps we could take to move forward. We have reviewed our probation policies and our advising practices to ensure that we are offering the best possible support for all students.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

The current performance faculty are seasoned experts in their field and have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in teaching. Recognizing the importance of using resources responsibly, this proposal includes careful consideration of existing faculty FTE and how the proposed program can be delivered effectively with no additional resources.

The latest renovations to the Temple building and recent dedication the Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts provide our students with efficient, safe, and creative environments in which to develop and thrive. Recent financial allocations for capital improvements in the Temple Building from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts has further strengthened these student environments by improving accessibility to current information and design technologies.

D. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Post-Secondary Education

The BFA in Acting is a comprehensive, rigorous, and progressive actor training program that **meets the needs of students** by providing essential curriculum and professional experience tailored for the success of the contemporary actor. This diverse, inclusive, accessible program provides students with an affordable educational option that will produce graduates who meet and exceed the current requirements of the entertainment industry.

The BFA in Acting **meets the needs of the state** by offering a world-class program that is unique to the region attracting and retaining Nebraskan, out-of-state, and international students to the university. Students will develop the essential skills required of the "actor entrepreneur" while serving the university and surrounding

community through participation in thoughtful and engaging performances. With programmatic integration of both cutting-edge technologies and foundational methods, students will be allowed opportunities for creative student engagement and research as they examine new approaches to storytelling. Although focused primarily on performance opportunities, the entrepreneurial skills learned in the program, including proficiencies in public speaking, time management, creative problem solving, and marketing practices, are essential workforce elements that have the potential of serving the needs of a variety of businesses in the state of Nebraska and abroad.

The innovative design of the BFA in Acting **builds exemplary institutions** by offering professional actor training that is unmatched by UNL's peer institutions while competing favorably with the best actor training programs in the country. Ultimately, the degree will likely generate national attention for the university for its progressive and comprehensive approach to actor training and establish the BFA in Acting as an exemplary destination program in the US. Designed to effectively meet the needs and interests of the students, it aligns with the university's mission to develop and sustain "exemplary teaching, learning, research, and public service."

Recent outreach and recruiting efforts in Nebraska support the Johnny Carson School's desire to establish **partnerships and collaborations** with high school theatre programs throughout the state. Moreover, the school is working to develop additional partnerships with summer theatres across the state and country to provide creative opportunities for our students while aiding in the development of their personal professional network.

The BFA in Acting program will benefit from prior **facilities planning** allowing student access to the newly dedicated \$50 million-dollar Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts in addition to the excellent performance facilities located in the recently renovated Temple Building. With access to current computer and information technologies, well equipped classrooms, and multiple live performance venues, students will enjoy the outstanding facility support allowing for greater accessibility and unhindered creative expression.

E. Evidence of Need and Demand

Need

The International Trade Administration's Industry & Analysis Unit stated in 2019:

"The U.S. media and entertainment (M&E) industry is the largest in the world. At \$717 billion, it represents a third of the global M&E industry, and it includes motion pictures, television programs and commercials, streaming content, music and audio recordings, broadcast, radio, book publishing, video games, and ancillary services and products. The U.S. industry is expected to reach more than \$825 billion by 2023, according to the 2018-2023 Entertainment & Media Outlook by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC)."

Live performance theatres contribute nearly \$9 billion to the economy with over 3,500 live theatres nationwide. It is clear from the research that significant employment opportunities for skilled performers exist in the industry and the ever-expanding performance opportunities in the areas of emerging media provide additional jobs for these artists. In 2018, the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded 64,500 jobs for actors nationally with a 12% projected increase in employment by 2028.

The proposed BFA in Acting is designed to provide talented young actors with the professional training necessary to become competitive in a growing industry that includes employment in theatre, film, and emerging media positively impacting local, state, and national economies. This program will be supported by a skilled and passionate faculty along with outstanding facilities, including the recently dedicated \$50 million Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, preparing graduates for the unique challenges and opportunities presented by an expanding entertainment industry.

Demand:

In an annual report published by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) in association with the Higher Education Arts Data Services, the data provided for 2019-2020 regarding theater program enrollment indicates that out of the 50 accredited Bachelor of Fine Arts programs in Theatre in the US, Acting and Musical Theatre performance had significantly greater enrollment than any other area of theatre education (see Appendix B: NAST Theatre Enrollment 2019-2020). Moreover, the BFA in Acting presented a 12.5% enrollment increase compared to a BA in Performance. Yet programmatic demand cannot be determined by enrollment alone. A BFA in Acting program must address the current demands of the entertainment industry and provide a trained and skilled workforce to support those demands. The BFA in Acting at the University of Nebraska will meet these demands by being committed to student creative development and artistic entrepreneurship. The following are examples of student opportunities presented in the degree proposal:

