

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Approved by the Regents

March 17, 2006

**ACTION REQUEST**

Subject: School of Music

Action Requested: Name change for the School of Music to  
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Effective Date: July 1, 2006

**Background:**

The 2005-06 academic year marks the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the School of Music at the University of Michigan. As we move beyond this retrospective celebration toward the school's future, we aim to reflect more accurately its tripartite composition. Hence, it is with great pleasure that we recommend approval of the proposed name change to the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Encompassing programs in dance, music, musical theatre, and theatre, the University of Michigan School of Music is defined by a long and rich heritage of excellence. With an internationally recognized faculty, world-renowned performance facilities, and a diverse student population, the University of Michigan is considered one of the finest performing arts schools in the United States when compared with either performance-oriented conservatories or with prestigious academic departments of music. Many departments within the school are consistently ranked among the top five in the country, with composition and conducting currently ranked as number one.

From its modest beginning over a century ago, the School of Music has undergone several name changes. It began in September 1890 as the Ann Arbor School of Music and continued in 1892 as the University School of Music, under the aegis of the University Musical Society. In 1929 it was incorporated into the University of Michigan and only in 1940 did it truly become the University of Michigan School of Music.

In 1976 the Dance Department became a part of the School of Music, followed by the addition of the Theatre Department in 1984. Today the School enrolls over 1,000 students and employs a faculty of 120 full-time and 20-30 part-time members, as well as 70 staff. During the course of the academic year the school presents over 400 concerts and recitals, 10 fully staged opera, musical theatre, and dance productions, and numerous semi-staged workshop productions, master classes, and lectures.

Throughout the school's history, music has been the largest of the three components, but with the creation of a highly successful musical theatre program – a program that draws heavily on all three domains – the balance of students has evolved. Today there are

approximately 250 students in theatre, musical theatre, and dance, accounting for nearly one-third of our undergraduate enrollment.

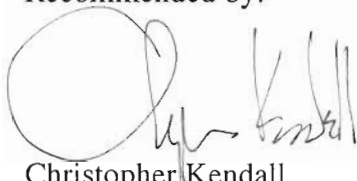
While each part of the school is a discrete entity with its own curriculum and focus, the nature of the work in all three areas is increasingly collaborative. Our staged productions, of course, incorporate lighting, costuming, and stage design, but they also require musical direction, coaching, conducting, and orchestra service. Student and faculty composers draw upon theatre, dance, and the media arts with ever-greater frequency. As theatrical and dance elements take on greater importance in musical endeavors, and as music plays a greater role in theatre, and as our students bring a greater appetite for collaborative art, we wish to have a name that articulates our recognition of the equal importance of the three elements in the performing arts process.

As it stands today, members of our constituency groups – donors, alumni, friends and potential students – are often confused because they do not realize that the School of Music now encompasses more than music. In development work, particularly, we often spend considerable time explaining what the school really is. Internally, the School of Music faculty have voted overwhelmingly in support of a name change.

For over two decades we have been, in practice, a School of Music, Theatre & Dance, with each artistic branch pursuing both practical and academic aspects. As we reach the end of our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, we feel that this is, indeed, the appropriate moment to change the name of the school and thereby look forward to a new century of collaborative performing arts education at the University of Michigan.

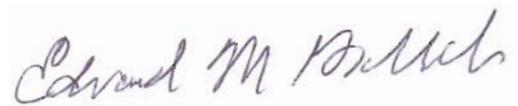
Approval of this proposed name change will require a revision of the Regents' Bylaw Sections 6.02 and 11.49.

Recommended by:



Christopher Kendall  
Dean, School of Music

Recommendation endorsed by:



Edward M. Gramlich  
Interim Provost and Executive Vice  
President for Academic Affairs



Mary Sue Coleman  
President

*March 2006*