

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF DANCE**

**Visitors' Report**

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

Baltimore, Maryland  
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Department of Dance  
November 7 – 10, 2017

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**Degree for which renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing is sought.**

Bachelor of Arts – 4 years: Dance (Education Certification, General)

## Contents

<b>DISCLAIMER .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OPTIONAL RESPONSE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A. Purposes .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B. Size and Scope .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>C. Finances .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>D. Governance and Administration .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Overall Effectiveness .....	7
2. Policy-Making.....	7
3. Dance Executive’s Load and Responsibilities .....	7
4. Communication.....	8
<b>E. Faculty and Staff .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>F. Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>G. Library and Learning Resources .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, Advisement, and Student Complaints .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention .....	11
2. Record Keeping .....	11
3. Advisement .....	12
4. Student Complaint Policy and Its Effectiveness .....	12
<b>I. Published Materials and Websites.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>J. Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution’s Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program (if applicable).....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>K. Community Involvement; Articulation with Other Institutions .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>M. Review of Specific Operational Standards for (1) Free-Standing Dance Institutions of Higher Education and/or (2) Proprietary Institutions (if applicable) .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula.....</b>	<b>14</b>
1. Credit Hours.....	14
a. Definitions and Procedures .....	14
b. Evaluation of Compliance.....	15
c. New, Experimental, Atypical Formats or Methods .....	15
2. Specific Curricula .....	15
a. General Content and Competency Standards.....	15
b. Individual Curricula .....	15

3. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalog Statements .....	16
4. Performance .....	17
5. Dance Studies in General Education.....	17
<b>O. Dance Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections .....</b>	<b>18</b>
1. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections Development.....	18
2. Completeness and Effectiveness of Self-Study .....	18
<b>P. Standards Summary .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program.....</b>	<b>19</b>
1. Strengths .....	19
2. Recommendations for Short-Term Improvement .....	19
3. Primary Futures Issues .....	20
4. Suggestions for Long-Term Development.....	20

## **DISCLAIMER**

The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NASD accreditation standards represent only the considered opinion of the visitors at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the Commission following a complete review of the application, including the Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report submitted by the institution.

## **OPTIONAL RESPONSE**

It is strongly recommended that each institution submit an Optional Response to the Visitors' Report, which may be used to correct (1) errors of fact, (2) conclusions based on such errors, and (3) any documented changes made in the program since the on-site review. In particular, information in the Optional Response should address noted issues of apparent noncompliance, such as those included in Section P. of this report, and any areas where the provision of further information has been deemed advisable by the institution.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The visiting team would like to thank Professor Carol Hess, Department of Dance Chair; Joy Abee, Program Management Specialist; and the UMBC dance faculty, staff, and students for their warm welcome and for the vibrant discussions throughout the visit. The team would also like to thank Jodi Hoover, the Digital Media Librarian, Dr. Scott Casper, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and Provost Philip Rous, Academic Vice President for the hospitality and the open, engaging conversations during the visit.

### **A. Purposes**

The mission of the Department of Dance of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) serves as a guiding force for the program and appears to be understood by faculty, staff and students, as well as upper administration. The mission is articulated through the design of the Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance, utilizing the faculty, facilities, and innovative ways of hiring guest teachers and artists to accomplish the mission goal of building a fundamental core of contemporary technique while challenging students with a variety of training approaches and research methods. In witnessing the program and degree of study in the three-day visit, the opening statement of the mission appears to be present and active:

“The UMBC Department of Dance offers challenging and innovative instruction in technique, performance, history, composition, dance and technology, and production. The program integrates the study of dance as a discipline within a liberal arts program”  
(see Self-Study, p. 11).

The curriculum, faculty research and professional activity, hiring decisions, and guest artist programs reflect the program's intent of “Building upon a strong core of modern and contemporary dance techniques, the dance program challenges students with a variety of modes of training and research methodologies” (see Self-Study, p. 6). This was evident through the technique and choreography curriculum and its level of rigor, the rotating visiting guest artist who teaches technique classes and sets work on students in a repertory setting, and the presence of the Baltimore Dance Project, in residence at UMBC, which features the choreographic research of the faculty in university campus and community venues. The Baltimore Dance Project invites selected students to participate in its

research in creating new works and in performances, thus addressing the program goal of integrating the creative research of faculty into student experience. During the visit at least one faculty member was away presenting at a national conference, exhibiting the commitment by the Department and the college to enhance faculty activity in the larger field.

In addition, a focus of the program appears to be guiding students to engage in their own research on dance making in a knowledgeable, sophisticated, and experimental way. This is exhibited through the robust choreography curriculum (including the capstone experience and independent study for student works for production) and choreographic mentoring of students by resident and visiting faculty, and the additional Undergraduate Research Award. This award comes from the office of the Provost and requires a proposal which is reviewed by a mentor and later an interdisciplinary panel of arts faculty. The award is \$1,500 and goes toward undergraduate student research, such as attendance at summer dance festivals like Bates Dance Festival in Maine, or travel to New York City to study dance or to study and conduct research with a particular artist or company. The award is not restricted to the study of dance technique.

