

# Proposal for New Instructional Degree Program

<b>Institution:</b>	<b>Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC)</b>
<b>Award:</b>	<b>Associate of Fine Arts (AFA)</b>
<b>Institution's Existing Degree(s) in Same or Similar Discipline:</b>	<b>Associate of Arts (AA) with courses available in music and theatre, or general studies with a focus in art</b>
<b>CIP Code:</b>	
<b>Institutional Division:</b>	<b>Academic enrichment, Language and Fine Arts</b>
<b>Proposed Delivery Site:</b>	<b>Scottsbluff Campus</b>
<b>Date Approved by Governing Board:</b>	
<b>Proposed Start Date:</b>	<b>Fall 2019</b>

## Description

An Associate of Fine Arts degree (AFA) is a two-year degree designed to transfer to a four-year institution for a baccalaureate degree in fine arts for the Visual Arts, Theatre, Musical Theatre, and Interdisciplinary tracks of this degree. The AFA in Music track will transfer into a baccalaureate of arts degree, and the Music Performance track will transfer in a baccalaureate of music degree. The curriculum consists of a core of general education courses that often comprise close to half of the curriculum and a block of fine arts courses. The fine arts courses usually focus on a single area—most often visual arts, music, or theatre. Occasionally, students are allowed to take a mix of two or three of the areas to create a generalist focus area. Some institutions offer an AFA with only one or two focus areas (see page 8 for a sample of institutions offering AFA degrees).

The AFA differs from the Associate of Arts (AA) in that after the general education requirements are met for the AA, students will take a combination of courses specific to their specialty area and identified as transferrable. For the Interdisciplinary track, students will take the first two introductory courses for several disciplines (art, theatre, and music), and then complete elective hours in upper level courses of their choice (in one of these three disciplines).

The proposed degree would require 31 hours of general education courses and a minimum of 29 hours in a fine arts field—art, music, or theatre. An interdisciplinary option would also be available with a core set of courses from art, theatre, and music totaling 23 hours and 6 elective hours from any of the fine arts courses. Many of the courses needed for the degree are already in place and are offered yearly on the Scottsbluff campus. Some new courses in all areas would need to be developed in order to provide the complete skill sets needed for a student to transfer into a baccalaureate program. The two music tracks will require the biggest overhaul as all

instrumental lessons will be split into three levels: for the hobbyist, for the student on the Music track, and for the student on the Music Performance track. Each level will have different expectations students must meet to progress to the next level. The Music Performance track has been built to reflect music curriculum recommended by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). WNCC will be seeking certification from this association. Successful certification will ensure students who obtain an AFA from WNCC in this area transfer seamlessly to other institutions with the same certification.

**REVIEW CRITERIA**

**A. Centrality to Role and Mission**

The proposal states *WNCC assures learning opportunities for all-enriching lives, invigorating communities, and creating futures* as the institution’s central Mission Statement. The addition of the AFA degree bolsters the already successful fine arts courses and community presentations. A transferrable AFA will give students a clearer path into their futures at four-year institutions with BFA, BA, BM, and MFA degrees. The addition of a mandatory general education core for the AFA degree also makes certain students are completing coursework consistent with the AA and AS degrees already offered by WNCC.

Numerous community members enroll in fine arts courses and participate in yearly theatre and music performances, as well as WNCC art exhibits. To coincide with the institution’s already established music and theatre departments, the addition of specific visual arts, musical theatre, and music performance tracks could demonstrate the institution’s long-term commitment of supporting performing arts education in the area.

Consistent with Institutional Role and Mission?                        √   YES           NO

**B. Evidence of Need and Demand:**

**1. Need for the Program:**

High-----Low				
		√		

Students attending WNCC in the past whose interests were in the areas of fine arts were directed to other programs, such as the AA, or to other institutions. Students who chose to stay and enroll in AA programs were exceeding the number of credits for an associate degree in order to meet the requirements of four-year institutions for transfer students in a fine arts field. In addition, students were often being placed in “general studies” programs with no direct focus on their future path.

