

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS AT CAÑADA COLLEGE

Background:

Cañada College offers programs in Music, Theatre Arts, Dance and Studio Arts, and provides students the opportunity to earn AA and/or AA-T degrees in these disciplines. Over the past several years the college has experienced waning enrollment, which most have attributed to an improved economy that has beckoned our students back into the workforce. The decline in enrollment has been particularly significant in the visual and performing arts, where factors unrelated to greater employment opportunities have also been brought to bear.

What follows is a brief overview and analysis of each program, with general recommendations for reinvigoration, improvement, and growth. Recommendations are based on an appraisal of recent enrollment patterns and course offerings within the broader context of the college's available resources, faculty strengths, and student needs. Any significant changes in program or facilities, balanced with other campus projects, will most likely not be implemented for at least three to five years. This will allow significant time for planning in all areas.

Overview of Programs and Facilities:

All of Cañada's performing arts programs are limited in practicum performance. Although introductory sections have good enrollment (particularly for Music 100 and Drama 140, whether offered face-to-face or online) there are limited opportunities for public performance. Degree paths are not effective in the sense that enrollment is low and students earn very few degrees. In addition, there are other colleges (Foothill/De Anza, as well as the other SMCCCD campuses) with strong programs in performing arts that are close enough to be compete for students. Curiously, the dance department is entirely linked to Kinesiology/Athletics. The theatre facility includes a 90-seat flexible theatre and a 500-seat main stage theatre, but our productions take place only in the flexible theatre. Over the course of the preceding years the auxiliary spaces, dressing rooms, green room, costume shop, etc. have been converted, and the orchestra pit on the main stage has been covered over. The main stage and flexible theatres are significantly underutilized. Technologies in the theatres are limited but fairly up to date. Art facilities include a 2D studio (which is in need of renovation), a classroom converted into a 2D lab, and a small photo darkroom that is currently unused. In the past 3D classes were discontinued and facilities converted to other uses. There is a small art gallery located in Building 9. Music has a single classroom/lab with electronic pianos. There are six small practice rooms with pianos and a choral room. There are no other performance labs or other music specific facilities. In addition the building that houses the theatres, art and music programs was built over forty years ago, and is in need of some upgrades and repair (although the main stage theatre lobby was recently remodeled). The Dance department has a single large studio in the current PE building. This building is scheduled to be replaced within the next year or two. The new building design is currently under process and it is expected that dance will have at least one studio space in the new building.

There appears to be a lack of identity and marketing for the programs. *The arts are not seen as a collective group and individual programs are somewhat siloed.* There is limited marketing for the few public performances that are offered, and connections of programs to local high schools are not strong. Looking at enrollments and participation, it also appears that many students at Cañada do not view the arts as either necessary or important to their college experience. The reasons for this may be lack of exposure or social/cultural influences that focus students only on those classes which apply to their specific career goals.

General program recommendations:

- Rather than trying to compete with other schools or simply developing standard degree programs, Cañada could look toward establishing innovative and/or niche programs that will set it apart. The best approach would be a ground floor opportunity to begin new programs that will serve current student needs and be on the cutting edge of future needs. For each of these programs to be successful they need to move beyond the introductory level classes and into degree or certificate patterns that will attract students and fulfill their goals.
- Program creation and/or improvement will rely on faculty energy, commitment and expertise as much as administrative support and resources. Successful programs will not build themselves. Curriculum can be written and programs put in place, but without faculty who have both the expertise to manage the program, as well as the passion and energy for success, it will be difficult to expand. *Full-time faculty will also need to be connected outside the college. This will mean working with local high schools, professionals, organizations and the community.* It will also mean recruiting well qualified adjuncts to help build programs.
- As programs are developed or redesigned they will need additional resources, including equipment, supplies, and classroom/lab/performance spaces. Some programs may require hiring faculty or staff before there is an upswing in enrollment in order to build curriculum, organize facilities and equipment, and market the program to target populations. *Put simply, the college may have to commit to allowing for growth in class sizes in new classes/programs that may start small with the idea that they will build to successful levels.*
- The main stage and flexible theatres must be utilized. The 500 seat theatre is a valuable resource for both the college and the community. The building should be redesigned and renovated to accommodate a variety of performances and then a structure put in place to schedule and use the theatre as a college performance space. Creating presenting opportunities within the community should be considered as well. As stated earlier, a separate report will be created related specifically to the theatre facilities.
- The college will need to commit resources to marketing new programs and performances. It will be a combination of branding as well as publicizing performances and programs so that an identity and reputation are developed to increase participation from both students and the community at large. This will also apply to recruitment for students into performance programs. There will need to be a coordinated effort to connect programs

with the area high schools. This needs to involve faculty connecting with their peers at the area high schools, as well as the programs being featured in general student recruitment.

