As clearly indicated by the Program Review Committee’s report, the Department of Theatre and Film has made impressive strides since its last program review. To be sure, the department did not follow the directive contained in the 1999 PRC report to develop greater focus. Instead, it developed several new programs—including integration of film studies into the department, creating a Department of Theatre and Film. This should not be viewed as a failure: with the support of the College, the department took advantage of unforeseen opportunities, came to the rescue of a program (film) that has high student demand, and helped advance the University’s effort to strengthen the arts by fostering collaboration among them. In short, its actions contributed significantly to important strategic objectives of the University.

While the development of new programs led to significant growth in enrollment, expansion did not come at the expense of quality. In fact, the quality of the department’s programs has grown, as indicated by the report of the external reviewers and demonstrated by the quality of productions in recent years. In addition, the department was able to recruit a significant number of new faculty, helping it support existing and new programs. Moreover, the quality of faculty, as indicated by their scholarship and creative portfolios grew. The diversity of the faculty also increased significantly, largely through the efforts of the chair and his colleagues to develop professional networks that allowed them to successfully recruit faculty of color. Increased faculty diversity has contributed significantly to the quality of the department’s intellectual and creative life and its ability to serve students.

I congratulate Dr. Ron Shields, the Department Chair, for his leadership and energy, and applaud his colleagues for their dedication, hard work, and creativity.

A number of issues remain to be addressed. Space remains the department’s most critical problem. Fortunately, we are well on the way to resolving this as planning for the Wolfe Center moves ahead briskly. Growth in enrollment has placed pressure on faculty, facilities, and equipment, necessitating serious consideration of an enrollment management plan. That, however, is a good problem to have.

In his response to the PRC’s report, Dr. Shields provides a compelling explanation for the decision to develop new programs and acknowledges the need to do a better job of compiling data concerning the department, its programs, and students. He also accepts the recommendations made by PRC.

I join Dr. Shields in accepting the PRC’s recommendations with the following stipulations:

1. The department sees opportunities in the University’s Scholarship of Engagement initiative and has already begun to develop plans to pursue them. The College views the Department of Theatre and Film as poised to build on its longstanding tradition of
community engagement to make a significant contribution to this initiative and will work with it to help it succeed.

2. While progress on the Wolfe Center has been disappointingly slow, the PRC’s report paints a far-to-bleak view of planning for this important facility. During the past three months, we have refined the program statement, made construction of the building a top priority of Capital Planning (placing it ahead of the new Student Services Center and the Admissions Center), are in negotiation with an executive architect, and are moving ahead with selection of a design architect. We appear to be on track for completion in 2009. Continuing to move the project ahead is a high priority of the College and has and will continue to receive my full attention. As we move ahead with the Wolfe Center, we will work to assure that existing spaces are safe and serviceable. The College is also working with the department and the College of Musical Arts to secure space in the Wooster Street Center for the Elsewhere Theatre and music recitals.

3. I ask that the Department survey enrollment management programs developed by other programs and develop a tentative enrollment management plan by May 2007. I will designate Dr. Roger Thibault, Associate Dean for Resources and Planning, to serve as liaison with the department on this important issue.

4. I will ask Dr. Thibault to work with the department to consider reinstating credit for the department’s practicum course and to review policies of attributing credit in large lecture courses to graduate assistants rather than the faculty members in charge of them. I ask that the department provide an analysis of these issues and how best to address them by January 15, 2007.

5. The department has already rewritten the section of its self-study addressing its doctoral program and submitted it to the College and the Graduate Dean.

6. The department has been a leader in assessment of its undergraduate programs. I ask that it work closely with Dr. Deanne Snavely, Associate Dean of the Graduate College, to develop an assessment plan for its graduate programs. That plan should be submitted to the Graduate College with a copy to Associate Dean Simon Morgan-Russell of the College of Arts & Sciences by March 1, 2007.

I am pleased with the success the Department of Theatre and Film has enjoyed in recent years as well as its many contributions to creating a model arts community at BGSU and to serving important initiatives such as BGeXperience. I look forward to working with Dr. Shields and his colleagues in the coming years to complete the Wolfe Center and continue to strengthen our programs in theatre and film.

____________________________________
Donald G. Nieman, Dean

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Date

Concurred: