Western Michigan University   Agenda Item No. <u>11 A 5</u>
Board of Trustees   *March 23, 2023*

PROPOSAL: Create a Certificate in Music Theatre Performance

<u>Background</u>

The Undergraduate Studies Council of the Faculty Senate has approved the creation of a Certificate in Music Theatre Performance offered by the Department of Theatre in the College of Fine Arts. The Music Theatre Performance BFA is one of the most competitive programs at Western Michigan University. With 400 students auditioning annually for 15 positions in each freshman class, there is a significant demand and market for the skills and opportunities the music theatre performance program provides. Music theatre performance as an industry has greatly increased its societal influence in recent years with groundbreaking works that promote race and gender equity such as Hamilton and Fun Home to wildly commercial pieces that bring young and vivacious new audiences into the theatre like Wicked and Frozen the Musical. With the infinite delivery platforms now available through TV, film and social media, the power of emotional connection to music may be one of the most universal methods to promote human empathy and communication. Most of the students who audition for WMU's current Music Theatre Performance major, however, do not achieve a position in the program and choose to pursue their education at other institutions. Providing a certificate program in music theatre performance would serve three significant goals. It would allow students who do not achieve a position in the program the opportunity to come to WMU and study music theatre while declaring other majors. It would also offer training in music theatre for WMU students pursuing related majors in music, dance, communications and education, as well as students who have a passion for the art form but are committed to other career paths. It would give students not pursuing degrees at WMU the chance to attend a summer semester program that will enhance their skills in the field.

<u>Recommended Action</u>

It is recommended the WMU Board of Trustees create a Certificate in Music Theatre Performance.