UCC Program Review Committee summary of review

Program – Dance

This program includes the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- B.A. Dance
- B.F.A. Dance – Performance and Choreography
- B.A. Dance, Honors Tutorial College
- B.F.A. Dance – Performance and Choreography, Honors Tutorial College
- Dance: History and Theory minor
- Dance: Performance and Choreography minor
- Dance: Somatic Studies minor

Recommendation

This program is found to be viable, see the report that follows for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

Date of last review – AY 2008

Date of this review – AY 2017

This review has been sent to program director and the dean. Their reports are attached.
April 12, 2016

To: UCC Program Review Committee

Re: 2016 review of the Division of Dance, part of the School of Dance, Film, and Theatre within the College of Fine Arts at Ohio University.

Gentle People,

After perusing the self-study documents and spending two days with faculty, staff and students in the Division of Dance at Ohio University, this review committee would rate the academic program as "viable as a whole," despite some very serious problems with regard to prolonged understaffing and deteriorating facilities. The Division is providing an excellent academic program despite those very serious challenges.

This committee commends the very small faculty and staff of the Division of Dance for creating an exemplary environment of collegiality, academic rigor, and "make do" determination in which Dance students can thrive and prepare for a variety of careers (and achievements of recent alumni of the Division of Dance indicate that the program does lead to employment for many of its graduates). This committee was especially impressed at the willingness of faculty and staff to devote extra time and effort into sustaining the program over a period of several years of shortstaffing from unfilled vacancies in the faculty. This committee was also impressed with the generally optimistic attitude of faculty, staff, and students toward the program despite some very serious (and even potentially dangerous) problems with the Putnam Hall facility, which will be discussed in the full report below.

The full report follows the format of the "Questions for Reviewers" document provided by the UCC Program Review Committee. The report follows the initial "Background" section.

Background

The Division of Dance was a charter member of the National Association of Schools of Dance, formed in 1981. Ohio University's Dance first received accreditation in 1982; today it is one of only 79 accredited programs in the NASD, and one of five in Ohio (the others are at Kent State University; Ohio State University; University of Akron; and University of Cincinnati). Formerly the School of Dance, the Division is now part of the combined School of Dance, Film, and Theatre (formally combined in 2013, the year after Ohio University switched from a quarters based academic calendar to a semesters system).

The program offers several undergraduate programs, including a BFA in Dance (first accredited in 1981 ); the BA in Dance Studies (first accredited in 2007); the Honors Tutorial College program in Dance; and minors in Choreography and Performance, Dance History and Theory, and Dance Somatic Studies. Enrollment has fluctuated over the seven-year review period, from a high of 67 students in 2010 to a low of 42 in 2014; the Division reports enrollment has increased in recent years, with a target of about 50 undergraduates. The program provides rigorous instruction with considerable amounts of individualized instruction by faculty and staff. Recent alumni of the program have gained employment as dance performers, dance instructors, choreographers, and dance-program managers; placements include positions in New York, California, much of Ohio, and Dublin, Ireland (the director of the Dublin Dance Festival is a 2014 BFA).
Current and emerita faculty contribute to the academic rigor of the program, with specialty areas including African dance; African American dance; modern dance; jazz dance; dance composition; ballet; Laban Movement Studies; dance pedagogy; choreography; yoga; Pilates; kinesiology; and technical direction for dance. The faculty is notably diverse in terms of race and gender. The current faculty comprises three Group 1 faculty, one Group 2, one Group 4, and a technical director who also provides instruction. Two former faculty members continue to serve as adjunct instructors. Since 2007, the Division has lost five positions due to retirements, resignations, position eliminations, or unfilled vacancies.

The Division of Dance is housed within Putnam Hall, a former elementary school. The building includes one large performance space/studio, the Shirley Wimmer Dance Theatre; several smaller studios; two multipurpose classrooms/practice rooms; a small suite of faculty offices; the SHAPE Clinic (servicing the entire College of Fine Arts); and a "Create Space" computer/production lab (also servicing the entire College of Fine Arts). Studios in Putnam Hall have key-card security locks that are reprogrammed every semester to ensure the safety and privacy of dance students and faculty, especially during evenings and weekends. Putnam Hall was given cosmetic upgrades in 2005, much of which have been damaged by frequent water leaks in the building, destabilized plaster/peeling paint, flooding and unreliable HVAC systems. Although there certainly are other academic departments at Ohio University that are facing similar problems, including other departments within the College of Fine Arts, this committee is limiting its review to the Division of Dance.