The dance unit regularly attends and presents at the American College Dance Association Festival (ACDA), addressing the mission goal: to produce unique dance artists who move beautifully, and have something to “say” as dancers and choreographers. “We challenge our students to perform to their fullest potential, to test their limits as choreographers, and to question and think critically about dance” (see Self-Study, pp. 11-12). Attending and presenting/performing at the ACDA events allows students to perform outside of their normal community, to gauge how their work and performance communicates on a regional/national level, and to view work by their peers in other colleges. This facilitates engagement in critical thinking about process, product, research, and choreographic development and presentation.

There was evident discussion and consideration of the goal to diversify the faculty body to reflect the student body when considering future hires. The visitors noted this goal repeatedly addressed in an open, transparent manner, with clear objectives in play. This reflects directly the University’s Vision Statement goal of commitment to inclusivity and diversity at all levels (see Self-Study, p. 8). Several faculty members have been in residence for more than three decades and the faculty body is notably committed to appropriate change and engaged in honest discussion of hiring goals.

The dance unit co-hosts an Education Certification in the Bachelor of Arts in Dance and partners with the UMBC Department of Education in mentoring students pursuing the certification. The student in this certification program follows the Bachelor of Arts in Dance like a dance major and adds one dance course, DANC 426 Teaching Methods for Dance, plus several required education courses offered by the Department of Education. They must pass the Maryland State Department of Education Praxis I exam, and complete a year-long extensive teaching internship. When the student engages in teaching internships in the local school systems, they are mentored by both dance and education faculty.

In regards to space and facilities, the dance unit moved to UMBC’s new Performing Arts and Humanities Building in fall of 2014, increasing the size of its studios and providing state of the art classroom, rehearsal, and performance spaces for study and exploration. The move to the new building included an increase to the operating budget for support and maintenance of the new studios and performance spaces. The new facility is very well organized, clean, spacious, and aligns strongly with the dance unit’s mission goals. Administrative personnel at the Department and College level are aware of future challenges linked to the new facility, in regards to financing equipment and studio maintenance.

The purposes of the dance unit appear to align with the University and College purposes and to meet Department level goals and objective.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Purposes (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.A.).

## **B. Size and Scope**

The dance unit at the UMBC appears to meet the NASD standards in regards to size and scope. Faculty education and competence were evident in the range of faculty professional and educational qualifications, their expertise in the field, diverse aesthetic methodologies and research goals, varied approaches to master teaching active in the classes observed, attention to faculty mentoring of student creative work and critical thinking, and the unit's commitment to hiring guest professionals in the field to support the fundamental training and teaching in residence.

There are currently 53 dance majors and 12 dance minors in the UMBC dance unit. The Department states that it could serve a maximum of 60 majors. The student/faculty ratio of majors to full-time faculty is 13 to 1. Dance major enrollment has not fluctuated greatly and appears to have a healthy consistency.

Faculty lines include four full-time faculty, including two tenured faculty, one Instructor, one Visiting Lecturer, a Postdoctoral Fellow bestowed on the dance unit by the University, twelve adjunct faculty (including faculty of cross-listed courses), and an annual, full-time Visiting Artist during the fall semesters. Staff includes a fulltime Program Management Specialist, a full-time Technical Director, and a part-time Music Coordinator, and five part-time Accompanists. The Technical Director is in charge of all dance performance spaces and equipment and appears to fulfil this job in a highly organized, professional, and efficient manner, as witnessed in our backstage tours and equipment review. Accompanists are highly skilled in the studio venue and exhibited skill that added sophistication to the technique classes observed, several using various instruments (beyond the piano) during class sessions.

Fulfillment of academic functions in advising and project guidance are apparent and effective. The visitors noted faculty giving direct one-on-one mentorship of student work and, when multiple faculty members were present, the ability to share various aesthetic approaches and feedback as a group without contradicting or negating other opinions.

Sufficient advanced level courses in the dance unit enable the institution to meet NASD standards and provide a rigorous curricular experience and production season. There are two levels of Intermediate Contemporary Dance listed as level 300, two levels of Advanced Contemporary Dance listed as level 400, one intermediate and one advanced level of Ballet, intermediate and advanced Dance Composition at the 300 level plus the Independent Study in Choreographic Projects at 200 level and the Capstone (or Senior Projects) at 400 level. The Repertory course is at the 400 level and is a rehearsal based class lead/taught usually by the Visiting Artist. There are two sections at the 200 level of Dance History, followed by a 300 level Writing Intensive Dance and the Contemporary Arts course. In addition in the technique area, there is a 300 level class entitle Beyond Technique which addressed somatic practices in contemporary dance. The visitors witnessed this class and noted how this course integrates and serves the dance major students, realigning their assumptions about the body and technique.

The visiting evaluators observed technique classes that were rigorous, providing a wide scope of style and content, with faculty that are focused, dedicated and bring professional and academic experience into the classroom. Feedback to the class at large and to individuals was consistently noted in all

teaching observed. The visiting evaluators noted that the course competencies in the Contemporary Dance courses may need alignment among the sequencing levels, so that the competencies apply in all syllabi in the contemporary dance courses, whether taught by resident or visiting faculty.

