LEARNING OUTCOMES DATA FOR THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Template

Program **DANCE MINOR**

Department **THEATRE and DANCE**

Number of students enrolled in the program in Fall, 2011: **39**

Faculty member(s) completing template **Lorelei Bayne in direct consultation with Linda Goodrich and Melinda Wilson Ramey, Ed Brazo, Michelle Felten, Ron Reisner, Philip Flickinger**

(Date **January 31, 2012**)

*Period of reference in the template: 2006-07 to present*

1. **Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?**

   [Please limit your response to 200 words or less]

   The dance minor program is a substantial force in the Department of Theatre and Dance. It is a smaller scale program in terms of curriculum, compared to the major, but is integral to our production season. Dance minors are required to take 18 credit units (9 required lower-division units and 9 upper-division elective units). Since the minor requirements match approximately one-third of those required by the dance major, faculty do not differentiate learning outcomes for each program.

   There has been a great transformation in the organizational culture of our department’s establishment of learning outcomes since AY 2006-2007. Prior to 2009, individual faculty members evaluated learning outcomes for their respective classes, so assessment occurred at the coursework rather than programmatic level. This remains the case for the dance minor. However, the department developed a new assessment plan that was implemented in the fall of 2010 whereby faculty members assess five specific learning goals for “THEA 121. Rehearsal and Performance.” Almost all dance minors take THEA 121 (this is an elective for the minor) and are assessed accordingly. During fall semester 2011, faculty expanded our learning outcomes beyond THEA 121 to define additional programmatic learning outcomes for both the dance major and minor. Our next step is to expand our assessment plan in order to evaluate learning outcomes simultaneously and track both majors and minors specifically as they progress through the program.

2. **Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.**
The following desired learning outcomes reflect the required and elective coursework for the dance minor. Dance minors’ are expected to gain technical knowledge of the discipline from their required lower-division coursework, as reflected in the first learning outcome listed below. Dance minors’ selection of upper-division electives creates a particular area of emphasis, such as history or multicultural dance forms that reflects the second outcome listed below.

a) **Perspectives-Interpret the elements of dance.** Understand the movement, music, and conceptual ideas that compose live dance performance as well as evaluate and criticize live university, community, and professional dance performance through multiple technical lenses.

The dance faculty desired this learning outcome as it serves as the foundation of Western and non-Western theatrical dance thought and practice. It evaluates both scholarly dance texts and dance productions to prepare students to apply the elements of dance as performance artists and/or audience members. Minors should understand how these elements operate both individually and collectively in order to grow in dance artistry and comprehend dance.

b) **Specific Content Knowledge- Analyze movement and performance in relationship to specific global, social, cultural, and historical contexts.** Dance minors will be able to analyze, that is compare and contrast, the structure, forms and conceptual framework of diverse choreographers, dancers, and designers in relation to specific global, social, cultural and historical contexts.

Faculty desires this learning outcome because it allows students to obtain a greater breadth of knowledge and more global perspective of dance and its contributions to society. Our lighting and design classes focus on an historical perspective that traces the evolution of theatrical performance from the Greeks to present day. Our upper-division dance technique classes focus on the dance styles and mastery associated with specific genres such as Ballet, Jazz, Cultural forms and Contemporary dance. In other words, some courses provide an overview of historical periods within particular social/cultural contexts, while others examine specific genres. This is a distinct aspect of our program, because many dance programs teach a limited view of western concert dance. Our dance history and dance cultures courses include a multicultural American and global perspective of dance, including dance of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Requiring minors to choose amongst courses in dance pedagogy, different dance histories, different performance forms and various ways of creating dance performance across the curriculum keeps our program current and abreast of changes/developments in the field.

c) **Skill Set-Demonstrate professional standards as dance artists throughout the audition, rehearsal, and performance process.** Minors in dance will be able to demonstrate professional standards as dancers, choreographers, dance teachers, or stage managers and technical crew members by preparing for in class auditions, skills tests, and interviews; developing artistic and technical skills; executing those skills in collaboration with others during both the planned and spontaneous demands of a live performance for in class and/or public viewing; and supporting the requirements of pre- and post-production through their technical theatre requirement. Students
possess proficiency and confidence in several current dance styles and techniques beyond the usual academic training of modern dance and ballet.

This learning outcome specifically evaluates students’ learning in production courses “THEA 120. Practicum in Technical Production” and “THEA 121. Rehearsal and Performance.” (Note; both courses are popular electives of the dance minor but share the THEA course prefix rather than DNCE). These classes and this outcome are integral to both our theatre and dance programs. Through production, i.e. public performance, theatre and dance majors must synthesize and apply coursework from across multiple areas. In THEA 120 and THEA 121 students, under the direction of dance faculty members and in a learning environment that reflects professional dance, must collaborate and execute their skills throughout the audition, rehearsal, and live performance processes.

