

**Response to the Reviewers' Report
Dance Program 2005–2012 Seven-Year Self-Study
East Carolina University
School of Theatre and Dance**

Prepared May/June 2013 by the ECU Dance Faculty:

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In accordance with the guidelines outlined by East Carolina University's Division of Academic and Student Affairs, the School of Theatre and Dance (SoTD) dance faculty has created this document as a response to the recommendations submitted by the three reviewers for the ECU dance program's seven-year self-study.

The primary goal of the self-study process is quality enhancement of the unit program. This process has been extremely valuable for the dance program in its scrutiny and refinement of its mission, goals, core values and vision for the future. The dance faculty is appreciative of the reviewers' vigilance in examining our self-study document, interviewing various groups and individuals during their on-site visitation and developing their report with recommendations based on their findings.

The reviewers were impressed with the quality education that dance majors are receiving at ECU and with the productivity, vitality and dedication of the SoTD dance faculty. They believe the dance program has the capability to attain its goals of maintaining its strong core, building a broader academic offering, utilizing the strengths of its faculty, recruiting and retaining high caliber students, achieving a wider national presence, and ultimately receiving accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD)—a distinction and achievement unanimously supported at all levels of ECU administration. While the reviewers noted the program's many strengths, they also pointed out its challenges. The dance faculty is resolute in its efforts to meet these challenges in order to strengthen the program and to attain NASD accreditation. The reviewers feel that implementation of many of their recommended changes "would position the Dance Program to be a premiere program in the Southeast."

Following are responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including what actions we propose to take, who will be responsible for facilitating the action, a prioritization of actions, and a proposed timeline for initiation of the actions. The initiation and implementation of many proposed actions are dependent upon sufficient funding and other needs and conditions within the SoTD and ECU. The following are listed in order of priority.

| Category | Facilitator(s) | Initiation |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Facilities | Dixon | Fall 2013 |

As pointed out by the reviewers, the greatest obstacle to the dance program's growth and potential for attaining NASD accreditation is the lack of dedicated and adequate dance facilities to serve the scope of the program. Funds have reportedly been set aside, and plans

are underway for the design and construction of a new dance building that will meet the minimum thresholds for NASD accreditation.

Until a new dance building is realized, the dance faculty will continue to advocate for the optimal working conditions in our current facilities, including clean and sanitary studios, adequately equipped dressing rooms, dance-appropriate temperature control, and best scheduled use of the one large studio space—for classes, rehearsals, guest artist residencies and workshop performances.

2. Curriculum Darkenwald 2013–2015

- a. To fulfill the NASD requirements and recommendations for accreditation, the dance program plans to develop the following courses and/or seminars over the next three years. Many of these courses are already being taught by our dance faculty on an irregular basis; our new dance education faculty member (entering Fall 2013) is qualified to teach several of these; and other ECU faculty are qualified to teach several of these courses and/or seminars.

Dance Kinesiology (course proposal created)
Somatics/conditioning (course proposal created)
Movement Analysis
Technique Pedagogy
Professional Preparation
Music for Dancers
Dance Production

- b. The dance program will reassess the current curriculum requirements and elective offerings of both the dance performance and the dance education degrees to determine whether they are adequately serving the educational needs of our students and to include newly developed courses listed above.
- c. Class schedules will be reassessed and reconfigured as appropriate to utilize our dance faculty’s expertise, the SoTD space resources and student needs. Class schedules will be reconfigured once again prior to the anticipated occupation of the proposed new dance building.

3. Faculty Darkenwald, Dixon, Weeks Fall 2015

The reviewers reported that the dance faculty workload seems unusually high. In addition to maintaining full teaching loads and advising, the dance faculty coordinates the dance degree programs, sets original choreography, organizes outreach activities and recruits new students, among other activities. The reviewers point out that faculty does not receive consistent reassigned time for administrative duties or creative activity. In the future, as conditions avail themselves, dance faculty will seek course load reductions in alignment with ECU’s Faculty Workload document (REG 03.00.12). Section 4.1.4 lists the following categories that can be considered for course reductions: “course/curriculum development, heavy load of academic advising, accreditation/program review, technology training for instruction, co-curricular

activities, academic administration, externally funded research, institutionally supported research, institutional service, service to the public, and service to the profession.”