The proposal states the AFA degree is designed to serve as a transfer, not terminal, degree. Students would be prepared to transfer to a four-year institution as well as trained for a variety of lower-level jobs in theaters, galleries, ensembles, commercial businesses, and the entertainment industry. Some of the local enterprises that might employ a student with an AFA include:

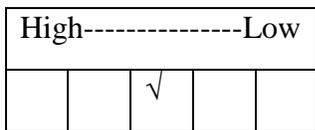
- West Nebraska Arts Center
- Churches: musicians, accompanying, choir members, soloist, choir director
- Midwest Theater: Sound technician
- Crossroads Music
- Private music lessons
- Construction companies (with skills learned in Technical Production)
- Student’s own devised theatre workshops
- Theatre West

EMSI (Economic Modeling Systems) was utilized by the college to collect data related to job opportunities. Within the region, EMSI reported a small increase in “Art Directors” as well as “Artists and Related Workers” over the past ten years. These employees would earn an average of \$26.65 an hour. Statewide, there was an increase of 2% in the number of jobs, with the greatest increase (17%) in “Designers, All Other.” The average salary was \$30.25 per hour.

The proposal also states that there are students who would not want or feel prepared for a baccalaureate program who could be attracted to an AFA. These students may want to sharpen their drawing skills as a tattoo artist, learn elements and principles of art to apply in their professional field, judge or jury an art exhibit, or write creative art reviews. For students who may not feel sufficiently prepared for a four-year institution, particularly music and theatre students, earning the AFA would provide the background needed, boost their confidence, and improve retention at the four-year institution.

The number of job openings in the region would not be large. However, the number of students choosing an AA with a block of fine arts courses over the past five years is significant. In the three main AA degree tracks of Art, Theatre, and Vocal Music, WNCC has seen 150 students enrolled in a variety of courses within each respective discipline. Many others have taken fine arts courses as elective hours.

**2. Demand for the Program:**



WNCC surveyed 30 students currently enrolled in fine arts courses to determine demand for the program. Of those taking art and theatre courses, 50% indicated they would be “favorable/interested” in an associate of fine arts degree. Of the students currently enrolled in music courses, 70% expressed interest in pursuing an AFA. If approved, WNCC’s AFA degree offering would be the second in the state—Mid-Plains currently offers this degree option. However, WNCC would be the only institution in the state offering a Musical Theatre track. WNCC currently recruits students from an 11-county service area in Nebraska, the eastern side of the state of Wyoming, and the Front Range area of Colorado. Recruiting practices would continue to hit these same markets with the implementation of the new degree option.

The college also reports contacting four-year institutions to discuss transfer opportunities. The majority were interested in working with WNCC to develop articulation agreements. Institutions contacted for input in the creation/updating of courses to ensure transferability include The University of Wyoming, The University of Northern Colorado, Chadron State College, The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and The University of Nebraska – Kearney. WNCC also contacted Hastings College, Nebraska Wesleyan University, The University of Nebraska-Omaha, and Wayne State College, sharing the proposed curriculum.

The college looks to maintain or increase the current traditional student numbers in vocal and instrumental music and theatre (13, 10, and 8, respectively) for the first year, and increase 31% overall to 15 students in each area by the third year. The college expects to enroll 8 students in the first year for visual arts and musical theatre, and increase 46% in the next two years for a total of 15 students. The college looks to increase student numbers in all AFA areas 35% by year three.

One other area that could help maximize enrollments in the fine arts courses comes from WNCC’s partnership with Scottsbluff High School (SBHS) and their Performing Arts career academy. With this program, students who are juniors in high school are eligible to take WNCC courses in their field of study for both high school and college credit. SBHS already has a performing arts track established for their students. A more prescriptive layout of an AFA from WNCC could provide clearer direction for high school students on this path.

Enrollments in the fine arts courses and interest expressed by students could result in a viable degree program, especially considering the number of students taking a large number of fine arts courses currently in the AA.

**C. Adequacy of Resources:**

**1. Faculty and Staff Resources:**

High-----Low				
		√		

WNCC currently employs four full-time faculty in fine arts: one each in art and theatre and two in music, with several adjuncts currently on staff for individual instrumental and vocal lessons. As the program is developed, adjunct faculty may be needed in theatre to help with technical aspects of each show. The addition of one full-time support staff member will be requested in year one, as only music currently has support with a part-time person. There is no full-time support staff available for these areas.