- Opportunities to perform at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, Nebraska's only professional Equity theatre. Students cast in Nebraska Rep productions work alongside seasoned professionals while earning points toward membership in Actors Equity Association (AEA), the union for professional stage actors and stage managers.
- Access to professional guest artists and industry professionals through faculty networks, Nebraska Repertory Theatre, and association with the Lied Center for the Performing Arts.
- Opportunities to engage formally and informally with students and faculty in the Carson Center exploring techniques in live motion capture, green screen, virtual reality, and voice-over for animation and gaming.
- Extensive on-camera training and collaboration with student filmmakers.
- London summer study abroad program at the Globe Theatre.
- Stage Combat training by Nebraska's only instructor certified by the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD).
- A contemporary, progressive, professionally focused curriculum that provides substantial training in foundational and emerging acting methods.
- The only accredited BFA in Acting program in Nebraska and one of only two accredited BFA in Acting programs in the Big 10.

The department currently recruits regionally in Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska in addition to national recruitment efforts at the International Thespian Festival. Formal and informal interactions with students during these recruitment events indicate that the majority of students interested in pursuing an acting degree desire a BFA in the discipline. To remain competitive and increase demand, the BFA in Acting program intends to expand its recruiting efforts to include regions outside the mid-west including New York and Los Angeles. This expansion will increase both interest and demand for the program by introducing the program to a national audience.

The department is determined to develop a selective professional program that will serve sixteen (16) talented young actors every year out of the multitude of applicants resulting in sixty-four (64) BFA in Acting majors in the program. This number is consistent within the cohorts of the current BA in Theatre: Performance option from 2015-2019 (see chart below).

Cohort Enrollment – BA in Theatre: Performance Option

	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Freshman	16	15	15	16	16
Sophomore	10	13	12	16	14
Junior	11	10	13	11	15
Senior	10	9	9	12	12
Total	47	47	49	55	57

Degrees Granted – BA in Theatre: Performance Option 5-Year Average: 8.4

2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
10	4	7	11	10

The management of enrollment is essential to the success of the program to allow for exemplary training, mentorship, and balanced opportunities for all acting students. Controlled programmatic sequence offerings and greater cohort selectivity will likely increase student retention and prevent attrition resulting in higher overall graduation rates. Currently, the average total enrollment in all JCSTF programs, including students in design/tech, emerging media, and graduate studies, is 170. The BFA in Acting students would comprise the largest cohort in the theatre-specific discipline.

F. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

Currently, there are no accredited BFA in Acting programs, public or private, in the state of Nebraska and only one such program in the BIG 10 (Penn State). UNL and The Johnny Carson School would be the only accredited BFA in Acting program offered by a public institution of higher education in the state. Nebraska Wesleyan, a private institution, offers a non-accredited BFA in Acting that focuses primarily on live theatre training and completely eliminates on-camera acting and emerging media practices. These training practices are at the core of the proposed BFA in Acting and will likely establish the Johnny Carson School as a destination program in the Midwest for students seeking this caliber of instruction.

The proposed BFA in Acting program would replace the current BA in Theatre: Performance option offering a more robust, progressive, and professionally focused curriculum. The Johnny Carson School will be recognized as a leader in the discipline by developing a comprehensive and forward-thinking program that anticipates the changes and opportunities in the entertainment industry and prepares students for successful integration into the workforce. From access to emerging media performance training at the state-of-the-art Carson Center to gaining professional experience performing on the Nebraska Repertory stage, the BFA in Acting program will position itself as a world-class actor training program in the Midwest and the nation that will be difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate.

Although BFA in Acting programs are well represented throughout the US, only 50 programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). NAST accreditation establishes high national standards for Theatre training programs and remains the principle accrediting body in the US (<https://nast.arts-accredit.org>). The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film is a NAST accredited institution and the BFA in Acting is designed to adhere to the rigorous standards established by NAST.

Impact on Students enrolled in the BA in Theatre Performance Option

The current BA in Theatre: Performance Option students will be able to complete their program while the proposed BFA in Acting program begins. Required courses in the original BA in Theatre: Performance Option will still be offered or cross-listed with suitable BFA courses until all BA Performance majors are graduated. Both programs will be supported by the current JCSTF performance faculty until the BA in Theatre: Performance Option is phased out with no additional faculty resources required. Freshman and sophomore students currently enrolled in the BA in Theatre: Performance program will be allowed to transition into the new program while students at the junior and senior level will continue in the BA Performance option program through graduation.

G. Adequacy of Resources

1. Faculty/Staff

The BFA in Acting will be fully supported by the exceptional JCSTF performance faculty currently employed at UNL. The existing faculty in the performance area include three (3) full-time members and one (1) full-time member with a .50 FTE apportionment dedicated to the performance area. All performance faculty will teach in their areas of expertise and bring years of professional experience to the program.

Faculty members include David M. Long (*Head of Performance, Associate Professor*), Ian Borden (*Associate Professor*), Ann Marie Pollard (*Assistant Professor of Practice*), and Rafael Untalan (*Assistant Professor of Practice*). Additionally, Johnny Carson School Director, Christina Kirk (*Professor*) will be available to teach one class per year in her area of expertise further enriching the student experience.