This outcome is desired by the faculty, for professionalism is at its core. Faculty strongly believes that students’ attitudes and work ethic not only contribute a great deal to their artistry. By intentionally integrating professionalism into this learning outcome, faculty observes dance minors maturing personally and artistically. This has resulted in a strengthening of the overall quality of our dance productions.

3. **For undergraduate programs only**, in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.

   [Please limit your response to 400 words or less]

   The dance minor program’s desired learning outcomes align with the Baccalaureate Learning Goals by reflecting discipline specific articulations of the university’s goals.

   For example, the university states that students should acquire “knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts. Focused by engagement with big questions, contemporary and enduring.” This goal articulates our program’s desire that students analyze the genre, structure, form, and content of diverse choreographers and performance artists in relationship to specific global, social, cultural, and historical contexts. Sections of our curriculum, particularly our dance history, dance cultures, and ethnic dance courses, focus specifically on the relationship among dance, history, society, and culture. This learning outcome also overlaps with the university’s desire for students to demonstrate intercultural knowledge and competence.

   In addition with the third university learning goal, students engage their “intellectual and practical skills” in THEA 120 and 121. In expecting our students to demonstrate professional standards throughout the audition, rehearsal, and performance process as detailed in learning outcome “c” above, they specifically utilize their inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, oral communication, and teamwork/problem solving skills. These skills are taught in multiple classes.

4. **For each desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please:**

   a) Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.

   b) Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.
c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program. 

d) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome. 

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less per learning outcome]

(If the requested data and/or analysis are not yet available for any of the learning outcomes, please explain why and describe the plan by which these will occur. Please limit your response to 500 words or less.)

The requested data and/or analysis are not yet available for any of the learning outcomes for the dance minor program as our current departmental assessment plan focuses on gathering and assessing data for THEA 121, which is currently a popular elective for the dance minor. Data is not yet available because assessment of those outcomes continues across the curriculum and is evaluated by individual faculty members for their respective classes. We have already identified the respective classes that focus on each of the outcomes. For example, students learn to interpret the elements of dance in a number of required and elective courses such as DNCE 022, 120, 122, 130, 131, 132, 142, 13, 111, and 112. Since this outcome is addressed in several courses, students learn to evaluate the elements of dance from different general and discipline/area-specific (dance technique/choreography, design/technical theatre, historical/cultural) perspectives.

The plan for collecting and analyzing data is currently done informally in certain courses. For example, students take ballet, modern and jazz technique courses in sequential order building toward advanced proficiency. During the first week of classes, placement auditions are held to evaluate skill level. Dance faculty members will need to first determine how to expand our formal assessment plan to include annual evaluation of additional outcomes. There are different ways to approach this task. For instance, we can track a small sample of students through the entire program, identify and focus on a set of core courses that each address a particular outcome as THEA 121 currently does, or evaluate one learning outcome across multiple classes/areas at a time. Next, we must further develop our assessment plan and schedule, so we evaluate multiple learning outcomes in a more timely fashion. While this aspect of the plan requires more multitasking and may make assessment more time consuming. The more we streamline our evaluation of learning outcomes for dance minor, the better we will be able to assess the success of the program and curriculum as a whole.

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur. 

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less per item]

a. Decision-making at the program level has not yet occurred for this outcome. It is addressed across the curriculum through the preparation and presentation of 1) movement studies, and original choreography in DNCE, 022, 120, 122, 132, and 150 2) final class performances and projects in DNCE 130, 131, 132, 142, 160, and 4. 3) Skills tests in DNCE 01, 02, 3A, 3B, 4, 5, 132, 011, 012, 13, 111, and 112. Faculty may plan to focus on one required lower-division course, potentially DNCE 022, where students study the elements of dance in broad detail. In examining the elements of creating movement, thought, concept, and composition both
individually and collectively, students gain foundational knowledge for understanding the translation process that forms the basis for their remaining coursework. DNCE 022 culminates in a final group project that is guided completely by students’ understanding and application of the elements of dance to a campus *site-specific production* (public location requiring students to employ creative problem solving skills). The plan would be to invite multiple faculty members to formally evaluate the final presentations and couple their findings with the professor’s in order to better assess this learning outcome and make informed curriculum decisions.