**2. Physical Facilities:**

High-----Low				
√				

WNCC is currently in the process of updating the performing arts spaces, including new construction for a theatre and music classrooms. The proposal states that WNCC will have adequate facilities. In the next three years, monies will be requested to continue updating the art facilities, as new windows are being installed in year one, and equipment will be updated in the next two years. The college also has an instructional equipment enhancement fund for future needs.

Scottsbluff has the West Nebraska Arts Center, The Midwest Theater, and Theatre West that would provide access to cultural experiences for students, as well as professional organizations and local events that promote visual and performing arts.

**3. Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources:**

Acceptable				
yes	√		no	

WNCC did not address this topic. Since the proposed program is based on courses from existing program areas, there should be sufficient resources to support the program.

**4. Budget Projections – For the first five years of the program**

**PROJECTED COSTS AND ANTICIPATED REVENUES FOR THE FIRST FIVE YEARS**

As reported by WNCC

PROJECTED COSTS		ANTICIPATED REVENUES	
Faculty and Staff	\$355,343	Reallocated Funds	
General Operating		Student FTE Funds	\$425,750
Equipment		Fees from Scholarship Students	\$126,825
Tuition Scholarships	\$724,700	Tuition and Fees, non-scholarship students	\$374,300
Five-Year TOTAL	\$1,080,043	Five-Year TOTAL	\$926,875

#### D. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

High-----Low				
	√			

There is only one other institution in Nebraska offering an AFA degree: Mid-Plains. Other community colleges in the state (with the exception of Mid-Plains) offer an AA degree with fine arts courses available to complete degree requirements. With the program emphasizing its transferability and NASM certification for the music tracks, the college hopes to become a niche program in the state, serving students from all areas and bolstering college enrollments at the same time.

#### E. Consistency with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*

The proposal states the addition of an AFA degree to WNCC's current degree offerings is consistent with *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*. Courses included in the degree offering, as well as institutional support, allow this degree option to hit in all five areas included in meeting the needs of students. With construction on the new performing arts center on the Scottsbluff campus projected to be completed by the fall 2019 semester, students of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities will have the opportunity to work in a new, upgraded facility. WNCC works to recruit and serve underrepresented populations. Recent IPEDS data demonstrates institutional attendance is composed of 21% Hispanic/Latino students, and 61% women. Graduation rates by other underserved populations include 50% Black/African American, 18% Hispanic/Latino, 50% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 55% Alien, Non-Resident. Hosting WNCC, community, and other educational endeavors in the new facility will promote the fine arts to individuals who may not otherwise have the opportunity to interact with the arts.

The proposal also notes the extensive support the fine arts area receives from the institution. With scholarship opportunities available in each of the AFA areas, a lack of financial resources will not be a barrier to students in regards to their ability to enroll and learn at WNCC. The institution has committed to maintaining this level of scholarship support for the five-year plan included in this proposal.

While scholarships for tuition are available, the institution does recognize that students have other financial obligations when attending: room, board, books, fees. To minimize the costs of these other commitments, WNCC has limited the number of credit hours in each track to 63 or below. The music degree options that reflect the 63 credit hours are still less than the 50% of transferable credits at most four-year institutions in this field. Research shows students will still be able to transfer the full 63 hours to many institutions. To also help with extended costs, all students in this degree area will be counseled to take full advantage of other federal and institutional grants.

In addition to the new performing arts center, WNCC is also including a new student resource center in the construction plan. This area located in the main building on the Scottsbluff campus

will house tutoring centers in math, English, and other specialized areas. The campus TRIO programs also promote the use of Supplemental Instruction tutors as another form of peer tutoring.

One concern heard in the research process from Chadron State College is many institutions do not require students in an AFA program to complete a general education core curriculum—all coursework is done in the fine arts area. The WNCC AFA requires all students on the degree track to complete the same general education curriculum as AA degree seeking students. This will ensure students are exposed to critical thinking skills from a myriad of avenues. The general education core consists of 31 required credit hours, with the remaining credits coming from each individual fine arts area.

Other areas in which this degree shows consistency with the statewide plan is through partnerships and collaboration. WNCC works closely with several high schools in its service area, and most often with Scottsbluff High School who is offering numerous WNCC classes to its students who are enrolled in career academies. Art, theater, and music courses could be placed on the list for these high school academies. In addition to high school partnerships, WNCC also has numerous outreach efforts in elementary and middle schools with its fine arts programs. WNCC is currently in its second year of a children's theatre academy where WNCC students perform for and teach children about the different areas of theater. Both instrumental and vocal music host a variety of musical shows off campus while touring each semester to local schools. WNCC hosts the District Music Contest for the area each spring, and this allows the institution to highlight its programs and facilities to a specific audience each year.