1. The program as a whole

a. Is the current number and distribution of faculty sufficient to carry out the broad overall mission of the Department (Teaching; Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity; Service).

The short answer is "no." The long answer is "no, and not for several years now."

The current faculty has been operating short-handed since two Group 1 retirements in 2013 and the elimination of the staff accompanist position in 2009. The Division at present is not aware of whether those vacated lines will be returned to the Division.

The curriculum of the Division of Dance requires a high number of contact hours for individualized instruction and advising, including pedagogy-related service related to the curriculum (e.g. holding auditions; organizing and managing student performances; ensuring the health and safety conditions of educational and performance spaces; etc.). As is the case for many other professional/performance programs at Ohio University, the nature of the Athens community makes it difficult to recruit suitable adjuncts due to the distance from metropolitan areas where most potential adjuncts live and work.

Some faculty have had to defer sabbatical/professional leave, curtail or postpone research/creative activities, and otherwise sacrifice their own professional development opportunities just to ensure that core courses and sufficient electives are offered to their majors. Group 1 faculty teach the equivalent of three 3-credit courses per semester, and in 2014-15, the Division's sole Group 2 faculty member taught the equivalent of six courses per semester. Such heavy teaching loads curtail faculty members' time for creative and/or research activities, although it seems all have maintained creative/research activity as best they could. Due to the physical nature of their teaching (demonstrating dance techniques), many of the faculty members
are doing the best they can in aging bodies. Thus, new faculty lines are necessary so that older faculty can take on courses that are not as physically demanding.

As a small department, each faculty committee is a "committee of the whole" with membership of all faculty members, each chaired by a different faculty member, which can result in additional service work well above each faculty member's assigned workload.

Some courses central to the kinesiology curriculum of the Division of Dance require instructors who are certified (e.g. Pilates, yoga, Laban/Bartenieff techniques), and recent vacancies have also resulted in the loss of full-time instructors with those certifications. As of now two students who are in their senior year of Dance are filling in for those missing instructors. Of course, Pilates, yoga, and dance/movement therapy are important sectors of the dance industry for students interested in careers as instructors and therapists.

The Division has two support staff positions, an administrative assistant and a technical/equipment/lighting director who also provides some instruction. Both indicated that there is "no back up" for the services they provide to the Division in the case of sick or personal leave.

The lack of a professional dance studio accompanist — a "given" in accredited dance programs — was referred to as "an embarrassment" by a number of faculty and students. A dance-studio accompanist must be able to improvise and perform dance music that cuts across musical genres; dance-school accompanists also must develop rapport with dance instructors, something that takes time. In the Division of Dance, the accompanist also taught courses related to music and dance, courses that are integral to the choreography portion of the curriculum. Low cost solutions such as hiring graduate students from the School of Music has not provided acceptable results, nor does it fulfill the "teaching power" for the dance-music courses, according to faculty, staff, students, and College administration. Although it is clear that the current Dance faculty have willingly made personal and professional sacrifices to prop up the program since the staff reduction, the current staffing levels likely are not sustainable, nor are they conducive to recruitment of new students and/or increasing enrollment to pre-Q2S levels.

b. Is the level of the Department’s RSCA appropriate for the program given the size of the faculty and the resources available to the Department? Is the Department’s level of external funding at an appropriate level?

The emphasis of the Division of Dance is on instruction; most Group 1 faculty members teach 9 credit hours or more per semester (essentially, the equivalent of a "3-3" teaching load by Ohio University standards). Two of the three G1 faculty maintain active creative agendas that includes performance, choreography, production, and guest instruction for performance companies. One of the G1 faculty members is more focused on research activity. The two other full-time instructors (a Group 2 and a Group 4) maintain active creative agendas even though such work does not formally "count" toward promotion. The Division of Dance thus has a balanced and relatively productive "RSCA" profile, one that enhances the stature and reputation of the program within the broader discipline.

The Division of Dance has been successful in securing relatively small grants and allocations to support faculty travel, bringing in guest instructors/performers, and to develop new initiatives (e.g. the SHAPe Clinic). The Division's pursuit of external funding seems appropriate given the nature of the discipline and the relatively small size of the program.
c. Is the level of service, outside of teaching, appropriate for the program given its size and the role that it plays in the University and broader communities it interacts with? Is the Department able to fulfill its service mission?

