

**From:** Petrella, Diane H.

**Sent:** Friday, February 23, 2018 3:04 PM

**To:** Mitchell, Linda E. <mitchelli@umkc.edu>; Bichelmeyer, Barbara A. <bichelmeyer@umkc.edu>

**Cc:** Stein, Thomas <SteinT@umkc.edu>; Noack, Carla <noackca@umkc.edu>

**Subject:** Theater/Conservatory

**Importance:** High

Dear Barb and Linda,

I have attached the Conservatory's response to the proposal presented to Faculty Senate on January 16th, 2018, recommending that the Department of Theatre be moved from the College of Arts and Sciences and into the Conservatory of Music and Dance.

The Conservatory faculty and staff supports this proposal, pending the Provost's agreement to the three contingencies outlined in the attached document.

Thank you,

**Diane Helfers Petrella, DMA**

*Interim Dean*

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to: Faculty Senate Executive Committee, c/o Linda Mitchell

cc: Interim Chancellor and Provost, Barbara Bichelmeyer  
Conservatory Faculty Chair, Tom Stein

re: Proposal to move the Department of Theatre (DOT) from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) to the Conservatory

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

Since the introduction of this proposal at the January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018, meeting of the Faculty Senate, considerable support for this move has been generated among the faculty and staff of both the DOT and the Conservatory.

A preliminary poll of Conservatory faculty and staff indicated that the majority supported this proposal, but concerns emerged about the financial state of the DOT and the impact this merge could have on Conservatory staff.

Conservatory faculty and staff held a meeting on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, with the specific charge to discuss and vote for or against this proposal.

Prior to the vote, the Conservatory faculty and staff agreed on three contingencies that must be in place for the results of this vote to be considered:

1. The debt the Department of Theatre (DOT) has accrued through overspending will not be transferred to the Conservatory
2. The Conservatory will add four additional staff members at the time of this merge
  - a. 1 full time line already in DOT
  - b. 1 full time advisor (currently .5 in DOT)
  - c. 1 full time staff member (currently represented in the Conservatory budget, but left open after a termination)
  - d. 1 new full time staff member, possibly transferred from the College of Arts and Sciences, to support the shift of students/faculty/programs from the infrastructure of CAS and into the infrastructure of the Conservatory
3. The establishment of a "grace period" during which DOT finances do not impact Conservatory finances, to allow time for the management of the DOT budget and adjustment to Conservatory oversight.

The result of this vote was as follows:

43 yes votes (90%), 3 no votes (6%), 2 abstentions (4%)

Based on the level of support expressed in this vote, as well as the unanimous support of this proposal from DOT faculty and staff, we would like to propose that an implementation committee be formed to facilitate this merge on an accelerated timeline.

**From:** Noack, Carla  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 28, 2018 10:39 AM  
**To:** Bichelmeyer, Barbara A. <bichelmeyer@umkc.edu>  
**Subject:** Yes

Dear Barb,

In light of your text to me yesterday afternoon (thank you!), I want to share with you something I wrote to the full-time Theatre faculty and staff yesterday morning. The discussion we had at our pre-semester faculty retreat was thoughtful and positive, but going into Monday morning's meeting I wanted everyone's assurance in writing. As of this morning, I have received written confirmation from all of our faculty and staff: a unanimous "Yes!"

My note to them:

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I believe that we can help the University and ourselves at this moment by joining the Conservatory. We can model the spirit of collaboration that will make UMKC not only more efficient, but stronger. We can give our administration a story of growth and unification that may compel donors to give us what we need—in facilities, in faculty, in staff, in students. I believe that the downtown campus "loss" is actually potentially very good for all of us. I believe that in this dark time, the stars may be aligning for us to contribute to something great.

We have a chance to be a true Partner to our Administration. I believe that if we say "Yes" at this moment in time, we will have a better chance of hearing "Yes" in the future. I also believe that if we say "Yes" we will be making UMKC exponentially more attractive to future undergraduate and graduate students.

I would like to be able to say Monday morning that the Theatre faculty is 100% supportive of this move. **Could you each please respond to this email within the next 24 hours with either your vote of support or a compelling argument—beyond labor/service concerns—not to go in this direction?** I appreciate your time, especially in the midst of recruitment.

Thank you!

Carla

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Barb, please—in re-reading this, I want you to know that I certainly do not mean to make light of the loss of the downtown campus. Years of tremendous thought and hard work have gone into that plan. But I do believe there is a real opportunity here to revitalize the passion of our donors (and students and faculty) by stoking what has the potential to be the true hearth of the campus.

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dear Provost and Interim Chancellor Bichelmeyer,

The proposal to move the Department of Theatre (DOT) from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) to the Conservatory has received nearly unanimous support by faculty in both effected units. There is strong evidence presented indicating that this reorganization strengthens and supports UMKC's vision, mission, and goals and helps to sustain university operations. The eight reasons for reorganizing academic structure are listed below, along with specific statements supporting the move of the DOT to the Conservatory.

**Improve operational efficiencies**

- Save funds by sharing production costs and support between music, theatre and dance
- Save time and resources by creating a production calendar that allows internal resources to serve productions in all three areas, decreasing reliance on external contractors
- Develop economy of scale by serving more programs with operational expenses specific to the performing arts
- Share resources (people and materials) among these similar professional and performance-based programs to avoid unnecessary expenses caused by duplication

**Sharpen strategic focus to better achieve goals**

- Place all performing arts programs in one unit to allow UMKC to demonstrate its commitment to excel in **all** of the performing arts, removing the possible impression that the DOT and the Conservatory are not equally valued
- Allow for increased student support and more opportunities to recruit for all performing arts programs without duplicating services between two units
- Increase collaboration among faculty and students to enhance productivity and scope of research and creative activity in the performing arts

**Clarify unique value and competitive distinction**

- Eliminate general confusion about why a professional program in the performing arts is located in the College of Arts and Sciences and allow UMKC's unique commitment to these types of programs to be more apparent
- Elevate the stature of the Conservatory by creating a compilation of programs and enrollment that compares to aspirational peers like the Cincinnati College-Conservatory and the School of Music, Theatre and Dance at the University of Michigan
- Provide additional opportunities for collaborations and new programs involving music, theatre and dance

**Improve quality**

- Improve learning experiences by expanding curricular options and collaborations among the performing arts disciplines

- Create a clear path for donors who wish to support the performing arts

**Improve the work experience and bring out the “better” in faculty and staff**

- Allocate people within a single unit who have expertise and talent in the performing arts to allow for better use of time and talent and improve likelihood of job success
- Improve communication, teamwork, engagement, responsiveness and transparency by grouping faculty and staff dedicated to the performing arts in a unified setting

**Empower academic leaders by providing greater support and accountability**

- Make the CAS more manageable by removing a department that has a different focus than the rest of that college
- Align authority and decision making about the performing arts within a single unit dedicated to advancing the university’s strategic priorities in this area
- Place the DOT within a unit dedicated to the performing arts to allow for careful attention to core operations and discipline-informed monitoring of finances
- Allow for focused feedback to improve unit reporting and increased accountability from all performing arts-based academic programs

**Take advantage of new ways to learn, teach and work**

- Ensure best practices in the study of the performing arts are followed in all areas, communicate clear learning outcomes within each performing arts discipline

**Take advantage of new opportunities for knowledge creation and knowledge transmission**

- Develop curriculum in areas like musical theatre that require collaborations across music, theatre and dance
- Grow new programs that are cross-disciplinary and link existing programs to provide new opportunities for students and new research areas for faculty