Acting students learn 'all aspects of theater'

By Kathryn Mowat

"Creighton's theater department offers students, majoring in theater, the opportunity to learn all aspects of theater," associate professor of theater Allen Klem said. "On the other hand, anyone can become involved in theater and not feel pressured by the department to become theater majors.

The department is small. Presently there are only a "handful of students" majoring in theater.

This is beneficial because each person receives a lot of individual attention," Klem said. He added that each student is given the opportunity to try their hand at directing, performing, and working with lighting and sets.

"We're very proud of this because students here are able to apply what they learn," he said. "This is not always the case in a larger university."

Acting background

Students starting out in theater should have some acting background.

"Occasionally a student taking a beginning acting class as an elective with no previous experience will show a lot of natural ability and change their major," Klem said. "However, this is the exception and not the rule."

"We want our students to have fun but at the same time realize that the work is very serious and the hours are long," Klem said.

Honest with students

In regard to career opportunities in theater, Klem said, "We want to be honest with students from the beginning. We don't want to fool around with people who don't have potential. We don't want to waste their or ours."

Students must take beginning, intermediate and advanced acting classes. Directing, technical theater, stage stage lighting and history of theater also required.

Theater majors are encouraged to take certain electives, dance, voice, painting, psychology and English.

"Theater requires a great deal of understanding of the arts and sciences and electives offered go hand in hand with theater," Klem said.

Four theater productions

Each year the department presents four major theater productions and a festival of one act plays. Auditions are open to anyone and the plays are chosen according to the students who are interested in acting them.

"We try to tailor the plays to fit the needs of our students," Klem said. "We also try to include the dance and department by putting on a musical comedy at least once every other year."