The dance unit also offers elective courses in special topics, such as Jazz Dance, Hip Hop, Tap Dance, Pointe, African Dance, and Indian Dance, encouraging dance majors to take these courses when possible and when applicative to their research interests.

Performance exhibitions by visiting guest artists and performance opportunities for students are multiple events that occur in the Dance Cube and the Proscenium Theatre in the Performing Arts and Humanities Building (PAHB) and appear to fulfil the mission of the institution.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Size and Scope (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.B.).

## **C. Finances**

Finances for the dance unit appear to be adequate for the purposes of the dance unit and the specific degree program. Although in past years the Department of Dance experienced budget cuts and adjusted spending to address those issues, currently the unit is financially healthy. With the anticipated move into the new performing arts facility, the unit submitted a ten-year facility plan as a projected operating budget, which included the need for a fulltime Technical Director and technical crew. The budget was increased to meet these needs, which also included equipment and curricular areas, and the unit appears to have a healthy financial state which can address the needs of the new facilities as well as the curricular programs (see Self-Study, p. 14). Both the dance executive and the Dean of the College spoke to the concern for the near-future needs of the new facility, its maintenance and upkeep of the equipment. Administrative members of the unit understand and anticipate the future budget needs for the new facility, and appear to be thinking strategically about revenue and budget requests for this issue.

The visiting evaluators did note the strength and programmatic inclusion of highly qualified adjunct instructors, and that the unit's budget appears to be accommodating in granting the unit flexibility in current and future hiring of adjunct faculty members. "The budget is flexible in that the Department Chair has the discretion to shift funds among budget areas, and to plan for the future by rolling over positive balances from one fiscal year to the next" (see Self-Study, p. 14). Communications between the Department Chair and the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) are healthy and productive on financial issues, and after-budget requests for artistic projects and student travel expenses, such as attending the American College Dance Festival, have been regularly granted for programmatic enhancement.

The Department of Dance also generates revenue through production ticket sales, which helps pay for the American College Dance Festival attendance and the building of a costume inventory for productions. It receives an annual allocation from the Center for Innovation, Research, and Creativity in the Arts (CIRCA) to support a performance by a visiting company or performer. Student fees for technique courses help pay a portion of the live accompaniment fees.

Fund raising efforts are in conjunction with various other agencies on campus, such as the Office of Alumni Affairs, to organize fund raising letters and other events. Through one generous donor, the unit receives an annual \$5,000 donation dedicated to the Summer Dance Research and Study Awards. Dance majors apply for this in a competitive process, and can receive up to \$2,500 for study and research of their choice in the dance field during the summer.

Several scholarship programs provide funding opportunities for students in the dance major. The Linehan Artist Scholars Program is an impressive, college-wide award program that is for incoming freshman who show high artistic ability as well as academic prowess and who are committed to a liberal arts education. It provides for a four-year plan of study, and students are mentored through their four years by a faculty member in the arts with an interdisciplinary point of view.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Finances (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.C.).

## **D. Governance and Administration**

### **1. Overall Effectiveness**

Standards for governance and administration appear to meet standards for serving the purpose of the institution as a whole as well as of the dance program. Governance structures seem to be invested in maintaining and sustaining the educational and artistic purposes of the dance program. The governance structure seems to effectively support teaching and learning and the size and scope of the dance program. In all on-site interactions, these principles were reinforced to the visitors in meetings with the administrators.

The visitors noted an adequate level of support for the dance program from administrators in the site visit. The Dance Chair reports to the Dean of the College. The Dean reports to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Senior VP reports to the President of UMBC.

The dance program is in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and physically housed in the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts Building along with Ancient Studies, English, Music, and Theatre. This placement allows for relationships and future collaborations across a broad range of disciplines. How the Department governs itself within this structure seems efficient, particularly in terms of how it maintains autonomy as a program within a large College.

### **2. Policy-Making**

The Department of Dance has a commitment to and appreciation for the shared governance model (see Self-Study, p. 15). As a small program, the dance unit relies on the full participation of its full-time faculty members for policy-making and curricular development. It seems that the voice and input of the faculty are valued by the dance executive, and the policy-making structure is understood by all. All full-time faculty vote on all department policies, including policies regarding tenure and promotion. Tenure and promotion process and decisions occur at the department, college and university levels.

The policies in the areas of Teaching, Creative Scholarship, and Research, Service, the Diversity of Expectations and Exceptions are defined in the UMBC Department of Dance's Policy on Faculty Responsibilities (see MDP I, E.1, "Policies and Procedures"). It appears that the dance unit meets and maintains the NASD standards concerning policy-making.

### **3. Dance Executive's Load and Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the dance executive are clearly articulated (see MDP I.D., "Governance and Administration," p. 71) and appear to be manageable.

The authority of the dance Chair does seem to be commensurate with administering the dance program including the day-to-day operations related to budget, the department's promotion and tenure process, curriculum, faculty/staff management, and is the primary representative of the department both internally and externally. The dance Chair has a 12-month appointment that serves a three-year term and may be re-elected to serve without term limits. It appears that the course release time of two courses per year is adequate to help the executive carry out the administrative duties related to the position (see Self-Study, p. 16).

