

Meeting called to order at 4:10pm

**Welcome** – Scott Adams welcomed everyone and gave acknowledgements to Mondavi Center and those who made possible planning and hosting the meeting at an offsite Theatre industry partner. Following the welcome, folks did brief introductions of themselves around the table of advisory board members, college representatives, and students who attended the meeting. Many of the introductions were directed toward the students in that several of the industry professionals described their paths from college to working in the field, which served as an overall theme for the day. Scott also gave a brief description of the purpose and function of the advisory board, which was included on the back of the agenda in writing, and for which all attendees already had a clear understanding.

**Sierra College Program Review Updates:** Scott Adams began by giving an overview of the direction Sierra College priorities have undergone with R4S (Re-engineering Sierra College for Student Success) and the implementation of guided pathways and interest areas. He directed attendees to a handout which listed a “learn and earn” approach that is being marketed online not only for the Theatre Arts Department under the Visual and Performing Arts disciplines, but for all interest areas at Sierra College for students to be able to make a more informed decision. So, the new web pages are more inviting and informative than they have been in the past. Scott next described department priorities that have been outlined after the completion of recent Curriculum and Program Reviews such as (1.) Outreach (CTE days, maker faire projects, high school visitations of theatre programs, and invitations to visit and tour their program following special performances for high schools of main stage productions); (2.) Adding new and re-organizing existing storage facilities (costume and properties storage container requested, cataloguing existing costumes and props into database); (3) Hiring technical staff (Costume Shop Manager, Props Shop Manager, Part-time Carpenter), and (4) Adding new or reconfiguring existing classroom facilities (such as T-2 into a black box dedicated to the Theatre Department performance and technical classes). In efforts to improve their program, Scott described that last year they began doing exit interviews of graduates asking outgoing students to evaluate their experiences to help improve programs and offerings, as well as a means to keep in touch and gather alumni data to track their career successes. Some of these interviews have led to hearing and responding to the need for more performance classes, including a new acting for musical theatre class that begins in fall ‘19. Debra Hammond discussed their new Stage Management class that begins spring ‘19. Following that, Christian Johnson added that Broadway Sacramento offers one-on-one job shadowing for stage managers. Christi-Anne Sokolewicz and Donna Flor chimed-in to mention that they suggest conveying to students to take the initiative to ask for opportunities to do job shadowing, because they (as employers) are eager and willing and waiting for college students to initiate these contacts, but seldom do. Donna described a success story of a UC Davis student who initiated contact at a recent student job fair, because the student kept in touch. Next, Scott asked Thor to review the new equipment that the department received over the past semester from both CTE committee allocations through Perkins grant funding and one-time district funding for student usage in production classes. New equipment that they received includes: 50 LED EGC fixtures, 30 D-60’s, 6 Moving lights, and 10 new wireless microphone channels to meet new frequency guidelines, which Sierra Theatre Arts plans to use for the spring musical.

**Folsom Lake College Program Review Updates:**

David Harris spoke about an FTE increase for a new film production in studies area expanding that part of their department next year. New classes being written currently include Audio Production utilizing

the activation of the Recording Studio at the Harris Center, Film editing, as well as courses toward a Commercial Music Certificate. David mentioned they are in a transition period for being able to effectively offer their technical theatre certificate describing challenges to find educators given the recent loss of the Technical Director at the Harris Center. David described the recent fall show, *Macbeth*, and their current agreement with the Harris Center to rent their space for all performances. Unfortunately, due to the fires, they had to shut down their final weekend, which was a \$5,000 pre-sale loss. They have appealed to the college to refund that money. David added that they too are desperately short on storage that cannot keep up with their growing program. Cameron Hoyt then discussed the success of their first semester for an internship program with the Harris Center having their students work on stage crew with touring shows for credit. Cameron stated 3 or 4 students participated this semester and truly benefitted from the experience. Cameron also reported they received 2 new 15,000 lumen projectors, giving them now up to 4 Epson projectors. They utilized some in the fall show and plan to use again in the spring for *Alice in Wonderland*. They received funds to “step into the automation world,” as well as a spotlight practical. They bought some of this equipment and rented other equipment. There were a few questions posed to Cameron and David regarding the existing relationship between the academic side of Folsom Lake College Theatre and Film Department and the Harris Center.

