DATE: October 19, 2016

RE: Request for a special fee for School of Theatre

TO: Provost Dunn

Provost Dunn:

The School of Theatre requests a discontinuance of the $35 special student fee (formerly of the SMTD) and ask that it be replaced with a $200 special student fee for all undergraduate theatre majors (Theatre AOS codes U880, U881, U882, U883, U885, U888). With approximately 300 undergraduate theatre majors, this fee would generate approximately $60,000 per semester or $120,000 a year to enhance undergraduate student experiences in the School of Theatre. This fee would not be charged to theatre minors or theatre graduate students.

This fee will allow the School of Theatre to attend to an aging technology inventory used by all undergraduate theatre majors, position students to learn from and collaborate with leading national and international theatre artists/educators, assist travel for students attending national and international conferences, and underwrite myriad fees associated with various course requirements. An increase in this special fee insures that the school will deliver the highest quality education to its students.

In seeking a fee of $200 per semester, a robust dialogue was initiated with the UNCG theatre students this fall. We are in the process of surveying our students, asking them if they would be willing to absorb a special fee in order to maintain the excellence of the program, support our facilities, and our co-curricular activities. This survey closes in November 2016; the results will be reported at that time. I am confident that the vote will be strongly in favor of such an increase, based on lengthy discussions with the Student Advisory Group (this group is composed of two representatives from each class elected by their peers). The theatre faculty and staff also discussed the initiation of the special fee of $200.00 per semester and, after debate and thoughtful reflection, it was approved with only one dissenting vote.

In addition to working with students and faculty, we consulted with the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts as well as our sister schools in the CVPA. The table below summarizes comparisons with theatre programs in the UNC system as well as national peer institutions that represent excellence in theatre training.
Note: the below represents tuition and fees only, per semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Tuition/Fees per semester (in-state)</th>
<th>Special fees assessed for theatre (per semester)</th>
<th>Total for theatre students if tuition stays the same</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Carolina</td>
<td>3,294.00 (if health insurance waived)</td>
<td>Yes: $125.00</td>
<td>3,294.00</td>
<td>Fine Arts fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC-Charlotte</td>
<td>3,313.50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3,313.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
<td>3,418.50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3,418.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC-Ashville</td>
<td>3,421.00</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3,421.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian State</td>
<td>3,495.50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3,495.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCG</td>
<td>3,485.00</td>
<td>Proposed at $200</td>
<td>3,685.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Southern Mississippi</td>
<td>3,982.00</td>
<td>Yes: course fees ranging from $6.50 - $125.00</td>
<td>3,982.00</td>
<td>Fees are for practicum, movement, makeup, scene and costume shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY-Albany*</td>
<td>4,030.00</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4,030.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Arkansas*</td>
<td>4,410.00</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4,410.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State University*</td>
<td>4,877.00</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4,877.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State University*</td>
<td>7030.50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7,030.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* peer institutions

The School of Theatre remains a competitive value in the state, particularly amongst national peer institutions even after the student fee increase; it is a program of choice that is currently at capacity across the board in all concentrations.

Theatre is an art form requiring cutting edge technology (sound, light, scenic innovation) buttressed by old world craftsmanship (costume design and actor training). The dedication of our faculty and the potential of our students are second to none in North Carolina, but this alone is not enough. The making and practice of theatre is expensive. We must provide our students the tools and resources needed if they are to be competitive when they enter the workforce.
A $200 special fee is modest when shared equally amongst our majors, but the rewards will represent a seismic change that can last a lifetime.

Proposed Budget:

Income from special fees: $120,000 (per fiscal year)

Expenditures:

- Lab Materials Support: 40%
  - (scene/light/sound/costume shops)
- Guest Artists/Lecturers: 30%
- Conference & Travel Support: 20%
  - (National: ACTF, USITT, SETC, NY Fringe; International: Prague Quadrennial, Edinburgh Fringe, Study Abroad)
- Class Material Support & Fees: 10%
  - (lumber, muslin, paints, supporting materials, makeup, industry-standard software for CAD, lighting, and sound)

About 40% of the approximately $120,000 this fee would generate annually would be used for providing material support for specialized facilities that students use for productions. These skill-based shops function as student-learning laboratories wherein emerging and established artists train our students; it is through these shops that students develop their specialized skills and are provided invaluable exposure to artists and craftspersons working and supporting themselves in the disciplines in which our majors hope to work. Hardware, software, and inventory is aging out and lagging behind peer and industry standards. Lighting and sound design is particularly challenged (for example, vari-lite instruments are approximately $6,000 each, replacement lamps cost anywhere from $100 - $400 per instrument; sound equipment and personal mics average $300 per performer and sustain heavy wear and tear; sound boards vary from $3,000 - $6,000). There are many other equally expensive industrial equipment needs in all of our shops on which students are trained.

Approximately 30% of the student fees would be earmarked to invite nationally and internationally recognized guest artists, lecturers, and educators to engage with our students. UNCG theatre students would have the opportunity to work side-by-side with professional designers and actors. Engaging with guest artists emboldens students to imagine a life in the theatre beyond that of Broadway. Entrepreneurial guest directors and playwrights working with our students would develop innovative work, creating new forms of theatrical expression and open up early professional opportunities.

About 20% of the proposed fees will be used in any given year to help students who wish to participate in faculty-led summer study abroad programs as well as international travel to theatre conferences and events. We are currently realigning our BA program toward a more entrepreneurial experience (reflecting the change in contemporary theatre) and a
more cross-disciplinary focus with stronger international exposure. We already enjoy a robust relationship with Living Pictures, UK and are a conduit for directing students from Trinity College, University of Manchester, and Central College Nottingham. The school director is traveling to Europe in the summers of 2017 and 2018 to continue to develop study abroad opportunities. These international experiences align very closely with UNCG's strategic mission and our Global Engagement Quality Enhancement Plan.

The remaining 10% enhances student education by covering fees associated with materials needed for specific course experiences. Material support for classes are needed for computer technology, printers, and software as well as consumables such as lumber, fabric, plastics and hardware for costume/scenic/sound/light design. Currently we are behind in providing industry-standard software in lighting and sound design because we do not have the funds for licensing fees.

We seek to build on our national reputation and invest these funds back to our emerging student-artists and young educators so that they are not only competitively versed in contemporary theatre practice but become leaders in their disciplines. In a single voice, this is one investment that the School of Theatre faculty, staff, and students wish to make. We ask you for your support.

John R. Poole, PhD
Director, School of Theatre