The evaluators met with the dance unit's Program Management Specialist who provides support to the dance executive and faculty, and supervises student employees. The administrative support provided by the Management Specialist seems highly effective and beneficial.

#### **4. Communication**

The onsite evaluators met with the full-time dance faculty during the site visit. There are regularly scheduled meetings for all full-time faculty as well as intra-unit communication via email and impromptu conversations as they see each other in the dance unit. Additional staff and adjunct faculty are invited to attend meetings as necessary and as agreed upon by the dance executive and full-time faculty. In a like manner, adjunct faculty and staff may request to meet with the dance executive and/or the faculty body at any time.

Communication with the Department Chair and upper administrators does seem to be effective, and the needs of and issues within the dance program seem to be communicated timely, appropriately and as needed to the faculty, staff, and administrators within the institution.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Governance and Administration (see *NASD Handbook 2017-18, Standards for Accreditation II.D.*).

### **E. Faculty and Staff**

Faculty qualifications in regards to education and competence are more than sufficient to fulfill the dance unit mission and programmatic goals and objectives. Number and distribution of faculty serve the unit's purposes, curricular offerings and its size and scope. Faculty workload appears to meet the university protocol and standards and faculty members appear to work well with this load. The administration at the college level and the department level are aware that the strategic planning in the sequence of the next hires will be important for the goals and vision of the dance unit.

The Artist-in-Residence faculty line is a strong component of student experience in the degree. Each fall a guest artist is hired as a full-time faculty member for one semester, teaching courses required for the major and usually setting a new work on the dance majors. The visiting evaluators observed a repertory class session of the then visiting faculty and clearly the students' assumptions of what dance pieces/performance can be were challenged in a vigorous way. Students are aware that this visiting line provides professional contacts with the larger field.

Faculty to student ratio is healthy, and mentorship and advising work well and are effective. Students appear to understand and appreciate the variety, professional and academic expertise, and overall excellence of faculty members. Faculty appear to work well together in mentoring students and in decision-making operations. Faculty morale appears positive.

The unique and exciting Postdoctoral Fellowship line bestowed on the dance unit by the upper administration has provided diversity, strong academic scholarship, and forward thinking about the next hires. This faculty member is currently providing a significant aspect of the dance unit missions'

commitment to diversity, in regards to area of study and research. The dance unit is poised for a faculty overhaul as retirements approach and it has a clear vision of its purposes and service to the student body in considering its next hires.

Support and technical staff appear strongly committed, engaged, and enthusiastic about the dance unit and are sufficient in number and experience to deliver the purposes of the unit. Dance has one administrative support employee with the title Program Management Specialist. Communication, organization, and administrative health of the dance unit appear to be strong. One faculty member serves as the Technical Director/Production Manager/Lighting Designer for the dance unit. The Technical Director is well organized, as witnessed in review of all back stage shops and equipment closets, the state of the equipment in the performance spaces, and the overall health of all equipment in the studios. The production shops appear to be well run with a strong sense of communication between all units.

The Department has one part-time Music Coordinator who schedules and trains (if necessary) accompanists for technique classes, and there is live accompaniment for all levels of ballet and modern technique. All modern and ballet technique classes observed during the visit were supported by high-quality live music, which enhanced the class session experience (see Self-Study, p. 25).

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Faculty and Staff (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.E.).

## **F. Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety**

The dance program appears to meet standards for Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety. The facilities, equipment, and technology were thoroughly reviewed in the site visit. Standards for ceiling height, fenestration, lighting, ventilation, temperature control, mirrors, barres, and locker rooms appear to be met.

The Department of Dance resides in UMBC's new Performing Arts and Humanities Building (PAHB), which opened in Fall 2014. The facility has two large dance studios with sprung floors; the Dance Cube (3,500 sq. ft.) and the Dance Technology Studio (2,400 sq. ft.). The Cube also serves as a performance space for dance concerts in the fall and spring.

There is a small warm-up studio (300 sq. ft.) which is used by the faculty for warm-up, class preparation and small group rehearsals if necessary. The Department also has a third 3,500 sq. ft. sprung floor dance studio (Studio 317) in the Fine Arts Building which is close to PAHB. Each studio is equipped with a state of the art sound system. Students also have access to the new Sonic Computer Lab for editing sound and video or working with interactive performance technology. PAHB also has dressing rooms, showers, and lockers for students and faculty.

An additional performance space, The Proscenium Theatre, is also housed in PAHB. This state-of-the-art proscenium theatre seats 250, and is complete with fly space. Other Department of Dance concerts are presented in this space annually.

The facilities appear adequate to support both the faculty and student needs, as well as the curricular offerings. Space, equipment, and technology designated to the dance program likewise appear adequate and safe for the dance program's functions.

The institution provides basic health and safety practices for students and faculty. Studios are equipped with a First Aid cabinet and there is an ice machine on the third floor of PAHB. The studios

in PAHB are locked outside of regular class hours, and the studio in the Fine Arts building is secured all day. Dance majors, faculty, and staff are granted all-hour access by way of a swipe card.