The majority of the twelve new course offerings proposed in the BFA in Acting will replace many of the courses currently offered in the BA in Theatre: Performance option allowing current faculty load to remain consistent. The new courses will provide students with a more focused, expansive, and cohesive curriculum not available in the current BA performance option. It should be noted that during the transitional period, cross-listing of some upper division performance courses may be necessary to support those completing the BA program.

Core offerings in the degree including Introduction to Theatre, courses in technical theatre design and practice, and Directing will be taught by accomplished JCSTF faculty members Ian Borden, JD Madsen, Jamie Bullins, and Andy Park, respectively.

Although the desire for future faculty member additions for programmatic enhancement remain, it is not essential for full implementation of the program when operating at planned full enrollment capacity.

2. Physical Facilities and Equipment

The BFA in Acting program will be housed in the Temple building (12th and R Street) with access to the newly dedicated Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts (13th and Q Street). No university in the region, private or public, enjoys the scope and quality of the outstanding facilities present in the Carson School. These facilities include multiple performance studio spaces with mirrors and sprung flooring, dance studios, technical/design classrooms, computer lab, academic classrooms, costume shop, scenic shop, meeting rooms, faculty offices, voice-over booth, motion capture studio, student lounge, administrative offices, and three (3) separate performance venues.

All areas are equipped with high-speed internet and student common areas. Additionally, both buildings are ADA compliant.

Library resources supporting the proposed program include a theatre collection in Love Library (the main research library on campus), a few rare books in Special Collections, volumes about theatre architecture in

the Architecture Library, and musical theatre books in the Music Library. Love Library has a Media Services room for viewing DVDs as well as a group study room seating two to eight students with video/DVD capability. The physical collections are supplemented by subscriptions to about 30 arts and humanities databases as well as generous borrowing agreements with other libraries in the Big Ten Academic Alliance. A small existing annual budget is available to add to the collections; library staff work with theatre faculty on selecting new items. These theatre holdings are more than sufficient for general students and most projects required of undergraduate theatre majors.

Although not directly connected to the proposed program, students will have access to curated films and film festivals presented at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center and live performances and national tours produced by the Lied Center for the Performing Arts.

3. **Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources**

The Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts includes a computer lab, voice over recording studio, and video editing suites for use in camera-acting projects and EMA-related theatre courses.

Students in all performance related classrooms in the Temple building will have access to scenic pieces, props, sound systems and other supporting rehearsal and performance elements related to their discipline.

The UNL Love Library will provide BFA in Acting students access to a regularly updated, faculty and librarian curated collection of scripts and performance related materials.

4. **Budget Projections [see Table 1 and Table 2].**

IV. Appendices

A. Letters of Support

- Megan Elliott, Director, Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts
- Judy Hart, alumnus (BFA Theatre, 1975) and theatre entrepreneur
- Trent Stork, alumnus (BA Theatre with Performance and Directing & Management options, 2011), director and casting director
- Ron Himes, Founder and Producing Director, The St. Louis Black Repertory Company
- Alan Klem, Artistic Director of Nebraska Shakespeare
- Steve Scott, Artistic Associate and Retired Producer, The Goodman Theatre
- Emily Ernst, Co-Founder, Fair Assembly

B. Data summary on national theatre enrollments from Higher Education Arts Data Services

Appendix A

Letters of support:

- Megan Elliott, Director, Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts
- Judy Hart, alumnus (BFA Theatre, 1975) and theatre entrepreneur
- Trent Stork, alumnus (BA Theatre with Performance and Directing & Management options, 2011), director and casting director
- Ron Himes, Founder and Producing Director, The St. Louis Black Repertory Company
- Alan Klem, Artistic Director of Nebraska Shakespeare
- Steve Scott, Artistic Associate and Retired Producer, The Goodman Theatre
- Emily Ernst, Co-Founder, Fair Assembly

2 November 2020

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller
Executive Vice Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
ADMS 208
P.O. Box 880491
Lincoln, NE 68588-0491

Dear Dr. Spiller,

I am writing to you in support of the proposed Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting.

The content creation and cultural industries are undergoing rapid transformation, and the onset of a global pandemic is an accelerant: Broadway is closed; many movie theatres have closed; live-action cinema and television production in the USA have ground to a complete halt and are only opening up again in a handful of cases. Companies like Hewlett Packard (HP) and Epic Games have just won Engineering Emmys because high-performance compute-power and real-time virtual collaboration tools enable Hollywood to continue to work remotely throughout the pandemic.

In my capacity as the Director of the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, one of my guiding principles is to plan for a future which is partially unknowable, but which is grounded in the art and practice of media makers who exist today. Actors can no longer imagine a future where they will solely perform in theatres, on sound stages, or in independent films. Actors must reconcile themselves as digital twins, as avatars, voice artists, as data sets on which animated characters are built through the use of motion capture technologies and real-time game engines.

