Dr Angela Vaupel – Senior Lecturer in European Studies

Host Organisation: Riverside Theatre, University of Ulster, Coleraine campus
www.riversidetheater.org

Placement Contact: Ms Andrea Montgomery - Artistic Director

THE PLACEMENT
The Riverside Theatre was founded in 1976 by Royal Charter. It is owned by the University of Ulster, funded and managed through partnership with other bodies – the three major stakeholders are the University of Ulster (UU), the NI Arts Council (ACNI) and Coleraine Borough Council (CBC).

On Dr Angela Vaupel's application to become involved in the EU Peace II, Proteus project, 'Enabling Lecturers to Learn from Business', she stated:

"Apart from a personal interest in the Arts, the opportunity to experience a period of placement will allow me to appreciate how placement learning contributes to the employability of our BA students."

Angela’s core knowledge of the Riverside Theatre as an organisation was gained by shadowing the work of the Theatre Artistic Director, Ms Andrea Montgomery.

While on placement, Angela was set the task to carry out research to support the need for theatre outreach services. Information gathered would allow Angela to draw up a suitable job description for the role of a Theatre Education and Community Outreach Officer.

An ‘Education Forum’ also took place on 8 June 2006 which involved Angela in an extensive range of associated event management tasks. The conference was well attended by representatives from local schools, youth groups, education clients and media and included support from UU provost, Prof Dr Alan Sharp and the regional education Board.

KEY LEARNING POINTS ON BUSINESS
• An understanding of the volatile nature of funded organisations and approaches taken to alter strategy and seek alternative income to survive. This year the Northern Ireland Arts Council announced a cut to the 100% funding for the four regional theatres in Northern Ireland prompting an urgent address to future sources of funding for the Riverside Theatre.

• A working knowledge of the extensive contractual and other legal aspects of theatre lettings, costume hire and front-of-house business.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE BA (Hons) LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE PROGRAMME OF THE UNIVERSITY
In learning that both the economic and administrative aspects of cultural management are important there is a possibility of creating an additional taught unit on aspects of ‘cultural management’ within the BA modules on European Culture.

FUTURE LINKS WITH BUSINESS
Ms Andrea Montgomery, Artistic Director commented: “The invaluable research report prepared by Angela will serve as a ‘mini-audit’ relevant to strategic planning and the completion of future funding applications.”

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION
This placement confirmed the vital role theatre plays in raising awareness of cultural diversity and how it facilitates cross-community activity which serves to promote peace and reconciliation within Northern Ireland and beyond.

PERSONAL LEARNING
Angela stated: “I will keep in touch on various levels: as a loyal customer of the Riverside Theatre, as a newly joined member of the Riverside’s volunteer group and as one of their educational links. The learning is in knowing that an exchange of ‘know how’ allowed me to contribute a research report that will hopefully serve to secure funding for an Education and Outreach Officer.”