

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Affairs

**NO.:** AAC 12-25

**COMMITTEE DATE:** February 28, 2012

**BOARD DATE:** March 6, 2012

---

**APPLICATION OF BOSTON CONSERVATORY TO AWARD THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN MUSICAL THEATER**

**MOVED:** The Board hereby approves the Articles of Amendment of the **Boston Conservatory** to offer the **Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theater**

**Authority:** Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.

**Contact:** Dr. Shelley Tinkham, Assistant Commissioner for Academic, P-16 and Veterans Policy

## **INTENT**

Boston Conservatory, a New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accredited, independent institution located in Boston, Massachusetts, filed articles of amendment to offer a Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theater. The proposed program will prepare graduates for faculty positions in academia as well as careers in performance, musical theater, non-musical theater and directing.

The proposed Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theater is an evolution of the Master of Music in Musical Theater to a more comprehensive program now recognized as the terminal degree in the field. The institution's decision to offer the proposed program was based on conversations with potential students and with professionals in the industry who communicated a strong preference for an MFA in Musical Theater as compared to the Master of Music. According to the institution, there is only one institution in the United States which offers the MFA in Musical Theater-- San Diego State University-- thereby, indicating a need for the program.

The program met Boston Conservatory's internal requirements for approval, including a Board of Trustees vote on September 30, 2010.

## **INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

The Boston Conservatory was founded in 1867 to serve as both a professional training academy and community music school. The Conservatory is now a private college with fully accredited undergraduate and graduate programs in music, dance, and theater and currently enrolls approximately 700 full and part-time students at its campus in Boston, MA., The mission of the college is to inspire and encourage students to perform at the highest level of their art; to foster creativity and courage; and to teach the skills that will lead to professional and personal fulfillment.

The Boston Conservatory received authority to award the Bachelor of Music by Chapter 229 of the Acts of 1938. Subsequently, in 1951, the school was granted the authority to award the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in drama and/or dance. In 1957, the school received the authority to grant the degree Master of Music and to use the term "A College of Music, Drama, and Dance" in conjunction with the name Boston Conservatory of Music. In 1990, the school was authorized to award the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Dance. The degree Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in drama and/or dance was re-titled to Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre and/or Dance. The Boston Conservatory of Music now seeks authority to offer the Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theater.

## ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS

### Admission

Prospective students must have a bachelors degree and are required to submit an application; essay; SAT or ACT scores; TOEFL or ELTS scores for non-native speakers; transcripts from all previous higher education institutions, artistic resume; two letters of recommendation and a writing sample. Applicants must also audition in music, dance and theater. Auditions should be in person if possible. Recorded auditions are permitted only if no other alternative is feasible.

### Projected Enrollment

The institution anticipates that graduates of its current Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theater programs will be attracted to the proposed program. Likewise students already enrolled in the institution's Master of Music program who want a more comprehensive experience will be able to transition to the proposed MFA program. Each entering class will be limited to no more than 12 full-time students. The institution anticipates a degree completion rate of over 90%.

### PROGRAM ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

	# of Students Year 1	# of Students Year 2	# of Students Year 3	# of Students Year 4*
New Full Time	9	12	12	12
Continuing Full Time	10	9	12	12
New Part Time	0	0	0	0
Continuing Part Time	0	0	0	0
Totals	19	21	24	24

### Current Tuition and Fee Charges

The total cost for the proposed program, including the two academic years and one summer intensive, will be \$94,088. Students will be eligible for merit scholarships based on talent and any appropriate federal financial aid.

### Curriculum (Attachment A)

The proposed program builds on both the institution's current Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theater and the Master of Music. Students in the current Master of Music may transfer to the proposed degree. When there are no remaining students in the Master of Music program, it will be phased out.

The proposed program consists of a total of 60 credits in areas of musical theater history and styles; Shakespeare; modern theater; cultural history and the theater. Students also take four semesters each of applied voice and dance, either ballet and/or jazz technique.