The proposed degree enables these students to do just that. It enables actors to collaborate with emerging media artists and engineers on projects, it imbues them with skills in performance for new emerging media artforms, and grounds them with the ability to think about a future, and the 'white space' which can be inhabited by performer-entrepreneurs.

I am convinced that the overall curriculum that has been presented to you, from Dean to the ever-changing world of acting and storytelling. I believe that it will ensure that alumnae of the program will be able to move into a multiplicity of industry positions, as well as into higher level academia with the strong skills they need.

I look forward to fruitful collaborations with our colleagues in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and with their BFA in Acting students.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Megan Elliott

January 2021

Dear Christina Kirk,

Thanks for asking my opinion about adding a BFA program back into the UNL theatre curriculum. I received a BFA from the UNL theatre program in 1975. In my day, a BFA was considered a “terminal degree” for the “working actor.” To complete the BFA degree, I was required to spend time in every aspect of the theater. Besides acting, I learned marketing, history, directing, play writing, criticism, and all aspects of tech. I knew how to make a flat, build a costume and light a show. Did I want to make a career in each of these areas? No, but I was introduced to the fundamentals of each discipline, which helped me respect them more. I wasn’t an expert– but I had enough skill and confidence to step into any entry level theater job in whichever market I chose. The BFA I received was a product of the times. Back then UNL was in the business of creating theatre generalists with specific focuses. A BFA gave me the tools to get started and then life took over.

I spent summers at Alabama Shakespeare and the Black Hills Playhouse. I lived in NYC where I earned my SAG and AEA cards (I also won a television game show there!). I moved to New Jersey and used my theatre acting chops to become a teaching artist and theatre entrepreneur. I worked in educational theatre programs that gave me the opportunity to teach, write and direct. I worked in costume shops as a stitcher, a draper and a shopper. I was an adjunct instructor at 3 Universities. I performed on regional stages in Nebraska, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York and New Jersey. I moved back to Nebraska when my husband took a job at the newly opened Lied Center in 1989. In Lincoln, I became a producer, grant writer, community organizer and casting director when I founded Angels Theatre Company which I ran for 30 years. Not bad for a kid with an undergraduate degree.

I think a BFA degree with an emphasis in acting will prepare a student for a career in theatre, film, and new media as well as the confidence to explore other possibilities within the industry. UNL has the resources to combine this acting emphasis with the liberal arts to produce a well-balanced person who can succeed in today’s changing performance landscape. It’s up to the individual to generate the passion and persistence needed to sustain what they’ve learned into a career. UNL is uniquely positioned to give the “modern actor” a great beginning with the theatre, film, dance, music, new media and entrepreneurial business resources available.

I think adding the BFA back into the UNL theatre program is a must. It will give each student the time to learn and refine necessary skills to succeed. This immersion combined with talent and tenacity can make a career. The BFA I received at UNL launched me into the professional world and karma and hard work was the fuel that kept it going.

With gratitude,

Judy Hart

Theatre Entrepreneur + Summer Camp Director

Trent Stork
1242 W Pratt Blvd. #1R
Chicago, IL 60626
515.669.5782
trentstork@gmail.com

January 8th, 2021

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller
Executive Vice Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
ADMS 208
P.O. Box 880491
Lincoln, NE 68588-0491

Dear Dr. Elizabeth Spiller:

My name is Trent Stork and I am a director and casting director currently residing in Chicago, IL. I am a proud graduate of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film (class of 2011) having received both a B.A. in Performance and a B.A. in Directing/Management. I am writing you today in full support of the transition from a B.A. in Performance to a B.F.A. in Acting for the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

I feel it most appropriate, given the nature of the program, to begin with a story.

Because of the excellent training I received from my time at UNL, I was accepted as an Acting Apprentice at Actors' Theatre of Louisville and it was there that I was confronted with the question, "Did you get a B.A. or a B.F.A.?" from my fellow apprentices (similar age and backgrounds). The phrase, "Now because you didn't get a B.F.A...." from my advisors was also not uncommon. At the time, I didn't understand the difference and as I questioned the other apprentices about their training and experience, I was surprised to learn that not only did I have more opportunities at UNL, my training nearly matched that of all the others who received a B.F.A. at their particular schools. I only relay this anecdote to express that the training I received from UNL is already on par (if not exceeding) most other B.F.A. programs in the country.

Having now worked in the professional theatre industry for the past ten years (I am now a casting director with the Casting Society of America and a Director with the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society), I can say that the difference between one singular letter, is wielded with enormous significance with my colleagues (even if it doesn't hold the same weight with me when I hire and produce). There is a stamp of approval, a certain nod, that goes to the resume that has a B.F.A. on it and, quite frankly, is already more representative of the level of training a student receives at the Carson School. A transition is certainly warranted.