- For effective marketing, the college might consider creating a full arts campaign to unveil new programs, facilities and performances to students, potential students, and the community.
- The eventual planned use for the main stage theatre will determine the direction of some of the academic programs, as well as the combination of staff to fulfill all of our needs. If the theatre is involved in more community or professional productions, this will provide opportunities for students in those programs that are connected to these areas.
- Staffing will not only involve instructional and support staff, but also professional staff and administrative structure. Staffing a variety of classes can be problematic in small departments. It is difficult for one full time faculty member to teach the breadth of a specific program, as well as other general department classes and duties. Qualified adjuncts will be a significant component for success with many of the new program directions. Having adjuncts who are also professionals in the discipline will provide students with strong connections to the career path of the program.
- To engage the student population as a whole, the college might benefit from involving general students beyond the marketing of specific programs and offering performance opportunities. Students do have a fine arts requirement as part of their transfer or other degree patterns. This is why many of the introductory classes have healthy enrollments. There are currently over twenty courses listed which satisfy that requirement in the Cañada AA/AS degree requirements GE area C. That requirement is only a single class in arts or humanities. As an example students could take Spanish 120 and satisfy this requirement which would limit any real exposure to the arts. The college might look to developing a fine arts general education class that exposes students to the many aspects of all the arts. In some ways it would be a more intensive version of the honors *Moveable Feast Seminar*. This course could be team taught by faculty from each discipline, highlighting the energy and importance all the arts play in our society. It could be made a mandatory requirement for the AA degree at Cañada. In this way all graduating students would have exposure to the arts and might be motivated to explore the arts through another class or performance opportunity. The trade-off would be to limit the other courses that satisfy the range of arts requirements.
- *If the Main Stage becomes a presenting house with a professional staff, it is recommended that the oversight of that facility and staff be in a new Visual and Performing Arts division and become the responsibility of a Dean. The division would also include the Art, Music, Dance and Theatre departments and could also include the Communications, Fashion design and Multimedia Art departments.* A dean with a background in that area would understand the unique issues, as well as provide leadership for greater success. Having the arts in their own division would strengthen department connections and encourage a stronger and more unified approach to the arts at Cañada.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

Music: Following general trends, the Music program has seen declining FTES in the last 5 years (it reached a low of 39 in 2013-14). The AA degree is minimal and not adequate for transfer. Furthermore, it would be extremely difficult for a college of this size to offer a complete transfer program due to the breadth of required classes and the resources necessary to provide them. The current program has no public performance component and Piano, Guitar and Songwriting are the only practicum classes (with most of the curriculum focusing on the more academic aspects of music). Besides performance, there are no classes or resources in electronic music and no part of the program addresses the music industry as a career path. Enrollments are strong in the introductory survey classes: Music Fundamentals and Music appreciation. Enrollments for most other classes have been up and down, while the piano and guitar have occasional spurts, but overall, are not very strong.

Recommendations:

- The department needs to develop performance ensembles to build the program. The department recommendation is to develop a Mariachi band, supplemented by Jazz and musical Theatre.
- Whatever ensemble opportunities are to be developed, their success will rely on the hiring of a full time faculty member to cultivate them. The difficulty is that the department does not have current FTE to justify the hiring of another full time instructor. However, a full time instructor should be specifically sought for the expertise, commitment, and following to develop strong performance ensembles, which will help to attract and recruit students to build a successful program. For this to happen the college must commit to hiring a faculty member, without the FTE, to build the program. The college also needs to find a way for individual students to get further training on their instrument. This is where the links with the other SMCCD campuses might prove effective.
- As for what type of performance ensembles, the idea for Mariachi is valid, though limited. Mariachi is a very specific style and will not capture a wide range of students. Jazz bands and orchestras are fairly common within other colleges in the area. To build off the Mariachi idea it is recommended that the department considers *World Music* as the genre to accommodate the broadest range of instruments and styles. This will provide multiple directions depending on available students.
- The department would like to continue focusing on developing the AAT degree, potentially combining classes with the other SMCCD campuses. This would be a way of creating the opportunity for the degree with the limited resources of the department. But there should also be appreciable student demand for the AAT before putting too much energy into it. The transfer degree can be important but the time and energy required may not yield significant number of students. It would be beneficial to look at other two year program degree/certificates that could be developed at Cañada which would serve more students and still have a direct career focus.

