ASU Music Theatre and Opera
Annual DEI Report – Academic Year 2020-21

Culture and Structure

- MTO faculty and students have become involved with the new school-wide DEI and I.D.E.A. committees and are engaged in discussions to incorporate DEI efforts across the school. Several events were organized school-wide during the academic year including the student-led Color Cabaret, the School of Music, Dance and Theatre Pride concert, and numerous wellness seminars.
- DEI discussions have been incorporated into the agendas of all faculty/staff meetings in the MTO area. All faculty have revised their syllabi and course content with a focus on creating more equitable and inclusive course content and policies. Curricular revisions have occurred within courses as well as the degree, including creating more access and student-choice in degree-required dance, acting and music courses.
- A temporary reporting form was created in August 2020 before the start of classes and was been posted on all audition and casting announcements, as well as all daily production schedules and rehearsal reports. It is also included in all syllabi. This includes a list of resources for student advocacy, in addition to submitting the response form. The form is intended to be temporary until school-wide and campus-wide systems are in place.
- The SLT now includes 10 members, more than ever. Seniors self-elected to rotate off the committee in December of their final year or study. All self-nominated applications were received and admitted to the committee. Particular attention was given to provide representation among musical theatre minors. No graduate students, opera or voice majors self-nominated to be on the committee. Therefore, the committee is currently entirely musical theatre students. It has become difficult to find time to hold meetings given the growing size.

Teaching and Learning

- MTO collaborated with ASU Gammage to host a DEI town hall in October 2020 with Black Broadway artists and ASU Vice President Colleen Jennings-Roggensack. MTO also provided for formal Bystander Prevention Training for all faculty, staff and students participating in MTO productions.
- In addition to the above, the SLT has begun organizing monthly community events.
- More than one-third of area budget expenditures were centered on new initiatives and strengthening diversity in productions.
- Faculty and staff members Toby Yatso and Kate Leonard participated in mental wellness training in fall 2020.

Auditions and Casting

- All 2020-21 productions included at least one person of color on the creative team.
- In collaboration with the Voice faculty, audition language and policies were revised in August 2020 and implemented in the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 auditions. This included removing the requirement of singing a classical selection for the musical theatre degrees and the addition of a “choose your own” selection that may include spoken word, instrumental or another skill or talent. This is for all voice degrees. Information can be found here: https://musicedancetheatre.asu.edu/admissions/music/undergraduate-auditions
- All auditions for the school took place virtually. Additional resources were provided to help students prepare. We will continue to expand these efforts as we return to in-person auditions in 21/22.
Programming, Productions and Seasons

- Works by multiple underrepresented composers and librettists were included on the 2019/20, 2020/21, as well as 2021/2022 season.
- Season selection committees were established and the SLT was more concretely involved in helping to solidify the final 2021-22 season. Repertoire was favored which is non-exclusionary. MTO continues to provide over 100 roles per year among all projects combined.
- The 2021-22 season was planned so there is no overlap with projects. 2020-21 planning was adversely affected due to COVID, but no performances overlapped, and there was no overlap with the Color Cabaret, enabling all students to participate if desired.

Community Connections

- The Student Leadership Team has taken over the MTO Instagram account and Facebook has been relegated exclusively to posting of event information. The featured alumni series was eliminated due to the fact that it was creating perceived inequities, as indicated by alumni. All MTO social media will be dedicated toward showcasing the work of current students.
- We are currently re-evaluating our LOOP program as well as our partnerships with multiple local organizations.

Advocacy

- The university library land acknowledgement was utilized for various events and classes taking place this year.
- An ASL-interpreted performance of one production has been planned. ASL interpreted performances are planned for 2021-22 productions as well.
- During the COVID-19 hiring and salary freeze, no additional hires were made in the musical theatre and opera area. However, new faculty have been hired in theatre and dance and elsewhere in the school of music for positions.
- The MTO budget was cut due to COVID-19, along with budgets across the school.
- MTO continues to advocate for a nation-wide presence for auditions and recruitment. Faculty have been encouraged to attend auditions at the Arizona Thespian Festival. Support and funding is needed. In the meantime, the virtual audition medium of COVID-19, while not ideal, demonstrated ways virtual auditions may serve to help create access for applicants who are limited by travel.

Accountability

- These DEI initiatives and updates were posted to our website and social media accounts in August 2020. Updates will be made available internally to all students, and externally to all those who inquire.
- School-wide demographic information is posted to the extent is has been made available at https://uoia.asu.edu/.
- This document has been updated in April 2021, shared with faculty, staff and the student leadership team for feedback.
- Further updates are in progress and on-going.