b. Decision-making at the program level has not yet occurred for this outcome. However, it is addressed across the curriculum and evaluated by individual instructors upon completion of written work such as term papers and dance concert critique/report papers in DNCE 130, 131, 132, 011, 012, 013, 111, 112, and critical essays in DNCE 160, 132, 143, and 150. As explained in question 4, how faculty members plan to utilize findings from evaluating this outcome is contingent upon how faculty decide to expand our current assessment plan. Focusing on this outcome is particularly challenging because it is addressed across all areas (dance technique/ choreography, design/technical theatre, and history/criticism) of the program.

c. Decision-making at the program level has not yet occurred for this outcome. However, it is assessed formally in THEA 121, which many minors take successfully. It is also informally addressed across the curriculum and evaluated by individual instructors upon completion of written work such as term papers and dance concert critique/report papers in DNCE 130, 131, 132, 011, 012, 013, 111, 112, and critical essays in DNCE 160, 132, 143, and 150. As explained in question 4, how faculty members plan to utilize findings from evaluating this outcome is contingent upon how faculty decide to expand our current assessment plan. Focusing on this outcome is particularly challenging because it is addressed across all areas (dance technique/ choreography, design/technical theatre, and history/criticism) of the program.

6. **Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.**

[Please limit your response to 300 words or less]

Currently, the program has not sought data from alumni outside of surveys distributed and collected by the Office of Institutional Research to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes. All faculty members remain in personal contact with recent alumni. Hence, our knowledge of students’ success is informal and neither systematically gathered nor officially documented by the program. Our tentative plan for measuring the long-term effects of the program’s learning outcomes is:

a. Spring 2012: Compile an alumni database by collecting contact information from the class of 2012, as well as recent alumni.

b. Fall 2012: Revise our senior exit survey so it addresses both program learning outcomes and departmental culture and administer the survey to each graduating class thereafter.
c. Spring 2013: Fall 2014: Develop and distribute electronic surveys to track alumni’s success 5, 10, and 15 years post-graduation. This means that the program will administer the surveys annually, but only to specific graduating classes.

d. Spring 2014: Evaluate the surveys as part of our annual assessment.

Taking these steps will enable us to better track the long-term effects of our desired student learning outcomes.

7. **Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?**

   *Please limit your response to 300 words or less*

The dance minor program pursues learning outcomes similar to the major program that are identified by the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD), the accrediting body for university dance programs. We use NASD learning outcomes to inform the outcomes for the dance program. For example, the NASD Handbook 2010-2011 (section VIII, part B. pp. 87-88) states:

1) Students should achieve the highest possible level of technical skill and the highest possible level of conceptual understanding of the medium and its expressive possibilities.

2) Students must develop basic knowledge and skills in choreography and have opportunities to develop their choreographic potential in studies that include traditional and/or experimental approaches.

3) Through comprehensive courses in dance studies, students must:
   a. Develop an understanding of the common elements and vocabulary of dance and of the interaction of these elements, and be able to employ this knowledge in analysis
   b. Learn to analyze dance perceptively and to evaluate critically
   c. Be able to place dance in historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts
   d. Be able to form and defend individual critiques

The learning outcomes for our dance minor program align approximately with the 30% standard for NASD minor requirements. For example, NASD #2 aligns with our choreography requirement, DNCE 120. Principles of Choreography, requiring basic knowledge of the dance minor. Also, NASD #1 and #3 overlap with our a. and b.

In addition, standards set forth by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), also inform the dance minor program’s learning outcomes. As the theatre program’s accrediting body, NAST also supports the technical aspects of dance production by requiring coursework in costuming, stage management, lighting design, scenic design, technical production, etc. We are institutional members of the National Dance Educators Organization (NDEO) and the American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) which fortifies our minor program.
8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment? [Please limit your response to 200 words or less]

The dance program offers a nationally competitive BA degree and the dance minor program supports and helps to build a reputation for excellence in the community. Dance minors actively participate in performances and artistic endeavors that garner accolades, awards and honors. These awards and honors bring recognition and visibility to the university, tying campus to community.

We continue to augment our plan for evaluating and assessing progress in achieving our learning outcomes and have made assessment-guided changes using our national accrediting agencies as benchmarks. We empower students and the region as a creative community with public performances that feature minors and majors alike, including Dance Sites and Sacramento/Black Art of Dance, performing its 20th Anniversary February 2012. Furthermore, the implementation of the annual Sacramento Dance Sampler makes CSUS a hub for the professional contemporary dance scene exposing students to diverse choreographic viewpoints. The dance minor is enriched by our commitment to offering master classes with renowned professionals and by our close relationship with the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts.

The dance and theatre major and minor programs are inextricably linked in performance and technical production. We have expanded desired learning outcomes for theatre and dance majors and this directly affects the dance minor through shared classroom and lab experiences. We will continue to develop means to assess the success of our dance minors throughout the curriculum.