All full-time faculty serve on all departmental committees, and committee-chair assignments are divided among the faculty. Each faculty member also performs service at the college and university level, as well as service to discipline-specific organizations and the broader community, Athens and beyond. As stated earlier, the faculty has been short-staffed for some years, and as such the service load on current faculty seems to be at an individually high, and possibly unsustainable, level.

d. Does the Department have an appropriate level of financial resources, staff, physical facilities, library resources, and technology to fulfill its mission?

The primary resource challenges facing the Division of Dance are understaffing and a deteriorating, and at times dangerous, working/teaching space. Financial resources in regard to other matters (library resources, technology, and equipment) appear to be adequate, although it should be noted that the Division takes pride in "taking care of our equipment," such that much of it remains useful well past the normal service life for such items (e.g., portable dance floors, stage lighting, legacy VHS players, etc. Even a 10-plus-year-old eMac computer remains in service).

The problems of prolonged under-staffing have been discussed above and need not be repeated here other than to note that staffing resources do not appear appropriate even for a small program such as the Division of Dance.

The problems of deferred maintenance also are obvious in the Division of Dance. Although there certainly are other academic departments at Ohio University that are facing similar problems, including other departments within the College of Fine Arts, this committee is limiting its review to the Division of Dance.

During this committee's tour of the Putnam Hall facility, we saw considerable water damage to walls and ceilings, peeled paint and deteriorating plaster (some of which falls onto students and staff during class or therapy sessions), visible mold/mildew on ceiling tiles, cracked exterior window panes, screen-less window openings, rotting wooden window frames, and nonfunctioning window shades (especially in studios used as changing rooms, when privacy is of utmost concern). Faculty, staff, and students alike reported insect infestations in studios and other occupied spaces, specifically yellow-jackets and cockroaches. This committee also was told that the HVAC system is unreliable, and that at times the heat does not work in studio spaces in winter months -- given the athletic, physical nature of dance, it is unreasonable to expect students and instructors to work with cold muscles and/or bulky clothing. Additionally, faculty and students often have to sweep/mop floors to clean up peeled paint, fallen plaster, dead insects, and the like before they can begin instruction/practice/performance. Some staff and students indicated that they like Putnam Hall in general, but find the current state of the building to be "horrible."

The committee was informed that conditions are even worse in some other instructional spaces within the College of Fine Arts. We confined our inspection to Putnam Hall. It was noted
to this committee that the deplorable conditions in Putnam Hall have been known to top administrators at the university for some years.

2. Undergraduate Program

e. Is the Department fulfilling its service role, adequately preparing non-majors for future coursework and/or satisfying the needs for general education?

For general education, the Division of Dance is fulfilling its service role but of course this is taxing the small faculty at a high level. The program offers minors as well as some general "service courses" for non-majors.

f. Is the program attracting majors likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of majors appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?

The current enrollment numbers are at a level that can be managed with a limited faculty. As the program increases enrollment, that will create a "tipping edge issue" in terms of quality of instruction due to the limited faculty.

The program also is quite attractive to students who wish to be in the HTC program or who double-major. Some dance students are double-majoring in the fields of business, journalism, and teaching.

Female students greatly outnumber male students in the program. Enrollment data from 2014 indicates that at least 20 percent of Dance students is from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group.

g. Does the undergraduate curriculum provide majors with an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation?

Discussions held with students indicated that, due to the diverse nature of the Division's instruction (costuming, managing productions, set-up for productions), they are very employable following their graduation. The internships the students are required to complete make them very attractive to future employers. Students are enrolled in both art and academics, and that merged focus increases their understanding of their field.

RESPONSE

h. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the undergraduate program?

As mentioned earlier, the current faculty are managing to support the program but are at a critical limit. Budget related cuts have hurt the ability of the Dance division to do little more that maintain the status quo. There is a great need to replace lost faculty and staff lines and to restore the accompanist position. The long term viability of this program is at risk without some additional faculty resources. Some of the courses offered previously in the Dane curriculum have had to be reduced due to lack of faculty to teach these courses.
i. Are pedagogical practices appropriate? Is teaching adequately assessed?

Pedagogical practices incorporate a strong physical curriculum as well as a strong academic emphasis. Dance is a physical discipline and much of the curriculum is spent in active involvement. The teaching is assessed by both students and peers. The program also follows the guidelines of its accreditation body.

j. Are students able to move into discipline-related careers and/or pursue further academic work?