- a. The dance faculty is in agreement with the reviewers’ recommendation of adding an additional tenure-track faculty line to address some of the above mentioned curriculum deficiencies. The dance faculty recognizes that the accomplishment of this goal is contingent upon a variety of factors, such as the ECU budgetary situation and other SoTD needs; however, the dance faculty wants to point out the many advantages of a new faculty line—
 - 1) An additional faculty position would allow for the inclusion and regular offering of the proposed NASD-required and recommended dance majors courses (listed in 2. a.).
 - 2) It would distribute the teaching load of the entire dance faculty. The current dance faculty—although highly qualified to teach several of these courses—are not able to offer these courses on a regular basis due to their already full teaching loads of major courses and several sections of the non-majors Foundations DNCE 1000 course—Introduction to Dance, a dance appreciation lecture course.
 - 3) The distribution of the teaching load would enable the dance faculty to receive workload credit for their creative activity. The dance faculty would be able to offer their own sections of a performance/repertory course (recommended by the reviewers), during which they would create choreography for performances during regularly scheduled pre-evening times. An advantage for dance majors is that this specific performance training credit would be reflected on their transcripts.
 - 4) An additional dance faculty position would enable the dance area coordinator, whose responsibilities have increased significantly over the past ten years, to be eligible for a reduced teaching load. As recommended in the NASD guidelines, “Normally, teaching loads of those having administrative and/or consultative duties are appropriately reduced.” (2012–13 NASD Handbook, p. 63)
- b. Another solution to the underutilization of faculty expertise and the curriculum deficiency problem is to add an additional .5 faculty line to teach several Distance Education sections of DNCE 1000—Introduction to Dance, to free up the full-time faculty to teach required dance major courses. This half-time position could be used to offer other non-major courses and/or could also accommodate the extra burden of supervising dance education interns at times when this duty becomes an overload for the dance education coordinator.
- c. The dance area coordinator will work with the Director to ensure that a clear and comprehensive mentoring system is in place for new faculty and current tenure-track faculty. There are no plans at this time to create a faculty handbook on guidelines for tenure and promotion. These are generally outlined in the ECU Faculty Manual and the SoTD Code of Operations; however, the dance area coordinator and the Director will address issues not covered in these documents as they arise.

- d. While the dance faculty appreciates that creative activity at the university level is given full credit, they support the regional and national creative activity required of faculty who aspire to full professorship in the future. The dance faculty are committed to the priority of fulfilling their ECU teaching and unit responsibilities, but will continue to request administrative support in the pursuit of their creative activity on a broader scope, as it impacts their progress as artists and provides a positive reflection on the caliber of the dance program, the SoTD and ECU.
- e. Upon the retirement of the senior faculty, who fill essential positions, the remaining faculty will make a concerted effort to emphasize gender and ethnic diversity as they search for the most qualified candidates for their replacements.

4. Recruitment Galaska Spring 2014

In order to recruit the highest caliber student possible, the dance faculty will—

- a. Participate annually in the High School Dance Festivals. The Regional High School Dance Festival, sponsored by the Virginia Governor's School for the Arts, is held in odd-ended years. The National High School Dance Festival, alternately held in Miami, FL and Philadelphia, PA, is in even-ended year. This festival experience is an intensive partial week of classes and performances for high school students and is a major recruitment venue for colleges and universities. We will set up an informational table, and offer scholarship audition classes.
- b. Implement a campus visitation day for high school students who are exploring universities. The day will include an informational session for the prospective students and family members about our program, technique classes, a discussion period with our current students, and a tour of our facilities. We will facilitate renewal credit for public school educators bringing groups, as appropriate.
- c. Actively pursue the increase in dance scholarship support through the College of Fine Arts and Communication Development Office. In order to be competitive with other strong dance programs, we need to offer significant scholarships to entice outstanding students. Receiving a scholarship is often a deciding factor on a prospective student's college selection.
- d. Consider reinstatement of a dance minor to serve ECU students with exceptional dance backgrounds who want to continue their dance training, but who have chosen a different major, and to increase the overall SoTD student numbers. A minor is only possible with the acquisition of adequate dance facilities and additional dance faculty.

5. Publicity**Dixon****Spring 2014**

The dance faculty will—

- a. Revise the dance area website with updated information on our degree tracks, faculty, past guest artists, and current activities. We will enhance the website with dynamic photographs and video clips of class work and performance.
- b. Based on available resources, update our dance program publicity flyers with the goal of creating a visually dynamic threefold dance program brochure with more specific information on the program. An eye-catching dance brochure has the potential to boost our increasing recruitment efforts.

6. Retention**Darkenwald****Fall 2014**

The dance faculty will continue to offer dance majors performance opportunities as often as possible. At present, we present one annual mainstage performance in McGinnis Theatre. All eight other on-campus performances are in our Studio Theatre: two faculty-produced workshop concerts, two senior choreography concerts, two informal composition class presentations and two student-driven performance.

The dance faculty proposes a second concert in McGinnis Theatre—

- a. to offer dance majors a second annual mainstage performance opportunity,
- b. to relieve the obligation that faculty feel to choreograph large works for the greatest number of majors for their single mainstage performance per year,
- c. to allow for a “rotation” or option for faculty to choreograph in either or both concerts,
- d. to give the Greenville and ECU community another opportunity to see dance. (SoTD dance concerts characteristically attract large audiences.)

