

Chair's Report
Year Three Review APR - Dance
February 25, 2022

Introduction

The Dance Department's Academic Program Review of 2017-18 was infused into the department's Self Study for Accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD.) In September 2018, the NASD Commission on Accreditation voted to approve UMBC for Membership status in its *NASD Commission Action Report* of October 5, 2018 (amended by NASD on October 31, 2018). According to the NASD Handbook, "Membership is granted to institutions meeting all of the standards of the Association. Institutions approved for Membership are granted five-year periods of accreditation. At the end of five years, such institutions are expected to apply for renewal of Membership. Institutions approved for renewal of Membership are granted ten year periods of accreditation." Because of COVID restrictions on travel, and on the delivery of dance curricula, NASD's next full review, for renewal of Membership, originally scheduled for the 2022-2023 Academic Year, has been re-scheduled to the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

Impact of COVID-19

The Dance Department is a performing arts department in which face-to-face instruction and training in specifically designed spaces, and live performance experience are essential components of a dancer's education. In Fall 2020, all dance technique, improvisation and composition courses were taught in hybrid form, with students learning at home in makeshift dance spaces made possible by clearing or moving furniture in their homes for most of their classes, and coming to campus to dance wearing masks, in 12' x 12' squares outlined on the dance studio floor.

The department invested the funds necessary to equip faculty teaching dance techniques from their homes. The equipment included: a 5'x 6' piece of vinyl flooring to dance on, a small sound mixer, a wireless microphone and receiver, and the necessary cables to input their music into the mixer. In Fall 2021 these classes met all in person. We presented a live concert in the Proscenium Theatre in December 2021, with a very limited, masked audience and plan to present a livestream concert in the Dance Cube in April 2022 and another concert with limited audience in the Dance Cube in May 2022.

Review of Post-APR Action Plan

The completed items recommended for action in the Post APR Action Plan are explained in the YRT Action Plan Grid. The action items not yet completed are also discussed in the grid, but this one bears repeating:

- *Replace computers and software, purchase new or upgraded software in the Sonic Computer Lab:* This CAHSS and Provost's Office action item is quickly becoming an emergency. Five of the sixteen computers in the lab were purchased in January 2014. The remaining 11 were purchased in Summer 2014. This lab is a teaching space, also used by students to work on their assignments. Currently it is not possible to upgrade some of the software programs because the computers are too old and cannot handle the load of things like 4K video files.

Current/Ongoing Actions Items for YTR:

- *Increase enrollment* – this cannot be accomplished without the strong support of the Office of

Admissions. The department needs to work with Admissions on strategies for reaching out to prospective students. This is a big challenge for a small faculty.

- *Resume and expand upon recruitment activities* – beginning in the next academic year if the pandemic allows, the department can resume offering department-specific events that target prospective students, “High School Dance Visit Day” for high school seniors, and hosting the Maryland All-State Auditions. The department will discuss additional visit opportunities with the Office of Admissions. I don’t know how much more we can do, being stretched thin.
- *“Increase 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” - Recommendation for Short-Term Improvement, NASD Visitors Report, 2018* – This recommendation arose from the NASD visiting evaluators’ meeting with the dance majors. Students want more opportunities to dance in faculty choreography. Other universities do this. It will require some funds for the department to hire an adjunct in order to make it possible. When the NASD accreditation team comes to UMBC in Fall 2023, they are going to wonder what we have done to address this issue.
- *“Possibility for an assistant chair position to aid the Department Chair in administrative duties” - Recommendation for Short-Term Improvement, NASD Visitors Report, 2018*–The chair would like to “protect” its two assistant professors from too many service commitments. The department looks for guidance on this issue.
- *Replace 1080p cameras with 4K cameras* – The 1080p cameras that “came with the building” have quickly become old technology. They should be replaced as soon as possible, in AY 22-23, @ \$5,000 per camera.
- *“Sustainability of the new facility and its equipment, and securing funding for future expenditures and replacement of state of the art equipment”- Primary Futures Issue, NASD Visitors Report, 2018* – The visiting evaluators recognized that the university must commit to maintaining, repairing and upgrading spaces and equipment. The department has divided these needs into two categories: what needs to be done now, and what can wait a bit.
As soon as possible:
 - Replace *2014 Mac Pro Production Computer* in Dance Cube tech booth @\$6,000
 - Replace *Soundcraft* analog console (technology not current for teaching - students should be learning digital sound boards) @\$5,000
 - Replace Dance Cube cyclorama (torn) @ \$12,000
 - Service the piano in Fine Arts 317 studio (routine maintenance) @\$4,000
 - Purchase new LED PAR lighting fixtures for Dance Cube (expand inventory with current stage lighting technology possibly over time) \$10,000*AY 24-25 and beyond:*
 - Replace vinyl flooring in the Dance Cube and the Dance Technology Studio @\$14,000 per studio

Faculty

IRADS incorrectly shows that in Fall 2018 the department had two tenure-track faculty: Carol Hess and Doug Hamby. The number should be three. Assistant Professor Ann Sofie Clemmensen joined the department in Fall 2018. Her position replaced that of Elizabeth Walton who had passed away. Off-track faculty included one full-time Instructor (Sandra Lacy) and one full-time Artist-in-Residence, Shaness Kemp. Fall 2019 was Professor Hamby's last semester before retirement. The department hired Assistant Professor Shaness Kemp, whose first semester overlapped with Professor Hamby's last. This is why IRADS shows four tenure track faculty for Fall 2019. The numbers are correct for Fall 2020, and are the same for Fall 2021.

New Faculty

The department has had an influx of new faculty, beginning with Assistant Professor Ann Sofie Clemmensen in 2018, Assistant Professor Shaness Kemp in 2019, and Artist in Residence Brandon Perry Russell. In 2021, Professor Clemmensen's Third Year Contract Renewal has been approved. Professor Kemp's Third Year Contract Renewal has been approved by the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Interim Dean of CAHSS, and awaits approval from the Provost. The Artist in Residence position has been converted to a Lecturer position, and the department is in the midst of a search.

Faculty Scholarship

Ann Sofie Clemmensen: In January 2019, Professor Clemmensen premiered a new work in Denmark entitled *Placed in Here* and presented it at UMBC. She received an award from the *John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Dance* commissioning her new work *In To and Out Of*, premiering in October 2019. In January 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, Clemmensen collaborated with artist Charlotte Stickles to present *Elsewhere, Again*, a YouTube livestream dance performance from two locations: Clemmensen in Baltimore and Stickles three time zones away in Washington.

Shaness Kemp: In May 2019, Professor Shaness Kemp choreographed a solo work, *hEATed: MY place*, performed by dancer Giavanni Powell. In a highly competitive adjudication process, the work was selected for performance in the *37th Maryland Choreographers Showcase* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in January 2020. In Summer 2021, she performed in a Dana Meredith's riveting work, *Bridge of Our Roots* at the Delaware Art Museum and then at the Suzanne Roberts Theater in Philadelphia. In February 2022, Professor Kemp was recognized as a Master Teacher of Umfundalai, the contemporary African dance technique that she teaches at UMBC.

Carol Hess: In 2018, Professor Carol Hess presented her multimedia work, *LightForest*, at UMBC's Baltimore Dance Project Concert. In Spring 2018, she presented a site-specific work entitled *Dancing In, Among, and With the Lumens* in the *Spark Pop-up Gallery* as part of *Light City Baltimore 2018*. In February 2019, she premiered a new work, entitled *Burnt*. In November 2019, she created a site-specific dance work designed for the *Spark Gallery* at *Light City Baltimore 2019* featuring five dancers performing in response to selected artworks in the gallery. In February 2020, she performed *Partial Recall II*, an experimental tap dance work in UMBC's Baltimore Dance Project Concert.

Sandra Lacy: In Summer 2018 Instructor Sandra Lacy received a CAHSS Pedagogy and Teaching grant to pursue further study of the Feldenkrais Technique, to apply to her teaching of ballet and contemporary

dance, and her course “Beyond Technique.” In February 2019, her solo work, *Giving Up the Ghost* was selected for the 36th *Maryland Choreographers Showcase* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center through a competitive adjudication process. Lacy is a certified teacher of Feldenkrais Technique, and is currently working on a new solo work.