Having reviewed the proposal for the curriculum, I was astounded and, dare I say, tickled to see the variations given to the course listing- that is to say, the incorporation of all of the film and new media elements into the curriculum beginning in the second semester. This is an incredibly smart move for the students. I work primarily in theatre but have been fortunate enough to work on commercial films as well (*West Side Story*, Steven Spielberg) and I can say with certainty that a firm grasp on acting for the camera will benefit any acting student immensely when they enter the professional realm. It is the actor who can bridge the gap between truthful performance and "screen smarts" that advances up the casting ladder.

In general, I am seeing more and more actors being able to sustain themselves on a career in acting by landing a few film/TV spots, commercials, or by diversifying their skillset into specialties like mo-cap and animation. What an incredible (and rare) opportunity for a student to graduate from JCSTF with that wealth of experience and knowledge. This will certainly make a graduate of UNL competitive in the open market. I travel all over the country meeting students, giving workshops, teaching classes and I haven't heard of any such program. To be a destination for that kind of unique caliber of training will make UNL a more competitive school when recruiting potential students. I can see it becoming the "Hub of the Midwest" for acting training that truly prepares you to become an acting entrepreneur.

I also gave an audible yelp of support when I came across the added emphasis on devised work and creation of original content. I'm finding year after year of young actor (many from some of the "best" theatre schools in the country) who have a firm grasp on how to be interpretive artists but cannot even fathom themselves as a generative one. They are expected to be told how, what, where, and when to execute but are struck dumb when asked how they would interpret a moment, or to create a character from a single line of text. I'm a huge advocate for the actor as an artist, a creator and mirror of the human condition, opposed to a sack of skills who strive to do their best impression of the Broadway original. The former is more successful and longer lasting and this new program at UNL will help to generate this form of artist for which I cannot express enough support.

Another moment that made me energetic for the future Johnny Carson student is the new required dance component. While not every graduate will leave UNL with truly competitive dance training, I've hired many actors because they "can move" and I have also *not* hired many more who cannot. Especially for a young performer, the use of one's body in musical theatre, physical theatre performance, or storytelling solely with one's physical being, cannot be underestimated- certainly, in a time where theatrical performance is and must sever from video and online platforms.

Lastly, I want to give a large nod to the focus on the business aspect of an actor's life represented in the outline of the B.F.A. program. Training, skills, knowledge, and experience are monumental to an actor's ability to succeed. However, I argue that it is merely half of what is needed to sustain oneself in this business. The continuous cycle of auditions, appointments, skill maintenance, interviews, tapes, voice reels, headshots, acting reels, independent contractor taxes, that one must maintain to keep up with this industry can be daunting and seemingly insurmountable... Unless one has the experience and knowledge to do so! This aspect becoming a pillar at UNL is vital and I was relieved to see it as an added emphasis into the curriculum.

I hope it is evident how ecstatic I am by the proposed change to a B.F.A. in Acting and I give the proposal my fullest support. As a side note, I would like to acknowledge the care, consideration, and thoughtfulness put forth by Christina Kirk and the team of professors currently assembled at the Carson School. From my brief talks with Ms. Kirk, my spirit glows even brighter for my alma matter. I anxiously await the implemented changes and hope, in some way, that I can aid in the success of the next wave of graduates from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

I'm happy to talk more, or if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Much respect from a proud graduate,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trent Stork". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Trent Stork

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller
Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

Dear Dr. Spiller,

I am writing in my capacity as the Founder and Producing Director of The St. Louis Black Repertory Company. I founded The Black Rep in 1976 with the intention to provide employment opportunities for artists of color and for other talented and deserving performers, designers and technicians. The Black Rep is one of the largest, not-for-profit professional African-American theatre companies in the nation and the largest African-American performing arts organization in Missouri. It's mission is to provide platforms for theatre, dance, and other creative expressions from the African-American perspective that heighten the social and cultural awareness of its audiences. I have produced and directed more than 200 plays at The Black Rep. We hire a mix of Equity and Non-Equity actors. We've garnered a national reputation and are proud to be providing extensive employment opportunities for professional actors. I offer my enthusiastic endorsement for the newly proposed BFA in Acting within the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film at University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

My collaboration with the Carson School began when I was hired in 2019 by Nebraska Repertory Theatre to direct *Dutchman*. In the fall of 2020 Nebraska Rep and The Black Rep launched a two year collaboration which includes a commitment to interviewing UNL students for The Black Rep's Intern Company. Three graduates of the Carson School have been part of this Intern Company in the past. Travis Banks, a 2019 graduate, performed a featured role in The Black Rep's recent production of *Two Trains Running*.



THE BLACK REP

THEATRE OF THE SOUL SINCE 1976

Page 29

The Carson School's decision to shift the BA in performance to a BFA in Acting will undoubtedly have a positive impact on these graduates' ability to secure professional employment in the industry. The focus of this BFA degree is on preparing students to have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to secure professional work as actors. A BA in performance, by contrast, as a more generalist degree, does not provide this concentrated and intentional focus. The Carson's School's affiliation with Nebraska Repertory Theatre, the only professional Equity theatre in the state, gives their graduates a competitive edge in the field. As someone who employs professional actors, I assert that UNL, by adopting this BFA degree, will provide its graduates with the capacity to earn Equity points, garner credits with a professional Equity company, and receive professionally oriented training that will enhance their hiring potential in the workforce.