- Once the performance area has been developed, another potential area of development recommended by the department is in songwriting/composing/arranging. Currently there are no other colleges in the area offering a degree or certificate specifically in writing/composing/arranging. Most campuses have a class or two but not a degree pattern. Classes would expand skills to include all aspects of songwriting and arranging and include different styles and applications that would also focus on career opportunities. There is solid potential for this direction, but any degree/certificate would need to be explored for viability and vetted by faculty as well as professionals in the area. Although there are no current Career Tech programs in this area this is a direction that could be explored as well. For even more student opportunities, there would be connections between these classes and whatever performance ensembles are developed such that original student works would be performed by student ensembles. This program could also tie in with the Multimedia department in terms of composing, scoring or arranging projects produced by that department.
- Any development of performance or songwriting will require significant upgrades to current facilities and equipment. For performance there will be a need for sufficient rehearsal spaces for ensembles, and these spaces must also meet acoustic requirements. If songwriting is developed (or any area related to composing, arranging or working with studio sound) the piano lab will need to be re-equipped with electronic keyboards and computers containing the various software programs that those classes will require. Ideally a small recording studio would enhance the ability to record and mix original works.
- Depending on the nature of the performance ensembles, it will also be beneficial to connect with community and professional groups to enhance student learning. As an example, the Redwood Symphony (which is a partner with the college) would be able to offer internships to students whose abilities meet symphony standards. Likewise, composers, songwriters, etc. could work with professional groups in the area.

Theatre: The theatre arts program is similar to Music in that there is solid enrollment in the introductory general education classes but low enrollments in classes for the major. The current theatre arts program is attenuated in the sense that it lacks a specific focus area and the breadth to successfully offer the range of lower division classes for transfer. Department enrollments have been dropping steadily from 35.31 FTES in 2010-11 to 17.3 FTES in 2013-14. The department does two productions a year in the Flexible Theatre. *Since 2009, the average number of students involved in the production class has been just over 10.* The instructor is having difficulty attracting a larger talent pool. Efforts were made in 2013-14 to attract more students with the department taking a comedy tour to two local high schools as well as promoting classes on campus. The technical theatre classes have also had declining enrollments to the point of not being offered in 2014.

Recommendations:

- Basically, the theatre department needs to reinvent itself. Programmatically this would follow the general recommendation of looking for a niche program. The current

instructor has a background in new works and has a desire to look at a playwriting degree that encompasses scriptwriting for both TV and film. This could be a valid niche program, but needs to be well vetted. It should include a comprehensive two year academic sequence for an AA degree that would also provide transfer opportunities and should have outside professional assessment (and input) for viability. This will be a difficult program for a single faculty member to teach, so recruiting qualified adjuncts will be a part of the development process. With the amount of new production in the area this program could have substantial internship opportunities and professional companies in the area could also be resources for qualified adjuncts. The difficulty with this program is that new works require student performers and productions. Cultivating a sustainable acting program along with playwriting will be very difficult in a small department.

- If the main stage theatre develops a presenting series, as well as other community and professional performance opportunities, another niche program with potential would be a degree or certificate in *Theatre Management*. Most schools in the area offer a class or two, but not a full program. *This could be an opportunity to develop a new and unique career tech program with some of the professional theatres in the area.* Working with an advisory committee, specific classes could be developed to help transition students directly into the workforce or provide them a unique background for transferring to a four year general theatre major. Some courses could also be developed in coordination with the Business Department. Students would have hands on opportunities working with the Cañada main stage production staff as well as interning at other theatres. This program would be most effective with a new faculty hire, one with expertise in the area, to develop and implement the program. If the main stage is developed to the level of having an Executive Director, there is the potential of combining some position duties.
- The current performance program is faced with a student population that does not have an interest in performing and a community that is not connected to the college. Most small college departments rely on both to create a sustainable performance program. In addition, there are multiple opportunities for performance at other schools and theatre companies in the area. Currently all productions are in the smaller Flexible Theatre. There are limited resources to mount a production on the main stage. *If the main stage gets a remodel there will be some interest generated to perform there, but it must be cultivated with productions that attract and build both participation and audience, as well as accommodating the need for greater production values (i.e. larger sets, more extensive lighting etc.).* Until new programs and facility upgrades are established, the performance program will most likely continue with minimal participation.
- The Theatre Arts department could also benefit from the inclusion of a resident theatre company as a partner in the use of the main stage or the Flexible Theatre. The main stage seating is rather large for many companies, however even occasional use of either the main stage or the Flexible Theatre in a partnership arrangement would provide potential opportunities for attracting student participation, as well as community exposure and participation.