Adjunct Faculty Scholarship

Our adjunct faculty are engaged in scholarship. Most notable are the following:

Monica Dale (Adjunct Faculty and Music Coordinator) received a \$24,996.00 Sherman Center Faculty Research Fellowship in the Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities this year. She is now working with early childhood educators at Arundel Elementary School to investigate the effect of MusiKinesis® on prekindergarten students’ music and movement skills, executive functioning, and kindergarten readiness.

Franki Graham (Adjunct Faculty) presented her company *LucidBeings Dance*, in *Permeating Presence* on UMBC’s 2018 Dance Department Showcase. The work was later selected for the 36th *Maryland Choreographers Showcase* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. In February 2020, she performed in *Biosphere* with Baltimore Dance Project.

Jill Vasbinder (Adjunct II) received a 2018 CAHSS Pedagogy and Teaching Award that supported her research to develop a “dance studies reader” for the purpose of providing her dance history students with information and resources not found in much of the available literature. Ms. Vasbinder is dedicated to developing strategies for engaging students in examining challenging essential questions about dance history today, such as how to view historic works and writings from the perspectives of race, gender, and the larger global arena.

Staff

The department has two full-time staff. The Program Management Specialist manages the office, grants, awards, budgets, accreditation reports, and much more. The Technical Director designs lights for our productions, supervises technical theatre students, maintains our theatrical equipment and spaces, recommends repair or purchase of necessary items, and teaches 399 Dance Practicum where students learn about stagecraft for dance, and lighting for dance. On February 11, 2022, our Program Management Specialist resigned the position and we are searching for their replacement.

Curriculum

Professor Clemmensen worked with UMBC’s Study Abroad office to design a faculty-led study abroad course, DANC 299 Dance Denmark – Dance and Culture. In January 2020, Professor Clemmensen took 18 students to Denmark for three weeks where they immersed in dance study and learned about Danish culture. It was the highest enrolled study abroad program in UMBC’s history.

Soon after Assistant Professor Shaness Kemp joined the full-time faculty, she designed DANC 275 Introduction to Umfundalai, a course in African Contemporary Dance. This course is now a requirement for the B.A. in Dance and ensures that all of our dance majors have an immersive experience in this important technique.

Student Research

Dance students receive Undergraduate Research Awards for their research, and present their research on Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day. In Spring 2018, Senior Dance Student Maia Schechter's capstone work, *Now Elsewhere*, was selected for regional honors in the American College Dance Association (ACDA) Mid-Atlantic North conference, and was invited to show her choreography at the ACDA National Festival at the Kennedy Center. In Spring 2019, Junior Teresa Whitemore's work entitled *When Eve Bit the Apple*, was selected for regional honors, and in Spring 2020, her capstone work, *Giving Skin* was selected for the ACDA Mid-Atlantic Conference gala performance.

Mentoring

Every dance major receives meaningful one-on-one mentoring by full-time faculty. In the required courses DANC 335 Projects in Choreography and the capstone course DANC 475 Senior Projects, each student undertakes the creative process of choreographing a major dance work for performance. Faculty visit rehearsals, and meet with the students individually to provide guidance and support.

Enrollment

A small department, Dance has a limit to the number of majors it can serve. In studio courses, class size is determined by the size of the space and the number of students we can safely teach in that space. The department also offers a minor, and through the minor, serves students from all of UMBC's colleges. Our enrollment of majors had begun to decline before the APR, and has now begun to rise. In Fall 2021 we showed 38 majors.

In addition to serving majors, minors and the general student population, the department serves MAT students pursuing certification in K-12 Dance Education, and teaches DANC 426 Teaching Methods for Dance, required for BA and MAT students pursuing certification.

Degrees

A few years ago, we had a dip in freshmen enrollment, and that dip affected the number of degrees awarded in 2020-2021. COVID-19 precipitated some changes from one student dropping out of college so she could find a job, two students changing from majors to minors, and some students choosing to reduce their course load and postpone degree completion. Still there will be a marked increase in degrees awarded during 2021-2022.

Operating Budget

Because of COVID-19, we have not presented the number of public performances per year that we usually do. These concerts generate revenue. We did have lower productions costs overall, but we also reassigned some of those funds to purchase the equipment necessary for teaching dance technique remotely, and for producing livestream events.

Major Challenges

The greatest challenge for the Dance Department is to manage all the things that need to be done, while at the same time protecting its assistant professors, with so few hands on deck. One person is left to do many of the jobs that were once shared by three.