

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENCE  
INTERDEPARTMENTAL**

**The Department of Philosophy**

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To: Melissa Austin,  
Associate Dean for Academic Programs  
The Graduate School

From: Kenneth Clatterbaugh  
Chair Dance Program Review Committee

**SUMMARY REPORT: REVIEW OF THE DANCE PROGRAM BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA) AND MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA) DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

The chair of the Dance Program Review Committee was Professor Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Chair of the Department of Philosophy. The Dance Program Review Committee included as internal reviewers Professor Ellen J. Garvens, School of Art, and Professor Thomas L. Harper, School of Music. External review committee members were Professor Donna M. White, Professor and Chair of the Department of Modern Dance at the University of Utah, and Professor Gregg Lizenbery, Professor and Director of the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Melissa Austin, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, convened a charge meeting on November 4, 2005. In attendance at that meeting were Dean Austin; Augustine McCaffery, Manager of Academic Programs for the Graduate School; Ellen Kaisse, Acting Divisional Dean, Arts and Humanities; Janice DeCosmo, Acting Associate Dean, Office of Undergraduate Education; Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost, Office of the Provost; and review committee members Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Ellen Garvens, and Thomas Harper.

The review committee, including its outside members, held its formal on-site review on November 18 and 19, 2005. All members of the committee were present for all phases of the review process. In addition to the Dance Program self study document and the appendices provided by Elizabeth Cooper, Professor in the Dance Program, the committee also requested and received a CV for Jennifer Salk, Professor in the Dance Program, which was missing from the original self-study; a statement of salaries for the faculty and staff of the Dance Program; a copy of the advertisement for the open position in the Dance Program; an updated departmental ratings summary; a final report of the Dance Program student learning goals; and a notice that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has granted permission for the Dance Program to award majors a dance endorsement on a Washington teaching certificate, which certifies that the bearer is qualified to teach dance.

During the two days of the onsite review the review committee conducted an extensive series of interviews. A corrected schedule for those days is attached. The committee interviewed each member of the faculty and the staff. These interviews in most cases ran for approximately 30 minutes, although most ran longer. In addition the committee interviewed five alumni, three MFAs and two BAs; ten undergraduates, most of whom were juniors or seniors; and all seven of the current graduate students. The committee also requested interviews with members of other departments who serve on the Dance Program Standing Committee. Augustine McCaffery contacted Barry Witham and was told that the Standing Committee was no longer active so no interviews were scheduled.

There was a final interview on the afternoon of November 18, 2005, with Professor Elizabeth Cooper, prior to the exit interview. The exit interview was divided into two parts. The first part included the five members of the review committee; Professor Cooper; Risa Morgan, Administrator and Undergraduate Adviser of the Dance Program; Mark Haim, Artist in Residence for the Dance Program; and Jureg Koch, Lecturer for the Dance Program. Representing the Graduate School, the Provost's office, and the Dean's office were: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean; Dean Melissa Austin; Manager Augustine McCaffery; David Hodge, Dean of Arts and Sciences; Dean Ellen Kaisse; Dean Janice DeCosmo; and Vice Provost Ana Mari Cauce. In the second part of the meeting the faculty members and staff members from the Dance Program were not in attendance.

## **FINDINGS**

The committee found the undergraduate programs in dance to be of uniformly high quality, a quality maintained through the great dedication and hard work of its teachers, whether they were graduate student, faculty member, or artist in residence. The University of Washington is committed to making the undergraduate experience a quality experience that derives from careful attention to pedagogical practice and faculty mentoring. The Dance Program seems to be a model of what the University yet hopes to achieve.

In the early years of the program the hires in the Dance Program faculty were almost exclusively drawn from graduates of its own MFA program. This hiring pattern gave the early program great continuity but little diversity in conception. In recent years however, with the addition of Elizabeth Cooper (who is originally from the program but spent intervening years at Texas), Mark Haim, Jennifer Salk, and Jurg Koch, the program has greatly diversified the background of its faculty. The faculty members of the Dance Program are well-trained, experienced professionals who share a commitment to students and the art of movement.

