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LCCC INNOVATION FUNDS

LCCC Summer Theatre Proposal

Prepared by: **Jason Pasqua**, Instructor of Theatre

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Executive Summary

I propose that LCCC begin a summer theatre season on its campus. As the proposal initiator, I suggest myself as Artistic Director.

Simply named LCCC Summer Theatre, the company would be professional in that actors, designers, shop workers, and stage hands would be paid for their work. The organization would also be professional in its ways and means. These two characteristics would make it like no other theatre company in the Cheyenne community. **The primary talent pool for these positions will be LCCC theatre students.** In addition, the Artistic Director (AD) could hire outside talent (professional actors) to expose the students to diverse ways of working and to increase the quality of the productions. The company would select, rehearse, stage, and perform one to two shows during the summer months. Each show would be executed within a two-week window. This mirrors the schedule of most other summer companies and is exactly the type of work LCCC Theatre students seek and obtain as they continue to a four-year institution. The productions would charge \$10-\$15 for admission with limited runs of four performances per show. Revenue would be used to assist in the continued support of ongoing operations. This revenue will likely prove insufficient for operating the program in perpetuity so this proposal asks for the maximum renewable support. The yearly budget is \$28,000, to be itemized below.

Goals

The LCCC Theatre program is committed to the college's goals of Instructional Effectiveness, Success After Completion, and the Strategic Plan. I believe this proposal has something to contribute towards all three.

Solutions

- Instructional Effectiveness

For theatre LCCC theatre students, this educational activity is rigorous and relevant. They will work as professionals. They will be forced to call upon all of their skill and talent to deal with the tight deadlines and demands of professional theatrical work. The LCCC Theatre program seeks to prepare its majors for the demands of four-year university theatre programs and or professional work in the field. We seek to promote and create active collaborators, critical thinkers, and expert project managers. It should also be said that something special happens when you are being paid for your work. That fact alone makes it *real*. That this is paid work will somewhat change the student's relationship to me. For at least some of their time at LCCC, our relationship will be employer-employee rather than only mentor-student.

- Completion

The primary outcome the LCCC program seeks is to prepare its majors for the demands of four-year university theatre programs and or professional work in the field.

- The LCCC Strategic Plan

Within the Strategic Plan there are two items to which this proposal can undoubtedly contribute. The first is Wyoming's interest in an educated citizenry. In the performing arts, there are always two stakeholders.

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There are the *participants* and there is the *audience*. We seek to educate both by offering a wider range of cultural programs.

The second item in the Strategic Plan is LCCC's commitment to cultural development. We will, by definition, be expanding cultural enrichment opportunities.

There is perhaps another way LCCC Summer Theatre could serve the college. For nearly 40 years, the college has been in need of a Fine and Performing Art Building. Could we not place the arts front and center in the collective mind of the community? Would a building then be seen as a more real and concrete possibility?

Project Description

The Executive Summary above describes exactly the proposed project. The what and the why are covered in the goals and solutions sections. A number a years ago under a previous A&H Dean and a former LCCC President, a similar project was proposed and rejected.

The overall shape of the project is derived from countless other summer theatre companies based in colleges and universities throughout the country. The nearest to LCCC is Snowy Range Summer Theatre at UW. Having been a member of their company for three of the last four summers, I can attest to the fact all I seek to do is replicate, albeit in a smaller way, their practices and success.

For literature in support of this project I can offer mostly arguments in favor of theatre education.

Two of my favorites are included.

The first has become a driving force in my teaching and on the numerous occasions I am called to defend the arts.

<http://tomvanderwell.wordpress.com/2012/01/16/10-ways-being-a-theatre-major-prepared-me-for-success/>

The second is in a similar vein, but is a response to recent comments by Georgia's Chancellor for Higher Education, Hank Huckaby.

<http://www.ajc.com/weblogs/get-schooled/2013/jun/01/chancellor-students-choosing-wrong-areas-study-inc/>

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Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

There is one goal with bulleted objectives.

LCCC Summer Theatre will produce 1-2 shows in summer 2015 and 2016.

- The productions will be of the highest professional quality.
- LCCC Theatre students will be the primary talent pool.
- The summer season plays will be chosen with an eye towards balancing art and commerce.

We will know if the project is successful by our audience attendance and by the level of growth shown by the students. One is a simple headcount, the other will be assessed using the same tools used in my classroom. I will not under any circumstances define success using only ONE of these two metrics.

Project Budget

Item	Estimated Cost
Rights to Performance	\$2500
Production Materials (lumber, paint, hardware, consumables, etc.)	\$7000
Actor's/Crew Stipends	\$7000
Technical Director Stipend (lights, set, costumes, properties)	\$4000
Artistic Director Stipend (Responsible for all supervision and company operation)	\$5000
Marketing	\$2500
Housing for company members in the LCCC Residence Hall (if needed.)	TBD
	\$28000

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Assuming performances are filled at 50% capacity (which is likely low), the ticket price is \$15, there are four shows in a run and there are two shows, the return on investment is as follows.

$$50 \text{ seats} \times \$15 \times 4 \times 2 = \$6000$$

However, I would submit that this metric is not the only measure of return on investment. There is another, more valuable and yet completely *unmeasurable* gain to the college; High profile, community and professional VISIBILITY. People on our campus. Even the audition notices, which shall go out all over the Front Range are in effect saying, "LCCC is a place where there is energy and where things are happening."

Imagine the implications for recruiting students to LCCC when we can say "*you will work as a paid, professional actor during your time at the college.*"

Project Timeline

Preparation for production would begin in the spring preceding each summer season. This would include show selection, hiring, auditions, and other pre-production work.

The first show could open as early as June 15th of each summer.

The season would end in late June, early July with the strike for the last show.

Actors would be paid the on the third night of each run. The Design Team would be paid half upfront, half on completion. Crew would be paid on the actor schedule. The AD would be paid at the start of the season on the first company workday. Other expenditures would be paid as needed.

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Project Team

Jason Pasqua-Artistic Director, Proposal Initiator.

Jason Pasqua has been the lead Theatre Instructor at LCCC for nine years. He holds a BFA in Performance from The University of Wyoming and an MFA in Acting from The University of Idaho. He is a recognized Actor Combatant with the Society of American Fight Directors with certifications in Rapier and Dagger, Broadsword and Unarmed Combat for the Stage.

In 2007, he was recognized with a Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival Meritorious Achievement in Directing Award for his production of *Biloxi Blues* at Laramie County Community College. His recent work on the stage includes multiple guest artist appearances with Snowy Range Summer Theatre in Laramie Wyoming.