



TO: Higher Education Committee

FROM: John L. D'Agati *John L. D'Agati*

SUBJECT: New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts Application for Degree Authority. Regents Authorization to Award the Associate in Occupational Studies (A.O.S.) Degree and Master Plan Amendment Authorizing the Institution to offer a Program in Film and Television Performance

DATE: December 3, 2012

AUTHORIZATION(S):

John B. ...
SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents authorize New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts to award its first degree, the Associate in Occupational Studies (A.O.S.) and approve a master plan amendment to offer a program in Film and Television Performance leading to the A.O.S. degree?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute and State regulation.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the Higher Education Committee at its December 2012 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken. It will then come before the full Board at its December 2012 meeting for final action.

Procedural History

The New York Conservatory for Dramatics Arts submitted this proposal in June 2009. The Department has determined that the program, if approved, would meet registration standards.

Background Information

Mission: The purpose of the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts (NYCDA) is to provide intensive and structured acting training focused on the skills which will support the young actor entering the professional arena, specifically in film and television, as well as the tools to continue artistic development throughout a career. Established in 1980 to train actors

for television commercials, the Conservatory developed a two-year non-credit program of study in the 1990's.

In 1995, the Conservatory received initial accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and currently is in good standing with this nationally recognized accreditation body.

Curriculum: The degree program proposed by the Conservatory is based on the two-year Film and Television Performance Program which NYCDA currently offers as a non-degree granting institution. The Film and Television Performance Program leading to the A.O.S. degree would require the completion of 65 credits and emphasize proficiency in film and television performance. Coursework would include voice and movement training, acting training in several schools of technique, film history, business skills, camera technique, voice-over technique, and new media.

Students: To encourage admission of the best and most suitable candidates for its training, NYCDA conducts wide-ranging scouting endeavors. These efforts ensure a broad range of ethnic, regional and cultural backgrounds in the student body, and provide opportunities to groups who may not otherwise have access to New York-based education. Enrolled students come from all over the United States. A completed application includes: a successful audition and interview, proof of high school graduation or GED, demonstrated English fluency and literacy, two letters of recommendation (one personal and one professional) and academic transcripts from all schools attended. In the 2011-2012 academic year, NYCDA enrolled 185 first-year students of whom 151 were invited back for further study after their initial Platform year. Of those students who chose to audition for the supplementary Theater Year for 2012-2013, 23 were accepted. Of the combined Platform Year and Theater Year students seeking places in the final Film and Television Year for 2012-2013, a total of 160 were invited to return. The Conservatory anticipates first year enrollment of 200 students, rising to 250 first-year students by the fifth year. Enrollment substantially beyond this number would require additional facilities.

Although the Conservatory does not award credit for its coursework, a number of NYCDA graduates, upon individual application, have had coursework from the Conservatory accepted for credit at other institutions. This group includes Adelphi University, University of Northern Colorado, SUNY New Paltz, Columbia College, Marymount Manhattan College, Occidental College, Virginia Commonwealth College, SUC at Buffalo and Oregon State University. Attainment of degree-granting status should additionally extend opportunities for NYCDA graduates to further their studies. Current NYCDA students have expressed overwhelming support for the idea of earning an Associate in Occupational Studies degree.

Faculty: NYCDA's faculty includes 9 full-time and 33 adjunct instructors. Faculty educational credentials are commensurate with those of other institutions offering degree-granting programs with similar content. The majority of faculty hold degrees from major universities, including two Master of Fine Arts (the terminal degree in Acting) from New York University, two from the Yale School of Drama and four from Columbia University. NYCDA's faculty members have extensive professional experience in their fields. The majority are members of professional unions such as Actors Equity Association (AEA), Screen Actors' Guild/American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG/AFTRA) and/or Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SSD&C), all of which require professional competence for membership.

Governance: NYCDA is a free-standing, for-profit institution which has been incorporated in the State of New York since 1981 under the corporate name of the Three of Us. NYCDA has a Board of Directors. Senior administrators comprise an Executive Committee. An

Academic Leadership Team, which includes faculty, has essential academic governance responsibilities, including curriculum review and quality assurance.

Facilities: NYDCA occupies three floors covering 10,000 square-feet each, at 39 West 19th Street in Manhattan. The space is divided into 13 studios and classrooms plus administrative and operations offices. The facilities include four multiple-camera studios, two large movement studios, two large teaching studios, two smaller teaching studios, a student lounge, changing rooms and a library. Camera studios are equipped with digital cameras, switchers, flat-screen monitors, and iMac computers for recording on-camera work. Large movement studios are equipped with iPod docks, CD players and wall-mounted speakers. All teaching and camera studios are equipped with basic set elements such as door units, multi-purpose blocks, furniture and props. The student lounge includes computers and printers for student use.

The library collection includes reference works, circulating materials focused on plays, screenplays, technique texts, and a liberal arts collection focused on history and literature. A wide-ranging selection of DVDs is available. Students also have access to online serials and databases. NYDCA will participate in the Metropolitan New York Library Resources Council (METRO) to take advantage of the further resources a consortial agreement provides. The library will be staffed by a MLS qualified librarian supported by student workers.

Need: According to the U.S. Board of Labor, growth projected for acting employment for the next decade is expected to be somewhat slower than average. Given this statistic, young actors must prepare themselves with all advantages possible in order to compete in the current market. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, job growth in theater is expected to be slower than in film. Film provides far better pay and career momentum than theater, and television provides the most opportunity of all, by virtue of the fact that more television shows than films are being produced at any given time. NYDCA provides a specific kind of education to meet the particular skill needs for acting for the camera in the digital age.

Film and television opportunities are growing in New York City even while they are shrinking elsewhere in the country. According to a new economic study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group, film and television production in New York City is currently the largest in the city's history. According to the Mayor's Office of Media Development, at least 13 pilots were filmed in New York in the spring of 2012, and 188 films and 140 television series were shot on location during 2011. Currently the film and television industry in New York City employ more than 130,000 people, an increase of 30,000 jobs since 2004. While 40,000 media jobs have disappeared across the country in the past ten years, New York City has gained 40,000 in the same period.

Regents authorization of the Associate in Occupational Studies degree is required because the College is not currently authorized to award any degree title. Master plan amendment is necessary because the proposed program will be the institution's first program in the discipline of the Fine Arts.

A canvass of all degree-granting institutions in the New York City region resulted in no objections to the proposed new college or its programs.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents authorize the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts to award the Associate in Occupational Studies (A.O.S.) degree and to offer a program in Film and Television Performance leading to that award.

Timetable for Implementation

This authorization will be effective until December 31, 2013, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.