The learning goals of the program have been worked out in collaboration with the Office of Educational Assessment. The purpose of these goals was to convey to students in the program the concrete objectives for dance majors and minors and to development a method of assessing the success of this conveyance. The goals seem appropriate to a research university, namely, to understand dance as a broad cultural practice; to think

critically and articulately about dance; to develop skill in rhythm and movement and compositional analysis; to understand and practice risk-taking; to engage in a variety of self-assessment and reflective practices that encourage life-long learning; and to understand the basic principals of dance teaching and dance science.

The number of undergraduate majors has grown from 11 in 1985, to 37 in 1996, and is now up to 49. The number of minors now stands at 56. Because the program has limited teaching resources the number of majors has been limited. Application to the major occurs twice a year. Last spring only 57% of the applicants were accepted, and this fall 60% were accepted as majors. Majors must take 65 credits in dance, minors 25 credits. There is now also an Honors Program in Dance, which requires two courses at the 300 or 400 level in the dance major, submission of an application, and identification of a faculty advisor. There is a graduation with distinction from the Honors Program in Dance that requires a fifteen to twenty five page paper in addition to other honors requirements. Recently, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has granted an endorsement to the program that allows its students to claim the qualifications to teach dance on their Washington teacher's certificate. The undergraduate program in dance has made great progress developing a well-managed and well-balanced program that serves majors, minors, and students just interested in taking some dance classes. The program has created a "home" in which students feel comfortable in taking risks by exploring new things and testing their creativity.

The ten students who met with the committee for a little over an hour were articulate and honest in expressing their opinions. They found their instructors were open to different dance styles, enthusiastic, and supportive and encouraging to students. Since some of the undergraduate students had already had professional careers, some of which ended through injury, they were especially appreciative of the quality of teaching in the program. One comment that the committee heard more than once was to the effect that "I had been dancing for all those years and never knew that (something their instructor had pointed out to them in class)." Students found that their teachers made it clear what their teaching approach was going to be and why they chose that approach. The students seemed to be particularly eager for different technique approaches and appreciative of their instructors' ability to provide them. Students also valued the fact that when the instructor was absent, usually to present a workshop or performance elsewhere, the substitute teachers were varied and brought new ideas to the class. Class size was good except for the technique classes - especially at the intermediate level, which the students found to be too large at 40-50 people. The students generally agreed that they would like more levels of dance for the most prevalent dance forms, namely, modern and ballet. Students found the program to be generally well balanced with opportunities to choreograph, perform, and work in production; there were also opportunities for scholarship in theory and aesthetic appreciation. Students said that through their classes they became more articulate about their art form as they became better dancers.

In addition to the interviews with students there is ample evidence of the high quality of instruction within the program. The student evaluations are uniformly higher than the University mean for instructor's effectiveness. The fact that the Dance Program received the Brotman Instructional Excellence Award for undergraduate teaching and

that Elizabeth Cooper was selected for one of the University's Distinguished Teaching Awards in 2003 are further confirmation of the excellence embedded in this program.

Many of the students in the program are double majors; this seemed to be in part due to the students' awareness that dance can be physically hazardous and there may be a need to prepare for a second career. Several students expressed an interest in dancing professionally for a while and then moving into physical therapy, public school teaching, working for a dance company, or in some cases pursuing degrees in biology or chemistry with an eye on research.

Although students found their classes to be well taught, well run, and the program to be very supportive, they would have liked to have more classes in non-western style dance, smaller classes at the intermediate level, more performances each year, and a chance to audition for opportunities to perform outside of the majors' dance concert. It is hard to see how many of these student complaints can be met without an expanded faculty. The committee felt that the request for more auditions for the different concerts would be a good idea. The committee also thought that the Dance Program might explore ways that students could perform off campus as well as on campus. For example, the Dance Program could collaborate with some local dance studios such as Open Flight in the University District as a way of creating more performance opportunities.

The findings of this committee with respect to undergraduate education are very consistent with the findings of the previous ten-year review committee. This review noted: "The dance faculty as a unit have shown extremely impressive drive and resilience in the face of a rapidly expanding program and static resources." This committee, as well as the previous committee, was concerned about faculty and staff burnout. It is not unusual for faculty members to have 16 to 21 contact hours each week and that does not count time spent at rehearsal and performances. The Chair of the program herself teaches six to seven courses each year in addition to overseeing performances and fulfilling the duties of a chair.