The faculty and staff of the Dance division do an excellent job in placing and following their alumni. Most have found a niche in a dance related field. Data is maintained by the office on the placement of recent graduates.

4. Areas of Concern

• Staffing resources must be enhanced for the long term viability of the Dance division.

• The building that Dance uses is in serious need of maintenance and upgrading.

5. Recommendations

• The Division of Dance should be provided with at least one FTE faculty line ASAP, and the accompanist position should be restored in some fashion. A second faculty line should be put into the works to be filled within the next year or two. At least one of the two new faculty lines should be a Group 1; the second could be either a Group 4 or a Group 1, depending on the Division of Dance's priorities in that regard.

• Putnam Hall needs immediate attention to correct serious and potentially hazardous problems, even if proper renovation is unlikely to occur within the next review cycle.

• The Division of Dance is an elite, well-respected, and well-functioning "small department" at Ohio University, with a successful and highly marketable curriculum and a network of accomplished alumni. University- and College-level recruitment efforts should be re-evaluated and enhanced so that this "hidden gem" at Ohio University is not so well hidden from prospective students, and so that the currently over-taxed faculty is not solely responsible for recruitment.

6. Commendations

• Follow-up and support of alumni is outstanding.

• Students report that they are very happy with this program overall.
• Despite the challenges facing the division, morale and collegiality seem very strong throughout -- faculty and emeriti, staff, students, and alumni. "This program is held together with love," one reviewer commented.

7. Overall judgment: Is the program viable as a whole?

Yes, the program is viable as a whole.

About the review

The three members of the review committee are Krisanna Machtmes, chair of Educational Studies in the Patton College of Education; Scott Sparks, professor of Teacher Education in the Patton College of Education; and Bill Reader, associate professor of Journalism in the Scripps College of Communication.

Each committee member reviewed the Division of Dance self-study and supporting materials in advance of the site visit.

The site visit took place on Wednesday, March 16, and Thursday, March 17, 2016, primarily in Putnam Hall.

The committee met with the following individuals: Travis Gatling, director of the Division of Dance; Rani Crowe, assistant director of the School of Dance, Film, and Theatre; Division of Dance staff members John Bohuslawsky and Debbie McAdoo; Tresa Randall, tenured Group I faculty member; non-tenured faculty members Nathan Andary and Ani Javian; Jeff Russell, assistant professor in the College of Health Sciences and Professions and director of the SHAPE Clinic, which is housed in Putnam Hall; approximately one dozen students currently enrolled in the Division of Dance; and Elizabeth Sayrs, interim dean of the College of Fine Arts since December 2015.

The committee was scheduled to meet with Associate Provost Howard Dewald, but that meeting was cancelled.

Sincerely,

Krisanna Machtmes, professor and chair, Department of Educational Studies
Patton College of Education

Scott Sparks, professor
Department of Teacher Education
Patton College of Education

Bill Reader, associate professor
E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Scripps College of Communication
To: Elizabeth Sayrs, Interim Dean  
College of Fine Arts  

David Ingram, Chair  
UCC Program Review Committee  

From: Travis D. Gatling, Artistic Director/Head  
Dance Division (School of Dance, Film, and Theater  

Re: Responses and Clarifications to the 2016 review of the Dance Division  

Date: May 2, 2016  

The following information is a list of clarifications and/or responses to the UCC Program Review Committee’s Report submitted on April 16, 2016 for the Dance Division, in the School of Dance, Film, and Theater within the College of Fine Arts.  

Background  

*From the Review (p. 2):*  
Current and emerita faculty contribute to the academic rigor of the program, with specialty areas including African dance; African American dance; modern dance; jazz dance; dance composition; ballet; Laban Movement Studies; dance pedagogy; choreography; yoga; Pilates; kinesiology; and technical direction for dance.  

*Clarification:*  
Current and emerita faculty contribute to the academic rigor of the program, with specialty areas including African dance; African American dance; modern dance; jazz dance; dance composition; ballet; Laban Movement Studies; dance pedagogy; yoga; Pilates; kinesiology; dance history; world cultural dance studies; dance and gender studies; and technical direction for dance.  