We will continue to offer one major guest artist residency, alternating the genres of ballet, modern and jazz with occasional alternative forms such as tap or flamenco. And we will continue to arrange other mini-residencies and master classes, as funds and guest artists are available. Emphasis will be given on inviting guest artists to teach historically and culturally diverse dance forms, such as African dance, Middle Eastern dance, international folk dance and pre-classic dance forms.

We plan to organize a repertory performing group that will be available for touring to public schools. This will—

- a. facilitate our response to requests from schools,
- b. give our dance majors additional performance opportunities in varied venues,
- c. provide performance experiences for children who may not be able to travel to a dance concert, and
- d. to bring revenue into the dance program for scholarships and/or master classes.

With increased scholarships, we can offer significant awards to our current dance majors for the regular academic year or for continued training through intensive summer study. Should the dance program acquire NASD accreditation, ECU dance majors will be eligible

for scholarships from outside sources that offer scholarships to qualified applicants who attend accredited dance institutions. We will inform our dance majors of these sources as they arise.

The dance program is offering its second summer jazz dance camp this summer for youth under Galaska's direction with the assistance of advanced dance majors. Because of the success of last year's camp and the expressed interest of students who attended our 2013 Day of Dance, we plan to continue offering a summer dance camp. We are interested in expanding the class offerings to more genres and to incorporate college to pre-professional level classes in the future.

6. Assessment Darkenwald/Weeks Summer 2013

The dance faculty will conduct an annual review of program goals, core values and SWOT, analyzing the effectiveness of our methods of measuring success and making revisions as needed.

The dance program is actively utilizing the SACS assessment model, with the aim of integrating this method of assessment with other means of assessment of the goals of our program.

The dance faculty have created and implemented rubrics to assess levels of student proficiency and knowledge in several areas, such as entrance auditions, the BFA jury class, understanding of dance terminology, basic anatomy/kinesiology and the understanding of the dance majors' own global and historical dance lineage.

We will evaluate the effectiveness of these new assessment tools and will continue to develop new ones. We will regularly review the results of the data generated, plan actions to implement and create follow-up actions to improve on our assessment methods.

We will continue to collect data regarding program recruitment, entrance, retention and graduation. Statistics from this data will aid us in effectiveness and improvements in these program areas.

7. Leadership Weeks/Dixon Fall 2013

Weeks has been re-elected as dance area coordinator for the AY 2013–14 and Dixon has been elected as dance area coordinator for the AY 2014–15. Dixon will serve as an apprentice/assistant to Weeks for AY 2013–14.

The dance area coordinator will request from the Director pertinent financial reports and updates on a regular basis to develop a working budget and to follow income and expenditures related to specific dance program activities, such as Senior Concerts, guest artist residencies and master classes, Day of Dance and our annual excursion to the regional conference of the American College Dance Festival Association.

The SoTD Director will be instituting an Executive Advisory Committee to begin Fall 2013, a developing idea of his, the value of which was confirmed by the reviewers during their

on-site visit. This committee will consist of representatives from the areas of Dance, Acting, Musical Theatre, Design & Production, Theatre Education/Theatre for Youth and the Director. The committee will facilitate more efficient communication among the areas and will serve as an advisory board for the Director. It will meet a minimum of once per semester to discuss matters affecting all areas, such as teaching schedules, mainstage production schedule, workshop production schedule.

8. Alumni Galaska/Panova/Weeks Spring 2014

The dance faculty plans to devise a strong and lively network of communication with our alumni, keeping them connected to the SoTD dance program and giving them a sense of ownership in the history, traditions and direction of our program. We plan to create this network through surveys, internet sources, social media and alumni events. This network will be valuable in the following ways:

- a. A dance graduate-specific exit interview for graduating seniors will give us information on what the dance majors found valuable in their dance studies at ECU and what improvements they might suggest to strengthen the program.
- b. This network will automatically enable dance graduates to be connected to graduates from their class, and also to former dance classmates.
- c. This will enable the dance faculty to track and publish alumni accomplishments.
- d. Alumni can be kept abreast of developments of the SoTD dance program, and in turn, they can channel prospective students back into the program.
- e. This more prevalent public exposure of ECU's dance alumni, who are spread throughout the U.S., will continue to raise the program's profile.
- f. The dance faculty plans to conduct periodic alumni surveys on how our graduates' training at ECU has aided their careers in dance.
- g. Alumni can announce their dance job openings through this dance network.
- h. Alumni will be able to "give back" to the program by making contributions to our dance scholarship funds.
- i. Within the next several years, we plan to host an inaugural alumni reunion festival on campus to reconnect. The festival would consist of open discussions; classes in technique, improvisation and choreography; ongoing video presentations of past concert; a showcase performance of faculty and alumni choreography; and social activities.
- j. When feasible, faculty will arrange social activities when visiting cities heavily populated by ECU dance alumni, such as New York City, Chicago and Atlanta.