The program is designed as a cohort model to be completed in two years. If a student falls out of sequence he or she may be required to switch to a subsequent cohort. The delivery methodology will be in small classroom settings with a hands-on approach to musical theater.

In addition to courses, students will be required to participate in the production of a new musical theater work in June at the conclusion of the first year of graduate study. Students also have the opportunity to create, develop and perform a cabaret solo performance at the conclusion of the second year to showcase their work for industry professionals.

## **RESOURCES AND BUDGET**

### Faculty and Staff

The proposed program will utilize the faculty and staff resources of the institution's current Master of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theater. Many of the courses of the proposed MFA exist as required courses or electives in these current programs. For example, students of the proposed program may be enrolled in courses as part of the Bachelor of Fine Arts but will have additional assignments appropriate to the graduate level. Likewise, the institution plans to phase out the Master of Music. The proposed MFA will be its replacement. Consequently, the institution does not anticipate needing to hire for the proposed program.

All of the faculty for the proposed program are currently teaching at the Conservatory: 14 full-time faculty members (six of whom have terminal degrees) and nine part-time faculty who will teach in the proposed MFA.

There are currently four academic divisions that report to the Conservatory's Dean and Chief Academic Officer: Music, Theater, Dance, and Liberal Arts. The proposed program will be administered by the faculty of the Theater Division with guidance from the Conservatory's Curriculum Committee. The program will be headed by a coordinator who will report to the Theater Division Director.

### Facilities and Library and Information Technologies

The proposed program will utilize the library and information technologies already available through the Master of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theater. The institution's recent renovation and expansion of the facility at 31 Hemenway (in Boston) contains modern classrooms, smart classrooms, dance studios and a performance hall for mounting professional-level theater productions. The Conservatory is committed to professional development for faculty to ensure the appropriate use of technology in the curriculum.

The institution's library contains a number of libretti, musical scores and anthologies; scripts; and online databases for industry journals and others. Students have access to other materials from interlibrary loan and partnerships with similar institutions such as the Goodspeed Opera House located in East Haddam, Connecticut. Students are also allowed access to the private holdings of faculty.

### Fiscal (Attachment B)

The institution submitted a budget for the proposed program.

## **PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS**

Upon completion of the proposed MFA in Musical Theater, students will

- be able to perform, direct, and instruct others in the practice of theater—particularly theater that uses music—through comprehensive study and practice within the art form;
- demonstrate an understanding of historical and contemporary musical theater through analysis, performance, and pedagogical practice;
- be able to perform historical and contemporary theatrical works, informed by an in-depth study of acting, voice, speech, and movement;

- sing with a mastery of vocal technique in all styles of the musical theater repertoire, having sharpened their skills in musical theory, score analysis, and character interpretation;
- demonstrate mastery and versatility in ballet and jazz to the highest level needed to support their professional work; and
- demonstrate their ability to perform and produce cabaret shows, create roles in new works of musical theater, and present themselves successfully to industry professionals.

## **EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The proposed program was reviewed on July 17-19, 2011 by a visiting committee comprised of Dan Carter, Professor and Director of the School of Theater, Pennsylvania State University; Paula Kalustian, Professor and Director of the MFA in Musical Theatre Program, San Diego State University; and Jeffrey Cox, Professor and Chair of the Department of Music and Dance, University of Massachusetts Amherst. The committee made several recommendations regarding the curriculum, suggesting that it needed to be more focused, including the inclusion of a dance and a substantial writing component. The committee also recommended that attention be paid to assessing the background of incoming students and providing remediation in a given area if needed.

In response, the institution made major changes to the curriculum, addressing each of the concerns expressed by the visiting committee. The number of classes offered were reduced to provide an increased focus; an emphasis on dance was added as was an extensive study of the history and lineage of musical theater. Admissions requirements were clarified to stress the knowledge needed to be properly prepared for the first day of class. The institution provided a clear set of program outcomes.