**Questions from the panel to the Colleges:** Herb Garman asked if either Sierra or Folsom Lake were seeing any difficulty in recruiting for a theatrical degree vs. the more alluring film and “Hollywood” industry. Both Scott and David responded that are not seeing that at all – that interest is in fact booming for a degree in theatre in this area largely due to the work that feeder high schools are doing to generate enthusiasm. David said, and Scott and Debra concurred that high schools are sending very excited, well prepared students more and more every semester.

Herb posed to the students if they were looking to stay in traditional theatre or looking at this education as a path to something else. Most of the students replied they were trying to learn as much about different aspects of theatre as possible and to keep their opportunities open. Sean Putzier responded that he and a few students he has spoken with are interested in teaching down the line.

#### **Comments and suggestions from panel**

After Max Schultz mentioned about his ambitions to get a masters exploring the technical theatre industry before possibly teaching, Steve Odehnal encouraged students to consider a career path in “technical sales.” He said the number of jobs out there for people with technical capabilities who could do sales was immeasurable. Christi-Anne said “manufacturing too.” Steve went on to say there’s a pretty big gap between technicians and sales folks in the industry that is not being met. He elaborated that working show to show is one thing, but if one is leaning toward a more “stable lifestyle,” amassing knowledge in many areas can lead to impressive positions in this industry as well. David asked how the colleges could support this line of career path. Steve responded that most of the students with whom he has had conversations are not asking enough of the type of questions early on, such as knowing the type of equipment with which they are working. They speak in general terms, but don’t ask enough to know the difference between one manufacturer and another, or how to look up how to use something, if they haven’t already been taught. Another advisory member added that he felt students didn’t feel they are typically responsible for knowing those kinds of details – that being “someone else’s job.” But he said, “you’re responsible for knowing everything.” Steve added that the industry of **projection design** is getting huge, and many in the room nodded in agreement. Richard Kuhwarth chimed-in that projection design is relatively a new, expensive and creative industry that is big on Broadway, in music

and television. Richard said when he talks about projection, he is also talking about computer networking. He said it's a big issue not only for projection but for lighting and audio as well. Richard said students need to have a basic understanding of how to connect this device to that device to the next device over Cad 5 or Cad 6, for example. Christian agreed a bit later, saying video and projection designers are "hard to find," but it's a specialized industry that requires special sensibilities, and he's hiring right now. A couple others around the table emphasized with regards to light board programming that knowing one lighting board consul will get you through college, but being fluent in 3 or more (or all) will get you a career. Rob Johnson said in his AV class that has just been created at Sierra that they don't yet have "one of every flavor," and it will be some time before that is accomplished. Donna added that trouble-shooting is a highly sought after skill as well when it's high stress (talent looking over your shoulder) and needing to keep your cool. She wasn't certain "how you teach that" but that it is critical to learn.

The last part of the meeting included an opportunity for the students who were present to pose prepared questions to the table of industry professionals. Such questions included how they chose their specific career path, when they have so many areas of interest early on. Students asked where to go to search for jobs, and a couple of key membership certification websites were cited, such as [esta.org](http://esta.org) for electricians, riggers and power, and [Avixa.org](http://Avixa.org), that certifies technical designers, technical installers, and technical sales, mostly for AV but also computer networking. Other more general websites such as Art Search and Backstage jobs were also mentioned. During this discussion, Donna clarified to the students that there are two types of theatre: "producing theatre" and "road-houses" and producing organizations who bring in groups such as tours. Donna said she chose her path by enjoying the variety of a road-house instead of the same show every night. Christian explained how working a road-house also broadens your view on life, because you meet people from multiple continents. Christian and Steve left some key parting advice for the students to take the time to develop a critical curiosity for everything you do. The difference between workers who leave knowing exactly the same thing they came in knowing that day, and those who noticeably want to learn something new each day and to understand the basic concept of how things run, is the difference between those who succeed and those who don't in this industry.

Scott thanked everyone, adjourned the meeting and invited those interested to take a tour of the facility led by the Mondavi staff.