Welcome to the University of West Florida and to the Center of Fine and Performing Arts. I am Charles Houghton, chair of the Theatre Department. Many of you have met me when you came to campus for your audition. This year, quite a few of you did your audition from home and haven’t had the opportunity to meet me or my colleagues. As most of you know, all of the majors in the Theatre department are by acceptance only. If you haven’t had the chance to audition or interview for the program, we need you to contact us as soon as possible so that we can schedule you for one. We are thrilled you chose UWF and are so impressed with your commitment to your craft. Theatre is a discipline that requires a huge amount of passion and dedication, whether you are a performer, designer, or technician.

The Theatre Department offers Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Acting, Music Theatre, and Design Technology. We also offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Performance Studies and Arts Administration. Each of the BFA programs offers coursework and practical experiences to build your skills and understanding. The Performance Studies program is the perfect opportunity to study a wide range of topics in theatre and is an ideal path for someone who is interested in teaching, dramaturgy, or directing as a career after graduation. The first week of classes we will have auditions for our fall shows. These auditions are open to all students, majors and even non-majors. At many schools’ students are not cast until they are in their Junior year. We believe in giving all students the ability to perform, and we see the advantages of you applying what you are learning in the classroom on stage. If you are in one of the design/technology areas, you too will have the chance to use the stage as your laboratory and apply the skills you are learning in class. Last spring our production of Silent Sky had two current students designing the lighting and the costuming, and an alum designing the scenery. In the fall last year, the entire design team for the musical was all students.

We do 5 shows a year, 2 plays, 2 musicals, and our annual production of A Christmas Carol. We have two theatres here on campus, the Mainstage Theatre, where I am right now, and our Studio Theatre. The Mainstage is a 400-seat proscenium theatre, and the Studio is a black box, flexible seating, theatre. This fall we will be doing To Kill a Mockingbird in the Mainstage, The Last Five Years in the Studio, and Christmas Carol in the Mainstage. In the spring we have Beyond Therapy in the Studio, and Gypsy in the Mainstage. In addition to our department performances there are showcases and special performances throughout the year. Summer 2021 will be the sixth year of our study abroad program. The program takes students from Theatre, Art, and Music to Ireland for one month. We have classes in the history and cultural of Ireland. The Theatre students will work with a Dublin based director to develop a show that is performed on campus in the fall. This is an amazing opportunity for our students and is one of the most immersive study abroad programs you will find.

Well that’s a little about us and what we do here. We will have a major/minor meeting on the Tuesday, August 25 at 4:30, here in the Mainstage Theatre. Check your email for the times for the fall auditions. You can also use Facebook and Instagram to find out what is happening in the department. Thank you again for coming to UWF. I know you will find the next four years a fantastic journey. I know we can’t wait to get started this fall!