The Master of Fine Arts degree in dance was instituted by the Dance Program in 1990. This graduate program was conceived as a way to transition professional dancers into academic life. Applicants to the program must have a baccalaureate degree and a minimum of eight years of professional dancing. The program is for two years; there are usually six graduate students, three in each class. During the time the students are in attendance at the University, they are members of the Chamber Dance Company (CDC), which puts on a concert, usually in February. The pieces presented at that performance, which is held in Meany Theater, are all restoration pieces. In addition to their duties with the CDC, graduate students teach Dance 101, Dance 102, and Dance 100 and 200 (the modern and ballet classes) and occasionally higher-level classes such as Anatomy for Dance. They also pursue a vigorous interdisciplinary curriculum that includes aesthetics courses in philosophy, a series of seminars that address the place of dance in higher education, a course in dance administration, a one-quarter course on how to write a research paper, and courses that focus on the pedagogy of teaching dance and how to prepare a course, which they then have to teach.

The MFA program was incredibly innovative at the time it was adopted, and the students who come out of the program are well equipped to enter academic dance programs around the country. A significant number of the graduates go on to work in academic departments. Often these are small departments for the simple reason that most dance programs are small. Others choose to stay in Seattle to participate in the local dance scene, and some choose to work with dance companies in other parts of the country. Thus, the MFA program is justly proud of their ability to place its graduates within the greater dance community. Students of the program generally felt that they received good preparation for the transition. They felt close to the other students in the program. And they felt that the faculty members were supportive and encouraged them to explore academic areas outside of dance.

The Dance Program Review Committee agreed that overall the MFA program is a good program. However, they did have some concerns. These concerns fall into two categories. The first has to do with ways to strengthen the overall quality of the program and to improve the competences of those who graduate. The second has to do with the impact of the CDC program on other aspects of the Dance Program.

Dancers today who wish to transition into academia now have a wider variety of choices as to where they can go for their education. The University of Utah and Ohio State University are two of the very best dance programs in the nation and they, along with University of Texas, New York University, and others, provide opportunities for transition. Thus, it is important for the graduates coming out of the University of Washington MFA program to be as well prepared as possible for the kinds of positions they seek and for the competition that they face.

Students who come into the MFA program have been out of academia for several years, unless they happen to have been teaching at an academic institution during the off-season. A new student coming into the MFA program is immediately faced with an unreasonable schedule. This schedule includes an extensive rehearsal schedule (e.g. one piece of this year's CDC performance requires 80 hours of rehearsal); teaching assistant responsibilities that require approximately 20 hours per week, and an academic course load of at least 10 credit hours. These responsibilities add up to well over 40 hours per week. In the program review of 1996 many students in the MFA program indicated that they wanted to have more time to take their classes. This review committee heard similar remarks from students and faculty who worked with the students; one alum of the MFA program told the committee the CDC work would have been much more engaging if there was time to explore it theoretically, another student felt quite strongly that there needed to be more time to "dig into research." And, a third student commented that there was not time for academics given the teaching and rehearsal schedule. Faculty members were clearly concerned that graduate students were not getting the most out of their university experience because of other time commitments. Specifically, the following was noted:

- The graduate students have no advanced composition class.
- The research class is only one quarter and both some faculty and some students believed it should be longer.

- Students coming out the program are not production literate as to lighting, sets, marketing, costuming, etc. because there is no course that specifically addresses production. There are courses in the drama department, but lighting, for example, for dance is different than lighting for drama. (see the self study, p. 53).
- There is limited time to explore academic classes outside of the program.
- There should be more opportunities to improve technology and production literacy among the MFA students.

In short, given that so many students from the MFA go into teaching in relatively small dance programs where they will have to be a generalist and know production, choreography, costumes, and the newer technologies, the review committee felt that the program should consider ways to strengthen the academic side of the MFA perhaps at the cost of reducing the rehearsal time commitment or expanding the length of the MFA program at least for some students (a similar suggestion was made in the 1996 review). The committee believes that the quality of the graduates in the MFA program would only be made better by enabling them to take greater advantage of the scholarly opportunities available at the University of Washington.

A second major concern about the MFA program has to do with the financial impact that CDC performances have on the rest of the Dance Program. This review committee acknowledges that the entire Dance Program benefits immensely from the presence of these former professional dancers who teach classes and help majors with their choreography and techniques. However the CDC performances do take up a very sizable portion of the Dance Program's financial resources.

