

## Cerritos College CTE Program Report, Spring 2019

Program: Technical Theater 1006.00

Division: Fine Arts

Attached is a copy of the Annual Unit Plan for: [Click here to enter text.](#)

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1. **Objectives: What are the objectives of the program?** To what extent are these objectives being achieved? How satisfied are students with their preparation for employment? How satisfied are employers with the preparation they receive in this program? Does this program contribute to programs in other fields? What plans are in place for improving the program?

The objective of the program is to prepare students for entry level positions in stage productions involving set design, lighting design, sound effects, theater acoustics, and stage direction in the entertainment industries such as theater, film, television, and live music productions. This objective is achieved by training studies on the latest staging, lighting, and audio technologies employed by the industry.

The program is currently exploring curriculum and certificate options in order to expand its training options and respond to the needs of the entertainment industry. Live concert production is a growing industry and employers are seeking students who can handle of the technical rigor of staging, lighting, and sound in a concert environment. New courses will reflect current trends in entertainment technology such as LED lighting, movable light fixtures, and audio networking.

The program currently offers a four-course Verification of Completion in Entertainment Technology. The goal is to offer stackable one-year and two-year Certificates of Achievement in Entertainment Technology as well as an AA degree. These degree options will allow students to choose the path that best suits their career and employment goals.

Students who have completed the existing certificate have found employment with companies such as Disney, Knotts, and RPG. However, many students feel that they need more time on task in order to achieve greater success in their employment. Students who have gone to four-year institutions found that the technical training they received through the program offered them an advantage when transferring since many four-year institutions do not have the facilities present at Cerritos College. However, many of the technology used at Cerritos is outdated and not following industry trends.

The Music and Theater departments both depend greatly on the Technical Theater students and staff for the productions of concerts, musicals, and plays. The Technical Theater students and staff also provide support of campus events such as Convocation, Awards, and all events in the Theater.

While the program is honored to support all these events, the lack of students and hourly support has presented problems for the program. The program is finding it difficult to maintain a high production standard required for these events.

The program has a strong relationship with Commercial Music and has actively pursued collaborating on events. The results of the collaboration have been positive and both program benefit from their work together. The programs hope that the collaboration will provide students with opportunities to train in both sectors. The program hopes to build a similar relationship with film in the coming years.

**2. Market Data Need: How strong is the demand for graduates of the program?** How has demand changed in the past two years and what is the outlook for the next five years. How many jobs are available regionally in this field? Are other similar programs offered in this region and if so, what is their impact on the job market? How is the job market impacting your program?

Current market data suggests the growing need for skilled audio technicians who have a broad range of skills and can adapt to several environments. The entertainment industry is experiencing growth, particularly in Southern California. According to figures by the California Employment Development Department, the total entertainment industry employment in Los Angeles County in 2018 will rise to about 320,600 jobs. These numbers reflect the various entertainment sectors such as film, television, radio, and music production. However, all these sectors require skilled audio technician labor.

The Occupational Projections of Employment supplied by Employment Development Department for the State of California shows a projected growth of 10.6 percent from 4700 to 5200 jobs between 2014 and 2024 in Los Angeles County for Sound Engineering Technicians (SOC 27-4014/TOP code 1005.00). The projected annual average job openings is 130 per year. The projected growth for Audio and Video Technicians (SOC code 27-4011/TOP code 1005.00) is 15.8 percent from 14,600 to 16,900 jobs between 2014 and 2024 in Los Angeles County. This data indicates that there is demand for this field. Data from the 2015 OTIS report suggests that audio related jobs will grow in the television, film, and gaming industries and that many of these jobs will be freelance professions.

There are several community colleges offering programs similar to that of Cerritos: Orange Coast College, El Camino College, and Citrus College. These schools, however, focus more on traditional theater training and the scope of training is not as broad as what Cerritos College offers. For example, Cerritos College has a complete outdoor stage system with lighting and sound capable of producing live outdoor concerts and events. In the past, the program would hold summer concerts in Falcon Square. There is also strong competition from for-profit schools in Hollywood, CA. These schools offer similar training at an average cost of \$60,000 per year and their degree offerings are not accredited. However, a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education shows that these for-profit schools fail to offer graduates gainful employment. The result is that graduates from those programs cannot find adequate employment to repay their tuition costs. There is clearly a demand for a low-cost alternative to the for-profit schools, however programs like that at Cerritos need to

have the equipment and software to compete with these programs.

The job outlook has had a positive impact on the program and students are excited that they can receive the same level of training from a community college that they would at a more expensive institution. With the creation of new Certificates and courses, the program can compete directly with other schools. As long as the program can remain current with its technology offerings, the program will provide students with an excellent alternative to for-profit programs. The goal is to make the program at Cerritos as attractive to students as possible by not only offering professional training, but placing them in jobs.

**3. Enrollment/Retention/Placement: What are the trends in student enrollment, success and completion, and placement? Is there an increase or decline in the last five years? What are the barriers to success and completion? What are placement rates with local employers? What do these data mean for your program?**

Student enrollment has declined over the past five years. Presently, the Technical Theater program is without students and several courses were cancelled as a result. In Summer 2016, the summer staging class was cancelled due to low enrollment and planned outdoor events were cancelled as a result. The summer outdoor program has yet to resume. The cause of this decline is twofold.

The first is a lack of promotion. The program was successful in the past because there was active interest by employers when the program was first launched. Since then, there has been little done to promote the program to the community and high schools. The second is the lack of a full-time faculty member dedicated to technical theater to oversee the growth and development of the program. The program needs a faculty member who is well-versed in technical theater and can help create curriculum, certificates, and marketing materials for the program. Although the Theater program now has three full-time faculty, two of them are specialists in acting while the third focuses more on costumes.

The initial design of the program was to allow students to enter the program in any given semester and receive training. While this allows for flexibility, tracking student progress is difficult because many students enter the program for a semester, find employment, and return at a later semester when the employment has ended. In many cases, students seeking employment would end up with a touring company and not return to complete their degree.

The program has excellent equipment to train students, however, when working with the outdoor staging, additional trained hourly labor is required to ensure the safety of the students. Sufficient funds need to be allocated to finance outdoor staging projects.

Employers have been very satisfied with the students leaving the program, however, many feel that they lack initiative or confidence. They feel that students need more time on task. The goal of the new curriculum is to provide students with more training through additional coursework. For example, the current live sound class is nine-weeks long, which is not enough time for the students. An 18-week new course has been proposed to offer students the time needed to properly train. The same case exists for the staging and lighting courses.