As stated in the Self-Study and noted during the site visit:

“Students involved with production-related activities (set up, strike, running shows) adhere to industry-standard safety guidelines. There is a building-wide policy of wearing hard hats when anyone is working above (in a lift, for example). Students are given ladder safety training as needed, and lift use is restricted to those who have completed a safety course that includes classroom training and a hands-on familiarity session. As this training is offered through the Department of Theatre and not required of Dance students, Theatre students are generally employed for production work that requires the use of an aerial platform.”

“The Department’s Genie lift is inspected by the operator before each use and quarterly by an outside inspector, per University policy” (see Self-Study, pp. 29-30).

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Facilities, Equipment, Health and Safety (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.F.).

## **G. Library and Learning Resources**

The institution was reviewed for library and learning resources. It appears that the institution meets NASD standards and provides adequate resources for the dance program to fulfill its purposes and is appropriate for the size and scope of its operations, and sufficient to support the curricula in dance.

The governance and administrative structure of the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery (AOK) library seem clearly defined. There is a total of 60 full-time library staff members with 24 of the librarians having faculty status. Two library liaisons work with a member of the dance faculty to order library materials annually to support the needs of the dance unit.

AOK maintains a wide range of library holdings in dance, including electronic access, books, periodicals, music, and audiovisual materials of sufficient size and scope. These resources are accessible to students and faculty and seem to support the incentive for individual learning, and research appropriate for the faculty and students. In addition to an interlibrary loan system (University Systems of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions), all library materials are searchable through the library’s online catalog, AOK OneSearch. OneSearch gives the dance faculty, and students access to web-based materials that can be accessed both on and away from campus (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.G.3.a.).

It was observed during the site visit that the institution maintains appropriate library hours of operation with online access to resources twenty-four hours a day. The library also provides twenty-four-hour study spaces that are swipe card accessible for students in designated areas. The library security and campus police manage the library’s safety and security.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Library and Learning Resources (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.G.).

## **H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, Advisement, and Student Complaints**

### **1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention**

The dance unit works in close collaboration with the Admissions Office to support the recruitment of dance students, and target prospective dance majors. A full-time Visual and Performing Arts Recruitment Counselor assists the departments of Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual arts with recruitment.

Faculty interaction and communication with prospective students include attending and administering auditions, contacting prospective students, participating in the High School Dance Visit Day, the Maryland Council for Dance Scholarship, the Maryland All-State Auditions, and Admissions Visit Days.

The institution considers many factors in making its decision to admit students. These include grade point averages and standardized test scores, the strength of the high school curriculum, class rank, an essay, and other achievements (see UMBC Admissions website <http://undergraduate.umbc.edu/apply/freshmen.php>).

The dance unit's executive has access to admissions data for students applying to UMBC with an interest in the dance major. This data provides the dance executive with the GPAs and test scores of the applicants which determine whether they meet the standards for admission to the institution. Once admitted by UMBC, the dance unit holds an audition for level placement in technique classes and scholarship offers. An initial audition for acceptance into the dance major is not required.

Through residential living-learning communities, students are given the option to live on a visual and performing arts floor with seminars and study groups for first-year students. The dance unit's size allows faculty to have a high level of contact with the students which helps them identify student-related issues; this includes a mid-semester one-on-one conference between faculty and students.

An additional retention resource involves The Learning Resources Center (LRC). LRC monitors first-year and transfer students in their first year at UMBC and notifies The First Year Intervention Program (FYI) if a student is in jeopardy of receiving a D or F in a specific course. The LRC contacts these students and offers them support and resources for improving their grade, including tutoring (see Self-Study, p. 32).

The rigor and fairness of the recruitment, admission, and retention policies appear to be clearly defined and fair and appropriate to the purposes of the institution.

### **2. Record Keeping**

Record keeping appears organized, accurate, and up-to-date and appears to meet NASD standards. Student records are maintained electronically through the Student Administration system. The Degree Audit module of this program allows faculty advisors to access student academic records and progress toward graduation (see *NASD Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.H.1.h.).

Advising records for dance majors and minors are kept in a locked file in the unit's central office. Personnel files are located in either a secured storage room or a locked file cabinet in the central office.

### **3. Advisement**

It appears that there is a balanced level of informal and formal advising practices in place that are effective for the dance unit. Faculty members are assigned between 10 to 25 advisees to help them fulfill all of their graduation requirements. During the site visit, it seemed that the students value the one-on-one attention they receive from their advisors.

It appears that the advising practices meet NASD standards and address program content, program completion requirements, future studies, and dance-specific student services consistent with the nature and purposes of the degree (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.H.1.j.).

### **4. Student Complaint Policy and Its Effectiveness**

The dance unit's Self-Study does not specifically address the Student Complaint Policy and Its Effectiveness, however, the institution has policies and procedures in place for addressing and rectifying issues that may arise. Information about student complaint policies can be found on the UMBC Policy Page at: <http://www.umbc.edu/policies/>; the University Catalog at: <https://studentaffairs.umbc.edu/for-students/student-rights-policies/>; and through the Office of Enrollment Management at: <https://enrollment.umbc.edu/student-complaint-resolution/>.

