Theater majors get special attention

By Cathy Nabity

Creighton's theater majors are a small group of students whose field of study is largely misunderstood by most other people.

"Since Creighton has a small program, theater majors get a lot of attention," said Suzanne Dieckman, theater coordinator and associate professor of fine and performing arts.

Dieckman said that one of the biggest advantages of Creighton's program is its flexibility. "The faculty can adjust or design programs to meet the individual desires and needs of the students," she said.

"Faculty members also have a lot of input and give students a lot of feedback," she said.

Dieckman said that she is working on a proposal to the university to offer a bachelor of fine arts option "for students who really have a pre-professional commitment and really want full training." A bachelor of arts is currently all that is available to theater students, she said.

Dieckman said that she is also working on a proposal with John Hollowitz, assistant professor of English and speech, to add a concentration major in arts management as another option.

"It's difficult to say how many theater majors there are because not all of them have declared their major yet, but there are probably eight to 10," said Dieckman.

"We encourage double majors because it's hard to make a living with just a theater major. It's a very, very competitive field."

Tom Mazur, design and technical director for the performing arts program, said that he teaches all the technical courses, including Stagecraft 153 and Lighting 255 which are required for theater majors.

"I take care of everything except the performer," Mazur said.

He said that his classes involve an average of two and one half hours of lecture and three hours of lab per week. "The technical labs get the actor involved behind the scenes so that through practical application, he can gain a better understanding of the theater as a whole," Mazur said.

"It makes it easier to understand acting when you understand the opportunities and the limitations in other areas of theater besides acting," said Frank Kozmicki, an Arts senior from Grand Island, Neb., who is majoring in both theater and psychology.

"It's necessary to have a well-rounded education, but I have enjoyed acting classes the most," Kozmicki said.

"Theater is a group art form in which actors, dances, lighting and scenery technicians and other artists must work together for a synthesis of their individual art forms," Mazur said.

Dieckman said that theater teachers must work against the ideas of competition and individualism that students have learned from society. Selfish ideals must be replaced with group ideals like support and cooperation, she said.

"Discipline is the most difficult part of any art form," Mazur said. "When one is working with a group he must be reliable because many other people are depending on him to do his job so they can do theirs," he said.

"The theater artist's medium is people," Dieckman said. She said that actors must interact with their audience and with other actors to produce their art just like some artists must work with paint and a brush.