

# 2024 BCCAT THEATRE ARTICULATION MEETING

## Host: Thompson Rivers University (online Zoom)

May 24, 2024

**Present:** Robin Nichol (TRU, meeting chair/host), Wes Eccleston (TRU, minutes), David Hudgins (Langara), Craig Alfredson (Douglas), Christine Knight (ABCDE), Denise Kenney (UBC-O), Kyla Gardiner (SFU), Catriona Leger (TRU), James Long (SFU), Tanya Elchuk (Douglas), Tom Scholte (UBC), Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta (UVic), Brad Gibson (Langara), Jody Thompson (Corpus Christi College), Robin Boxwell (VIU), Fiona McQuarrie (BCCAT)

**Regrets:** Michelle Deines (Capilano), Leon Potter (VIU), Shelley Liebembuk (UFV)

**Call to order** at 10:05am

**Welcome**, Territorial Acknowledgement (Catriona)

**Introduction Roundtable** (representatives and institutional focus)

**Institutional Reports** and Roundtable

ABCDE Report (Christine Knight, Kerry High, Campbell River)

- High School theatre ongoing but morale low, general class availability low and enrolment too, quality lower and rigor lacking, COVID a contributor, job demands, mental health suffering students
- Discussion about new drama specialists for high schools due to retirements
- Diversity and inclusion discussion, BIPOC concerns and awareness for diversity; Hudgins spoke to some strategies to deal with it; Sadeghi-Yekta spoke to mentoring by hiring BIPOC faculty; Scholte spoke to need for encouraging diversity in programming and casting
- October 25th, HS PD day, invite to the teacher conference where there are workshops on various subjects (styles and special training)

Douglas College: Craig

- merging of performing arts into general Arts (except music), 7 faculty at present and without coordinator, enrolment adequate with tech better than acting
- auditionee numbers down as well as lack of communication; cohort of 22 in first year deemed too large (attrition during term), expectations, major workplace incident last year and is returning soon (health and safety committees more heavily involved since)

Corpus Christi College: Jody

- Formal program in development, intake of 25 students last year, concern for BIPOC as well as neurodiverse focus (CCC is a liberal arts college)

Langara: David

- 58th season complete, four show season, graduates continue to find work, shared season (with lesser known pieces, then a musical and a thriller)
- enrolment incrementally dropping with domestics with more talented internationals (diversity), included 'relaxed' performances in season were well received, grads continue to find work, program streamlining

SFU: Kyla, James

- enrolment is down, a lot of faculty turnover recently, productions ongoing including dance, moving toward curriculum redesign, working toward BFA
- period of change with retirements, program rebuilt with new streams with shift to theatre/performance with focus on composition, context classes (land and history) and international practice (physical) streams in second/third year also involves practice; thesis project as capstone in final year; shift from production to design (as degree)
- recent resignation from program; 3 full time faculty; enrolment stable with a dip and international apps recently of high caliber applicants

TRU: Wesley, Robin

- second year in realigned department with English and Creative Writing, recruitment ongoing, few grads this year with retention issues since COVID
- course offerings predictable for program in BA, Minor revisions complete, Major revisions ongoing; 3 ongoing faculty with present vacancy in Tech Coord. Position
- production season attendance strong with 4 shows, HS matinees helpful
- International enrolment forecast not positive, new Major to be titled Applied Creative Arts

UBC-O: Denise

- recent retirement will not be replaced, program in perpetual crisis financially since inception, enrolment is great with waitlists, only have a minor so are positioned as providing service courses, diversity happening with many international students
- social practice/devised work still a focus, interdisciplinary work continues, battle for survival continues, course caps are being challenged

UBC-V: Tom

- dialed back season from 4 to 3 plays (fourth as film project), newer first year admission model may shift to 4 year; season selection unique with submissions from interested parties involving MFA productions, acting prof positions changed
- season almost ready to announce, attendance not great as Point Grey can be a drive versus other shows, some retirements, curricular review coming, dealing with common challenges with students, reviewing the conservatory model, looking for flexibility for students, online/zoom audition/callback kept to date that keep even playing field

UVic: Kirsten

- refocusing to 4 areas of study for actors, production season shifting with who is cast, collaborative process to black box production, enrolment has been challenging but getting back on track, production season great with attendance

- some retirements and no assurances they will be replaced, field schools ongoing, focus on decolonization and research exciting, indigenous theatre festival (cast and language), working on a minor too

VIU: Robin

- students now taking 3 years to complete 2 year degree, feeding major institutions as usual, post-COVID affects felt, still very limited faculty, focussed now on content creation and one large production; experimenting with media studies and collaboration with other media (not film though)
- neurodivergence identified within 50% of student population; partnered with Creative Writing using AI that appealed to non-regular theatre audiences, Q&A engaging too, video components still very heavy (generative video), collaboration ongoing, free event/show offered too, still 2 full-time people

**Break at 12:10pm**

**Recalled to order at 1:01pm**

BCCAT: Fiona

- some retitling of BCCAT committees; 66 provincial articulation committees; annual meeting Nov 7 (free, online) and 8 (in person), early fall registration (350 participants last year); focus on updating guide books for articulation, emphasizing that articulation is ideally ongoing through the year versus just once
- admission process scrutinized for alternatively-abled individuals; spoke to accreditation, report on course outlines in BC Transfer System and calendar descriptions and resolving contradictions; letters of permission in system spoken to, international transfer credits (interprovincial too); TCS (Transfer Credit System)

**Incomplete Transfer Requests**

- nothing formally generated for this meeting, if there are outstanding requests, resolve them ASAP; if questions, go institution registrar and they can generate a list of requests

**Open Discussion**

Student Stresses

- we are compassionate and believe in self care but must be willing to change with times
- the industry has changed and reflect the times
- past successes possibly built on the backs of those overworking
- students can exploit leniency as well
- commitment to something bigger and each other still important
- exploring models of community and commitment worthwhile, updating room agreements, offering offsite (virtual attendance)

Performance Venues as Rental Spaces

- discussion around hosting other events in performance spaces, can observe how other groups engage with each other outside of how our institutions operate

#### Decolonization Issues

- challenges with staging indigenous plays without indigenous human resources, intentions and starting early important; usually focus is on content
- initiative unit to deliver land acknowledgement versus a recording, the need for guidance/cooperation with leaders making them more personal

#### Student Production Availability

- restrictions on students working outside productions, dropped restrictions on employment, linking course work with productions, exploration of smaller shows to lessen commitment, likely not going to get better anytime soon
- spreading rehearsal out with shorter runs, add tech into classtime, build in downtime for students/faculty, export a better model for the industry, take more time with each show versus creating; Studio58 students not encouraged to work though most do
- remove the shame of what's going on in every student's life when overwhelmed; students may prefer smaller roles in smaller shows versus bigger roles in massive productions; afternoon/lunchtime productions

#### Neurodivergent Students

- mental health is a priority, accommodations should be made, STEPS program (auditing for autistic students), inclusivity a focus; UBC BFA program making space for neurodivergent students
- discussion around the need to make room for individual process, development trumps curriculum, rigor meets the individual (one process doesn't fit all)

#### Next Meetings

- 2025, VIU host (online or potential hybrid), date/time TBD
- 2026, UBC-V host (as above)

**Adjournment** at 3pm.