If necessary, additional information regarding Section H.4., "Student Complaint Policy and Its Effectiveness" can be submitted in the institution's Optional Response.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.H.).

## **I. Published Materials and Websites**

The variety of published materials, both printed and on the website, were available and reviewed on-site, and these appear to represent the dance program clearly and accurately. It seems that the dance unit's website is the primary source of information. One key feature of the dance website is a promotional video created by a Linehan Artist in Visual Arts student which focuses on the student experience. The video can be accessed on the dance unit's homepage at <https://dance.umbc.edu/>.

The site contains additional information about auditions, scholarships, courses of study, student and professional concerts, and other pertinent information. Other online materials include the dance unit's Facebook and Instagram pages. Supplemental printed materials for the dance unit include the student handbook, flyers, postcard mailers, and posters.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Published Materials and Websites (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.I.).

## **J. Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution's Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program (if applicable)**

Not Applicable

## **K. Community Involvement; Articulation with Other Institutions**

The Self-Study notes three primary networks of community affiliations and involvement. The Baltimore Dance Project is a professional dance company committed to presenting the creative work of the dance unit's faculty. The InterArts Series is a multidisciplinary arts series that features visiting visual and performing arts lectures and performances. The Dance Council of Majors is a university student-run organization which hosts a variety of dance-related, social, and fund-raising activities.

UMBC has articulation agreements with Maryland community colleges. Course equivalencies for transfer students from Maryland's community colleges are determined by the Articulation System for Maryland Colleges and Universities. All transfer policies and information for students can be found at in the UMBC's catalog and the Registrar's website: <http://www.umbc.edu/registrar/transfer.html>.

The dance program along with support from the Registrar's Office has designed a two-year graduation plan for transfers coming from Maryland community colleges with either an Associate of Arts or Associate of Fine Arts degree.

The Chair reviews all requests for course/transfer equivalencies and makes a decision on a course-by-course basis after reviewing the course description and syllabus.

The institution appears to meet the guideline for articulation in terms of assuming joint responsibility and working collaboratively to facilitate articulation.

The institution appears to comply with standards regarding Community Involvement; Articulation with other Schools (see NASD *Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation II.J. and K.).

## **L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community**

Not Applicable

## **M. Review of Specific Operational Standards for (1) Free-Standing Dance Institutions of Higher Education and/or (2) Proprietary Institutions (if applicable)**

Not Applicable

## **N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula**

### **1. Credit Hours**

#### **a. Definitions and Procedures**

##### **(1) Definition of Credit and Methods of Assigning Credit**

In defining a credit hour, UMBC aligns with the Carnegie unit of measure defined by the U.S. Department of Education. Based on federal and state definitions, UMBC awards one credit hour as follows:

1. A minimum of 15 hours, of 50 minutes each of actual class time, exclusive of registration, study days, holidays.
2. A minimum of 30 hours, of 50 minutes each of supervised laboratory or studio time, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays.
3. A minimum of 45 hours, of 50 minutes each of instructional situations such as practica, internships, and cooperative education placements, when supervision is ensured and learning is documented.

The Department of Dance's definition of the credit hour adheres to UMBC policy while also often extending the amount of contact time, in particular in the technique courses. Usually, each dance unit course has a 3 credit hour assignment:

“Often, course contact-hours are greater than assigned credit-hours; for example, a two- credit technique course meets three hours per week, a three credit (intermediate or advanced contemporary) technique course meets six hours per week, and a three-credit repertory or performance course meets for six hours per week” (see Self-Study, p. 73).

##### **(2) Publication of Definitions and Policies**

Definitions of Credit hour are published as follows: University Website: <http://registrar.umbc.edu/> “[UMBC Credit Hour Policy](#).”

All information and documentation of transfer policies are published in the UMBC catalog, and online: <http://registrar.umbc.edu/>

##### **(3) Procedures Used to Make Credit Hour Assignments**

Procedures used by the dance unit to make credit hour assignment align with university policy and protocol.

##### **(4) Means Employed to Ensure Accurate and Reliable Application**

Means employed are described in the Self-Study and include advising sessions, college and curriculum review committees.

##### **(5) Procedures of Free-Standing Institutions**

Not Applicable

**b. Evaluation of Compliance**

The institution appears to meet NASD Standards (see *NASD Handbook 2017-18*, Standards for Accreditation III.A., “Credit and Time Requirements”) and seems to be within the range of commonly accepted practices in dance units, including but not limited to the norms indicated by NASD credit hour standards.

**c. New, Experimental, Atypical Formats or Methods**

The UMBC Department of Dance does not appear to employ any new, experimental, or atypical formats or methods in relation to defining or assigning credit hours.

**2. Specific Curricula**

**a. General Content and Competency Standards**

The information provided by the institution for the Bachelor of Arts degree curriculum is commendable, logical, and seems to meet content and competency standards for a Bachelor of Arts program (see Self-Study, Section II.B.). Additionally, it was clear during the visit that excellent teaching and learning was occurring.

