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Office of the President
October 29, 2003

Members, Board of Trustees:

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN THEATRE PRACTICE

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of a Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre Practice degree program in the College of Fine Arts.

Background: The Ph.D. in Theatre Practice is designed to prepare students to pursue either academic or professional careers through a combination of practical/applied and theoretical studies. Upon completion of this program, students will be capable of serving as professional dramaturges, educators, and/or scholars in theatre history, criticism, or performance studies. The proposed program is consistent with the mission of the Department of Theatre to provide the highest quality instruction in the theory and practice of Theatre Art. The Department promotes the scholarly investigation of the theatre and its historical/theoretical components and provides cultural and artistic opportunities for the University, the community, and the Commonwealth. The proposed degree program promotes the mission of the University of Kentucky especially as it relates to graduate education goals: to provide advanced knowledge and skills as well as to provide the advancement of research.

During the past 20 years, significant changes in the demands of both professional theatre companies and post secondary education institutions have occurred. In professional theatre, one development has been to train the dramaturge--the literary consultant to the production. This person advises directors, designers, and actors regarding cultural, literary, political, and technical aspects of a particular play. Research and communication skills are critical to this position, as is knowledge of the arts that combine to create theatre--directing, acting, and designing. While this position has existed in European theatres for centuries, it has evolved slowly in the United States but finally has become a recognized and necessary one for professional theatre companies. A number of universities--mainly those with Research Extensive status such as the University of Illinois, University of Maryland, and University of Michigan have begun offering advanced degrees in dramaturgy. Additionally, colleges and universities throughout the country are offering courses in dramaturgy and related areas. Faculty trained in this field are now being hired in increasing numbers. As a result, a Ph.D. degree program designed to combine scholarly activities with applied work in theatre is required. Student requests for this type of education are also increasing.

This program has the approval of the Graduate Council and Senate Council, and has completed the forty-five day review by the Council on Postsecondary Education. The Provost of the University supports this recommendation.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____