










Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Dance MFA

Goal	Develop Professional Level Of Expertise In Dance DRAFT  MFA in Dance candidates will demonstrate knowledge base and skills commensurate with professional careers in dance.
Objective (L)	Demonstrate Choreographic Skill  Students will demonstrate excellence in creating extended choreographic works, employing effective tools of composition to create well-crafted original statements in movement.
Indicator	Evaluation Of Required Choreographic Work   Required Choreographic Work is evaluated on common standards of choreographic effectiveness as shown in attached rubric. These choreographic evaluations take place within the three required MFA choreography courses in (DNC 5676, 5378, and 5380). Instructors judge student work as Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory or Excellent. Extensive, qualitative, face-to-face feedback is also given.
Criterion	90% Of Students Will Be Judged Satisfactory In Proficiency  90% Students will be judged to have at least Satisfactory proficiency in choreography. 75% will be judged to have Excellent proficiency.
Indicator	Presentation & Evaluation Of Thesis Concert  As the culmination of the creative thesis, students develop and present an extended original choreographic work. The process, from proposal through performance, is mentored by members of the thesis committee. The thesis presentation will be assessed on the following points: the choreography is informed by student's research; the choreography stands on its own as a work of art; the performance reflects effective directing by the student.
Criterion	All MFA Thesis Students Meet Choreographic Production Standards  100% of MFA Thesis performers will be assessed by Thesis Committee to meet standards for choreographic effectiveness. (In addition, Students who meet the standard for acceptable choreographic production will receive a passing score for that portion of DNC 699, Thesis II.)
Finding	100% Passed Thesis II  In 2014-15, two graduate students presented the MFA thesis project. Both were successful.
Action	Continue To Mentor Graduate Students Through The Thesis Process  Faculty are committed to mentorship of graduate students. Students have always met regularly with their committee and/or chair, to review the research components and to show choreography in process. Those showings had been scheduled only during the students' regular rehearsal times, which did not always coordinate with the committee

members' schedules. Beginning in 2014, we scheduled showings for each thesis student for periodic Wednesdays at 1:00, a time we reserve for departmental activities such as majors meetings. We were thus much more involved with the choreographic process at an earlier stage, and able to give feedback at a stage in which it could be incorporated effectively.

Objective (L)

Breadth Of Knowledge In The Field 🔑

MFA graduates will have a solid understanding of dance technique, choreography, production, and history, and will be able to write and speak from that informed perspective.

Indicator

Comprehensive Exam 🔑

Students will be given a choice of topics to research relevant to all aspects of study that the student has experienced in the program. A passing grade on the comprehensive examination will serve as an indicator that a Dance MFA candidate has acquired a breadth of knowledge in the field of dance. Additionally, the students' ability to express themselves critically and at a standard commensurate to the profession will be demonstrated.

Criterion

Pass Rate 🔑

As demonstration that the Dance graduate program is successful in preparing students for the written comprehensive examination, at least 90% of students will pass the exam at the first sitting or upon retaking it. We observed last year that students were not as comfortable expressing themselves orally as they are with dance. Thus, we believe this exercise is beneficial to develop and extend oral expression.

Finding

Oral Presentations Were Effective 🔑

Early in 2014, we decided to give students the option of either the written comprehensive exam or an oral presentation. Of the two students completing their degree last year, one chose the written, the other did the presentation. Both performed well.

Action

Replace The Written Comprehensive Exam With Oral Presentation Of Research 🔑

The faculty determined that students have abundant opportunities within their coursework and in the written portion of the thesis to develop writing skill. The area we identified as requiring practice is in oral expression. The student who did the oral presentation to the faculty told us she found it extremely helpful when she soon thereafter interviewed for positions in dance. We may maintain the option of the written exam, but will likely move towards a model of oral demonstration of comprehensive knowledge in the field.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

The number of Dance MFA candidates in residence has grown from an average of approximately 8 to 15 in the past five years. Our goal is to graduate five per year, or 25 over 5 years. With the increase in number of students, we must continue to assess the way we deliver the curriculum so that students are well served. Given that our six graduate faculty also deliver the majority of the undergraduate curriculum, we must also not burn out our faculty with excessive hours of graduate mentorship.

We will see what effects, if any, having additional choreography course study will have in the thesis concerts presented in 2015, and will continue to assess the mode of comprehensive exam, written or oral. We plan to improve our follow up with students' employment after graduation, determine our track record of placing students in positions in higher education, as this is the goal for the majority of students seeking this degree.

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.

Scheduling showings of students' creative work at the beginning of the semester was a huge benefit for both students' process and faculty satisfaction. Although there were only two students completing thesis in 2014-15, the high quality of their choreography could be attributed, at least in part, to increased number of courses in choreography as well as the structured mentorship.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

Having received approval from the dean of Graduate Studies, the department will require the oral presentation as part of the thesis project, and eliminate the bound thesis. The new model will provide more authentic preparation for the careers our students will likely pursue.

Creative elements our students are increasingly interested in are the incorporation of technologies including video and lighting design embedded in the choreographic process. The department ran a Collaborative Process course as a special topic in the spring of 2014. The course will be proposed in the next curriculum cycle. As our students gain experience in these technologies, we anticipate a shift in the creative projects our students create, and a related opportunity for the curriculum to shift.