**b. Individual Curricula**

**(1) Status:** BA in Dance (General, Education Certification)

Renewal of Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing

**(2) Curriculum:**

There are two concentrations in the BA in Dance. The visitors evaluated the Bachelor of Arts in Dance (General, Education Certification) based on the stated purpose of the degree noted in the Self-Study: “The Bachelor of Arts degree program prepares future dancers, choreographers, educators and scholars through a core curriculum that includes traditional and experimental techniques, creative exploration, historical and aesthetic context, technology and production skills” (see Self-Study, Section II., “Instructional Programs,” p. 39).

Curricular structure and content enable students to develop a range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected for those pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance. The visitors evaluated the curricular table for the Bachelor of Arts degree. The chart shows that Dance Studies comprise 45 Units of the degree (37%). Performance and required Dance Electives comprise 13 Units (11%). General Studies is 36 Units (25%) and General Studies Electives comprise 26 Units (27%).

The institution appears to meet NASD Standards with regard to its Program, Degree, and Curricula.

**(3) Title/Content Consistency:** The title Bachelor of Arts in Dance (General) and the Bachelor of Arts in Dance (Education Certification) appear to be consistent with degree content and requirements.

**(4) Student Work:** Student work was reviewed during the site visit in DANC 450: Repertory Class, in live performance, rehearsal, and in dance technique classes. The

visitors also reviewed written work from classes. Recordings of past concerts were also viewed on site.

The dance program hosted a dress rehearsal of the Senior Concert in the PAHB Dance Cube. The dances were performed by students and were primarily inclusive of modern and contemporary dance aesthetics. In this respect, they seemed to be gaining the experience necessary in terms of their sophistication for creating ensemble and small group choreography with a range of musical selections. The student performers demonstrated the ability to apply their technical training to performance.

- (5) Development of Competencies:** The institution seems successful in outlining, assessing, and developing the competencies of majors. This can be attributed to clear expectations for levels and standards for progression as outlined in the “Dance Department Outcomes Assessment Plan” included in Appendix P of the Self-Study (p. 531) and recent biennial Assessment Report (2017) included in MDP III.A. (see pp. 106-113). The dance program should be commended for its attention to this area of their curriculum development, and also work towards standardizing competencies in the contemporary dance area, so that visiting and resident faculty are in alignment in addressing these.

The dance unit co-hosts an Education Certification in the Bachelor of Arts in Dance and partners with the UMBC Department of Education in mentoring students pursuing the certification. The student in this certification program follows the Bachelor of Arts in Dance like a dance major and adds one dance course, DANC 426 Teaching Methods for Dance, plus several required education courses offered by the Department of Education. They must pass the Maryland State Department of Education Praxis I exam, and complete a year-long extensive teaching internship. When the student engages in teaching internships in the local school systems, they are mentored by both dance and education faculty.

The visiting evaluators were not able to view the Dance Education course connected to the Education Certification, but received information from dance director Carol Hess and faculty members about the process and product of the area of study, with its mentoring program and overall effectiveness. The visiting evaluators were satisfied with the information given that the program of study addresses competencies in the degree.

- (6) Overall Effectiveness:** The overall effectiveness of the Bachelor of Arts appears high, and the students appear to be developing the skills they need as future performers, choreographers, educators, and scholars. Students gain an understanding of contemporary and ballet techniques, as well as get to explore other styles of dance and ways to approach movement. Students also gain instruction in composition and improvisation. Students acquire a variety of performance experiences and are learning in a professional and safe environment.

The dance unit’s curriculum appears to be in compliance with the NASD Standards.

### **3. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalog Statements**

Transcripts for the program were reviewed on-site and appeared to be consistent with the program requirements as published in institutional materials. Additional samples of transcripts are included in the Self-Study and were also reviewed (see Appendix R, “Sample Transcripts,” pp. 549-564).

The 3% overage in the 120 credit hour Bachelor of Arts in Dance is mentioned both in Sections N.2.b.2., “Individual Curricula,” and below in Section P. Any clarifications related to this can be submitted with the institution’s Optional Response.

#### **4. Performance**

Performance exhibitions by visiting guest artists and performance opportunities for students are multiple events that occur in the Dance Cube and the Proscenium Theatre in the Performing Arts and Humanities Building (PAHB) and appear to fulfill the mission of the institution. These events consist of:

Fall Semester

- Performance by a visiting solo dance artist or small dance company.
- Senior Concert attached to DANC 475 Senior Projects.
- First Works attached to DANC 290.
- Fall Dance Showcase which includes works from Independent choreographic study, repertory, and dance workshop courses.

Spring Semester

- Baltimore Dance Project – choreography research by full-time faculty.
- Senior Concert attached to DANC 475 Senior Projects.
- First Works attached to DANC 290.
- Spring Dance Showcase, which is the same as the Fall showcase but with the inclusion of any other courses working towards performance such as Hip Hop or Jazz, thus allowing for students taking classes in the dance unit who are not dance majors to also have an opportunity for performance experience.

The visiting evaluators observed one Department production dress rehearsal, The Senior Concert, in the Dance Cube in the new Performing Arts and Humanities Building. It exhibited a variety of aesthetic approaches by student choreographers, a wide range of representation of the student body on stage, and clear production support of student work through innovative lighting design by the Technical Director. Faculty mentors observing the works discussed their mentees work with all faculty present, so that collective feedback could be taken into account when mentoring the student.