*From the Review (p. 2):*  
Since 2007, the Division has lost five positions due to retirements, resignations, position eliminations, or unfilled vacancies.
Clarification:
Since 2007, the Division has lost five positions – four Group I positions and one hybrid faculty/staff (full time) accompanist position – due to retirements, resignations, position eliminations, or unfilled vacancies. One of the Group I positions was subsequently replaced by a Group IV position, which was later converted to a Group II. A second was replaced by a Group IV.

1. The program as a whole

From the Review (p. 2):
The current faculty has been operating short-handed since two Group I retirements in 2013 and the elimination of the staff accompanist position in 2009.

Clarification:
The current faculty has been operating short-handed since two Group I retirements in 2012 and 2013 and the elimination of the staff accompanist position in 2009.

As an additional point of clarification we ask that the committee consider including these details to the above:
As of now two students who are in their senior year of Dance and have completed certifications in Pilates and yoga are filling in for those missing instructors, under supervision of current faculty.

2. Undergraduate Program

From the Review (p. 4.e):
For general education, the Division of Dance is fulfilling its service role but of course this is taxing the small faculty at a high level. The program offers minors as well as some general "service courses" for non-majors.

Clarification:
The Dance Division offers 5 to 7 Tier II "service courses" for non-majors annually. This could include any combination of the following: DANC 1700: The Dance Experience; DANC 2700: History, Traditions and Languages of Dance; DANC 2710: Black Dance Forms; DANC 3550: Dance Cultures of the World; DANC 4710: Histories of Modern and Postmodern Choreography and Practice; DANC 4711: Dance, Sexuality, and Gender; DANC 4750: Dance in Non-Western Expressive Cultures

About the review:

From the Review (p. 6):
The committee was scheduled to meet with Associate Provost Howard Dewald,
but that meeting was cancelled.

Clarification:
Dr. Dewald was called to substitute for the Provost at a meeting in Columbus and was therefore unable to meet with the UCC reviewers.
May 1, 2016

Dear Dr. Ingram,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the program review report for the Division of Dance. I appreciate the careful attention provided by the reviewers both in their visit with the unit, and in their reading of the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) accreditation report. I strongly concur with their assessment that the Division of Dance is viable, and provides an “excellent academic program” in an “exemplary environment of collegiality, academic rigor, and ‘make do’ determination in which Dance student can thrive and prepare for a variety of careers.” The report also notes that the Division of Dance demonstrates the employability of fine arts graduates, writing that they “do an excellent job in placing and following their alumni. Most have found a niche in a dance related field.” I wanted to provide some additional context to areas of concern and recommendations that were included in the report.

Facilities
Like many building on campus, Putnam Hall has deferred maintenance needs as well as issues resulting from its original design (as an elementary school). A partial renovation in 2000 reconfigured many spaces, including a large performing space/studio, and provided air conditioning, although there are still some HVAC issues throughout the building. Replacing the roof is on the deferred maintenance list of projects for the university, which will help with many of the issues related to water damage. As noted in the external NASD report, the “facilities, equipment, and technology appear adequate to support faculty needs, all curricular offerings, and all students enrolled.”

Faculty and staff
Both the NASD and the program review report express concerns about the number of faculty supporting the program, as well as the workload of those faculty. This is a valid concern, and has been a longer-term issue, especially with regard to Group I faculty. However, faculty FTE overall has been relatively stable since 2010 (briefly higher in 2012-2014). In terms of faculty FTE, in 2010 (when there were 67 students in the program), there were 6 faculty FTE, all Group I. In the fall of 2015 (when there were 43 students in the program), there were 5.66 faculty FTE, including three Group I and two early retired faculty. As noted in the review, “The current enrollment numbers are at a level that can be managed with limited faculty.” The Division of Dance has been exploring new curricula, and has attracted double majors as well as served the general student population very effectively; as these efforts grow, they may support additional faculty to sustain the program. I have encouraged the Division of Dance to explore a joint staff accompanist position with the School
of Music to replace Dance’s studio accompanist line (eliminated in 2009); it is unknown at this time whether this is feasible and whether such a position would be a priority for both areas.

The School of Dance recently merged with the Schools of Film and Theater. As the bylaws of the merged school evolve and units adapt, it may help lessen the service burden on Group I faculty in the Division of Dance as they move from a “committee of the whole” structure to having representatives on committees of the merged school.

Thank you for the constructive feedback, and I thank you, your committee, and the reviewers for the time and expertise that you all have brought to the review process.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Elizabeth Sayrs
Interim Dean, College of Fine Arts