The Dance Program puts on four performances each year. One is the Grad 3-D performance for the MFA students. This year it will be done in collaboration with the Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media as part of a developing collaboration between the two programs. There is also the Faculty Dance Concert usually given late in the fall quarter. The Dance Majors' Concert is in the spring where the performances, choreography, and production are the work of the undergraduate majors. And there is the CDC Concert, which usually comes in February, where there are 4-5 pieces presented, each of which is a restoration dance. Typically all the performances except the CDC performance are done in Meany Studio Theater. The CDC performance is done in the much larger venue of Meany Theater. Ticket revenues that run around \$5000 for the three Meany Studio performances pretty much cover the cost of the performance, although that is a meager amount for each of these.

The CDC concert is in a very different category from the other three performances. It is enormously expensive and rather than being a collaborative effort by faculty and students it is under the ownership of a single faculty member. Typically it costs about \$52,000 to put on this event. Much of the expense is due to hiring those who "own" the dance to be restored whether it is a foundation, a choreographer, or an individual. Their entities or their representatives are paid to come to the University and put on the restoration. License fees, choreographers, costumes, accommodations, and production staff are all costs for this performance. Ticket sales go toward this concert, but they fall well short of the needed revenues. For example, in 2002-03 ticket sales came to

about \$13,000. Thus, an additional \$39,000 (approximately) was needed to cover the cost of production. This type of situation occurs each year, and each year the additional funds come out of the main operating and hourly budgets of the Dance Program. To return to our example of 2002-2003, the budget (after hourly pay is taken out) is approximately \$55,000 less the \$39,000 CDC shortfall leaving a meager \$16,000 for all other operations in the Dance Program with seven faculty and three staff. This constrains doing anything more elaborate for the other performances such as bringing in a nationally recognized choreographer. It also constrains faculty travel, a necessity for their research since they are required to maintain a research profile outside of the University. The program has made some progress in making more travel funds available, but only a few years ago there was simply no money for travel available for faculty members because of the CDC demands on the budget. Obviously other areas are impacted as well including costuming, marketing, development, newsletters, and outreach. Undergraduate opportunities to perform, something the undergraduates are eager to have, could also be expanded with more available resources. Of course, if ticket sales are higher, as they were in 2004-2005, the demands on the operating budget go down, but given the history of ticket sales this cannot be counted on, and historically the CDC Concert does create considerable stress on the rest of the Dance Program's budget.

The question the review committee asked was whether the expense of this single concert and its effects on the rest of the program were limiting the department's ability to grow and incorporate the ideas and expertise of the whole faculty. The committee was not convinced that the CDC performance as the exclusive domain of a single faculty member needed to command this proportion of the resources of the program. Other possibilities are readily conceivable. For example, each piece in the CDC performance would not have to be an historical choreographic restoration. One or two pieces could be historical reconstructions and newer choreographed works could be matched with those. This would also allow more students and other faculty members to be used in more aspects of the production. It should also be noted that the CDC performance is larger than the other concerts in part because it is billed as a "professional" performance, which means it gets considerably more coverage in the media. However, there is strong public support for the other performances and there is some evidence that some of them might do as well as the CDC concert if given better venues and resources, for example, in 2001-02 when the Dance Faculty Concert was moved to Meany Theater it drew almost as many people over its four-day run as the CDC drew (1565 to 1733). Putting more resources into the other performance might well make the Dance performances and program even better known. But this is a question that the Dance Program, perhaps in consultation with its Standing Committee and the Dean of Arts and Humanities, should address.

Greater willingness to share the resources and the governance of them, both financial and creative is the ideal model for the future of the department. The review committee was concerned with how decisions to commit monetary resources are arrived at. Ownership and responsibility of the program's resources should be shared by all of the faculty members. The committee sensed considerable tension around this issue and believes that it needs to be addressed for the good of the program. (If such a discussion is held and the status quo is maintained, then we suggest that the CDC funds that go to one faculty member who traditionally puts on the CDC performance should be made into a

research fund for that faculty member. This way the departmental budget can be separated from what is currently a de facto research budget for an individual.)