I feel confident that the Johnny Carson School, with its genuine and intentional commitment to diversity, can build a BFA program in acting that will draw a diverse pool of actors with strong employment potential. This proposed BFA program prepares graduates for employment opportunities within the state of Nebraska, in regional theatres across the country, and in film, television and new media venues. I look forward to having BFA graduates from UNL audition for The St. Louis Black Repertory Company.

Sincerely,



Ron Himes
Founder and Producing Director
The St. Louis Black Repertory Company

About The St Louis Black Repertory Company

Founded in 1976 by Producing Director Ron Himes, The Black Rep is one of the largest, professional African-American theatre companies in the nation and the largest African-American professional performing arts organization in Missouri. Quality professional dramas, comedies and musicals by primarily African-American and African diaspora playwrights are produced. Mainstage productions and education programs combine to reach more than 80,000 people annually.



THE BLACK REP

THEATRE OF THE SOUL SINCE 1976

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller,
Executive Vice Chancellor
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dear Dr. Spiller:

I write to offer my support for the proposed Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I have reviewed the proposal by Christina Kirk and strongly agree that a BFA in Acting degree would greatly benefit students, strongly increasing their opportunities for professional work in theatre.

I have been involved with professional theatre as an actor and director for over fifty years and am a member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the Union for professional actors and stage managers. I have served as artistic director for three theatre organizations including Nebraska Shakespeare which I co-founded 35 years ago here in Nebraska. Based on my experience, I strongly believe that professional training for the actor at the college level is advantages to finding work and hopefully a career in a highly competitive profession.

At Nebraska Shakespeare we are currently associated with two university professional training program, the University of Minnesota/Guthrie BFA in Acting program and the Florida State University/Asolo Conservatory for actor training in Sarasota. We attend invited auditions at these two programs annually and have benefited greatly over the years by employing many young actors who, based on their strong training, have greatly enhanced the quality of our productions. Many have returned for several years and as Equity Membership Candidates (EMC) successfully increased their required points towards becoming a member of AEA.

Students with professional actor training are prepared to audition very well. However, talented students without the intensive training provided by a quality professional program can in the five minutes (or less) of audition time also impress. The difference is often exposed during the rehearsal period. Young actors trained in a professional program usually exhibit stronger skills in the areas of voice, movement, script analysis, and period styles than actors without the training. In the three weeks or less of rehearsal to mount a professional production, directors do not have the time to teach an actor how to move gracefully, or be understood, or to employ basic stage combat. Auditions being equal, I would cast a young actor with professional training every time over one devoid of such training as time is vital and in professional theatre, we simply cannot risk a mistake.

We have enjoyed a wonderful relationship through the years with UNL having cast students as well as teachers in our Shakespeare productions. This past year we had hoped to see two UNL students, Nadia Williams and Beck Damron, perform in our plays. However, the Covid pandemic put an end to our live theatre season. Nadia was able to help us on virtual discussions and workshops with our touring program to Nebraska schools this past fall. I have always found UNL students to be well trained, disciplined, and talented. I believe that a professional training program such as that proposed by Professor Kirk will only increase the chances for UNL acting students to gain the competitive edge for theatre employment throughout the Midwest region and beyond.

For the reasons sketched in this letter and more, I strongly recommend that the proposal for a BFA in Acting Degree be adopted at UNL. I will be more than happy to further reflect on this proposal if asked. I can be contacted at aklem@creighton.edu , aklem@nebraskashakespeare.com, or (402) 885-1061.

Sincerely,

Alan Klem
Co-Founder and Artistic Director, Nebraska Shakespeare
Associate Professor Emeritus of Fine and Performing Arts-Theatre,
Creighton University

Steve Scott
5601 North Sheridan Road, #6A
Chicago, Illinois 60660
stevescott@goodmantheatre.org
brinsleyscott@gmail.com

March 5, 2021

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller
Executive Vice Chancellor
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
Dear Dr. Spiller:

I have been notified by Christina Kirk of the possibility of establishing a BFA in Acting program to replace the current BA in Performance course of study. I am pleased to offer my strong support for this change. I had the pleasure of directing for Nebraska Repertory Theatre in the fall of 2019, working closely with a number of students in the BA program as well as many theater faculty members, and it remains one of the best directing experiences I've had in my nearly fifty-year career.

