

To: WSU Dance Faculty

From: Dean Madonna Miner

Re: Dean's Response to Dance's Self-Study, Reviewers' Report, and Dance's Response to the Review

Date: May 7, 2015

Thank you all for your many contributions to WSU's Dance Program Review process. All Dance area faculty participated in various stages of this review, and I am grateful to you for your thoughtfulness and thoroughness in addressing concerns of importance to the area and to the College. I want to convey special thanks to Amanda Sowerby for serving as internal team leader, and to the four individuals (Matt Choberka, Brenda Kowalewski, Nichole Ortega and Amy Ragsdale) who served as reviewers.

Having read documents associated with the Dance area, as well as those from Music and Theatre (units with whom Dance shares space, administration and staff, some budgets and some students), I want to comment on items that I believe merit highlighting (and, in some cases, further attention and discussion).

1. As noted by the Review Committee, the Dance Program has a clearly articulated mission statement and is living up to that statement. The curriculum and faculty are strong. The program is to be commended for taking the initiative to generate both community outreach and interdisciplinary projects. Like the Review Committee, my sense is that overall, Dance is doing an excellent job.
2. The Review Committee also notes various challenges confronting the Dance Program. One major challenge has been the loss of design technical support (formerly supplied by Theatre area faculty and staff). Dance has had to hire and pay for external designers to produce dance concerts, cutting into funds formerly used for student travel, guest artists and undergraduate research. The Review Committee suggests that Dance articulate a long-term strategic plan, a plan that would present their needs and priorities; I agree with this suggestion. The Dean's Office currently allocates some Stewart Education funding to the theatre area to support student travel to regional theatre conferences; there is a good chance we could allocate some funding to Dance for student travel, guest artists, and undergrad research. If we were to do so, Dance could continue using its own funds for tech support, without compromising support of students.
3. The Review Committee encourages the Dance area to create a two-year certificate or Associate Degree. I too think a two-year program might be very appealing to our student population.
4. Under "Support," the Review Committee worries that because of its small size relative to Theatre and Music, the Dance Program may be overlooked in departmental decisions. I believe this concern is valid and needs to be addressed. All three units within the

department were up for review this year, and each one of them suggested that the department as a whole needs to should engage in a review of its governing/operating structures. It is time for Music, Dance, and Theatre to have a realistic discussion about their existence as a single department. What might be advantages/disadvantages of different governance/operating structures? Are there ways all three areas might benefit if we were to configure them differently? What costs would accompany such a reconfiguration? Which resources can continue to be shared and which should be allocated to individual units? Theatre faculty members suggested the formation of a Task Force to analyze the situation and propose alternatives. I am supportive of this approach, and suggest such a Task Force might be called into existence before the end of summer, 2015. The Dean's Office is willing to provide funding for an internal (to the university) or external facilitator for such a Task Force up to \$1500.

5. Let me close by reiterating that Dance is doing some very progressive interdisciplinary and community work. I am grateful to the three tenure-line faculty and adjuncts for their dedication to outreach, access, and learning.

Madonne Miner, Dean
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