- The Technical Theatre program is also at a standstill with minimal participation for the same reasons as production. The college currently offers only two classes (Theatre Production I and Theatre Production Lab) to cover all technical theatre training. These classes are directly tied to the department productions and have most of the time spent in the Flexible Theatre. With an increased use of the main stage, the technical program could expand, although the program would still have to achieve its goals within the context of the renovated main stage. If the Main Stage develops a presenting program, there might be opportunities to work with the Stagehands Union in *creating a certificate program in technical theatre which could include internships*. There will also be a need to have some training for students who are involved in the above mentioned Theatre Management program which would help expand participation in technical theatre classes. Curriculum would need to be developed as well as assigning faculty. As with the Management program, staff for the main stage could potentially serve as faculty for technical theatre classes.

Visual Art: The Visual Art program was cut back severely in the past but our current program still offers the AA and AA-T in Studio Art. Classes follow these degree paths and there are currently few majors. Enrollment in the introductory classes are healthy, but less so in the 2D studio classes. There are no 3D classes or facility and the current 2D studio lab is in great need of a remodel. There is also a small photo darkroom but the space has been deemed unsafe due to ventilation issues. There is a small gallery located in Building 9 that is managed by the Studio Art faculty member and staffed by work study students and volunteers. The student art show is generally done in the main stage theatre lobby.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that with the renovation of the theatre the 2D studio should get a full remodel. This would include the removal of the Dark Room and connecting that space with the 2D lab. A new, up to date facility will help attract students to the current 2D studio classes being offered.
- *It is not recommended that a 3D studio be rebuilt.* It would require square footage that is not available as well as equipment, staff and faculty to accommodate a program that will, most likely, not attract as many students as will be needed to be successful.
- The Art History area remains viable though there must be continued efforts to recruit new students into the program. New revenues from the theatre could provide some help for the Art honors class creating more consistent help for students to attend events. In addition, connections to the new Stanford University Arts Institute may strengthen enrollments and student participation.
- *The Art Gallery is inadequate, being very small and not well designed as a gallery. If the college wants to have a greater presence for visual art, another galley will be needed. A larger, better designed gallery space will help provide a better facility for student art, as well as possibly bolstering the gallery management class, which currently has trouble making enrollment. In addition, the connection to the community would be strengthened*

with a variety of community and professional shows. A larger gallery will require more staff time and it is recommended that, if created, the gallery could still be supervised by the Studio Art Faculty, but that a full time classified position be hired to run it. If the community is well involved in the gallery, funding for the staff position could come from a variety of sources.

Dance: The Dance department has also had trouble with enrollments in classes other than the courses that fulfill GE requirements or the social dance classes which are not a part of the major. As stated earlier, the department is still connected to the Kinesiology and Athletics department. The department has established an AA-T degree, but has no majors and has not been able to offer some of the classes due to low enrollments. The department does class recitals at the end of each semester on the main stage theatre.

Recommendations:

- The department will have trouble establishing a standard major with the resources available. Moreover, the Dance major is not a big draw for community college students in general. Students who are seeking entry into the profession look for those instructional opportunities that will improve their skill rather than earn them a degree or certificate. Professional companies place a premium on talent and ability, not academic credentials. With that in mind the department might look to establishing a workshop series each year, offering short term professional or master level training for dancers. These workshops would still be offered for credit and instructors paid as faculty.
- Workshops could also be part of a performance series that offers a higher level of performance than that of a standard class.
- The department might also look to summer workshops/institute style trainings. If local high schools were queried for potential workshop ideas and the program was well marketed to high school students, they might provide a good base for a workshop/institute.
- Many professional dance teachers do not have a Master's degree and the college will have to look at a process that will facilitate equivalency.
- As a short term solution to increasing enrollments, the department could look at offering more standard classes in the evenings. There are many high school dancers that would like to have other opportunities, but cannot attend classes when they are in school.