In addition, the institution is committed to attending the American College Dance Festival each spring and presents three student-choreographed works each year, two of which are adjudicated at the conference.

#### **5. Dance Studies in General Education**

The Department of Dance is committed to offering courses for non-majors and also allows for non-majors to audition for student choreography and thus be in departmental productions, as long as they are enrolled in a technique course.

Non-major students are permitted to take any technique course at their level of skill.

Courses in the Department of Dance that satisfy General Education Program (GEP) requirements are Dance Appreciation, Dance History I and Dance History II.

The visiting evaluators also witnessed a special topics course being offered with mostly non-majors students in attendance: an East Indian technique course. The Department offers various types of dance forms when possible and these are often taken by non-majors as well as majors.

The level of students in technique courses and the course offerings for non-majors appears appropriate for the dance unit size and scope.

## **O. Dance Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

### **1. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections Development**

The Self-Study and the visit revealed that evaluation, planning and projections development are a strength of the UMBC Department of Dance. Clearly articulated goals were discussed with the visiting evaluators, including the goal of diversifying the faculty body to reflect the student body. Dance leadership, faculty, and college level leadership are aware of and committed to this goal.

The next challenge of maintaining the new, sophisticated facility and its equipment is in the sights of the planning and projections by leadership and faculty. Awareness of the number of current and prospected dance majors, curriculum needs, and requests by students for artistic exposure to adjunct, visiting, and resident faculty are in the sights of the dance leadership. Precise and extensive assessments of what the unit is doing, how it is doing it, and whether it is successful can be seen in the example of the Dance Chair's assessments of the unit (see Self-Study, MDP III., p. 103). The Department of Dance appears to have a healthy, active, and accurate element of evaluation, planning, and projection for the development of the unit.

### **2. Completeness and Effectiveness of Self-Study**

The completeness and effectiveness of the Self-Study from the Department of Dance at UMBC was evident throughout the reading of the document and during the consequent visit to the program. It was thorough, insightful, well written, and comprehensive while also being succinct. The Self-Study provided a clear picture of the program purposes and how they are manifested in the institution, allowing as well for aspirations and future hopes for the program. The document provided all necessary information for the visiting evaluators and the content was reflected during the site visit. It aligned well with the current reality of the dance unit and presented a proactive program unafraid of change and diversity, thoroughly thinking through its identity and how its potential hires will connect to where it wants to go/what it wants to be. The experience of being provided such a thorough and exacting Self-Study and seeing it reflected in the program during the site visit was a positive experience and provided yet another piece of evidence of the dance unit's integrity, strong leadership, confident faculty and students, and supportive upper administration.

## **P. Standards Summary**

The institution appears to meet the NASD standards relating to a Bachelor of Arts in Dance.

## **Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program**

### **1. Strengths**

- Class sizes are moderate and appropriate to the degree, and there appears to be easy tracking of student progress, with advisement that appears to be timely and thorough.
- The faculty exhibit a range of scholarly and professional expertise.
- The faculty are engaged in artistic and scholarly development.
- Lines of communication between entities in the Department and administration are healthy, and consensus among faculty and students is reached.
- The faculty have confidence in the leadership, and there is transparency.
- Facilities are state of the art, clean, and available to students and faculty.
- The Linehan Scholarship program raises the profile of the program.
- The faculty are dedicated to student experience.
- Students are encouraged to go to and successfully engage in summer study.
- The Postdoc fellowship program is an exciting opportunity to diversify the faculty.
- The Chair has vision for the future of the Department of Dance and is active in implementing it.
- The Department of Dance has the support and awareness from the upper administration, especially the Dean of the College.
- The choreography component of the degree is very strong with thorough assessment from various faculty members.
- Students perception of their approach to the study of the arts is one of risk taking.

### **2. Recommendations for Short-Term Improvement**

- Alignment of competencies in the Contemporary Dance courses, which are taught by resident and visiting faculty.
- Enhancing and improving the public image of the dance program and its performances and events, in connection to the university campus and the community. The Department of Dance should expect help from the college and university in this task.
- Enhancing the image materials for the program performances, i.e., images on dance performance programs, posters, and internet.
- Increasing student opportunity to be chosen for, rehearse in, and perform in faculty dance works, providing a more frequent professional level rehearsal experience for students in the program.
- Possibility for an assistant chair position to aid the Department Chair in administrative duties.

- Cultivating resident adjunct faculty in regard to faculty development and more student access to the professional connections and activity that part-time faculty can provide, such as commissioning an adjunct faculty member to create a new work on the student body.

### **3. Primary Futures Issues**

Sustainability of the new facility and its equipment, and securing funding for future expenditures and replacement of state of the art equipment.

### **4. Suggestions for Long-Term Development**

The visiting evaluators appreciate the current height of awareness the Department administration and faculty bring to the future task of assembling a faculty body that the Department of Dance wants for the program, which will help support the institution's goal of diversification. Development of a strategy in regards to the sequence of new permanent hires will be of significant importance to the pursuit of diversity and quality within the dance unit.