I've taught in a variety of university programs, largely in the Chicago area, and I have been a faculty member in the BFA program for actors at the College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University for more than twenty years. Although it may not be suitable for all theatre students, an intelligently designed and rigorous BFA program in acting provides training and opportunities which are crucial for young actors. In my experience, such programs offer a breadth and depth of experience not possible in a standard BA program, through an expanded curriculum which allows these students exposure to and experience in a wide variety of performance approaches, techniques and styles as well as more concerted and ongoing training in voice preparation, stage movement, media performance, and other specialty areas. In addition, the expanded curriculum of a BFA program can offer the necessary practical tools (classes in audition preparation and business skills for the actor, among others) that are increasingly crucial for young professionals. More important are the elements of a BFA program which increase the hireability of its graduates: the awarding of points towards membership in Actors' Equity Association (the union for professional stage actors), points which might take years to accrue otherwise; the chance to work with professional directors, who can then hire students for other work post-graduation; and the accumulation of professional credits while still in school, giving BFA graduates a jump start in their professional

careers. In my own professional work, I have found that students with a BFA degree are better trained as actors, better prepared for the challenges of work in a professional theater, and much more able to achieve the high levels of performance that are demanded of them in a professional setting. In short, they are stronger, better candidates for employment than the average BA recipient.

My experience as a guest artist at UNL convinced me that it has all of the ingredients necessary for an effective and distinguished BFA program. The facilities of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film are vastly superior to those found in nearly any other university, providing students with a true state-of-the-art environment for stage, film, television, and electronic media. The faculty of the theatre program are highly regarded professionals in their own right as well as dedicated and talented teachers, and are already offering superior training within the limits of a BA curriculum. And the re-establishment of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre has brought in guest artists from around the country to work with these students, offering insights into both the art and business of acting that are invaluable resources for young pre-professionals. I couldn't be happier that the University is considering this expansion of an already superior program; and I hope that this will more firmly establish the University of Nebraska as the world-class training center it deserves to be.

Sincerely,

Steve Scott
Artistic Associate and Retired Producer
The Goodman Theatre

March 13, 2021

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller
Executive Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
208 Canfield Administration Building South
Lincoln NE, 68588-0420



Dear Dr. Spiller,

I am extremely proud to provide a letter of support for the proposed BFA program for the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. I am a native Nebraskan and had the privilege of teaching at the Carson School in the fall of 2019 while serving as the Associate Director of Flatwater Shakespeare Company. I graduated from the SMU Meadows School of the Arts BFA Acting program in Dallas, and received a certificate from L'Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, France.

As a high school student looking for professional acting training, I sought immersion. A BFA degree was the perfect middle ground: conservatory-like training in a liberal arts institution. Immersion in the discipline of theatre is essential for work that requires technique and emotional availability, but it also meant being able to experiment in areas of production beyond my immediate focus. This comprehensive approach gave me the skills, experience, and confidence to found my own company (Fair Assembly) in 2019. Our first production required the kind of "all hands on deck" approach we used in undergrad. For our first show, we designed our own lights and props, we did company management, stage management, dramaturgy, ran our box office, designed a website, commissioned a logo, and wrote press releases. A BFA program made the formation of an award-winning company--which employed two equity actors, eight non-equity actors, a fight director, choreographer, and composer--possible.

Perhaps the most competitive aspect of the BFA Acting Proposal is its emphasis in film and new media; essential components of any program for a student in the fall of 2022. Film has utterly transformed the modern professional landscape, and the inability to evolve with this change is causing many programs to fall behind. I graduated from college during a time when acting and film programs were often separate; having both in one is a strategic move for the Carson School, and positions the University as a destination for young artists. Motion capture and voiceover in video games are extremely lucrative, and my highest-earning classmates outside of LA work in this field. As filmed auditions become the norm, current students will also be more likely to find summer work outside of Lincoln, increasing their prospects for employment immediately after graduation. As every theatre program knows, the reputation of the school is directly connected to the success of its graduates.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Ernst".

Emily Ernst
Co-Founder
Fair Assembly

Appendix B

Data Summary from Higher Education Arts Data Services

Higher Education Arts Data Services
DATA SUMMARIES
2019-2020

THEATRE ENROLLMENT

Chart 1, Chart 2, and Chart 4 provide information on theatre major enrollment, number of degrees awarded in theatre, and percentage of credits generated in courses designed for non-theatre majors.

Chart 1 includes the number of institutions offering a specific major, theatre major enrollment in major areas for Summer and Fall 2019, and the number of degrees awarded during the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

Example: Chart 1-2 – “Total Theatre Student Enrollment, All Institutions,” Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Programs or Equivalent (65% Theatre Content).

During 2019–2020, 50 institutions offered majors in Acting. In those schools, 403 major students in Acting were enrolled in Summer 2019; 2,103 were enrolled in Fall 2019; and 488 graduated between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

Chart 2 is a synopsis of Chart 1 by type of institution. There are three charts: private institutions, public institutions, and all institutions. There is also a figure in each chart for total enrollment (all programs) in that category of institution.

Example: Chart 2-4 – “Theatre Major Enrollment by Size and Type of Institution,” Public Institutions, 101+ Majors.

