

THSP Removal of Speech Minor

Proposed Change

The Purpose of this proposal is to eliminate the Speech minor.

Rationale

1) Since our first site visit by a National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) representative in 2009, we have been told that our “theatre and speech” model is a “1950’s” model. NAST is our accrediting organization and we have our first five-year review next year (2015-16). While NAST has not insisted on a change in how speech classes are offered, our tenured faculty members feel that a move to a more current model would be very beneficial. The speech component of our department can be draining on resources and time for our faculty and department head. Over the past couple of years, we have explored options related to moving this minor and the accompanying classes to another department. At one point, there were serious talks of moving Speech to Communications. None of those discussions led to workable conclusions.

2) Two years ago, we had three full-time Speech Lecturers. In Fall 2013, one of these took an early FMLA retirement. The UTC Administration has indicated that we will not be able to fill that vacant position. In May 2015, another full-time Speech Lecturer will retire. She has turned in her resignation and is well into the process. The UTC Administration has indicated that we will not be able to fill this vacant position either. The full-time Lecturers have been responsible for teaching the upper level speech classes required by the minor. Currently, we have one Speech Lecturer who is teaching all upper-level speech classes. None of our other Theatre faculty members are qualified to teach these.

3) We will continue to offer some speech classes, such as our Voice and Body class for actors, Voice and Diction and Public Speaking. These can be taught by our current remaining Speech Lecturer, our Theatre professors and adjuncts (as budget allows).

Summary

Following the suggestion of NAST representatives, we want to align our program with a more current model that does not emphasize speech. Focusing only on the various theatre disciplines will allow our faculty to be more efficient and productive, especially since our Speech Lecture lines will not be renewed.

Impact on other departments

The School of Business and the Department of Psychology currently have requirements that some of their majors take Public Speaking. Both of these entities have been notified of the proposed changes in our department regarding Speech classes. Our department has been notified that these entities are considering curriculum proposals that will reduce this requirement. However, we will continue

to teach Public Speaking as needed for current majors, using our one remaining Speech Lecturer, Theatre professors and adjunct instructors to do this.

The Department of Communications has asked us to continue teaching Voice and Diction as well. Their majors can take our voice for actors classes and we can offer Voice and Diction periodically as well.

Transitioning Current Speech Minors

Current Speech Minors will be able to finish their minor. We will continue to offer the same variety of speech classes for these students using existing faculty until these students have had time to graduate.