Consistent with *Statewide Comprehensive Plan*?

YES  NO

## AFA Degrees at Selected Community Colleges

### WNCC Peers

Central Wyoming College, WY	AA
Coffeyville Community College, KS	AA
Dodge City Community College, KS	AA
Flathead Valley Community College, MT	AA
Mid-Plains Community College, NE	AFA with concentration in Visual Arts, Theatre, and Music
Rockingham Community College, NC	AFA with concentration in Visual Arts
Shawnee Community College, IL	AA
Southeastern Community College, IA	AA
Southeastern Illinois College, IL	AFA with concentration in Art, Musical Theatre, and Theatre
Surry Community college, NC	AFA with concentration in Visual Arts

*Note: All institutions have a variety of fine arts courses that a student could select to complete the requirements for the AA program (beyond the general education requirements); specific areas and number of courses vary by institution.*

### Credit hours and areas of study for the AFA (unless noted)

Institution	Gen Eds	Visual Arts	Music	Music Performance	Theatre	Musical Theatre	Other
<b>WNCC AFA</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Interdisciplinary 29</b>
Mid-Plains CC	31	33	34		31		Interdisciplinary 29
Rockingham CC	24	36					
Southeastern Illinois College	30	33			25	30	
Surry CC	24	36					

**TABLE 1: PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

	(FY__20__)		(FY__21__)		(FY__22__)		(FY__23__)		(FY__24__)		Total	
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		FTE	Cost
<b>Personnel</b>	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost								
Faculty <sup>1</sup>											0	\$0
Professional <sup>2</sup>											0	\$0
Graduate assistants											0	\$0
Support staff											0	\$0
Subtotal	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
<b>Operating</b>												
General Operating <sup>3</sup>												\$0
Equipment <sup>4</sup>												\$0
New or renovated space <sup>5</sup>												\$0
Library/Information Resources <sup>6</sup>												\$0
Other <sup>7</sup>												\$0
Subtotal		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00

**FOOTNOTES are for guidance only. Please provide your own footnotes where appropriate and delete ours.**

<sup>1</sup> This AFA proposal is the re-organization of existing performing arts courses and AA degrees, so no new expenses will be incurred. There is no plan to hire new faculty or support staff in the future.

<sup>2</sup> WNCC is currently in the middle of construction for a new theater and music building. Included in this construction is also improvements to the art classroom where studio classes are held. Construction is slated for completion in May of 2019.

**TABLE 2: REVENUE SOURCES FOR PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

	FY(__20__)	(FY__21__)	(FY__22__)	(FY__23__)	(FY__24__)	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	<b>Total</b>
Reallocation of Existing Funds						\$0
Required New Public Funds						\$0
1. State Funds						\$0
2. Local Tax Funds (community colleges)						\$0
Tuition and Fees	\$94,388	\$97,220	\$100,137	\$103,141	\$106,236	\$501,122
Other Funding						\$0
Student FTE Funds	\$80,194	\$82,600	\$85,075	\$87,626	\$90,255	\$425,750
2						\$0
3						\$0
Total Revenue <sup>5</sup>	\$174,582	\$179,820	\$185,212	\$190,767	\$196,491	\$926,872

**FOOTNOTES are for guidance only. Please provide your own footnotes, where appropriate, and delete ours.**

<sup>1</sup>Tuition and fees rates were figured by taking current tuition and fee rates and increasing 3% each year over five years. This total was then multiplied by 20 students expected to be in the programs who are not on scholarship. The fees schedule in this total is higher because it takes into account scholarship recipients as well. Performing arts scholarships do not include institutional fees.

<sup>2</sup> This number was calculated based on 15 total credits for each student (approx. 45.5), multiplying that by the cost of tuition and fees per credit, and then divided by two--to receive an approximate FTE funds from the state.

<sup>5</sup> **Revenues are not expected to match expenses.**

NOTE: Where appropriate, show calculations and/or formulas that were used to project new revenue; e.g. number of new students projected multiplied by tuition and fees.