Seventy-one schools in this category offer baccalaureate liberal arts degree programs in theatre. In those schools, 1,477 theatre major students were enrolled in Summer 2019; 8,916 were enrolled in Fall 2019; and 1,831 students graduated between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

Chart 4 analyzes the percentage of credit hours (either quarter or semester hours) generated by non-theatre major students.

Example: Chart 4 – “Percentage of Semester Hours Generated by Non-Major Students,” Public Institutions, 101+ Majors.

The average percentage of semester hours generated by non-theatre major students in the 75 institutions in this category is 42%. The percentiles also provide a range of data for comparison.

TOTAL THEATRE STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY MAJOR AREA, ALL INSTITUTIONS

	Number of Institutions with Majors	Theatre Major Enrollment Summer, 2019	Theatre Major Enrollment Fall, 2019	Number of Degrees Awarded July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019
Associate of Fine Arts Degree Programs or Equivalent (65% Theatre content)				
Performance	6	113	680	337
Design/Technology	3	1	14	6
Film/Video Production	1	13	31	14
General Speech/Theatre Major	0	0	0	0
Other	4	55	357	122
Total	7	182	1,082	479
Associate Degree Programs in Theatre Education and Speech Education (50% Theatre content)				
Theatre Education	0	0	0	0
Speech Education	0	0	0	0
Speech/Theatre Education	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0
Associate Liberal Arts Degree Programs in Theatre (30-45% Theatre content)				
Performance	3	10	93	8
Design/Technology	2	6	22	6
Film/Video Production	0	0	0	0
Speech/Theatre	1	25	99	33
General Major	3	62	153	5
Other	2	9	57	1
Total	7	112	424	53

TOTAL THEATRE STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY MAJOR AREA, ALL INSTITUTIONS

	Number of Institutions with Majors	Theatre Major Enrollment Summer, 2019	Theatre Major Enrollment Fall, 2019	Number of Degrees Awarded July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019
Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Programs or Equivalent (65% Theatre content)				
Acting	50	403	2,103	488
Acting/Directing	3	8	55	5
Children's Theatre	2	0	33	10
Costume Design	10	4	79	16
Design/Technology	49	84	1,045	218
Directing	2	3	13	2
Drama	2	10	27	10
Film/Video Production	4	0	161	42
Lighting Design	9	9	95	14
Musical Theatre	50	342	2,249	464
Performance	14	175	655	151
Playwriting	2	2	6	2
Production	1	0	23	6
Scenery Design	8	5	65	17
Sound Design	3	1	22	1
Stage Management	16	20	180	40
General Major	10	159	491	95
Other	19	134	633	90
Total	81	1,359	7,935	1,671
Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Theatre Education, Speech Education, and Drama Therapy (50% Theatre content)				
Theatre Education	27	137	541	76
Speech/Theatre Education	2	1	41	7
Speech Education	0	0	0	0
Theatre Administration	1	15	23	4
Pre-Drama Therapy	0	0	0	0
Other	1	5	14	2
Total	30	158	619	89

TOTAL THEATRE STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY MAJOR AREA, ALL INSTITUTIONS

	Number of Institutions with Majors	Theatre Major Enrollment Summer, 2019	Theatre Major Enrollment Fall, 2019	Number of Degrees Awarded July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019
Baccalaureate Liberal Arts Degree Programs in Theatre (30-45% Theatre content)				
Design Technology	48	125	888	204
Film/Video Production	7	175	459	113
Performance	47	230	1,869	424
Speech/Theatre	11	99	724	131
General Major	106	1,264	6,670	1,387
Other	52	370	2,173	402
Total	147	2,263	12,783	2,661

TABLE 1: PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

UNL BFA in Acting

	(FY2023) Year 1		(FY2024) Year 2		(FY2025) Year 3		(FY2026) Year 4		(FY2027) Year 5		Total Cost
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	
Personnel											
Faculty ¹											
Professional											
Graduate Assistants											
Support Staff											
Subtotal	0.0	\$0	0.0	\$0	0.0	\$0	0.0	\$0	0.0	\$0	\$0
Operating											
General Operating ²		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0
Equipment ²											
New or renovated space											
Library/Information Resources											
Subtotal		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0
Total Expenses		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0

¹ No new faculty are proposed. Existing Theatre faculty will teach the courses.

² No additional expenses are projected for this program. Also, no additional equipment is necessary for this program.

TABLE 2: PROJECTED REVENUES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

UNL BFA in Acting

	(FY2023) Year 1		(FY2024) Year 2		(FY2025) Year 3		(FY2026) Year 4		(FY2027) Year 5		Total
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	
Reallocation of Existing Funds											
Required New Public Funds											
1. State Funds											
2. Local Tax Funds (community colleges)											
Tuition and Fees ¹											
Other Funding											
Total Revenue		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0

¹ No new tuition and fee revenue is projected from this program since it is the transformation of an existing option within a current undergraduate major.