After reviewing the institution's response, the visiting committee felt that the changes made adequately addressed the recommendations.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

The required public hearing was held on February 16, 2012 at the Department of Higher Education, located at One Ashburton Place in Boston, Massachusetts. No comment was offered in opposition to the proposed program.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

The staff has thoroughly evaluated all materials submitted by Boston Conservatory and finds that the proposal meets the requirements for NEASC-accredited institutions outlined in 610 CMR 2.08. Recommendation is for

approval of the school's petition to offer the Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theater.

## ATTACHMENT A: CURRICULUM

### Graduate Program Curriculum Outline

<b>Major Required (Core) Courses (Total # of courses required = 30)</b>		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
TH 571	Introduction to Graduate Studies	2.0
TH 553	Musical Theater History 1	2.0
TH 554	Musical Theater History 2	2.0
TH 531	Musical Theater Styles and Analysis 1	3.0
TH 532	Musical Theater Styles and Analysis 2	3.0
TH 631	Musical Theater Styles and Analysis 3	3.0
TH 632	Musical Theater Styles and Analysis 4	3.0
TH 511	Acting 1: The Vocal-Physical Connection	3.0
TH 512	Acting 2: Research, Play and Performance	3.0
TH 514	Acting 3: Principles and Practice of Movement	3.0
TH 517	Acting 4: Shakespeare	3.0
TH 611	Acting 5: Modern Theater	3.0
TH 612	Acting 6: Audition, Rehearsal, and Performance	3.0
TH 581A, 581B, 681A, 681B	Applied Voice and Rep. (4 semesters, 2.0 credit each)	8.0
Varies by level	Dance Lab: Ballet Technique (4 semesters, 1.0 credit each)	4.0
Varies by level	Dance Lab: Jazz Technique (4 semesters, 1.0 credit each)	4.0
TH 518	Musical Theater Dance History Seminar	3.0
TH 551	Cultural History and the Theater	2.0
TH 695	Capstone: Summer Stock	1.0
TH 696	Capstone: Cabaret	1.0
TH 697	Capstone: Showcase	1.0
	SubTotal # Core Credits Required	60.0
<b>Curriculum Summary</b>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		30
Total credit hours required for degree		60
<b><i>Prerequisite, Concentration, Dissertation or Other Requirements:</i></b>		



Students must have a Bachelor's degree and be accepted for the M.F.A. based on an audition. Undergraduate and/or prior professional success will be examined carefully. It is expected that applicants will have earned a minimum of a 3.0 or "B" average in their undergraduate coursework upon graduation.

Music Theory Pre-Requisites: Successful completion of two full years enrolled in an undergraduate musicianship or theory course (or demonstrated equivalent). Students will have competent sight-reading ability, basic piano skills, and possess a sound command of the fundamentals of music theory. Students who have not met certain criteria or demonstrate deficiencies in undergraduate preparation or basic skill development may be granted conditional admission with the understanding that remedial coursework will be completed (upon enrollment, or in advance, or both).

Musical Theater History Pre-Requisites: A written exam (with multiple-choice, fill-in and essay questions) will determine whether students can benefit fully from the graduate-level course. Students must score above a certain level to qualify. Those who don't will read Scott Miller's *Strike Up the Band* and watch the *Broadway: The America Musical* DVD series and take a follow-up exam.



Tuition Inflation

5%

Faculty salaries are based on the current salary of each faculty member plus 3% inflation starting in Year 1. Fringe benefits assumes 7.65% for part-time faculty and 37.65% for full-time faculty.

Notes:

\* In Year 1, the 10 Second Year Students are current First Year Students in the M.M. program.

\*\* FY12 tuition of \$35,800 was set by the Board of Trustees at a recent meeting.

\*\*\* Summer Students in Year 1 will include all students from Year 1 taking the summer portion of the degree program.

\*\*\*\* Summer tuition is based on 12 credit hours at the summer rate per credit (\$1,480 for FY12).