Currently, the staff in the Dance Program consists of a Program Coordinator and an Administrator/Undergraduate Advisor. The committee would like to see the undergraduate advising role removed from the duties of the administrator so that the administrator could spend more time on development and promotion of the program. There is enormous potential here for development.

Seattle is a very good community for dance. There are many companies and studios here in addition to Cornish, which offers a BFA degree. There have been steady gains by the department in recent years in connecting to the greater Puget Sound dance community. In the past local choreographers and instructors, with the exception of Pacific Northwest Ballet, were not closely connected to the University program. That isolation is breaking down as more local choreographers' pieces are presented and as other instructors come in as temporary replacement teachers. The Dance Program is creating a studio/theater that can be used for outreach performance for outside groups. And students enrolled in the Dance Teaching Course teach in local studios. Mark Haim who is a world-renowned dancer and choreographer and who has been an Artist in Residence for the past four years also brings in many performers from the World Series of Dance. These artists not only present at the Meany Theater, but also serve as guest instructors. These kinds of connections make the undergraduate majors and the MFA students feel like they are part of an extensive network. Establishing such a network is critical to their ability to work in the field.

Closely connected to the question of networking is the issue of diversity within the Dance Program. 'Diversity' here means many things. At one level it means that there should be instructors who come from different backgrounds and who use different techniques. The program has made significant progress in this area of diversity. 'Diversity' also means reaching out to groups that are underrepresented in the dance community. The work of Jurg Koch who teaches integrated dance (performances that involve dancers with disabilities) is an impressive step in furthering the goals of diversity. The undergraduate student body seems to be about as diverse as the University student body is generally and there are two MFA students out of six that are members of racial minorities. 'Diversity' in dance also means making more non-Western dance style available. The program tries to offer more classes in which non-western dance is taught and where dance is taught in its social context in its two courses: World Dance and Culture, and The Creative Context. The committee would like to see greater faculty diversity made a priority for this program. Every effort to achieve this should be made in the present and in future faculty searches.

The facilities of the program are generally adequate. The large studios are good class spaces but the fact that they are located directly over the Meany Studio Theater makes two of them unavailable in the evenings for classes or rehearsals when there is an event in the Meany Studio Theater. Office space in Cunningham Hall and the fact that there is a meeting room there has eased the severe shortage of office space in Meany Hall. However, this is a temporary arrangement and something must be done to meet the long-term requirements of this program.



The committee was puzzled by the role of the Dance Program Standing Committee in relation to the Dance Program. When requests were made to speak with members of that committee the response was that the Standing Committee was either nonexistent or moribund. Yet there have been regular recent email messages between the Chair and this committee regarding issues of reappointment, hiring, and tenure.

Overall we believe that the Dance Program is performing with excellence in its teaching and research mission. The program understands its place in a research university and has taken on its many roles with enthusiasm and dedication in the face of static resources. Our critical comments are only intended to make a very good program even better. Elizabeth Cooper, the current chair of the program, has been a dynamic leader who has greatly strengthened the undergraduate program, introduced diversity into the curriculum and the faculty, and has made every effort to create a program at the graduate and undergraduate level which will serve as a strong foundation for the future.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

The Dance Program Review Committee unanimously makes the following recommendations to address the immediate needs of the program.

1. There should be permanent funding for two lecturer positions. One lecturer position has just been funded by the Provost's office (for three years) and another was cut for this year. The burdens of the faculty members who have at this point a very high number of contact hours coupled with a heavy performance schedule could be greatly lessened by the program's ability to count on two lecturers each year.
2. A part time undergraduate advisor should be assigned to the program in order to free the administrator for her duties as administrator.
3. Auditions for performances by undergraduates to determine which of them get to dance in faculty and graduate performances should be instituted.
4. There should be some expansion of undergraduate opportunities to perform, perhaps through a repertory type class.
5. The program needs to address the MFA curriculum to see if there is a way to find more time for graduate students to pursue research projects and to be introduced to or work with dance technology. In support of this, The Graduate School should consider increased assistance that would allow at least some students to take a third year if such was justified by a research project.
6. The ownership of departmental resources needs to be addressed and settled.

7. There should be a decision concerning the space requirements of the program, perhaps by making the offices in Cunningham Hall permanently available to the program.

The Dance Program Review Committee unanimously approved this report and concur with the independent reports of the two external members Professors Donna White and Gregg Lizenbery.